

The Islands of the Ionian Sea and the Mainland

Landscapes, Contacts and Politics



edited by
Adolfo J. Domínguez, José Pascual

Edizioni ETS



La collana *Diabaseis* ha la sua sede presso il Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia. Essa nasce dal progetto di ricerca nazionale di storia antica *La 'terza' Grecia e l'Occidente*, avviato nel 2009 grazie alla fattiva collaborazione tra le unità di ricerca delle Università della Calabria, Venezia Ca' Foscari, Napoli Federico II, Parma e Roma La Sapienza.

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As is clearly indicated by the first published volumes, the goal is a common one: to highlight the relations between Western Greece – which is too often seen as 'peripheral' – and Greek and non-Greek peoples in the West. The series is published under the guidance of the Editor-in-Chief in collaboration with an International Scientific Committee. Its aim is to widen research on the Greek World and provide a critical contribution to the debate on the interaction between local history and international relations in the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic ages, as well as to the knowledge of Greek political dynamics beyond Athens and Sparta.



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Fin dal primo volume della collana è apparso chiaro come la riflessione sullo spazio ionico fosse uno dei principali filoni di ricerca che si intendeva valorizzare: i rapporti fra le Isole Ioniche e la loro terraferma sono, da questo punto di vista, un campo di studio elettivo cui è dedicato l'intero numero 11 di Diabaseis.

Adolfo J. Domínguez e José Pascual hanno coordinato con successo un nutrito gruppo di studiosi internazionali nell'intento di descrivere la geografia politica delle Isole Ioniche muovendo dalla prospettiva del continente; e in questo risiede l'originalità dell'approccio. Generalmente, infatti, la prospettiva storiografica moderna segue quella antica che, generata dalla visione insulare e marittima, vede nell'epeiros un riferimento semantico indistinto. In questo volume, invece, larga attenzione è dedicata sia all'Epiro storico, indagato nella sua complessa genesi etnica e istituzionale, sia all'Acarnania, regione dalla travagliata e mutevole identità politica. Vi trova spazio anche una riflessione sul Peloponneso occidentale, considerato nella sua dimensione di 'terraferma' e che per questa ragione va letto in continuità e non separatamente rispetto all'epeiros della Grecia centrale. Sul versante marittimo, il focus è posto sull'insieme meridionale delle Isole Ioniche (Leucade, Cefalonia e Zacinto), che storicamente ha ricevuto meno attenzione da parte della critica; l'interesse si è concentrato soprattutto su Leucade che solo a tratti assume una connotazione insulare: gli studi qui raccolti concorrono a delinearne un profilo nuovo e per certi versi inedito.

Grazie a quest'ultimo volume di Diabaseis, dunque, la distanza metaforica che tradizionalmente separava questo comparto dello Hellenikon dal cuore pulsante della storia greca appare considerevolmente ridotta.

Venezia, giugno 2024

Claudia Antonetti

INTRODUCTION

The structure and historical development of the states of the Ionian Sea, their influence on the north-western region of Greece and the Western Peloponnese, not to mention the naval traffic between the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic and the Central and Eastern Mediterranean, mean that the Ionian islands are fundamental when it comes to understanding not only the Greek world in general, but also the Ancient Mediterranean Region as a whole. Thus, first of all, the northernmost islands, Coreyra and Leucas, were chosen as the location for colonial settlements by Greeks of other origins (Euboeans, Corinthians). One consequence of these developments was the emergence of the *polis* of Coreyra, which, in turn, would become an important colonising power in the neighbouring territories along the Epirote coast, as well as the Greek and non-Greek regions that lay to the north of this area (Chaonia, Illyria). Similarly, Leucas, another Corinthian colony, would become one of the main points of attraction in relation to Acarnania. The southern islands of the archipelago would, in principle, retain their autonomy, resisting any foreign colonial settlement. Whilst Ithaca and Zacynthus constituted a single state each on their respective islands, no fewer than four different states emerged on Cephallenia, the *tetrapolis*, and this not only meant that the connections between the *poleis* on the different islands were important, but that the connections between cities that shared the same island and identity were important, even though they may not have always followed the same policies. In short, and in spite of the differences between the various *poleis*, the importance of the shared historical development of the islands of the Ionian Sea cannot be ignored or underestimated. Suffice it to mention the essential role that all the islands played with regard to the links that were established between the Eastern Mediterranean, the Central Mediterranean and the West.

Maritime traffic and the strength of the island *poleis* would influence the development of the settlements in North-western Greece in terms of the processes, whereby ethnicities and states were defined, not to mention the progressive consolidation of certain continental elites and the emergence of their own Hellenic identity. In this respect, it is possible that the island

poleis played a key role in the configuration of the state structures on the continent, based on a highly diverse rate of *poleogenesis*, ranging from the shaping of the first Acarnanian *poleis*, perhaps around the end of the sixth century or beginning of the fifth century, to the emergence of the Epirote *poleis* in the fourth century, not to mention the founding and consolidation of other ethnic and political structures, such as the *polis*-based ethnic confederations (*koina*) of the Chaonians and Thesprotians, the confederations sustained by *poleis* (Acarnania) and kingdoms (Molossia). In short, they influenced the different ways of being, becoming or being considered to be Greek. This was not a one-way influence, since we can distinguish between different aspects in the inter-relationship between the islands and the continent, such as economic, cultural and political relations. These relations were not always peaceful, encompassing as they did processes of ethnic permeability and even de-ethnicization, to the extent in which one state or population of ethnically distinct origin was integrated into another. As an example, we might mention Leucas, which, perhaps also as part of a dynamic process of identity building, came to serve as the capital of the Acarnanian Confederation during the Hellenistic Period. In this respect, Coreyra was able to inspire a process of consolidation of the Epirote elites and *ethne*. In Ancient tradition, Leucas was considered to be a peninsula (*chersonesos*) that formed part of Acarnania (Strabo 10, 2, 2). This account, together with others (cfr. *Od.* 24, 376-378), alerts us to its close links with the continent and with Acarnania, of which it came to occupy a part. Pottery finds in Cephallenia and Ithaca demonstrate their links with the entire North-west, with Epirus, Acarnania and the Peloponnese. Zacynthus, an Achaeon colony in ancient tradition (Thuc. 2, 66), even featuring mythical links with Arcadia, provides us with a glimpse of Peloponnese influence, featuring a curious connection with the Iberian Peninsula, one in which, according to Strabo (3, 4, 6) and Appian (*Hispania*, 25), Saguntum was founded by Zacynthians, this conclusion obviously deriving from the similarity of the two names. All this without overlooking the fact that, according to the Zacynthians themselves, their links with defeated Troy stretched as far back as Cassandra herself, daughter of Priam and sister of Hellen, who would play such an important part in the ethnic formation and development processes of Epirus. In short, the history of the islands of the Ionian Sea cannot be understood properly without taking into account their mutual influence with regard to the Greek continent and the Western Peloponnese.

As a route of passage, the Ionian islands played a fundamental role as of the Archaic Period in terms of facilitating access to other parts of

Introduction

the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic, whilst also receiving return traffic from Magna Graecia and Sicily and from the Adriatic towards Greece (both in the direction of the Corinthian Gulf and the Peloponnese and, in particular, the region of the Pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Olympia), without forgetting the routes that linked the Ionian islands with the Aegean. In this respect, Corcyra was located at a key strategic point with regard to the routes towards the west and towards the north. Leucas, whose *polis* was located close to the strait, measuring just 600 metres in width, that separated the island from the continent, also constituted an essential throughfare for ships. Similarly, the Strait of Cephallenia-Ithaca served as a fundamental transit point for naval traffic running between Greece and Italy. Zacynthus was especially well situated on the naval routes to and from the Corinthian Gulf and the Peloponnese. In short, this strategic dimension of the territories located along the Mediterranean seaboard of the Ionian Sea – territories that were diverse, yet united by their importance in terms of navigation routes – is quite fundamental when it comes to understanding their history. We could say that a kind of “Homeric geography” united all of these regions, including Epirote Thesprotia and the island of the Phaeacians, by means of an entire series of human relations and mutual interests, aspects effectively projected in epic accounts that had, in fact, existed since the beginning of the Archaic Period and, quite possibly, for several centuries before that.

All of these themes are brought together in this book. We address the geographical make-up of the region, which is interlinked with different historical processes, featuring an environment of strong geophysical, tectonic and seismic activity, not to mention a singularly mountainous terrain and a strong anthropogenic impact that led to deforestation and soil erosion. We go on to highlight the intensity of the contacts that developed between the Ionian islands and the continent, especially between Corcyra and Epirus, from the Archaic Period to the Hellenistic Period; we might also mention the links between Leucas and Acarnania and even the presence of islanders at Dodona. The ambitions of the Pan-Hellenic powers in the region also played a fundamental role, especially those of Sparta, Athens and Macedonia, and we can also mention the relations that the Ionian islands maintained with the closest Greek federal states such as Acarnania, Aetolia and Achaëa. As we have seen, the book highlights the special importance of the naval routes that ran to and from the west, the ports and the canals of the Ionian islands and, consequently, we can observe the presence of foreigners on the archipelago that originated from both sides of the Mediterranean, ranging

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from Massalia to Miletus. Finally, our study also encompasses aspects concerning the organisation of the different territories and states, including references to pioneering research and modern evocations.

This book is also the result of the research project "Between the Adriatic Sea and Continental Greece: The Ionic islands, State Structures, Colonization and Ethnogenesis" PID2019-108822GB-I00, financed by the Spanish Ministry for Science and Innovation. This project extended others that have been carried out within a research group that has produced numerous publications, headed by lecturers at the Autonomous University of Madrid, a group that has devoted itself to the study of Ancient Greece for decades.

The results of the project we are referring to here have once again been included in the prestigious *Diabaseis* Collection, and we would like to express our gratitude to Claudia Antonetti, the Director of the Collection, for the opportunity she has afforded us in this respect. Our thanks also go to Stefania de Vido, the Secretary of the Collection, as well as the staff at the ETS publishing company for their dedication.

We would also like to thank all those authors who, whilst not being members of our research team, have been willing to collaborate on this book, which has been significantly enriched by their important and high-quality contributions.

In addition, we would like to thank the many colleagues who have served as anonymous referees, whose efforts and precise observations have significantly enhanced the quality of our work. We would also like to thank to María Luisa García-Martín and Antonio Carrasco Sabroso, from the Autonomous University of Madrid, and to Eloisa Paganoni and Ivan Matijašić from Ca' Foscari University of Venice for their considerable task relating to the publication and coordination of this volume.

Unfortunately, when this book was in the process of being published, one of the members of our research team, Soledad Milán, died suddenly from an unexpected illness. A specialist in GIS, she was one of the few Spanish academics, if not the only one, devoted to the study of the Aegean Bronze Age. This book includes her last study, which she hardly had time to complete. Never again shall we walk alongside her through the sacred land of Greece, nor feel the warmth of her spirit and friendship. We dedicate this book to her.

Madrid, May 2024

Adolfo J. Domínguez

José Pascual



María Soledad Milán Quiñones de León

IN MEMORIAM

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OBSERVING THE IONIAN ISLANDS FROM THE MAINLAND (*EPEIROS*)

1. Corecra and the Mainland: The most ancient accounts

The Epirus/mainland (Ἡπειρος) possesses a long coastal territory, which, according to authors such as Pseudo-Scylax, could be covered in a day and a half by ship (not including Molossia, an inland territory) (Ps. Scyl. § 28-31)¹. According to ancient calculations, this would be equivalent to between 186 km and 218 km (approximately)². The same author states that opposite this coast lay the Island of Corecra, observing both Chaonia and, above all, Thesprotia (Ps. Scyl. § 29)³. From the very earliest times after it was founded in around the last third of the eighth century BC, Corecra would probably have controlled the coastal territories on the mainland (Ἡπειρος) that stood opposite. However, the archaeological evidence does not begin to be consistent until the sixth century BC, when certain indications emerge around the mouth of the Thyamis River at sites such as Lygia (Torone), Pyrgos Ragiou and Mastilitsa⁴ and, somewhat further north, towards Bouthrotos, on Lake Vivari⁵. This entire region would have formed part of the *peraea* of Corecra⁶, and the island's impact on the Greek-speaking Epirote populations would appear to have been quite intense⁷. There is little doubt that one of the key sites was Bouthrotos/

¹ Peretti 1979, 271.

² Hdt. 4, 86: in summer, 70,000 fathoms (ὀργυαί) by day and 60,000 by night: 124 km and 106 km, respectively. Other estimations produce 145.25 km by day and a total of 269.75 km for a whole day, which would be 124.5 km for the night, although an average might be around 150 km for a day-time journey by sea of 12 hours. Calculations in Jennings 1988, 147. See also the calculations in Peretti 1979, 34-35.

³ Ἐπιβάλλει δὲ Κόρκυρα καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν Θεσπρωτίαν πλεῖον ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν Χαονίαν.

⁴ Christophilopoulou 2004, 191-196.

⁵ Hodges 2012, 53-78; Melfi 2012, 23-30; Hernandez 2017, 205-271.

⁶ Lepore 1962, 134-136; Carusi 2011, 99-100; Intrieri 2018a, 157-159; Psoma 2022, 37-39, 82-83; Gehrke, Sapirstein 2024, 525-527.

⁷ Domínguez 2020, 59-91.

Butrint (Fig. 1) whose appearance in Antiquity would have been very different from today's due to major sedimentation and silting processes that have affected the entire area⁸. In its acropolis, cult-type remains have been discovered that date back to at least the sixth century BC (*bothros* and *eschara*)⁹, although the first significant Greek materials found in the region date from the second half of the seventh century BC¹⁰. The relief of a lion, which was re-used in a series of Late Roman/Mediaeval walls, would perhaps have originated from a Doric temple (supposedly dedicated to Athena) dating from the end of the sixth century and placed in the eastern terrace of the acropolis¹¹. Recent surveys at the site where the temple was supposed to have been located have not been able to confirm or deny its existence, although there is no doubt about the existence of a place of worship at the acropolis¹². The function of Butrint during the Archaic period may have been that of an *emporion* with its sanctuary, established by Corcyra¹³.

Preliminary analyses on the existing wall remains at the acropolis had given rise to a debate as to whether they were an archaic construction that served as a boundary wall for the *temenos* and for terracing the upper part of the hill¹⁴ or whether they were a clearly defensive construction dating back to the first quarter of the fifth century BC¹⁵. Recent excavations in some sections of the backfill of these walls have shown a stable and permanent occupation of the acropolis of Butrint between the end of the 7th and the middle of the fifth century BC¹⁶. Perhaps the earliest phases of the wall may correspond to this late seventh-early sixth century period, but further archaeological work will be necessary to confirm this¹⁷.

Some 7.5 kilometres to the north of Butrint, a wall built in the fifth century would have closed off access by land to the Peninsula of Ksamil, thus guaranteeing the security of the Corinthian territory¹⁸; this date

⁸ Giorgi 2021, 483; Giorgi and Muka 2023, 243-246.

⁹ Greenslade *et alii* 2013, 51; Hernandez 2017, 207; Giorgi 2021, 490.

¹⁰ Aleotti 2022, 156, with previous bibliography and references to some scarce pottery from the late 8th century BC.

¹¹ Hernandez 2017, 230-241.

¹² Giorgi 2021, 492-493; Carbotti 2021, 34-41.

¹³ Hernandez 2017, 210-214; Giorgi 2021, 489-490, 495-497.

¹⁴ Greenslade *et alii* 2013, 47-52.

¹⁵ Hernandez 2017, 245-250.

¹⁶ Carbotti 2021, 41-42; Aleotti *et alii* 2022, 163-178.

¹⁷ Castignani 2022, 163-178; Giorgi and Muka 2023, 246-248.

¹⁸ Hernandez 2017, 251-256; Giorgi 2021, 478.

would coincide with two enclosures at Lygia and with the Tower of Pyrgos Ragiou, situated in an area at the mouth of the Thyamis¹⁹. Nevertheless, the archaeological data available would suggest that Butrint was abandoned in around 475 (or shortly after) to 350 BC, after which it came to form part of Chaonia²⁰.

Corcyra may have used these territories in order to complement its timber production, which would have been necessary for it to become one of the most ancient naval powers in Greece (Thuc. 4, 13, 4; 14, 2)²¹. Neither can we rule out the idea that the mainland would have also served as a source for slaves of different kinds (δοῦλοι, οἰκηταί), especially in the case of a city such as Corcyra that made considerable use of them²², even though we have no direct evidence of this fact. More likely is a relationship with the mainland that was expressed by means of mythological accounts, a relationship that was even exemplified by the western façade of the Temple of Artemis²³.

Although it is not explicitly stated whether, in their embassy to the Nekyomanteion of Acheron, located in Thesprotia (Hdt. 5, 92η), the Corinthians had to pass through Corcyra, this is not unlikely, although it cannot be confirmed due to the lack of any specific references. It is not until 471 BC that written sources provide indications of a more direct relationship between the island and the mainland. This consists of the episode involving Themistocles, when, fleeing Argos after the agreement between the Athenians and Spartans to accuse him of medism (Thuc. 1, 135), he reached Corcyra, which some years previously had considered him to be its benefactor (εὐεργέτης) (Thuc. 1, 136, 1), according to Plutarch, for having mediated in a dispute between Corcyra and the Corinthians about Leucas and for having favoured the island's interests (Plut. *Them.* 24, 1). The scholiast on the work of Thucydides (*ad loc.*) states, however, that it was because Themistocles had defended the Corcyraeans against the punishment that the Greeks wanted to impose on them for not having taken part in the struggle against the Persians. Those authors that relate

¹⁹ Dakaris 1972, 104-108; Riginos 2006, 131.

²⁰ According to Hernandez 2017, 220-221 “there was no settlement at Bouthrotos when the Korkyraian *oligoi* occupied the forts of the *peraea* in 427 B.C. Owing to its fortifications the site may have served as temporary fortress at the time”. More recent excavations seem to confirm this impression: Giorgi 2021, 494. We shall address the Corcyrean *staseis* later on.

²¹ Psoma 2022, 80-81.

²² Intrieri 2016, 247-250, with the main source references.

²³ Antonetti 2001, 13-14; Id. 2006, 60-62.

Themistocles' passage through Corcyra, before heading for Molossia, do not explain the subsequent events in the same manner: Plutarch (*Them.* 24, 2) only states that from the island he fled towards Epirus (ἐξεῖθεν δ' εἰς Ἡπειρον ἔφυγε); Nepos, for his part, claims that the most important citizens (*principes*) of Corcyra feared that, if they should give refuge to the fugitive, Athens and Sparta would attack them. Themistocles, realising this (*animaduertisset*), sought refuge (*confugit*) with Admetus, the Molossian king (Nep. *Them.* 8, 3). It is Thucydides, however, our most ancient source, who offers us more precise details. According to this author, the Corcyraeans (with no further explanation) convey their fear of arousing the enmity of the Spartans and Athenians, but they are the ones who take responsibility for moving him to the mainland located opposite the island (διακομίζεται ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐς τὴν ἡπειρον τὴν καταντικρὺ, Thuc. 1, 136, 1). The scholiast specifies that the land located opposite (καταντικρὺ) is Thesprotia (*Schol. ad Thuc.* 1, 136, 1b, p. 468 Kleinlogel-Alpers).

This detail is interesting because, although Themistocles ends up in Molossia, where he is given refuge and protection by King Admetus, it seems to indicate that the Corcyraeans facilitate his journey and leave him on a piece of the mainland that is under their control. It also leads us to believe that in this territory, either controlled by Corcyra or consisting of an independent Thesprotia, Themistocles expected to avoid capture. Nevertheless, it was due to the fact that his persecutors followed him to the mainland that he was finally forced (ἀναγκάζεται) to turn to King Admetus. Admetus was not only not a friend (οὐ φίλον) (Thuc. 1, 136, 2), but wanted to wreak revenge on the Athenian politician for previous unclarified grievances that had been inflicted (Plut. *Them.* 24, 2)²⁴. In spite of this, Nepos states that Themistocles and the king were tied by bonds of hospitality (*cum quo ei hospitium erat*: Nep. *Them.* 8, 3), which is not contradictory given that ξενία entailed reciprocal compensation, which, if unfulfilled, could lead to grievances and subsequent conflict.

There is no evidence to suggest that it was his Corcyraean friends who guided Themistocles through Epirote territory and advised him to place himself under the protection of the Molossian king. King Admetus does not appear to have feared reprisals from the Athenians and Spartans (Thuc. 1, 137, 1; Plut. *Them.* 24, 5; Nep. *Them.* 8, 5; Aristodemus *FGrHist* 104 F 1, 10), possibly because, from his perspective in a kingdom located

²⁴ According to the *Schol. ad Thuc.* 1, 136, 2a, p. 468 Kleinlogel-Alpers, Admetus would have requested an alliance with Athens and Themistocles would have advised the city not to help him; hence they were not friends. See Piccirilli 1973, 348-351.

inland, such reprisals would have appeared to be simple threats with little likelihood of being fulfilled, something that the Corcyraeans would have been less sure about, especially, as we have seen, since they had been on the verge of being punished, if not for Themistocles' intervention. Only in Diodorus' account (11, 56, 2) does Admetus appear to be sensitive to Spartan threats, consisting of the idea that they would wage war against him with the support of all the Greeks (πολεμήσειν [...] μετὰ πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων), whereby the king hands over a large amount of gold to Themistocles for him to leave Molossia, which he does with the help of two young Lyncestian traders. In the accounts of other authors, however, it is Admetus himself who takes responsibility for taking Themistocles to Pydna under his protection (Thuc. 1, 137, 1; Nep. *Them.* 8, 5).

This episode, which we have no reason to contest, at least in terms of its general telling, would perhaps suggest that the relationship between Corcyra and the most coastal (and, therefore, most accessible) parts of Epirus was quite intense at the time, and that Corcyraean influence over the mainland may have gone beyond the mere control of a series of points along the coast²⁵.

Finally, to conclude this section, we do not know whether it was due to Corcyraean influence or pressure that the coastal Epirote peoples, such as the Chaonians and the Thesprotians, ended up losing or failing to establish monarchic regimes, unlike the Molossians, who were possibly less exposed to the direct influence of Corcyra. Whatever the case, some years later, the relationship between Corcyra and the mainland appears to have deteriorated, whilst Corinth continued to maintain good relations with Epirus.

2. Epirus, Corcyra and the Ionian Islands During the Last Part of the Fifth Century BC

During the incidents that took place in the years 435-433 BC, which led to clashes between Corinth and Corcyra and would serve as one of the causes that triggered the Peloponnesian War ²⁶, we can find some references to the mainland territories and the part they played in the events

²⁵ Psoma 2022, 138 has suggested that "it is very plausible that Corcyrean connections with Epirus saved Themistocles".

²⁶ See Fantasia 2011, 27-70 about the relationship in Thucydides' work between αἰτίαι and πρόφασις.

that unfolded. Given that the question of the relations that existed between Athens, Corinth and Corcyra has given rise to an ample bibliography and this is not really the matter that interests us here²⁷, I shall not mention the multiple debates that surround this issue, unless it is really necessary. Instead, I shall focus on the details that illustrate the relations between the Epirote region and the exterior during this period.

In one of the first actions carried out by Corinth in support of Epidamnus, we learn that the Corinthian army crossed Epirus from Ambracia up to Apollonia by land (Thuc. 1, 26, 2), which undoubtedly entailed crossing Molossian and Chaonian territory, due to the fact that the Corcyraeans controlled both sea shorelines, at least along certain stretches, a control that increased, as we shall see below, to the point where they had the capacity to influence other parts of Thesprotian territory. This demonstrates that both Corinth, as well as its colonies of Ambracia and Leucas, which took part in the expedition (Thuc. 1, 26, 1), must have maintained good relations with these Epirote peoples, this being the only way in which they could have crossed their territories. For the same reason, we can understand that they considered Corcyra to be an enemy. In fact, when Corcyra sent a fleet of 40 ships to reinstall the Epidamnian exiles and expel the Corinthians and their allies, they received the support of Illyrian troops (Thuc. 1, 26, 4), possibly because the Epirotes had also sided against Corcyra.

In the counter-offensive organised by the Corinthians, the city located on the Isthmus, received eight ships from Megara and four from the Paleians of Cephallenia, as well as five ships from Epidaurus, one from Hermione, two from Troezen, ten from Leucas and eight from Ambracia. The Thebans contributed money, together with the Phliasians and Eleians, who also handed over ships to Corinth that were unmanned. The Corinthians put together a force of thirty ships and three thousand hoplites (Thuc. 1, 27, 2). This is one of the first occasions on which we see the Island of Cephallenia intervening, with other Corinthian allies, in the affairs of Corcyra. Following the first Corcyraean victory over the Corinthians and their allies at Leucimme (Thuc. 1, 29, 5), Corcyra carried out punitive expeditions against Leucas, Cyllene (Thuc. 1, 30, 1-2) and possibly against Paleis²⁸, although by the following summer (434 BC) the Corinthians had established themselves at Actium and Chimerium, in Thesprotia, in order to avoid new Corcyraean attacks on Leucas and their allies (Thuc. 1, 30, 3). Epirus was, thus, fully drawn into the conflict, and to the most probable

²⁷ Crane 1992, 1-27; Psoma 2022, 139-162.

²⁸ A suggestion made by Stickler 2010, 152, in spite of Thucydides' silence.

alliance between Corinth and the Molossians and Chaonians (or, at least non-belligerence) we can now add the occupation of the Chimerium area.

Although different possible locations have been suggested for Chimerium, which would be situated between the mouths of the River Acheron in the south and the Thyamis to the north (Thuc. 1, 46, 4-5), there is no absolute certainty regarding the matter²⁹, which prevents us from knowing whether we are dealing with a part of the coast formerly controlled by Corcyra but taken over by the Corinthians, or whether the Corinthians had chosen this stretch of coast that was located outside direct Corcyraean control. Whatever the case may be, there are no accounts of any difficulties that Corinthians may have had to establish their camp there, nor any reports that the Corcyraeans considered them to have occupied part of their territory. The Corcyraeans had established their camp opposite the Corinthians (ἀντεστρατοπεδεύοντο), which is to say in the area around Cape Leucimme, which is the southernmost end of the island (Thuc. 1, 30, 4). It is true, however, that in view of the advance of the Corinthian fleet, which would be defeated at Leucimme, the Corcyraeans had sent a herald to Actium, where the Sanctuary of Apollo was located, warning them not to sail any further on (Thuc. 1, 29, 3), which has been taken by some authors to mean that this was the boundary of the Corcyraean area of influence³⁰.

Once the defensive alliance (ἐπιμαχία) had been formalised between Corcyra and Athens (Thuc. 1, 44, 1), the Corinthians prepared a new attack against their former colony with one hundred and fifty of their own ships and those of their allies (Megarians, Leucadians, Ambraciots, Anactorians) (Thuc. 1, 46, 1) (433 BC). Chimerium was once again the base they used. Corinth enjoyed the support (παραβεβοηθηκότες) of the majority of the barbarians from the mainland, given that these “mainlanders” had always been their friends (οἱ γὰρ ταύτη ἡπειρώται αἰεὶ ποτε αὐτοῖς φίλοι εἰσίν) (Thuc. 1, 47, 3); Hammond suggests that it may have been Ambracia that had prepared their arrival in advance³¹. During the Battle of the Sybota Islands, the Epirote army (στρατὸς τῶν βαρβάρων) moved to the desert

²⁹ Hammond 1945, 28-29; Wilson 1987, 37-39, presents the state of the question and prior proposals. In recent times, Chimerium tends to be associated with Cape Varlam; cf. Psoma 2022, 147.

³⁰ Psoma 2022, 146; Wilson 1987, 27 suggests that the Corcyraeans “may even have entertained some concept of Corcyrean territorial waters”. However, in around 483/2, Themistocles’ arbitration in the Leucas episode would suggest that Corcyra also wanted to demonstrate its interest in the waters that surrounded this island.

³¹ Hammond 1945, 32.

harbour of the same name, from where they lent support to the Corinthians (Thuc. 1, 50, 3). There is little doubt that Thucydides is referring to the inhabitants of Epirus here, whose old friendship with Corinth he highlights, something that the reader of Thucydides would have already been able to discern based on the information brought together here.

The Corcyraeans prepared their one hundred and ten ships and sailed them to one of the Sybota islands, where the ten ships from Athens were located. They had been sent to observe and, if necessary, intervene in aid of Corcyra (Thuc. 1, 45, 1-2; 47, 1); they would later be joined by another twenty ships (Thuc. 1, 50, 5; 51, 4)³². For their part, the infantry was located at Leucimne, having been joined by 1,000 hoplites from Zacynthus (Thuc. 1, 47, 3), possibly as allies of Athens (Thuc. 2, 9, 4) rather than Corcyra, although their presence might also be explained by the fact that they feared a possible assault on the part of Corinth³³. It is the references we find after the Battle of Sybota that enable us to see how far Corcyraean territory extended or, at least, indicate the limits of Corcyra's effective control. First of all, as we have seen, the desert-like nature of the harbour at Sybota would suggest that Corcyra had no troops deployed there; second, when the Athenians threaten the Corinthians with action should they sail against Corcyra or any other place (χωρίων) belonging to the latter (Thuc. 1, 53, 4), we are clearly given to understand that Corcyraean territory on the mainland must have begun to the north of that point³⁴.

These early actions, thus, provide us with a few details of great interest: in addition to the presence of an important Zacynthian contingent of 1,000 hoplites, allies of Athens and, possibly, of Corcyra, it shows how the Epirotes, systematically defined by Thucydides as “barbarians” without providing any additional identification, support Corinth from inland, since they did not see either Corinth or its colony, Ambracia, as enemies, the latter being a neighbour of the Epirotes. They did, however, see Corcyra as an enemy, since it controlled an area that is not very well defined in Thucydides, but must have been situated along the mainland coast opposite the island, most probably to the north of the line that stretched from Cape Leucimne in Corcyra to the Sybota Islands and the coastal site of the

³² Epigraphic confirmation of the two expeditions in IG I³ 364; Meiggs, Lewis 1988, nr. 61; Osborne, Rhodes 2017, no 148.

³³ Wilson 1987, 35.

³⁴ Some authors associate these χωρία with the τείχη of Thuc. 3, 85, 2 and, therefore, consider them to be fortified centres. We do not see any necessary association here and, therefore, the places that the Athenians had to protect were those that belonged to Corcyra on the mainland, without them needing to be fortified centres.

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same name on the mainland; that is to say, a good part of Cestrine³⁵, whose southern border was marked at that time by the River Thyamis (Thuc. 1, 46, 4), but possibly the most northern part of Thesprotia as well.

Following the Corcyraean-Athenian victory over the Corinthians at Sybota (Thuc. 1, 48-54), we have no further news about what was happening in this region until the summer of 430 BC. The first piece of information refers to the grand expedition of one hundred ships that the Spartans, under the command of the *navarchus* Cnemus, sent to Zacynthus, which included, among others, a force of one thousand Lacedaemonian hoplites. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that they disembarked on the island and raised it to the ground, they did not manage to force the Zacynthians to surrender, in which respect they left the island (Thuc. 2, 66, 1-2)³⁶. The following summer, it would be the Ambraciots and the Chaonians who would persuade the *navarchus*, Cnemus, to attack Acarnania in order to separate it from the Athenian alliance, which would also enable them to get hold of Zacynthus and Cephallenia (Thuc. 2, 80, 1). At this time, Cephallenia was an ally of Athens, in spite of the fact that, some years previously, the city of Paleis, at least, had been an ally of Corinth. Both Thucydides (2, 30, 2) and Diodorus (12, 43, 5), although making reference to different moments and circumstances, mention that the Athenian fleet disembarked on the island and, without any need for fighting (ἄνευ μάχης, Thuc. 2, 30, 2), guaranteed the alliance of its four cities. Whatever the case may be, attracting and securing the allegiance of Zacynthus and Cephallenia on the Athenian side through the dispatch of embassies was amongst Athens' goals on the eve of war (Thuc. 2, 7, 3)³⁷; for their part, the Corinthians attacked the city of Crane in Cephallenia in the winter of 431/430 BC in an attempt to prevent it from forming an alliance with Athens, but without success (Thuc. 2, 33, 3). It is also true that, according to Diodorus (11, 84, 7), since the time of Tolmides' periplus in 456/5 BC, Athens had guaranteed control over the two islands, with the author adding the detail that Zacynthus belonged to Cephallenia at that time. It is possible that this alliance was based on (or ended up being justified as) ties of kinship with Athens, something

³⁵ Pascual 2020, 635-645.

³⁶ At the beginning of the war, as beforehand, Zacynthus featured as an ally of Athens, as well as Corcyra (Thuc. 2, 9, 4); Diod. Sic. 12, 42, 5, however, omits Zacynthus.

³⁷ Regarding the kind of dominion that Athens wished to exercise over them, Intrieri 2002, 77, has highlighted the speech made by Euphemus at Camarina (Thuc. 6, 85), which emphasised that Athens would respect the allies' autonomy in exchange for the fulfilment of its demands, whether it be ships or money, a respect that would even apply to island territories that would be easy to conquer.

that was clearer in the case of Cephallenia, but also perhaps in the case of Zacynthus³⁸.

Returning to Cnemus' expedition, this not only included troops from Ambracia, Anactorium and Leucas, but also Epirote troops, which Thucydides once again defines as being barbarians: 1,000 Chaonians; an indeterminate number of Thesprotians, Molossians and Paravaeans; one thousand Orestians; and one thousand Macedonians, who arrived late (Thuc. 2, 80, 5-7). It was the drive and lack of foresight of the Epirotes that led them to fall into an ambush prepared by the Acarnanians of Stratos, which caused the Chaonians to suffer heavy losses, the rest of the Epirotes to flee (Thuc. 2, 81, 4-6) and the whole enterprise to founder (Thuc. 2, 82).

In spite of their consideration as barbarians, which makes sense within the context of Thucydides' exclusivist outlook³⁹, what is surprising is that the Chaonians and Ambraciots were the ones who persuaded (πείθουσι) the Spartans to carry out this campaign and who also told them (λέγοντες) that, should the expedition be successful, they would dominate Acarnania and the two large islands of the Ionian Sea. The previous year, both Chaonia and Ambracia had collaborated in the Ambraciots' war against Amphilochean Argos (Thuc. 2, 68, 9)⁴⁰.

The Chaonians' interest can be explained by the fact that, should the expedition have been successful, it would have avoided or alleviated Corcyraean pressure on Epirus, given that, as they had reasoned, the loss of those allies would have made it difficult for the Athenians to gain access to those waters if the expedition had been successful, as would the taking of Naupactus (Thuc. 2, 80, 2)⁴¹. The Chaonians' insistence would have to do with their interest in controlling Cestrine, which must have been either entirely or partially in Corcyraean hands. In this respect, we do not know whether Corcyraean territory on the mainland may also have occupied part of Chaonia. Ambracia, whose territory did not border Chaonia, supported the initiative, partly because of its alliance with Corinth, partly because it had already participated in military campaigns against Corcyra in previous years and due to its relationship with the Molossians, who were also allies with the Chaonians, as witnessed by the disastrous campaign waged against the Acarnanians of Stratos. In view of all the above, we cannot fail to observe that the Chaonians' interest in gaining new territories and

³⁸ Fragoulaki 2013, 251-261.

³⁹ Domínguez 2022, 1023-1054.

⁴⁰ Fantasia 2017, 47-49.

⁴¹ Carusi 2011, 105.

their capacity to speak on apparently equal terms with Ambracia and with the Spartan general are indications that state-like structures must have existed in Chaonia, as suggested by other authors⁴², in spite of their characterisation as barbarians by Thucydides.

Meanwhile, and although we do not have much detail regarding the specific circumstances, not long after the failure of Cnemus' expedition, the young Molossian king, Tharyps, who was still a boy at the time, as pointed out by Thucydides (2, 80, 6: ἔτι παιδὸς ὄντος), was forced to travel to Athens, most probably as a hostage, even though he would end up receiving citizenship and becoming an ally of the city-state, together with his kingdom⁴³. This would have deactivated the unity of the three main Epirote peoples, at least for the moment, leaving the Chaonians more isolated with regard to their pretensions, forcing them to take other initiatives vis-à-vis their rivals, the Corcyraeans, as we shall see below⁴⁴. Whatever the case may be, three years later in 426 BC, in the operations that the Spartans and Ambraciots carried out against Amphilochian Argos, which turned out to be a serious defeat, the Epirote allies no longer appeared on the Peloponnesian side, at least officially, although the Ambraciots did use a large number of mercenaries (ὁ μισθόφορος ὄχλος), who would have been largely Epirotes, although Thucydides does not specify as much (Thuc. 3, 108-114).

Returning to the campaign of 429, and although the Chaonian and Ambraciot initiative sought to snatch control over Zacynthus and Cephallenia from Athens, we do not know whether the two islands played some role at the time. In fact, both islands appear to have continued under Athenian control, but do not seem to have played an important role when it came to preventing Peloponnesian naval movements between Greece and Magna Graecia and Sicily during the expedition to Sicily in the second phase of the war. This may have been because the Athenians did not have sufficient forces or ships located there⁴⁵. Nevertheless, both islands, together with Corcyra, would take part in the Athenian war effort in Sicily (Thuc. 7, 57, 7).

In effect, following the *navarchus* Cnemus' failed campaign against Stratos, which Epirote troops took part in, we do not find any news

⁴² Pascual 2018, 57.

⁴³ Domínguez 2018, 1-42.

⁴⁴ The Chaonians' weakened position following the campaign of 429 may have also entailed territorial losses at the hands of the Thesprotians, which would have had its corresponding reflection in myth. See, for instance, Moscati Castelnovo 1986, 411-424.

⁴⁵ Wilson 1987, 109.

relating to this region until a couple of years later, in the spring of 427 BC, when the Corinthians decided to liberate the Corcyraean prisoners that had taken part in the Battle of Sybota (Thuc. 1, 55, 1), these being amongst the “principals” (πρωτοί) of the city. These leaders had been persuaded to ensure that Corcyra abandoned its alliance with Athens and passed over to the Corinthian side (Thuc. 3, 70, 1). Corinth’s direct hand in this matter would appear to be clear, given that Corinthian *proxenoi* in Corcyra were involved in the liberation and in providing the ransom (Thuc. 3, 70, 1) and, possibly, in monitoring and supporting the ex-prisoners in order to ensure that they carried out their mission, although perhaps not that openly⁴⁶. Without going into all the intricacies of this *stasis*, which has been the subject of numerous analyses⁴⁷, I shall focus on those details that relate to the relationship between Corcyra and the mainland territories that were dependent on the island and that appear to have played an important role in the events that unfolded. Politically-speaking, the former Corcyraean prisoners were pro-oligarchic, in which respect, one of their first measures was to attempt to condemn Peithias, who was labelled with the peculiar title of “volunteer proxenus” (ἐθελοπρόξενός) of Athens⁴⁸, as well as having been the figure at the head of the *demos* (τοῦ δήμου προειστήκει) (Thuc. 3, 70, 3) and having formed part of the Corcyraean βουλή at the time (Thuc. 3, 70, 6).

The events unfolded rapidly. Peithias was killed, clashes began to take place and the two sides began to line up against each other: on the one side, the people and, on the other, the rebels, who had seized the reins of power (Thuc. 3, 72, 2). Whilst the people sought the support of the slaves, whom they liberated, the other faction enlisted the support of eight hundred mercenaries from the mainland (ἐκ τῆς ἡπείρου) (Thuc. 3, 73, 1). Although Thucydides does not give any further details, these mercenaries were probably Epirotes, given that, if they had been Illyrians for example, the author would have indicated as much as he did when he recounted the civil conflict in Epidamnus, where he clearly identified the contingents who supported one of the warring groups (Thuc. 1, 26, 4). Given that the actions of the pro-Corinthian faction appear to have been carefully planned during the period in which the prisoners were held captive in Corinth, it

⁴⁶ Gerolymatos 2020, 51-56; Psoma 2022, 529-533.

⁴⁷ Gehrke 1985, 91-93; Wilson 1987, 65-118; Intrieri 2002, 67-172.

⁴⁸ Gerolymatos 2020, 51-56; Intrieri 2002, 83-84. The *proxenus* status of Peithias had probably not been ratified by Athens when he was killed. In this respect, he would not have enjoyed the protection that an official *proxenus* would receive, and Athens would not have been able to intervene officially when he was killed. See Psoma 2022, 529-533.

would seem clear that this support (which was probably not improvised) had been plotted long before and was made possible by Corinth's friendship with the Epirote peoples. All of this would have been facilitated by the fact that the Corinthians had liberated the prisoners some time before the *stasis* began, and that plans had been put into place well in advance⁴⁹. Similarly, these aristocrats, unlike the people, had a much greater chance, due to their economic activities, of being in contact with the indigenous groups on the mainland⁵⁰.

In view of the failure of the attempted coup, the majority of these mercenaries were secretly returned (λαθόντες) to the mainland (Thuc. 3, 74, 3). It is interesting to consider the hypothesis that Lepore proposed in his day in the sense that these contingents could have belonged to the indigenous clients of the Corcyraean nobles⁵¹, even though they would perhaps not have been labelled mercenaries (ἐπίκουροι) in this case. There is no reason to believe that the Corcyraean nobles pursued agricultural activities that were different to those they carried out on their own island, where both production and services were in the hands of slaves (δοῦλοι, οἰκέται), whose support the democrats enlisted with the promise of freedom (Thuc. 3, 73).

It is at this point that Thucydides informs us precisely about the existence of Corcyraean fortifications on the mainland (τείχη τε λαβόντες, ἃ ἦν ἐν τῇ ἡπείρῳ), which were then used by the oligarchs who had escaped from Corcyra and taken over control of the city's territory located opposite the island (ἐκράτουν τῆς πέραν οἰκείας γῆς). It was from here that they carried out pillaging raids on the island (Thuc. 3, 85, 2). Such actions caused considerable damage and even hunger amongst those who lived in the city (καὶ πολλὰ ἐβλαπτον, καὶ λιμὸς ἰσχυρὸς ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ πόλει) (Thuc. 3, 85, 2). Thucydides does not give us any further details, but the scope of Corcyra's territorial control over the mainland must have been more extensive than the area indicated by the sites mentioned above (Butrint, Lygia, Matsilita and Pyrgos Ragiou), which were the points that facilitated Corcyraean dominion of the neighbouring territories. This dominion must have served as an important source of agricultural resources if, as Thucydides relates, its control by the oligarchs caused hunger in the city. The situation would have also been favoured by the sense of insecurity that the oligarchs'

⁴⁹ Wilson 1987, 91-92.

⁵⁰ Fantasia 2008, 197.

⁵¹ Lepore 1962, 134.

raids created amongst the Corcyraean peasants⁵², not to mention the piracy practised against those who transported supplies to the island⁵³. The oligarchs finally landed back on the island with a force of 600 men, once they had enlisted the necessary ships and mercenaries (Thuc. 3, 85, 3-4), although on this occasion Thucydides does not tell us where the men came from or how the ships were obtained. In this respect, the oligarchs would most probably have used their usual contacts on the mainland⁵⁴. There is little doubt that the fact that the oligarchs were able to occupy the mainland territory without the local inhabitants taking advantage of the situation to free themselves from Corcyraean dominion, and the fact that the locals most probably even supplied the mercenary troops the oligarchs required, would have been due to Corinth's intervention. In this sense, Corinth would have used its alliances with the Epirote peoples, especially the Chaonians and possibly also the Thesprotians, to support the oligarchs in their rebellion against the city.

Once on the island and having set up a base at Mount Istone⁵⁵ and built a fortification (Thuc. 3, 85, 3), the oligarchs controlled a good part of Corcyra's land and carried out pillaging raids against the city's population, causing starvation. In this respect, Athens decided to support the city, in view of the possibility that the Spartans might help the oligarchs (Thuc. 4, 2, 3). The Athenian strategy was successful and the oligarchs were surrounded in the mountains, after which they negotiated with the Athenians to hand over the mercenaries and their weapons and to surrender (Thuc. 4, 46, 1-2). Thucydides relates what happened then: the Athenians kept the oligarchs in custody on the Island of Ptichia in order to take them to Athens, but the *demos*, fearing that they would escape without punishment, plotted a conspiracy to ensure that the oligarchs tried to escape (Thuc. 4, 46, 3-5); once the oligarchs were discovered, and in view of what had been agreed with the Athenians to the effect that if any of them tried to flee they would be handed over to the Corcyraean people, they were effectively handed over (Thuc. 4, 47, 1-2). Locked up in a large building, they were made to come out in groups of twenty, flanked by hoplites, who beat them, whilst

⁵² Carusi 2011, 104.

⁵³ Intrieri 2002, 114.

⁵⁴ Fantasia 2008, 197.

⁵⁵ With regard to the identification of Mount Istone, it has traditionally been linked with Mount Pantokrator, located in the north of the island (Intrieri 2002, 115), although the idea has gradually become more accepted that the site may have been Mount Agioi Deka, located in the central part of the island and to the west of the city (Psoma 2022, 34, 208), where the oligarchs' actions against the city's lands would have been much more effective; see also Gehrke, Sapirstein 2024, 523-524.

at the same time “to hasten the pace of those that went slowest on, others were sent to follow them with whips”⁵⁶. When those who were inside the building refused to come out, the Corcyraeans removed the roof and threw tiles and arrows at them, and those who didn’t die took their own lives as best they could. With this description, Thucydides concludes his account of the Corcyraean *stasis* in the year 425 (Thuc. 4, 48, 1-5). The end of the *stasis* also ended Corcyra’s naval power, but the island’s importance as a passage point on the route towards the West continued to be valid for the Athenians⁵⁷.

3. Coreyra and Dodona: The Κερκυραία μάστιξ

Amongst the important links that Corcyra maintained with the Sanctuary of Dodona, we might highlight the proverbial phrase “the copper vessel in Dodona” (τὸ ἐν Δωδώνῃ χαλκίον) due to its considerable popularity in literary tradition, which was explained by Strabo (7, frags., 3) in the following manner: “In the sanctuary was a copper vessel with a statue of a man situated above it and holding a copper scourge, dedicated by the Corcyraeans; the scourge was three-fold and wrought in chain fashion, with bones strung from it” (Loeb, modified)⁵⁸. After describing how long the sound of the whip lasted when it struck the vessel (which is what would give rise to the proverb), Strabo ends up by telling us that this was also how the proverbial phrase “the whip of the Corcyraeans” (ἡ Κερκυραίων μάστιξ) originated. Ancient references (rather more to the vessel of Dodona than to the Corcyraean whip) are quite abundant and have also given rise to an extensive literature that has sought to explain the meaning of the offering, its shape and, on occasion, its possible chronology. This is not a point that ancient tradition provides a unanimous opinion on, as witnessed by the different studies devoted to this matter⁵⁹. Not all authors have equated the vessel with the Corcyraean whip, as Strabo does,

⁵⁶ Μαστιγοφόροι τε παριόντες ἐπετάχυνον τῆς ὁδοῦ τοὺς σχολαίτερον προΐοντας; (Thuc. 4, 47, 3).

⁵⁷ Psoma 2022, 211.

⁵⁸ Although many translators have interpreted Strabo’s text to mean that the vessel was located in the temple, what the author actually says is ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, which could also be translated to signify the wider meaning of sanctuary.

⁵⁹ Cook 1902, 5-28; Kalligas 1976, 61-68; Sasel Kos 2015, 20-22; Bosman 2016, 184-192; Katsadima 2017, 495-498; Intrieri 2018b, 135-169; Piccinini 2022, 45-56; Angelucci 2022, 175-182.

and there are even authors who have mentioned it without associating it with Dodona (Zen. 4, 49; Hsch. *s.v.* Κερκυραία μάστιξ). Descriptions of the Dodona vessel, although they may differ, nevertheless all agree that it consisted of a human figure (generally a young man), a whip and a vessel or *lebes*, and that when the scourge struck the vessel, it generated a long-lasting sound. A large number of ancient commentators also accept that it constituted a Corcyraean votive offering (ἀνάθημα), although there is no reference to the time or occasion of its dedication⁶⁰. Let's see if it is possible to make some progress in this regard.

The oldest references to Corcyraean whips, although apparently unrelated to Dodona, appear in Phrynichus' *Satires* (Schol. in Ar. *Av.* 1463) and in *The Birds* by Aristophanes (1462-1464), performed between 425-420 and 414 BC, respectively; their sudden popularity in Athens possibly being linked to the recent Corcyraean *stasis*⁶¹. During this conflict, as we have seen, the oligarchs who surrendered to Athens were subsequently forced to come out in groups by the Corcyraean *demos*, flanked by hoplites, so that they could be beaten to death and, in order to prevent them from moving too slowly or stopping, they were harried on by men bearing whips (μαστιγοφόροι; Thuc. 4, 47, 3)⁶². Aristophanes' reference relates, judging by the *scholia*, to this episode⁶³.

With regard to the rather imprecise chronology of the Corcyraean offering (which research has dated back to between the sixth and third centuries BC)⁶⁴, some authors advocate a very early date⁶⁵, whilst others believe that it cannot have originated before the mid-fourth century BC, based on parallels⁶⁶ that derive, above all, from the reconstruction (somewhat incorrect but highly popular nonetheless) carried out by Cook in 1902⁶⁷. However, this monument, consisting of two columns, one with the young μαστιγοφόρος and the other with the vessel (Polemo, frag. 29 Angelucci, *apud* Steph. Byz. δ 146), only appears in descriptions after the

⁶⁰ Angelucci 2022, 179.

⁶¹ Intrieri 2018b, 139, 142-143.

⁶² Intrieri 2018b, 144.

⁶³ Gehrke and Sapirstein 2024, 542-545 prefer to think that the link between *stasis* and whips in the Aristophanic *scholia* is a late invention, but the very reference in the *scholia* to Phrynichus would suggest that Corcyraean whips were known in Athens even before Aristophanes.

⁶⁴ Katsadima 2017, 497.

⁶⁵ Dieterle 2007, 62-65.

⁶⁶ Piccinini 2017, 82-83; Id. 2022, 47-48.

⁶⁷ Cook 1902, 12.

fourth century, the moment in which the Corcyraeans may have renewed the monument, a hypothesis already considered by Cook⁶⁸.

Various remnants of bronze items of doubtful classification (Fig. 2) were discovered at the Sanctuary of Dodona by Carapanos and Kalligas, who proposed a link with the “Corcyraean whip”, although they suggested that these offerings could have something to do with the practice of flagellation for educational reasons⁶⁹, an idea that other authors have raised by presenting possible parallels, which are nevertheless rather obscure and too difficult to verify⁷⁰. In our opinion, it is difficult not to associate this offering with the terrifying episode that took place in the year 425 in Corcyra and, in this respect, Piccinini is perhaps right when she rejects any kind of prophetic character for this offering, associating it with “the identity and values of the dedicants, the élite of Corcyra”⁷¹, although in another work she favours its interpretation as an evocation of the rite of passage of Corcyraean youth⁷². If, as has been suggested, the whip is a kind of weapon typical of the Corcyraean aristocracy⁷³ or, perhaps more appropriately, a symbol of their power and their status as slave owners⁷⁴, the fact of using *μαστιγοφόροι*, which was perhaps of an even lower status than that of the hoplites, would, as Moggi has observed, be proof of the “violazione totale delle regole, che pure in genere venivano rispettate quando si combatteva contro nemici esterni, nell’ambito del *polemos*”⁷⁵, which would entail an even greater humiliation of political rivals.

Of course, the democrats’ victory in the *stasis* of 425 does not appear to have been the most appropriate moment to make this offering at Dodona, which was possibly still under Thesprotian control, given that the Epirotes had demonstrated their preference for the oligarchs, whom they had served as mercenaries; the Epirotes would also have possibly provided refuge for those oligarchs who had survived. Any other subsequent moment would have been more propitious, but, given the popularity of Corcyraean whips amongst comedy writers such as Aristophanes, it is not improbable to think of some moment in the fifth century BC. One opportune moment

⁶⁸ Cook 1902, 13.

⁶⁹ Kalligas 1976, 61-68.

⁷⁰ Ducat 1995, 339-368.

⁷¹ Piccinini 2017, 85.

⁷² Piccinini 2022, 45-56.

⁷³ Piccinini 2017, 85. Other authors have preferred to see the Corcyraean whip as an element linked to “le pratiche educative dei fanciulli”; see D’Alessandro 2016, 271-276.

⁷⁴ Gehrke, Sapirstein 2024, 544-545, 561.

⁷⁵ Moggi 1999, 71-72.

could have been what is known as the second *stasis* of Corcyra, which is unfortunately only known through the account provided by Diodorus. In spite of the fact that it shared certain features with the *stasis* of 427-425, this *stasis* has been recognised as a separate episode⁷⁶. This second *stasis*, according to Diodorus (13, 48), took place in the year 410 and, as occurred in 427, brought “those who stood out amongst the most prominent” (οἱ προέχοντες τοῖς ἀξιώμασι), in favour of oligarchy and Sparta, into conflict with “the mass of the people” (ὁ δὲ δημοτικὸς ὄχλος), who were in favour of Athens. As occurred on the previous occasion, there was conflict amongst the citizens, with the democrats receiving the support of the Athenian Conon, and a force of six hundred Messenians from Naupactus. In an initial clash, many oligarchs were killed, others were captured and one thousand were exiled, which, as on previous occasions, “fled to the mainland located opposite” (εἰς τὴν καταντίον ἡπειρον ἔφυγον). The latter, mobilised by their supporters who had remained on the island, crossed over again and took on the democrats in battle. Nevertheless, as Diodorus tells us, when night brought an end to the fighting, “they came to an agreement with each other, stopped their quarrelling and resumed living together as one people in their fatherland” (ἦλθον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, καὶ τῆς φιλονεικίας παυσάμενοι κοινῶς ὄκουν τὴν πατρίδα). And this was how, according to Diodorus, the massacre (σφαγή) ended in Corcyra.

The second Corcyraean *stasis* thus ended quite abruptly, and whatever its stance may have been during the last few years of the Peloponnesian War, the city emerged from this conflict in a rather weakened state, as witnessed by its scarce presence in the events that took place over the latter years of the fifth century BC and the early years of the fourth⁷⁷. The agreement between the two sides may have been due, above all, to their exhaustion, due to the realisation that they were unable to finish off their rivals, due to Conon or due to the neutralisation of external factors⁷⁸. The agreement (ὁμολογία) may also have reduced the pretensions of the two sides and, perhaps, although some authors claim the regime continued to be democratic, it would have become less radical, moderating its views⁷⁹, whilst also reaching “qualche forma di equidistanza anche rispetto ad Atene”⁸⁰. Other authors claim, however, that Corcyra was always an oligarchy, even

⁷⁶ Wilson 1987, 112-114; Psoma 2022, 215-218.

⁷⁷ Psoma 2022, 217-221.

⁷⁸ In spite of Diodorus' silence in this respect, Stickler 2010, 362 has suggested a possible and probable intervention on the part of Corinth, as in the *stasis* of 427 BC.

⁷⁹ Gehrke 1985, 94.

⁸⁰ Intrieri 2015, 58.

when the *stasis* of 410 broke out, and it continued to be one throughout the fourth century⁸¹, in a more or less moderate sense according to the moment.

Although the struggle between the oligarchs and democrats manifested itself again at some moments during the fourth century (Diod. Sic. 15, 46, 1-3; 47, 1-7 [374 BC]; 95, 3; Aen. Tact. 11, 13-15 [361 BC])⁸² it never reached the intensity of the conflicts that took place at the end of the fifth century BC. Whatever the case may be, one of the results of this new *stasis* appears to have been the loss of Corcyra's naval capacity, "incapable de reprendre son rôle maritime"⁸³. In fact, it would disappear from all accounts until the year 375⁸⁴.

Once again on his occasion, Epirus had served as a fundamental factor for the oligarchs, who had found refuge there and, possibly, military support as well, although Diodorus does not make any explicit reference to it in this case. He does mention the liberation of slaves, however, and the granting of citizenship to foreigners on the part of the democrats.

We do not have any specific details regarding Corcyra's relationship with the mainland following the *staseis*, but the ties established between the Corcyraean oligarchs and the Epirotes may well have been maintained, being reflected in the dedication of the whip *anathema* at Dodona, possibly as a recollection of the previous civil conflicts, although for the moment we can only hypothesise about this point. It may also have evoked other meanings, since we would agree with the definition proposed by Piccinini of a "multidimensional offering"⁸⁵. The placing of the offering at Dodona would also indicate good relations between the Corcyraeans, represented by their élite (even of the political model that emerged after the agreement of 410 BC), and the sanctuary. Neither do we know – although, as we shall see below, the possibility cannot be ruled out – whether Dodona may have facilitated a solution for this and other *staseis*, for the fact is that at least three lead tablets have been found at the sanctuary in which the Corcyraeans question Zeus and Dione regarding the re-establishment of peace amongst Corcyra's citizens. The fame (negative) that had spread throughout Greece and, at the very least, throughout Athens regarding the "Corcyraean whip", and the evident transgression entailed by using such a low-status instrument of punishment to humiliate prominent citizens

⁸¹ Psoma 2022, 341-344.

⁸² Gehrke 1985, 94-96.

⁸³ Christien 2015, 126.

⁸⁴ It could have repositioned itself on the Spartan side or have maintained its independence to a large extent; see in this regard Intrieri 2015, 60-61.

⁸⁵ Piccinini 2022, 56.

even further, were aspects that had to be addressed in order to achieve an agreement to resolve the conflict, a *ὁμολογία*, such as the one that Diodorus mentions. In this respect, making a dedication that includes a whip would fit well with the Greek practice of making offerings to the gods that consecrated items with important meanings or images and reproductions of the same⁸⁶. We do not know whether the initial offering assumed the monumental guise indicated by ancient sources or, whether, on the contrary, it was rather simpler and was renovated later on, possibly to commemorate another political agreement between the opposing groups in Corcyra (something that, as we have mentioned and shall see again, occurred on various occasions throughout the fourth century). But what we can be sure of is that the *stasis* of 427-425, the bloodiest and most cruel of the civil conflicts witnessed in Corcyra, must have become a point of reference for the future and the “Corcyraean whip” must have been considered a symbol of this.

If we believe that the initial offering was made at the end of the fifth century BC, we do not know whether Dodona continued to be a Thesprotian sanctuary or whether it had already been incorporated into Molossia, as mentioned by Strabo, but without any specific date (7, 7, 11). A Thesprotian sanctuary would, perhaps, have been more favourable to the Corcyraean aristocrats. If, at that time, Dodona had been absorbed by Molossia and, bearing in mind the fact that the territory appears to have changed its political leaning in order to be linked with Athens after Tharyps’ presence there, the stance of the Molossians would have been quite different to that of the other Epirotes, unless the Chaonians’ discredit after the defeat of 429 had facilitated an increase in Molossian influence and its new interests.

The end of the Corcyraean *stasis* of 410 would have entailed a reconciliation of the two opposing sides and would have been a good moment for an offering to be sent to Dodona to recall, not this conflict (which was soon resolved), but the terrible strife of fifteen years earlier. Some years later, in 373 BC, the Athenian general Ctesicles, whom we shall refer to below, once again intervened in another Corcyraean *stasis*, observing how those who lived in the city were opposed to one another, without telling us how the general ended these internal disputes and raised the city’s morale⁸⁷. Finally, and as we have mentioned and as we shall see

⁸⁶ For example, weapons taken from the enemy, or chains created to enslave enemies, but consecrated by the enemies after defeating the initial owners, etc.

⁸⁷ Καταλαβὼν τοὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει πρὸς μὲν ἀλλήλους στασιάζοντας [...] τὰς μὲν στάσεις διέλυσε (Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 5).

below, at least three oracular tablets have been found at Dodona in which the Corcyraeans consulted the Oracle as to the means by which they might resolve their internal problems, which would suggest, on the one hand, the frequent nature of these disputes and, on the other, the important role that Dodona played in the case of Corcyra.

Athens also maintained good relations with Dodona during the fifth century BC, even before Cnemus' campaign against Acarnania in 429, as demonstrated by various details. For example, we might mention the inscription on a bronze plaque that commemorates an Athenian naval victory over the Spartans at some point in the fifth century BC, whether it might have been mid-century⁸⁸ or even later on⁸⁹. Similarly, it was the Oracle at Dodona that instructed Athens to accept the Thracian cult of Bendis in around 433 BC, as witnessed by an Athenian inscription dating from the mid-third century BC found in Piraeus⁹⁰. Of even greater import, however, is the curious account related by Pausanias (8, 11, 12) to the effect that the Oracle at Dodona had ordered them to colonise Sicily⁹¹; in spite of the fact that this Σικελία was nothing other than a small hill located close to the city, the Athenians did not understand its meaning and it led them to initiate a war against Syracuse. If this Oracle, which does not appear in any other tradition, was real, Dodona's leaning in around 415 BC, would have been clearly pro-Athenian, and this may well have to do with the Molossians' control over the sanctuary, although the fact that Athens had made use of the Oracle before this period and had turned it into a site for its offerings would suggest a favourable relationship with Dodona, perhaps even during the period of Thesprotian control. We do not know whether Athens initiated its contacts with Dodona *motu proprio* or was introduced by more proximate peoples such as, for example, the Corcyraeans.

Whatever the case may be, a Molossian Dodona would not necessarily have been hostile to the Corcyra that emerged from the agreement of 410 BC, if said agreement had been carried out with the knowledge, or even been instigated, by Athens itself, although this may have depended on whether Conon continued on the island or had already retired when the agreement was reached, something we cannot be sure of. This period at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century BC has also been linked with a Dodona tablet in which the Corcyraeans question

⁸⁸ Dieterle 2007, 92-93.

⁸⁹ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, 209, who do not rule out the possibility that it may even refer to the Battle of Sybota.

⁹⁰ IG II² 1283, l. 6: κατὰ τὴν μ[α]ντείαν τὴν ἐγ Δωδώνης; Parker 1996, 170-175.

⁹¹ Ἀθηναῖος δὲ μάντευμα ἐκ Δωδώνης Σικελίαν ἤλθεν οἰκίζειν; Parke 1967, 136-137.

Zeus Naios and Dione as to how best to govern their city, although the date of this tablet could also be somewhat later than the period in question⁹².

Nevertheless, we could see this as a change in the relationship between Corcyra and the mainland, given that during the conflict between Corcyra and Corinth, the latter maintained close links with the Epirotes, who supported the Corinthians against Corcyra.

In this respect, it is probable that Corcyra changed its relationship with the ἡπειρος, possibly because the military support that the oligarchs obtained had entailed some kind of compensation over and above financial recompense. It has been suggested that Corcyra lost control over the area of Butrint between the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century as a consequence of its civil conflicts⁹³, although it is difficult to confirm this development based on the information available⁹⁴. However, we cannot rule out the idea that the pressure Corcyra exerted over its *peraea* may have begun to relax at this time, being replaced by some other kind of relationship with the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the region, which the Corcyraean *anathema* could have symbolised, if we accept the hypothesis described here⁹⁵.

4. Epirus, Corcyra, the Islands and the Second Athenian League

The situation in the fourth century BC is rather complex. Diodorus informs us that in the year 385/4 BC, the King of the Molossians, Alcetas I, was exiled in Syracuse, where he had been given refuge by

⁹² Lhôte 2006, nr. 1, 9-30; Intrieri 2002, 119.

⁹³ Carusi 2011, 101.

⁹⁴ In fact, what the archaeological evidence shows, for the moment, is that Butrint may have been abandoned in around the year 475, not being reoccupied until the mid-fourth century; see Hernandez 2017, 220-221. Whatever the case may be, there are so many superimposed levels at Butrint that new excavations may provide us with more precise information.

⁹⁵ Psoma 2022, 38-39 raises the possibility that Corcyra may have preserved its *peraea* or parts of it, at least until the mid-fourth century BC, and that after it was lost, Corcyra would have sought to maintain a relationship with the mainland by means of an agreement with Oricus, which is interpreted as being a *sympoliteia*, as witnessed in a tablet from Dodona: Lhôte 2006, nr. 2, 30-33; other possibilities in Intrieri 2019, 109-127. Nevertheless, at the only site that has been relatively well excavated, Butrint, archaeologists detected a certain abandonment between around 475 and 350 BC, as we have mentioned: Hernandez 2017, 220-221.

Dionysius I⁹⁶, although we do not know why he was in exile. As part of his policy of expansion throughout the Adriatic, the Syracusan tyrant decided to establish an alliance with the Illyrians through the mediation of the exiled Molossian king, handing over two thousand of his soldiers and five hundred complete sets of Greek armour (πανοπλῖαι Ἑλληνικαὶ πεντακόσια), which were distributed amongst the best Illyrian soldiers. This force managed to reinstall the king on his throne, but not before raising the territory to the ground and killing more than 15,000 Molossians (Diod. Sic. 15, 13, 1-3)⁹⁷. In spite of the fact that Alcetas' father, Tharyps, had been taken to Athens and educated there, the end of the Peloponnesian War must have meant that Epirote territory fell under Spartan control (or at least under its influence), together with a good number of the Ionian islands⁹⁸. Alcetas' exile in Syracuse, an ally of Sparta, would have been a way to keep him away from Epirus and also make the Spartan victory felt in these territories.

Nevertheless, after a number of years had passed, Dionysius of Syracuse used the deposed king to carry out his own policy, which, by employing the Illyrians as allies, led to catastrophe in Molossia. In view of these disasters in Epirus, Sparta sent an army to help the Molossians and "curb the barbarians' great audacity" (δι' ἧς τοῦ πολλοῦ θράσους ἔπαυσαν τοὺς βαρβάρους), given that it held an alliance with them (συμμαχία) (Diod. Sic. 15, 13, 3). Although Alcetas' return was due to an alliance with Dionysius, who employed the king as an instrument of his policy in the Ionian and the Adriatic, the Molossian king appears to have been kept on his throne by Sparta, although the king was possibly forced to accept certain formal requirements in order to reconcile him with his people, who were the ones who had formally expelled him, although we cannot rule out Sparta's intervention, as we have seen. These new requirements to recover

⁹⁶ Vanotti 1996, 77-90; Piccinini 2015, 467-479.

⁹⁷ It is also possible that the synthetic nature of the account introduced a degree of confusion in the narration, which would have to be broken down into various points: restoration of Alcetas, sacking of the territory, Molossian uprising and catastrophe, and Spartan intervention. Similarly, it is probable that the latter actions were carried out by the Illyrians without any intervention on the part of Syracuse. See Intrieri 2015, 75-76.

⁹⁸ In the year 401, the Spartans expelled the Messenians who had settled in Cephallenia (and in Naupactus) and, according to Diodorus (14, 34, 2), returned their fortresses (ἀπέδωκαν τὰ φρούρια) to the Cephallenians. Later in his account the author refers (Diod. Sic. 14, 78, 5) to the Messenians of Naupactus and Zacynthus, which would seem to indicate that they had also settled on the latter island (unless Diodorus is mistaken), from which they would also have been expelled (ἐξβεβλημένοι) by Sparta. They had been resettled in Crane by Athens after the latter had evacuated them from Pylos as a result of the Peace of Nicias (Thuc. 5, 35, 7), but Thucydides only mentions Cephallenia, not Zacynthus.

the throne may well have included the mutual oaths between king and people, oaths that still existed in the time of Pyrrhus (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 5, 1)⁹⁹. In relation to this episode, we also know of various Spartan consultations with the Oracle of Dodona, whilst Aristotle (*Pol.* 1310b 39-40; 1313a 23-60) establishes some interesting comparisons between Spartan and Molossian royalty.

Sparta's actions at this time have been viewed as an attempt to establish the limits between the hegemonic dominion of Lacedaemonia and that of Dionysius, who would have to pursue his Adriatic policy to the north of Epirus¹⁰⁰. In fact, in the introduction to his account, Diodorus attributes to Dionysius the intention of controlling all sea traffic through the Ionian Sea, thus ensuring the route towards Epirus and having his own cities available to anchor his ships (Diod. Sic. 15, 13, 1). Although Diodorus does not specify any of the tyrant's other intentions, Sparta's energetic intervention reflects the danger he posed, for there is little doubt that Dionysius intended to not only control the Epirote coasts, but probably also the islands of the Ionian Sea, with Corcyra at the top of the list, no doubt followed by others such as Leucas and most probably Zacynthus and Cephallenia as well. We cannot be entirely sure about this, but if we remember that one of the goals that Diodorus attributes to Dionysius was that of "sacking the temple at Delphi, which was filled with great wealth" (σουλῆσαι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς τέμενος, γέμον πολλῶν χρημάτων) (Diod. Sic. 15, 13, 1), controlling these islands would have been fundamental to guarantee safe access to the Gulf of Corinth¹⁰¹. Let us not forget that Dionysius earned himself considerable notoriety because of the sacking of temples and sacred sites during his reign¹⁰², and that the year after the expedition to Molossia he plundered the Sanctuary of Pyrgi in Caere, which brought him a booty of one thousand talents (Diod. Sic. 15, 14, 3-4; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 5, 2, 21; Strabo 5, 2, 8).

The change in alliances in all of these territories came about with the creation and growth of the Second Athenian League, which removed them from the Spartan sphere of influence, thanks, in good part, to the intervention of Timotheus who, during his journey throughout the Peloponnese (in the

⁹⁹ Domínguez 2018, 27-28.

¹⁰⁰ Christien 2015, 131-132.

¹⁰¹ Regarding whether Delphi was amongst the tyrant's objectives, see the summary of various points of view in Intrieri 2015, 76.

¹⁰² According to Cicero (*Nat. D.* 3, 83-84) he sacked and appropriated items from the Temple of Persephone in Locri, from the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and from the Temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus, as well as many others.

summer of the year 375 BC), subjected Corcyra to his will, although without enslaving or banishing its inhabitants or changing the island's laws, which meant that all the *poleis* in the region were well disposed (εὐμενέστεραι) towards Athens (Xen. *Hell.* 5, 4, 64)¹⁰³. Control of Corcyra enabled him to bring together a number of vessels from this city in order to gather together a fleet of 70 ships, with which he could confront the Spartans (Xen. *Hell.* 5, 4, 66). He also attracted the cities of Cephallenia, earned the friendship of the Molossian king, Alcetas, and defeated the Spartans at Leucas (Diod. Sic. 15, 36, 5-6). In the Decree of Aristoteles (IG II² 43)¹⁰⁴, only the city of Proni appears amongst those located in Cephallenia (ll. 107-108), although, as we shall see below, a few years later it was also claimed that Iphicrates controlled the cities of Cephallenia; both Alcetas and his son, Neoptolemus, appear in the Decree (ll. 109-110)¹⁰⁵. Cornelius Nepos adds some further details, giving Timotheus the credit for not only bringing Corcyra under Athenian control (*sub imperium Atheniensium redegit*), but also for the incorporation of Epirotes, Athamanians, Chaonians and “all those people who live near that sea” (*omnesque eas gentes, quae mare illud adiacent*) as allies (*socii*) (Nep. *Timoth.* 2, 1-2). Given that we know Alcetas was king of the Molossians, the appearance of the term “Epirotes” (*Epirotae*), which also explicitly excludes Chaonians and Athamanians, raises some interesting questions, since there is little doubt that these “Epirotes” must be those over whom Alcetas exercised power. Hammond was right when he suggested that “here ‘Epirotae’ may have been used to indicate a group of Epirote tribes which did not include the Chaones and the Athamanes but evidently included more than the Molossi”¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ With regard to the mechanisms that enabled Timotheus to control Corcyra, see the discussion in Intrieri 2015, 83-88.

¹⁰⁴ Cargill 1981, 14-47; on the problems about the integration of Corcyra into the Athenian league and its timing, see Dreher 1995, 12-18.

¹⁰⁵ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, nrr. 22, 92-105. In addition to becoming an ally of Athens, the relationship between Alcetas and Timotheus became much closer, since the king travelled to Athens (together with Jason of Pherae) in order to testify in his favour during the trial that the *strategos* was subjected to in the year 373 ([Dem.] 49, 10). Although Nepos does not mention Alcetas, he considers Jason to be the *hospes* (ξένος) of Timotheus (Nep. *Timoth.* 4, 2).

¹⁰⁶ Hammond 1967, 524; the issue has led to a series of different explanations, such as the idea that Nepos may have equated the name ‘Molossians’ with that of ‘Epirotes’: Franke 1955, 22-23. For his part, Tuplin 1984, 551 poses two possibilities: either that we are dealing with an “artificial” group of “tribes”, mainly made up of Molossians, which call themselves Ἡπειρώται, or that these were other “tribes” outside the group, but also subject to Alcetas. He sees no good reason to accept either of these possibilities and even rejects

Diodorus gives us more details than Xenophon regarding these campaigns and his account is much less synthetic, which, nevertheless, has given rise to huge historiographical debates¹⁰⁷. In Zacynthus, the democrats, expelled by the oligarchs in favour of Sparta, found refuge with Timotheus and fought by his side, in exchange for which, the Athenian general once again put them ashore on the island, where they seized a fortress called Arcadia (Diod. Sic. 15, 45, 2-3), from which they attacked the city's inhabitants. Xenophon seems to refer to these events, although he does not explain the reason for the Zacynthians' dissension (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 2). He does, however, take the time to relate how Timotheus' decision to return the exiles to the island provoked a reaction from Sparta, who sent Mnasippus, who landed on Corcyra and achieved some initial victories (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 3; Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 1). In order to help the Zacynthian oligarchs, Sparta sent 25 triremes under the command of Aristocrates (Diod. Sic. 15, 45, 4). Meanwhile, peace had been signed between Athens and Sparta in the year 375 (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 1-2; Diod. Sic. 15, 38, 1-2), but the events in the Ionian Sea meant that the peace was broken almost immediately. Xenophon offers the pretext of Timotheus' return of the Zacynthian exiles onto the island (although he does not explain the background to this development) once the latter had received orders to withdraw from the area following the signing of peace in the year 375 (or 374 for other authors) (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 3).

Regarding the events on Corcyra, Xenophon does not relate how the conflict on the island arose from an uprising on the part of the philo-Laconians against the *demos*, neither the request for help from Sparta, which sent 22 triremes under the command of Alcidas, who sought to gain control of Corcyra by deceit (Diod. Sic. 15, 46, 1-2). Athens also sent help to both islands (Diod. Sic. 15, 46, 3).

any argument based on a reference located in an inscription (which we shall return to later) relating to "Molossians and their allies". We would need to take into account here, that the view of an "artificial" union may have to do with the date of the research and, therefore, with a perspective that is somewhat reluctant to grant much importance to the federative phenomena that were undoubtedly significant in territories such as Epirus. The same can be said of the inadequate translation of *ethnos* as "tribe".

¹⁰⁷The chronological problems in this period are quite significant and different commentators have chosen to propose their own version of events; Gray 1980, 306-326 presented a highly comprehensive and detailed account, which was soon corrected and qualified by Tuplin 1984, 537-568. See also the reconstruction proposed by Valente 2014, 289-302, who sides with those who place the peace in the spring of 374 BC rather than in the autumn of 375 BC.

Observing the Ionian Islands from the Mainland

Athens' actions in Corcyra were headed by Ctesicles, who, as we mentioned earlier, reestablished harmony amongst the besieged citizens and managed to counter-attack the enemy, killing Mnasippus (Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 5-6). When Iphicrates (and Timotheus?) arrived, the war had already ended (Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 7)¹⁰⁸. Xenophon (*Hell.* 6, 2, 3-8) gives us further details of this campaign, which do not contradict Diodorus' account, but do clear up various things. When the Corcyraeans call on Athens for assistance, the ambassadors make them see the island's considerable wealth in terms of ships and money, as well as its favourable position with regard to the Gulf of Corinth, not to mention as a means of attacking Spartan territory. They also highlight Corcyra's excellent position with regard to the mainland/Epirus located opposite (ἐν καλλίστῳ δὲ τῆς τε ἀντιπέρας Ἡπείρου/ἡπείρου) (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 9)¹⁰⁹, and for sailing from Sicily to the Peloponnese. Xenophon also tells us that Alcetas helped Ctesicles to cross over with his six hundred *peltasts* (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 10) (only five hundred according to Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 5). Diodorus makes the point that the crossing could be made by night, avoiding the besiegers' surveillance (Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 5), whilst Xenophon (*Hell.* 6, 2, 10) also highlights the night-time crossing and states that the force was led through the territory towards the city. It is not clear whether Alcetas only provided them with access to the sea or whether he even placed individuals at their disposal who knew this stretch of sea well, the ships required to make the crossing and information relating to the most ideal spots to land a not insignificant number of soldiers without being seen. Did he also provide information regarding the best routes to take in order to reach the city whilst avoiding the besiegers' surveillance, or were the Athenians aided by Corcyraean exiles who knew the island well and would have been the most appropriate guides? Neither account tells us whether the king was asked to provide additional troops nor whether he actually provided them¹¹⁰.

Similarly, on their way towards Corcyra, we learn that Iphicrates took control of the cities of Cephallenia (καταστρεψάμενος τὰς ἐν τῇ Κεφαλληνίᾳ πόλεις) (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 33) and that, after controlling Corcyra, he returned

¹⁰⁸ Timotheus' presence, mentioned by Diodorus, does not appear to be very probable, given that, following his trial, he was not reinstated in the post of *strategos*, and the account also contradicts Xenophon (*Hell.* 6, 2, 13), who tells us that after his dismissal, it was Iphicrates who took command of the fleet. See also [Dem.], 49, 9-10 and Psoma 2022, 246.

¹⁰⁹ I have written Ἡπειρος in both uppercase and lowercase because it is not easy to distinguish, based on the text, whether Xenophon is referring to the mainland in general or to Epirus in particular.

¹¹⁰ Dreher 1995, 26-27.

to Cephallenia to raise funds, either voluntarily or by force (τὰ μὲν παρ' ἐκόντων, τὰ δὲ παρ' ἀκόντων) (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 38), possibly depending on whether they were allies or not, even though they were subject to Athens' control. As we mentioned above, in the Aristoteles Decree only Proni appears as an ally of Athens, in which respect it is possible that the other three cities did not enjoy this privilege in the beginning, with another Athenian epigraph (IG II² 96) referring to Cephallenia as a whole, together with Corcyra (specifically mentioned in IG II² 97)¹¹¹, in spite of some authors's doubts¹¹². Inscription IG II² 98 may well refer to the inclusion of the Cephallenians, but the stele is too fragmented to be sure, although it seems clear that Athens would establish three military commanders with supervisory powers (ἐπιμελεταί) whilst the war lasted; these commanders and the corresponding garrisons would be amongst those that Athens would have to withdraw following the signing of the peace of 371 and Iphicrates' return to Athens (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 4, 1). At some point during this campaign, possibly in the year 373 BC, an Athenian trierarch called Phanostratus, made a consultation at Dodona asking whether he should seek the friendship of Iphicrates, given that he had formerly been a supporter of Timotheus¹¹³.

At this juncture in the development of the Second Athenian League, Athens' intentions in this territory would appear to be clear: control over Corcyra; control over Cephallenia, possibly the whole island, even though the initial allies were only those citizens from Proni; control over Zacynthus, possibly not over the entire island, but at least over the "Zacynthian people who live in Nelo" (Ζακυν[θ]ίων ὁ δῆμος ὁ ἐν τῷ Νῆλλωι) (IG II² 43, ll. 131-134), whose interpretation remains far from clear, especially with regard to Timotheus' activities on the island¹¹⁴; and, naturally, control over Molossia and, quite possibly, over the rest of Epirus, as we saw above.

Heraclides Lembus offers us an account, possibly taken from the "Constitution of the Molossians"¹¹⁵, written by members of the Aristotle

¹¹¹ Fauber 1998, 110-116; Rhodes, Osborne 2003, no 24, 108-113.

¹¹² Cargill 1981, 68-75; Cawkwell 1981, 46. A recent discussion on Corcyra's integration into the Athenian alliance can be found in Intrieri 2015, 91-98.

¹¹³ Dakaris *et alii* 2013, 50, nr. 123; Carbon, Lhôte 2023: https://dodonaonline.files.wordpress.com/2023/06/ciod_dvc_123.pdf, last consulted 08-01-2023. See Chaniotis 2017, 64; Psoma 2022, 247-248.

¹¹⁴ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, 104; Cawkwell 1981, 42; Pascual 2010, 95-96.

¹¹⁵ The different opinions of the experts as to whether the passage comes from a Constitution of the Molossians, of the Epirotes, of Ithaca or of the *Nomima Barbarica* have been brought together by Polito 2001, 138. In spite of its problems, the work does present a

School, in which he informs us that the Molossians plundered (συλήσαντες) the Temple of Artemis at Cephallenia, removing the gold crown (χρύσεος στέφανος) from the image, although they later made a compensatory sacrifice. The Cephallenians, however, when attempting to replace the crown with another, saw how the goddess rejected the new crown and flung it to the ground (Heraclid. Lemb. *Excerpt. pol.* 45)¹¹⁶.

This account has barely been analysed¹¹⁷, and we are not aware of any occasions on which the Molossians and the Cephallenians may have been opposed to each other. Unless we are dealing with some episode of mythical origins, which we do not know, one of the few possibilities might have to do with this Athenian campaign to gain control of the island, in which, hypothetically at least, Molossian troops allied with Athens may have taken part, these troops being the ones that would have committed the sacrilege. This is, of course, only a hypothesis, which, for the moment, takes into account one of the few occasions on which there may have been a confrontation between the Molossians and the islanders¹¹⁸. We are not told either which of the four Cephallenian *poleis* provided the site for the sanctuary dedicated to Artemis; and we do not know whether the crown dedicated to Zeus Naios discovered at Dodona and dedicated by the inhabitants of Paleis may have something to do with this episode.

If Heraclides' work contains, as is habitually thought, a summary of Aristotle's *politeiai*, the episode must have taken place before 335 BC, which is when Aristotle probably began his project to bring together this series of 158 constitutions¹¹⁹, which would give us a clear *terminus ante quem*.

As we have just seen, during the Athenian campaign to snatch Coreyra from the Spartans, the Athenian *strategos*, Ctesicles, was aided by Alcetas when crossing over to the island (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 10), which suggests that Molossia possessed an exit along the coast and that the Thesprotians would not have raised any objection to a decision taken by their Molossian neighbours, perhaps because alliance agreements already

summary of different constitutions, which is generally accepted today; see Verhasselt 2020, 672-683; Id. 2022, 77-91. In relation to the existence of a Constitution of the Molossians, see Gigon 1987, 688-689.

¹¹⁶ Dilts 1971, 28-29.

¹¹⁷ For example, Polito 2001, who does not analyse Heraclides' account.

¹¹⁸ The other may have taken place in the year 431 when the Corinthians attacked Crane (Thuc. 2, 33, 3), but it is not very likely that the Corinthian ships would have carried Molossian troops on board.

¹¹⁹ Weil 1960, 308-309.

existed between them or because both, it would seem, were allies of Athens. In this respect, it is not clear whether the small Molossian stretch of coast referred to by Pseudo-Scylax (*Per.* § 32), which must have been located in the Gulf of Ambracia, was already in Alcetas' possession in the year 373 BC, especially if we bear in mind that this account corresponds to the period of Philip II¹²⁰. However, given that the crossing took place and we have already mentioned what it entailed, it is not improbable that this venture left from the mouth of the River Thyamis¹²¹ and that Alcetas either controlled Thesprotia, or Molossia and Thesprotia were allies, σύμμαχοι, which meant, above all, that they had the same friends and the same enemies¹²².

As for Leucas, although the island's close relationship with Corinth and with Sparta persisted at least until the year 373 BC, the existence of a rather mutilated inscription that mentions friendly relations between the island and Athens has led some commentators to suggest that there may have been an alliance between the two sides before 368 BC, perhaps in the late 70's of the fourth century. This would not have entailed the island's inclusion in the League¹²³.

The peace of 371 (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 3, 18) led Athens to recall Iphicrates, who was obliged to return what he had taken after the oaths. This would have affected the Cephallenian cities not joined to Athens by treaty, Zacynthus¹²⁴ and Corcyra, which, according to some authors, “se retrouve donc abandonnée”¹²⁵, its rebirth being interrupted¹²⁶ in spite of the fact that it was still in the Athenian alliance in the year 361 (Κόρκυρα συμμαχίς πόλις) when Chares landed there, causing civil conflict, multiple killings and pillaging (Diod. Sic. 15, 95, 3). According to Aeneas Tacticus (11, 13-15) Chares would have supported the rich and the oligarchs in their uprising against the *demos*. As Diodorus concludes, actions such as these “brought his country into discredit” (τῇ δὲ πατρίδι διαβολάς) (Diod. Sic. 15, 95, 3), since they went against the spirit that presided over the creation of the Second League, as proclaimed by the Aristoteles Decree¹²⁷. In fact,

¹²⁰ Peretti 1979, 223, 438.

¹²¹ Pascual 2018, 66-67.

¹²² Baltrusch 1994, 17-19.

¹²³ IG II² 104; Cargill 1981, 75-76; Psoma 2022, 248.

¹²⁴ Intrieri 2015, 106.

¹²⁵ Christien 2015, 134.

¹²⁶ Christien 2015, 142.

¹²⁷ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, 101; Cawkwell 1981, 54-55. Regarding the possible meaning of this Athenian action, see Psoma 2022, 250-253.

the scarce references to Corcyra in subsequent years already show that the island was an enemy of Athens after having left the League before 353 BC¹²⁸.

It has been suggested that this new *stasis* must have been resolved by a reconciliation between the oligarchs and the *demos*, as had occurred in the past, and that the Dodonaean Zeus may have had a hand in this matter, based on two tablets discovered at the sanctuary, one more concise and the other more detailed, in which the Corcyraeans ask Zeus Naios and Dione what god or hero they should present sacrifices and direct their prayers to in order to establish harmony in their own interest¹²⁹. As we have seen above, a similar but more ancient tablet has been cited as evidence of a previous reconciliation. Although we cannot be sure, the idea that the Corcyraeans may have (once again) sought help at the Sanctuary of Dodona to resolve their problems is not improbable. Whatever the case may be, the aforementioned tablets provide evidence that, either at this time or around this period, the Corcyraeans appealed to the Oracle for any help it might be able to offer.

5. The End of Athenian Influence in Epirus and on the Islands

The collapse or decadence of the Second Athenian League also had an impact on the islands of the Ionian, such as Cephallenia and Zacynthus, which appear to have enjoyed a period of complete independence¹³⁰. In the year 357, Zacynthus became the recruitment site and departure-point for a small army with which Dion sought to snatch Syracuse from Dionysius the Younger (Diod. Sic. 16, 6, 5; 9, 4; Plut. *Dion* 22, 8). A number of Zacynthians undoubtedly accompanied the Syracusan commander, given that they feature amongst the conspirators who are executed (Diod. Sic. 16, 31, 7; Nepos, *Dion* 9, 3; Plut. *Dion* 57, 2-4). Dion may have been named a citizen of Zacynthus¹³¹, but the choice of this island as a base of operations would seem to show the island's proximity at this time to Corinth (and to Sparta)¹³², whilst the possible involvement of Athens (beyond the circles

¹²⁸ Dem. 24, 202 (353/2 a.C.), Dion. Hal. *Amm.* 4; Dem. 18, 234 (346 a.C.); see Intrieri 2015, 108.

¹²⁹ Psoma 2022, 252-253; Lhôte 2006, nrr. 3 and 4, 33-35; both could be dated to the second half of the 4th century BC.

¹³⁰ Thiry 2001, 135; Psoma 2022, 252-253.

¹³¹ Muccioli 1999, 304-305.

¹³² Marasco 1982, 175-176.

surrounding the Academy) is regarded in varying manner by modern authors¹³³.

Years later, in the year 344, Timoleon headed an expedition to Syracuse in order to end the tyranny. The small naval force he brought with him consisted of seven Corinthian ships, two Corcyraean ships and one ship furnished (*προσπαρασχόνται*) by Leucas (Plut. *Tim.* 8, 5). Diodorus (16, 66, 2) adds that the two Corcyraean ships and the ship from Leucas joined (*προσλαβόμενος*) on the way. These vessels were accompanied by soldiers from these and other Corinthian colonies¹³⁴. As Antonetti has highlighted, numerous cities in North-Western Greece, in addition to those linked to Corinth (Leucas, Ambracia, Anactorium), coined currency using the Corinthian winged horse (Pegasus) as a motif, amongst them Corcyra itself during a brief period in the second half of the fourth century, which suggests an “explosion” of “Pan-Corinthian” identity associated with Timoleon’s expedition¹³⁵. Prestianni Giallombardo regards the involvement of the two Corinthian colonies along the same “pan-Corinthian” lines, encouraged as they were by a growing fear of Philip II. Corcyra’s involvement is especially noteworthy, with the island having put aside its traditional rivalry with the metropolis, as it had on certain previous occasions¹³⁶. On the epigraph of the monument raised for Timoleon in Corinth, although rather fragmented, we can read the names of Ambracia, Corcyra and Apollonia, whilst Leucas would need to be restored¹³⁷, but this suggests that these cities, at least, contributed troops to the war effort¹³⁸. One indication of the relations that the Epirote world maintained with Corinth is provided by the participation of a contingent of Eleians (ἐξ Ἑλέας, Plut. *Tim.* 35, 2), headed by Megillus and Pheristus, in the repopulation of Acragas during the colonising project initiated by Timoleon in the year 338 BC (Diod. Sic. 16, 82, 5; Plut. *Tim.* 35, 1). Contrary to the idea that these colonisers may have come from Elea in Italy¹³⁹, Asheri has convincingly argued that they actually came from

¹³³ Whilst De Vido 2011, 453-454 would like to see Athens’ hand in the matter, Marasco 1982, 165-166 questions it.

¹³⁴ Talbert 1974, 57.

¹³⁵ Antonetti 2011, 55-57; not all authors agree in associating these issuances with Timoleon’s venture. See, for instance, Psoma 2022, 100-102.

¹³⁶ Prestianni Giallombardo 2011, 469-470; Manganaro 2002, 114; Psoma 2022, 253-256.

¹³⁷ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, nr. 74, 368-371.

¹³⁸ Talbert 1974, 169.

¹³⁹ Sordi 1961, 74.

Elea in Thesprotia¹⁴⁰. It is somewhat more difficult to see echoes of these movements in some of the Dodona tablets, as suggested by some authors¹⁴¹.

Athens' declining influence throughout the entire region can also be observed in Epirus. In effect, the death of Neoptolemus I of Molossia left the throne in the hands of his brother, Arybbas, with whom he appears to have reigned jointly after Alcetas' death (Paus. 1, 11, 3; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 1.5; Just. *Epit.* 7, 6, 10-11). When the *theorodokoi* list for Epidaurus was composed in around 355-354 BC, the figure responsible in Molossia for receiving the Epidaurian *theoroi* was none other than the king himself, called Θάρυψ in the epigraph¹⁴². The new king would soon give the hand of his niece, Olympias, to Philip II of Macedonia (357 BC; Just. *Epit.* 7, 6, 10-11), who would shortly afterwards call for her brother, Alexander, to be sent to the Court of Pella (Just. *Epit.* 8, 6, 4-8). Before he was expelled by Philip in 343-2 and replaced by Alexander I (Dem. 8, 32; Diod. Sic. 15, 72, 1), Arybbas must have had some conflict with the King of Macedonia in around the year 352 BC (Dem. 1, 13). Some years before, possibly at the beginning of his reign (around 360 BC?), although the chronology is not that certain, Arybbas appears to have also been forced to face an invasion led by the Illyrian king, Bardylis, who plundered his territory, although Arybbas seems to have expelled the invader with some ease (Frontin. *Str.* 2, 5, 19). In none of these episodes does Arybbas appear to have received direct support from Athens, even though Athens gave him refuge, renewed his citizenship and undertook to restore him to the throne, as indicated by an important inscription found in Athens (although the restoration to the throne perhaps never happened)¹⁴³.

As demonstrated by the *theorodokoi* list for Epidaurus, around the time when the list was composed (*circa* 355/4 BC), Epirus (Ἰπειρος) was a geographical region, one that included: Pandosia, Cassope, the Thesprotians, Poionos, Corcyra, Chaonia, Artichia and the Molossians¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴⁰ Asheri 1970, 79-88, who suggested that we should read ἐξ Ἑλλάδας in Plutarch's text. See also Talbert 1974, 204-205; Manganaro 2002, 117; Psoma 2022, 254-255.

¹⁴¹ Specifically, the tablets that have been associated with Timoleon's colonisation are Lhôte 2006, nrr. 102, 217-219 and nrr. 103, 219-221; this author does not offer any view regarding the first (although he suggests we could be dealing with a Corcyraean) and he considers it to be impossible in the case of the second. See also the suggestions made by Manganaro 2002, 118-120, which are not definitive either.

¹⁴² IG IV² 1, 95, col. I, l. 31. With regard to the chronology, see Perlman 2000, 72-74.

¹⁴³ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, 348-355. However, the possibility that Arybbas might have returned to the throne after Alexander's death has been suggested by some authors. See lastly Walsh 2017, 199-208.

¹⁴⁴ IG IV² 1, 95, col. I, ll. 24-31.

As Cabanes has shown, “l’unification de l’Épire est loin d’être achevée, dans les années 360-355”¹⁴⁵.

6. A Testimony of Direct Contacts between Epirus and Zacynthus

Over the last few pages, we have seen how Epirus and the Ionian islands interacted on different occasions throughout the fifth and fourth centuries BC, although the relations between Corcyra and the mainland were more intense and more widely known. The relationship that the other islands maintained with Epirus must have been less intense, except, perhaps, in the case of Leucas, which was situated closer and was more involved in Epirote affairs due to its alliances. However, the realm of epigraphy has thrown up an interesting document that presents a proxeny of the Molossians in Zacynthus, one that, as we shall see, must have begun in ancestral times (Fig. 3).

This epigraph consists of a bronze plaque discovered during Carapanos’ excavations at Dodona, featuring in the book that the latter published on his findings¹⁴⁶, which has been subject to diverse commentaries, partly due to the unique nature of the text and partly (although other cases are known) due to the fact that the epigraph is decorated with the relief image of a phallus. The text identifies the plaque as a gift (δῶρον) offered to Zeus, governor and sovereign (μεδέων)¹⁴⁷ of Dodona, by a man called Agathon, son of Echephylos and his Zacynthian descendants (γενεά), who have been *proxenoi* of the Molossians and their allies for thirty generations (ἐκ τριάκοντα γενεαῖς), since the days of Troy, and who are of the lineage of Cassandra (ἐκ Τρωίας Κασσάνδρας γενεά)¹⁴⁸.

Given that, except for a few unimportant traditions (Paus. 2, 16, 6; Schol.

¹⁴⁵ Cabanes 2004, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Carapanos 1878, 39-40, 196-199.

¹⁴⁷ All commentators who have analysed this epigraph have highlighted the fact that this form of address to Zeus clearly derives from Achilles’ invocation of Zeus at Dodona, as featured in *The Iliad* (16, 233-234): Ζεῦ [...] Δωδώνης μεδέων. See lastly Lebreton 2022, 297-298.

¹⁴⁸ IG IX 1² 41750. Θεός : τύχα / Ζεῦ Δωδώνης μεδέ- / ων, τόδε σοι δῶρον πέ- / μπο παρ’ ἐμοῦ: Ἀγάθων / Ἐχεφύλου καὶ γενεά / πρόξενοι Μολοσσῶν / καὶ συμμάχων ἐν τ- / ριάκοντα γενεαῖς / ἐκ Τρωία – ς Κασσάν- / δρας γενεά / Ζακύνθιοι. Amongst the multiple possible readings, Fraser 2003, 33 may well be right when he disassociates Τρωίας from Κασσάνδρας. The same author observes how the text makes use of the different meanings and nuances of the word γενεά on the three occasions on which it appears in the text.

in Hom. *Od.* 11, 420) Cassandra had no children, Agathon's link with Cassandra's lineage must have been through some figure associated with her. Fraser suggests that it could have been another Agathon, Cassandra's brother, who appears just once in *The Iliad* (24, 248), although we should not rule out the other more famous brother, Helenus, who was also her twin, who came to have a much more intense relationship with Epirus in mythological tales¹⁴⁹. Other authors have suggested other possibilities, although they are less convincing¹⁵⁰. Furthermore, we do not have any information to confirm the fact that Cassandra may have been the first prophetess at Dodona, as has also been proposed¹⁵¹, or even that she may have ever come to be present at the sanctuary.

Some authors have suggested that this descendancy from Cassandra would not have only been characteristic of Agathon's family, but would have encompassed all Zacynthians, this being a good means of establishing links with the Molossians, Helenus' role having been highlighted at least since the time of Euripides' *Andromache* (Eur. *Andr.* 1238-1252)¹⁵². Trojan traditions, as other authors have also noted, were firmly rooted in Zacynthus¹⁵³. Furthermore, some authors have sought to link the text of the dedication with certain passages in Lycophron's *Alexandra*, and even link its chronology with this work¹⁵⁴, but the arguments in favour of this are not very convincing.

Although we find it difficult to believe that the proxeny relationship between Agathon's family and the Molossians may have lasted the nine hundred or nine hundred and ninety years indicated by the text, the truth is that, for those who drew up the text of this epigraph, this formed part of their perception of the past, with the length of the association adding even greater value to the relationship. This was even more so in view of the fact that it dated back to one of the main chronological landmarks recognised by all Greeks, namely the Trojan War.

Nevertheless, we cannot lose sight of the fact that in *The Odyssey*, Dodona is linked to Thesprotia (Hom. *Od.* 14, 316-330; 19, 291-299), which could be reached by sea (Hom. *Od.* 14, 314-315) and was a territory that possessed ships and, furthermore, sent ships regularly to Ithaca

¹⁴⁹ Fraser 2003, 36-37, with the main previous references; see also Erskine 2001, 122-123.

¹⁵⁰ Davreux 1942, 85-87.

¹⁵¹ Dakaris 1964, 103-104.

¹⁵² Erskine 2001, 121-123.

¹⁵³ Fragoulaki 2013, 256.

¹⁵⁴ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, 230-231.

(Hom. *Od.* 14, 344) and to Dulichium (Hom. *Od.*, 14, 334-335; 19, 291-292), which (whatever its exact location) was within the radius of Ithaca, as illustrated by the fact that Penelope's suitors came from there, from Same and from Zacynthus (Hom. *Od.* 1, 246; 9, 24; 16, 123, 247-250; 19, 131)¹⁵⁵. This link between Dodona and Thesprotia is demonstrated by other authors such as Strabo (7, 7, 11), who tells us that although Dodona was formerly (τὸ παλαιόν) under the control of the Thesprotians, it later (ὕστερον) passed to the Molossians (ὕπὸ Μολοσσιῶν ἐγένετο). Although the exact date of the change from Thesprotia to Molossia is not known, as we mentioned some pages ago, it is generally thought to have taken place between the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century. Whatever the case may be, judging by the oldest epigraphic document of political nature found at Dodona¹⁵⁶, by the time of the reign of Neoptolemus I (370-368 BC) at the very least, the sanctuary was already in Molossian hands. In this respect, it is interesting to note that, amongst the δαμιοργοί who endorsed the political decisions that were taken, we find an Onopernian¹⁵⁷ who, according to other inscriptions, would be amongst the Thesprotians¹⁵⁸.

Consequently, it is hard to believe that the epigraph of Agathon of Zacynthus would refer to a proxeny that lasted thirty generations between the Molossians and the island, since, although this might not be impossible, it is difficult to make out what interests the Molossians, an inland people, would have had in common with the Ionian island. It is easier to believe that the Zacynthians would have established a proxeny link with the Thesprotians, with whom, furthermore, the Homeric tradition establishes certain ties (although indirect), focusing on the Thesprotian sanctuary of Dodona. However, once the Molossians had taken over the sanctuary and, above all, established an alliance with other neighbouring peoples, including

¹⁵⁵ In the "Catalogue of Ships", Dulichium does not feature under Odysseus' authority, who, however, heads the Cephallenian troops, who possess Ithaca and Neritum, administrate Crocyleia and Aegylips, as well as Zacynthus, Same and the mainland and coasts located opposite (οἱ τ' ἡπειρον ἔχον ἢ δ' ἀντιπέραι ἐνέμοντο) (Hom. *Il.* 2, 631-637). Although Strabo 10, 2, 10 suggests "Epirotis extended thus far [the coast of Acarnania] in early times and was called by the general name 'mainland' (τάχα τῆς Ἠπειρώτιδος τὸ παλαιὸν μέχρι δεῦρο διατεινούσης καὶ ὀνόματι κοινῶ ἡπείρου λεγομένης), this is nothing more than erudite speculation.

¹⁵⁶ Cabanes 1976, nr. 1, 534-535; Meyer 2013, 48-60.

¹⁵⁷ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, nr. 30, ll. 17-18.

¹⁵⁸ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, nr. 58, ll. 11-12; see also, 138-139.

the Thesprotians¹⁵⁹ (or a part of them), Agathon would have considered this a good opportunity to send his inscription to Dodona in order to recall this ancient proxeny, now headed by the Molossians, although the reminder would have also included their allies, the Thesprotians among them, with whom the proxeny had originally been established. We should not lose sight of the fact that Agathon's offering was made to Dodonian Zeus, which would represent the element of continuity over and above the contingent fact of who actually controlled the sanctuary, and that it was formulated as "this gift that I send to you from me". Although we are dealing with a rather isolated testimony of the relations that existed between Epirus and Zacynthus¹⁶⁰, the existence of this document forces us to consider what moved Agathon to recall the extremely ancient tradition of proxeny with the Molossians at Dodona and to link it to the figure of Cassandra. The existence of local traditions that tie individuals and peoples to ancient heroes from the epic and mythical tradition is well-known in the Greek world and in Epirus itself, and, although some documents have survived that might shed some light on the matter¹⁶¹, in others we must simply content ourselves with the existence of the documents in question, without being able to discern any further details regarding their origin and the mechanisms used to bring them about.

One of the most obvious problems regarding this inscription is its dating, which, from the moment it was discovered, has varied from around 370 BC¹⁶² to the beginning of the third century¹⁶³, with a large number of estimates revolving around the second half of the fourth century BC¹⁶⁴. Hammond had already observed that the formula *πρόξενοι Μολοσσῶν καὶ συμμάχων* had parallels in other cases, which first tended to mention the state that possessed the hegemony and the allies that would be represented by delegates on a council. This led him to date the epigraph back to the

¹⁵⁹ Cabanes 2004, 35.

¹⁶⁰ Morgan 2018, 228-233.

¹⁶¹ For example, within Epirus itself, the development of a tradition of Eleian origin that linked a part of the Cassopeans to Elis through the figure of Oxylus: Domínguez 2017, 79-88.

¹⁶² E. Egger, in Carapanos 1878, 197.

¹⁶³ Meyer 2013, 73-74.

¹⁶⁴ Without wishing to be exhaustive, some of the chronologies proposed include: Dakaris 1964, 169: between the end of the fourth century-first few decades of the third century, but nevertheless after 329/5 BC; Franke 1955, 38, certainly after 334 BC; Erskine 2001, 121: late fourth-early third century BC; Fraser 2003, 26-27: last third of the fourth century; Dieterle 2007, 90: last third of the fourth century; Fragoulaki 2013, 256: mid-fourth century; Morgan 2018, 228: late fourth century or more probably early third century.

last few years of the reign of Alexander I (334-331 BC)¹⁶⁵. For his part, Cabanes is right when he states that this expression corresponds to a period of very short duration, one in which the Molossians had incorporated neighbouring peoples into an alliance¹⁶⁶, but without yet having brought about full integration, although in a subsequent work he considered this to be a practical formula instead, “mais sans contenu institutionnel réel”. After ruling out the idea that we could be dealing with an organisation comparable to the Delian League or the Peloponnesian Confederation of the fifth century (which employed a similar formula), he considers it to be an expression that designates the Molossians and their neighbours that have been more or less absorbed into the same state, the Aeacid monarchy¹⁶⁷.

In spite of its scarcity and fragmented state, it is thanks to the Epirote epigraphic repertoire that we can see that it is the Molossians (οἱ Μολοσσοί), which is to say the *koinon* of the Molossians (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Μολοσσῶν) (as becomes clear in various inscriptions in which the two terms are used indistinctly)¹⁶⁸, who grant proxeny or other benefits to individuals and to communities, as was habitual in relations between states. However, only in Agathon's inscription do we find the expression “the Molossians and their allies”, which is unknown in the epigraphy produced by the Molossian state. This exception would be due to the fact that we are dealing with a document produced in Zacynthus and by Zacynthians, who would have considered it necessary to include the allies so that, as we have seen, they can make those thirty generations tally with the ongoing relations that Agathon wishes to date back to the Homeric period, a time in which, as everyone knew, Dodona was under Thesprotian control. We might also consider that, contrary to the current tendency of some authors to drastically reduce the chronology of the Dodona inscriptions, based on a pre-conceived idea regarding the non-existence of state structures in Epirus during the fourth century¹⁶⁹, the reference to “the Molossians and their allies” could correspond to the initial moments in the shaping of this kind of political structure, which ultimately gave rise to the “*koinon* of the Epirotes” (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἀπειρωτᾶν), in which the Molossians and their allies had been fully integrated. In our opinion, this step would have taken place under Alexander I, although it may also

¹⁶⁵ Hammond 1967, 534.

¹⁶⁶ Cabanes 2004, 35, 41.

¹⁶⁷ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, 140.

¹⁶⁸ Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, nrr. 30-40, 215-224.

¹⁶⁹ For example, Meyer 2013, satisfactorily criticised by Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, 231-232.

have been earlier¹⁷⁰, and this would be witnessed by the list of *theorodokoi* from Argos (*circa* 330-328 BC), in which Ἀπειρος is headed by Cleopatra, the wife (and perhaps already widow) of Alexander I and daughter of Philip II of Macedonia and Olympias¹⁷¹. Another epigraph from Dodona, of controversial interpretation and dating, includes the peculiar expression οἱ σύμμαχοι τῶν Ἀπειρῶταν, which has become the foundation for believing that the monarchic Epirote State was called “the symmarchy of the Epirotes” until the fall of the monarchy in 232 BC, something that has been called into question today. However, I shall not analyse this period here¹⁷².

What we conclude from everything we have seen up until now is that, at some point in the fourth century BC (some indeterminate point, given that the letter type used in the Agathon inscription does not help us to gain a more precise idea in chronological terms), the Zacynthians, through the auspices of the *proxenus* of the Molossians, Agathon, felt the need to recognise the new political situation that an expanding Molossia was bringing about. In this respect, we might recall Nepos’ account (*Tim.* 2. 1), in which he declares that Timotheus made the Epirotes, Athamanians and Chaonians allies, even though it is well-known, as we have also seen, that it was the king of the Molossians, Alcetas I (and his son Neoptolemus), who entered into an alliance with Athens. Although it is also clear that at this time the concept of “Epirus” was more geographical than political¹⁷³, in his source Nepos may have seen a list of those Epirote peoples who were subject to Alcetas, encompassing them under the term “Epirotes”, as befitting the Roman period¹⁷⁴, whereas the list would refer to the Molossians, although possibly not exclusively to the Molossians¹⁷⁵. To complicate matters, a contemporary source, Xenophon (*Hell.* 6, 1, 7), describes Alcetas in the year 374 BC as a subject (ὑπήκοος) of Jason of Pherae and defines him as the latter’s governor in Epirus (ὁ ἐν τῇ Ἠπειρῷ ὑπαρχος), although this

¹⁷⁰ Pascual 2018, 70.

¹⁷¹ Perlman 2000, 205, col. I, line 11. The catalogue also includes Phoenice, *ibid.*, line 12, which belonged to the Chaonians (not mentioned on the list), whose presence does not rule out the idea that this people may have also been integrated into the Epirote State at this point. See Pascual 2018, 53.

¹⁷² Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, 140.

¹⁷³ As witnessed, for example, by the list of *theorodokoi* for Epidaurus, which can be dated to around 360 BC, and presents Molossia, Cassope, Thesprotia and Chaonia as independent states.

¹⁷⁴ This would not contradict the idea suggested by Franke 1955, 22-23, but it would qualify it somewhat.

¹⁷⁵ An idea suggested by Hammond 1967, 524.

would go against Alcetas' (and his son's) status as full allies of Athens on the inscription that contains the Decree of Aristoteles¹⁷⁶. Whatever the relationship of dependence that may have existed between Alcetas and Jason, the truth is that, as Hammond also observed, "Alcetas' authority extended beyond the territory of the Molossian tribal group"¹⁷⁷.

An alliance of Epirote peoples under the hegemony of the Molossians, but possibly preserving (either in fact or only in a formal sense) their autonomy (as suggested by the list of *theorodokoi* for Epidaurus), would not have received any name other than that of οἱ Μολοσσοὶ καὶ σύμμαχοι, without this implying (in spite of the formula employed) that their internal relations were necessarily similar to those that Sparta and Athens maintained with their respective allies. We should not forget either that, as we mentioned above, Alcetas helped the Athenian Ctesicles to cross over to Corcyra, which shows that Molossia had acquired access to the sea during the king's reign (either direct access or access through allies, something that is not clearly stated in our sources either), which would pave the way for more direct relations to be established with the territories of the Ionian Sea. Neither should we overlook the fact that the same Ctesicles who crossed over from Epirus to Corcyra (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 10-11); Diod. Sic. 15, 47, 4-5) is the very same Ctesicles who, according to Diodorus (15, 46, 3) (given that Xenophon does not mention him), had landed some months earlier on Zacynthus, in order to lead the exiles, which is where he possibly received the order to come back to Epirus to prepare for the crossing over to Corcyra.

Although nothing we have seen here constitutes solid proof, we have a series of concomitant circumstances that might suggest that Agathon could have sent his plaque to Dodona during the reign of Alcetas I, although this is a date that the critics do not generally accept (except for the oldest studies). This was also a moment in which both Epirus and Zacynthus once again came within the Athenian orbit, featuring a more stable situation following Alcetas' traumatic recovery of the Molossian throne. Other moments in the fourth century might also be possible, such as the period of Arybbas' reign or, more probably, the period following his expulsion at the hands of Philip II and Alexander I's accession to the throne in around 342 BC, when Molossia incorporated new territories¹⁷⁸. Whatever the case may be, this

¹⁷⁶ This idea that Alcetas was a subject of Jason's has been viewed as being part of the Thessalian tyrant's propaganda. See, for instance, Gray 1980, 312.

¹⁷⁷ Hammond 1967, 524.

¹⁷⁸ This is the period that Hammond 1967, 534-535, above all, appears to favour, considering that the formula "the Molossians and their allies" would correspond to the period of Alexander I. In effect, in spite of the reticence of researchers, the only moment

would be another indication to add to the scarce literary sources available, one that demonstrates the relations that existed between Epirus and the more distant islands of the Ionian Sea.

Finally, another testimony, which is much more problematic than the one we have just analysed, consists of a small bronze band, used possibly as a diadem for a statue or an adornment for some offering, also discovered during Carapanos' excavations¹⁷⁹, featuring the inscription "the Paleians (have dedicated it) to Zeus Naios" (Fig. 4). Later editors have done little more than suggest a chronology that stretches from the fifth century BC¹⁸⁰ to the end of the fourth or beginning of the third century BC¹⁸¹, without adding any further details to those published by Carapanos¹⁸². Some scholars even consider Paleis to be an unknown city¹⁸³. The only occasion we are aware of on which the Cephallenians may have made an offering of this kind at Dodona could be linked with the events we described above, namely the account of a conflict involving the Cephallenians and the Molossians. Of course, this does not mean that the offering was made at that moment and that there is any direct link between the episode described by Heraclides Lembus and this dedication. In any case, the finding of a diadem dedicated by the Palaeans does serve as additional testimony, at least, to the interest that the city showed at some point in the Epirote sanctuary, to the point in which it made an offering that does not appear to have been insignificant, since it would be part of an even greater monument.

7. Conclusions

As a conclusion to these lines, we could say that the relations between Epirus and the Ionian islands could well date back to the time of Homer, although due to the literary nature of the Homeric world, these relations would seem to be enveloped in an atmosphere as mythical as it is factual. Corcyra, for example, is not mentioned as such, although the Corcyraeans

in which this formula led to the creation of a federal model known as Ἰππεύς is, precisely, that of Alexander I, as witnessed by the *theorodokoi* list for Argos, in which the *theorodokoi* would be received by the figure who exercised power following the king's departure or death, his wife or widow, Cleopatra.

¹⁷⁹ Παλειῖς Δὴ Νάωι; Carapanos 1878, 44-45; lám. XXIV, 6-6 bis.

¹⁸⁰ Lazzarini 1976, 308.

¹⁸¹ Dieterle 2007, 91.

¹⁸² Cabanes, Hatzopoulos 2020, nr. 27, 214.

¹⁸³ Meyer 2013, 104.

themselves ended up believing that their island was identifiable as the country of the Phaeacians, who appear in *The Odyssey* (Thuc. 1, 25, 4)¹⁸⁴. This idea would be widely shared by other Greeks, especially the Athenians¹⁸⁵, where there were even families who considered themselves descendants of Nausicaa¹⁸⁶. For their part, and as we can see in *The Odyssey*, Thesprotian seafarers sailed to Dulichium, whose exact location is disputed, but they stopped in Ithaca, which had links with Cephallenia and Zacynthus. Whether these relations might refer to the time in which the Poems were written, in the eighth century BC, or whether we are dealing with information that originated during the Mycenaean Period, is something that we are not going to analyse here.

Outside this “Homeric” period, what appears quite evident is that Corcyra appears to have demonstrated an early interest in the mainland that lay opposite, although we are obliged to wait until the sixth or fifth centuries to find material remnants that demonstrate this interest.

Whatever the case may be, by the first half of the fifth century BC, as witnessed by the Themistocles episode, Corcyra had become the gateway to Epirus for outsiders such as the Athenian general, being the place where he received the information required to gain access to the Molossian Court. The episodes that took place after the third decade of the fifth century effectively illustrate the important links that existed between Corcyra and Epirus, but also the good relations that the Corinthians, partly through their colony at Ambracia, also maintained with the mainland. Although we lack precise details, over and above the archaeological discoveries that have been made that highlight the existence of contacts between Corinth-Corcyra and Epirus during the Archaic Period, there is no doubt that these ties existed. As is frequently the case, it is Athens’ entry into the picture that increases the amount of information available, enabling us to observe the multiple interests that crossed paths in Epirus, especially when Corinth and Corcyra began to clash and also when one of the political groups in Corcyra, made up of the most powerful citizens, entered into a series of civil conflicts with the people, finding support on the mainland. Apart from the eventual consultations that would be made at the sanctuary at Dodona on the part of this Corinthian world and its colonies, which are not always distinguishable because they shared the same dialect and alphabet (and

¹⁸⁴ Soueref 2002, 329-335; Intrieri 2002, 16-21.

¹⁸⁵ Mackie 1996, 103-105.

¹⁸⁶ For example, Andocides, one of the generals (according to Thuc. 1, 51, 4) who commanded the second Athenian fleet sent to Sybota: Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 170 a-c.; Rizzo 1966, 271-289.

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featuring chronologies that are very often imprecise), we can highlight the Coreyraean offering of the whip monument at Dodona, which we have sought to situate within a probable historical context (in spite of the rather unclear information available to us), linking it with the internal conflicts or *staseis* witnessed in Corcyra.

It is also after this period when we begin to see other Ionian islands (in addition to the inevitable Leucas) such as Zacynthus and Cephallenia involved in the conflicts that were to take place within this Epirote arena. In this case, it is difficult to know whether their presence is due to the interests they shared with the mainland or, as is more probable, to the dynamics of the military alliances promoted by Sparta and Athens during the Peloponnesian War. The discovery of a bronze diadem featuring a dedication from the Paleians of Cephallenia to Zeus Naios, of imprecise origin, between the fifth and fourth century BC (over and above its context), is an indication of a rapprochement between this island and Epirus, not to mention the interesting but somewhat vague account written by Heraclides Lembus, which we have referred to above.

It was Athens that, following the establishment of the Second Athenian League, would once again bring these mainland and island territories together, with notable success in the case of Epirus and, possibly, at a different rate of progress in the case of the islands, especially Corcyra, Zacynthus and Cephallenia. The consolidation of the Epirote monarchy following Alcetas' recovery of the throne would determine the integration processes throughout Epirus, which would give rise to various provisional forms such as the above-mentioned "symmachy of the Molossians" (or "the Molossians and their allies"), as witnessed by an epigraphic document issued from Zacynthus that appealed to ancient links of proxeny between a family from this island and the Molossians dating back some thirty generations. We have interpreted this epigraph as a way of acknowledging the change of ownership of the Dodonean sanctuary, which passed from the Thesprotians to the Molossians, as well as a desire on the part of the Zacynthians to maintain this privileged relationship, either prior to or during the changes that the reign of Philip II of Macedonia would introduce throughout Epirus. We have not sought to delve further into these links between the mainland and the Ionian islands, but these relations would continue and, at certain times, intensify over subsequent centuries, when the Epirote

State, headed by kings such as Alexander I and, above all, Pyrrhus and his son Alexander II, would become a power that endeavoured to match (and, on occasion, would succeed in matching) the new kingdoms that

were to emerge following the disintegration of the empire of Alexander the Great.

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Fig. 1. Sites mentioned in the text

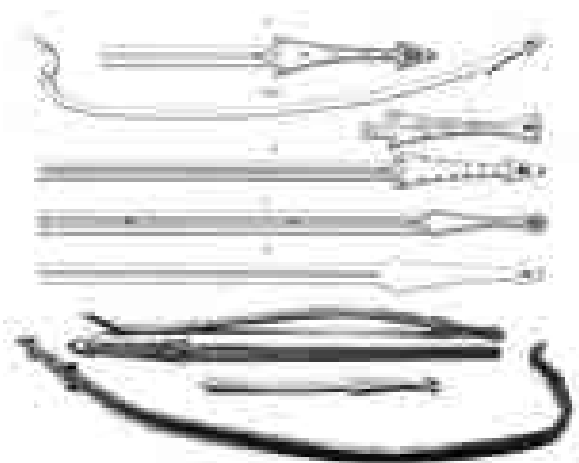


Fig. 2. Offerings from Dodona interpreted as parts of whips. (From Carapanos 1878 and photograph by A.J. Domínguez).



Fig. 3. Inscription from Dodona with a proxeny between Zacynthus and the Molossians and their allies. (From Carapanos 1878 and photograph by A.J. Domínguez).

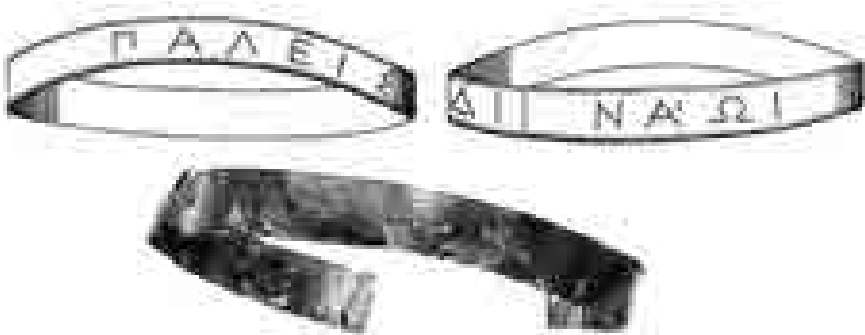


Fig. 4. Offering from Dodona from the Paleis to Zeus Naios. (From Carapanos 1878 and photograph by A.J. Domínguez).

LE ISOLE DELLO IONIO NEL CONFRONTO TRA SPARTA E ATENE. DINAMICHE POLITICHE E STRATEGICHE NELLA SECONDA METÀ DEL SECOLO V A.C.

L'espressione 'isole dello Ionio' si è affermata a partire dalla fine del XVIII secolo per designare le isole situate lungo le coste occidentali della penisola greca, da Corcira a Citera, quando esse furono appunto definite *les îles Ioniennes* dai Francesi che ne avevano assunto il controllo¹. Originariamente coniata in riferimento all'unità politica venutasi a creare sotto il governo francese, essa offre una nozione unitaria in realtà fuorviante². Se, infatti, Citera non può essere considerata una delle isole dello Ionio³ e Leucade assume solo a tratti una connotazione insulare⁴, soltanto Itaca, Cefallenia e Zacinto, a voler citare solo le maggiori, possono essere considerate in senso geografico un insieme⁵ dal quale Corcira, situata all'imbocco dello *Ionios kolpos*, risulta senz'altro separata⁶. Senza entrare nelle annose problematiche connesse alla geografia omerica e ai vettori e ai tempi del pieno inserimento in essa delle isole dello Ionio, è significativo che i Greci d'età storica avessero finito per identificare in una delle isole meridionali l'Itaca di Odisseo⁷, l'eroe *polytropos* per eccellenza del mito, in Corcira, la Scheria dei Feaci. Terra di partenze e di ritorni Itaca, "il limite inclusivo della geografia umana" nell'*Odissea* secondo la

¹ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 50; Crema 2014, 13-21. A eccezione dei riferimenti espliciti all'età moderna, tutte le date citate nel testo sono da intendere a.C.

² Cf. Thiry 2001, 132.

³ Cf. già Benton 1931-1932, 245-246.

⁴ Definita nell'*Odissea* (24, 378) ἀκτὴν ἠπείροιο e da Strabone (10, 2, 8) χερρόνησος, Leucade venne separata dal continente con la creazione di un canale negli anni successivi alla fondazione (vd. infra 57 n. 21). Non si trattò tuttavia di una separazione definitiva poiché sull'operatività del canale incisero nel corso del tempo sia problemi di ordine geofisico, sia motivazioni di ordine politico.

⁵ Si veda in tal senso l'uso nei poemi omerici del nome Cefaleni per indicare gli abitanti di Itaca e delle isole vicine: *Il.* 2, 631 ss.; *Od.* 20, 210; 24, 355; 378; 429; vd. anche Plut. *Mor.* 294d; 986e. Cf. Petrakis 2006, 385 ss.; Thiry 2001, 142.

⁶ 65 ca. sono i km che separano Leucade da Corcira; solo 5 quelli che separano capo Skinari, punta settentrionale di Zacinto da Cefallenia.

⁷ Per l'attribuzione agli Eubei della codificazione occidentale della geografia dell'*Odissea* cf. Braccesi 1993, 11-23; Malkin [1988] 2004, 97 ss.; Antonelli 2000, 29-37.

definizione di Malkin⁸; terra lontana nel mare ondoso, posta agli estremi confini⁹, Scheria, eppure non così lontana da non consentire alle navi ‘veloci’ dei Feaci di riportare l’eroe nella sua terra. Una percezione della distanza fra Corcira e le isole meridionali, forse più che fisica culturale e politica, quella evidenziata, di cui è possibile cogliere un riflesso nel V sec. non solo nell’autoidentificazione fra Corciresi e Feaci rimarcata da Tucidide¹⁰, ma anche in Erodoto quando, nell’elencare i Greci presenti a Salamina, precisa che Ambracioti e Leucadi provenivano “dalle regioni più lontane”¹¹, quasi a volerne evidenziare lo statuto di “punto terminale, in direzione nord-occidentale, dei territori ricompresi nello Hellenikon”¹², anche a fronte del mancato aiuto dei Corciresi alla Lega ellenica che si era opposta al Persiano.

1. Una posizione geografica peculiare

Al di là di qualsiasi determinismo geografico, le isole dello Ionio si connotano, nel loro complesso, per una posizione senza dubbio peculiare. Se Corcira rappresentava, e rappresenta, una stazione chiave nelle rotte verso l’Adriatico e le coste dell’Italia, Leucade e le isole meridionali, poste a raggiera di fronte all’imbocco del Golfo di Corinto, si configuravano come realtà strategiche di grande importanza sia rispetto ai territori antistanti¹³, a cui la loro vicenda è nel corso del tempo inevitabilmente intimamente legata, sia in riferimento al periplo del Peloponneso. Va, infatti, ricordato che, a eccezione di quelli di *Kyparissia* e Pilo sulla costa messenica e di *Pheia* e Cillene¹⁴ in Elide, la costa occidentale del Peloponneso non offriva approdi utili.

⁸ Malkin 2004, 85. Vd. anche Ratinaud-Lachkar 2000, 261-262.

⁹ Hom. *Od.* 6, 204-205.

¹⁰ Thuc. 1, 25, 4.

¹¹ Hdt. 8, 47: οἱ ἐξ ἐσχατέων χωρέων ἐστρατεύοντο.

¹² Fantasia 2017, 2-3.

¹³ Sulla scia di Peretti (1989, 41), può essere interessante rilevare come in Scilace (34 e 43) le isole dello Ionio, contrariamente ad altri contesti, siano menzionate “sempre in correlazione con località del continente, come punti di riferimento di chi naviga”.

¹⁴ Sul ruolo di Cillene come base navale dei Peloponnesiaci per le operazioni nello Ionio, in particolare negli anni della guerra del Peloponneso, vd. Thuc. 1, 30, 2; 2, 84, 5; 86, 1; 3, 69, 1; 76, 1; 6, 88, 9. Sul porto di Cillene vd. anche [Scyl.] 43, dove esso rappresenta l’unico porto espressamente menzionato lungo la costa da Sicione al confine meridionale della Messenia; Strab. 8, 3, 4 C 337; Paus. 4, 23, 1; 6, 26, 4; 8, 54, 3; Ptol. *Geogr.* 3, 14, 30; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Κυλλήνη.

Il rapporto privilegiato con le regioni del Peloponneso occidentale, già lumeggiato nei poemi omerici¹⁵, trova conferma nei dati archeologici che, a partire dall'età micenea¹⁶, sembrano tuttavia suggerire una rete di relazioni ben più ampia. Noto è, in particolare, il ruolo rivestito sin dall'età protostorica da Itaca¹⁷ e dalla stessa Cefallenia¹⁸ lungo le rotte tra il Peloponneso, la Grecia centrale e nord-occidentale e l'Italia meridionale; e ciò indipendentemente dall'importanza che si voglia attribuire, fra quelle possibili, alla rotta che prevedeva l'attraversamento del canale fra Itaca e Cefallenia¹⁹, come ipotizzato e.g. da Malkin sulla base dei noti ritrovamenti della Grotta delle ninfe nella baia di Polis²⁰.

Col taglio dell'istmo sabbioso che collegava all'Acarnania la penisola, sede dal 630 ca. della colonia cipselide di Leucade²¹, la geografia delle rotte possibili si arricchisce significativamente. Situata immediatamente a nord dell'accesso al Golfo di Corinto, l'*île continentale*²² veniva infatti a configurarsi non solo come uno scalo²³ importante lungo il percorso

¹⁵ Cf. Crema 2014, 167-168.

¹⁶ Cf. Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999; Petrakis 2006, 376-381. Per la menzione di Zacinto in alcune tavolette micenee rinvenute a Pilo vd. Ventris, Chadwick 1973, 145 e 150; Palaima 1991, 281-282; sui contatti con la Messenia e l'Elide, sempre in età micenea, Van Wijngaarden *et alii* 2021, 603-613.

¹⁷ Sulle peculiarità del ruolo di Itaca (anche in rapporto al tema odissiaco), pur con approcci e posizioni diverse, cf. Morgan 1988, 315-316 ss.; Ead. 2007, 71-86 (con ulteriore bibl.); Ead. 2018, 237-244; Malkin [1988] 2004, 87 ss.; Antonaccio 1995, 152-155; Livitsanis 2014, 169-171. Sui rapporti con l'Occidente: d'Agostino 1979, 29 ss., 36 ss.; Id. 2012, 284-287, 296-299; D'Andria 1985, 334, 353, 359; Id. 2012, 577-586. Per un quadro aggiornato dei dati che lasciano presupporre una partecipazione dell'isola ai traffici commerciali che attraversavano l'area vd. Pascual 2022, 523.

¹⁸ Cf. Sotiriou 2012, 371-378.

¹⁹ Sul canale vd. Strab. 10, 2, 10 C 453 (ἐν πορθμῷ Ἰθάκης τε Σάμοιό τε, citazione da Hom. *Od.* 4, 671) e 8, 3, 26 C 351 (οὐ κατὰ τὸν πορθμὸν τὸν Κεφαλληνιακόν).

²⁰ Malkin 2004, 87 ss. Per i ritrovamenti della baia di Polis cf. Benton 1934-1935; 1938-1939; per un quadro d'insieme sulle interpretazioni offerte dalla critica, Ratinaud-Lachkar 2000 (con ulteriore bibl.).

²¹ Per la fondazione di Leucade vd. Strab. 10, 2, 8 C 452; Plut. *Mor.* 552e; Nic. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 57, 7. Sull'origine corinzia vd. anche Hdt. 8, 45; Thuc. 1, 30, 2; [Scyl.] 34; Dem. 9, 34; [Scymn.] 465; Plut. *Tim.* 15, 1. Sul taglio dell'istmo e la creazione del *dioryktos* vd. Strab. 10, 2, 8 C 452; 1, 3, 18 C 59; [Scyl.] 34; Plin. *NH* 4, 2 e 2, 92; Ov. *met.* 15, 289-290. Cf. Oberhummer 1887, 8-9; Fiedler 1996, 159 n. 21.

²² La definizione si deve a Thiry 2001, 139, 141.

²³ Sul porto di Leucade come uno dei principali punti di approdo nello Ionio e sul suo sviluppo cf. Murray 1982, 224-265; Pliakou 2001, 28-42. Sulla topografia della *polis* di Leucade: Fiedler 1996; Zachos, Douzougli 2003; Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 87-96. Sul ruolo assunto progressivamente dall'isola nella diffusione commerciale non solo delle proprie

usuale seguito da chi, risalendo dal Golfo o dopo aver fatto il periplo del Peloponneso, intendeva spingersi fino a Corcira, per poi proseguire la navigazione in Adriatico o dirigersi verso le coste dell'Italia, ma anche il punto di partenza di una rotta alternativa, d'altura, con attraversamento immediato dello Ionio in direzione di Taranto²⁴ o Siracusa²⁵. Rotte, queste ultime, senza dubbio meno sicure²⁶, ma strategicamente utili per chi intendeva evitare il passaggio nel canale o nelle acque antistanti Corcira²⁷.

A prescindere dal lungo momento coloniale, fra VIII e VII sec., che vede le isole al centro delle rotte verso Occidente e, con la nascita delle colonie, ne segna il progressivo articolarsi della geografia politica, è in primo luogo il V secolo a offrirsi come un interessante campo di indagine. Il progressivo accentuarsi del confronto fra Sparta e Atene e le rispettive proiezioni verso le colonie greche d'Occidente contribuiscono, infatti, a gettare un cono di luce su un'area altrimenti storiograficamente in ombra. Nel loro ruolo di punti di snodo nelle rotte da e verso l'Occidente, nelle loro relazioni reciproche, con Corcira, con le regioni antistanti e con le principali protagoniste della storia della Grecia continentale, Leucade, Cefallenia, Itaca e Zacinto, si presentano infatti come una sorta di laboratorio, un microcosmo al centro di dinamiche e fenomeni di grande interesse²⁸.

2. Fra Corinto e Atene

Il valore strategico delle isole dello Ionio in riferimento al Golfo di Corinto e al Peloponneso affiora, nei rari cenni offerti dalle fonti a loro riguardo, sin dagli anni centrali del V secolo. Di esse si ha notizia in relazione alla

produzioni agricole ma anche di quelle dell'Acarnania e delle isole vicine, Morgan 2016, 36-37; Filis, Staikou 2022, 263-278.

²⁴ Vd. infra 76.

²⁵ Vd. infra 76. Le possibili rotte alternative sono in fondo sottintese a quanto affermato da Nicia nel 415, di fronte all'assemblea ateniese chiamata a decidere sulla spedizione in Sicilia, in merito ai confini ai quali sarebbe stato opportuno attenersi nelle relazioni fra la *polis* attica e i Sicelioti: "il mar Ionio per chi navighi lungo la costa e il mar di Sicilia per chi navighi in alto mare" (Thuc. 6, 13, 1).

²⁶ Sulle distanze previste dalle diverse, possibili rotte alternative a quelle che prevedevano l'attraversamento del canale d'Otranto cf. Wilson 1987, 107-108.

²⁷ Sulle conseguenze per i Corinzi, sul piano della sicurezza della navigazione nello Ionio, dell'alleanza stipulata nel 433 fra Atene e Corcira cf. Cataldi 1990, 25.

²⁸ Cf. Morgan 2016, 31: "a near-perfect laboratory of connectivity both in terms of the composition of the group (...) and its broader strategic position and international connections".

spedizione condotta da Tolmide nell'estate del 456²⁹ lungo le coste del Peloponneso quasi ad anticipare una tattica che sarà ampiamente applicata dagli Ateniesi nel corso della Guerra archidamica.

Sulle operazioni compiute dallo stratego le fonti non offrono un quadro unanime. Mentre Tucidide si limita ad accennare a tre sole azioni condotte dalla flotta ateniese nel corso del periplo del Peloponneso (l'incendio dell'arsenale navale di Sparta, la sottrazione di Calcide d'Etolia al controllo di Corinto e una sconfitta inflitta ai Sicioni in uno scontro terrestre)³⁰, si deve a Diodoro un resoconto più articolato. Secondo lo storico siceliota, al comando di cinquanta navi e quattromila opliti³¹, dopo aver condotto con successo degli attacchi contro Metone³² e il porto spartano di *Gythion*³³, Tolmide si era diretto verso Zacinto τῆς Κεφαλληνίας e, dopo aver occupato l'isola, si era 'conciliato il favore' di tutte le *poleis* di Cefallenia. Successivamente, si era portato a Naupatto dove, dopo averne acquisito il controllo, gli Ateniesi avevano proceduto all'insediamento nella città dei Messeni reduci da Itome³⁴.

Al di là della mancata concordanza fra le fonti, le notizie relative a Zacinto e Cefallenia risultano di un certo valore sia in riferimento ai rapporti fra le due isole, trattandosi dell'unica testimonianza su un eventuale controllo esercitato in questa fase da Cefallenia su Zacinto³⁵, sia in relazione agli obiettivi di fondo della missione di Tolmide. Lo sviluppo dell'azione dello stratego, con l'assunzione del controllo di Zacinto, la creazione di legami con le *poleis* cefallenie e l'installazione dei Messeni a Naupatto³⁶, da questo

²⁹ Per questa datazione cf. Freitag 1996, 78.

³⁰ Thuc. 1, 108, 5; cf. Beck 1997, 34.

³¹ Per queste cifre vd. anche Polyæn. 3, 3.

³² La Metone in Messenia: Lewis 1992a, 117 n. 79. È probabile, come suggerito indirettamente da Gomme, *HCT*, I 320, che Diodoro (o la sua fonte), possano aver invertito l'ordine di citazione dei due luoghi.

³³ Su *Gythion* vd. Strab. 8, 5, 2 C 363; Cic. *de off.* 3, 2, 49. Sul centro portuale come sede della flotta spartana sin dal 480, quando Sparta sembra poter contare su almeno sedici navi (Hdt. 8, 43), cf. Lewis 1992a, 117.

³⁴ Diod. Sic. 11, 84, 6-8. Sulla probabile acquisizione da parte di Atene del controllo di Naupatto nel 458 vd. Thuc. 1, 103, 3; Paus. 4, 24, 7; cf. Lewis 1992a, 115 e n. 71, 118. Al 455 pensa, invece, Beck 1997, 32; vd. anche Freitag 2015, 71. Sulla spedizione di Tolmide vd. anche Schol. Aesch. 2, 75; Paus. 1, 27, 5 che aggiungono l'acquisizione del controllo di Boeae e di Citera.

³⁵ Sul valore dell'espressione diodorea τῆς Κεφαλληνίας εἰς Ζάκυνθον come indicazione di appartenenza cf. Haillet 2001, 181, che precisa come lo storico abbia altresì utilizzato nel libro XVI (a 6,5 e 9, 4) una diversa locuzione (ἐκ Ζακύνθου τῆς πρὸς Κεφαλληνίαν) per indicare invece la vicinanza geografica.

³⁶ Si tratta di operazioni alle quali Tucidide (1, 108, 5), come già accennato, consente di aggiungere anche la cattura di Calcide d'Etolia.

momento in poi roccaforte ateniese nell'area, lascia infatti ipotizzare il perseguimento di un progetto strategico teso a garantire ad Atene la progressiva assunzione del controllo dell'accesso al Golfo di Corinto ai danni della stessa *polis* istmica³⁷: un progetto perseguito con determinazione nel tempo, come mostra anche l'assoggettamento, in un momento difficile da precisare, di Molicrio, riconquistata e forse distrutta dagli Spartani nel 426³⁸.

Non sono tuttavia solo le operazioni militari e diplomatiche a testimoniare l'interesse di Atene per Cefallenia. Un riflesso dell'importanza attribuita all'isola è infatti ravvisabile anche in alcune tradizioni di marca ateniese tese a evidenziare l'esistenza di legami ancestrali fra l'isola e la *polis* attica. Il riferimento è, ovviamente, al mito di Cefalo, l'eroe eolide figlio di *Deion*³⁹ o *Deioneus*⁴⁰, re della Focide, noto in Atene come sposo della figlia di Eretteo Procri⁴¹, di cui Ferecide, una delle fonti più antiche del nucleo base della tradizione, ricordava il legame col demo di *Thorikos*⁴², dove, come testimonia il testo di un calendario sacrificale databile al 430 ca., la coppia era oggetto di offerte sacrificali due volte all'anno⁴³.

Incentrato sulla complessa relazione fra Cefalo e Procri, risoltasi nell'uccisione più o meno involontaria della giovane moglie da parte dell'eroe in un incidente di caccia e nella sua condanna all'esilio⁴⁴, il mito sembra

³⁷ "A potentially firm grip on Corinth's western gateway" secondo Lewis 1992a, 119.

³⁸ Vd. Thuc. 3, 102, 2: ἐπὶ τε Μολύκρειον ἐλθόντες τὴν Κορινθίων μὲν ἀποικίαν, Ἀθηναίων δὲ ὑπήκοον, αἰροῦσιν.

³⁹ *Nostoi* fr. 5 Bernabé = Paus. 10, 29, 6; Paus. 1, 37, 6; Apollod. 1, 9, 4; Hygin. *Fab.* 189, 241.

⁴⁰ Hellan. *FGrHist* 323A F 22a-b = Schol. Eurip. *Or.* 1648; Strab. 10, 2, 14 C 456 e 20 C 459; Apollod. 2, 4, 7.

⁴¹ *Nostoi* fr. 5 Bernabé = Paus. 10, 29, 6; Apollod. 1, 9, 4; 3, 15, 1; Hygin. *Fab.* 189. Il mito di Cefalo e Procri è narrato anche da Ovidio nella seconda parte del VII libro delle *Metamorfosi* con un ampio rimaneggiamento rispetto alla fonte ellenistica da cui doveva aver attinto e la ripresa di motivi omerici. Cf. Labate 1975, 103-128.

⁴² Pherecyd. *FGrHist* 3 F 34 = Schol. Hom. *Od.* 11, 321 = F 152 Dolcetti; *BNJ* F 34b = *PSI* 10, 1173 = F 153 Dolcetti. Su *Thorikos* come una delle *poleis* oggetto del sinecismo di Teseo vd. Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 Fr. 94; come *polis* la presenta anche Hecat. Fr. 126 = Steph. Byz. s.v. Θορικός. Sulla sua incontestabile natura di demo cf., tuttavia, Hansen 1997, 25-27.

⁴³ SEG 26, 136; Daux 1983, 150-174; SEG 33, 147. Cf. Parker 1987, 137-147; Lupu 2005, 115-149. Sul culto di Cefalo a *Thorikos*, cf. anche Kearns 1989, 70, 95 n. 85; 177. Sui frammenti di Ferecide e la natura del culto di cui il mito potrebbe costituire una spiegazione eziologica cf. Fowler 1993, 29-42.

⁴⁴ Vd. Pherecyd. *FGrHist* 3 F 34 = Schol. Hom. *Od.* 11, 321 = F 152 Dolcetti; *BNJ* F 34b = *PSI* 10, 1173 = F 153 Dolcetti; Paus. 1, 37, 6. Per la sottoposizione di Cefalo al giudizio dell'Areopago vd. Hellan. *FGrHist* 323A F 22a-b = Schol. Eurip. *Or.* 1648; Apollod. 3, 15, 1.

offrire uno sviluppo recenziore nella narrazione dell'aiuto prestato da Cefalo ad Anfitrione nella sua impresa contro Tafi e Teleboi⁴⁵: aiuto grazie al quale l'eroe aveva ricevuto in dono l'isola di cui era divenuto eponimo⁴⁶. Erano stati quindi i quattro figli generati dall'eroe a dar nome alle quattro *poleis* dell'isola⁴⁷.

La coloritura ateniese del ramo cefallenio della tradizione su Cefalo non è sfuggita ai commentatori che ne hanno, in genere, suggerito un collegamento con gli interessi della *polis* attica nei confronti dell'isola collocandone l'elaborazione negli anni della spedizione di Tolmide⁴⁸. A favore della datazione proposta potrebbe deporre l'assenza, per quanto ci è dato constatare, di riferimenti a questo sviluppo nei frammenti del già citato Ferecide, anche se, come rilevato da Fowler, l'attenzione da questi riservata al mito di Cefalo potrebbe in realtà essere stata dettata proprio dalla presenza in Atene di un'*audience* interessata al tema⁴⁹.

Non è questa la sede per un'analisi accurata delle diverse ramificazioni del mito e delle varianti locali cefallenie⁵⁰, nel tentativo di ricostruire, per quanto ciò possa essere possibile, uno stemma delle tradizioni⁵¹ e provare a risalire alle motivazioni e al momento dell'introduzione in Attica della figura di Cefalo. Né è possibile in questa sede soffermarsi su altri aspetti come il collegamento attestato con *Thorikos* e quello altresì proposto da alcuni con *Kephale* e col *ghenos* dei Κεφαλίδαι⁵². Va, tuttavia, ricordato come la presenza di Cefalo fra gli eroi 'locali' dell'Attica dovesse essere già consolidata alla fine del VI secolo quando, secondo uno scolio all'*Ippolito* di Euripide, Clistene ne aveva inserito il nome fra quelli dei cento eroi proposti alla Pizia per l'estrazione a sorte degli eponimi delle dieci nuove

⁴⁵ Strab. 10, 2, 20 C 459.

⁴⁶ Vd. Strab. 10, 2, 14 C 456; Paus. 1, 37, 6; Apollod. 2, 4, 7.

⁴⁷ Vd. Strab. 10, 2, 14 C 456; *Etym. Magn. s.v. Κεφαλληνία*; Steph. Byz. *s.v. Κράνιοι*; cf. Fragoulaki 2013, 251-252. Paus. 1, 37, 6-7 aggiunge il ritorno in Attica dieci generazioni dopo dei suoi discendenti *Chalchinos* e *Daitos* su autorizzazione del dio di Delfi e la fondazione del santuario di Apollo ad *Aigaleos*. Cf. Kearns 1989, 70, 177, 205.

⁴⁸ Cf. Benton 1931-1932, 227.

⁴⁹ Fowler 2013, II 464.

⁵⁰ Vd. in Strab. 10, 2, 9, la tradizione che faceva di Cefalo il primo a essersi buttato giù dalle bianche rocce di Leucade per amore di Pterelao e quanto narrato nell'aristotelica *Costituzione degli Itacesi* (Arist. fr. 504 Rose): τὸν Κέφαλον οἰκοῦντα ἐν ταῖς ἀπ' αὐτοῦ κληθείσαις Κεφαλληνίαις νήσοις, ἅπαιδα ἐπιπολὺ ὄντα, ἐρόμενον τὸν θεὸν κελευσθῆναι ᾧ ἂν ἐπιτύχη θῆλει συγγενέσθαι· παραγενόμενον δὲ εἰς τὴν πατρίδα καὶ δὴ ἐντυχόντα ἄρκτω κατὰ χρησμόν συγγενέσθαι, τὴν δὲ ἐγκύμονα γενομένην μεταβαλεῖν εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ τεκεῖν παῖδα, Ἀρκείσιον ἀπὸ ἄρκτου. Cf. Delattre 2009, 162-164.

⁵¹ Cf. Delattre 2009; un quadro sintetico in Fowler 2013, 461-464.

⁵² Cf. Lupu 2005, 133. Sul *ghenos* vd. Parker 1996, 300.

tribù ateniesi⁵³. Nello stesso tempo occorre precisare che il riconoscimento di Cefalo come eponimo dell'isola doveva necessariamente essere già da tempo patrimonio delle *poleis* di Cefallenia quando, agli inizi del IV sec., l'effigie dell'eroe fa la sua comparsa progressivamente sulle monete di Pale, Same e Pronni⁵⁴.

Ritornando agli interessi strategici di Atene, va ricordato che, per la sua collocazione di fronte all'entrata del Golfo e alle coste dell'Elide settentrionale e dell'Acarnania, Cefallenia si presentava alla *polis* attica come una postazione di grande rilievo, in grado di contrastare anche il ruolo svolto nell'area da Leucade. Quasi una marcia di avvicinamento verso l'Acarnania (e forse la stessa Leucade), all'interno di un'azione partita in questo caso dal golfo stesso di Corinto, si può infatti intravedere anche nella spedizione condotta nel 454/3 da Pericle il quale, secondo quanto riferito in forma sintetica da Tuciddide, leggermente più ampia da Plutarco, salpato da Pege in Megaride, dopo essersi spinto nel territorio di Sicione, con l'aiuto degli Achei si era poi portato sulla costa opposta e, risalito il corso dell'Acheloo, aveva attaccato Eniade senza tuttavia riuscire ad espugnarla⁵⁵.

Che in questo gioco di posizioni Corinto non avesse già da tempo sottovalutato il valore di Cefallenia potrebbe essere testimoniato da una notizia, pur di difficile valutazione, che ci riporta agli inizi dello stesso secolo. Si tratta della menzione in Erodoto dello schieramento al fianco di Corinto di duecento opliti di Pale, insieme ai contingenti di Ambracia, Leucade e Anattorio, fra le file dell'esercito greco che nel 479 si era scontrato coi Persiani a Platea⁵⁶.

L'assenza del loro nome sul tripode di Delfi⁵⁷, dove risultano invece

⁵³ Vd. Schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 455. Notizie più generali senza la menzione di Cefalo in Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21, 6 e Hdt. 5, 66. Cf. Parker 1996, 118.

⁵⁴ Head 1911, 427-428; Kraay 1976, 96 e 100; Randsborg 2002, II 49-50; Hoover 2010, 29-46; Μπονελου, Σωτηριου 2017, 239-240.

⁵⁵ Vd. Thuc. 1, 111, 2-3; Plut. *Per.* 19, 2-3. Di questa spedizione si ha notizia anche da Diodoro che in due passi distinti (11, 85 e 88, 1-2), fortemente sospettati di reduplicazione, attribuisce allo stratego ateniese sotto l'anno 455 la sottomissione di tutte le città dell'Acarnania a eccezione di Eniade e, nel 453, l'attacco a Sicione e ancora le scorrerie nel territorio di Eniade. Sulle problematiche connesse al contesto e alla datazione della stipulazione dell'alleanza fra Atene e gli Acarnani, attribuita in Thuc. 2, 68, 8 alla prima spedizione di Formione contro gli Ambraciotti, cf. Fantasia 2006 (con bibl. precedente). Per un sintetico quadro della storia di Eniade cf. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 367-368; sui complessi rapporti della città con la confederazione acarnana, che lo studioso considera già attiva dalla prima metà del V sec., cf. Pascual 2016, 57 ss.

⁵⁶ Hdt. 9, 28, 5.

⁵⁷ Come notato in ML 27, va tuttavia precisato che, fra i contingenti ricordati da

menzionati gli Elei, pur giunti in ritardo per poter prendere parte alla battaglia⁵⁸, ha, infatti, indotto alcuni studiosi a ipotizzare una possibile confusione da parte dello storico fra i due contingenti⁵⁹ o, in alternativa, la voluta valorizzazione di una tradizione filo-corinzia tesa a rivendicare alla *polis* istmica un rapporto precoce con un centro di grande valore strategico come Pale, anche in considerazione dei più tardi legami attestati dalle fonti⁶⁰. Un rapporto privilegiato fra Corinto e Pale è infatti indubbio nel 435 quando – teste Tucidide – quattro navi della *polis* cefallenia partecipano alla battaglia di Leucimme all'interno del variegato schieramento facente capo alla *polis* istmica impegnato nella prima spedizione contro Corcira⁶¹. Un supporto, tuttavia, apparentemente non rinnovato nel 433 quando dei Palei non v'è più menzione a differenza di quanto si verifica, invece, per Ambracia, Leucade, Anattorio e per gli Elei⁶². È, dunque, probabile che delle quattro *poleis* di Cefallenia, mentre Crane, Same e Pronni, in un momento difficile da precisare ma precedente al 446, erano tornate a una politica di equidistanza rispetto ai due blocchi emergenti, Pale doveva aver progressivamente intessuto un rapporto privilegiato con Corinto. Diversamente, Zacinto, che nel 433 appare schierata al fianco di Corcira con mille opliti, dei quali Tucidide ricorda la presenza sul promontorio di Leucimme accanto alla fanteria cittadina⁶³, doveva aver consolidato i suoi legami con Atene⁶⁴, forse anche a seguito dell'affrancamento dal controllo dei Cefalleni che la *polis* attica doveva aver favorito, ovviamente se il precedente assoggettamento può essere considerato un dato reale.

Erodoto, i Palei non sono i soli a non essere menzionati sulla colonna serpentina, mancando anche qualsiasi riferimento a Crotone, Serifo, Tebe, Mantinea, ai Locresi Opunzi e ai Focesi. Lo stesso si può dire per nomi, ancora leggibili al tempo di Pausania (5, 23, 1-2), incisi sulla base della statua di Zeus dedicata a Olimpia (Hdt. 9, 81, 1) dove mancano i nomi di Tespie, Eretria, Leucade e Sifno. Cf. Asheri, Vannicelli 2006, 284-286.

⁵⁸ Hdt. 9, 77, 3; cf. ML 27: “their control of Olympia perhaps won them special consideration”.

⁵⁹ Cf. Beloch 1916, 77; Masaracchia 1978, 167; Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 369.

⁶⁰ Cilenti 2014, 18 n. 51.

⁶¹ Thuc. 1, 27, 2.

⁶² Thuc. 1, 46, 1. È probabile che, a seguito delle operazioni condotte da Corcira nel 435/4 contro le colonie corinzie dell'area, Pale avesse preferito evitare qualsiasi ulteriore coinvolgimento, anche in considerazione dell'entrata in gioco nel 433 di Atene. Cf. Psoma 2022, 154.

⁶³ Thuc. 1, 47, 2.

⁶⁴ Vd. Gomme, *HCT* I ad 1, 32, 4 e 1, 47, 2; Wilson (1987, 35) il quale, alla possibile pressione esercitata su Zacinto da Atene, aggiunge il timore degli Zacinti di poter divenire essi stessi oggetto delle mire di Corinto in considerazione della loro difficile posizione geografica fra l'Elide e, appunto, Pale di Cefallenia. Cf. anche Fragoulaki 2013, 252. Sul confronto fra Corcira e Corinto, da ultima, Psoma 2022, 139-162.

Nessuna notizia emerge, invece, dalle fonti relativamente al coinvolgimento di Itaca nelle vicende che interessano l'area nella seconda metà del V secolo: un silenzio che ne ha fatto in qualche caso ipotizzare una sorta di assimilazione alle scelte o alla sorte di Cefallenia⁶⁵.

Se, come osservato in termini generali da Catherine Morgan, "small islands in this position may shift often quite dramatically between phases of abandonment or 'exported population' and intense exploitation supported by external markets"⁶⁶, sul mancato coinvolgimento dell'isola nelle operazioni militari nel corso della seconda metà del V sec. possono aver pesato l'esiguità e le dimensioni ridotte dei suoi approdi⁶⁷ quanto la scarsità di fonti d'acqua, anche a fronte delle possibilità altresì offerte alle flotte ateniesi dalla vicina Cefallenia e da Zacinto. La superficie esigua del suo territorio e la mancanza di risorse naturali dovevano rendere Itaca un'isola poco attrattiva per le *poleis* impegnate a contendersi il controllo di uno snodo fondamentale come l'area dello Ionio. A solo titolo informativo si può ricordare come un legame, o meglio un voluto rapporto di precedenza fra Cefallenia e Itaca, è suggerito da una delle varianti delle tradizioni relative alla progenie di Cefalo, quella, riportata nell'aristotelica *Costituzione degli Itacesi*, che gli attribuiva come figlio Acrisio, il padre di Laerte, così da renderlo progenitore di Odisseo⁶⁸.

Ritornando alla natura delle relazioni fra Pale e Corinto, in assenza di notizie più precise sulle dinamiche politiche interne alla tetrapoli, accanto alle motivazioni di ordine strategico, va ricordato che Cefallenia era nota per le sue foreste di faggi (*Abies Cephalonica*), un legname molto apprezzato per la costruzione di navi e dunque non privo di interesse per una città come Corinto non aliena dalle attività navali⁶⁹. Il territorio di Pale, in particolare, doveva poi distinguersi per la produzione di cereali,

⁶⁵ Cf. Beloch 1923, 161-162 e 164 (ripreso da Dreher 1995, 191) in merito all'adesione di Itaca alla seconda Lega navale attica sulla base di quella di Cefallenia, ipotesi rigettata, tuttavia, da Accame 1941, 105. Vale per il coinvolgimento dell'isola nelle vicende del tempo quanto affermato in termini più generali da Livitsanis 2014, 30: "The crucial question is whether Ithacans were indeed passive receivers of all the developments happening around them, or whether they were active members".

⁶⁶ Morgan 2018, 238.

⁶⁷ Per questo aspetto vd. [Scyl.] 34: νῆσός ἐστιν Ἰθάκη, καὶ πόλις καὶ λιμὴν; cf. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 360-361; Pascual 2022, 497-503, 512-513, 522, al quale si rimanda anche per l'ipotesi della precoce presenza nell'isola di un'unica *polis*.

⁶⁸ Arist. fr. 504 e 611, 70 Rose. Vd. anche Hygin. *Fab.* 189.

⁶⁹ Meiggs 1982, 493; Sotiriou 2010, 99; Zoumbaki 2012, 84-85; 2018 94-95, con riferimento alla raffigurazione di pigne sulle monete di Pronni e Pale (Head 1963, 427-428; *BMC Peloponnesos*, 89 e tav. XVII 9). Contra Salmon 1984, 29-30, 122-126, 129.

come testimoniato dalla raffigurazione sulle sue coniazioni di IV secolo di una spiga, simile a quella presente sulle monete di Metaponto, o di chicchi di grano⁷⁰, ma anche le attestazioni in loco del culto di Demetra⁷¹ e, pur da considerare con cautela, l'identificazione proposta in antico della penisola di Paliki con la *Doullichion* "ricca di grano" verso la quale nell'*Odissea* il finto mercante cretese Odisseo affermava di essere stato imbarcato dal re dei Tesproti Fidone⁷².

Va ricordato, come già accennato, che nei primi anni della *pentekontaetia*, quando non si era ancora palesata la possibilità di un rapporto privilegiato con Corcira⁷³, Atene aveva appuntato la sua attenzione proprio sullo Ionio meridionale quale bacino dove acquisire alleati e stabilire postazioni in funzione anti-peloponnesiaca, forse già in una sorta di marcia di avvicinamento verso la più recalcitrante delle colonie corinzie nelle cui acque, tuttavia, gli Ateniesi si sarebbero concretamente spinti con le loro triremi solo dopo la stipula dell'*epimachia*⁷⁴. A partire dal 433, infatti, Corcira avrebbe dovuto diventare⁷⁵ il fulcro di un sistema di alleanze e/o postazioni (Cefallenia, Zacinto, Acarnania) che, in sinergia col caposaldo di Naupatto, avrebbero dovuto consentire agli Ateniesi il controllo non solo dell'accesso al Golfo di Corinto ma anche del versante 'greco-occidentale' dello Ionio⁷⁶, allo scopo, tra l'altro, di impedire l'arrivo di aiuti ai Peloponnesi dai loro alleati d'Occidente e tenere sotto costante minaccia il Peloponneso⁷⁷.

⁷⁰ Head 1963, 428.

⁷¹ Randsborg 2002, II 311.

⁷² Hom. *Od.* 14, 314-335; 19, 292. Vd. Hellan. *FGrHist* 4 F 144 = Strab. 10, 2, 14 C 456; Paus. 6, 15, 7. Cf. Hoekstra 1984, comm. *ad loc.*; Randsborg 2002, 20; d'Agostino, Gastaldi 2002, 124.

⁷³ Va, tuttavia, ricordato il ruolo arbitrato svolto da Temistocle fra Corinto e Corcira a proposito dei rispettivi diritti su Leucade risolto dall'Ateniese a vantaggio di una amministrazione in comune della colonia (Plut. *Them.* 24, 1-3; Pap. Ox. VII 1012, C fr. 9, II, ll. 23-34), decisione che gli sarebbe valso il riconoscimento di *euergetes* dei Corciresi (Thuc. 1, 136, 1).

⁷⁴ Thuc. 1, 44, 1; Plut. *Per.* 29, 1.

⁷⁵ Il condizionale è d'obbligo poiché in realtà l'isola non avrebbe offerto ad Atene l'aiuto sperato. Cf. Intrieri 2015, 54-56. A un'Atene desiderosa solo di indebolire sistematicamente gli alleati che possedevano flotte degne di nota pensa, invece, Psoma 2022, 177 sulla scorta di Wilson 1983, 133-134.

⁷⁶ In questo studio si è fatto uso dell'espressione 'mar Ionio' nella sua accezione geografica odierna quale precisatasi dal IV sec. a.C. in poi: cf. Braccesi 1977, 65-66.

⁷⁷ Intrieri 2015, 54.

3. ... περίξ τήν Πελοπόννησον καταπολεμήσοντες

Il valore strategico delle isole dello Ionio è esplicitamente rammentato da Tucidide nel corso della rassegna degli alleati schierati rispettivamente al fianco di Sparta e di Atene agli inizi della Guerra archidamica. Lo storico precisa, infatti, che gli Ateniesi avevano inviato ambascerie “soprattutto nelle aree intorno al Peloponneso - Corcira, Cefallenia, l’Acarnania, Zacinto - ben vedendo che, se la loro amicizia fosse stata salda, avrebbero potuto accerchiare e fiaccare (καταπολεμήσοντες) il Peloponneso”⁷⁸.

Va subito rilevato che, contrariamente a quanto in precedenza affermato per Corcira⁷⁹, l’accento non è posto sul notevole valore attribuibile anche a queste isole in riferimento ai collegamenti con l’Italia meridionale e la Sicilia, assolutamente rilevanti per un’Atene da sempre interessata al grano siciliano e al legname magnogreco⁸⁰. L’affermazione dello storico riassume, infatti, una delle posizioni prevalenti in Atene rispetto alle modalità di conduzione della guerra. Come emerge da altri passi tucididei, Pericle prima, in forma apparentemente più sfumata⁸¹, Cleone e, successivamente, Alcibiade, da posizioni più belliciste, ritenevano che per sconfiggere Sparta e la sua Lega sarebbe stato necessario isolare il Peloponneso, creare cioè una sorta di cintura militare capace di impedire o almeno rendere difficili i collegamenti con l’esterno⁸². La tattica periclea puntava, infatti, a un lento ma progressivo accerchiamento del Peloponneso che, già tagliato fuori dai mercati dell’Egeo, non avrebbe dovuto poter contare sull’aiuto dei Greci d’Occidente: come rimarcato da Tucidide, il vero scopo dell’invio della prima spedizione navale in Sicilia nel 427, celato dal pretesto del vincolo di sangue, era quello di non farvi più giungere grano siciliano⁸³.

⁷⁸ Thuc. 2, 7, 3. Chambers 1957, 84, colloca questa notizia in serie accanto alle altre azioni condotte dagli Ateniesi verso Occidente dal 462-460 fino al 431, in ossequio alla strategia di Pericle volta a rafforzare Atene in vista della guerra e di una guerra da vincere rapidamente. Sull’opinione, condivisa da entrambi i fronti, che la guerra sarebbe stata breve cf. Fronda, Giroux 2019, 295-298.

⁷⁹ Thuc. 1, 44, 3: “E poi l’isola sembrava loro in ottima posizione per salpare verso l’Italia e la Sicilia”.

⁸⁰ Vd. Thuc. 6, 90, 3-4.

⁸¹ Thuc. 1, 142, 4-5. Cf. Fantasia 2012, 64-65, che evidenzia la solo “apparente” passività della strategia periclea e la necessità di attenuare la distanza, suggerita dalla lettura tucididea, fra le posizioni di Pericle e quelle dei leader successivi.

⁸² Thuc. 6, 90, 3-4.

⁸³ Thuc. 3, 86, 4. Cf. Intrieri 2020, 29 con ulteriore bibl. a n. 30. Che Sparta fosse interessata al supporto degli alleati d’Occidente quanto alle loro produzioni è testimoniato dalla richiesta perentoria rivolta loro di impegnarsi nella raccolta di contributi in denaro e approntare una flotta in modo da consentire alla costituenda flotta peloponnesiaca di

L'importanza in tal senso delle isole dello Ionio è richiamata anche dallo stratego ateniese Eufemo nel discorso tenuto a Camarina nel 415/14 quando, nell'affermare che Atene era solita trattare gli alleati secondo i servigi resi da ciascuno, ricorda come alcuni fossero considerati "alleati del tutto liberi", sebbene abitanti di isole facili da conquistare, per il fatto che si trovavano "in una posizione di importanza strategica intorno al Peloponneso"⁸⁴. Ciò rendeva necessario per Atene, anche in considerazione del solido legame fra Corinto e Leucade, di poter contare non solo sulle alleanze già in essere, "... la maggior parte degli Acarnani, i Corciresi, gli Zacinti ..."⁸⁵, ma anche di acquisire quella delle *poleis* di Cefallenia.

Sull'adesione di queste ultime alla causa ateniese, non immediatamente collegabile alle ambascerie inviate nell'area prima dell'inizio del conflitto, possediamo due resoconti: quello dello stesso storico ateniese e quello di Diodoro.

Secondo la ricostruzione tucididea, essa andava annoverata fra i risultati conseguiti durante le operazioni militari condotte nell'estate del 431 *περί Πελοπόννησον* da una flotta di cento navi attiche con a bordo mille opliti e quattrocento arcieri⁸⁶. Con l'appoggio di ulteriori cinquanta navi corciresi e "altri alleati della zona", gli Ateniesi avevano attaccato Metone, salvata dal provvidenziale intervento di Brasida, quindi, ripreso il mare, avevano devastato e, con l'aiuto dei Messeni, conquistato *Pheia* in Elide che avevano però dovuto ben presto abbandonare di fronte al consistente arrivo di forze elee⁸⁷. Risultati più concreti e duraturi erano stati ottenuti solo all'altezza dell'imbocco del Golfo di Corinto. Dopo aver sottratto Sollio ai Corinzi⁸⁸ e averne consegnato il territorio agli Acarnani di Palero, avevano conquistato d'assalto Astaco, accolta fra gli alleati dopo la deposizione del tiranno Evarco, per poi dirigersi verso Cefallenia portata "dalla loro parte senza combattere"⁸⁹.

Più sintetica ma sostanzialmente concorde, se non per la posticipazione degli eventi al 430 (anno dell'arconte Apollodoro), la narrazione di Diodoro.

raggiungere il numero complessivo di cinquecento navi: Thuc. 2, 7, 2; Diod. Sic. 12, 41, 1; cf. Intrieri 2020, 29 n. 31 con ulteriore bibl.

⁸⁴ Thuc. 6, 85, 2; vd. anche 7, 57, 7, dove la libertà degli alleati è tuttavia attenuata: indipendenti sì, ma costretti dalla loro condizione di isolani. Cf. Figueira 1990, 67.

⁸⁵ Thuc. 2, 9, 4-6.

⁸⁶ Per la prima notizia sulla partenza di questa spedizione vd. Thuc. 2, 23, 2.

⁸⁷ Thuc. 2, 25. Sull'ubicazione di Metone tra Laconia e Messenia: Shipley 2004, 564-565.

⁸⁸ Su Sollio come colonia 'dipendente' da Corinto e sulla sua posizione sul continente di fronte a Leucade cf. Graham 1983, 119 ss.

⁸⁹ Thuc. 2, 30: *προσηγάγοντο ἄνευ μάχης*. Sulla *polis* di *Astakos* vd. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 358.

Lo storico siceliota, infatti, dopo aver accennato ad alcuni attacchi mossi lungo le coste del Peloponneso col supporto di cinquanta triremi corciresi dallo stratego ateniese Carcino, riferisce che gli Ateniesi, dopo aver saccheggiato le coste dell'Elide e aver conquistato *Pheia*, “ricacciati - infine - alle navi” dagli Elei erano salpati alla volta di Cefallenia e, “guadagnata l'alleanza dell'isola”, avevano ripreso il mare verso Atene⁹⁰.

Che nel mutamento della posizione delle *poleis* di Cefallenia fosse stato a questo punto determinante il timore suscitato dall'appressarsi della flotta ateniese è, tuttavia, chiaramente suggerito da Tuciddide quando, nella rassegna delle forze impegnate in Sicilia nel 415 al fianco di Atene, precisa che, tra gli abitanti delle isole situate intorno al Peloponneso, i Cefalleni e gli Zacinti, pur essendo autonomi, seguivano Atene “soprattutto a causa della loro condizione di isolani, dato che gli Ateniesi erano padroni del mare”⁹¹. Del resto, se la documentazione archeologica sembra suggerire la mancanza al tempo di adeguate fortificazioni per le città di Cefallenia⁹², dai resoconti storiografici è possibile evincere come esse non fossero in realtà in grado di opporre alcuna resistenza ad Atene nemmeno sul mare potendo forse contare, come si vedrà, almeno nella fase in oggetto, soprattutto su truppe di terra⁹³. La loro cauta resistenza, o comunque la loro tensione all'autonomia, trova del resto conferma cinquant'anni più tardi nei comportamenti assunti fra il 375 e il 371 in un contesto in fondo simile a quello appena ricostruito. Dopo essere state nuovamente ‘portate’ dalla parte di Atene da Timoteo⁹⁴, dovevano essersene almeno in parte distaccate, come mostra l'iscrizione del nome della sola Pronni sulla stele comune degli alleati della seconda Lega attica⁹⁵, a fronte della precedente richiesta di alleanza τῶν Κεφα[λ]λήνων, come testimoniato in IG II² 96⁹⁶. Questa ricostruzione trova conferma nelle notizie offerte da Senofonte in merito alle due soste compiute da Ificrate nell'isola nel 373/2. Lo storico riferisce che approdato a Cefallenia, dopo aver ricevuto notizie tranquillizzanti sulla situazione a Corcira, vi si era fermato per far riposare le truppe ma, prima di ripartire, καταστρεφόμενος

⁹⁰ Diod. Sic. 12, 43, 4-5.

⁹¹ Thuc. 7, 57, 7.

⁹² Randsborg 2002, II.

⁹³ Vd. infra 76.

⁹⁴ Diod. Sic. 15, 36, 5: Τιμόθεος δὲ παραλαβὼν τὴν ναυαρχίαν καὶ πλεύσας εἰς τὴν Κεφαλληνίαν, τὰς τ' ἐν αὐτῇ πόλεις προσηγάγετο καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὴν Ἀχαρνανίαν ὁμοίως ἐπείσειεν ἀποκλῖναι πρὸς Ἀθηναίους.

⁹⁵ IG II² 43, ll. 107-108 = Rhodes, Osborne 2003, nr. 22.

⁹⁶ Rhodes, Osborne 2003, nr. 24.

δὲ τὰς ἐν τῇ Κεφαλληνίᾳ πόλεις⁹⁷. Sulla via del ritorno da Corcira vi aveva nuovamente fatto sosta per riscuotere del denaro che gli era stato consegnato “da alcuni spontaneamente, da altri perché costretti con la forza”⁹⁸.

Ritornando alle vicende del 431, è senz'altro significativo che Tucidide avesse tenuto ancora una volta a rammentare la posizione di Cefallenia κατὰ Ἀκαρνανίαν καὶ Λευκάδα, ma anche a precisarne l'articolazione del territorio in quattro città: Pale, Crane, Same e Pronni⁹⁹. Va rilevato che si tratta del primo riferimento nella tradizione storiografica alla presenza nell'isola di quattro *poleis*, dettato, con buona probabilità, non solo da desiderio di completezza informativa ma dalla volontà di far comprendere ai lettori la complessità dell'isola¹⁰⁰, trattandosi di comunità autonome, apparentemente non riconducibili ad alcuna istituzione comune¹⁰¹, pur se condividenti la stessa identità di ‘Cefalleni’¹⁰², soggette a vicissitudini comuni e costrette solo dalle contingenze storiche a contrarre le stesse alleanze.

Spostandoci sul versante peloponnesiaco, l'interesse nutrito in particolare da Corinto all'acquisizione almeno di una base nell'isola, oltre a quanto già evidenziato in merito alle relazioni intessute con Pale, può essere illustrato da un episodio collocato da Tucidide nell'inverno del 431/0. Dopo aver attaccato Astaco e avervi riportato al potere l'acarnano Evarco, forse sulla scorta di questo successo, un corpo di spedizione corinzio forte di ben millecinquecento uomini aveva tentato di attirare dalla propria parte, ma senza successo, anche alcune località acarnane¹⁰³. Lo stesso tentativo

⁹⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 31 (ἀνέπαυε τὸ στράτευμα) e 33. Per Cawkwell 1981, 46, le città dell'isola sarebbero state sottomesse solo in questa fase come testimoniato da IG II² 98 che, pur nella sua lacunosità, sembrerebbe suggerire la presenza sull'isola di magistrati e di una guarnigione ateniese.

⁹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 38.

⁹⁹ Thuc. 2, 30, 2; schol. Thuc. 1, 27. Vd. anche Strab. 10, 2, 10 C 453; 13 C 455.

¹⁰⁰ Sulla Grecia occidentale come area rispetto alla quale Tucidide ritiene necessario o opportuno fornire indicazioni specifiche di tipo geografico cf. Ridley 1981, 41, 44.

¹⁰¹ Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 351-352, in opposizione alle ipotesi di Dreher 1995, 199 n. 116.

¹⁰² Vd. Κεφαλλήνων in IG II² 96 (ma anche IG II² 98; *Agora* XVI 46) in riferimento agli ambasciatori giunti ad Atene nel 375, insieme a quelli di Corcira e dell'Acarnania, per chiedere l'adesione alla seconda Lega attica, mentre nel decreto di Aristotele (IG II² 43) risulta specificato Κεφαλλήνων Προῖνοι. Per ulteriori testimonianze epigrafiche vd. Κεφαλλῆνες ἐκ Παλέων: Bousquet 1938, 334 nr. 4087 e Daux 1944, 121 nr. 32 (Delfi); Κεφαλλ[ῆσιν][ἐκ Παλ]έων FD III 4, 376 (Delfi - 358/7 a.C.); Κεφαλλᾶνι ἐκ Προ[όνων: IG IX 1² 1, 8 (Thermos - 300-250 a.C.); Κεφαλλᾶνι ἐκ Κρα][ν]ίων: IG IX 1, 268 (Opous in Locride); Κεφαλλᾶνεςσι ἐκ Κρανίων: IG IX 1, 276 (Opous in Locride - II sec. a.C.).

¹⁰³ Thuc. 2, 33, 1-2. Astaco era stata successivamente nuovamente liberata dagli Ateniesi alla fine del 429 e ne era divenuta alleata entrando forse anche a far parte della confederazione acarnana (vd. Thuc. 2, 102, 1; cf. Gomme, *HCT* II, 249).

era stato effettuato nei confronti della città cefallenia di Crane¹⁰⁴. Dopo essere sbarcati nel suo territorio e aver concluso un accordo, i Corinzi erano tuttavia rimasti vittime di un inganno: attaccati inaspettatamente erano stati costretti a imbarcarsi e a far ritorno in patria¹⁰⁵. Non è forse un caso che, secondo quanto emerso fino ad ora dalle analisi archeologiche, si possa attribuire a questi anni la prima fase delle fortificazioni di Same e Crane¹⁰⁶, le due città dell'isola sul piano strategico forse più importanti per Atene per le possibilità di approdo, e conseguentemente di controllo delle rotte che costeggiavano l'isola, che esse potevano offrire alle forze attiche.

Nella primavera successiva, un analogo tentativo di conquista era stato rivolto contro Zacinto attaccata e devastata da una flotta al comando di Cnemo, forte di ben cento navi di "Spartani e alleati" e mille opliti spartani. Anche l'attacco contro Zacinto, benché massiccio, non aveva sortito l'effetto sperato: dopo aver devastato "la maggior parte del territorio dell'isola" i Peloponnesiaci erano stati costretti ad abbandonarla per la resistenza dei suoi abitanti¹⁰⁷.

L'episodio appena narrato offre lo spunto, come si è già fatto per Cefallenia, per allargare lo sguardo, anche in questo caso in forma oltremodo concisa, su quel lavoro culturale che, anche nel mondo greco, preparava in qualche modo e accompagnava l'azione espansiva o la politica estera dei diversi attori.

Nel soffermarsi sull'attacco condotto contro Zacinto dallo spartano Cnemo, Tucidide coglie infatti l'occasione per fornire qualche elemento ulteriore sull'isola. Oltre a richiamarne la posizione geografica di fronte all'Elide, lo storico ne precisa infatti l'origine achea degli abitanti prima di ricordarne la comunanza d'armi con gli Ateniesi: εἰσὶ δὲ Ἀχαιῶν τῶν ἐκ Πελοποννήσου ἄποικοι καὶ Ἀθηναίοις ξυνεμάχου¹⁰⁸. Come suggerito dalla Fragoulaki, anche al di là della possibilità di intendere il καὶ come equivalente di ὥστε καὶ, con conseguente implicazione di un chiaro nesso logico fra il legame di sangue con gli Achei e l'alleanza con Atene, "statement about Zacynthus' colonial identity and its alliance with Athens

¹⁰⁴ Thuc. 2, 33, 3. Su Crane cf. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 364.

¹⁰⁵ Thuc. 2, 33, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Randsborg 2002, 30, 264-281.

¹⁰⁷ Thuc. 2, 66, 2. Il valore di questo *raid* è rimarcato da Lendon (2010, 142-143) che lo considera in generale un successo da parte peloponnesiaca in quanto avrebbe mostrato le difficoltà degli Ateniesi nel proteggere i propri alleati. Fronda, Giroux 2019, 303, ritengono invece che il fallimento dell'impresa non avesse fatto altro che rendere evidente la perdita di terreno dei Peloponnesiaci.

¹⁰⁸ Thuc. 2, 66, 1. Per la plausibilità dell'affermazione tucididea vd. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 374.

subtly points to a kinship tie between the two areas”¹⁰⁹. L’ampia diffusione nel corso del V secolo e, in particolare, negli anni turbolenti della Guerra del Peloponneso, di tradizioni relative ai legami di parentela esistenti fra Achei e Ioni¹¹⁰, doveva infatti rendere ben comprensibile ai lettori il ‘sottile’ riferimento dello storico ateniese.

Torniamo, tuttavia, alle operazioni sul campo. Forze peloponnesiache (terrestri e navali) ritornano nell’area nell’estate successiva (429) su richiesta di Ambraciotti e Caoni. Obiettivo di Ambracia, e segnatamente di Corinto¹¹¹, era quello di assoggettare l’Acarnania e farla così defezionare da Atene. Particolarmente interessanti per la nostra analisi risultano le argomentazioni addotte dagli inviati della colonia corinzia di fronte agli Spartani a sostegno della propria richiesta nel resoconto offerto da Tucidide:

“se gli Spartani avessero partecipato con loro alla spedizione con proprie navi e truppe di fanteria, una volta impadronitisi dell’Acarnania – poiché gli Acarnani della zona costiera non avevano la possibilità di accorrere in aiuto – facilmente avrebbero potuto sottomettere Zacinto e Cefallenia. Le condizioni del periplo del Peloponneso¹¹² sarebbero state allora ben diverse per gli Ateniesi, e vi era anche la speranza di poter conquistare Naupatto”¹¹³.

A due anni dall’inizio del conflitto, le preoccupazioni di Sparta in merito alla progressiva acquisizione da parte di Atene di postazioni utili al controllo del periplo del Peloponneso dovevano essere cresciute. Nonostante la richiesta degli Ambraciotti, come suggerisce l’associazione a essi dei Caoni¹¹⁴, comportava l’intervento di Sparta in un conflitto areale locale, le ricadute che la perdita del supporto degli Acarnani avrebbero potuto avere sulla presenza di Atene nell’area erano ben chiare. Essa avrebbe potuto, infatti, favorire non solo un diverso posizionamento di Cefallenia e Zacinto, ma anche, come suggerito da Lewis, l’isolamento di Corcira¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁹ Fragoulaki 2013, 251-252.

¹¹⁰ Vd. Hdt. 7, 94 e 8, 73, 1 con l’analisi di Fragoulaki 2013, 253-255.

¹¹¹ Thuc. 2, 80, 3: ἦσαν δὲ Κορίνθιοι ξυμπροθυμούμενοι μάλιστα τοῖς Ἀμπρακιώταις ἀποίκοις οὖσιν.

¹¹² Va, infatti, precisato col Wilson 1987, 106 che il termine παράπλου indicava la rotta che dalle coste occidentali del Peloponneso conduceva lungo le coste della Grecia occidentale fino a Corcira.

¹¹³ Thuc. 2, 80, 1 (trad. Cagnetta).

¹¹⁴ Sulle posizioni assunte dagli *ethne* epiroti nel corso del conflitto peloponnesiaco, i loro rapporti con Ambracia e il ruolo giocato nella vicenda cf. Fantasia 2017, 49 ss. (con ulteriore bibl.).

¹¹⁵ Lewis 1992b, 399.

La spedizione, scarsamente coordinata, si sarebbe rivelata un disastro, in particolare per la resistenza della città di Strato e l'inaspettata vittoria delle venti navi ateniesi di stanza a Naupatto al comando di Formione sulle quarantasette navi corinzie dirette verso le coste dell'Acarnania¹¹⁶. Radunatisi a Cillene, dove erano stati raggiunti da Leucade dalle forze di Cnemo, e successivamente da tre inviati spartani "quali consiglieri nella conduzione della flotta", i Peloponnesiaci avevano sfidato nuovamente gli Ateniesi a battaglia¹¹⁷, ma lo scontro, avvenuto verso la fine dell'estate, si era sostanzialmente risolto con un nulla di fatto¹¹⁸ tanto da indurre gli Spartani a porre fine alle operazioni.

Se sul versante peloponnesiaco erano Cefallenia e Zacinto a sollecitare l'interesse di Sparta, sull'altro fronte era Leucade a richiamare l'attenzione di Atene.

L'isola/penisola rappresentava, infatti, un vero e proprio caposaldo corinzio nell'area, capace di supportare, anche con l'indiscusso attivismo della sua flotta¹¹⁹, le operazioni dei Peloponnesiaci nello Ionio e offrire alle loro navi un approdo sicuro. È quanto si verifica, e.g., nel 427 quando i Peloponnesiaci impegnati a Corcira con una flotta di ca. quaranta navi, rafforzate da tredici triremi di Leucade e Ambracia¹²⁰, avvertiti con segnali di fuoco proprio da Leucade¹²¹ dell'imminente arrivo di sessanta navi ateniesi, erano riusciti a evitare lo scontro navigando di notte lungo la costa fino a raggiungere e superare l'istmo¹²²: una manovra ripetuta nel 425 quando, sempre provenienti da Corcira, sessanta navi peloponnesiache

¹¹⁶ Thuc. 2, 80-84.

¹¹⁷ Thuc. 2, 83-85, 3.

¹¹⁸ Thuc. 2, 90-92. Come ricorda lo storico a 2, 92, 4-5 entrambi gli schieramenti avevano eretto un trofeo.

¹¹⁹ Limitatamente alla guerra archidamica vd. Thuc. 2, 81, 3; 2, 91, 2-3; 2, 92, 3; 2, 92, 6; 3, 69, 1.

¹²⁰ Thuc. 3, 69, 1. Si trattava della flotta che sotto il comando di Alcida, dopo aver abbandonato alla loro sorte i Mitilenesi, si era portata a Cillene e quindi a Corcira dilaniata dalla guerra civile (Thuc. 3, 69, 1 ss.). Nel passo lo storico accenna alla presenza a Cillene anche di Brasida, inviato da Sparta come consigliere di Alcida, e con buona probabilità non estraneo al reclutamento delle triremi fornite dalle due colonie corinzie, al fianco delle quali, secondo Roisman 1987, 404, poteva aver già combattuto nel 429. Sulla *stasis* corcirese del 427-425 e la ricostruzione degli interventi ateniesi e spartani cf. Intriери 2002, 68-119; Fantasia 2008, 167-201.

¹²¹ Per la possibile presenza di una rete di punti di segnalazione lungo la costa epirota fra Leucade e la postazione spartana alle Sibota cf. Schmidt 1890, 76; Busolt 1904, 1050 n. 1.

¹²² Vd. Thuc. 3, 81, 1: οἱ μὲν οὖν Πελοποννήσιοι τῆς νυκτὸς εὐθὺς κατὰ τάχος ἐχομίζοντο ἐπ' οἴκου παρὰ τὴν γῆν· καὶ ὑπερνεγκόντες τὸν Λευκαδίων ἰσθμὸν τὰς ναῦς, ὅπως μὴ περιπλέοντες ὀφθῶσιν, ἀποκομίζονται.

erano riuscite a raggiungere Pilo dopo aver superato ancora una volta l'istmo sfuggendo alle navi attiche di stanza a Zacinto¹²³.

Su Leucade gli interessi ateniesi venivano a saldarsi con quelli degli alleati Acarnani, da sempre rivolti all'acquisizione del suo controllo¹²⁴. A ripercorrere le operazioni congiunte condotte nell'area sembra, tuttavia, di poter cogliere nelle scelte operate da Acarnani e Ateniesi quasi una strisciante, reciproca, preoccupazione in merito a un eventuale, rispettivo, eccessivo rafforzamento nell'area.

Gli attacchi condotti contro Leucade dalle forze ateniesi non sembrano, infatti, sostenuti dalla dovuta determinazione. Difficilmente può, e.g., essere inteso come un tentativo contro la colonia corinzia, a meno di non voler pensare alla possibilità di un colpo di mano, lo spostamento di Asopio verso di essa nell'estate del 428, dopo il fallimento della spedizione contro Eniade e il congedo della fanteria composta πανδημεὶ da forze acarnane¹²⁵. Gli obiettivi del figlio di Formione, che in questa diversione aveva trovato la morte, dovevano essere infatti ben diversi da quelli delle trenta navi ateniesi che, successivamente, nell'estate del 426, "in missione intorno al Peloponneso" al comando di Demostene e Procle, dopo aver annientato la guarnigione insediata a Ellomeno, avevano attaccato Leucade in forze col cospicuo contributo degli Acarnani e di contingenti forniti anche da Zacinto e Cefallenia, mentre Corcira aveva inviato quindici navi¹²⁶. Anche questo attacco, tuttavia, non aveva conseguito gli esiti sperati. Contrariamente alle richieste degli Acarnani che, vedendo a portata di mano la possibilità di acquisirne il controllo e di inglobarla nella loro Lega, spingevano affinché Leucade fosse isolata con la costruzione di un muro che ne avrebbe determinato la resa¹²⁷, lo stratego ateniese aveva invece scelto di rinunciare all'assedio optando, su richiesta dei Naupatti, per un'operazione contro

¹²³ Thuc. 4, 8, 2; infra 74-75. Per un parallelo fra questi passi e quello riferibile all'Istmo di Corinto (Thuc. 8, 7-8) cf. Pettegrew 2011, 566.

¹²⁴ Nonostante ripetuti tentativi, Leucade sarebbe entrata a far parte della confederazione acarnana solo tra il 280 e il 263. Vd. IG IX 1² 3A; cf. Funke, Gehrke, Kolonas 1993, 134.

¹²⁵ Thuc. 3, 7.

¹²⁶ Thuc. 3, 94, 1: καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν τριάκοντα νεῶν Ἀθηναῖοι περὶ Πελοπόννησον ὄντες πρῶτον ἐν Ἐλλομενῷ τῆς Λευκαδίας φρουροὺς τινὰς λοχήσαντες διέφθειραν, ἔπειτα ὕστερον ἐπὶ Λευκάδα μείζονι στόλῳ ἦλθον, Ἀκαρνᾶσί τε πᾶσιν, οἷ πανδημεὶ πλὴν Οἰνιαδῶν ξυνέσποντο, καὶ Ζακυνθίοις καὶ Κεφαλλήσι καὶ Κερκυραίων πέντε καὶ δέκα ναυσίν. Di στρατιώται messi a disposizione di Demostene dai Cefalleni, dagli Acarnani e dai Messeni di Naupatto parla esplicitamente Diodoro (12, 60, 1: οὗτος δὲ προσλαβόμενος παρὰ τῶν Κερκυραίων τριῆρεις πεντεκαίδεκα καὶ παρὰ τῶν Κεφαλλήνων καὶ Ἀκαρνάνων καὶ Μεσσηνίων τῶν ἐν Ναυπάκτῳ στρατιώτας ἔπλευσεν ἐπὶ τὴν Λευκάδα) il cui resoconto degli eventi non si discosta per il resto da quello tucidideo se non per la mancata menzione degli Zacinti.

¹²⁷ Thuc. 3, 94, 2.

gli Etoli¹²⁸. Sulla scelta di Demostene, poco felice nel suo esito finale, aveva probabilmente pesato una visione strategica che annetteva grande valore alla conquista dell'Etolia nell'ottica dell'apertura di un corridoio che, attraverso la Doride e la Focide, avrebbe permesso agli Ateniesi di attaccare la Beozia¹²⁹.

Da parte acarnana sintomatico è invece il rifiuto opposto ad Atene, sempre nel 426, dopo il massacro di Idomene, alla richiesta di supporto in vista di un attacco diretto contro Ambracia e ciò – teste Tuciddide – nel timore che “se la città fosse caduta in mano agli Ateniesi, in questi essi avrebbero avuto vicini ben più molesti”¹³⁰. Gli Acarnani si erano anzi affrettati a stipulare un trattato di pace e alleanza della durata di cento anni con Anfilochi e Ambraciotti che, pur espressione della “debolezza contrattuale” di Ambracia, rendeva evidente la volontà acarnana di trovare una soluzione, senza interferenze esterne, ai contrasti fra gli Stati che si affacciavano sul suo golfo¹³¹.

La sconfitta di Ambracia e l'accordo da questa stipulato con Acarnani e Anfilochi segnano il fallimento del tentativo di Corinto di ribaltare i rapporti di forza nell'area a vantaggio dello schieramento peloponnesiaco venendo così a determinare la sostanziale scomparsa di questo teatro di guerra “dall'agenda militare” di Sparta e Atene¹³². Ciò non comporta, tuttavia, una diminuzione dell'importanza delle isole dello Ionio quali alleate e basi di appoggio per i due schieramenti, come si evince dalle pur scarse notizie offerte dalle fonti in riferimento ai fatti di Pilo del 425 e, un decennio dopo, alla seconda spedizione ateniese in Sicilia.

Leucade aveva continuato, infatti, a costituire un punto di approdo prezioso per le navi peloponnesiache e una via di fuga in situazioni strategicamente complesse. L'attraversamento dell'istmo e la successiva navigazione fra la costa di Leucade e l'odierna isola di Meganisi, o fra le odierne Meganisi e Kalamos, non solo consentiva un allontanamento più

¹²⁸ Thuc. 3, 95, 1-2: “Lasciò dunque Leucade con tutte le forze di cui disponeva, contro il volere degli Acarnani, e avanzò lungo la costa sino a Sollio. Là comunicò agli Acarnani il suo disegno, cui essi però non aderirono perché non si era attuato il blocco di Leucade. La spedizione contro gli Etoli fu condotta allora solo con le truppe restanti, vale a dire Cefalleni, Messeni, Zacinti e trecento soldati ateniesi imbarcati sulle navi attiche” (trad. Cagnetta).

¹²⁹ Cf. Lewis 1992b, 410; Fantasia 2012, 77 e 101-103. Che la diversione fosse stata determinata dalle posizioni di Demostene e non da una decisione dell'assemblea ateniese sembra emergere anche dalla scelta operata dallo stratego dopo il fallimento dell'attacco contro l'Etolia di non far ritorno ad Atene per timore delle possibili reazioni del demo.

¹³⁰ Thuc. 3, 113, 6 (trad. Cagnetta); cf. Freitag 1996, 83-86.

¹³¹ Fantasia 2017, 68-69.

¹³² Cf. Fantasia 2017, 69 ss.

rapido ma scongiurava anche la possibilità di scontri non voluti con le flotte ateniesi in navigazione o pattugliamento nelle acque antistanti¹³³.

È quanto si verifica per le sessanta navi peloponnesiache che, dopo aver ricevuto l'ordine di portarsi rapidamente da Corcira verso Pilo, erano riuscite a sfuggire al controllo delle navi attiche di stanza a Zacinto¹³⁴. Il ruolo svolto dalla più meridionale delle isole dello Ionio come base di appoggio della flotta ateniese nell'area è del resto rimarcato dal riferimento ulteriore alle due navi inviatevi segretamente da Demostene per chiedere allo stratego Eurimedonte di affrettarsi anch'egli con la flotta verso Pilo¹³⁵. Le motivazioni della sosta a Zacinto della flotta ateniese guidata da Eurimedonte e Sofocle non sono del tutto chiare. Secondo la ricostruzione tucididea si trattava, infatti, della stessa flotta che, diretta in Sicilia¹³⁶, ma con l'incarico di fermarsi a Corcira¹³⁷, dopo aver aiutato Demostene a conquistare e fortificare la posizione di Pilo e averlo lasciato in loco con cinque navi, aveva ripreso "in fretta" la navigazione verso la propria destinazione originaria¹³⁸. Al di là delle ipotesi avanzate in passato dalla critica sulla possibile intenzione degli Ateniesi di provare a intercettare la flotta peloponnesiaca¹³⁹, è possibile che la sosta si fosse invece resa necessaria, dopo le operazioni a Pilo, per provvedere a qualche controllo e agli opportuni approvvigionamenti prima di far vela verso Corcira. L'accoglienza ed evidentemente l'assistenza offerta da Zacinto a una flotta di ben trentacinque navi non solo conferma il saldo legame fra l'isola e Atene, ma costituisce anche una ulteriore testimonianza del suo valore strategico¹⁴⁰.

¹³³ Cf. Busolt 1904, 1050 n. 3; Gomme, *HCT* II, 367-368.

¹³⁴ Thuc. 4, 8, 2: περιήγγελλον δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Πελοπόννησον βοηθεῖν ὅτι τάχιστα ἐπὶ Πύλον καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς ἐν τῇ Κερκύρα ναῦς σφῶν τὰς ἐξήκοντα ἐπεμψαν, αἱ ὑπερνεχθεῖσαι τὸν Λευκαδίων ἰσθμὸν καὶ λαθοῦσαι τὰς ἐν Ζακύνθῳ Ἀττικὰς ναῦς ἀφικνοῦνται ἐπὶ Πύλον.

¹³⁵ Thuc. 4, 8, 3 e 5 (con ulteriore menzione della provenienza delle navi da Zacinto).

¹³⁶ Thuc. 3, 115, 5.

¹³⁷ Thuc. 4, 2, 2-3; 4, 46, 1 (per l'arrivo a Corcira).

¹³⁸ Thuc. 4, 5, 2: ταῖς δὲ πλείοσι ναυσὶ τὸν ἐς τὴν Κέρκυραν πλοῦν καὶ Σικελίαν ἡπείγοντο.

¹³⁹ Kagan 1974, 224.

¹⁴⁰ Il valore dell'isola in relazione alla rotta verso Occidente è testimoniato ancora, cinquant'anni dopo, dalla notizia che la vede nel 357/6 ca. come luogo di raduno delle forze raccolte dal siracusano Dione in vista del suo ritorno in Sicilia (Plut. *Dio* 22, 8-25, 2; Diod. Sic. 16, 6, 5 e 9, 4).

4. Le isole dello Ionio nelle rotte verso la Sicilia

Del ruolo svolto dalle isole dello Ionio non si ha più notizia fino agli eventi connessi alla *megale strateia* ateniese in Sicilia del 415-13. La conclusione nel sangue della *stasis* corcirese con la vittoria del *demos*, quella della prima spedizione ateniese in Sicilia a seguito della pace di Gela e, nello stesso tempo, lo spostamento dell'asse del conflitto peloponnesiaco verso l'area traco-calcidica dovevano aver portato necessariamente a un allentamento della presenza e delle operazioni di Atene e Sparta nello Ionio.

Prima di soffermarci sul ritorno di Atene in Sicilia, che vede riaffiorare nei resoconti storiografici cenni pur indiretti, che danno tuttavia conto del grande valore dell'area ionica nelle rotte verso Occidente, va ricordato che nell'estate del 424 una flotta ateniese sotto la guida di Nicia, Nicostrato e Autocle aveva proceduto all'assoggettamento dell'isola di Citera completando così la cintura di postazioni a controllo del periplo del Peloponneso. Nel dar conto della spedizione, Tucidide precisa che l'isola era oggetto di grande attenzione "perché offriva un approdo alle navi mercantili provenienti dall'Egitto e dalla Libia e al tempo stesso impediva ai pirati di infestare la Laconia dal mare, l'unico lato dal quale potesse essere danneggiata"¹⁴¹, venendo così non solo a evidenziare il valore delle importazioni via mare per la Laconia¹⁴², ma anche a confermare i piani ateniesi di isolamento del Peloponneso.

La costante attenzione di Atene nei confronti delle isole dello Ionio affiora anche dalla notizia riferita all'estate del 420 del trasferimento a Crane di Cefallenia dei Messeni, degli Iloti e dei disertori fuggiti dalla Laconia in precedenza radunatisi a Pilo¹⁴³. Le fonti non offrono indicazioni sulle motivazioni della scelta, ma si può forse ipotizzare che essa fosse stata determinata dalla volontà di rafforzare il versante occidentale dell'isola, in passato oggetto delle attenzioni di Corinto attraverso i legami intessuti con Pale e il tentativo contro Crane¹⁴⁴. Di quelli insediati nel *phrourion*, i soli Iloti sarebbero stati successivamente riportati a Pilo dagli Ateniesi nell'inverno del 419/18 a parziale accoglimento della richiesta di reinsediamento nel

¹⁴¹ Thuc. 4, 53-54 (trad. Favuzzi, Santelia).

¹⁴² Fantasia 2012, 99.

¹⁴³ Thuc. 5, 35, 7: (...) ἐξαγαγεῖν ἐκ Πύλου Μεσσηνίους καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Εἰλωτάς τε καὶ ὅσοι ἡττομολήκεσαν ἐκ τῆς Λακωνικῆς· καὶ κατώκισαν αὐτοὺς ἐν Κρανίοις τῆς Κεφαλληνίας. Come precisato da Diodoro (14, 34, 2), in riferimento al loro allontanamento dall'isola da parte degli Spartani nel 401 (*infra* 79), essi erano stati insediati ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ φρουρίον. Per la possibile attribuzione a questo periodo della costruzione di fortificazioni nell'area centrale del porto e l'aggiunta di un bastione alla cortina muraria dell'acropoli vd. Randsborg 2002, II 281 e 286.

¹⁴⁴ Vd. *supra* 70.

caposaldo messenico di “Messeni e Iloti” (τοὺς Μεσσηνίους καὶ Εἰλωτας) avanzata dagli Argivi come risposta all’invio via mare a Epidaurò, città con la quale Argo era in guerra, di un presidio di trecento uomini da parte degli Spartani¹⁴⁵.

4.1. La spedizione ateniese in Sicilia

Se Corcira costituisce nel 415, e per tutto il corso della spedizione, il punto di raccolta delle forze ateniesi e di quelle dei loro alleati diretti in Sicilia¹⁴⁶, sull’altro versante è Leucade a svolgere un analogo ruolo nel 414 per la flottiglia peloponnesiaca agli ordini di Gilippo¹⁴⁷ inviata in aiuto di Siracusa. Giunto a Leucade con le navi spartane e quelle di Corinto, allarmato da false notizie che riferivano ormai di un blocco totale di Siracusa da parte ateniese, volendo almeno “salvare l’Italia”, lo Spartano si era portato con grande rapidità a Taranto, seguendo una rotta d’altura, con due navi spartane e due di Corinto¹⁴⁸. Le rimanenti forze corinzie avevano successivamente anch’esse affrontato il mare aperto, e non proprio a ranghi serrati, in direzione di Siracusa¹⁴⁹. Il grosso delle truppe, composto da seicento opliti spartani e trecento beoti, aveva, infine, raggiunto Siracusa a partire da Capo Tenaro su navi da carico (*olkades*)¹⁵⁰.

Come risulta evidente, i soccorsi avevano seguito tre rotte diverse, alternative¹⁵¹, studiate per evitare qualsiasi possibile blocco da parte delle navi ateniesi, soprattutto di quelle di stanza a Naupatto, per distrarre le quali i Corinzi avevano posizionato venticinque triremi sulla costa opposta¹⁵². La ricostruzione offerta da Tucidide lascia, tuttavia, ipotizzare l’assenza, o perlomeno l’ininfluyente presenza di navi ateniesi alla rada a Zacinto o Cefallenia¹⁵³ e, ancora una volta, la difficoltà per le due isole di

¹⁴⁵ Thuc. 5, 56, 1-3.

¹⁴⁶ Vd. Thuc. 6, 32, 2; 42-44, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Per la decisione dell’invio di soccorsi alle *poleis* siceliote e l’affidamento del comando a Gilippo vd. Thuc. 6, 93, 2-3.

¹⁴⁸ Thuc. 6, 104, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Thuc. 7, 2, 1; 7, 7, 1. La flotta corinzia era composta da quindici navi: dieci di Corinto, due di Leucade e tre di Ambracia.

¹⁵⁰ Thuc. 7, 19, 3-4.

¹⁵¹ Si vd. anche l’invio di una nave dalla Sicilia verso il Peloponneso latrice di notizie (Thuc. 7, 25, 1), o la traversata dall’Elide verso la Sicilia di una nave con opliti corinzi, bloccata in un primo momento da Demostene (Thuc. 7, 31, 1).

¹⁵² Thuc. 7, 19, 5.

¹⁵³ Wilson 1987, 109.

fornire qualsiasi aiuto sul mare. Contrariamente a quanto attestato per Corcira e Leucade sin dagli inizi del conflitto peloponnesiaco, come si è potuto notare e contrariamente a quanto inteso in alcuni casi dai moderni sulla scia del Beloch¹⁵⁴, le fonti antiche non fanno esplicita menzione della fornitura di navi da parte di Cefallenia e Zacinti, né di alcun pattugliamento navale condotto in proprio nell'area, essendo i contributi noti limitati apparentemente alla sola fornitura di truppe di terra¹⁵⁵. Questo, che appare come un dato costante¹⁵⁶, e che non esclude ovviamente il possesso di navi, pur in numero esiguo, da parte delle *poleis* delle due isole, emerge anche dai resoconti relativi alla rotta seguita e alle soste operate nel 414 dalla flotta di Demostene in navigazione verso la Sicilia.

Tucidide narra, infatti, che nel suo spostamento dalla Laconia verso Corcira, lungo la rotta usuale per gli Ateniesi, lo stratego si era imbattuto a *Pheia* in Elide in una nave da carico con a bordo opliti corinzi diretti in Sicilia. La nave era stata attaccata e distrutta dagli Ateniesi ma gli opliti corinzi erano riusciti a fuggire e, successivamente, a compiere la traversata con un'altra nave¹⁵⁷. Portatosi, quindi, a Zacinto e Cefallenia, Demostene vi aveva imbarcato degli opliti e ne aveva richiesto altri a Naupatto per poi approdare in Acarnania, ad Alizia e Anattorio¹⁵⁸, dove aveva arruolato frombolieri e tiratori¹⁵⁹. Mentre era impegnato in queste azioni, era stato raggiunto da Eurimedonte, “sulla via di ritorno dalla Sicilia” e, successivamente, da Conone preoccupato per le venticinque navi corinzie ormeggiate di fronte a Naupatto¹⁶⁰. Dopo aver provveduto al rafforzamento della flotta ateniese a Naupatto con l'invio di dieci ulteriori navi¹⁶¹, Eurimedonte prima, con l'ordine di arruolare opliti e navi, e Demostene

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Beloch 1916, 290.

¹⁵⁵ Vd. *supra* 68 Come rilevato da Thiry 2001, 142-143, Cefallenia e Zacinto possono essere inquadrati in età classica fra quelle isole che, contrariamente e.g. a Corcira, mostravano una *insularité passive*, cioè la rinuncia alla costruzione di una flotta consistente e all'impegno nelle attività commerciali. Per quanto riguarda le attività commerciali la rinuncia va intesa solo in riferimento a quelle ad ampio raggio non certo alla navigazione di piccolo cabotaggio nelle acque dello Ionio.

¹⁵⁶ A eccezione della menzione delle quattro navi di Pale impegnate al fianco di Corinto nel 435 (vd. *supra* 63), bisogna, infatti, attendere l'ultimo quarto del III sec. per avere esplicita menzione di una flotta cefallenia in azione. Vd. Polyb. 4, 6, 2 e 8; cf. Mataranga 2021, 541-551.

¹⁵⁷ Thuc. 7, 31, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Anattorio era stata sottratta al controllo della madrepatria Corinto da una spedizione congiunta di Ateniesi e Acarnani nel 425 e quindi occupata da questi ultimi: vd. Thuc. 4, 49.

¹⁵⁹ Thuc. 7, 31, 2 e 5.

¹⁶⁰ Thuc. 7, 31, 3-4.

¹⁶¹ Thuc. 7, 31, 5.

successivamente, dopo aver completato gli arruolamenti di uomini nelle località “nei dintorni” dell’Acarnania, si erano portati a Corcira dalla quale avevano attraversato “con tutto quanto l’esercito lo Ionio fino al Capo Iapigio” per poi proseguire la navigazione verso la Sicilia lungo le coste dell’Italia¹⁶².

Come è noto, l’enorme flotta ateniese impegnata in Sicilia non avrebbe più ripercorso a ritroso la rotta seguita nei due anni precedenti e nulla ci è riferito di dettagliato sulle rotte seguite dalle navi peloponnesiache né da quelle siceliote e italiote che dal 412 in poi si sarebbero spinte nell’Egeo¹⁶³.

5. Epilogo

Con la tragica, per Atene, conclusione della spedizione in Sicilia e il successivo riaccendersi della guerra nel quadrante orientale dell’Egeo, le isole e le comunità dell’area bagnata dallo Ionio ritornano storiograficamente in un cono d’ombra. A eccezione del riferimento alla partecipazione di navi di Leucade e Ambracia alla Guerra ionica¹⁶⁴, di esse si ha nuovamente menzione solo in relazione alle operazioni militari condotte nell’area da Sparta dopo il 404 a partire dalla guerra punitiva mossa contro l’Elide. Al di là delle motivazioni più specifiche attinenti ai complessi e mutevoli rapporti fra Sparta e l’Elide, sembra evidente l’interesse della *polis* laconica, la cui gestione dell’egemonia non poteva più prescindere dall’impegno sul mare, all’assunzione del controllo di una base portuale importante come Cillene e con essa della stessa rotta verso nord in precedenza sorvegliata da Atene. Significativamente, secondo la ricostruzione degli eventi offerta da Diodoro, il conflitto con l’Elide era stato immediatamente seguito nel 401 da una spedizione contro i Messeni insediati dagli Ateniesi a Naupatto e a Cefallenia. Dopo aver liberato dagli occupanti le due piazzeforti, Sparta si era tuttavia limitata a riconsegnare queste ultime rispettivamente ai Locresi e ai Cefalleni¹⁶⁵. Nonostante Cefallenia rappresenti il punto più a nord delle terre bagnate dallo Ionio interessato in questa fase dalle operazioni

¹⁶² Thuc. 7, 33, 3 ss.

¹⁶³ Cf. Intrieri 2020, 149 ss.

¹⁶⁴ Thuc. 8, 103, 3.

¹⁶⁵ Diod. Sic. 14, 34, 2; di esuli messeni da “Zacinto” e Naupatto accolti a Messina da Dionisio I di Siracusa parla invece a 14, 78, 5. Sul legame fra questi eventi e la guerra contro l’Elide cf. Funke 1980, 40-41 e n. 43. Per l’insediamento dei Messeni a Naupatto, al termine della III guerra messenica, vd. Thuc. 1, 103 e Diod. Sic. 15, 66, 4-5; per l’istallazione a Crane di Cefallenia, Thuc. 5, 35 (*supra* 76).

spartane, l'atteggiamento in fondo accondiscendente riservato ai Cefalleni nell'occasione lascia ipotizzare una posizione altrettanto indulgente nei confronti di Corcira e il precoce riattivarsi di rapporti di *philia* con la più settentrionale delle isole dello Ionio¹. Alla *polis* laconica bastava evidentemente aver riacquisito il pieno controllo dello Ionio meridionale e dell'accesso al Golfo di Corinto². Il pericolo di accerchiamento e isolamento del Peloponneso, anche mediante l'assunzione del controllo delle isole dello Ionio, almeno per il momento, era stato sventato.

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Abbreviazioni

BMC = *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum*, London 1887-.

Dolcetti = *Ferecide di Atene. Testimonianze e frammenti*, a cura di P. Dolcetti, Alessandria 2004.

HCT = A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, K.J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, I-V, Oxford 1945-1981.

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¹⁶⁶ Intrieri 2015, 60-61.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Falkner 1996, 17-25; Roy 1997; Schepens 2004, 88-89.

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Le isole dello Ionio nel confronto tra Sparta e Atene

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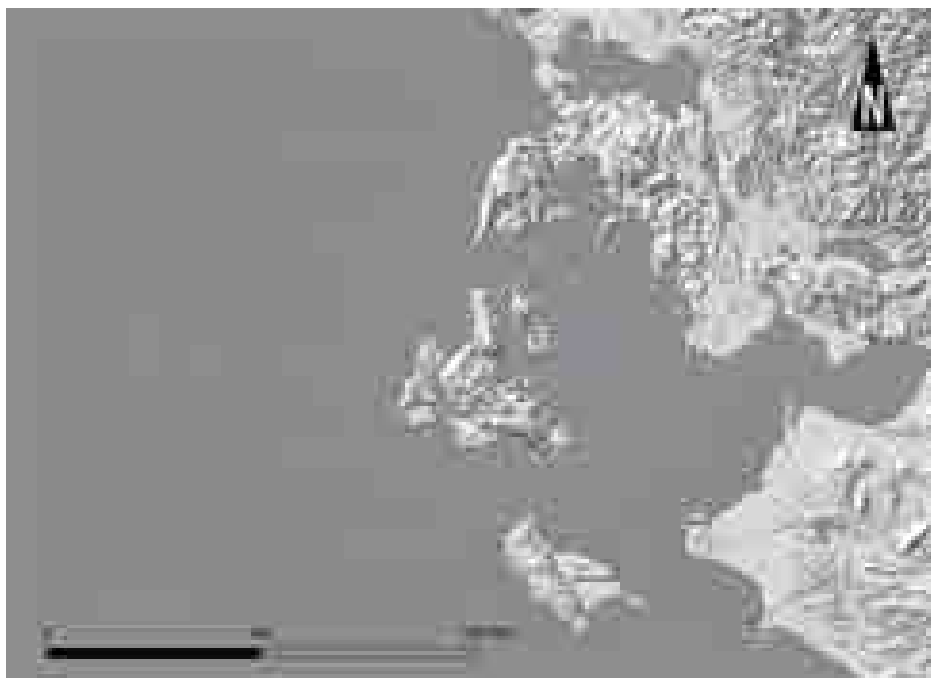


Fig. 1 . Le isole meridionali dello Ionio. (Elaborazione grafica di Edoardo Arioti).

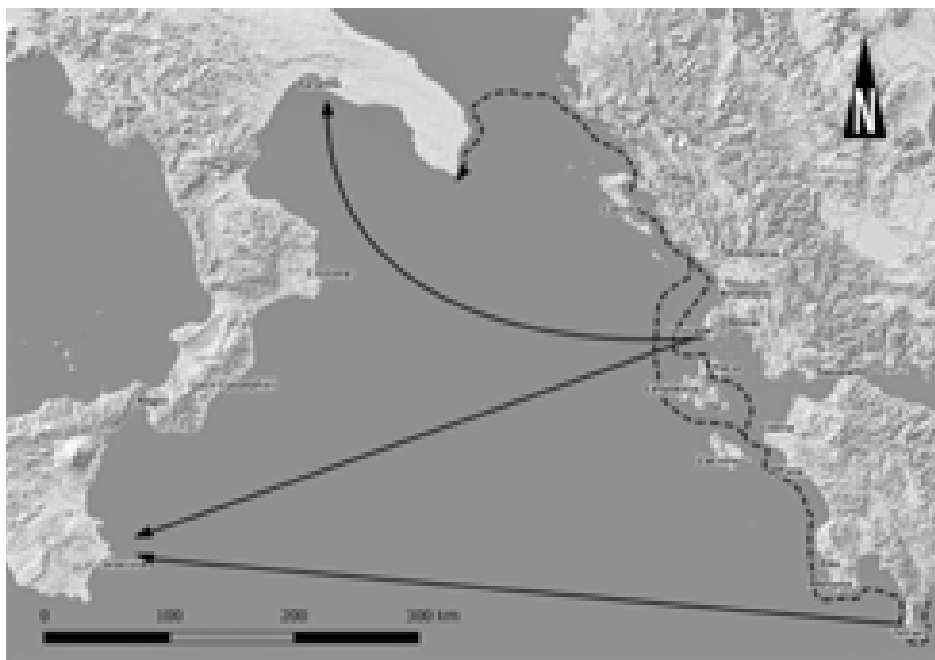


Fig. 2. Possibili rotte seguite dalle flotte attiche e da quelle peloponnesiache durante la spedizione ateniese in Sicilia del 415-413 a.C. (Elaborazione grafica di Edoardo Arioti).

DIE IONISCHEN INSELN UND DIE GRIECHISCHEN BUNDESSTAATEN

1. Einleitung

Die Konzentration liegt auf den Inseln im sog. Westgriechischen Inselbogen, der von Zakynthos bis Leukas reicht, den C. Morgan in ihrer grundsätzlichen Abhandlung als „distinctive islands kosmos“ bezeichnet hat¹. Die Insel Kerkyra bleibt außen vor. Auch Ithaka wird nicht berücksichtigt, da die Insel nicht das Interesse von Bundesstaaten auf dem Festland auf sich gezogen hat². Der Sammelname „Ionische Inseln“ hat in der Antike nicht existiert. In den antiken Quellen ist von Ionischer Golf³ bzw. Ionischer Pontos⁴ die Rede, und die Bezeichnungen beziehen sich auf den südlichen Teil der Adria zwischen Italien und Griechenland. Einige der infrage kommenden Inseln werden mit dem akarnanischen Festland und der Peloponnes als regionale Einheit betrachtet, die vor dem Golf von Korinth liegt⁵.

Das Thema Insularität⁶ mit einem Blick auf die Ionischen Inseln und die Entwicklung der griechischen Bundesstaatlichkeit bedarf einer generellen Erläuterung. Es geht um die Frage, ob auch Insel-Einheiten, die durch das Meer vom Festland getrennt sind, politisch in Bundesstaaten vereint worden sind, wobei man aber nicht nur an die Integration von Poleis in Insellage denken muss. Im 4. Jh. v. Chr. hatten Achaier Kalydon, Pleuron und Naupaktos, durch den Golf von Korinth getrennte Poleis, in ihren Besitz genommen und den Bewohnern das achäische Bundesbürgerrecht verliehen⁷.

¹ Morgan 2016, 31; vgl. Zoumbaki 2018, 77-107.

² Morgan 2007, 71-86; Pascual 2022, 495-527.

³ Hekat. frg. 91, 92; Skylax, *FGrHist* 709, T 4; Hdt. 6, 127; Thuk. 1, 24, 1.

⁴ Hdt. 7, 20. Eur. *Phoen.* 208.

⁵ Thuk. 2, 30, 2; 7, 57, 6; Strab. 2, 5, 20; 8, 2, 2. Dazu Strauch 1997, 216-217.

⁶ Lättsch 2005; Kouremenos 2018.

⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 4, 6, 1. Merker 1989, 303-11.

1. Bundesstaaten entwickelten sich auf einer Insel: Auf größeren Inseln wie Kreta⁸, Euböia⁹, Keos¹⁰, und Lesbos¹¹ existierten mehrere Poleis, die zumindest zeitweise bundesstaatenähnliche Strukturen aufbauten, in denen auf der Insel gelegene Poleis miteinander kooperierten. Einige Insel verwiesen auf gemeinsame ethnische Substrate. Gemeinsame Kulte und Heiligtümer boten Anknüpfungspunkte für Kooperationen. Dabei gerät ausschließlich Kephallenia in den Blick, weil sich nur dort mehrere Poleis entwickelt hatten. Die anderen Inseln waren „monopolate Islands“¹².

2. Zusammenschluß von mehreren Inseln unter der Anleitung einer größeren Seemacht: In der Ägäis wurde zu Beginn der hellenistischen Zeit ein Nesiotenbund (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν νησιωτῶν)¹³ gegründet. Das Koinon war ein Zusammenschluss von Bewohnern verschiedener Ägäisinseln mit dem Zentrum in Delos, der begründet und fortgeführt wurde unter der Anleitung und dem Protektorat hellenistischer Herrscher. Unter Führung des Hegemon Rhodos wurde der Bund von 188 bis 167 v. Chr. erneut ins Leben gerufen, dessen Mittelpunkt sich nun auf Tenos befand¹⁴.

3. Die Integration von eigentlich ethnosfremden Inseln und politisch autonomen Poleis in festländische Bundesstaaten. Inseln wurden in Bundesstaaten integriert, wie z. B. Aigina¹⁵ und Kythera¹⁶ in den Achäischen Bund, oder es wurde darüber diskutiert, dies zu tun.

2. Leukas und Akarnanien

Leukas kann wegen seiner räumlichen Nähe zum Festland als „Fastinsel“¹⁷ oder „île continental“¹⁸ bezeichnet werden. Der Sund von

⁸ Chaniotis 2015, 377-385.

⁹ Knoepfler 2015, 158-178.

¹⁰ Lewis 1962, 1-4; Reger, Rissner 1991, 305-314; Sheedy 1998, 249-257.

¹¹ Buraselis 2013, 173-184; Buraselis 2015, 358-376; Constantakopoulou 2015, 213-236.

¹² Reger 1997, 450-492.

¹³ Sheedy 1996, 423-449; Gallo 2009, 335-339; Galotta 2009, 341-345; Hauben 2010, 103-121; Buraselis 2013, 173-184; Constantakopoulou 2017.

¹⁴ Thiry 2001, 132.

¹⁵ Aigina war von ca. 228 bis 210 v. Chr. Mitglied des Achäischen Bundes (Plut. *Arat.* 34), wurde 210 v. Chr. von den Römern unter P. Sulpicius Galba erobert, den Aitolern übergeben und von diesen dem permanischen König Attalos verkauft für nur 30 Talente (Polyb. 12, 8, 10). Figueira 1993, 386-387; Löbel 2014, 53-54.

¹⁶ Löbel 2014, 70. Strab. 8, 5, 1; Cass. Dio. 44, 7, 2.

¹⁷ Philippon, Kirsten 1956, 9.

¹⁸ Thiry 2001, 139.

Leukas ist eine flache Lagunenlandschaft, welche die Insel von der Plaghia-Halbinsel trennt. Nach Norden hin ist die Lagune vom offenen Ionischen Meer durch ein ausgedehntes Strandwallsystem abgeschnitten. Leukas-Stadt blickte auch auf die gegenüberliegende 10 km breite trapezförmige Plaghia-Halbinsel¹⁹. Vermutlich südlich von Leukas lag Nerikos²⁰ als befestigter Küstenplatz. Es existiert eine lange Diskussion über die Frage, ob Leukas stets eine Insel oder ob es in der Vergangenheit mit dem akarnanischen Festland verbunden war²¹. Die Stadt war durch einen schmalen Isthmos (Thuk. 3, 81, 1) mit der Küste von Akarnanien verbunden. Die Athener verwüsteten 426 v. Chr. das leukadische Land sowohl jenseits der Landenge (Isthmos) als auch diesseits in der Nähe der Stadt (Thuk. 3, 94,2). Nicht nur Thukydides, sondern auch Livius²², Strabon²³ und Plinius²⁴ berichten mit Blick auf unterschiedliche Zeiten, dass östlich von Leukas ein „Isthmos“ existierte – und zwar dort, wo die Stadt gelegen war und später eine Brücke den Sund überquerte. Livius nimmt für das Jahr 197 v. Chr. eine Einschätzung der Lage von Leukas vor, indem er sagt, dass jetzt eine Insel sei, die durch einen seichten Meeresarm, der künstlich angelegt ist, von Akarnanien getrennt war (*Leucadia nunc insula est, vadoso freto, quod perfossum manu est, ab Acarnania divisa*, Liv. 33,13,6). „Damals“ sei Leukas eine Halbinsel (*tum paeninsula erat*) gewesen, die im Osten durch eine schmale Landzunge mit Akarnanien verbunden war. Es gibt immer wieder Diskussionen über die Benutzung des Polybios bei Livius und zur zeitlichen Einordnung der topographischen Erwähnungen²⁵. Livius gibt genaue Maße an: Diese Landzunge (fauces) sei ungefähr 500 Schritt lang und nicht mehr als 120 Schritt breit gewesen. Der römische Historiker betont die Lage am Meer, das Leukas von Akarnanien abtrennt. Das Meer sei aber von seichten Wasser geprägt und habe mehr Ähnlichkeit mit einem Teich. Einige Forschende gingen hingegen trotz des klaren Quellenbefundes von einer Lage der Landenge und dem Kanaldurchstich der Korinther weiter im Norden aus, entweder nahe der Festung Agia Mavra oder im Umfeld einer Durchfahrt zwischen

¹⁹ Warnecke 2018, 176.

²⁰ Thuk. 3, 7, 5; Strab. 10, 2, 8. Plin. *NH* 4, 5. Murray 1982, 187-191; Fantasia 2017, 20; Faraklas 1991, 221-227, identifiziert Agios Georgios mit Sollion. Fiedler 1996, 159-160.

²¹ Strabon (10, 2, 8; 1, 3, 18) nennt Leukas Chersonesos.

²² Liv. 33, 17, 6.

²³ Der Kanal hätte sich in der Nähe der Stadt befunden (Strab. 10, 2, 8).

²⁴ Plin. *NH* 4,5.

²⁵ Vgl. dazu schon die Diskussion von Partsch 1889, 4 und Oberhummer, 1887, 8-9.

dem Ende der Nehrung und der akarnanischen Küste, dem sog. Canali stretti²⁶. Nach geoarchäologischen Untersuchungen ist der Wandel zwischen Schiffbarkeit und Nichtschiffbarkeit des Kanals in historischer Zeit auch auf Tsunamis²⁷ und den von ihnen herbeigeführten wiederholten Im- und Export von Sedimenten zurückzuführen²⁸.

Leukas besaß einen Festlandsbesitz, „Peraia“, in Akarnanien²⁹. Dieses „außerhalb des Isthmos“ gelegene Land befand sich auf der Westseite der Plagia-Halbinsel. Für die Sicherheit der Stadt und zur landwirtschaftlichen Nutzung war es notwendig, die Territoriumsgrenze von Leukas zur akarnanischen Nachbarstadt Palairos durch das innere Bergland der Plaghia-Halbinsel zu legen. Die Grenze wurde durch teilweise stark befestigte Wachtposten gesichert und auch das befestigte Heiligtum von Sterna auf dem höchsten Punkt der Plaghia Halbinsel war möglicherweise zumindest zeitweilig in leukadischem Besitz. Darauf verweisen Ziegel mit dem Stempel „Da(mos)“, die auf Leukas hindeuten, wo es vergleichbare Ziegelstempel gibt³⁰. Auf festländischen Gebiet lag das korinthische Sollion, das aber 431 von Athen erobert und Palairos zugeteilt wurde³¹. Sollion war irgendwo auf der Plaghia-Halbinsel gelegen und verstärkte dort den korinthischen Einfluss. Auch bei Homer lässt sich Festlandbesitz von Inseln nachweisen. Bei Homer ist Odysseus Anführer der Kephallenen, der auch über Ithaka und Zakynthos herrschte. Das Festland und die gegenüberliegende Küste (Antiperaia) werden als dem Reich des Odysseus zugehörig beschrieben³².

Leukas hatte für ihre Infrastruktur drei Wasserbauprojekte umgesetzt, die sich auch auf das Verhältnis zu den Akarnanen auswirkten:

1. Eine Durchquerung des leukadischen Sundes war einer Fahrt entlang der abweisenden westlichen Kliffküste generell vorzuziehen³³. Durch einen Kanal von Leukas verlief zumindest zeitweise eine Hauptschifffahrtsroute zwischen Griechenland und dem Adriatischen Meer. Ziel dieses Kanals war der direkte maritime Zugang nach Norden, die Verkürzung von Schifffahrtswegen und die Anbindung des Hafens von Leukas, von der die Insel in wirtschaftlicher Hinsicht profitierte. Der Kanal versandete aber

²⁶ Partsch 1889; von Marées 1907; von Seidlitz 1927, 352-372.

²⁷ Vött *et alii* 2009c, 112-128.

²⁸ Brockmüller, Vött, Brückner 2013, 15-30.

²⁹ Funke 1999, 55-75; Carusi 2011, 92-95.

³⁰ Lang 2016, 755.

³¹ Thuk. 2, 30, 1.

³² Hom. *Il.* 2, 635. Gehrke 1994, 102; Warnecke 2018, 165.

³³ Murray 1982, 247, 254.

durch Wind, Wellen und Tsumani jedoch im Verlauf der Zeit immer wieder. Die Korinther hätten unter dem Kypselos einen Kanal durch den Isthmos von Leukas gegraben und dadurch die Halbinsel erst zu einer Insel gemacht³⁴. Thukydides erwähnt, dass im Peloponnesischen Krieg spartanische Trieren 427 und 425 v. Chr. über den Isthmos gezogen werden mußten. Zu dieser Zeit war der Kanal offensichtlich nicht mehr funktionstüchtig³⁵, auch wenn der Bericht kein Beweis für die Unpassierbarkeit durch einzelne kleinere Handelsschiffe ist. Der Kanal im Sund von Leukas, nun „Dioryktos“³⁶ genannt, wurde unter Philipp V. im Jahr 218 wieder geöffnet³⁷, der seine Flotte von Kephallenia von Süden her nach Leukas führte. Unter ihm wurden Arbeiten am Dioryktos unternommen und er brachte seine Schiffe durch diesen anschließend in den Golf von Ambrakia. Livius beschreibt Leukas als „nunc insula“ und berichtet, dass für den Schiffsverkehr sehr unangenehme Untiefen nah bei der Stadt existierten³⁸. Aus den Briefen des Cicero, der die Gegend zweimal bereiste, wird wohl ersichtlich, dass der Kanal um 50 v. Chr. nicht schiffbar war³⁹. Cicero erwähnt in einem Brief an Atticus aus dem Jahr 51 v. Chr., dass er nach ungemütlicher Überfahrt lieber auf dem Landweg von Actium nach Patras gehen wolle, als die beschwerliche Umsegelung von Leukas auf sich zu nehmen. Die Durchfahrt durch den Kanal von Leukas stellte weiterhin in augusteischer Zeit ein Problem dar, in der kleine Schlepper, die *paktones* genannt werden, größere Handelsschiffe durch den Kanal zogen⁴⁰. Plinius lokalisiert ‘Dioryktos’ nahe der Stadt und erwähnt, dass der Kanal versandet war. Er überliefert zudem, dass Leukas durch die Bewohner vom Festland getrennt worden sei, doch hätten sich durch Winde Sandmassen angehäuft, die Leukas wieder mit Akarnanien verbanden⁴¹. Arrian schließlich erwähnt den schiffbaren Kanal, der durch den Isthmos von Leukas führte⁴². In den Boden gerammte Pfähle wiesen Seeleuten in der Durchfahrt den Weg und halfen ihnen, sandige Untiefen zu umschiffen.

³⁴ Strab. 10,2,8. Gehrke 1994, 99-100.

³⁵ Thuk. 3, 81; 3, 94, 2. Thuk. 4, 8.

³⁶ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50. Plin. *NH* 4, 5. Strauch 1996, 276.

³⁷ Pol. 5, 5, 12.

³⁸ Liv. 33, 17, 6.

³⁹ Cic. *Fam.* 16, 6, 2. Cic. *Att.* 5, 9, 1. Axioti 1980, 186-205; bes. 203. Zur Reiseroute Ciceros Schweighardt, Schmid 1995, 51-56; Wirbelauer 1999, 399-406.

⁴⁰ Einen direkten Hinweis auf die Schiffsbedingungen im Kanal findet sich in einem Exzerpt des C. Iulius Hyginus, Bibliothekar und Freigelassener des Augustus, das aus dem Kommentar zum *Propempticon* des Helvius Cinna stammt, Dahlmann 1977, frg. 3, 31-33.

⁴¹ Plin. *NH* 4, 5.

⁴² Arr. *Ind.* 41, 2.

2. Durch den leukadischen Sund verlief von Leukas bis zum akarnanischen Festland eine ca. 750 m lange Brücke, die mit über 200 Bögen als repräsentatives Monument ausgebaut war, mit dem die Verbundenheit und wohl auch die Finanzkraft und Stärke Akarnaniens und Leukas eindrücklich vor Augen geführt wurde. Außerdem war sie eine infrastrukturelle Einrichtung, die eine feste Verbindung zwischen Leukas und Akarnanien verstetigte. Sie überspannte die flache Meeresenge an der zweitschmalsten Stelle des Sundes. Auf dem akarnanischen Festland verlief eine antike Straße in das Hinterland⁴³. Leukas und Akarnanien kooperierten in der Bauzeit der Brücke politisch eng miteinander und man demonstrierte dies auch nach außen. Es ist möglich, dass der Akarnanenbund – und allein nicht die Polis Leukas – das Monument errichtete. Die Zeit der Zugehörigkeit zum Akarnanischen Bund von Leukas kommt für die Datierung der Brücke am ehesten in Betracht.

3. Südlich von Leukas-Stadt schließt eine ca. 10 m breite Mole die Meerenge von Leukas ab, deren 400 m langer Westarm eine 60 m breiten Durchfahrt von einem 138 m langen Ostarm trennte. Auf der Plaghia-Halbinsel wurde die Mole durch eine Festung bei Agios Georgios gesichert⁴⁴, deren Datierung bis heute umstritten ist⁴⁵. Die Mole diente als Wellenbrecher, Anlegestelle und zum Schutz des Hafens von Leukas und sollte die stetige Versandung des Sundes von Süden her verhindern⁴⁶.

In der Ilias und der Odyssee wird Leukas nicht erwähnt⁴⁷. Die Frage nach der homerischen Vorstellung von den Inseln vor der akarnanischen Küste wird seit langem sehr kontrovers diskutiert. Einige verbinden Leukas mit Odysseus' Ithaka, andere mit Dulichion, dem bei Homer bedeutendsten Zentrum der Ionischen Inseln, über das Meges geherrscht haben soll⁴⁸. Die antike Polis mit Namen Leukas wurde als korinthische Apoikie unter den Kypseliden gegründet. Die Korinther orientierten sich mit der Isthmoslage an topographischen Verhältnissen, die auch in der Metropolis vorherrschten und die bei der Anlage von anderen korinthischen

⁴³ Strabon erwähnt die Brücke, Strab. 10, 2, 8. Fiedler 2008, 275-298; Fiedler, Hermanns 2011, 48–52, 50-51.

⁴⁴ Fiedler, Hermanns 2011, 49-50; Lang u. a. 2007, 148.

⁴⁵ Lehmann-Hartleben 1923; Murray 1988, 101-118.

⁴⁶ Lehmann-Hartleben 1923, Nr. 152; von Marées, 10-18, 101; Negris 1904, 354-360.

⁴⁷ Die in Hom. *Od.* 24, 11 genannte Λεύκας πέτρη ist ein imaginärer Ort. Hennig 1942, 331-340.

⁴⁸ Allen 1921, 87; Hope Simpson, Lazenby 1970, 10. Nach Burr 1944, 74-76 sei Dulichion ein Ort in Akarnanien.

Kolonien eine Rolle spielten (Epidamnos und Potidaia). Leukas war auf den Seeverkehr in die Adria und in das westliche Mittelmeer ausgerichtet und betrieb intensiven Seehandel⁴⁹. Pseudo Skylax (34) erwähnt, dass die Leukas früher Epileukadioi genannt wurde⁵⁰. Eine bislang nicht lokalisierte Polis Epileukadioi „nach Akarnanien hin ausgerichtet“ (πóλις μετὰ Ἀκαρνανίαν), wird auch bei Stephanus von Byzanz (s.v.) genannt, der immerhin Hekataios von Milet mit seiner Europe (*FGrHist* 1 F 110) zitiert. Nach Ps-Skylax hätten Akarnanen, zerrüttet von Bürgerkriegen, einst 1000 Kolonisten (Epoikoi) aus Korinth dort aufgenommen. Die „Akarnanen“ wurden aber getötet und die Korinther nahmen das Gebiet von Epileukadioi allein ihren in Besitz. Im 5. Jh. v. Chr. prägten eine tiefe Feindschaft das Verhältnis von Leukas zu den Akarnanen, über die Thukydides ausführlich berichtet. Zur Zeit des peloponnesischen Krieges stand Leukas als einzige „Insel“ der Gegend auf der Seite der Spartaner und Korinther. Die Akarnanen bemühten sich, die Insel unter ihre Kontrolle zu bringen⁵¹. Leukas blieb auch im 4. Jh. v. Chr. weiter außerhalb des sich etablierenden Bundes. Ob die Akarnanen schon im 5. Jh. einen Bundesstaat gegründet hatten, ist weiter umstritten⁵².

Der binnenländischen Poleis Stratos kam jedenfalls in diesem Prozess eine große Bedeutung zu. Ob aber Stratos als „Tribal-Polis“ mit gewisser territorialer Hegemonialstellung den Prozess hin zu Bundesstaatenstrukturen maßgeblich gelenkt hat, bleibt zweifelhaft⁵³. Leukas wird in einer Theorodokenliste aus Epidauros aus dem Jahr 355 v. Chr. unter dem Eintrag Akarnanien geführt⁵⁴, was veranlasst hat, anzunehmen, dass Leukas zu dieser Zeit Mitglied im Akarnanischen Koinon war⁵⁵. Die Theorodokenliste wird sich aber an einem Itinerar nach landschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten orientiert haben und diente dem

⁴⁹ Hdt. 7, 45; Thuk. 1, 30, 2; Ps.-Skyl. 34; Ps. Skymn. 464-465; Plut. *Tim.* 15. Zu den Gründern vgl. Strabon 10, 2, 8 und Nik. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 59. Salmon 1984, 216; Domingo-Forasté 1988, 6-25.

⁵⁰ Shipley 2011, 120.

⁵¹ Thuk. 2, 9, 2; 3, 94-95; 6,104; Ps.-Skyl. 34. Corsten 1999, 127; Stickler 2010; Blome 2020, 33-34.

⁵² Xen. *Hell.* 4, 6, 4; Diod. Sic. 19, 67, 3-4. Gehrke 1994-1995, 41-48; Freitag 1996, 75-86; Beck 1997; Corsten 1999; Fantasia 2006, 59-98; Fantasia 2010, 141-161; Pascual 2016, 53-77; Sierra Martín 2015, 57-76; Freitag 2015, 66-85; Mysłowska 2018, 199-210; Pascual 2018b, 59-82.

⁵³ IG IX 1² 2, 390. CID II 1, 17, 22. Xen. *Hell.* 4,6,4.

⁵⁴ IG IV² 95. I 1, 8, I 20.

⁵⁵ Pascual 2018c, 49.

Asklepiosheiligtum als Ausweis einer panhellenischen Wertschätzung⁵⁶. Gleiches gilt für die Theorodokenliste aus Argos aus dem Jahr 331/330 v. Chr.⁵⁷ In einer weiteren Theorodokenliste aus Nemea (331-313 v. Chr.) wird Leukas separat von den Akarnanen aufgeführt⁵⁸. Interessant ist auch der numismatische Befund: Hier finden sich auf Pegasoi aus Leukas aus dem 4. Jh. v. Chr. bisweilen „akarnanische“ Beizeichen, vor allem der Kopf des bärtigen Acheloos⁵⁹. Oliver Dany schlägt anhand dieser Münzen, die leukadische und akarnanische Symbole und Beizeichen tragen und wahrscheinlich gegen 300 v. Chr. datiert werden, sogar eine Integration von Leukas in den Akarnanischen Bund vor⁶⁰. In die Diskussion miteinbezogen werden auch wahrscheinlich auf Leukas überprägte makedonische Königsmünzen des Philipp II. und Alexander d. Gr. mit Darstellung des Acheloos⁶¹. Wann diese Überprägungen stattgefunden haben, steht aber nicht fest⁶².

Seit dem Beginn des 3. Jh. v. Chr. übte der epirotische König Pyrrhos⁶³ eine Art Oberherrschaft über den Akarnanischen Bund aus, die auf dessen Sohn Alexander II. überging⁶⁴. Dieser wurde während des Chremonideischen Krieges nach einem Angriff auf Makedonien (wohl 263 v. Chr.) aus Epirus vertrieben, flüchtete nach Akarnanien und wurde irgendwann später aber mit Hilfe des Aitolischen und des Akarnanischen Bundes wieder als König von Epiros eingesetzt⁶⁵. Leukas wurde dann im 3. Jh. Mitglied des Akarnanischen Bundes. Die konkreten Umstände und Datierung bleiben im unklaren⁶⁶ und auch die entscheidende Frage, ob Leukas diesen Schritt freiwillig oder aufgrund von Druck von Außen unternommen hat⁶⁷, kann nicht mit Sicherheit beantwortet werden. In der althistorischen Forschung wurde darüber diskutiert, ob es eine längere Übergangsphase zwischen Eigenständigkeit und Vollmitgliedschaft von

⁵⁶ Swoboda 1910, 401.

⁵⁷ SEG 23, 189.

⁵⁸ Miller 1988, 147-63. SEG 36, 331, col. A l. 47. Perlman 2001, 116-124.

⁵⁹ Calciati 1990, 89. Ein gleiches Phänomen findet sich auf Münzen aus Ambrakia Ravel 1928, Nr. 137-138.

⁶⁰ Corsten 1999, 129-131; Dany 1999, 286-287.

⁶¹ Imhoof, 1878. 146-147; Corsten 1999, 129-131; Dany 1999, 67-68.

⁶² Vgl. zur ganzen Diskussion Freitag 2013, 42-43.

⁶³ IG IX 1², 2, 207.

⁶⁴ Pascual 2018a, 47-71.

⁶⁵ Just. 26, 2, 11.

⁶⁶ Dany 1999, 64; Freitag 2013, 41-54.

⁶⁷ Löbel 2014, 172.

Leukas gegeben hat⁶⁸. Im Aitolisch-Akarnanischen Bündnisvertrag, in dem die Regulierung der Grenze, eine Verpflichtung zu gegenseitiger militärischer Hilfeleistung und eine Isopolitie vereinbart wurde, stammt ein Bundes-Beamter aus Leukas. Als siebenter und letzter Strategie wird ein Polykles aus Leukas genannt (IG IX 1² 1, 3). Bald darauf wurden die Akarnanen das Opfer einer Übereinkunft, die die Aitolier mit dem König Alexander II. von Epiros abschlossen hatten⁶⁹. Eine genaue Datierung kann nicht vorgeschlagen werden, irgendwann zwischen 260 und 243 v. Chr. wurde dieser Vertrag geschlossen. Akarnanien wurde entweder zur Hälfte oder zu einen 1/3 zugunsten der Aitolier und 2/3 zugunsten von Epiros aufgeteilt, wobei den Aitolern das Gebiet von Stratos, Oiniadai, Metropolis⁷⁰, Phoitiiai und möglicherweise Astakos der Nordwesten mit Leukas, Palairos, Thyrrheion, Anaktorion, Limnaia, Medion und Alyzeia aber dem König Alexander zufielen⁷¹.

Die Aufteilung ging nicht ohne heftigen Widerstand der Akarnanen vonstatten, und hier scheint Leukas ein Zentrum des Widerstandes gewesen zu sein. Ein Alexander, der gemeinhin mit Alexander II. von Epiros identifiziert wird, hat demach Leukas belagert⁷². Da in der Stadt Lebensmittel in Hülle und Fülle vorhanden waren, eroberte Alexander zuerst die Kastele, die in der Nachbarschaft lagen, und ließ alle, die sich darin befanden, nach Leukas fliehen, damit der Proviant in der Stadt schneller verbraucht würde. Wie der Angriff des Alexanders konkret endete, ist in den antiken Quellen nicht erwähnt. Auch die Aitolier mußten mehrere Jahre um ihren Teil Akarnaniens kämpfen⁷³, ehe sie eine Siegesweihung in Delphi aufstellen konnten⁷⁴. Statuen aitolischer Feldherren, des Apollon und der Artemis wurden von den Aitolern nach der Unterwerfung der Akarnanen gestiftet. In dieser Zeit wurde ein Dekret der Leukadier über die Anerkennung der Asklepieia auf Kos ausgefertigt, das in das Jahr 242 v. Chr. gehört und nach dem König Alexander datiert⁷⁵. Nach dem Tod des Alexander zu Beginn der 230er übernahm seine Witwe Olympias die Herrschaft in Epiros. Die Aitolier versuchten nun, den von

⁶⁸ Dany 1999, 67.

⁶⁹ Polyb. 9, 34, 7; 2,45,1; Iust. 28,1,1-2. Walbank 1957, 239-241; Corsten 1992, 195-210; Pascual 2017, 33-54.

⁷⁰ IG IX 1², 1, 3B.

⁷¹ Schoch 1997, 78-80; Löbel 2008-2011, 141-153.

⁷² Frontin. 3, 4, 5.

⁷³ Cabanes 1976, 92.

⁷⁴ FD III 4, I78. Paus. 10, 16, 6.

⁷⁵ IG IX 1² 4, 1474.

Alexander einst abhängig gemachten Teil Akarnaniens zu erobern. Die Akarnanen, die unter Oberhoheit der Epiroten eine gewisse Autonomie als Bundesstaat genossen, ersuchten bei Demetrios II. von Makedonien um Hilfe und wandten sich zusätzlich an Rom um Unterstützung⁷⁶. In diesem Zusammenhang wurde von den Akarnanen in die Diskussion gebracht, dass man im Gegensatz zu den Aitolern nicht in den Trojanischen Krieg eingegriffen und den Aineias auf seinem Weg nach Italien unterstützt habe⁷⁷.

Im Jahr 233/32 v. Chr. ging die Aiakiden-Dynastie unter. Der nordwestliche Teil Akarnaniens erlangte endgültig die Unabhängigkeit, wobei nun ein Akarnanischer Bund mit einem verkleinerten Territorium neu konstituiert wurde. Unter den etwa ein Dutzend Mitgliedern (Alyzeia, Anaktorion, Astakos, Koronta, Leukas, Limnaia, Matropolis, Medion, zeitweise Oiniadai, Palairos, Phoitiiai, Phokreis/Phokreanes, Thyrrheion) war Leukas die größte und aufgrund seiner für den Seehandel günstigen Lage auch wirtschaftlich stärkste Polis des neuen Akarnanischen Bundes. Politisch lehnte sich der Akarnanische Bund künftig an Makedonien an, um vor aitolischen Angriffen geschützt zu sein. Im Jahr 231 v. Chr. wurde die akarnanische Stadt Medion von den Aitolern belagert. Der neue Zusammenschluß der Akarnanen unter einer „Bundeshauptstadt“ Leukas war im Sommer 230 bereits vollzogen, als die Akarnanen gemeinsam mit den Epiroten ein Bündnis mit der illyrischen Königin Teuta schlossen, die sie im Seekampf gegen Aitolern und Achaier im Jahr 229 unterstützte. Der neue Bundesstaat war stark von seinen Poleis geprägt. Die Vermutung, dass in dem erneuerten Bund die Rolle von „city-states“ weniger ausgeprägt war als in der Vergangenheit, scheint mir nicht zutreffend zu sein⁷⁸. Die Aussage, dass nach der der Inschrift mit dem Vertrag zwischen dem Akarnanenbund und der Stadt Anaktorion über das Heiligtum des Apollon Aktios (IG IX 1² 2, 583) der zweite Akarnanische Bund „was officially composed by πόλεις καὶ ἔθνη“⁷⁹ trifft nicht zu, da in der Inschrift nur ausgedrückt wird, dass mit Blick auf die Tradition die Lagerplätze, die während der Feiern im Heiligtum genutzt wurden, den Poleis und Ethne so verbleiben sollen, wie es schon von alters her eingerichtet gewesen sei (l. 40). Bei der angeblichen Neugründung blieb der vorherige Hauptort Stratos im aitolisch besetzten Teil. Wahrscheinlich wurde Leukas bereits

⁷⁶ Iust. 38, 1, 5-6. Corsten 1992, 195-210.

⁷⁷ Erskine 2001, 193-195.

⁷⁸ Lasagni 2019, 114.

⁷⁹ Lasagni 2018, 171.

bei der Loslösung von Epiros „Hauptstadt“ des zweiten Bundes, wobei umstritten ist, was denn „Bundeshauptstadt“ eigentlich bedeutet. Betont man die demographische Größe des Polisverbandes verbunden mit einer gewissen Dominanz, wie dies bei Stratos im 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr. erkennbar wird? Gibt es auch verfassungsrechtliche Gesichtspunkte, die zum Tragen kommen? Waren die Bundesinstitutionen in der Hauptstadt ansässig? Die Bundesmünzprägung der Akarnanen mit der Darstellung des aktischen Apollon und dem Kopf des Acheloos scheint nach der Wiederbegründung des Bundes in Leukas angefertigt worden zu sein und Livius bezeichnet Leukas für das Jahr 197 als „caput Acarnaniae“ (Liv. 33, 17, 1). Im Jahr 216 v. Chr. stellte nach Ausweis des zweiten bekannten Präskripts mit Nennung der leitenden Bundesbeamten Leukas nicht nur die drei militärischen Befehlshaber (den Strategen, Hipparchen, den Nauarchen), sondern auch den Sekretär der Beamten (Schreiber der Archonten), mithin vier der sechs im Präskript genannten Magistrate⁸⁰. Die Zahl der Strategen hatte sich nach 263 v. Chr. von sieben auf einen reduziert. Erhalten blieb aber die Regel, dass das Archontenkollegium aus einer Stadt stammen sollte. Die Verfassungsregel, dass nur noch ein Stratege gewählt wird, ist wahrscheinlich im Zuge der Wiederbegründung des Akarnanischen Bundes ca. 230 v. Chr. eingeführt worden. Die vergleichsweise hohe Zahl von leukadischen Bundesbeamten verweist demnach nicht auf eine politische Dominanz, sondern ist rein verfassungstechnisch bedingt mit einem jährlich rotierenden Archontenkollegium, das aus einer Stadt stammte⁸¹. Bei der Bestellung des Magistratskollegiums wurde danach eine weitere Änderung in der akarnanischen Bundesverfassung zwischen den Jahren 216 und 208/7 v. Chr. durchgeführt, in der man von einer Bestellung des Archontenkollegiums durch eine Stadt abging⁸². Die leitenden Bundesbeamten kamen nun aus verschiedenen Bundesmitgliedstädten, im Jahre 208/7 v. Chr. stellte Leukas nicht einen einzigen Beamten⁸³. Beim Modus der Besetzung des obersten Leitungsgremiums strebte man nun eine stärkere Berücksichtigung der einzelnen Gliedstaaten des Bundes und damit eine Stärkung des föderalen Prinzips an⁸⁴. Die Akarnanen waren weiterhin treue Verbündete des Philipp V., der sich nach der Niederlage im zweiten Makedonischen Krieg mit den Akarnanen Rom unterwerfen

⁸⁰ Habicht 1957, 86-122; Gschnitzer 1964, 378-382; Blawatsky 1974, 497-500; Migeotte 2001, 164-170; Czech-Schneider 2002, 76-100; Wacker 2018, 9-34.

⁸¹ Dany 1999, 271.

⁸² Funke, Gehrke, Kolonas 1993, 131-144.

⁸³ Inschr. Magnes. 3I.

⁸⁴ Funke, Gehrke, Kolonas 1993, 142.

musste⁸⁵. Ein römischer Legat nahm nach dem Sieg der Römer die *editio* der Akarnanen entgegen. Schon im Jahr 198 hatten die Römer um Akarnanien als Bündnispartner geworben. L. Flamininus hatte akarnanische *Principes* vor der Schlacht bei Kynoskephalai nach Korkyra geladen und diese für ein Bündnis mit Rom gewonnen. Die Entscheidung mußte aber von den Bundesorganen getroffen werden⁸⁶. Auf Leukas fand anschließend 197 v. Chr. eine Bundesversammlung statt. Die Versammlung war aber nur schwach besucht und man fand keine Einigung in der Frage, ob die Akarnanen ein Bündnis mit Rom eingehen sollten. Es wurde ein inoffizieller Beschluss auf Betreiben führender Männer über ein Bündnis mit Rom gefasst, doch dieses wurde, weil nur eine Minderheit dahinterstand, als *privatum decretum* betrachtet und deswegen nicht anerkannt⁸⁷.

In einer zweiten, jetzt aber regulär besuchten Volksversammlung ebenfalls in Leukas wurde der „private“ Bündnisbeschluss mit Rom aufgehoben, die Absetzung des Strategen und die Verurteilung von Römerfreunden wegen Verrats erwirkt. Diese konnten zwar durch geschicktes Auftreten vor der Volksversammlung schließlich die Aufhebung des Urteils erreichen, an dem Festhalten an der Verbindung mit Makedonien änderte sich aber nichts⁸⁸. Die römische Flotte unter L. Flamininus brach anschließend von Korkyra auf, landete auf Leukas bei einem sogenannten Hera-Heiligtum und rückte mit allerlei Kriegsgerät an die Stadtmauern heran und bereitete die Belagerung und die Erstürmung vor⁸⁹. Ausführlich beschreibt Livius die Belagerung, wobei sich die Bewohner von Leukas vehement dem Angriff entgegengestellt hätten. In Leukas befanden sich aber einige Verbannte von italischer Herkunft, die dort wohnten, und sie ließen von der Burg her die römischen Soldaten in die Stadt hereinkommen.

Die Erwähnung von Italikern in Leukas bei Livius verweist im übrigen darauf, dass Leukas schon zu dieser Zeit in ein gewisses kommerzielles Netzwerk mit Rom und Italien eingegliedert gewesen ist⁹⁰. Auf dem Marktplatz von Leukas kam es zu einer richtigen Schlacht, nachdem die Mauern an vielen Stellen mit Sturmleitern überwunden worden waren. Ein Teil der Bewohner wurde niedergemacht, ein Teil warf die Waffen weg und ergab sich. Leukas war von L. Flamininus 197 nach hartem Widerstand

⁸⁵ Liv. 33, 17, 15.

⁸⁶ Liv. 33, 16, 1.

⁸⁷ Liv. 33, 16, 3-6. Deininger 1971, 48.

⁸⁸ Liv. 33, 16, 4-5. Deininger 1971, 49.

⁸⁹ Liv. 33, 17, 8-10.

⁹⁰ Melfi 2016, 82-105. Liv. 33, 17, 13.

erobert worden⁹¹. Als man wenige Tage später von der Schlacht bei Kynoskephalai hörte, unterwarfen sich alle Akarnanen dem Legaten⁹². Der Friede von 196 v. Chr. war für die Akarnanen insofern günstig, als Rom ihnen Leukas gegen aitolischen Widerstand zurückgab, ihnen ihre Freiheit beließ und sie in ein Verhältnis der *amicitia* aufnahm⁹³. Die Aitolier hatten im Jahre 197 v. Chr. in Korinth, obwohl sie nie über die Insel verfügt hatten, noch aufgrund der Bestimmungen des römisch-aitolischen Vertrages vor einer Senatskommission die Übereignung von Leukas gefordert⁹⁴.

Die Aitolier hätten mit Leukas sicher auch ganz Akarnanien unter ihre Kontrolle bekommen, aber es wird in der Forschung diskutiert, wie ernsthaft das Bemühen um Leukas von aitolischer Seite gemeint gewesen sei⁹⁵. Die Senatskommission jedenfalls verwies die Aitolier an den Senat, der aber dem Q. Flamininus die Entscheidung überließ, der schließlich die Zugehörigkeit von Leukas zu Akarnanien bestätigte. Die schonende Behandlung von Leukas dürfte den strategisch-politischen Überlegungen des Flamininus und des römischen Senats entsprochen haben, die nun von einer deutlich spürbaren Abneigung gegenüber den Aitolern geprägt waren⁹⁶. Die römische Flotte des L. Flamininus lag noch im Jahre 195 in Leukas, das offensichtlich im Kampf gegen Nabis von Sparta als permanente Flottenstation diente⁹⁷. Erst 194 v. Chr. verließen die römischen Flottenverbände Leukas. Die Bewohner von Apollonia unterstützten in dieser Zeit den Wiederaufbau der Stadtmauern in Leukas, wie Bauinschriften zeigen, die in die Zeit nach 197 v. Chr. datieren⁹⁸.

Beide Städte waren sowohl durch Handelskontakte als auch durch eine gemeinsame Geschichte als korinthisch-kerkyräische Kolonien lange Zeit schon miteinander verbunden⁹⁹. Im syrisch-aitolischen Krieg im Jahr 191 hatte sich die Stadt anfänglich dem Plan widersetzt, von den Römern abzufallen und auf die Seite des Seleukidenkönigs Antiochos III. überzugehen, der zu dieser Zeit in Akarnanien mit Truppen operierte. Der

⁹¹ CIL XIV, 2935 = CIL I² 619. Eine Votivinschrift des L. Quinctius Flamininus im Heiligtum der Fortuna Primigenia in Praeneste wegen seiner Eroberung von Leukas in Akarnanien im Jahre 197.

⁹² Pliakou 2001, 147.

⁹³ Oberhummer 1887, 176-77; Oost 1954, 49-56.

⁹⁴ Polyb. 18, 47, 8; Liv. 33, 49, 8. Lehmann 1999, 78; Pfeilschifter 2005, 152.

⁹⁵ Pfeilschifter 2005, 152.

⁹⁶ Dany 1999, 185.

⁹⁷ Dany 1999, 187. Liv. 34, 26, 11.

⁹⁸ IG IX 1² 4, 1234, 1235, 1236.

⁹⁹ Oost 1954, 54; Fiedler, von Hesberg 2014, 59-74.

Aitolische Bund hatte Antiochos nach Griechenland gerufen, um gegen die römische Präsenz vorgehen. Antiochos landete mit einem kleinen Heer in Griechenland und bemühte sich, Griechenland zum Abfall zu bewegen. Dies führte zum offenen Krieg zwischen Rom, Antiochos III. und den Aitolern. Bei ihrer Entscheidung spielten auf Seiten von Leukas keine Sympathien für Rom eine Rolle, sondern Befürchtungen vor der römischen Flotte, die unter dem Legaten Atilius im Gebiet von Kephallenia operierte, von der Leukas unmittelbar bedroht war¹⁰⁰. Wieder fand eine Bundesversammlung (wohl erneut in Leukas) statt, auf der erörtert wurde, wie das akarnanische Bundesheer Städte wie Medion und Thyrrheion schützen könne. Es wurde beschlossen, nicht alle Waffenfähigen ausrücken zu lassen, sondern eine Schutztruppe von 500 Mann auszusenden. Der Akarnanen Klytos hatte aber geplant, die Schutztruppe in die Hand des Königs zu geben, die ihm als Geiseln dienen sollten. In Medion traf man mit Gesandten des Königs zusammen, die das Angebot auf einen Bündnis- und Freundschaftsvertrag übermittelten. Ein Antrag des Klytos fand Zustimmung, zunächst eine Gesandtschaft über diese Frage zum Koinon der Akarnanen zu entsenden, das weiterhin in Leukas tagte. Diese verständigten sich jedoch insgeheim mit Antiochos III. und zögerten ihre Abreise nach Leukas so lange hinaus, bis die Seleukiden in der Nähe von Medion waren. Kaum hatten sie dann die Stadt verlassen, als Antiochos — im März 191 v. Chr. — vor den Toren der Stadt erschien, wo eine vollständige Verwirrung entstand, bis schließlich Klytos und Mnasilochos den König in die Stadt führten. Antiochos hielt dort eine Rede und erreichte den Anschluß einiger weiterer Städte in Akarnanien. Thyrrheion weigerte sich aber, auf die Seite des Antiochos überzugehen. Zur gleichen Zeit kam der römische Gesandte Cn. Octavius nach Leukas, der von T. Quinctius Flamininus geschickt worden war und eine Schutztruppe und einige Schiffe von A. Postumius übernommen hatte¹⁰¹. Cn. Octavius berichtete von der baldigen Ankunft des M. Acilius Glabrio in Griechenland und man zwang Antiochos anschließend zum Abbruch des Akarnanienzuges¹⁰².

Im Jahre 167 v. Chr. wurde Leukas durch Rom vom Akarnanischen Bund aufgrund einer Entscheidung einer Senatskommission und des Aemilius Paullus abgetrennt¹⁰³. Zuvor führte der Bundesstratege¹⁰⁴ Chremas aus Thyrrheion eine akarnanische Gesandtschaft zu L. Aemilius Paulus an.

¹⁰⁰ Liv. 36, 11, 6-10, 11; App. *Syr.* 70.

¹⁰¹ Liv. 36, 12, 10.

¹⁰² Deininger 1971, 95.

¹⁰³ Liv. 45, 31, 12. Oost 1954, 82-3.

¹⁰⁴ IG II² 951 (m. Add. p. 669); zum Datum vgl. Habicht 1986, 190-191.

Es gelang ihm, die antirömische Faktion endgültig auszuschalten. Rom konnte den Besitz einer strategisch wichtigen Insel sichern. Leukas verlor nun alle Funktionen, die es als Hauptstadt der Akarnanen übernommen hatte¹⁰⁵. Livius betont, dass bei den Akarnanen ansonsten alles beim Alten blieb. Die Akarnanen hatten sich im Krieg des makedonischen Königs Perseus wankelmütig gezeigt, ob wohl sie sich de facto nichts zu Schulden hatten kommen lassen¹⁰⁶. Kontrovers wurde im Jahr 170 v. Chr. auch in Anwesenheit einer römischen Gesandtschaft die Forderung von Romfreunden diskutiert, in akarnanischen Städten zur Sicherung gegen die Umtriebe der makedonischen Parteiungen römische Besatzungen zu legen¹⁰⁷. Für die Akarnanen war die Abtrennung von Leukas der härteste Schlag, der sie seit dem Verlust von Stratos und der Aufteilung ihres Landes im 3. Jahrhundert getroffen hatte¹⁰⁸. Mit der bevölkerungsreichsten Stadt verlor der Bund etwa ein Drittel seiner Bevölkerung und einen günstig gelegenen Handelsplatz¹⁰⁹. Leukas bekam den freien Status einer autonomen Polis zugewiesen, die aber von Rom abhängig blieb. Die Nachfolge als „Bundeshauptstadt“ trat Thyrrheion an. Auf Didrachmen aus Leukas mit „Magistratsnamen“ aus dem 1. Jh. ist nun eine weibliche Gottheit dargestellt, die mit Aphrodite Aineias identifiziert wird. Man prägte nun Münzen eines vollkommen neuen Typus¹¹⁰. Vor kurzem ist der dezidiert römische Charakter, den die Münzen aufweisen, betont worden. Die Römer hatten weiter hin ihren Einfluß auf Leukas geltend gemacht, so dass die Münzen, die im Namen der Leukadier geprägt worden sind, eine „pseudo-civic Greek coinage“ darstellten, die von Römern in Auftrag gegeben worden war und die man möglicherweise mit der Finanzierung der Truppen des Sulla im Jahre 87 v. Chr. in Verbindung bringen kann¹¹¹. Ob die Insel Nikopolis nach 31 v. Chr. zugeschlagen wurde, bleibt im Unklaren¹¹². Archäologische Befunde verweisen auf einen

¹⁰⁵ Zur Verfassung von Leukas siehe das Ehrendekret für Damophon aus Messene, IG IX 1² 4, 1475 (200-190 v. Chr. oder nach 167 v. Chr.). Thonemann 2003, 114-111; Melfi 2016, 82-105.

¹⁰⁶ Liv. 43, 17, 7-9.

¹⁰⁷ In dem Proxeniadekret der Akarnanen für einen Cn. Baebius aus dem Jahr 168/7 v. Chr. agierte ein Alkimos aus Leukas als Stratege. Funke, Gehrke, Kolonas 1993.

¹⁰⁸ Oberhummer 1887, 191.

¹⁰⁹ Dany 1999, 216.

¹¹⁰ De Callatay 2015, 239-270.

¹¹¹ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 49, 4-1, 51, 3.

¹¹² Leukas wird vor der Schlacht von Agrippa eingenommen, Vell. Pat. 2, 84, 2. Cass. Dio 50, 13, 5. Flor. 4, 11, 5. Zur möglichen Umsiedlung von Bewohnern von Leukas nach Nikopolis: Strab. 7, 7, 6; 10, 2, 2; Anth. Pal. 9, 553. Lang 1994, 252-253; Pliakou 2001, 152-153.

Niedergang im städtischen Zentrum, auch wenn man selbstverständlich nicht von einer Entvölkerung der Insel ausgehen kann, der weiterhin eine gewisse ökonomische Bedeutung zukam.

3. Kephallenia und Aitolische Bund

Kephallenia ist die größte der westgriechischen Ionischen Insel, sehr gebirgig und stark bewaldet. In den antiken Quellen wird die Nähe zu Akarnanien¹¹³ und die Lage am Eingang des Korinthischen Golfes betont¹¹⁴. Der Insel kam eine große strategische und handelsökonomische Bedeutung zu¹¹⁵. Auf der Insel Kephallenia existierten mit Krane, Pronnoi, Same und Pale vier Poleis (Thuk. 2, 30, 2), die zwar eine gewisse gemeinsame Identität miteinander verband¹¹⁶, die aber auch aufgrund einer kantonalen Zersplitterung¹¹⁷ nur locker miteinander kooperierten¹¹⁸. Ihr Wille zur Selbständigkeit wird auch dokumentiert durch eindruckliche Festungsanlagen in allen vier Poleis¹¹⁹. So gab es keine gemeinsame Münzprägung, keine gemeinsame Bundesinstitutionen und – magistrature¹²⁰, vielmehr verfolgten die Poleis häufig eine eigene Politik unabhängig voneinander¹²¹. Von Außen wurden die Bewohner der Insel zwar häufig als Kephallenen betrachtet¹²², eine gewisse Kooperation der Poleis kam allerdings häufig nur aus äußerem Druck zustande¹²³.

Bei Homer wird mit dem Ethnikon *Κεφαλλήνες* die Gesamtheit der Bewohner der westlichen ionischen Inseln umfasst¹²⁴. Die Insel wird bei Homer Same bzw. Samos genannt¹²⁵. In der Ilias wird davon berichtet,

¹¹³ Thuk. 2, 30, 2; 2, 7, 3; Strab. 8, 2, 2; 10, 2, 15.

¹¹⁴ Strab. 2, 5, 20. Morgan 2003, 218.

¹¹⁵ Mataranga 2021, 542.

¹¹⁶ Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 351-378.

¹¹⁷ Randsborg 2002, 67-68.

¹¹⁸ Dreher 1995, 199; Rigsby 2001, 187; Sotiriou 2010, 97; Mataranga 2021, 543.

¹¹⁹ Sotiriou 2013, 9.

¹²⁰ Dem. 32, 9 spricht von „Archonten auf Kephallenia“, die eine Weiterfahrt eines Getreideschiffes nach Athen genehmigten, das von Syrakus losgesegelt war und auf Kephallenia repariert werden mußte.

¹²¹ Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 352. Eine Polis Kephallenia ist bei Ptol. Geog. 3, 13, 12 erwähnt: ἡ Κεφαλληνία νῆσος, ἥς ὁμώνυμος πόλις.

¹²² Thuk. 3, 94, 1-2.

¹²³ Biedermann 1897, 10.

¹²⁴ Visser 1997, 589.

¹²⁵ Hom. *Il.* 2, 634. Visser 1997, 594.

daß das Territorium von Kephallenia neben den benachbarten Inseln auch Teile des peloponnesischen Festlandes umfaßt habe¹²⁶. Bei Stephanos von Byzanz erfährt man, dass Astakos, eine Stadt an der mittelakarnanischen Küste, eine Apoikie von Kephallenia gewesen sei. Diese Geschichte mag aber mit Blick auf die festländischen Gebiete des Odysseus erfunden worden zu sein.

Thukydides bezieht sich auf Kephallenia als *τετραπόλις*¹²⁷. Der Zug des Atheners Tolmides 456 v. Chr. brachte den Anschluss der Insel an Athen¹²⁸, Pale auf Kephallenia jedoch blieb bis 431 v. Chr. auf der Seite Korinths, erst im Sommer dieses Jahres konnte Athen die gesamte Insel auf seine Seite bringen¹²⁹. Die Poleis auf Kephallenia stellten nun ihre Häfen bereit und unterstützten Athen mit Schiffen und Truppenkontingenten. Das geschah aber nach Aussage des Thukydides nicht ganz freiwillig, sondern weil die Athener das Meer beherrschten¹³⁰.

Der Athener Timotheos brachte 375 v. Chr. die Städte auf die Seite Athens. In einem athenischen Volksbeschluß über die Symmachie mit Kerkyra, Akarnanien und Kephallenia werden die Gesandten dieser Staaten geehrt, die die Aufnahme ihrer Staaten in den athenischen Seebund beantragten¹³¹. Die Polis Pronnoi wird explizit in einem späteren Zusatz im Aristoteles-Dekret genannt, ob aber die restlichen Städte offiziell Mitglieder des Seebundes geworden sind, muss offen bleiben¹³².

Die enge Verbindung von allen vier Poleis auf Kephallenia zum Aitolischen Bund reicht bis in das letzte Drittel des 3. Jahrhunderts zurück¹³³. Seit wann die Insel in engeren Kontakt mit den Aitolern geraten war, lässt sich nicht mehr mit Sicherheit sagen. Die Aitoler beabsichtigten im Zuge ihrer Expansion, die ionische Insel als Flottenbasis zu nutzen, auch wenn es nicht gelang, die vier Poleis in einem strategischen Konzept zur einer dauerhaften Kooperation untereinander zu veranlassen. Ob mit „Kephallenia“ möglicherweise 226 eine Isopolitie abgeschlossen wurde, ist

¹²⁶ In der *Odyssee* (4, 635) erfährt man, dass die Herden des Odysseus auf dem Festland weideten und Noemon aus Ithaka Pferde in Elis hielt.

¹²⁷ Thuk. 2, 30, 2. Hansen 2000, 174; Fragoulaki 2013, 252.

¹²⁸ Thuk. 1, 108. Diod. 11, 84, 7.

¹²⁹ Thuk. 1, 27, 2; 2, 30, 2; 2, 33, 2.

¹³⁰ Thuk. 6, 57, 7.

¹³¹ IG II² 96, 7. Diod. 15, 35. Xen. *Hell.* 5, 4, 62-66.

¹³² StV III 262 und III 267. Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 33; 37. Dreher 1995, 191 und 199.

¹³³ Flacelière 1937, 258; 284-285. Dazu und zum Folgenden jetzt grundlegend Mataranga 2021, 544-546.

weiter umstritten¹³⁴. Kephallenia mit seinen vier Poleis kam aber unter aitolischem Einfluss. In der Zeit des Bundesgenossenkrieges von 220 bis 217 v. Chr. kooperierten Kephalleneng mit dem Aitolischen Bund. Die Insel trat nun als eine gewisse Seemacht in Erscheinung. Wohl im Jahre 223/2 v. Chr. wurden aitolische Kolonisten nach Same ausgesandt. Wieviele Personen daran beteiligt waren und woher die Siedler stammten, lässt sich nicht mehr ermitteln. Ein Koloniesgesetz ist inschriftlich aus Thermos erhalten¹³⁵. In der Inschrift geht es um die Regelungen der Wohn- und Besitzverhältnisse und der Erbangelegenheiten. Es ist von „Archioikistai“ die Rede, was darauf hindeuten könnte, dass sich die Regelungen auf die Situation von Zweitsiedlern in Same beziehen. Andere haben diese Archioikistai als Gründungsbeamte interpretiert, die für die Durchführung zuständig waren¹³⁶. Same lag an der Ostküste der Insel und sicherte einen wichtigen Stützpunkt¹³⁷. Es kam zu einer Zuwanderung aitolischer Siedler, die möglicherweise mit Einverständnis der Bewohner in Same aufgenommen wurden¹³⁸. Dies war das einzige Mal, dass die Aitoler eine Kolonie gründeten¹³⁹. Ob vor allem militärische Überlegungen eine Rolle spielten, steht zu vermuten. Auch zu anderen Poleis wie Pronnoi und Pale¹⁴⁰ wurden in dieser Zeit enge Beziehungen aufgebaut. Ob Kephallenia aber offiziell Mitglied im Aitolischen Bund wurde, bleibt im Dunkeln¹⁴¹. Auch in der delphisch-pyläischen Amphiktyonie sind nun Hieromnemonen aus Kephallenia belegt¹⁴². Das Ethnikon Κεφαλλᾶνες wird in Delphi verwendet, um Hieromnemonen zu bezeichnen: In der Zeit von 205-201 v. Chr. tauchen vier Kephalleneng als Hieromnemonen auf: Drakon, Kephallene¹⁴³,

¹³⁴ Polyb. 4, 6, 2 und 4, 6, 8. Flacelière 1937, 284. Walbank 1957, 454. Themis, Zavvou 2019, 111-116.

¹³⁵ IG IX 1² 1, 2. Flacelière 1937, 258; Asheri 1971, 85-87; Calero Secall 2003, 257-271; Scholten 2000, 194-197; Mackil 2013, 114.

¹³⁶ Leschorn 1984, 203.

¹³⁷ Grainger 1999, 250.

¹³⁸ Randsborg 2002, 31. Die Existenz von Münzen aus Same mit der Legende ΑΙΤΩΛΩΝ verweist auf die engen Beziehungen. Mataranga 2021, 545. Eine in Krane geprägte Münze trägt ebenfalls die Münzlegende ΑΙΤΩΛΩΝ. Tsangari 2007, 244-445; Sotiriou 2010, 99. Zur Geschichte von Nea-Krane vgl. jetzt Milani 2021, 179-194.

¹³⁹ Scholten 2000, 195; Mackil, 2013, 114.

¹⁴⁰ Siehe das aitolische Proxenieedikt für Kallikrates aus Pale: IG IX 1², 1, 31, 80-8. Vgl. Antonetti, Cavalli, 173-201.

¹⁴¹ Scholten 2000, 107, 194, 279; Mackil 2013, 114-115; Grainger 1999, 375.

¹⁴² Lefèvre 1998, 118.

¹⁴³ CID IV, 95; CID IV, 94.

Aristodamos aus Pronnoi¹⁴⁴, Sotakos aus Kephallene aus Same¹⁴⁵? und Oinanthios, Kephallene¹⁴⁶. Nach 201 v. Chr. sind die Kephallenen nicht mehr verzeichnet¹⁴⁷. Mit dieser außerordentlichen und gegen alle Traditionen sprechenden Maßnahme bekamen Kephallenen nun mit Chios und Magnesia vom Maiander Sitz und Stimme im Amphiktyonischen Rat. In der Forschung wird davon ausgegangen, dass die Poleis auf Kephallenia rotierend ihren Sitz in der Amphiktyonie eingenommen hatten, was aber keineswegs auf föderale Strukturen auf Kephallenia hindeuten muss¹⁴⁸. In anderen Inschriften werden „Kephallenen aus einer Inselstadt“ erwähnt¹⁴⁹. In diese Diskussion über eine denkbare Kooperation von kephallenischen Poleis in dieser Phase wird nun auch ein messenisches Dekret mit allgemeinem Bezug auf Gesandte aus Kephallenia einbezogen, das wohl in den Beginn des 2. Jh. v. Chr. datiert¹⁵⁰.

Mit Schiffen aus Kephallenia, die offensichtlich zentral zusammengestellt wurden, verfügten die Aitolern nun über eine Art Kriegsflotte¹⁵¹. Ziel der Städte der Kephallenen, das diese mit dem Bündnis mit den Aitolern verfolgten, war vor allem ein Schutz vor illyrischer Piraterie. Die Aitolern beabsichtigten, die Insel als Ausgangspunkt für Eingriffe in peloponnesische Verhältnisse und an der akarnanisch-epirotischen Küste zu nutzen. 221 v. Chr. benutzten die Aitolern Schiffe der Kephallener, um die epirotische Küste zu verwüsten und auch in Akarnanien zu versuchen, Thyrraeon einzunehmen¹⁵². Im Jahre 220 versammelten sich die Aitolern bei Rhion, rüsteten dort eigene Fahrzeuge zur Überfahrt und setzten die Schiffe der Kephallener in Bereitschaft, um das Heer zur Peloponnes zu überführen¹⁵³ und gegen Messenien vorzurücken. Die Schiffe der Kephallenier beteiligten sich somit an einer geplanten und „offiziellen“ Militäraktionen

¹⁴⁴ Aristodamos aus Pronnoi agierte als Hieromnemon in zwischen 215–205 v. Chr. CID IV 96.

¹⁴⁵ CID IV, 97, 204–202 v. Chr.

¹⁴⁶ CID IV, 98. CID IV, 99 l. 7, 200 v. Chr.

¹⁴⁷ CID IV, 101 aus dem Jahr 193/2 v. Chr.

¹⁴⁸ Rigsby 2001, 187.

¹⁴⁹ IG IX 1² 5, 1908. IG IX 1² 5, 1909. FdD III 4, 376, 3–4. BCH 68–69, 1944–45, 121, Nr. 32.4. IG IX 1² 1, 8, 3–4. FdD III 3, 204.

¹⁵⁰ SEG 49, 323. Zoumbaki 2018, 77–107.

¹⁵¹ Benecke 1934, 15: „... der aitolische Bund besaß überhaupt keine eigene Flotte, sondern war eben nur auf die geschickt behandelten Piratenführer und später auf die Schiffe der Kephallenen und anderer Bundesgenossen angewiesen“. Vollmer 1990, 80; Grainger 1999, 212–213; Bernand 2005, 31–38; Scholten 2000, 107; Funke 2008, 253–264.

¹⁵² Polyb. 4, 6, 1–2. Scherberich 2009, 136; Kleu 2015, 32.

¹⁵³ Polyb. 4, 6, 7.

der Aitolier¹⁵⁴. Leider erhalten wir keine genauen Informationen über die Zahl der Schiffe, die verwendeten Schiffstypen und darüber, ob alle Städte auf Kephallenia Schiffe bereitstellten. Im Jahr 218 v. Chr. unternahm zu Beginn seines Seekrieges der Makedonenkönig Philipp V. einen Zug gegen Kephallenia, um weitere seemilitärische Unterstützung der Aitolier zu verhindern und einen günstigen Ausgangspunkt für künftige Aktivitäten zu erhalten. Von Patrai aus forderte er die Verbündeten schriftlich auf, ihre Flottenverbände beim kephallenischen Pronnoi zu versammeln. Philipp setzte dann zur Insel über, gab aber den Plan auf, Pronnoi im Südosten der Insel zu belagern und segelte nach Pale, wo er die Schiffe an Land ziehen liess und durch Dämme und Gräben schützte. Anschließend belagerte Philipp Pale und erwartete dort die Bundesgenossen, die dann mit der vertraglich vorgeschriebenen Anzahl von Schiffe vor Ort erschienen¹⁵⁵. Sämtliche mit den aitolischen Kolonisten wurde von Philipp nicht angegriffen. Philipp verließ schließlich Kephallenia aufgrund interner Differenzen mit seinen Offizieren, die möglicherweise einer „anti-naval lobby“ zugeordnet werden können¹⁵⁶, ohne Pale einzunehmen und fuhr anschließend mit seiner Flotte in den Sund von Leukas ein. Polybios erwähnt die strategischen Vorteile von Kephallenia (Sammelplatz für Verbündete, Ausgangspunkt für weitere Unternehmen gegen den Feind, schützendes Bollwerk für die Bundesgenossen)¹⁵⁷, die später auch den Römern aufgefallen waren, die die Insel als maritime Basis nutzten. Auf die dauerhafte Präsenz von römischen Bürgern auf Kephallenia verweist eine Theorodoken-Liste aus Delphi aus den letzten Jahren des 3. Jh. v. Chr. (ἐν Σάμῃ Μάαρκος Κορνήλιος Γαῦς)¹⁵⁸.

Zu Beginn des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. rückte die Ionische Insel als „Tor nach Griechenland“ in den Fokus römischer militär-strategischer Interessen. Die Kephallenen waren immer noch mit Aitolien verbunden. Im dritten Buch betont Polybios (3,2,4) in einem Vorausblick auf weitere Ereignisse, dass er das Unglück der Aitolier und der Kephallenen den Lesern vor Augen führen werde, die offensichtlich eine Art Schicksalsgemeinschaft im Krieg gegen die Römer gebildet hätten. Kephallenia, das 191 v. Chr. unter A. Atilius Serranus und Aulus Postumius schon Ziel von römischen Flotteneinsätzen war¹⁵⁹, wurde nach der Niederlage des Antiochos III. von

¹⁵⁴ Mataranga 2021, 546.

¹⁵⁵ Polyb. 5, 5, 2-11. Pascual 2021, 899-906.

¹⁵⁶ Larsen 1968, 347; Mataranga 2021, 548-549.

¹⁵⁷ Polyb. 5, 3, 6-9. Latsch 2005, 138.

¹⁵⁸ Plassart 1921, 15 II 146; Zoumbaki 2011, 532.

¹⁵⁹ Liv. 36, 11, 9; 36, 12, 10.

dem römischen Flottenprätor C. Livius Salinator auf dessen Überfahrt nach Griechenland geplündert¹⁶⁰. Ein Lakedaimonier Hybristas machte 190 v. Chr. mit einigen Schiffen gemeinsam mit einer Jungmannschaft aus Kephallenia zu dieser Zeit die Meerenge durch „Piraterie“ unsicher, weshalb das Meer für römischen Nachschub aus Italien gesperrt gewesen sei¹⁶¹. An dieser Stelle wird nachweislich eine Episode des Seekrieges der seit langem mit Ätolien verbündeten Städte Kephallenias gegen Rom als reine kriminelle „Piraterie“ stilisiert¹⁶². Livius berichtet, dass nach der rhodischen Niederlage bei Panhormos zwei Trieren der italischen Bundesgenossen und zwei Trieren der Rhodier unter dem Kommando des Vizeadmirals Epikrates abgeordnet worden seien, um die Meerenge von Kephallenia zu schützen¹⁶³. Von den Friedensbedingungen im Vertrag zwischen Römern und Aitolern aus dem Jahre 189 v. Chr. waren alle Kephallenen ausgenommen¹⁶⁴.

Anschließend setzte der Konsul M. Fulvius Nobilior von Ambrakia nach Kephallenia über¹⁶⁵. Die Poleis auf der Insel ergaben sich und stellten Geiseln nach ihren begrenzten Möglichkeiten. Nur die Bewohner von Same leisteten weiter Widerstand, Livius kann den Grund für dieses Verhalten nicht angeben¹⁶⁶. Sie selbst sagten, weil ihre Stadt eine günstige Lage habe, kam die Furcht auf, dass sie von den Römern gezwungen würden, die Insel zu verlassen. Selbst die gerade gestellten Geiseln aus Same konnten die Bewohner nicht überreden, einzulenken. Die Stadt wurde vier Monate mit großem Aufwand belagert und schließlich eingenommen. Die Römer hatten sogar 100 Schleuderer aus Achaia nach Kephallenia gerufen, die die Bewohner daran hinderten, Ausfälle gegen römische Feldwachen zu unternehmen. Die Bevölkerung wurde 188 v. Chr. versklavt, die Stadt geplündert und zerstört. Eine römische Garnison wurde dort stationiert¹⁶⁷. Die Kephallenen gerieten nun vollständig unter römische Herrschaft, auch wenn die Städte formell für frei erklärt wurden. Im Krieg gegen Perseus war 171 v. Chr. längere Zeit eine römische Flotte unter der Führung des Prätores G. Lucretius und dessen Bruder M. Lucretius auf Kephallenia

¹⁶⁰ Liv. 36, 42, 5.

¹⁶¹ Liv. 37, 13.

¹⁶² Wiemer 2002, 123.

¹⁶³ De Souza 1999, 88-89; Grainger 2002, 285.

¹⁶⁴ Polyb. 21, 30, 1-5. Liv. 28, 9, 9-10. StV IV 631.

¹⁶⁵ Polyb. 31, 30. Liv. 28, 10. Holleaux 1930, 1-41. Holleaux 1931, 1-10. Warrior 1988, 325-356. Walther 2016, 85.

¹⁶⁶ Liv. 38, 27, 7.

¹⁶⁷ Liv. 38, 28, 5-30, 1. Polyb. 21, 32. Zon. 9, 21. Mitropoulos 2019, 85.

präsent¹⁶⁸. Strabon nennt den C. Antonius Hybrida, Onkel des M. Antonius, als einen Gründer einer neuen Stadt auf Kephallenia¹⁶⁹. Dieser war 59 v. Chr. in Rom vor Gericht gestellt und ins Exil verbannt worden. Er wählte Kephallenia zum Aufenthaltsort, bis er im Jahr 44 von Caesar begnadigt wurde. Mit Panormos wurde eine neuer Hafenplatz in römischer Zeit auf Kephallenia gegründet¹⁷⁰.

4. Zakynthos und der Bund der Achaier

Die Insel Zakynthos ist die südlichste der westgriechischen Inseln und stand in engem Kontakt zur westlichen Peloponnes. Bei Homer wird der Inselname des „waldigen Zakynthos“¹⁷¹ genannt, das zum Reich der Kephallenien gehörte. Sie ist die einzige westgriechische Insel, die zweifellos ihren Namen seit homerischer Zeit behalten hat¹⁷². Thukydides beschreibt die mit Athen verbündete Insel Elis gegenüber liegend und schildert, dass die Lakedaimonier und ihre Verbündeten im Verlauf des Sommers 430 v. Chr. einen letztendlich erfolglosen Angriff mit einer großen Flotte von hundert Schiffen auf Zakynthos unternahmen. Zakynthos war ein „separater“ Verbündeter der Athener während des Peloponnesischen Krieges, vor dessen Ausbruch Athen die Freundschaft (Philia) seiner Verbündeten überprüft und dabei auch Gesandte in Poleis geschickt hatte, die keine Seebundmitglieder waren. Dabei wird auch Zakynthos erwähnt. Deren Bewohner seien Siedler aus dem peloponnesischen Achaia (εἰς δὲ Ἀχαιῶν τῶν ἐκ Πελοποννήσου ἄποικοι) und mit Athen verbündet (Thuk. 2, 66, 2)¹⁷³. Was meint Thukydides damit? Möchte er eine Verwandtschaft zwischen den peloponnesischen Achaïern im Gegensatz zur Achaia Phthiotis und den Bewohnern von Zakynthos in den Vordergrund stellen? Möglicherweise will Thukydides auf mythische Beziehungen zwischen Athen und Zakynthos hinweisen. In genealogischen Mythenerzählungen werden Ion und Achaïos, der eponyme Stammvater der Achaier, als

¹⁶⁸ Liv. 42, 48, 8.

¹⁶⁹ Strab. 10, 2, 13.

¹⁷⁰ SEG 37, 790. Artemid. Frg. 55 Stiehle (Porphyrios, Über die Nymphen- grotte in der Odyssee, 4). Anth. Pal. 10, 25. Sotiriou 2010, 108; Sotiriou 2013, 46-48; Andreiatou, 2013, 69-96.

¹⁷¹ Hom. *Od.* 1, 246; 9, 24; 16, 123; 19, 131.

¹⁷² Philipppson, Kirsten 1957, 528. Visser 1997, 579.

¹⁷³ Freier der Penelope aus Zakynthos werden in der homerischen Odyssee (26, 250) als „Söhne Achaïas“ bezeichnet.

Brüder bezeichnet, deren Vater Xouthos und Mutter Kreousa, Tochter des Erechtheus, waren¹⁷⁴. In der Beschreibung der arkadischen Polis Psophis erwähnt Pausanias, dass die Akropolis von Zakynthos Psophis genannt werde. Der Name wurde vergeben, weil ein Mann aus Psophis, Zakynthos, der Sohn des Dardanos, als erster per Schiff auf die Insel übersetzte und die Stadt gründete¹⁷⁵. Zakynthos wird hier mit Troja-Traditionen in Verbindung gebracht, der eponyme Gründer sei ein Sohn des Dardanos¹⁷⁶ gewesen, der seinerseits ein Ahn des Aeneas ist¹⁷⁷. Eine enge Beziehung von Zakynthos zu Arkadien wird auch in einer anderen Episode erkennbar. Im Jahre 375/4 kooperierten Verbannte aus Zakynthos mit den Athenern. Die Exilierten versuchten die Insel zu erobern und gründeten vor 377 v. Chr. einen Ort mit Namen Nellos¹⁷⁸ oder Arkadia wohl auf der Insel, von dem aus die Eroberung der Stadt gelingen sollte¹⁷⁹. In mythologischen Erzählungen jedenfalls wird ein Nahverhältnis von Zakynthos zur Peloponnes hergestellt und es rücken zwei benachbarte Landschaften in den Vordergrund: Achaia und Arkadien. Athener bemühten sich indirekt, die Verbindung zwischen Zakynthos und Athen ihrerseits mythisch zu begründen.

Ein unmittelbarer politischer Zugriff auf Zakynthos von der Peloponnes aus wurde erst viel später, in der Zeit der makedonischen Kriege geplant. Die Insel geriet unter die Kontrolle von hellenistischen Königen und schließlich bemühten sich die Achaier, die Insel in ihren Bund zu integrieren. Der Makedonenkönig Philipp V. hatte 219 die Insel erfolglos belagert und war 217 v. Chr. kurz vor dem Frieden von Naupaktos in den Besitz der Insel gekommen, die er aber nicht den Achaiern übergab¹⁸⁰. Im Jahr 212 v. Chr. eroberte der Promagistrat M. Valerius Laevinus Zakynthos mit Ausnahme der Akropolis und die Insel wurde danach wie Aigina an die Aitoler übergeben¹⁸¹. Wie die Aitoler mit Zakynthos umgingen, ist nicht überliefert. Der Makedonenkönig konnte die Insel aber wohl im Jahr 207

¹⁷⁴ Ps. Hesiod. frg. 10 (a) 23. Fragoulaki 2013, 251-261. Vgl. auch Arena 2006, 13-80.

¹⁷⁵ Paus. 8, 24, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Steph. Byz. s. v. Ζάκυνθος und Ψωφίς. Danach führten zwei Söhne des Dardanos, Psophidios und Zakynthos, eine arkadische Kolonie nach der Insel hinüber. Vgl. IG IX 1², 4, 1750 mit Fraser 2003, 26-40.

¹⁷⁷ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 374.

¹⁷⁸ Im Aristoteles-Dekret ist die Rede von dem Demos von Zakynthiern in Nellos (IG II² 43.B.35; Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 2). Baron 2006, 381-382; Mitchel 1981, 73-77; Intrieri 2015, 88.

¹⁷⁹ Diod. 15, 45, 2-3. Dreher 1995, 176-178.

¹⁸⁰ Murray 1985, 99.

¹⁸¹ Liv. 26, 24, 15.

zurückerobern¹⁸² und danach dem König Amyndros von Athamanien übergeben¹⁸³. Amyndros blieb 15 Jahre im Besitz der Insel, setzte dort aber Statthalter ein, zuerst Philippos von Megalopolis, seinen Schwager, und später dann Hierokles von Agrigent als dessen Nachfolger¹⁸⁴. Livius äußert sich dazu nur allgemein: Amyndros Philippum Megalopolitanum insulae praefecit. (Liv. 36, 31, 12). Was das aber für die Polis Zakynthos konkret bedeutet, darüber kann man nur spekulieren. Möglicherweise wurde in der Stadt eine Garnison eingerichtet und die Bewohner mussten Abgaben zahlen. Philipp war der Sohn eines Alexander, der wohl aus Makedonien stammte, hatte aber in Megalopolis Bürgerrecht erhalten. Er behauptete von sich, ein Nachfahre des Alexander d. Gr. zu sein¹⁸⁵. Im Römisch-Syrischen Krieg versuchte Amyndros, nun auf der Seite des Antiochos III., seinen Schwager Philipp von Megalopolis auf dem makedonischen Thron zu installieren¹⁸⁶. Als Antiochos 191 v. Chr. nach der Niederlage bei den Thermopylen nach Kleinasien geflohen war, Philipp von Megalopolis in römische Gefangenschaft geriet und Amyndros durch Philipp V. aus Athamanien vertrieben wurde, schickte der Statthalter auf Zakynthos, Hierokles, auf eigene Initiative Boten zu Diophanes, dem Strategen der Achaier, einigte sich mit ihm auf einen Preis für Insel und übergab diese den Achaiern¹⁸⁷. Darauf veranlasste Flamininus den Strategen der Achaier, Diophanes, eine Bundesversammlung einzuberufen, in der es um den künftigen Status der Insel Zakynthos gehen sollte¹⁸⁸. Diophanes war für den Ankauf der Insel verantwortlich gewesen. Flamininus warnte die Achaier ausdrücklich davor, über die Peloponnes auszugreifen. Der Römer meinte, es sei mehr als recht, dass die Insel als Kriegsgewinn ihnen zufalle, der Konsul M. Acilius und die römischen Legionen hätten bei den Thermopylen schließlich nicht für Diophanes und die Achäer gekämpft. Diophanes suchte demgegenüber bald sich und sein Koinon zu entschuldigen, bald ihr Recht zu diesem Vorgehen gegenüber Zakynthos einzufordern. Der Streit drohte zu eskalieren, da beteuerten einige von den Achäern, sie hätten der Sache anfangs keine Beachtung geschenkt und kritisierten jetzt den Starrsinn des Strategen. Auf ihren Antrag hin beschloß man, die Entscheidung in dieser Sache T. Quinctius Flamininus zu überlassen. Dieser hätte auf

¹⁸² Oost 1957, 14.

¹⁸³ Liv. 36, 31, 11-32, 1.

¹⁸⁴ Thiry 2004, 227-237.

¹⁸⁵ App. *Syr.* 3, 13; Liv. 35, 47, 5-8. IG XI 4, 750.

¹⁸⁶ Zoumbaki 2011, 532.

¹⁸⁷ Gruen 1984, 471.

¹⁸⁸ Liv. 36, 31, 10-32, 2-9.

Widerstand schroff reagiert, aber er zeigte sich nun versöhnlich sagte: „Wenn ich der Meinung wäre, der Besitz dieser Insel wäre für die Achäer nützlich, würde ich dem Senat und dem Volk von Rom raten, dass sie sie euch behalten ließen. Aber wie ich es bei der Schildkröte sehe: wenn sie sich in ihren Panzer zurückgezogen hat, ist sie gegen alle Schläge sicher, wenn sie aber irgendwelche Teile herausstreckt, ist das, was sie entblößt hat, gefährdet und schwach - so ist es in meinen Augen ganz ähnlich mit euch, ihr Achaier; auf allen Seiten vom Meer umschlossen, könnt ihr leicht, was innerhalb der Grenzen der Peloponnes liegt, mit euch vereinen und das Vereinte schützen; sobald ihr aber in der Gier, mehr zu umschließen, darüber hinausgreift, dann liegt alles, was außerhalb ist, bloß und ist allen Schlägen ausgesetzt.“ Die ganze Versammlung sei von dem Bild der Schildkröte beeindruckt gewesen und habe beigepflichtet, und auch Diophanes wagte sich nicht länger dagegenzustemmen, und so wurde Zakynthos den Römern übergeben¹⁸⁹. Im Gegensatz zur ersten Eroberung von Zakynthos im Jahr 212 v. Chr. beabsichtigten die Römer nun, eine dauerhafte Kontrolle über die Insel einzurichten.

5. Zusammenfassung

Es gab in der Antike keine bundesstaatliche Organisationsform, in der „Ionische Inseln“ im Rahmen eines „Koinon“ miteinander kooperierten. Auch von auswärtigen Mächten (Athen, Sparta, hellenistische Könige, Rom) wurden keine wirkkräftigen Versuche in diese Richtung initiiert¹⁹⁰. Nur auf Kephallenia entwickelten sich mehrere Poleis („Tetrapolis“), die anderen Insel (Leukas, Zakynthos) waren „monopolate“ Inseln. Auf Kephallenia kann man keine bundesstaatlichen Organisationsformen erkennen, obwohl die Poleis in bestimmten Zeit vor allem mit Blick auf eine außenpolitische Ausrichtung zusammenarbeiteten. Generell waren die Poleis aber auf ihre Eigenständigkeit bedacht. In der zweiten Hälfte des 3. Jhs. v. Chr. schlossen die Aitolier mit den kephallenischen Poleis Verträge, nahmen „Kephallenien“ in die dephisch-pyläischen Amphiktyonie auf und siedelten im Gebiet von Same durchaus auch militärstrategischen Gründen Kolonisten an und regelten deren Rechtsverhältnisse. Die kephallenischen Poleis wurden demnach wohl nicht in den Aitolischen Bund integriert,

¹⁸⁹ Liv. 36, 31, 12-32, 6. Plut. *Flam.* 17, 2. Möglicherweise beabsichtigten die Achaier ein Heer auszusenden, um sich Zakynthos zu sichern. Plut. *Mor.* 197B. Bastini 1987, 77-78; Nottmeyer 1995, 37; Daubner 2022, 167.

¹⁹⁰ Thiry 2001, 132.

waren aber eng mit Aitolien verbündet und unterstützten die Aitoler vor allem durch ihre Flottenverbände. In den über dreißig Jahre verband die Kephallenen und Aitoler ein enges Bundesverhältnis, das die politischen und ökonomischen Strukturen in ganz Nordwestgriechenland und in der Inselwelt prägte, wie dies Polybios eindrücklich hervorhebt. S. Thiry hat vorgeschlagen, zwischen ‘active maritime’ and ‘passive maritime’ Inseln zu unterscheiden, wobei er Zakynthos und Kephallenia zu den ‘passive maritime’ Inseln zählt, die sich nicht in weitausgreifenden kommerziellen Aktivitäten engagiert hätten und auch keine politischen Kontakte zum Festland aufgebaut hätten¹⁹¹. Diese Einschätzung trifft aber generell nicht zu, wenn man die große strategische und auch ökonomische Bedeutung der Inseln in den Blick nimmt.

Die Achaier hatten im 2. Jh. v. Chr. schon Erfahrung mit der Integration von durch das Meer getrennten Bundesmitgliedern, wenn man an Kalydon, Pleuron, Naupaktos, Aigina und Kythera denkt. Im Jahr 191 v. Chr. beabsichtigten sie, die Möglichkeit zu nutzen, auch Zakynthos in ihren Bundesstaat aufzunehmen. Die Römer in Person des T. Quinctius Flamininus machten ihnen einen Strich durch die Rechnung, die nun auch Zakynthos in ihren Herrschaftsbereich eingliederten.

Leukas war als „Fastinsel“ aufs engste mit dem Festland verbunden. Die Stadt wurde in der Nähe eines schmalen Isthmos gegründet, der zwar mit der Anlage eines Kanals durchbrochen wurde, der aber in der Folgezeit aus unterschiedlichen Gründen immer wieder verlandete. In hellenistischer Zeit errichteten Bewohner eine monumentale Brücke, um eine bequeme Verbindung zwischen Leukas und dem Akarnanischen Festland herzustellen. Leukas verfügte auf der Plaghia-Halbinsel möglicherweise während der gesamten Antike über Festlandbesitz, der vor allem landwirtschaftlich genutzt und zeitweise fortifikatorisch abgesichert wurde. Bis weit in das 4. Jh. v. Chr. hinein standen sich Leukas und die Akarnanen feindlich gegenüber, das änderte sich aber und man kann im Endergebnis konstatieren, dass eine weitere eigentlich ethnosfremde Polis sich wohl freiwillig in den Akarnanischen Bund integrieren lässt. Die Gründe dafür sind im politisch-militärischen und im ökonomischen Bereich auszumachen. Die Teilung des Akarnanischen Bundes zwischen Epiros und Aitolien und seine Wiederbegründung in einem verkleinerten Format in der 2. Hälfte des 3. Jh. v. Chr. brachte es mit, dass Leukas zum größten und politisch einflussreichsten Bundesmitglied („*caput Acarnaniae*“) wurde, bis im Jahre 167 v. Chr. die Römer die „Fastinsel“

¹⁹¹ Thiry 2001, 139.

vom Akarnanischen Bund loslösten und Leukas fest in den römischen Einflussbereich eingliederten.

Kleinere, auch unbewohnte Inseln in dem „distinctive islands kosmos“ (C. Morgan), wie die Echinai oder Echinaden vor der akarnanischen und aitolischen Küste, wurden von Polisbewohnern auf dem Festland mitgenutzt¹⁹² bzw. waren dem Gebiet von Inselpoleis zugeordnet.

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¹⁹²Thukydides (2, 102, 5) beschreibt die Echinaden als unbewohnt. Ps. Skylax (34) sagt, dass viele Inseln gegenüber der akarnanischen Küste liegen, von denen der Acheloos einige mit dem Festland verbunden habe. Vgl. auch Strab. 10, 2, 19; Plin. *NH* 4, 5 und auch Philostr. *Apoll.* 7, 26. Nasos war ein fester Ort im Mündungsgebiet des Acheloos und gehörte zu Oiniadai: Murray 1985, 97-108.

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- Zoumbaki 2011 = S. Zoumbaki, *The Presence of Italiote Greeks and Romans in Aetolia, Acarnania and the Adjacent Islands from the 3rd BC to the beginning of the imperial age*, in *Sulla rotta per la Sicilia: l'Epiro, Corcira e l'occidente* (= *Diabaseis* 2), a cura di G. de Sensi Sestito e M. Intrieri, Pisa 2011, 523-538.
- Zoumbaki 2018 = S. Zoumbaki, *Where East Meets West: Island Societies of the Ionian Sea under Roman rule*, in *Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*, ed. by A. Kouremenos, Oxford 2018, 77-107.

L'EPIRO E LE ISOLE IONICHE. PAESAGGI ELLENISTICI A CONFRONTO

Negli ultimi anni le produzioni scientifiche riguardanti l'Epiro sono aumentate in maniera significativa. Sia in termini di articoli pubblicati su riviste e sugli atti di convegni¹, sia di ampie monografie e lavori miscellanei, che hanno analizzato da più punti di vista i dati storico-archeologici².

Per quanto riguarda le isole ioniche, seppure la ripresa delle ricerche abbia interessato anche quest'area³, manca ancora un lavoro di sintesi generale che analizzi le evidenze archeologiche presenti nel territorio, in relazione alle dinamiche storico-economiche. Più dettagliatamente, se le fasi arcaiche in questo senso hanno ricevuto una maggiore attenzione, quelle ellenistiche appaiono più difficili da analizzare⁴. Ciò è dovuto anche alle fonti storiche che per questo periodo risultano essere più elusive: come ha scritto S. Thiry la ricostruzione storica delle isole ioniche pone molte difficoltà poiché vi sono diversi momenti di ombra⁵.

Tale elusività, chiaramente, si è riflessa anche sulla produzione scientifica: se si osserva la storia epirota che va da Pirro alla fine della dinastia eacide, è nota l'annessione al regno di Corcira, di Leucade e quindi delle altre isole, tuttavia, sfuggono le dinamiche storico-politiche, le modalità con cui tale controllo era garantito e, soprattutto, gli effetti di questo sul territorio, a livello monumentale, difensivo e insediativo. Se per quanto riguarda la parte continentale, infatti, le indagini archeologiche hanno fornito nuove informazioni sulla conformazione del paesaggio epirota di epoca ellenistica⁶, in merito alle isole ioniche solo in tempi recenti le

¹ Citando i volumi più recenti, vd. i contributi in Kotsou, Theophilopoulou 2018; Lamboley, Perzhita, Skenderaj 2018; Chouliaras, Pliakou 2019; Liampi *et alii* 2022.

² Per le monografie tra le più recenti vi sono: Rinaldi 2020; Gerogiannis 2021; Mancini 2022; De Mitri 2023. Per i volumi di carattere miscelaneo vd. Domínguez 2018b; Lepore, Muka 2020; Papadopoulou 2022; Mancini 2022.

³ Vd. i contributi in Kotsou, Theophilopoulou 2018 e Liampi *et alii* 2022.

⁴ Vd., per esempio, il caso di Itaca: Pascual 2022, 496-497.

⁵ Thiry 2001, 131.

⁶ Vd. Giorgi, Bogdani 2012 per la Caonia; Perna, Çondi 2012 e Perna 2022 per la valle del Drino; Pliakou 2007, Gerogiannis 2021 e Papadopoulou 2022 per la Molossia; Bogdani 2022 per la Cestrine; Lazari, Kanta-Kitsou 2010 e Forsén 2011 per la Tesprozia.

ricerche si sono focalizzate su questi aspetti e uno studio approfondito sul territorio è stato effettuato solo su alcune di queste isole⁷.

In particolare, obiettivo del presente contributo è quello di provare ad analizzare il rapporto che vi era in età ellenistica tra le isole ioniche e il regno epirota e di comprendere, a livello archeologico, se la nuova gestione territoriale – evidente per l'età ellenistica in Epiro a livello paesaggistico – avesse coinvolto o meno anche le isole ioniche.

È possibile riconoscere il controllo che Pirro e suo figlio Alessandro dovevano avere su Corcira e su Leucade⁸, a partire dal matrimonio tra Pirro e Lanassa e dal trattato tra l'Epiro e la lega etolica che determinava la spartizione dell'Acarnania fra le due parti⁹. In particolare, riguardo quest'ultima, N.G.L. Hammond sostiene che “Acarnania, however, which had its own long established League, was probably attached to Pyrrhus by a personal bond and owed him allegiance in a defensive war. This may have been set out in a treaty between Pyrrhus and the Acarnanian League of which a copy was placed in the temple of Apollo at Actium. A fragment of this copy has been noted, but it is now lost. We do not know what arrangements he made when he gained possession of Corcyra and Leucas”¹⁰. Più precisamente, riprendendo Giustino¹¹, N.G.L. Hammond sostiene che in una prima fase gli Acarnani fossero *socii* e solo successivamente, con Alessandro II, ci sarebbe stato un vero possesso del territorio della Acarnania, spartito con gli Etoli¹².

Simili osservazioni sono presenti in Cabanes: “Les autres conquêtes de Pyrrhos concernent des régions qui n'ont jamais appartenu aux Eacides : il s'agit d'Ambracie, de l'Amphilochie qui contrôle la route vers l'Étolie, des îles de la mer Ionienne, c'est à-dire Corcyre et Leucade, de l'Acarnanie dont le statut a toujours dû être assez particulier et enfin des territoires de l'Illyrie méridionale”¹³.

Sicuramente le isole ioniche rappresentavano il ponte di unione tra Oriente e Occidente¹⁴ (Fig. 1). Un ponte che sembra conoscere una frequentazione senza soluzione di continuità, ben più antica di quanto

⁷ In particolare, su Leucade vd. Morris 2001 e Stavropoulou-Gatsou 2010, 87-90; su Itaca: Morgan 2007 e Pascual 2022; su Cefalonia: Randsborg 2002 e Sotiriou 2010.

⁸ Plut. *Pyrrh.* 6, 2 e 9, 2; Iust. 28, 1, 1.

⁹ Polyb. 9, 34, 7.

¹⁰ Hammond 1967, 569.

¹¹ Iust. 26, 3, 1.

¹² Hammond 1967, 589.

¹³ Cabanes 1976, 133.

¹⁴ Zoumbaki 2012, 78, n. 6.

trapeli dalla tradizione storiografica¹⁵ e che in epoca ellenistica divenne oggetto di interesse e quindi terreno di scontro tra le maggiori potenze del Mediterraneo¹⁶: prima tra Sparta e Atene, in connessione con la Sicilia¹⁷, poi tra Macedonia, Sicilia, Epiro e Illiria, ai quali si aggiunse poco dopo la lega etolica, poi, infine, tra i Romani e i Macedoni con i loro alleati¹⁸.

Come è noto, difatti, le isole ioniche si trovavano lungo una delle principali rotte marittime che consentivano di raggiungere il Mediterraneo occidentale: tale rotta, in particolare, partiva dal Golfo Saronico, doppiava il Peloponneso dal Capo Malea e risaliva verso nord tra le isole ioniche, Zante, Cefalonia, Leucade e il litorale occidentale della Grecia fino a Corcira, da dove era possibile proseguire verso le coste italiane. Se invece la meta era la Sicilia un'altra possibilità era quella di partire direttamente da Cefalonia¹⁹.

L'importanza strategica di Corcira, d'altronde, è descritta in maniera esplicita già da Tucidide e da Senofonte, i quali affermano chiaramente come il controllo dell'isola fosse fondamentale per gestire i traffici marittimi di questa parte del Mediterraneo²⁰.

Tale posizione strategica aveva favorito la precoce frequentazione corinzia, con la fondazione delle città di Corcira, di Leucade, di Epidamno, di Ambracia e in seguito di Apollonia²¹, che influenzarono in maniera significativa le dinamiche insediative in Epiro, con una capacità di penetrazione a livello di cultura materiale anche nell'entroterra²². Senza risalire troppo indietro nel tempo, in questa sede ci si soffermerà sul periodo che comprende la tarda età classica e arriva sino alla fine del regno epirota,

¹⁵ De Sensi Sestito 2019, 221; Braccesi 2014; Bearzot 2016.

¹⁶ A livello generale vd. i contributi presenti in De Sensi Sestito, Intrieri 2011 e in particolare De Sensi Sestito 2011, 361-390; Intrieri 2015.

¹⁷ Vd. Thiry 2001, 139.

¹⁸ Intrieri 2011, con bibliografia.

¹⁹ Thiry 2001, 131, n. 5; sulle rotte commerciali, soprattutto nella tarda età ellenistica vd. De Mitri 2023, 22-23, 205.

²⁰ Thuc. 1, 36, 2: τῆς τε γὰρ Ἰταλίας καὶ Σικελίας καλῶς παράπλου κεῖται, ὥστε μήτε ἐκεῖθεν ναυτικὸν εἶσαι Πελοποννησίοις ἐπελθεῖν τό τε ἐνθύνδε πρὸς τάκει παραπέμψαι, καὶ ἐς τὰλλα ξυμφορώτατόν ἐστιν.

Xen. *Hell.*, 6, 2, 9: καὶ πέμποντες πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους βοηθεῖν τε ἐδέοντο καὶ ἐδίδασκον ὥς μέγα μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀποβάλλοιεν ἂν, εἰ Κερκύρας στερηθεῖεν, τοῖς δὲ πολεμίοις μεγάλην ἂν ἰσχὺν προσβάλλοιεν: ἐξ οὐδεμιᾶς γὰρ πόλεως πλήν γε Ἀθηνῶν οὔτε ναῦς οὔτε χρήματα πλείω ἂν γενέσθαι. ἔτι δὲ κεῖσθαι τὴν Κέρκυραν ἐν καλῷ μὲν τοῦ Κορινθιακοῦ κόλπου καὶ τῶν πόλεων αἱ ἐπὶ τούτων καθήκουσιν, ἐν καλῷ δὲ τοῦ τὴν Λακωνικὴν χώραν βλέπτειν, ἐν καλλίστῳ δὲ τῆς τε ἀντιπέρας Ἠπείρου καὶ τοῦ εἰς Πελοπόννησον ἀπὸ Σικελίας παράπλου.

²¹ Sulla frequentazione corinzia a partire dall'età geometrica vd. Fantasia 2017, 16-17.

²² Gravani 2004, 558; Tzortzatou, Fatsiou 2009, 22.

quando le vicende storico-politiche conobbero una forte accelerazione. Per dirla come C. Antonietti “L’epoca ellenistica è anzi quella che vede le isole ioniche, tradizionalmente autonome e indipendenti dalle vicende della Grecia continentale, legare le proprie sorti alle vicine potenze territoriali quali l’Epiro, gli Illiri o il *koinon* etolico con conseguenze fatali per gli isolani”²³.

Appare utile partire da Cleonimo che in soccorso a Taranto, come tramanda Diodoro, avrebbe occupato Corcira (303/302 a.C.)²⁴, sia per entrare in possesso delle ricchezze dell’isola – con le quali poteva pagare i mercenari – e delle navi corciresi²⁵, sia per poter avere un punto di forza strategico da cui controllare questa parte del Mediterraneo²⁶. Difatti, seppur per un breve periodo, Cleonimo ebbe un ruolo di primo piano in Adriatico, fino a trovare la sconfitta in terra veneta²⁷. Sull’importanza dell’isola di Corcira nel quadro più ampio del Mediterraneo²⁸, è interessante rilevare come Cleonimo ricevette richieste di alleanza sia da Cassandro sia da Demetrio²⁹, in un periodo in cui, tra l’altro, il regno epirota si trovava in crisi dinastica³⁰. Sempre in questa ottica, va sottolineato come da tempo Cassandro cercasse di acquisire il controllo dell’area ionico-adriatica, ponendo presidi ad Apollonia, a Epidamno e in Acarnania, traendo a sé Leucade, sebbene tali tentavi risultarono vani³¹.

Ancora Cassandro, uscito di scena Cleonimo³², tra il 299 o il 298 attaccò Corcira. L’assedio era stato ben pianificato, tuttavia i Corciresi chiesero aiuto ad Agatocle che intervenne e distrusse la flotta di Cassandro³³. Con Agatocle

²³ Antonietti 2010, 302.

²⁴ Diod. Sic. 20, 104.

²⁵ Psoma 2022, 266.

²⁶ Questo era ben noto ai Lacedemoni: οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, τὴν Κόρκυραν εἰδότες μεγάλην ῥοπὴν ἔχουσαν τοῖς ἀντεχομένοις τῆς θαλάττης, ἔσπευσαν κύριοι γενέσθαι ταύτης τῆς πόλεως (Diod. Sic. 15, 46, 1). Su Cleonimo in generale vd. Braccesi 1990.

²⁷ Liv. 10, 2; Musti 2011, 759-760.

²⁸ Su questi aspetti, per gli anni compresi tra Cleonimo e Agatocle, soprattutto per quanto riguarda la Magna Grecia e Sicilia, vd. Consolo Langher 2000, 283-288, con ampia bibliografia.

²⁹ Diod. Sic. 20, 105, 1; Coppola 2003, 211-212.

³⁰ Dopo la morte di Alessandro il Molosso, infatti, vi fu un periodo di reggenza da parte di Cleopatra, sua moglie, e di Olimpiade, sua sorella, in seguito al quale si susseguirono Arybba II, Eacide e Alceta II. Su questo periodo turbolento vd. Iust. 7, 6, 12; Diod. Sic. 18, 11, 1; 19, 11, 2; 19, 36, 2-5; Paus. 1, 11, 3; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 2, 1.

³¹ Vd. Consolo Langher 2000, 294-295, con ampia bibliografia a n. 26.

³² Rimane incerta la sua presenza o meno a Corcira in questi anni (Consolo Langher 2000, 289, con bibliografia).

³³ Diod. Sic. 21, 2, 1-3; Consolo Langher 2000, 286; Psoma 2022, 267.

si aprì un nuovo scenario. L'obiettivo di quest'ultimo, verosimilmente, era allontanare il pericolo macedone, dato che da qui potevano eventualmente partire spedizioni contro le coste italiane e la Sicilia, e acquisire il controllo di Corcira e delle altre isole che, come già sottolineato³⁴, costituivano un punto strategico essenziale per dominare l'Adriatico³⁵. Un controllo che ben si inseriva nella ambiziosa politica espansionistica del *basileus* siciliano³⁶. Seppure le fonti risultino frammentarie e a volte solo allusive, emerge in modo chiaro l'interesse che il re aveva al riguardo, a partire anche dalle sue azioni che non sempre appaiono benevole nei confronti degli abitanti: ne fa cenno, per esempio, Beoto di Siracusa o Duride di Samo che parla di *lesteia* effettuata dalle truppe di Agatocle ai danni di Itaca³⁷. Sempre a tali azioni probabilmente si deve collegare la presenza di Agatocle a Leucade: in questo senso appare coerente l'ampia circolazione di pegasi di questa *polis* in Sicilia³⁸.

Avendo consolidato il controllo di Corcira e delle isole ioniche, quindi, Agatocle si era inserito in maniera determinante nell'ampio scenario geopolitico, che vedeva coinvolte diverse forze, con le quali intraprese trattative e alleanze. Tra queste ultime, verosimilmente perseguendo una politica che era in linea con quella di Tolemeo³⁹, il re siracusano offrì sua figlia Lanassa come moglie a Pirro, portando in dote Corcira.

È più che probabile che anche dopo il matrimonio il controllo dell'isola rimase comunque ad Agatocle che ne offriva così l'utilizzo ma non il possesso⁴⁰. L'unione con la dinastia eacide, infatti, era volto a garantire una maggiore tranquillità nella gestione delle rotte marittime, allontanando il pericolo che Corcira diventasse la base di forze esterne che potessero attaccare la costa ionica della Magna Grecia⁴¹.

A testimonianza del mantenimento del controllo siracusano su Corcira vi è il successivo matrimonio tra Lanassa e Demetrio Poliorcete nel 290⁴², che difatti sanciva una nuova alleanza, questa volta in favore della Macedonia⁴³.

³⁴ Vd. *supra*, n. 20.

³⁵ Psoma 2022, 268-269.

³⁶ Su Agatocle vd. Consolo Langher 2000.

³⁷ Intrieri 2011, 444, vd. anche 442, n. 72, con il riferimento a *De sera num. vind.* 12 = *Mor.* 557b-c, in cui seppure in modo ironico risulta chiaro l'intervento di Agatocle sia a Corcira sia a Itaca.

³⁸ Consolo Langher 2000, 303-304, con bibliografia a n. 56; Intrieri 2011, 444.

³⁹ Consolo Langher 2000; Zodda 1997.

⁴⁰ Antonetti 2015, 199.

⁴¹ Consolo Langher 2000, 302; Intrieri 2011, 447-449.

⁴² Plut. *Pyrrh.* 10, 6-7.

⁴³ Vd. Antonetti 2015.

Con Corcira, anche Leucade doveva essere sempre di suo dominio, dato che dopo il matrimonio Demetrio per andare ad Atene partì da Leucade e da Corcira⁴⁴. Un'ulteriore prova potrebbe essere anche la collocazione di guarnigioni nell'isola da parte di Demetrio che quindi in questo modo cercava di garantirsi il possesso⁴⁵.

Nel frattempo, però, Pirro, perseguendo il suo disegno egemonico, aveva consolidato i confini del suo regno che ora comprendeva nuovi territori, tra i quali la Paravea, la Timfea, Ambracia, l'Acarnania e Amfilochia, ottenuti tra il 295 e il 294 da Alessandro, figlio di Cassandro⁴⁶ (Fig. 2). Anche a nord aveva rafforzato i confini con gli Illiri, con i quali aveva stretto alleanze matrimoniali⁴⁷. Il quadro geopolitico, quindi, con Pirro al trono era diventato più complesso e l'Epiro tornava ad affacciarsi nuovamente sullo scenario mediterraneo come potenza politica e militare, dopo circa trent'anni di crisi⁴⁸.

A tal riguardo vale la pena ricordare come i fatti sinora narrati intorno alle isole ioniche, a partire dall'intervento di Cleonimo, fossero accaduti proprio di fronte all'Epiro e in particolare a Pirro, il quale, esiliato da bambino in Illiria e cresciuto presso la corte del re Glaucia, era stato richiamato dagli Epiroti per salire al trono quando aveva solo 11 anni⁴⁹. Nel 302, poi, era stato deposto per essere sostituito da Neottolema II⁵⁰, più vicino alla dinastia macedone e in particolare a Cassandro, per riappropriarsi, infine, del regno nel 297, grazie all'aiuto di Tolemeo. In questa tempesta, quindi, Pirro, che aveva partecipato alla battaglia di Ipsa e che aveva soggiornato presso la corte tolemaica⁵¹, doveva avere bene chiara l'importanza fondamentale e strategica che comportava il controllo delle isole ioniche: senza queste non poteva sperare di competere con le grandi potenze del mondo ellenistico⁵². Senza questo controllo, ancora, non sarebbe stata possibile la successiva impresa oltremare in Italia e Sicilia, dove Pirro si sarebbe presentato come legittimo erede e successore di Agatocle in virtù del matrimonio con Lanassa⁵³.

⁴⁴ Frammento di Democare citato da Ateneo (Democh. *FGrHist* 75 F 2 = Ath. 6,62, 253b-d); Intrieri 2011, 444.

⁴⁵ Plut. *Pyrrh* 10, 6-7.

⁴⁶ Plut. *Pyrrh*. 6, 2; Intrieri 2011, 445-446. Sullo spostamento ad Ambracia vd. Léveque 1957, 126-130, 185, 195.

⁴⁷ Vd. Antonetti 2015, 198, con bibliografia.

⁴⁸ Sulla crisi della dinastia eacide dopo la morte di Alessandro il Molosso vd. *supra*, n. 30.

⁴⁹ Iust. 17, 3, 21.

⁵⁰ Plut. *Pyrrh*. 4, 1-2.

⁵¹ Vd. Santagati 2020, 208.

⁵² Léveque 1957, 125.

⁵³ Iust. 23, 3, 3. De Vido 2015, 186.

È per tali ragioni che nel 281⁵⁴ Corcira fu conquistata per mano di suo figlio Tolemeo, che si sarebbe impadronito dell'isola con soli sessanta uomini⁵⁵. È verosimile che anche Leucade fosse stata già annessa⁵⁶, ma in ogni caso il suo possesso sembra essere certo all'epoca di Alessandro II, come sembrano confermare sia le testimonianze epigrafiche sia quelle storiche. Per quanto riguarda le prime vi è il decreto in cui la città riconosce gli *asylia* del santuario di Asclepio a Cos e Alessandro II di Epiro compare due volte⁵⁷. Sulle fonti storiche vi è l'informazione tramandata da Frontino⁵⁸, che riporta un assedio della città di Leucade perpetrato da Alessandro, verosimilmente il figlio di Pirro⁵⁹. Sempre al periodo di Alessandro II, poi, come già anticipato sopra, è da ascrivere la spartizione dell'Acarnania con gli Etoli e Leucade, che ricadeva nella porzione epirota, faceva parte della confederazione acarnana, rappresentandone la capitale⁶⁰.

Gli interessi nel controllare le isole ioniche per l'Epiro, dunque, erano molteplici: non solo garantivano la sicurezza dei mari e del proprio territorio⁶¹, bensì le due isole provvedevano a fornire a Pirro quello di cui egli aveva estremamente bisogno, ossia una flotta, personale esperto e porti⁶². Questi ultimi erano di fondamentale importanza soprattutto per la gestione dei traffici marittimi e del commercio in questa parte del Mediterraneo, tra Oriente e Occidente e non solo. Come è stato già sottolineato, Corcira era lungo la rotta principale che portava dal Golfo di Corinto alle coste italiane⁶³ e fungeva da punto di incontro tra le due aree. I Corciresi, al pari degli Ateniesi, non avevano bisogno di viaggiare per commerciare, bensì il commercio avveniva nella loro città a causa della loro posizione geografica⁶⁴: il controllo di questo porto, dunque, era fondamentale anche dal punto di vista economico.

Tali interessi di Pirro verosimilmente erano stati perseguiti anche dai

⁵⁴ In merito a tale cronologia e a differenti interpretazioni vd. Antonetti 2015, 191, n. 4.

⁵⁵ Iust. 25, 4, 8. Thiry 2001, 139.

⁵⁶ È interessante che per C. Klotzsch e S. Funke le due isole fossero personali dipendenze dei re (Klotzsch 1911, 162-163; Funke 2000, 209-210).

⁵⁷ IG IX 1² 4, 1474 ll. 2-3, 6-7; Psoma 2022, 275.

⁵⁸ Front. *Strat.* 3, 4, 5.

⁵⁹ Cabanes 1976, 92; Hammond 1967, 589 ss.

⁶⁰ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 88; Carusi 2011, 95 con bibliografia alle note 18 e 19.

⁶¹ Paus. 1, 11, 6: Πύρρος δὲ βασιλεύσας πρώτοις ἐπέθετο Ἑλλήνων Κορκυραίοις, κειμένην τε ὁρῶν τὴν νῆσον πρὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ χώρας καὶ ἄλλοις ὁρμητήριον ἐφ' αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐθέλων εἶναι. Psoma 2022, 275.

⁶² Psoma 2022, 270-271. In particolare, sulla flotta dei Corciresi vd. Psoma 2015, 158-162.

⁶³ Strab. 7, 7, 5; Polyb. 34, 6, 11-14 e 34, 7, 1-2.

⁶⁴ Psoma 2015, 153.

dinasti epiroti precedenti a Pirro e in primo luogo da Alessandro il Molosso, considerata anche la sua spedizione in aiuto a Taranto, per la quale dispose di diverse navi⁶⁵. Riguardo questo periodo, una interessante informazione proviene da Licurgo, il quale riferisce come Leocrate avesse acquistato del grano in Epiro dalla regina Cleopatra, lo avesse trasportato a Leucade e da lì a Corinto, in un periodo che corrisponde alla spedizione di Alessandro il Molosso in Italia meridionale oppure alla reggenza che seguì la morte di questo⁶⁶. L'Epiro sembra quindi essere stato un paese esportatore di grano e forse utilizzava Leucade come porto.

Riguardo il periodo storico preso in esame nel presente contributo, è interessante rilevare anche come vi sia stato un cambiamento nella politica estera delle isole: se fino a circa la metà del IV secolo Corcira e Leucade si trovavano spesso in conflitto tra loro⁶⁷, a partire dalla seconda metà del medesimo secolo si registra un'inversione di condotta. Nella spedizione di Timoleonte, infatti, erano sullo stesso fronte⁶⁸ e non esitarono a combattere insieme nel 312 per cacciare i Macedoni del re Cassandro dal territorio di Leucade⁶⁹. Sul finire del III secolo, poi, quando ormai la dinastia eacide era decaduta si trovarono di nuovo su fronti opposti: nel 229 il Leucadesi sostennero con le proprie navi, insieme agli Acarnani, gli Illiri contro la flotta etolo-achea, invocata in soccorso di Corcira, poi assediata dagli stessi Illiri⁷⁰.

Se per Corcira e Leucade, tuttavia, vi sono maggiori informazioni per le altre isole, Itaca, Cefalonia e Zante, i dati storico-epigrafici appaiono meno abbondanti. Come è stato rilevato da S. Thiry, Corcira e Leucade da una parte, Zante e Cefalonia dall'altra, seguirono due percorsi diversi in epoca ellenistica sino almeno alla definitiva vittoria dei Romani: le prime due parteciparono attivamente alle vicende politiche e militari, interagendo direttamente con i principali attori coinvolti, mentre le seconde ebbero, con rare eccezioni, un ruolo più marginale⁷¹. Effettivamente, anche in base agli sviluppi storici sopra evidenziati tale considerazione sembrerebbe corrispondere alla realtà, tuttavia, ciò che pare mancare sinora è una rilettura complessiva che analizzi anche il dato archeologico.

⁶⁵ Aristot. fr. 407, 1 Gigon. Sull'argomento vd. Mele 2003, 319; Bettalli 2003, 118-119, n. 18.

⁶⁶ Cabanes 1976, 491-492. Su questi aspetti, riguardo a una nuova gestione del territorio anche rispetto allo sfruttamento agricolo vd. Domínguez 2022a.

⁶⁷ Thiry 2001, 139.

⁶⁸ Diod. Sic. 16, 66, 1-2; Plut. *Timol.* 8, 3.

⁶⁹ Diod. Sic. 19, 89, 3.

⁷⁰ Thiry 2001, 139.

⁷¹ Thiry 2001, 132-138; Carusi 2011, 92.

Per tali ragioni, di seguito si cercherà di affrontare la ricerca tenendo conto delle evidenze archeologiche rinvenute nei diversi contesti, anche alla luce delle ricerche più recenti, lette all'interno del paesaggio ellenistico più ampio, cui i singoli insediamenti e le isole appartenevano.

1. La trasformazione del paesaggio come conseguenza della nascita dello stato epirota

Come è noto, il IV e il III secolo a. C. rappresentano una fase cruciale per la crescita dell'Epiro sotto più aspetti. Proprio a partire dalla seconda metà del IV secolo a.C., infatti, con Alessandro il Molosso, i Molossi emersero sugli altri *ethne*, ampliando la propria sfera di influenza⁷²; in questo senso la nascita e lo sviluppo di alcuni centri principali possono essere letti come segnale di una nuova gestione del territorio.

È nota l'attenzione posta dai *basileis* ellenistici alla organizzazione delle città in senso monumentale e auto celebrativo, spesso esplicatasi proprio con nuove fondazioni⁷³. Per il regno di Pirro, infatti, vi sono le fondazioni di Antigonea, lungo la valle del Drino, e di Berenice, in Tesprozia⁷⁴. Per quanto riguarda il controllo politico, inoltre, basti sottolineare come Ambracia divenne la capitale del regno e proprio con Pirro conobbe una nuova fase edilizia che vide la costruzione dei due teatri⁷⁵.

I nuovi modelli insediativi, però, si inseriscono in contesti differenti che rispecchiano anche diversi modi e tempi di sviluppo. In questa ottica si può osservare la macroscopica differenza che vi è per le fasi più antiche tra la zona costiera e quella interna. Per quanto riguarda quella costiera, tra le prime colonie a essere fondate, a partire dalla fine dell'VIII secolo, si annoverano quelle elee, di Pandosia, Batiai, Bouchetion ed Elatrea, nella Cassopea⁷⁶. Tutte si contraddistinguono per essere collocate in posizioni vantaggiose, essendo dotate di ampi terreni fertili, utili sia alla coltivazione

⁷² Vd. Pascual 2018, con bibliografia.

⁷³ Su questi aspetti vd. Ferrara 2018, 357-359, con bibliografia.

⁷⁴ Domínguez 2022b, 559-561, con bibliografia.

⁷⁵ Vd. Riginos 2008; Papadopoulou 2018, 37, 42. Appare molto interessante il recente rinvenimento ad Ambracia di un piedistallo recante una iscrizione con la quale gli Ambraciotti esprimevano la loro gratitudine al re Pirro, che doveva essere esposto pubblicamente nel pritaneo. L'iscrizione è in corso di pubblicazione ed è stata esposta per la prima volta il 27.11.2022, presso il Museo Archeologico di Ioannina (vd. V. Papadopoulou, *ὑπὲρ Πύρρου*-Hyper Pyrrhus-In favor of Pyrrhus: An inscribed stone pedestal from the Prytaneion of Ambracia, su academia.edu).

⁷⁶ Dem. *Su Alonneso*, 7, 32; Dakaris 1971, 1-2.

sia al pascolo di buoi e cavalli, ma soprattutto per essere in punti strategici rispetto alla viabilità che conduceva al santuario di Dodona e al golfo di Ambracia⁷⁷. Tuttavia, i dati archeologici disponibili non sono molti: poco o nulla si conosce circa gli abitati e la loro organizzazione; l'elemento maggiormente conservato difatti è costituito dalle poderose cinte murarie, la cui costruzione è stata datata tra la fine del V e la seconda metà del IV secolo⁷⁸.

Diversa è la situazione invece per Ambracia che si struttura presto come centro urbano organizzato in una griglia stradale regolare. Scendendo cronologicamente ma rimanendo nel paesaggio costiero si possono citare Cassope o Gitana che nel corso dell'età ellenistica conoscono una organizzazione delle aree sia pubbliche che private, tramite la monumentalizzazione degli spazi agorali definiti ora da *stoai* ed edifici di vario tipo e lo stesso vale per Elea o, passando alla Caonia, per Phoinike⁷⁹. Sono tutti centri che conoscono una prima fase a partire verosimilmente dalla seconda metà del IV secolo, ma che si strutturano come impianti urbani solo successivamente, tra il III e il II secolo a.C. In tutti, in ogni caso, particolare attenzione è data agli apparati difensivi, i quali definiscono il perimetro urbano e in modo scenografico monumentalizzano i settori di maggiore impatto visivo. Un esempio in questo senso è il bastione di forma triangolare, situato a sud del teatro di Gitana, il quale, oltre a garantire una migliore difesa, nel senso di una più efficace risposta agli attacchi delle artiglierie, enfatizzava l'ingresso alla città situato immediatamente più a nord: l'aspetto monumentale e scenografico delle architetture, quindi, era sostenuto ed enfatizzato dagli apparati difensivi.

Entrando nel territorio molosso, similmente alla Tesprozia, Cassopea e Caonia, si possono riconoscere alcuni insediamenti principali in età ellenistica attorno ai quali si organizzano le aree di produzione. Anche in questo caso si nota una particolare attenzione ai circuiti murari che non vanno solo a coprire l'intero territorio, ma racchiudono i centri maggiori con apparecchi murari considerevoli. In particolare, il bacino di Ioannina, meglio conosciuto, può essere utilizzato come area di studio campione. Qui,

⁷⁷ Hammond 1997, 48; vd. anche Fantasia 2017, 16.

⁷⁸ Dakaris 1971; Corvisier 1991, 201. Per una lettura critica alla interpretazione tradizionale vd. Domínguez 2015, 111-143. Una recente revisione generale sull'argomento è in Gravani, Katsikoudis 2022, 33-40.

⁷⁹ Per Cassope vd. Aggeli 2015; per Gitana: Kanta-Kitsou 2008; per Elea: Spanodimos 2020; per Phoinike: Giorgi, Lepore 2020. A livello generale, per una lettura sulle dinamiche insediative in Epiro, in senso urbano, vd. Bogdani 2018; Longo 2019; Rinaldi 2020; Gerogiannis 2022a.

infatti, negli ultimi 15 anni sono emersi nuovi dati che hanno consentito di evidenziare una fitta occupazione del bacino, senza soluzione di continuità, dall'Età del Bronzo a quella romana (Fig. 3)⁸⁰. Alcuni di questi sorsero su siti mai occupati precedentemente a partire dal V secolo a.C., periodo in cui si registra un cambiamento nei modelli insediativi osservabile sia negli abitati, che diventano più articolati, sia nell'utilizzo di materiale litico per costruire. Esempi in questo senso sono costituiti da Dourouti, Episkopi oppure Rachi Platania, per citare i siti più noti⁸¹.

Un altro momento di cambiamento è collocabile tra la fine del IV e l'inizio del III secolo a.C., quando sorsero diverse fortificazioni, tra le quali alcune pertinenti a insediamenti⁸²: Megalo Gardiki, il Kastro di Ioannina e Kastritsa; a questi si aggiungono le fortezze di Episkopikò a sud, di Kalyvoules a nord e la torre a Pedinì. Tutti e tre gli insediamenti furono realizzati su siti già esistenti: le pendici di Kastritsa hanno restituito tracce di frequentazione dal Neolitico fino al IV secolo a.C.⁸³; testimonianze almeno dall'Età del Ferro sono emerse anche sull'acropoli di Megalo Gardiki e un discorso simile si può ipotizzare per il Kastro di Ioannina⁸⁴. All'interno di tutti e tre, poi, sono stati individuati e in parte scavati edifici e strutture pertinenti all'abitato, che agli inizi del III secolo a.C. si organizza assumendo un impianto pseudo-regolare.

In questa fase, dunque, accanto agli insediamenti rurali che continuano a vivere nel bacino, si formano – o si riorganizzano – questi altri insediamenti, posti su alture ben difendibili e con eccellente visibilità sul territorio circostante, i quali vengono fortificati con imponenti apparati difensivi.

Viste nell'insieme le fortificazioni sembrano rispondere a un medesimo sistema difensivo che doveva funzionare sinergicamente, soprattutto grazie alla intervisibilità che tutti hanno e alla loro posizione in punti strategici, di controllo rispetto alle vie di accesso al bacino di Ioannina.

Simili impianti e fortificazioni sono leggibili anche negli altri insediamenti maggiori della Molossia, intorno ai quali gravitano altre fortificazioni minori. Tra questi, un esempio può essere Orraon, in cui, analogamente agli altri insediamenti della Molossia, risulta difficile definire uno sviluppo prettamente urbano, soprattutto in assenza dell'identificazione di un'area

⁸⁰ Gravani 2018; Pliakou 2018; Vasileiou 2019-2020, 76.

⁸¹ Per Dourouti vd. Gravani 2004; per Rachi Platania vd. Pliakou 2007, 169-170. Per una lettura generale vd. Domínguez 2018a, 8-12, con bibliografia.

⁸² Gerogiannis 2021, 138-144; Papadopoulou, Vasileiou 2022, 90; Choínas 2022.

⁸³ Yiouni, Kappa, Faklari 2015, 16-21.

⁸⁴ Pliakou 2018.

chiaramente pubblica⁸⁵. Piuttosto, l'insediamento si struttura su un tessuto regolare di strade strette, impiantato su una collina difesa naturalmente a sud, da dove si ha un'ottima visibilità sulla via che conduce verso Ambracia, ed è racchiuso da un possente circuito murario, dotato di una ricca batteria di torri e bastioni⁸⁶.

In altre parole, negli insediamenti molossi non sembra spiccare in modo evidente uno sviluppo urbano vero e proprio⁸⁷, per lo meno confrontabile con quello riscontrato in altri siti di Epiro, come Cassope, Gitana o Phoinike, ma, piuttosto, la fase di monumentalizzazione sembra esprimersi principalmente nei possenti circuiti murari che disegnano un nuovo paesaggio militarizzato.

Ciò che emerge, dunque, è la militarizzazione di un territorio attuata su molteplici livelli e che coinvolse il modello insediativo stesso d'Epiro, pur con le rispettive differenze infra-regionali⁸⁸. La distribuzione dei siti fortificati lungo i corridoi di penetrazione del territorio epirota creava un nuovo paesaggio che rispecchiava l'identità guerriera del *basileus* ellenistico⁸⁹. È in particolare con Pirro che si raggiunge la massima espressione di questa identità guerriera che, benché già prima si stesse delineando in forma embrionale, con il nuovo sovrano connota in senso più marcato lo stato epirota che travalica i confini. Ed è, infatti, in questo senso che può essere letta la stretta interconnessione visiva che vi è tra le diverse fortificazioni lungo tutto il territorio epirota. Ma non è solo questo: la militarizzazione del territorio, verosimilmente, non aveva una funzione unicamente difensiva, bensì recava in sé un valore propagandistico ben più significativo e penetrante, andando a disegnare un paesaggio nuovo e in linea con le altre potenze mediterranee, dove ogni singola fortificazione fungeva da segnacolo della presenza del potere regale. Occorre sottolineare, peraltro, che le fortificazioni, oltre a essere collocate lungo la viabilità, furono realizzate nelle aree maggiormente produttive sia a livello agricolo sia di allevamento. In questo senso, sono interessanti le recenti osservazioni di A. Domínguez⁹⁰ su alcune di queste fortezze di piccole dimensioni oppure

⁸⁵ Su Orraon vd. Dakaris 1986; Hoepfner 1999; Aggeli 2005.

⁸⁶ Gerogiannis 2021, 387-400.

⁸⁷ Tale sviluppo, in particolare, in Molossia sembra concentrarsi unicamente nel santuario di Dodona, "capitale" politica del regno molosso, il quale, oltre alla monumentalizzazione degli edifici propriamente sacri, fu dotato in questa fase di tutti quei complessi a carattere pubblico volti a rappresentare e ad accogliere la collettività, come il *bouleuterion*, il pritaneo, il teatro e, in una fase di poco successiva, lo stadio (vd. Soueref 2019, con bibliografia).

⁸⁸ Gerogiannis 2021.

⁸⁹ Calìo, Brancato 2020, 217-246; Gerogiannis 2022b.

⁹⁰ Domínguez 2022a.

su alcune torri che potevano costituire le residenze di personaggi illustri, posti dalla dinastia molossa a gestione di quella parte di territorio, i quali obbedivano direttamente al re. Secondo quest'ottica, nella progressiva trasformazione del paesaggio epirota, avviata da Alessandro il Molosso e poi incrementata dalla politica di Pirro e di Alessandro II, sarebbe stata attuata una sostanziale riforma nella gestione del territorio, basata sull'implemento della produzione agricola, a capo della quale sarebbero stati posti i *philoi* e gli *hetairoi* del re⁹¹. Questi personaggi fidati, non solo garantivano lo sfruttamento agricolo e l'allevamento, ma consentivano anche un controllo capillare del territorio tramite la loro presenza, segnalata in modo evidente dalle fortificazioni, torri-residenze, che dettavano un nuovo linguaggio architettonico rispetto al paesaggio, ma anche dalle tombe monumentali, individuate per esempio in Tesprozia⁹².

2. Le isole ioniche nel quadro del paesaggio ellenistico

Partendo da questo quadro così delineato per l'Epiro, si cercherà di analizzare il paesaggio delle isole ioniche in epoca ellenistica, soprattutto nel lasso di tempo in cui queste furono sotto il controllo diretto dello stato epirota o comunque sotto la sua influenza. In particolare, ci si concentrerà sui casi di Leucade, Itaca e Cefalonia, per i quali i dati archeologici e le ricerche effettuate permettono di avere una idea generale sulla loro organizzazione. In questo senso, sembra paradossale la scarsa conoscenza archeologica che si ha di Corcira per questo periodo. Nonostante la fondamentale importanza che l'isola doveva avere, le maggiori informazioni riguardano essenzialmente il centro cittadino, con i suoi porti, le aree necropolari e le zone produttive⁹³; mentre per le fortificazioni restano molti aspetti da chiarire, sia per quelle urbane sia per quelle situate nel territorio. Si auspica che vengano pubblicati in futuro nuovi studi aggiornati in grado di ricostruire il paesaggio ellenistico di questa importante isola.

Iniziando da Leucade, dunque, le informazioni a disposizione sono maggiori (Fig. 4). È noto il suo carattere ambiguo, a metà tra isola e penisola, strettamente connessa alla costa continentale, da cui è divisa da uno stretto canale, scavato secondo la tradizione dai primi coloni corinzi⁹⁴.

⁹¹ Domínguez 2022a, 480-481, 484, 486-487.

⁹² Domínguez 2022a, 480.

⁹³ Vd. Metallinou 2010, con bibliografia.

⁹⁴ Strab. 10, 2, 8.

Qui, infatti, sorse la città⁹⁵, a diretto controllo del canale, con il suo molo⁹⁶, protetto da una serie di fortezze⁹⁷, che costituiva una vitale alternativa rispetto alla ventosa costa occidentale⁹⁸. In età classica la città fu cinta da una prima fortificazione, poi ampliata e ristrutturata in epoca ellenistica, raggiungendo una lunghezza di 4,5 km, di cui si conservano alcuni tratti in opera poligonale⁹⁹. Sempre all'epoca ellenistica, inoltre, appartiene il ponte in pietra che collegava l'isola alla terraferma¹⁰⁰.

Per quanto riguarda la *chora*, invece, sull'isola sono stati individuati quindici siti identificabili come una o più strutture a torre, di forma circolare, rettangolare o quadrangolare, costruite in opera rettangolare, poligonale oppure in mattoni crudi¹⁰¹.

È difficile risalire alla cronologia assoluta di queste torri, tuttavia, è stato notato che in alcuni casi, come a Poros, Achuria e a Kleismatia, su una precedente torre circolare ne era stata costruita una più recente a pianta quadrata, in opera rettangolare o poligonale, la cui architettura e planimetria trova confronti diretti con le opere difensive di IV e III secolo a.C. note per la parte continentale¹⁰² (Acarnania ed Epiro).

Per quanto riguarda la funzione, nonostante il loro carattere monumentale – anche costoso da realizzare – e sebbene siano collocate in punti strategici, con ottima visibilità sul territorio, S.P. Morris sottolinea l'aspetto residenziale di queste torri, che sarebbero legate secondo la studiosa alla produzione agricola, in particolare alla viticoltura¹⁰³. La funzione principale di queste strutture, quindi, poteva essere quella di garantire la sicurezza del personale¹⁰⁴ e dei prodotti che venivano stoccati all'interno, come sembrerebbe testimoniare il rinvenimento praticamente esclusivo di ceramica d'uso comune, tra cui numerosi *pithoi*¹⁰⁵.

Senza entrare nel merito della cronologia delle singole strutture

⁹⁵ Thuc. 3, 94, 2.

⁹⁶ Sul molo vd. Murray 1988.

⁹⁷ Morris 2001, 287.

⁹⁸ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 87-88.

⁹⁹ Morris 2001, 289.

¹⁰⁰ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 88.

¹⁰¹ Morris 2001, 338.

¹⁰² Morris 2001, 339.

¹⁰³ Morris 2001, 343.

¹⁰⁴ Su questo S.P. Morris riporta il noto passo di Demostene: αἱ μὲν ἄλλαι θεράπαιναι -ἐν τῷ πύργῳ γὰρ ἦσαν, οὐπὲρ διαιτῶνται- ὥς ἤκουσαν κραυγῆς, κλείουσι τὸν πύργον, καὶ ἐνταῦθα μὲν οὐκ εἰσῆλθον, τὰ δ' ἐκ τῆς ἄλλης οἰκίας ἐξέφερον σκεύη (Dem. 47, 56).

¹⁰⁵ Morris 2001, 340-343.

difensive¹⁰⁶, a livello complessivo sembra emergere un paesaggio fortificato che trova forti analogie con quanto riscontrato in Epiro, almeno per la prima età ellenistica¹⁰⁷.

Un sistema simile sembra sia emerso anche dai recenti studi effettuati sul territorio di Itaca: qui, in particolare, la rilettura dei dati archeologici ha permesso di evidenziare la distribuzione di quindici siti principali di vario tipo (insediamenti, fortificazioni, necropoli), il cui sviluppo si può datare a partire dalla tarda età classica a quella ellenistica¹⁰⁸.

Itaca, rispetto alle altre isole, pur trovandosi lungo le rotte commerciali che collegavano la Grecia con le coste italiane, è un'isola montagnosa con poche aree fertili¹⁰⁹, costituita da due ampie penisole, rispettivamente una a nord e una a sud, unite da una stretta fascia di terra dove era il principale insediamento, Aetos, posto di fronte a Cefalonia (Fig. 5). Qui si trovavano i più importanti approdi, di Piso Aetos e la Baia di Polis, di fronte al porto di Same, in Cefalonia¹¹⁰.

Nonostante il territorio non propriamente ospitale, a partire dalla tarda età classica si registra una crescita nell'economia dell'isola, basata sullo sfruttamento intensivo del territorio, tra cui l'allevamento del bestiame e l'utilizzo di altre risorse come il legno, il miele, il sale, la pesca, che avrebbero integrato una dieta basata su orzo, olio e vino¹¹¹. A tale crescita economica corrispose uno sviluppo insediativo e la costruzione di numerose fortificazioni, realizzate sia intorno ai centri abitati (almeno Aetos, Stavros, Agios Athanassios, Paleokastro di Roussano, Pilikata e plausibilmente Vathy, Rouga e Helleniko), sia nel territorio, tramite sistemi di *phrouria* e torri. Secondo J. Pascual, in questa opera di fortificazione generale sono riconoscibili due fasi: la prima collocabile alla fine del IV secolo a.C., quando sarebbero state realizzate le prime torri difensive presso gli insediamenti, che sarebbero stati cinti da prime opere difensive. La seconda, ascrivibile al III secolo, che vide l'attuazione di un programma scenografico che avrebbe comportato la fortificazione di tutti gli insediamenti, ora racchiusi entro imponenti circuiti murari, costruiti in opera poligonale¹¹².

Le torri dislocate nel territorio (Sotera-Pagano, Dexia e forse Vigglà,

¹⁰⁶ S.P. Morris data la realizzazione delle torri tra il V e il III secolo a.C., anche se riferisce la maggior parte all'epoca tardoclassica (Morris 2001, 343).

¹⁰⁷ Domínguez 2022a, più cf. *supra*.

¹⁰⁸ Pascual 2022, 504.

¹⁰⁹ Pascual 2022, 497-500.

¹¹⁰ Pascual 2022, 503.

¹¹¹ Pascual 2022, 521-522.

¹¹² Pascual 2022, 517.

e anche a Paleokastro di Roussano, Rouga e Helleniko) erano dotate ovviamente di ampia visibilità e intervisibilità, e potevano costituire punti di sorveglianza ma anche di rifugio in caso di pericolo¹¹³.

Anche in questo caso, come a Leucade e in Epiro, alcune di queste torri sono state interpretate come torri-residenze, legate non solo alla difesa ma anche allo sfruttamento agricolo del territorio; in particolare quella di Agios Athanasios¹¹⁴.

È interessante, inoltre, che proprio in questo periodo la ricchezza dell'isola sia testimoniata anche dalla comparsa di ricche tombe ellenistiche, al cui interno sono stati rinvenuti gioielli e ceramiche provenienti dall'Italia, che documentano in modo evidente l'interconnessione con le coste italiane¹¹⁵.

L'ultima isola ionica a essere analizzata in questa sede, infine, è Cefalonia, costituita, come noto, dalle quattro *poleis*, come informa Tucidide¹¹⁶: Pale, Crane, Same e Proni. In particolare, Pale si troverebbe a nord della moderna Lixouri; Crane a sud di Argostoli; Same a est dell'attuale villaggio; Proni, infine, vicino ad Asprogerakas¹¹⁷. L'importanza dell'isola di Cefalonia, oltre che per la sua collocazione strategica rispetto alle rotte marittime¹¹⁸, risiedeva anche in altri elementi, quali le sue risorse naturali: Polibio¹¹⁹ attesta l'abbondanza di grano a Pale, che, a suo dire, era in grado di sfamare un intero esercito, ma sicuramente ben più redditizia era la vendita di legname da costruzione navale, il famoso abete dell'isola, l'*Abies Cephalonica*¹²⁰. Rispetto al mare, poi, Cefalonia aveva anche sviluppato una flotta di una certa importanza, che è proprio quella che gli Etoli avrebbero utilizzato per devastare le coste dell'Epiro, del Peloponneso e dell'Acarnania¹²¹.

Dal punto di vista archeologico le quattro città sembrano conoscere un primo sviluppo in età classica, ma, parallelamente a quanto evidenziato per

¹¹³ Pascual 2022, 517.

¹¹⁴ Morgan 2007, 81-82. In questa ottica si pone anche la fortificazione sull'acropoli di Roussano, sopra Polis, la cui occupazione potrebbe segnare l'inizio di uno sfruttamento sistematico di questi altipiani, probabilmente per la pastorizia, in concomitanza con le coltivazioni in pianura (Morgan 2007, 82).

¹¹⁵ Morgan 2007, 82.

¹¹⁶ Thuc. 2, 30, 2.

¹¹⁷ Sotiriou 2010, 98.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *supra*.

¹¹⁹ Polyb. 5, 3, 5.

¹²⁰ Pascual 2021, 905, con bibliografia. Sull'economia di Cefalonia, sulle emissioni monetali che richiamano la vocazione al mare e al ricavo di legname vd. Sotiriou 2010, 99.

¹²¹ Polyb. 5, 3, 7-8; Pascual 2021, 905.

l'Epiro¹²², la vera strutturazione si ebbe solo in età ellenistica, quando i più antichi circuiti murari, limitati il più delle volte alle sole acropoli, furono ampliati, assumendo un aspetto imponente e monumentale, come nel caso di Same, oppure di Crane. Questa ultima, in particolare, vide la fondazione, mai conclusa, di una “nuova città”, la cosiddetta Nuova Crane, avviata verosimilmente intorno al 300 e proseguita nel corso del III secolo a.C.¹²³, che prevedeva l'organizzazione di un impianto regolare, basato su lunghi isolati, larghi 33 m per 68-206 m di lunghezza, che richiamano dal punto di vista planimetrico quelli di Demetriade¹²⁴. È a questa fase che si deve datare anche l'ampliamento del circuito murario che ora a nord prevedeva una imponente cinta muraria in opera trapezoidale e poligonale, difesa da una fitta rete di torri, con diverse postierle e una porta monumentale. Questa, protetta ai lati da due possenti bastioni quadrangolari, era costituita da due muri perpendicolari al tracciato delle mura che creavano un corridoio, largo 20 e lungo 38 m, al termine del quale, sul lato sud, si ergeva un'altra torre, che lasciava lo spazio a due passaggi laterali¹²⁵.

In modo simile si registra una fase monumentale anche a Same, non solo nell'imponente apparecchio murario difensivo, ma anche nell'impianto urbano. In particolare, anche se è nota la frequentazione dell'area prima dell'epoca classica, una prima strutturazione dell'abitato si ebbe solo durante il IV secolo a.C., quando fu realizzata una griglia regolare con isolati di 89x33 m, ognuno suddiviso in blocchi più piccoli quadrati di 14,8 m di lato, separati da strade larghe tra i 3 e i 6 m, secondo una scansione che trova forti analogie con il mondo epirota e in particolar modo con Kassope¹²⁶.

Tali interventi sostanziali, non riguardarono solo gli insediamenti ma anche il territorio che fu occupato in maniera capillare, come testimoniano le numerose fortificazioni di vario tipo disseminate su tutta l'isola¹²⁷, la maggior parte delle quali è da collocare, secondo K. Randsborg, tra il 350 e il 250 a.C.¹²⁸. La disposizione di queste fortificazioni, secondo A. Sotiriou indicherebbe le zone di pertinenza di ciascuna delle quattro *poleis*, con una funzione quindi di tutela dei confini¹²⁹. Tuttavia, anche in questo caso si registra la stretta interconnessione tra una fortificazione e l'altra

¹²² Cf. *supra*.

¹²³ Randsborg 2002, 281.

¹²⁴ Sotiriou 2010, 102.

¹²⁵ Sotiriou 2010, 102.

¹²⁶ Sotiriou 2010, 105.

¹²⁷ Randsborg 2002, 290; Sotiriou 2010, 106.

¹²⁸ Randsborg 2002, 252.

¹²⁹ Sotiriou 2010, 106.

con una interservisibilità che verosimilmente abbracciava tutto il territorio, permettendo di controllare le vie di penetrazione, in connessione con le rotte marittime. È in quest'ottica che K. Randsborg vede nella realizzazione di queste opere difensive l'intervento di potenze straniere, che nelle fasi più antiche identifica con Atene e poi con i dinasti macedoni¹³⁰: "Only the wealth and man-power available to the constructors are beyond discussion"¹³¹.

3. Considerazioni conclusive

Dai dati storico-archeologici presentati appare evidente la volontà da parte dei dinasti molossi di aprirsi verso il mare, a partire almeno dalla seconda metà del IV secolo a.C. Un'apertura che poteva avvenire solo attraverso il controllo delle isole ioniche. Questa politica verosimilmente era stata tentata già da Alessandro il Molosso, come conferma in maniera evidente la sua spedizione in Italia. Per poter partire dovette disporre delle navi necessarie a trasportare il proprio esercito, ma anche dei porti per poter gestire e organizzare tutta la spedizione. In questo senso, se non si può parlare di dominio effettivo, sono ipotizzabili forme di accordo e di collaborazione, così come sembra testimoniare anche il passaggio per Leucade del grano acquistato da Leocrate dalla regina Cleopatra.

Più informazioni, come visto, si hanno per il periodo che va da Pirro a suo figlio Alessandro II, durante i quali, il controllo di Corcira e Leucade appare essere certo. È probabile che anche Itaca e Cefalonia finirono sotto la sfera di influenza epirota, se non di dominio, almeno se si tiene conto della condotta attuata precedentemente dagli altri *basileis*, a partire da Agatocle, ma anche da Demetrio Poliorcete¹³².

Un dato certo, comunque, è l'ingresso, con Pirro, dell'Epiro nel quadro geopolitico Mediterraneo. Epiro ora proiettato verso il mare, come dimostra la spedizione in Italia e in Sicilia. In questo suo quadro egemonico sembra essere coerente l'informazione tramandata da Plinio, secondo la quale il re epirota avrebbe progettato di costruire un ponte che collegasse la costa epirota a quella italiana a Idrunte¹³³.

Certamente il controllo delle isole non fu immediato e necessitò di azioni diplomatiche, sistemi di alleanze – come il matrimonio con Lanassa – ma

¹³⁰ Randsborg 2002, 285-286.

¹³¹ Randsborg 2002, 307.

¹³² Vd. Intrieri 2011, 444-445, n. 89.

¹³³ Plin. *NH* 3, 101.

anche di interventi militari ed è in tale ottica che forse si può inserire anche il rifacimento o la costruzione delle fortificazioni lungo la costa, quella che apparteneva alla perea di Corcira¹³⁴. Tra queste fortificazioni, si può citare Lygia, dove si conservano i resti di una triplice opera difensiva datata tradizionalmente tra il V e il IV secolo, anche se gli apparecchi murari sembrano appartenere a un orizzonte cronologico più basso, inquadrabile tra la fine del IV e il corso del III secolo a.C.¹³⁵, assimilabile al resto delle fortificazioni epirote.

L'analisi di queste ultime, in particolare, ha mostrato che nella regione esiste un processo di standardizzazione delle forme di architettura poliorcetica. Infatti, piuttosto che notare un evoluzionismo interno è stato possibile mettere in luce un sistema difensivo che si organizza in maniera complessa, coerente, ma soprattutto omogeneo. Al di là di alcune soluzioni che sembrano essere episodiche, come la porta sud di Apollonia oppure la torre triangolare di Kastritsa, l'architettura fortificata epirota presenta caratteri costruttivi abbastanza simili in tutta la regione. Le caratteristiche poliorcetiche e la seriazione tipologica costituiscono i motivi principali di una nuova militarizzazione del territorio sotto il controllo dei Molossi, attribuibile ai regni dinastici di Alessandro il Molosso, di Pirro e di suo figlio Alessandro, che va a disegnare un nuovo paesaggio ellenistico.

Per quanto riguarda le isole ioniche, la presentazione dei dati ha consentito di evidenziare un quadro simile, sia riguardo i modelli insediativi, con la riorganizzazione e pianificazione dei centri urbani, che si attua principalmente tra la seconda metà del IV e il corso del III secolo a.C. (vedi Same e Crane, per esempio), sia con la realizzazione di una fitta rete di fortificazioni che coprivano in maniera capillare i territori insulari. Tale sviluppo insediativo sembra andare di pari passo con un incremento nella produzione agricola e nell'allevamento. È difficile stabilire se tale innovazione sia da ascrivere all'intervento di una potenza esterna, come la Macedonia o l'Epiro oppure se sia il frutto di una riorganizzazione interna attuata da città-stato autonome, così come è stato ipotizzato per Itaca¹³⁶.

Tuttavia, è più che probabile che il processo di militarizzazione, legato a una riorganizzazione nella gestione del territorio e al suo sfruttamento, sia avvenuto in un lasso di tempo ampio, che coinvolse molteplici protagonisti,

¹³⁴Thuc. 1, 50, 3; 52, 1; 54, 1; 3, 76, 1.

¹³⁵Rispetto alla datazione di S. Dakaris, che pone la costruzione delle tre rispettive fortificazioni tra il V e il IV secolo a.C. (Dakaris 1971, 105-108), Ch. Spanodimos ritiene che nessuna delle opere difensive possa appartenere a un periodo antecedente al IV secolo a.C. (Spanodimos 2019, 261-262).

¹³⁶Pascual 2022, 524.

tra i quali sicuramente i dinasti molossi ebbero un ruolo di primo piano. A livello generale si può notare come tali interventi portarono alla creazione di un nuovo linguaggio architettonico che attraverso le fortificazioni plasmò in modo nuovo il paesaggio ellenistico, in una *koine* socio-culturale che travalica i confini regionali, arrivando in Italia e in Sicilia – e viceversa –, passando per le isole ioniche¹³⁷.

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¹³⁷ Su questi aspetti vd. anche Antonetti 2010.

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Fig. 1. Immagine satellitare, presa da Google Earth, con indicazione delle isole ioniche (elaborazione dell'A.).



Fig. 2. Estensione del regno epirota negli anni di Pirro. Rielaborazione dell'A. da Cabanes 2012.



Fig. 3. Bacino di Ioannina con indicazione dei siti archeologici individuati (rielaborazione dell'A. da Pliakou 2018).



Fig. 4. Carta di Leucade con indicazione delle torri (da Morris 2001).



Fig. 5. Immagine satellitare con le isole di Cefalonia e di Itaca, presa da Google Earth, con indicazione dei siti principali (elaborazione dell'A.).

DODONA AND THE IONIAN ARCHIPELAGO

1. Pilgrimage to Dodona. The Scope of the Oracle

People from all over the Greek world consulted the Oracle of Dodona. This Panhellenic dimension does not correspond to the scope of the Sanctuary itself, however. Most of the activities that took place at this site seem to have belonged to the Epirote community and their closest neighbours. Nevertheless, we can find people from abroad in some specific cases, aside from the oracular role. This paper is going to focus on those visitors that came from the Ionian Archipelago, with particular attention being paid to those from the southern part, a territory that lies on the fringes of the immediate area of contact of Epirus. This information will allow us to reconstruct the kind of relationships and bonds that the islanders established with Dodona.

Thanks to the oracular tablets of Dodona, we have access to a first-hand source of both public and private consultations, whose topics deal with all the kinds of concerns that communities and individuals had in their daily lives¹. From these documents we can sometimes infer the origin of the pilgrims that travelled to Dodona. The main criteria that help us to glean this information include the explicit mention of the ethnic of the consultant, the onomastic of the individual, and the dialect used²; the first one gives us a specific location, whereas the other two enable us to map potential regions. In the case of the area of study of this paper, the dialectal variety among the islands and near territories makes this attribution less accurate. More data is needed to reach a more specific conclusion³. Section 2 of this paper is focused on this topic.

¹ This research has been carried out within the framework of project EYC2021-031612-I, derived from a Ramón y Cajal postdoctoral contract. Lhôte 2006. Eidinow 2007, 72-124; Chapinal-Heras 2021, 167-170; 2023, 144-198.

² For example, LOD 50 (Δεινοκλής Ἀπολλωνιάτας), DVC 215A (Περίκκη, the Boeotian version of Perikles), and DVC 1978A (θύον [τίνι κα θεον ---]);, written with the Megarian alphabet), respectively.

³ The West Greek dialect was shared, to some extent, by most of the communities in northwestern Greece, including the Ionian islands, partly due to the foundation of Corinthian colonies in several islands and along the Epirote coast (Méndez Dosuna 2017, 444-445). To my knowledge, a detailed and complete study regarding the dialect(s) spoken in the Ionian islands is still lacking.

There were other reasons to go to Dodona, apart from the Oracle and the worship of the cults that were active at the sanctuary⁴. Sources provide evidence of official acts corresponding to the Molossian and, within a broader context, the Epirote communities. According to several inscriptions that have been preserved, manumissions and concessions of citizenship, *proxenia* or other privileges took place at this sacred arena during the 4th-2nd centuries⁵. Likewise, since at least the 3rd century, artists and athletes from different regions had participated in the agonistic competitions known as Naia⁶. Given the geographical proximity, we may assume that some people from the aforementioned islands visited the place for these purposes, especially to participate in the Naia, but up to this day there is no inscription that mentions these *agones* and the corresponding participants from the Archipelago.

The last source of information, where we do have evidence of contacts between Dodona and the Ionian islands, is the combination of offerings and dedications deposited at the sanctuary, a procedure that could also be related to any of the activities mentioned above, as well as the erection of honorific statues. Some of these works bear inscriptions of the people involved, either those who created them or the dedicants themselves, often including their provenance. Section 3 will deal with four interesting cases.

2. Oracular Consultations

The Ionian island which presented the most prominent presence in Dodona was, for obvious reasons, Corcyra. Its proximity to Epirus made it easy to develop a fluid circulation of people, ideas and goods between both territories. Due to the focus of this paper on the southern area of the Ionian Archipelago, however, the Corcyraean testimonies in Dodona are not going

⁴ For an updated analysis of the ensemble of the so-called temples of Dodona, see Mancini 2022.

⁵ Manumissions: C68, C69, C71 and C74; SGDI 1346-1355, 1357-1358, 1359+1362 and 1360-1361. Citizenship concessions: SEG 15, 384; SGDI 1334-1335, 1337-1338 and 1344-1345. Concession of *proxenia* and/or other privileges: C16, SGDI 1336 and 1339-1341. All dates are BC, unless otherwise indicated.

⁶ The evidence of the festival includes inscriptions that mention the event, and participants or officers in charge of it: C27, C29, C30, C71; Cabanes 1988, 53, 67, 68, 70 and 71-72; Carapanos 1878, 107, nr. 1 and pl. XXVI, nr. 8; IG IV¹, 428; IG V², 118; SEG 40, 690; SEG 23, 472; SGDI 1356, 1370-1371, and perhaps 5786 (small tripod bearing the inscription of the dedicant, a rhapsode, who might have participated). The Naia probably existed already in the 5th century, most likely as a local or regional contest. On this issue, see Katsikoudis 2020; Chapinal-Heras 2021, 125-127; Domínguez Monedero 2022.

to be examined thoroughly. On the other hand, as part of the group of islands located to the west of the Hellenic peninsula, the omission of these data would result in a worse reconstruction of these dynamics. Suffice it to say that the documentation in question reveals the strong bonds that existed between Dodona and Corcyra, the northernmost Ionian island.

The fact that the collective Corcyraean consultations represent the largest group of public consultations preserved at Dodona is undoubtedly remarkable. É. Lhôte, in his corpus of inscriptions that included all the references published until 2006, placed them at the top of the list. LOD 1-4 constitute the evidence for four visits to Dodona by representatives of the Corcyraean community – together with Oricum in LOD 2⁷. Despite the fragmentary state of conservation of LOD 4, with just the beginning of the question left, it is likely to be similar to the other cases. Interestingly, the theme of all of them is linked to the common request for advice in order to achieve prosperity by means of improved government and total security (LOD 1-2) or harmony (LOD 3). Corcyraeans effectively asked which gods or heroes they should worship and make sacrifices to in order to be successful in their prayers, a very common question in public consultations. The dating, despite the fact that LOD 4 is unclear but probably similar, shows us that the island made use of the oracular services of Dodona several times in the 5th-4th centuries.

At least one private consultation by a person from Corcyra can be found among the more than 4,000 references that have been published⁸. A few more inscriptions with fragmentary texts may attest to the presence of further Corcyraean pilgrims, although it is unclear whether we can read the name of Corcyra⁹. There is also an oracular lamella that mentions the island, but it is not possible to know if it refers to the origin of the consultant, or the question itself deals with something related to Corcyra¹⁰. Finally, some cases might be linked to the island, on the basis of the alphabet employed, since Corcyraeans shared the same style with other Corinthian colonies in the region, such as Ambracia and Apollonia, as Lhôte indicates in his analysis of the consultations cited above¹¹; and in a couple of inscriptions there are similitudes between the Epirote and the

⁷ This joint consultation has been interpreted as the likely testimony of a *sympoliteia* between Corcyra and Oricum (Intrieri 2018, 159-160; 2019, 123).

⁸ DVC 1088A (Φείδης ὁ Κορ- / κυραῖος).

⁹ DVC 105B (Κορ-), 193B (Κο-), 1088A (Κορ-) and 3116A (Κ[ο]ρ-), which could be Κόρχυρα, but also for example Κόρινθος.

¹⁰ DVC 1229B (Κόρχυ[ρ]αν).

¹¹ LOD 41 and 95.

Coreyraean alphabet¹². These cases are potential proof of the movement of individuals from the island to Dodona, in the hinterland of Epirus, as of the end of the 6th century and up until the 4th century¹³.

One final issue regarding Coreyra and its neighbouring oracle remains to be addressed: the ἀνάθημα. At some point in the history of Dodona, probably in the 4th-3rd centuries, or at least not earlier than the mid-4th¹⁴, the sanctuary received a remarkable offering from the Coreyraean community. It consisted of a small statue of a boy – or a man, depending on the version – holding a bronze whip with bones at the end of its three chains, which struck the cauldron and made a long lasting noise¹⁵. The first author to pay particular attention to the *anathema* was A. B. Cook, who suggested that it could have played an important role in the oracular process, replacing an earlier circle of cauldrons on tripods surrounding the sacred oak; in this sense, the sound produced by both methods would have been the divine message. Cook also stressed that it could also have had an apotropaic function¹⁶.

Since then, a number of studies have examined the literary and material evidence for such an oracular procedure, and the hypothesis of the *anathema* as an oracular tool is currently rejected by several scholars¹⁷. It has been

¹² DVC 2368A and 2401.

¹³ None of the documents are dated in the period of the 3rd-2nd centuries. It is worth pointing out, however, that the official dating of the oracular tablets published in DVC might be partially mistaken. Some authors criticize the lack of evidence in many inscriptions and argue for a major revision that might lead to a later chronology (Lhôte 2018; Méndez Dosuna 2016, 119). Currently, the Dodona Online Project carries out an exhaustive reedition of the oracular inscriptions that is not finished yet (<https://dodonaonline.com/>, consulted on April 18th, 2024). However, since at the time of writing no major revision has taken place, the chronologies mentioned in this paper are considered correct until new research proves them wrong.

¹⁴ Piccinini 2017, 83-86.

¹⁵ Strab. fr. 7, 3; Zenob. 6, 5.

¹⁶ Cook 1902, 5-28. The main sources for the cauldrons in Dodona are Callim. *Hymn* 4, 277-287; Luc. 6, 422-430; Aristid. *Four*, 672; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Δωδώνη; *Suda s.v.* Δωδωναίων χαλκεῖον. Other references that refer to the sound of the cauldron, but without mentioning oracular activity, are Apollonius Dyscolus *Syn.* 3, 119; Philostr. *Imag.* 2, 33; Aus. 26, 23-26. Other ancient passages allude to alternative methods, primarily the flight of three doves (Strab. Fr. 7, 1) or by means of the oak itself (Hom. *Od.* 14, 327-330; Aesch. *PV* 829-835; Soph. *Trach.* 1164-1172; Pl. *Phdr.* 275b; Philostr. *Imag.* 2, 15 and 33; Paus. 7, 21, 2; Zen. 6, 5; Claud. 7, 117-119; Symm. 4, 33, 2; *Suda s.v.* Δωδώνη).

¹⁷ Bosman 2016; Domínguez Monedero 2017, 84-89, for more bibliography. Domínguez Monedero presents an interesting hypothesis about the oracular procedure, which could have consisted of touching the sacred oak. This author supports the apotropaic function of the *anathema*.

suggested that perhaps the sculpture of the boy may be that of Hyllus, one of the children of Heracles. This would link a plausible Corcyraean characteristic figure, Hyllus, to one of the cults that may have existed in Dodona, that of Heracles¹⁸. On the other hand, as J. Piccinini convincingly argues, it is most likely that this monumental offering was related to a rite of passage of the Corcyraean young élite¹⁹. In this way, the importance of the *anathema*, both for the sacred landscape of Dodona and for the Corcyraean community, reflects the good and strong relationship of Corcyra with the Sanctuary. The northern Ionian island was therefore close enough to Dodona – not only geographically – as to have that kind of bond²⁰.

Can we picture a similar situation in the case of the southern part of the Archipelago? In terms of oracular activity, unfortunately, the evidence of any presence of these islander communities is scarce. Undoubtedly, there were pilgrims from Leucas, Ithaca, Cephallenia, Zacynthus and other minor islands. But many tablets preserve fragmentary inscriptions, and consultants did not always specify their origin. Besides, despite the fact that we have more than 4000 testimonies, this is only a fraction of the total number of visitors who travelled to Dodona to pose questions to the Oracle over the several centuries that the site was active. All in all, for now we have just one oracular consultation related to the southern area of the Ionian Islands.

The tablet classified at the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina as M1346 bears four inscriptions (4072-4075). The first one of them, a private inquiry catalogued as DVC 4072A, presents the following text:

ἥ ἐν Σάμαι πορ[εϋόμενος];

“If (it would be good) to transfer to Same?”²¹

The document dates from the end of the 5th century or beginning of the 4th and the name of the consultant is not indicated. Σάμαι is likely to be Same, one of the four autonomous centres that made up the tetrapolis of Cephallenia, together with Pale, Crane and Proni²². Same was situated in the northern and northeastern part of the island²³. The question deals with

¹⁸ Intrieri 2018, 156-160.

¹⁹ Piccinini 2022, 50-53.

²⁰ In fact, the scope of Corcyra was broader, with offerings of large bronze bulls in Delphi and Olympia: Paus. 5, 27, 9 and 10.9.3-4; cf. Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 362.

²¹ All the translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

²² Pascual 2021, 900-901.

²³ Some of its remains have already been identified, including a temple outside the *polis* (Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 371).

some sort of transfer to Same, although the specific purpose –business, moving or any other possible reason– is not mentioned²⁴.

As stated above, like any other sanctuary, Dodona had other functions apart from the oracle. In some of these activities we can find further evidence of people from the southern Ionian Archipelago interacting with the Epirote cult centre. The following section will cast some light on these cases.

3. Dedications and Other Interactions

Votives and dedications are always a valuable source of information about the dynamics of a sanctuary²⁵. They help us to understand the religious practices, the cults and the concerns of the people who visited these sites. Dedications always help to increase our knowledge about the reasons why individuals or groups decided to deposit offerings or provide a glimpse of their lives and their purposes. Sometimes, the inscriptions are brief and specific, without any kind of literary adornment. Precisely regarding the Ionian islands, we have a small number of cases, although they reflect a variety of situations.

A headband or tiara from the 5th or 4th-3rd centuries bears a collective dedication (Lazzarini 1976, 308, nr. 907 bis; Dieterle 2007, F600). The piece seems to have been part of a statue, the adornment of a vase, or just a votive itself. Its inscription is as follows²⁶:

Παλειῖς Διὶ Νάω

“The Paleians, to Zeus Naios”.

Pale (Πάλη) was another Cephallenian *polis*, in this case located on the west side. This is, therefore, the second testimony from this island, and again we can see that the ethnic refers to the *polis*, instead of Cephallenia, as a consequence of the unique feature of being the only Ionian island where

²⁴ The text is grammatically problematic. πορ[ευσόμενος] (perhaps together with ἐν: ἐμπορευόμενος) implies displacement, whereas ἐν Σάμῃ, in dative and with a certain static connotation, seems contradictory. A possible explanation is that the consultant chose to write a short sentence that would combine both movement to Same and the idea of staying there, as would be the case of migration to the Cephallenian centre.

²⁵ The inscribed dedications of Dodona are compiled in Dieterle 2007, 362.

²⁶ National Museum of Athens, nr. 1247. Carapanos 1878, 44, nr. 14 and pl. XXIV, nr. 6-6bis; Lazzarini 1976, 308, nr. 907 (5th century); Dieterle 2007, 362 (4th-3rd centuries).

there was not just one *polis*, but four, all of them autonomous²⁷. The reason why the Paleians chose to dedicate a headband is difficult to discern, partly because we cannot know whether the artefact was part of a major votive, or just the offering itself. The dating, 5th or 4th-3rd century, depending on the scholar, is also too wide to tie the dedication to a specific period or event. In any case, the chronology coincides with the period of maximum activity of the Kingdom of Molossia, and later the Epirote Koinon.

A bronze vase from the 3rd century, also found during the excavations of the sacred area of Dodona conducted under Carapanos in the 19th century CE, revealed the following dedication (Lazzarini 1976, 229, nr. 379)²⁸:

Φιλοκλέδα ὁ Δαμοφίλου Λευκάδιος Δι Νάτοι

“Philocledas, son of Damophilos, Leucadios, to Zeus Naios”.

The person who offered this votive, Philocledas, was an inhabitant of the island and *polis* of Leucas. His offering, a bronze vase, was a frequent choice, especially for individuals and generally related to *symposia*²⁹. Considering that this practice tended to be associated with local élites, it might be possible that Philocledas, son of Damophilos, belonged to an important family in Leucas.

Our second dedication of an Ionian islander alone, IG IX² 1 4, 1750³⁰, is much more fruitful. The artefact consists of a bronze plaque, 20 cm high, with palmette finials and a central acroterion. It has a small central hole for suspension below the acroterion, plus two larger holes at the bottom left and right corners that would keep the plaque flat against a support, probably a wall. The piece is decorated with a phallus in the centre as an emblem, dividing the three last lines of the inscription into two halves. Its chronology has been discussed by different researchers, varying from

²⁷ Pascual 2021, 900.

²⁸ National Museum of Athens, nr. 441. Carapanos 1878, 40, nr. 2 and pl. XXIII, nr. 1-1bis; Lazzarini 1976, 229, nr. 379; Fotiadi 2018, cxvii.

²⁹ Large sympotic vessels, for example, were the most common offerings in Dodona between the 6th and 4th centuries (Piccinini 2012, 336).

³⁰ National Museum of Athens, nr. 803. Egger 1877, 254-258; Carapanos 1878, 39-40, nr. 1 and pl. XXII; Franke 1955, 38; Hammond 1967, 534; Cabanes 1981, 26 and 36, nr. 4; Davies 2000, 249, D10; SEG 50, 543; Fraser 2003, 26-40; SEG 53, 570; Cabanes 2004, 50-51, nr. 6; Cabanes 2010, 135-136; Piccinini 2012, 222; 2017, 74-76; Fotiadi 2018, 158-159 and cxx-cxxi.

the 4th century³¹, ca. 330³². to the third, ca. 295-290³³. The dedication is a remarkable literary exercise, featuring far-reaching political and social implications:

Θεὸς· Τύχα
Ζεῦ Δωδώνης μεδέ-
ων τὸ δέ σοι δῶρον πέ-
μπω παρ' ἐμοῦ· Ἀγάθων
5 Ἐχεφύλου καὶ γενεὰ
πρόξενοι Μολοσσῶν
καὶ συμμάχων ἐν τ-
ριάκοντα γενεαῖς
ἐκ Τρωϊα- ς, Κασσάν-
10 δρας (phal) γενεά,
Ζακύν- (lus) νθιοι.

“God. Fortune. Zeus, ruler of Dodona, the gift to you I send from me: Agathon son of Echephylos and descent line, proxenoi of Molossians and allies in thirty generations, descent line from Cassandra of Troy, Zacynthians (Davies 2000, 249)”³⁴.

The inscription provides interesting information not only about the activity of Dodona, but also about the political development of the Molossian *ethnos*. The document has been part of a major debate concerning the formation of a Koinon, consisting of the Molossian community, and a later *symmachia* among different Epirote *ethne*, known as the Alliance³⁵. What is relevant for this contribution, however, is both the mention of the *proxenia* and

³¹ Carapanos 1878, 39.

³² Davies 2000, 249.

³³ Meyer 2013, 73.

³⁴ The transliteration of some words (Echephylos, Cassandra, Zacynthians) has been adapted to the spelling of the volume.

³⁵ To sum up briefly, the Molossian Kingdom turned into a *koinon*, preserving the Aeacids as rulers. Once this royal family disappeared in 232, a more extensive federal state, the Epirote Koinon, was formed in almost the entire territory of Epirus. Before this, it is possible that there was a previous step in the process of federalization, the Alliance, formed ca. 330 BC. For further information regarding this thesis, see Hammond 1967; Cabanes 1976; Davies 2000. Meyer 2013 and 2015, has revised the epigraphic sources and her conclusions have provided a new interpretation, one that rejects the existence of any alliance between the Molossian and other Epirote *ethne*. For a more recent hypothesis that considers the formation of the Alliance before 331, see Pascual 2018.

the mythological lineage that Agathon claims to descend from³⁶. As P. M. Fraser states, the document “belongs to that elusive world in which legend, tradition, personal intention and historical reality combine to leave us in the dark”³⁷.

The use of ancestral genealogical bonds to connect with gods, heroes or characters from epic stories of the Greek past – the Trojan War was a rich source, in this sense – was a common practice in the Hellenic world, usually as a means of shaping collective identity. Epirus was no exception. In the Molossian territory, the figure of Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, was well known as the father of the eponymous founder of the *ethnos*, Molossus. It is no coincidence that Agathon uses the expression Ζεῦ Δωδώνης μεδέων, a very close adaptation to the invocation of Achilles to Zeus in the *Iliad*³⁸. According to Pausanias, from King Tharyps – a child monarch at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War³⁹ – to Pyrrhus, there were fifteen generations. After the fall of Troy, the hero decided not to go back to Thessaly, but to land in Epirus, where he lived following the advice of an oracle of Hellenus. He did not have descendants from Hermione, but with Andromache he had three sons, Molossus, Pielus and Pergamus. Andromache herself would have one more child, Cestrinus, with Hellenus, after the death of Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus in Delphi⁴⁰.

There are epic poems that include Dodona or Epirus as settings for part of their plots. In the *Odyssey*, the great hero of Ithaca is supposed to have travelled to Dodona in order to consult the Oracle about how to achieve his aim, while actually being dressed up as a beggar⁴¹. Another poem, known as *Thesprotia* or *Telegony*, written probably in the 7th century, presents Odysseus leaving Ithaca again and arriving in the Epirote region of Thesprotia. There, he would marry Queen Callidice, father another child, Polypoites, and fight against the tribe of the Brygi. When Callidice died,

³⁶ There is a second testimony of a citizen of Dodona, Boiscos son of Lycophronos, as proxenos of Corcyra. However, as stated above, this contribution is focused on the southern Ionian islands. For this reason, it is sufficient to mention the document, which dates to the 2nd century BC: πρό- / ξενον εἶμεν Βοῖσκον / Λυκόφρονος Δωδω- / ναῖον... (IG IX 1, 688; IG IX 1² 4, 792).

³⁷ Fraser 2003, 26.

³⁸ Hom. *Il.* 16, 233-234: Ζεῦ ἄνα Δωδωναῖε Πελασγικὲ τηλόθι ναίων / Δωδω-νης μεδέων δυσχειμέρου. Cf. Fraser 2003, 27.

³⁹ Thuc. 2, 80, 6.

⁴⁰ Paus. 1, 11, 1; Serv. *Aen.* 3, 297. Pausanias stresses that the Aeacid dynasty did descend from Pielos, instead of from Molossos (Paus. 1, 11, 2). On the topic of genealogical elaborations and Molossia, see Bearzot 1992, 227-236; Kittelä 2013; Chapinal-Heras 2014.

⁴¹ Hom. *Od.* 14, 310-337 and 19, 268-299.

the hero would return to Ithaca⁴². Hellenus, son of Priamos, mentioned above, also ended up in Epirus⁴³. Aeneas is another important figure. His itinerary led him to visit the Zacynthians, the Leucadians and the centre of Ambracia, including a consultation with the Oracle of Dodona⁴⁴. This account is the result of movement dynamics in northwestern Greece, where maritime routes connected islands and the continent, with colonization and commerce as two of the most powerful activities. A hypothesis suggested by Fraser offers a reinterpretation of the dedication of Agathon, expanding the Trojan connection with Agathon and Zacynthus⁴⁵. The *polis* of the island, as this author reminds us, is said to have been founded by Zacynthus, a son of Dardanos⁴⁶. Fraser also stresses the various meanings of the term *γενεά*, employed thrice in the dedication – linear descent, both ancestral and prospective, membership of a collective and the chronological sense of a generation. He then separates Troy from Cassandra, suggesting that both mentions belong to different sentences, thus highlighting the race or *γενεά* of Cassandra. The result is as follows:

“God. Fortune. Zeus, ruler of Dodona, the gift to you I send from me: Agathon, the son of Echephylos, and his offspring, proxenoi of the Molossians and their allies throughout thirty generations from Troy, the race of Cassandra, Zacynthians”⁴⁷.

Afterwards, Fraser incorporates the existence of a lesser-known member of the family of Priam, another sibling of Hellenus and Cassandra: Agathon, who appears just once in the *Iliad*, as one of the sons of the king of Troy⁴⁸. The coincidence in the onomastic of the dedicant is the element that allows this reconstruction, and would connect, in the Dodonaean and

⁴² Malkin 1998, 132, nr. 68; 2001, 203-204; Tartaron 2017.

⁴³ Apollod. *Epit.* 6, 12-13.

⁴⁴ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50, 3-4. In an alternative version that could be read in the *Little Iliad*, written by Lesches, both Andromache and Aeneas become prisoners of Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus and are brought to Pharsalia (Sch. Lycoph. 1268). The play *Andromache*, by Euripides, is also worth mentioning. Considered a pro-Molossian and anti-Spartan work – within the context of the Molossian-Athenian Alliance – (Beaumont 1952, 65; Cairns 2012, 46-47), it also refers to the birth of Molossus from Andromache and Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus.

⁴⁵ Fraser 2003, 32-3.

⁴⁶ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50.

⁴⁷ Fraser does not include a new complete translation of the text, but just the section he reinterprets. The reconstruction offered here, adapted to the spelling of the volume, presents the entire inscription.

⁴⁸ Hom. *Il.* 24, 249.

Molossian sphere, with Hellenus, who had been in Dodona⁴⁹. and made up one of the genealogical lines of the Aeacid Dynasty of Molossia⁵⁰. Finally, the phallus would not just allude to the continuing life-force of the Trojan lineage, but also would function as a guarantee for Zacynthian Agathon himself.

Honorific statues erected on pedestals are another valuable source when it comes to studying both the internal and foreign policies of the political entities of Epirus. Some of these pedestals record the names and deeds of certain individuals of Epirus and neighbouring areas, usually sculpted either as standing warriors or as riders. There is one that interests us, dating from the 3rd century or the beginning of the 2nd.⁵¹ It was found as the base of a column on the southern side of the stoa of the so-called prytaneion, although its original location was probably to the east of the bouleuterion or the stoa of the prytaneion. It bears the following inscription (Katsikoudis 2005, 75-77).⁵²

.....[μα]ντείας ἔνε-
[κεν καὶ εὐ]νοίας τᾶς εἰς αὐτούς.
Μέλισσος Ἐπικράτεος Κορκυραῖος
ἐποίησε

“...of the oracle, on the occasion of his good will towards themselves. Melissus (son) of Epicrates, Corcyraean, made it”.

This interesting case points to another function of Dodona, the same as any other site where sculptures and monuments were erected: as gathering places for artists in charge of these works. The inscription is surely a decree of the Epirote Koinon, and the Oracle – of Dodona, it is implied – seems to have taken part in the decision of honouring the sculpture of a person whose identity is lost. The Corcyraean Melissus, son of Epicrates, was the person chosen to carry out the task of creating the sculpture that stood on this pedestal. Unfortunately, we do not have any further information about Melissus, and none of the fragments of bronze honorific statues unearthed in Dodona can be connected specifically to this work⁵³.

⁴⁹ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 51, 1.

⁵⁰ Theopomp. *FGrHis* 115 F355.

⁵¹ The other references of this kind are C14, C15, C16 and C17.

⁵² Dakaris 1987 [1988], 72; SEG 38, 457; Dakaris 1989 [1992], 179-180; SEG 43, 317; Katsikoudis 2005, 75-77; Katsadima 2017, 502, n. 35.

⁵³ Katsikoudis 2005, 76-77.

Whereas dedications and honorific statues provide concrete proof of contacts and the presence of individuals from the southern Ionian Archipelago in Dodona, there are other materials worth mentioning. These materials testify to the interactions between Epirus, in general, and Dodona, in particular, with the islander communities. The coincidence in typologies of artefacts reflects the circulation of goods and people in northwestern Greece. This kind of commercial and cultural interaction dates back to at least the Bronze Age, when Dodona functioned as a hub in the hinterland, together with other sites such as Vitsa⁵⁴. In this respect, Tartaron highlights the importance of the Glycis Limen as the main harbour area that would connect the hinterland of Epirus with the Ionian islands. His calculations regarding a maximum single-day range for Late Bronze Age sailing vessels prove that even Ithaca was within reach⁵⁵.

In the Late Geometric Period, when the religious activity of Dodona is already fully confirmed, we once again come across materials that are also attested to in the Ionian islands. For example, there are similarities between two bronze figurines of warriors, originally attached to tripods, unearthed in Dodona and Ithaca⁵⁶. Bronze artefacts, rather than pottery, tend to have a broad geographical scope, covering a great part of the Hellenic territory. In the case of pottery, Corinthian products are the most widespread ware in northwestern Greece⁵⁷, although, to cite an example, Ithacan Late Geometric and Early Archaic pottery, which had a shorter range, circulated in Corinthia, Epirus, Cephallenia and Italy⁵⁸.

Numismatics give us another glimpse of this entangled world. The finding of coins of a certain State in another region does not necessarily imply the presence there of people of such provenance, but it is a good sign in terms of confirming the circulation of goods. The coins struck discovered in Dodona, however, do not show a strong circulation of currency from the Ionian islands. Despite the fact that there are still a large number of coins that have not been examined yet, some preliminary approaches point in this direction. For example, among the 74 silver staters that are currently preserved at the Archaeological Museum of

⁵⁴ For a summary of the Bronze Age materials in Dodona and the quality and quantity of Mycenaean artefacts, see Tartaron 2004, 23, 89-90 and 148. For an updated and deeper analysis, and the discussion concerning whether Dodona was already a religious site in the period, see Kleitsas 2021.

⁵⁵ Tartaron 2017.

⁵⁶ Benton 1934-1935, 85-86; Fotiadi 2018, 68-70.

⁵⁷ Coldstream 2003, 166-168.

⁵⁸ Livitsanis 2014, 145.

Ioannina and are analysed by Katsikoudis, the only piece from an Ionian island is one from Corcyra⁵⁹.

4. Time, Changes, Developments

Dodona and the Ionian Archipelago were part of a wide network that connected the Hellenic world and, more specifically, northwestern Greece. The circulation of people, knowledge and materials among these territories had been a reality since Prehistoric times, increasing in the Bronze Age and from the Archaic Period onwards. Different workshops produced artefacts that can be found in Epirus and the Ionian islands⁶⁰. A wide range of evidence confirms this integration, as we have seen. In the literary sphere, the *Odyssey* reflects the extent to which Epirus was close to the southern Ionian Islands. Undoubtedly, the Homeric poems were intended for a wider, Panhellenic, audience, so the allusion to Dodona lies within this context. However, precisely the story and sequence of events should be realistic enough, in terms of movement, to make the readers consider it plausible that Odysseus could pay a visit to the Oracle before finally reaching Ithaca – even if, as already noted, this was only a fake trip, since the hero had already reached the island disguised as a beggar. The elaboration of local traditions, such as the *Thesprotia/Telegony* poem, reinforced these dynamics. Nevertheless, the scarcity of evidence, with only a relatively small number of documents that prove these bonds, must also be considered within the context of the network of Dodona. It would be a mistake to try to see the southern Ionian Islands as one of the closest territories to the Sanctuary in terms of contacts and pilgrimage activities.

⁵⁹ Katsikoudis 2013, 314. The rest of the coins are from Dyrrachion, the Achaean *Koinon*, Damastion, Thyrraeion, the Thessalian *Koinon*, Larissa, the Boeotian *Koinon*, Chalcis, Aegina, Corinth, Sicyon, Ellis, Pellene and Macedon (Katsikoudis 2013, 314-321). Therefore, none of the southern Ionian Islands are on this list, despite the fact that silver coinage is also attested to in Cephallenia, Leucas and Zacynthus (Gehrke and Wirbelauer 2004, *passim*). Although not specifically linked to Dodona, there were obviously interactions among the Ionian islands and Epirus which can be examined through numismatics. This is the case of Leucas, in whose port we can find Epirote coins primarily from the second half of the 4th century and the 3rd century. These were not, however, the most intense contacts of this island; for example, the integration of Leucas into the Acarnanian *Koinon* after Pyrrhus – becoming its capital, indeed – entailed a major circulation of coins from that territory (Bonnellou 2005, 53-54).

⁶⁰ Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 11-12; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood and Papoulia 2022. For example, Corinthian vases in Dodona since the late 8th century, with a similar chronology as the foundation of Corcyra (Piccinini 2017, 63).

The chronology of the inscriptions we have seen in the previous sections shows two levels of activity in Dodona regarding the presence of Ionian islanders, although the interpretation might also apply to a general trend. The oracular consultations –the Corcyraeans and the one relating to transferring to Same, in Cephallenia– date mostly from the 5th-4th centuries. However, the dedications in votives –the Paleians, the Leucadian Philocledas and the Zacynthian Agathon– and on the pedestal –the Corcyraean Melissus– have a slightly later dating, from the 4th to the early 2nd centuries. Most of the dedications, in fact, date from the 4th century. With this in mind, what we can see here is the development of Dodona within the historical context of its region. First, the Oracle was active since at least the 8th century, and, according to the chronology of the lamellae, it reached its peak in the 5th-4th centuries. Second, at the end of the 5th century or beginning of the 4th, the Kingdom of Molossia gained control over the Sanctuary, which seems to coincide with a process of transformation and monumentalization of the site⁶¹. Dedications were frequent at the shrine as of at least the 6th century⁶², but a series of honorific statues on pedestals were erected all over the sacred site during the 4th-2nd centuries. At the same time, Dodona became a meeting place for the celebration of concessions of *proxenia*, citizenships and other rights, as well as for manumissions, during the same period. These were the consequences of being in the zone of influence of the Molossian, and later Epirote, States.

The dedications made by Ionian islanders during the 4th-3rd centuries belong to that second level of activity of Dodona, which is strongly connected to the development of Epirus and the general trend of northwestern Greece. The series of events that altered the geopolitical situation of the territory contributed to a more intense flow of people. Obviously, in the previous epoch contacts and the movement of communities and individuals also existed, as the colonization process reflects. However, the new dynamics of the 4th century onwards empowered them. As an example, there are a number of testimonies from 4th-2nd centuries of intermarriage between people from the Ionian islands and other Hellenic territories, as for instance two Zacynthians married in Michalitsi, in Epirus. In general, it seems that Coreyra and Zacynthus were a good source of women, whereas foreign men

⁶¹ The conventional dating of such a change in the Dodonaean landscape is the end of the 5th or beginning of the 4th century, but recent revisions of these theories suggest a slightly later chronology, with the 4th century well under way. On this subject see Mancini 2022, 106.

⁶² Dieterle 2007, 362. They cover mostly 6th-3rd centuries, plus a strigil from the 1st century.

would concentrate in the ports of Corcyra and Leucas⁶³. It is, therefore, no coincidence that dedications from people from the Ionian islands have this chronology.

Moving forward in time, one may be tempted to interpret the lack of testimonies during the Late Hellenistic and the Imperial Periods as proof of a decrease in the interactions between Dodona and the Ionian islanders. The foundation of Nicopolis, in this sense, transformed the dynamics that had characterized northwestern Greece up until then, partly due to the synoecism process that required the creation of the new settlement⁶⁴. The port of Leucas, for example, lost its prominence as a commercial hub, although its position as a coastal station favoured its ongoing inhabitation⁶⁵. Nevertheless, the Sanctuary of Dodona shows a general trend of diminished activity from the Roman conquest onwards. Despite the existence of certain periods featuring an apparent revitalization⁶⁶, a global overview of the site over these centuries confirms this decline. Therefore, the absence of evidence of contacts with the Ionian Archipelago must be understood within this broader context. Dodona was still active, and, in fact, the place would become a bishopric seat in Christian times⁶⁷, but it never recovered the intense activity and supra-regional scope of previous epochs.

5. Conclusions

Dodona was deeply immersed in the broad network of northwestern Greece and neighbouring territories. This is well summarized by D'Ercole, who stresses the oracular connections with navigation, harbours and the colonization process⁶⁸. Such an entangled world included the southern Ionian Archipelago. The Sanctuary, as part of this complex phenomenon, offered the possibility of consulting Zeus Naios and Dione about any issue people had in mind. Since the Oracle had a Panhellenic scope, it is not surprising that we can find questions from communities and individuals far away from Epirus, including the Ionian islands. Corcyraeans, in the vicinity of the coast of their neighbours, prove to have had a close bond with the site, in both public and private spheres, with the consultation

⁶³ Morgan 2016, 32.

⁶⁴ Bowden 2009, 169; Zachos 2015, 23.

⁶⁵ Pliakou 2001, 158.

⁶⁶ For example, during Augustan times, as Piccinini 2013 shows.

⁶⁷ Bowden 2003, 180.

⁶⁸ D'Ercole 2019, 12-18.

about a transfer to Same, probably moving there, being a good example of these dynamics.

Dedications from Ionian islanders, however, seem to belong to a narrower social sphere: the élites. The two inscriptions that have been preserved point to the presence of important families from Leucas and Zacynthus⁶⁹. In the first case, Philocledas, son of Damophilos, deposited a bronze vase. In the second case, Agathon, son of Echephylos, offered a plaque – a δῶρον, as the inscription says – that recalled his role and his ancestors' role as *proxenoi* of the Molossians, as well as claiming the antiquity of his lineage, linked to Trojan γενεά. Both testimonies can be placed in an aristocratic context. The bronze vase leads us to *symposia* and to meetings and celebrations shared by the élites of different communities. Offerings such as vases and sculptures attached to them were frequent. The Zacynthian plaque worked in a similar way and expanded the potential and influence of its dedicant. Agathon was not a mere visitor to Dodona who would meet other aristocrats; he had a *proxenia* bond with the Molossians, the rulers of the Epirote sanctuary, and descended from an old lineage that supposedly even connected him with the Trojan dynasty of Priam, as the Aeacids did – together with that of Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus –, too. The pedestal mentions the Corcyraean Melissus, an artist responsible for the elaboration of an honorific statue, an activity related to this very same social dynamic. By means of the erection of such sculptures, social cohesion and interstate contacts were effectively strengthened. The skillful artists required for these tasks had to move where they were required, together with their workshops, thus contributing to the spread of their techniques and the interchange of knowledge, trends and styles⁷⁰.

The materials found in Dodona show us two levels of participation on the part of Ionian islanders in the activities in Dodona. The first, consisting of the Oracle, was open to anybody who wished or needed to consult it. The second refers to the Sanctuary as a social arena, and this would contribute to the continuous redefinition and consolidation of the hierarchy of communities that chose Dodona as their meeting place. Here élites would share both tangible and intangible elements that characterized

⁶⁹ Although examined here as a secondary element due to the focus of this paper on the southern Ionian islands, the Corcyraean *anathema* is the best evidence of the symbolic and physical presence of the island élites in Dodona.

⁷⁰ For example, Delos' epigraphy contains the names of 652 craftsmen who worked at the Sanctuary. When provenance can be identified, either because it is stated or it can be inferred from other data, we see that they usually came from other Aegean islands (Archibald 2011, 53-54).

and reinforced their status, either depositing votives with dedications or sculpting honorific statues. Communities, such as the Paleians, contributed to their collective integration through the offering of votives that sought to curry the favour of the gods for the entire *polis*.

At the same time, based on a more general perspective, we should not perceive Dodona as an isolated cult site, but understand it within the context of the region where it was situated, Epirus. This paper has attempted to show through a variety of data how Epirus was connected to other territories in the Hellenic world, especially northwestern Greece, including the Ionian islands. The circulation of pottery, for example, attests to this interaction. In the literary sphere, the creation or re-elaboration of myths and legends, such as the ones we see in the *Odyssey* and the lost poem *Thesprotia / Telegony*, was a mechanism for capturing this reality⁷¹. It was precisely a mechanism that the élites would boost, as a means of connecting themselves with the folk traditions that prevailed in these regions.

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Abbreviations

C = P. Cabanes, *L'Épire de la Mort de Pyrrhos à la Conquête Romaine (272-167 av. J.C.)*, Paris 1976.

DVC = Dakaris, S.I., Vokotopoulou, J., Christidis, A. F. (Eds.), *Τὰ Χρηστήρια Ἑλλάσματα τῆς Δωδώνης τῶν Ἀνασκαφῶν Δ. Εὐαγγελίδη. Ἀθῆναις Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας*, Athens 2013.

LOD = E. Lhôte, *Les Lamelles Oraculaires de Dodone*, Ginebra 2006.

SGDI = H. Collitz, (hrsg. von), *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, II, nr. 1, Göttingen 1885.

⁷¹ Malkin 1998, 130-132; Crema 2014, 153-154 (wondering to what extent there could have been a direct contribution from the Ithacans in spreading the tradition of the *nostoi* to Epirote shores).

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THE IONIAN ISLANDS AND ACARNANIA: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Introduction

The Region of Acarnania is located on the Ionian side of the Hellenic Peninsula, the third in terms of size in the Mediterranean Sea and the one that presents the most rugged coasts. Its physiographic scenario is demarcated:

(a) To the north, by the Ambracian Gulf, situated in a basin whose longitudinal axis runs west-east.

(b) To the east, and outside our area of study, by the Pindus Mountain Range, belonging to the Hellenides, a southern branch of the Alpine orogenic belt, whose vigorous reliefs rise up to a height of 2,637 metres above sea level (m.a.s.l.) and make up the backbone of a large part of Greece.

(c) To the south, by the Gulf of Patras, which makes up the western end of the Corinth Rift.

(d) To the west, by the Ionian Sea, whose depths plunge down into a sea trench (> 4 km in depth, out of which rise up the main Islands of Leucas, Cephallenia and Ithaca).

The history of this region has been the subject of innumerable accounts, which are too numerous to recite here, partly inspired by the attraction of the frequent allusions and descriptions contained in Homer's works and those of many other ancient writers. Alongside these accounts, the region's geo-physical context has received considerable attention in recent decades thanks to the territory's original location at a point where various tectonic plates and microplates converge. Its mobility and propensity for collision are responsible for the generation of its physiographic scenario, as well as a frequent and high level of seismo-tectonic activity. Nevertheless, the geographical contributions devoted to an analysis of the region's physical landscape and its evolution over time are largely insufficient, although a number of notable exceptions do exist¹.

¹ We might highlight the contributions made by Brockmüller, Jahns, May, Schriever, Vött, Willerhaeuser, as well as those of other projects carried out throughout the region.

The Acarnania Region is located in a tectodynamic position amongst complex geo-physical structures and accidents that are directly responsible for:

(a) the rugged landscapes, not only throughout the continental territory, but also on the nearby islands;

(b) the danger posed by the region's telluric activity, perhaps one of the highest on the European continent.

Furthermore, its exposure to the Ionian Sea is manifested in other aspects of its physical environment: the climate and vegetation. Its proximity to the sea endows the territory with mild temperatures in winter and guarantees hot and dry summers. The humid winds from the west bring rain to the windward side, whose forested landscapes are completely different to those of the leeward side, which borders the Aegean Sea. The dryness of the terrain causes a low and sparse vegetation cover, except for a few exceptions resulting from altitude.

Like other Mediterranean territories, the Region of Acarnania presents an unstable and changeable landscape in which a series of different endogenous and exogenous factors combine to shape the territory. Amongst all its territorial realms, the shape and outline of the region's coasts are possibly amongst the most sensitive to the paleo-geographical variations witnessed over recent millennia. This is an especially important consideration for a region that, since the days of Antiquity, has been surrounded by sea on three sides and has only been unceasingly connected with inland Greece on its eastern flank. This perspective explains the strong maritime vocation of so many ancient harbours that were established on the region's coasts, whose anchorages subsequently witnessed how the coastline shifted away (sometimes by several kilometres) due to the interaction between coastal and river dynamics.

Studies that have addressed the coastal changes that have occurred since Antiquity have based their conclusions on geomorphological observations, archaeological evidence and an analysis of historical sources. In recent decades, our knowledge of the evolution of the coasts of Acarnania has increased significantly. This is a consequence of a systematic approach based on an analysis of sedimentary records and organic remains obtained through cores and vibracore transects, absolute dating (^{14}C) and a huge volume of regional geo-physical data. All of this information attests to the importance of the changes that have occurred regarding the configuration of the coast, determining the key role played by ancient harbours in the historical development of a region associated with three Ionian realms: to the north, the Ambracian Gulf; to the west, the waters of the Ionian Sea and

its central islands; and to the south, the Gulf of Patras. A good illustration of how the coast has evolved is provided, among other aspects, by ancient harbours that, today, lie some distance away from the shoreline (Fouache *et alii* 2005). We can highlight cases such as Oeniadae and Nasos, on the Acarnanian mainland, as examples of anchorages that were abandoned due to the fact that they were silted up with sediments that pushed the coast further out to sea (Vött 2007, Vött *et alii* 2007a).

2. Geological and Geophysical Setting

A relatively wide range of rock varieties can be found in Acarnania, forming part of the External Hellenides made up of the Pindus, Gavrovo and Ionian Zones, which constitute the sedimentary cover nappes overthrusting the Apulian Zone. These palaeographic units were laid down during the Miocene-Pliocene by compressive Alpine tectonics and cover the insular and inland territory of Acarnania based on a general northwest-southeast orientation. In numerous areas, Plio-Quaternary post-Alpine sediments abound, which can also be found lying uncomfortably over the more ancient formations. Running west-east, these units include:

(a) The Apulian Zone, which only appears in a limited sector on the westernmost border of the Islands of Leucas and Cephallenia (Paliki Peninsula), where carbonate rocks accumulated up until the Late Cretaceous Period predominate.

(b) The Pre-Apulian Zone, which emerges in the central territories of these islands, where, lying over carbonate strata sedimented up until the end of the Eocene, first we find superimposed Oligocene marls and then flysch layer.

(c) The Ionian Zone, which is located at the eastern edges of the Island of Leucas and makes up the entire territory of the Island of Ithaca, as well as the entire territory of Acarnania. Here, its eastern boundaries trace an imaginary meridian line that connects the east coast of the Gulf of Ambracia and the area around the City of Mesolongi, in the Gulf of Patras. The rock formations here are particularly made up of Triassic evaporite and Jurassic limestone crowned with a thick flysch sedimented during the Oligocene and Miocene Periods.

Outside the study area, the Gavrovo Zone makes up a good part of the territory that shapes the Region of Aetolia, whilst further to the east, we find the Pindus Zone, where a powerful pelagic series, siliceous above all, was sedimented in a deep trench up until the Late Cretaceous Period,

subsequently giving way to an accumulation of flysch until the Upper Oligocene.

The predominance of different varieties of limestone in the region (limestones and marly limestones, dolomites) and flysch is manifested by the existence of two kinds of contrasting formations. One is of karstic nature, being dominated by carbonate dissolution processes that have sculpted different sub-aerial morphologies (dolines, sinkholes, poljes...) and subterranean morphologies (caves...); furthermore, the erosion-resistant behaviour of dolomites has given rise to more abrupt reliefs and crests at high topographical elevations. The formations over flysch have been created by the differential erosion associated with rainfall-runoff processes. Such areas are easily eroded due to the vulnerable nature of the friable layers, especially on steep slopes and in areas where no vegetation cover exists. In this respect, the flysch outcrops coincide with lower-level reliefs and domed summits, amongst which we can find depressions of variable size.

This morpho-lithological framework is located in a region where various plates meet within a small geo-structural arena: the African Plate and the Euro-Asian Plate, together with their satellite microplates, the Aegean Microplate and Apulian Microplate. Within this context of intense crustal deformation, the specific displacement of each of these plates (Fig. 1) generates lithospheric phenomena, including collisions, divergence and horizontal sliding (Sachpazi *et alii* 2000; Hollenstein *et alii* 2008).

Recently, the Region of Acarnania has come to be considered a microplate under formation, being known as the “Ionian Island-Acarnanian Block” (Pérouse 2013; Lefils *et al* 2023). This microplate would also include the territory of the Western Peloponnese (Vassilakis *et alii* 2011; Pérouse *et alii* 2017), being demarcated by various structural units of different geotectonic deformation defined by their high seismicity and characterized by frequent destructive earthquakes, with magnitudes of over 7.4 (Papazachos 1990; Louvari *et alii* 1999; Lagios *et alii* 2007).

Amongst these units we might highlight:

(a) To the south and south-west, the Hellenic Subduction Zone or Hellenic Trench, where the African Lithosphere is shifting towards the north-east some 10 mm/year, subducting the Euroasian Plate north-northeastwards (Cocard *et alii* 1999; Doutsos and Kokkalas 2001) under the South Aegean Microplate, which is shifting towards the south-west at different rates pushed by the tectonic forces derived from the displacement of the Anatolian Microplate towards the west (Le Pichon *et alii* 1995; Peter *et alii* 1998; Haslinger *et alii* 1999; Haddad *et alii* 2020): 10 mm/year closer to the Island of Leucas; 30-35 mm/year (Doutsos, Kokkalas

2001; Karkani *et alii* 2022) and 40 mm/year to the south-west of the Peloponnesian mainland (Cocard *et alii* 1999).

(b) To the south-east, the Corinth Gulf Rift, which has one of the highest opening rates on the planet: some sections present a north-south extension rate of 10-16 mm/year (Briole *et alii* 2000; Avallone *et alii* 2004). Its western prolongation makes up the Patras Gulf.

(c) To the west, and only one hundred kilometres from the coasts of the central Ionian Islands, is located the important dextral transform fault of Leucas-Cephalonia (LCF). Its main characteristic resides in the fact that its disposition, running NNE-SSW and 140 km in length, serves as a link between two highly contrasting geo-tectonic segments: to the south, the Hellenic Subduction Zone, and to the north the collision of the Adriatic (Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012). This series of factors means that this fault causes perhaps the greatest degree of seismic activity on the western side of Greece. In this respect, the horizontal displacement of its two lips due to shear stress (Scordilis *et alii* 1985; Cocard *et alii* 1999; Louvari *et alii* 1999; Haslinger *et alii* 1999) coincide with its clockwise rotation: its western flank, belonging to the Apulian or Adriatic Microplate, is moving towards the north-east, whilst the other flank, belonging to the Aegean Microplate (where the Acarnania block is located), is sliding towards the south-west. Today, the values corresponding to this displacement, according to Global Positioning System (GPS) measurements, are between 7 mm/year in the northern section and 30-40 mm/year in the southern section (Lagios *et alii* 2007). However, based on a time perspective consisting of millions of years (Ma), the north-west of Greece has witnessed a 40° clockwise rotation over 15-8 Ma, and a 20° clockwise rotation after 4 Ma (Van Hinsbergen *et alii* 2006). The main factors that have led to this mobility are due to the separation dynamics caused by the rapid south-west movement of the Aegean Microplate (Doutsos, Kokkalas 2001).

(d) To the north-west, the continental collision of the Apulian or Adriatic Microplate against the Eurasian Plate (Western Greece and Albania), caused by its north-northeastern movement featuring a small component of counter-clockwise rotation.

Accompanying these dynamic tectonic phenomena, on the western side of the Hellenic Peninsula another network of significant faults also exists. Although these faults are of lesser import (Fig. 2), they are also characterised by their seismic activity. Amongst these, we might mention the following:

(a) The Amphiloikia Fault (Haslinger *et alii* 1999), also known as the Katouna Stamna Fault (KSF) (Haddad *et alii* 2020), is heading north-

northwest/south-southeast, extending from the south-eastern end of the Ambracian Gulf to the Gulf of Patras (Pérouse *et alii* 2017) for some 75 km. It passes through the eastern territories of Acarnania, separating them from the territories of Central Greece (Cocard *et alii* 1999), forming a prolonged depression where the Lakes of Ambracia and Ozeros are located. The lips of this significant tectonic phenomenon are moving in an anti-clockwise direction (Doutsos *et alii* 1988; Clews *et alii* 1989; Haslinger *et alii* 1999). This facture has opened due to the tangential mobility differences between the Aegean Microplate (featuring higher annual rates) and the Eurasian Plate. Thus, today the Aegean Acarnanian Block is moving towards the south-west at a rate of some 5 mm/year, which is higher than the rates recorded in the same direction in the north and centre-west of Greece (Cocard *et alii* 1999). Once again, this mobility is the consequence of the extraordinary clockwise rotation (90°) of the Acarnanian Block since the Oligocene-Miocene (Broadley *et alii* 2004).

(b) On the other side of the Gulf of Patras, outside the region, the territories of the Northern Peloponnese are compartmentalised by various faults running north-northeast/south-southwest. The Movri-Amaliada Fault (MAF) is the most important and extends from the cities of Patras and Amalias, not far from Pyrgos.

This complex geophysical context involving the Hellenic Trench and the LCF, not to mention the different trajectories of the plate and micro-plate displacements in the area, are responsible for the series of compressive and extensional tectonic forces that are capable of creating the positive reliefs² or negative submergence³ that have affected Acarnania and the central Ionian islands. It is also the cause of other phenomena such as: (a) frequent and dangerously intense seismic activity that threatens the entire region, with rates of over 7 on the scale (Papazachos 1990; Louvari *et alii* 1999), which, on occasion, is accompanied by a series of more or less devastating tsunamis; (b) tangential mobility (mm/year) of certain territories (such as the Islands of Leucas and Cephallenia; and (c), the phenomena of uplift

² The compressional tectonic regime has witnessed two critical periods: one during the Early Cenozoic, when the initial collision of the Apulian Microplate caused the first deformation and uplift in the Orogenic Belt, which, subsequently, would have given rise to an intense period of denudation that accumulated a series of thick bands of flysch in extremely deep bathymetric realms; the other was during the Miocene-Pliocene Period, which raised the Pindus Range and its western foothills, the Acarnanian Mountains.

³ The extensional tectonic regime essentially occurred as of the Pliocene, submerging various grabens, which, running in a general west-east direction, characterise the territory of Acarnania: the Ambracian Gulf, the basin of Lake Trichonis (in Aetolia) and that which accommodates the Gulfs of Corinth-Patras.

and subsidence, sometimes associated with sudden co-seismic events and intense earthquakes.

The Island of Leucas is, perhaps, the part of the region where the most catastrophic earthquakes have occurred, being located to the east of the nearby Hellenic Subduction, which, towards the north, extends along the Leucas-Cephalonia Fault (LCF). This fracture is the epicentre of the extremely frequent earthquakes recorded in the area, and it interferes with the activity of the Athani Fault, which is considered to be a highly activity phenomenon on the island. This occurrence possibly destroyed the walls of ancient Leucas in the 6th century AD. Since then, at least 13 strong earthquakes have been recorded, generally featuring a narrow focus (<30 km) but accompanied by devastating effects on the island's towns and cities. We might highlight the earthquakes of: 1469 (city of Leucas), 1613, 1625, 1704, 1722, 1767 (complete destruction of Athani), 1787 (complete destruction of Athani and Dragano), 1820, 1825, 1869, 1914, 1948 and 2003 (Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012).

3. Morphostructural Units

A multitude of tectonic lines (see Fig. 2) break up the territories of Acarnania and the nearby islands, landscapes in which medium-height mountains predominate, interrupted by various basins, which is where the region's lakes, gulfs and valleys are essentially located.

3.1. The Acarnanian Mountains

These mountains are made up of a series of foothills that run north-south and northwest-southeast, more or less parallel to the Pindus Mountain Range. The reliefs rise up no higher than 1,600 m.a.s.l. (Psili Koryfi: 1,589 m.a.s.l., Boumistos: 1,577 m.a.s.l., Perganti: 1,422 m.a.s.l.) and they extend for some 40 km through the environs of the towns of Vonitsa and Astacus. Their anticlines and synclines, broken by an infinite number of faults, coincide with autochthonous structures folded by Alpine orogeny and made up of limestone and flysch rock varieties. At the heart of the mountains, the intra-mountainous depressions are of largely limited extension. We might highlight the karstic depression of Vatos Polje (760 m.a.s.l.) situated in a tectonic graben, where the Holocene sediments accumulated at the core have enabled us to create an environmental

reconstruction of the sector (Vött *et alii* 2009a). A wider expanse is offered by the Plain of Stratos, which has been shaped by the torrents of the Acheloüs River, making the plain an extremely fertile landscape, one that led to the development of this important city.

The proximity of certain mountainous reliefs to the coast has made the latter rather rugged and uneven. In this respect, various small islands have emerged close to the western shoreline, featuring few coastal plains, with those that exist being of limited size. One significant exception consists of the extensive plains made up of the deltas of the Acheloüs and Evinos Rivers, which are dotted with numerous lagoons and wetlands.

3.2. Ambracian Gulf

This gulf is located in an extensive and complex tectonic basin in which the surrounding areas converge laterally with the ends of the Ionian, Aegean and European Plates (King *et alii* 1993). In this respect, multiple tectonic stresses have interacted in shaping the gulf: some of compressive tendency, running northeast-southwest, and other subsequent pressures of extensional nature running north-northwest/south-south-east, associated with the southwest-ward displacement of the Aegean Microplate during the Plio-Quaternary Period (Clews 1989; Poulos *et alii* 1995; Haslinger *et alii* 1999). A dense tectonic network demarcates the boundaries of this gulf, where the important Loutrakion and Ambracia Faults emerge to the southwest, whilst towards the Greek mainland we can find what is known as the “Eastern Fault”, associated with the Amphilochia Fault (Brockmüller 2005). On the northern shoreline, beyond the boundaries of Acarnania, we can observe the deltaic system shaped by river torrents.

3.3. Palairos Basin

Between Lake Voulkaria and the Bay of Pogonia extends the narrow Palairos Plain, in the form of a prolonged and active tectonic graben (Vött *et alii* 2006a) running north-south, which presents a complex sedimentary mechanism. To the west, its plain is bordered by a series of reliefs that make up the backbone of the territory that shapes the Plagia Peninsula, reaching their maximum altitude with Mt. Sterna (508 m.a.s.l.).

3.4. The Astacus Depression

This depression coincides with another narrow tectonic corridor, sunken and flanked by faults that run north-northeast/south-southwest (Bousquet 1976), at the heart of which we find the valley of the River Xeropotamos. At the foot of its slopes we can see numerous small alluvial fans built by the seasonal watercourses that descend from the edges of the mountains that flank the depression, where abundant waters rise up from the local karstic aquifers.

3.5. Acheloüs Delta

This huge delta is of the lobolate type (Fourniotis 2012), being one of the largest of its kind in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is located at the north-western end of the Gulf of Patras and its Holocene sediments are surrounded by the foothills of the Acarnanian Mountains, where we can find the elevations of Kalubitsa and Koutsilaris to the north and south-west, and Kounovina and Dioni to the west. Since the middle of the Holocene Period, the formation of the delta has been controlled by its voluminous sedimentary inputs, which have extended its perimeter and gradually displaced the coastline, once the level of the sea rose to reach altimetry positions close to those of today. This significant progradation caused the waterlogging of the edges of various paleo-islands, joining them to the continental territory of Greece (Philippson 1958).

The course of the Acheloüs River meanders today over its deltaic plain, presenting numerous bends, some of which have become choked up in recent times. We might highlight the fact that part of this meandering section and the thickness of the alluvial sediments has been determined by the susceptibility of the Triassic bedrock to dissolution. Thus, over outcrops of gypsum and limestone, diapirs (Underhill 1989) and depressed morphologies (small poljes and dolines) have developed in various deltaic settings (Schriever 2007; Vött *et alii* 2007). The construction of various dams upstream has broken the deltaic balance, leading to a significant deficit in waterflow and alluvial sediments. For this reason, marine processes predominate over fluvial processes on the deltaic front, in spite of the negligible tidal range on the coast (Fourniotis 2012); furthermore, the low discharges of fluvial freshwater have led to the entry of marine saltwater up to 2-3 km up from the mouth of the river. At the southern end of the delta a prolonged bar extends which is

made of sands recovered by coastal processes, constituting the boundary towards the Ionian Sea. As is characteristic of deltaic mechanisms, the deltaic plain consists of various juxtaposed environments (estuary environments, freshwater lakes, lagoons ...) that make up a rich natural heritage subject to protection through schemes such as Red Natura 2000 and the Ramsar Convention.

3.6. Gulf of Patras

This gulf measures 535 sq. km. and is located at the western end of the Corinth Rift, shaping the southern coast of Acarnania. It has a general east-west orientation and constitutes a Plio-Quaternary graben (Piper *et alii* 1990) sunk between mainland Greece to the north and the Peloponnese to the south. It is more than 50 km long, less than 20 km wide and the average depth of its waters is 50 metres, with the deepest part (-138 m.b.s.l.) being close to Patras (Fourniotis *et alii* 2009).

3.7. The Tectonic Depression of Trichonis Lake

This lake, which is located outside the Region of Acarnania, occupies a tectonic depression that was sunk throughout the Quaternary Period and is situated to the north of the Patras Gulf and runs parallel to the coast. In seismic terms it is highly active and witnesses frequent earthquakes (magnitude >6)⁴, due, above all, to the extensional tectonics that affects its edges (Haddad *et alii* 2000; Evangelidis *et alii* 2008) and various strike and reverse faults (Kassaras *et alii* 2014). Thus, its northern and southern boundaries are linked to complex west-northwest/east-southeast faults that extend for more than 30 km and interrupt the folding and straddling structures made up of Paleogenic materials belonging to the belt of the Pindus Mountains in a perpendicular manner (running northwest-southeast). The northern fault is highly active, featuring earthquakes whose focal point is located at a depth of ~ 10 km. Other faults, of lesser extension (10-12 km), enclose the depression to the west and east (Karymbalis *et alii* 2016).

⁴ This extensional tectonic mechanism was the centre of recent seismic activity between 1975-2007.

3.8. Islands of Leucas, Cephallenia and Ithaca

These islands characterise the Ionian side of the Greek mainland and are made up of Mesozoic and Cenozoic sedimentary deposits. They are situated at the front of the Hellenides Orogenic Belt, with their reliefs rising up due to the compressive pressures witnessed as of the Upper Tertiary Period. One of the most important characteristics of the islands is the fact that they are moving laterally together some -7 mm/year towards the south-west, and increasingly towards the south (Cocard *et alii* 1999; Hollenstein *et alii* 2006). To this movement we must add the vertical shifts - downward and upward movements – witnessed in different locations and associated with seismic effects. The earthquake of 1953 corroborated this interpretation, given that a sector in the west of Cephallenia suddenly rose by 70 cm (Stiros *et alii* 1994).

3.8.1. Island of Leucas

From a geo-structural point of view, a large part of this island belongs to the Ionian Zone, featuring outcrops of Jurassic and Cretaceous carbonates above all, whilst the lands in the western sector would correspond to a fragment belonging to the Pre-Apulian Period, being made up of Cenozoic flysch and limestones and brecciated limestones from the Cretaceous Period (Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012). On Leucas we find a dense network of normal, reverse and strike faults whose activity is extremely recent (Bathrellos *et alii* 2009), although a good number of them originated in older tectonic phases (pre-Quaternary). The largest and most dynamic faults are located close to the west coast of the island, just a few kilometres away from the highly active transform fault of Leucas-Cephallenia⁵. This is where the focal-point is located that gives rise to numerous destructive earthquakes, accompanied by frequent rockfalls, slide liquefaction phenomena and tsunamis (Mavroulis *et alii* 2002; Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012). However, the eastern margin faults are less significant and present lower levels of seismic activity.

⁵ We might highlight the Athani Fault, which runs parallel to the coast and has been the focal-point of various catastrophic earthquakes (1704, 1767, 1783, 1948, 2015).

3.8.2. Island of Cephallenia

This is the largest island (780 sq. km.) and is located opposite the Patras Gulf. Its rock formations are identical to those of Leucas, although those that form part of the Ionian Zone occupy a limited sector on the eastern side, mostly consisting of Triassic evaporites at the base. Extensive Neogene-Quaternary coverings of sandstone and marls fossilise the Mesozoic and Cenozoic outcrops of the Ionian and Pre-Apulian Zones (Lagios *et alii* 2007).

The island's relief also presents a rugged topography, given that 80% of its territory is dominated by mountain and semi-mountain elevations, the highest being Mount Aenos (1,628 m.a.s.l.), a massif that features dolomites and limestone from the Cretaceous Period. This morphostructural device is compartmentalised by a series of large faults running northwest-southeast, which cross other less significant faults running northeast-southwest and determine part of the island's high seismic activity, both in the past and in the present. Some of these sudden earthquakes (co-seismic events) have been capable of deforming certain sectors vertically. One of them took place between 350 and 750 A.D. But much better known was the earthquake that took place in 1953, which almost completely destroyed the town of Argostoli and raised the south-eastern part of the island by more than half a metre (Stiros *et alii* 1994). Vertical movements have been identified recently, such as those caused by the earthquake of August 2003. This led to an uplift of some 28 mm in the north of the island, a phenomenon that continued, resulting in a 56 mm rise over subsequent months, with a similar uplift being witnessed in the western sector (Lagios *et alii* 2007). Alongside these ground movements, we might also highlight the tangential slide witnessed between 1992 and 2010, which has led to an estimated clockwise rotation of 3-8 mm/year in the western and northern sectors (Cocard *et alii* 1999; Lagios *et alii* 2007).

The extensive Mesozoic and Cenozoic limestone outcrops on the island make up an important aquifer, where multiple exokarstic and endokarstic morphologies have been sculpted (Karymbalis *et alii* 2013): dolines, sinkholes, poljes, caverns and speleothems (stalactites and stalagmites). We might highlight the Polje of Valsamata (east of the Gulf of Aristogoli) and those that have been shaped on the peninsulas of Erissos and Sami. On the latter peninsula we might mention the famous Melissani Cave, amongst others, whose vault collapsed after the earthquake of 1953, creating a rocky doline, whose bottom is occupied by the phreatic layer. Its waters are somewhat salty due to a mixture of freshwater from the karst aquifer

and water originating from the coast⁶. Given that they are located below sea-level, these caves, which have been shaped by fresh water, testify to an ancient process that dates back to the Pleistocene glacial stages, when the sea-level was lower, and/or possible tectonic submersion processes.

3.8.3. Island of Ithaca

This island is separated from Cephallenia by the narrow Ithaca Sound (<4 km in width) and this proximity means that Ithaca shares certain characteristics with Cephallenia: (i) its intense seismic activity; (ii) its rugged and mountainous topography (the highest peak is Nerito, 806 m.a.s.l.); (iii) its rock formations, which form part of the Ionian Zone, featuring a predominance of carbonate outcrops dating from between the Triassic Period and the mid-Cenozoic Period. This lithological make-up favoured the significant development of a karst landscape with exokarstic (sinkholes) and endokarstic features (caverns, underground streams; speleothems ...) in many parts of the island (Underhill *et alii* 2018). We might highlight the Cave of Polis Bay, located in the north of the island, which features a series of important archaeological records linked with the cult of Odysseus (Wijngaarden 2012).

4. Bioclimatic Context

Due to its latitudinal position in a subtropical domain, Acarnania has enjoyed a Mediterranean climate (*Csa* according to the Köppen classification), at least since the end of the Tertiary Period and once the Hellenic peninsular area was shaped by plate tectonics. Today, hot/dry summers and warm/wet winters predominate (Karymbalis *et alii* 2013). Its proximity to the Ionian Sea, the parallel line of its reliefs with regard to the coast, as well as its altitude and position upwind from the Pindos Mountain Range determine its Mediterranean character, featuring a significant degree of humidity (Koutsoyiannis *et alii* 2012). Most of the territory, including the central islands, receives a mean annual rainfall of between 700 and 1,200 mm. At a lower altitude, the Achelōüs River Delta is the area that receives the lowest levels of precipitation (600-800 mm/

⁶ At Argostoli a number of traditional mills exist, whose machinery was hydraulically propelled by means of seawater flows into certain coastal sinkholes.

year). However, the summits of the Acarnanian Mountains receive $>1,000$ mm of annual precipitation, which rises to $>2,000$ mm/year in the high peaks of the Pindos Range, outside the region.

Acarnania is located in the belt traversed by the Mediterranean storms displaced by westerly winds responsible for the rain, which falls, above all, in autumn and winter and accounts for 90% of annual rainfall. In terms of temperature, the winters are mild throughout the entire region, although it is colder in the mountains, which can witness frost at night. During the summer, the region falls under the influence of a subtropical anticyclone, which entails a high degree of dryness, interrupted only sporadically by intense storms of convective origin.

The potential vegetation of Acarnania corresponds to the *Quercion ilicis* alliance, represented by *Andracno-Quercetum aegaeicum* (Horvat *et alii* 1974), which is replaced at high altitude by *Ostryo-Carpinion orientalis*, with *Abieton cephalonicae* appearing at the highest elevations (Spanos, *et alii* 2021). The real vegetation only corresponds to the potential vegetation in a marginal sense, given that anthropogenic deforestation has substantially modified it over many thousands of years. Numerous commentators have alluded to this significant interference since the Bronze Age (Nenninger 2001; Grove, Rackham 2003), featuring over-exploitation of natural resources in Roman times (Hughes 1994). The impact on vegetation cover has been multiple: systematic clearance and expansion of crops, linked to demographic growth; excessive felling of trees for fuel and building; uncontrolled grazing; and the devastating effects of fires. As a consequence, the forests today are restricted to the residual trees located in inaccessible areas or sub-serial formations corresponding to stages of regression (Giessner 1990). Today, crops and grazing pastures determine the lack of trees, including *Quercus macrolepis* (an emblematic species in Greece) and other tree varieties: *Fraxinus ornus*, *Carpinus orientalis*, *Celtis australis* and *Quercus coccifera*. This degree of deforestation would appear to be relatively recent, given that, in the mid-19th century, travellers described landscapes covered in forests (Leake 1835; Heuzy 1860; Oberhummer 1887).

One of the most emblematic species within the realm of Greek vegetation, a species that today presents a highly marginal status, is the Valonia oak (*Quercus ithaburensis subsp. macrolepis*)⁷. This tree is a characteristic

⁷ This type of oak belonging to the Fagaceae family is closely related to *Quercus cerris*. On *The Planet List* it is considered to be a pseudonym for *Quercus ithaburensis subsp. macrolepis* (Kotschy). *Macrolepis* is an epithet that means “large scale”, referring to the growths that cover the acorn cup.

feature of the Acarnanian landscape (Philippson 1958). This deciduous species is endemic to the Eastern Mediterranean, given that it also grows naturally in Southern Albania, Western and Southern Turkey and very locally in South-East Italy.

Theophrastus (3,8,6) called it “*hemeris* oak”, oak of large scales (*macrolepis*) or wild oak “[...] the oak with large scales (*macrolepis*) which people consider to be the wild kind [...] has rough wood and grows in mountain districts” (Theophrastus III, 8, 175). The galls were used for tanning leather and dyeing wool. *The Odyssey* mentions that the acorns fed Odysseus’ flocks, which grazed in the Valonia oak forests in Western Greece. Theophrastus also related that, amongst all the varieties of oak, this species was used for tanning purposes; he also referred to the fact that the acorns tasted sweet. Herodotus referred to them as part of the Arcadians’ diet. According to pollen data, these trees survived throughout almost the entire Holocene Period, although the accompanying vegetation varied considerably over time. Thus, this deciduous oak predominated in the area around the current Achelōis Delta during the period (fifth century BC) when the city of Oeniadae was founded, although featuring a minority presence of woody perennial species (Jahns 2017). This biogeographical composition persisted throughout the region in subsequent centuries, during Medieval times, although featuring the presence of *Olea* due to the emergence of olive cultivation (Jahns 2013).

Between the 15th century and the early 20th century the fruits from this oak were marketed by the traditional tanning and tannin extraction industry. Acorn gathering was highly prized by farmers, due to the additional income it generated. This is why areas featuring Valonia oaks were often recorded at land registries by mentioning the amount of land covered and the number of trees. Furthermore, the wood from these trees was highly valued and was highly sought-after in the naval industry. For all these reasons, the Valonia oak forests were protected by the local population. As of the founding of the Greek State, the high value of these forests was recognised and, in 1930, a series of pioneering decrees was issued for their conservation, prohibiting the felling and pruning of these trees, apart from a few exceptions, and regulating grazing (Diapoulis 1939). As of the 1970’s, the abandonment of traditional tanning activities began, due to the fact that the substances extracted from acorns were replaced by cheaper chemical substitutes. As a consequence, the oak forests lost some of their economic importance, accompanied by a decrease in their popular esteem. Today, this species is present in the form of open forests, isolated patches and individual trees, leftovers from the old and more extensive forested expanses.

The current extension of the Valonia oak reflects the influence of anthropic pressures. In high- and mid-mountain areas, forest expanses made up of this species have been preserved in spite of human pressure. These areas make up traditional agroforest systems similar to the well-known grasslands of the Iberian Peninsula, which are characterised by combinations of agricultural, pastoral and forest uses (Moreno *et alii* 2018; Simões *et alii* 2015). Conversely, in the lowland areas, the demand for cultivable land has reduced the Valonia oak forests to individual trees located within estates. The systems made up of this species are considered to be of high natural and cultural value (den Herder *et alii* 2017) and, as a result, they appear as a type of natural habitat of Community-wide interest, being included in the Habitats Directive of the European Ecological Network, Natura 2000⁸.

Without any significant forested patches, the two communities that occupy the largest area today consist of a series of degraded Mediterranean forests (Sauerwein 1976):

(i) maquis (Greek: *xerovouni*). These are characterised by their impenetrability, consisting of a bush covering measuring 1.5 metres in height, located mainly in Western Greece. The constituent species include: holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*, *Arbutus andrachne*), mastic tree (*Pistacia lentiscus*), laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), broom (*Spartium junceum*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), wild olive (*Olea europaea sylvestris*) and wild pear (*Pyrus salicifolia*).

(ii) garrigue (Greek: *phrygana*). This is an extremely widespread semi-bush covering that covers large areas on the downwind side of the country in the east. The most characteristic species include: thyme (*Thyme capitatus*), juniper (*Juniperus communis*), kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*), thistle (*Echinops graecus*), and various species from the Ericaceae family, *Cistus* sp., *Asphodelus* sp. (Sauerwein 1976; Rother 1993).

If the anthropic pressure intensifies in these communities, the regression of the vegetation accentuates, giving rise to herbaceous communities, ruderal vegetation or even barren land. Neither must we forget that this degradation leads to an increase in surface run-off and soil erosion, which makes it significantly more difficult for natural regeneration to occur.

Special mention must be made of the phreatophyte species that develop in damp soils close to the banks of rivers and lakes. In this respect, we might mention ash trees (*Fraxinus angustifolia subsp. oxycarpa*), as well as

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en (viewed 06/05/23).

poplars (*Populus alba*), elms (*Ulmus minor*) and willow trees (*Salix alba*). The Fraxos Forest close to Lesini (north of the Acheloüs Delta) stands out, which has developed over ancient wetlands that were drained from the 1930's onwards. This forest, which consists of some exceptionally large trees (>25 m in height), is a left-over from the former expanse (8,000 ha), which was depleted by the agricultural and livestock activities in the area. For their part, the forested expanses of *Abies Cephalonica* are restricted to the surrounding summit areas (>1000 m.a.s.l.) of Acarnania.

5. Hydrography

Acarnania possesses a series of rivers and lakes that make up one of the most important freshwater reserves in the whole of Greece. Amongst these resources, we might mention the Acheloüs River and the Voulkaria, Ambracia and Ozeros Lakes. At the eastern end, lying just outside the region, we find the Trichonis and Lysimachia Lakes.

In ancient times, the Acheloüs River formed the natural boundary between the Regions of Acarnania and Aetolia⁹, although featuring certain temporal and territorial exceptions. The watercourse of this river is either the longest or the second longest in Greece, given that certain doubts exist regarding its real length, in the same way as the calculations concerning the river's drainage basin¹⁰. The head of the valley is located on the side of the Pindus Range (>2200 m.a.s.l.) and the water flows generally southwards, running into the end of the Patras Gulf. Its main tributaries – the Megdovas (78 km) and Agrafiotis Rivers (50 km) – originate outside the region, specifically in the Agrafa Mountains, whose reliefs run adjacent to the Pindus Mountains. In terms of flowrate, the Acheloüs River is the widest in Greece. The hydrological characteristics of its drainage basin and the volume of its waters meant that this river was venerated like a god (Aqueloo). Furthermore, according to Strabo (10.2.2) the river was navigable, with ships being able to reach Stratos, upstream from the mouth of the delta.

⁹ Temporally, in the fourth century, this border was broken by the Acarnanians, which occupied territories beyond the eastern banks of the river (see Diod. Sic. 19, 67, 4).

¹⁰ For some researchers, the river runs for 220 km (Fourniotis, 2012; Efstratiadis *et alii*, 2014); however, others calculate its length to be up to 240 km (Koutsoyiannis *et alii*, 2012). With regard to the size of its drainage basin, this would be 5,027 sq. km. (Efstratiadis *et alii*, 2014) or 4,812 sq. km. (Koutsoyiannis *et alii*, 2012).

The climatic conditions that predominate in the valley would suggest a Mediterranean fluvial regime featuring low water levels in the summer. The upper reaches might possibly be subject to a snow regime, given that they are fed by the high peaks of the Pindus Range. Although there are no precise data available regarding the river's current flow rate¹¹, the circulating volumes of water have been evaluated as being amongst the highest of all the Greek rivers: the mean annual (naturalized) discharge at the estuary is 136 m³/s (Efstratiadis *et alii* 2014). Data regarding the bed load estimation¹² are only approximate, but some years ago it was calculated that the river's waters transported a significant suspended sediment load of 0.83 (10⁶ t) per year, equivalent to an annual loss of 615 t/sq. km. of suspended sediments on its slopes (Poulos *et alii* 1996). This figure is conditioned by two key factors: the high relief ratio and the easily erodible litology (flysch) of its catchment area. However, this high sediment yield is not comparable to the exceptional yield provided by the Arachthos River, which each year transported a suspended load of 7.31 (10⁶ t) to the Ambriacian Gulf, corresponding to an annual loss of 3,033 t/sq. km. of suspended sediments (Poulos *et alii* 1996). In its final stretch, the river's banks are covered with rich vegetation, whilst the river widens, leading to the formation of various alluvial bars. These present a different degree of vegetation cover, based on how recent their sedimentation is, constituting a braided bed that diversifies the river's current.

Alongside the Achelouïs River, Acarnania features a multitude of small rivers with lower waterflow rates, many of them consisting of authentic mountain torrents featuring seasonal or ephemeral waters.

As in other Mediterranean areas, this region suffers from the threat of river flooding. This risk was recognised in Antiquity, as reflected by Greek mythology when Hercules triumphed over Acheloüs, effectively symbolising, according to the interpretation of Diodorus (4, 35, 4) and Strabo (10, 2, 19), control over these floods through the construction of dykes. Furthermore, the existence of hydraulic works, such as the ancient Alycia Dam¹³, suggest that the waters were used for irrigation purposes

¹¹ The construction of five large dams between 1965 and 2001 completely altered the river's hydrodynamic regime. Today, as of the Stratos Dam, the river is channelled up to the vicinity where the Lake Ozeros drainage channel converges, upstream from the delta.

¹² This river received the Greek name of "Aspro Potamos" due to the light colour of its suspended sediment load (Oberhummer, 1887).

¹³ This dam was built with blocks of stone and is 25 metres long and 14 metres high, being located in the narrow setting of Varnakas. The exact date of its construction is unknown, although some researchers date it back to the 5th century BC. We should mention the fact that this is the only non-Mycenaean dam that has been preserved in inland Greece.

and/or drinking water supply. We cannot rule out the possibility either that they were used to regularise the floods in order to prevent the inundation of the former city of Alycia and its agricultural surroundings (Koutsoyiannis *et alii* 2012).

The inland lakes of Acarnania are all freshwater, being located at low altitude and featuring highly variable dimensions. They are located in tectonically sunken sectors in which carbonate or gypsum rocks abound, shaped by karstic processes. The lakes of smaller size today present strong symptoms of eutrophication, due to the agricultural activities that take place in the surrounding areas, especially over the last few decades.

The Voulkaria Lake is located in the north-west of the region, and its formation has been dated back to at least the 9th millennium BC (Jahns 2005). In spite of its proximity to the sea¹⁴, this is a freshwater wetland featuring a certain degree of salinity and shallow waters (<3.5 m). Its basin is located inside a tectonic and karstic depression (Bousquet 1976), in which a low and narrow barrier (<18 m.a.s.l.) consisting of carbonate outcrops dating from the Triassic Period separates this lake from Aghios Nikolaos Bay. This threshold was influenced by a sea-lake connection known as the “The Cleopatra Canal” (which is preserved today), whose depth was sufficient, especially in winter, for it to be used as a navigable waterway leading to a hypothetical lake harbour between the fifth and first centuries BC (Vött *et alii* 2009a).

Further to the south we find the Ambracia and Ozeros Lakes, situated in the sunken block associated with the Katouna-Stamna Fault. Lake Ambracia, known in Antiquity as Lake Limnaia, occupies part of a karstic depression (Verginis and Leontaris 1978) and has a triangular shape measuring 12 sq. km., featuring a maximum depth of 60 metres. The presence of gypsum outcrops on the western side means that the waters are of the sulphated type, being considered to be those of greatest concentration regarding this ion amongst the different lakes of Greece. Its surface level features significant variations in height depending on the yearly weather conditions, but also due to the extraction of water for irrigation purposes (Zotos *et alii* 2021; Thomatou *et alii* 2013). Lake Ozeros is also very small (10 sq. km.) and quite shallow (~5.6 m). We might highlight the contrast between the landscape of its western side, featuring reliefs that run down to its banks covered in trees, and the eastern side, which is dominated by extensive fields of crops, which extend up to the Acheloüs River.

¹⁴ This lake was described as a coastal lake by Strabo (10, 2, 21).

Lake Trichonis (100 sq. km.) is located beyond the Region of Acarnania and consists of an intermountain lake whose surface water lies at an altitude of ~15 m.a.s.l. Its perimeter is flanked by the reliefs of the Panaitoliko and Arakynthos. The lake is kidney-shaped (19 km long and 6 km wide) and its maximum depth reaches ~58 m, characteristics that make this body of water the deepest and largest natural lake in Greece. A rigorous palaeo-environmental reconstruction of its environment over the last 2,600 years has recently been carried out (Seguin *et alii* 2020). Very close by (2 km) we find the small Lysimachia Lake (13 sq. km. and a depth of ~9 m). They are linked by a canal, which siphons off the water towards the latter due to the lower height (11 m) of its water level. Another canal drains off its basin towards Angelokastro, close to the watercourse of the Achelouïs.

Today, various karstic depressions in inland areas throughout the region are temporarily flooded, especially during the winter rainy season, such as the Vatos Polje (Vött *et alii* 2009a).

6. Environmental Evolution of the Region

In the same way as with other Greek regions, the climate and environments of Acarnania have been determined by the North Atlantic Oscillation and the intensity and westwards movement of the cold Siberian anticyclone, since the end of the Glacier Period and over the last ten millennia (Koutsoyiannis *et alii* 2012). In order to gain an insight into the environmental evolution of this region, we have the geomorphological evidence that has already been mentioned, as well as historical descriptions, but, above all, a series of palynological studies that have been carried out in the Eastern Mediterranean¹⁵ and other specific studies regarding the environment of Acarnania. (Jahns 2005, 2013, 2017; Fouache *et alii* 2005; Vött *et alii* 2009a; Seguin *et alii* 2020). Nevertheless, the palynological evidence and its connotations are masked by the difficulty of establishing the precise boundaries between the climatic dryness factor and that associated with anthropogenic deforestation disturbances. In addition to this limitation, the Acarnanian palynological records have been obtained in lake-land areas (Voulkaria, Lysimachia, Trichonis lakes) or in former swampy plains (Astacus, Mytikas, Vatos Polje ...) whose wetness has conditioned the existence of pollen species, featuring a somewhat

¹⁵ For further details about palynological data in this Mediterranean realm, see Vött *et alii*, 2004.

ambiguous interpretation (ash trees, hornbeams, elms etc.) given that these species are dependent on the proximity of water. Greater uncertainty exists regarding the identification of pollen from *Pinus* and *Abies* that may have grown in more distant areas, but whose small size allowed them to be carried by the wind.

The environmental evolution of the region during the Holocene Period is based on the palynological analyses carried out, above all, of the sediments of Lake Voulkaria (Jahns 2005). All of this presided over by a Mediterranean climate that is sufficiently humid for the deciduous oak to have always been the species that stocked the forested areas. However, its degree of dominance, together with the different kinds of accompanying vegetation, would have temporarily fluctuated depending on climatic changes and the degree of stress resulting from human impact. The main environmental stages of Acarnania included the following (Jahns 2005):

(a) The lead-up to this temporal period goes back to the yet-unknown date of the disappearance of a lake situated some 14,000 years BP¹⁶ ago in the Vatos Polje, in inland Acarnania, whose karstic waters dissipated as a result of climate change, introducing some much drier conditions (Vött *et alii* 2009a). As in other Eastern Mediterranean regions, between 8,000 and 7,000 cal BC, abundant mixed forests developed in which the dominant species (50-69%) consisted of deciduous oak, accompanied by other deciduous trees (*Coryllus*, *Carpinus orientalis/ostrya*, *Fraxinus ornus*, *Tilia*, *Ulmus*, *Celtis*, *Acer*), but featuring a lower pollen presence. A certain degree of *Pistacia* pollen representation suggests the coexistence of open forests.

(b) As of 7,000 and up until 6,300 cal BP, there was a slight increase in the pollen of deciduous oaks and a decrease of up to 3-5% in that of *Pistacia*. Following this, between 6,300 and 5,000 cal BP, the interference of a climatic pulsation caused an increase in the pollen of *Carpinus orientalis/ostrya* and an expansion of this species, which was also associated with a certain increase in deciduous oaks and other deciduous trees (*Coryllus*, *Carpinus* ...). At least locally, this period coincided with a phase of rapid silting up in the area around the former Astacus, which continued until 4,500 cal BP (Vött *et alii* 2006b).

(c) Between 5,300 and 3,500 cal BP, a climatic oscillation towards drier conditions, or an anthropic deterioration of the vegetation cover due to grazing or fire is reflected in the pollen diagram with an increase in the figure corresponding to *Erika sp.*, whilst the pollen data for the deciduous

¹⁶ BP: Years Before Present (before AD 1950).

varieties *Quercus* and *Carpinus* remained unchanged, whilst the figures increased for *Corylus* and *Fraxinus*.

(d) The period between 3,500 and 800 cal BP was presided over by a significant increase in deforestation, which originated effective torrential processes. The pollen spectrum reflects the growing presence of pollen from evergreen shrubs and a decrease in that of deciduous oaks (<50%). A minimal record of pollen from *Olea* (<2%) suggests the pursuit of olive tree cultivation. This prolonged period witnessed alternating conditions in the nearby Lake Trichonis during the third and second millennia (Seguin *et alii* 2020): a tendency towards drier conditions between 2,600 and 2,000 cal BP, which was accentuated between 2,000 and 1,800 cal BP, only to be followed (1,750 cal BP) by a period of greater rainfall.

(e) Between 720 and 200 cal BP, a new anthropic impact on the vegetation was witnessed, caused by the founding of cities throughout Acarnania. The breakdown in phytostabilisation led to erosion, which liberated and mobilised large amounts of sediment, not only in the area around the Voulkaria Lake (Jahns 2005), but also in the areas of the Xeropotamos Valley (Vött *et alii* 2006b), Mytikas Plain (Vött *et alii* 2006c) and Palairos Plain (Vött *et alii* 2006a). These geomorphological data are supported by the increase in sclerophyllous vegetation, dominated by *Phillyrea sp* shrubs and a decline in deciduous oaks. A subsequent increase in the pollen of *Juglans* and *Olea* attests to the progress of walnut and olive cultivation.

(f) As of 200 cal BC and up until 140 AD, the environmental conditions were similar to those of the previous phase. Nevertheless, depopulation of the area around Lake Voulkaria following the Battle of Actium (31 BC), appears to have been responsible for the moderate expansion of vegetation and a slight increase in pollen corresponding to *Pistacia* and *Erica*, both of which may have sprung up on the cultivated lands that were abandoned; this would explain the drastic decrease in pollen from *Olea* and *Juglans*. The Late Roman to Byzantine Period was accompanied by another stage of intense torrential erosion caused by the cultivation of extensive areas on slopes and in the bottom of depressions (Vött *et alii* 2009b). The pollen spectrum confirms this effective morphogenesis with a decrease in pollen from deciduous oaks and a renewed increase in pollen from *Olea*. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries constituted the period in which deforestation reached its climax, effectively eradicating a good part of the dense forests of Valonia oaks that had survived up until that time.

7. Evolution of the Sea Levels

Like all interfaces, coasts make up an area of contact in which terrestrial and maritime systems interact. Both are subject to fluctuations in their uplift/subsidence, caused by different factors (geophysical, tectonic, climatic, oceanographic ...), which, working over different time-scales, determine the morphology of the littoral/continental interface. However, on coasts such as those of Acarnania, it is a truly intricate task attempting to distinguish the specific behaviour of each of these evolutionary factors, since a diverse and complex series of difficulties arise, especially consisting of the following: (a) local subsidence or uplift linked to neo-tectonic deformation witnessed along different stretches of coast; (b) altimetric changes in sea level during the Holocene; (c) coastal changes caused by frequent seismic events and sporadic (but violent) tsunamis; (d) variations in the coastline linked to the recent expansion of alluvial fans and, above all, deltas; and (e) the work of longshore currents controlled mainly by the oblique approach of wind-induced waves towards the coast; in the micro-tidal conditions of the Ionian Sea, these currents are capable of mobilising and creating numerous sandy barriers in a very short space of time that run parallel to the coastline.

Altimetric oscillations in sea level¹⁷ have undoubtedly played the dominant role regarding variations in Acarnania's shoreline. However, as on other coasts, the sea level changes that have occurred in the recent geological past have been caused by a combination of different factors. Amongst these, we might highlight the following:

(a) Glacioeustatic sea level changes (rise/fall): these are linked to progress/regression regarding the volume of ice (Greenland and Antarctica) during the glacial and interglacial periods.

(b) Thermal factors: the volume of water contained in the oceans fluctuates according to changes in temperature; sea level rises when the water's density decreases due to warming; conversely, cooling entails contraction, which translates into a vertical drop in sea level¹⁸.

¹⁷ The altimetric oscillations in sea level witnessed during the Pleistocene are well-known, based on a study of the marine terraces that were shaped along the shoreline, terraces that plunge down to a depth of several dozen metres off the coast today, especially near the Island of Cephallenia. With regard to variations during the Holocene, these have been traced through geomorphological and geoarchaeological indicators. *Notches* are good indicators of former sea levels, consisting of micro-indentations that have been sculpted by the waves on coastal rocks.

¹⁸ It has been calculated that a variation of just 1°C in the average temperature of the ocean's waters can lead to a rise or drop in sea level of some two metres.

(c) Tecto-eustatic changes: these are caused by the expansion or contraction of the sea-floor, or by the deformation of their morphological configuration, both of which are governed by plate tectonics. Alongside these influences, we find other less important factors that, nevertheless, can lead to significant coastline alterations. Amongst these, we might mention local vertical land movements (uplift and subsidence) governed by regional tectonic activity, which are capable of modifying the shape of the coast very rapidly and efficiently.

(d) Another key factor consists of the changes associated with the progressive advance of the boundaries of alluvial fans and deltas during the Holocene, once sea level reached an altimetric position close to that of today. As in other Mediterranean deltas, this expansion has been brought about by two factors: tectonic subsidence and an increase in alluvial supplies, associated with the anthropogenic activity of deforestation witnessed since the Roman Period (Anthony *et alii* 2014).

Data relating to the altimetric position of sea levels throughout the Pleistocene are very general, and it has only been possible to identify them at certain points along the coast of Acarnania. In the same way as on other Mediterranean coasts, sea level was located at ~120 m.b.s.l (metres below present sea level) during the Late Pleistocene ~20,000 years BP (Marine Isotope Stage 2), coinciding with the colossal development of ice volumes on the planet (*Last Glacial Maximum*). Some authors (Lambeck, Purcell 2005) established the position of the shoreline around ~18,000 BP to be 112 m.b.s.l. (metres below present sea level), whilst others (Jing, Rapp 2003) have suggested that at ~15,000 BP the levels of the Ionian Sea were 100 m.b.s.l. several kilometres away from the present-day coast. Later on (~10,000 BP), the palaeo-coast was shaped at 45 m.b.s.l. opposite the Ambracian Gulf (Lambeck, Purcell 2005). Up until 5,500-5,000 cal BC, sea-rise rates reached very high values of -12 mm/millennium. As of 4,000 cal BC and up until 500 cal BC, rates of increase per millennium decreased significantly to -0.2-1.4 m/millennium (Vött 2007).

The maximum transgression of the Ionian Sea took place at different times and places. Generally, the dates fluctuate between 5,900-4,500 cal BP (Vött *et alii* 2006a; Vött 2007; Jing, Rapp2003, featuring an elevation that was always conditioned by subsidence factors: earthquakes and local vertical uplift/subsidence movements were responsible for the verified altimetric positions of the waters along different stretches of the Acarnanian coast (Table I). Rising sea levels were also caused by the volume of material resulting from sediment deposited by rivers and torrents, which led to the creation of deltas and coastal alluvial fans, whose perimeters witnessed

progradation due to an increase in terrigenous materials liberated by the pioneering anthropogenic practice of deforestation. Sea level achieved a position very close to that of today over the last few centuries (Table I), with some commentators stating that the present level of the sea has never been surpassed throughout the Holocene (Vött *et alii* 2007a).

8. The Coasts of Acarnania

Acarnania has a coastline in which alternating sea inlets, capes and sandy spits articulate the whole, which runs from the Ambracian Gulf to the eastern end of the Acheloüs River Delta. The islands of Leucas, Cephallenia and Ithaca rise up opposite the coast of the Acarnanian mainland, and the key characteristic of these coasts is the sheer number of changes they have witnessed over the last few millennia. Excellent examples of this are provided by the Ambracian Gulf, Leucas Sound and, above all, the Acheloüs River Delta. Alongside these areas we can also find other less extensive parts that present significant coastal variations, the result of their complex Holocene evolution.

8.1. The Coasts of the Ambracian Gulf and the Strait of Preveza

The Ambracian Gulf owes its name to the nearby location of ancient Ambracia, and its waters demarcate the Regions of Epirus and Acarnania, which lie on its northern and southern shores. Longitudinally, the gulf stretches in a west-east direction for some 35 km; its width is between 5-15 km and its maximum depth is 65 metres. Here, tidal variation is insignificant (5 cm), although a variation of up to 25 cm has occasionally been recorded (Jing, Rapp 2003). Today, the boundaries of the Ambracian Gulf present some considerable contrasts:

(a) The northern coast is low due to the sediment deposited by the Rivers Louros and Arachthos, creating an extensive coalescent delta. Its extension (360 sq. km.), dotted with lagoons (Rodial, Tsoukalio and Logarau Lagoons) and wetlands, make this the largest Greek deltaic system in relation to the surface area of its river basins (Poulos *et alii* 1996).

CHRONOLOGY	PALEO MEAN SEA LEVEL	COASTAL SITE	REFERENCE
12,000 BP	11.70 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Lambeck <i>et al.</i> , 2002
12,000 BP	10.00 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Jong <i>and</i> Rapp, 2009
10,000 BP	8.50 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Jong <i>and</i> Rapp, 2009
8,500 cal BC	11.50 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
8,100 cal BC	11.50 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
8,100 cal BC	11.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van, 2007
8,100 cal BC	11.00 m.a.s.l.	Palawan Plate	Van, 2007
8,000 cal BC	11.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Mytilos	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a; Van, 2007
8,000 cal BC	8.00 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
8,000 cal BC	8.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van, 2007; Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
6,000 cal BC	8.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a; Van, 2007
5,100 cal BC	8.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Mytilos	Van, 2007
5,100 cal BC	11.70 m.a.s.l.	Plate of Borella	Van, 2007
5,100 cal BC	7.50 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van, 2007
5,000 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Palawan Plate	Van, 2007
4,800 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Jong <i>and</i> Rapp, 2009
4,700 cal BC	7.50 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
4,600 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van, 2007
4,100 cal BC	7.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Mytilos	Van, 2007
4,000 cal BC	7.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
4,000 cal BC	11.00 m.a.s.l.	Plate of Borella	Van, 2007
3,800 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Palawan Plate	Van, 2007
3,700 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Jong <i>and</i> Rapp, 2009
3,700 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van, 2007a
3,600 cal BC	7.00 m.a.s.l.	Plate of Borella	Van, 2007
3,600 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
2,500 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
2,400 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van, 2007; Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
2,000 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
1,700 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
1,700 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Mytilos	Van, 2007
1,300 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Plate of Borella	Van, 2007
1,200 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
750 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van, 2007; Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
550 cal BC	4.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Mytilos	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
500 cal BC	5.00 m.a.s.l.	Plate of Borella	Van, 2007
300 cal BC	3.00 m.a.s.l.	Antarctic Shelf	Jong <i>and</i> Rapp, 2009
300 cal BC	3.00 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
300 cal BC	3.00 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
100 cal BC	3.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van, 2007
11 AD - 195 AD	1.0-1.5 m.a.s.l.	Bay of Astoria	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
750 AD	3.0 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
1500 AD	1.00 m.a.s.l.	Archaean Delta	Van <i>et al.</i> , 2007a
1,600 AD	1.50 m.a.s.l.	The Kadiak Lagoon	Van, 2007

Table I.- Late Pleistocene and Holocene changes in relative sea level for different stretches of the Acarnanian coast.

The sedimentary efficiency of both rivers has been linked to their mean annual discharges (Arachthos: 70 m³/s and Louros: 20 m³/s), but, above all, to their annual average load of suspended sediments: the Arachthos River – 7,310,000 t; and the Louros River – 80,000 t (Poulos, Chronis 1997). We have approximate figures for the measurements made regarding the advance/progradation of the Arachthos River Delta. This is estimated at 110-120 m/year for the period 1945-1960, when no large dams had yet been built in the valley (Tziavos 1997). Following the construction of these reservoirs, the sediment flow decreased and the delta advanced at a rate of just 30 m/year (Brockmüller 2005). In the past, deltaic progradation witnessed high rates of advance as of the Roman Period. This was caused by the abundant sediment liberated by erosion triggered by anthropic initiatives on the valley slopes (Jing, Rapp 2003).

(b) On the east coast, sheer and low shore-lines alternate, the latter coinciding with the sediment washed down by the Rivers Loutro, Potoro and Xiror. This sediment has led to the creation of the coastal plain of Boukka¹⁹, which is affected by a subsident tendency (Vött 2007) and is, thus, bordered to the north by the Lagoon of Katafourkou, and to the south-east by the Bay of Amphilochia, a short and narrow “cul-de-sac” that follows a north-northeastern/south-southwestern direction along the important Amphilochia Fault (Brockmüller 2005). The southern shore presents a highly irregular and rugged aspect, characterised by various small peninsulas and inlets, such as that of Vonitsa. On a promontory located at the foot of a cove ravine stood Anactorium and its harbour (Mauro 2017)

(c) The western boundary of the Ambracian Gulf is closed off by a headland of meridian orientation, one that partially isolates it (Fig. 3). The headland is 7 km long, 4 km wide, 6 metres high and is essentially made up of Holocene sediments of a coastal and swampy nature. Today, the Strait of Preveza²⁰ breaks the continuity of this threshold, splitting it into two narrow sections of minimal width (600 metres) and depth (4-10 metres)²¹.

¹⁹ In Antiquity, this coastal plain did not belong to Acarnania, but to Amphilochia, a small politically independent realm located to the east of the Ambracian Gulf, between Epirus and Acarnania (Brockmüller 2005).

²⁰ This strait was formerly known as the Actium Strait, given that close by was where the famous naval Battle of Actium (31 BC) took place between Mark Antony Antonius and Octavian Augustus.

²¹ These limitations call for dredging measures, although the force of the current, which changes direction with small tides, can reach up to 180 cm/s.

On the northern side we find the peninsula with the city of Preveza, whilst the southern side coincides with the Actium Headland (Vött 2007c; May 2010) and the Bay of Aghios Nikolaos. According to Strabo (10.2.2), it was in this vicinity, between the Ionian Sea and the Ambracian Gulf, where the harbour of Actium was first located, with the two Roman harbours of ancient Nicopolis coming later.

The palaeogeography of the Ambracian Gulf has been well-known for some decades now (Poulos *et alii* 1995), especially due to the exhaustive works of Jing, Rapp (2003), Brockmüller (2005), Vött *et alii* (2007c) and May (2010). All of these studies highlight the geo-physical complexity of the gulf, which translates into a Holocene evolution conditioned by vertical movements that have affected certain landscapes in different ways. Thus, the Preveza sector has witnessed ongoing tectonic uplift since the Pleistocene, whilst the central area of the gulf has witnessed significant subsidence (King *et alii* 1993; Jing, Rapp 2003).

During the *Last Glacial Maximum* (25,000-18,000 BP), this gulf was a lake that was unconnected to the sea, given that the level of its waters was some 100-120 metres below the current level (Poulos *et alii* 1995); it is possible that during the closing stages of that climatic maximum (16,000-14,000 BP), the height of the sea was at ~100 m.b.s.l., which means the palaeo-coast of the Ionian Sea was located some 5 km to the west of the Strait of Actium (Jing, Rapp 2003). In this respect, the dimensions of the former lake exceeded those of the gulf today, due to the fact that the deltaic sediments of the Rivers Louros and Arachthos had not yet been accumulated. An exceptional rise in sea level occurred between 13,000-6,000 years BP, a trend that subsequently slowed down, always governed by the subsidence witnessed at the bottom of the gulf.

In order to learn about the evolution of the northern sector of the gulf, as well as the sites located on the eastern shores of the Preveza Peninsula, in the vicinity of ancient Nicopolis (Mazoma Lagoon...) and its harbours (Comarus and Ormos Vathy) we can turn to a series of rigorous palaeogeographical reconstructions of its changing coastlines (Jing, Rapp 2003). These encompass a period that stretches from Neolithic times (~7,000 BP) to 1,000-500 years BP. The multiple variations of the coastline were always conditioned by the glacio-eustatic increase in sea level, the rising tectonic tendency of the sector, as well as the above-mentioned contribution of fluvial sediments. It is possible that Nicopolis was located closer to the sea during the Roman Period and that the already-mentioned geo-physical rise of the Preveza Peninsula (3-6 metres) was largely responsible for the coast's progressive retreat (Jing, Rapp 2003).

We also have detailed information regarding the palaeo-geographical evolution of the sector made up of the coast of the Ionian Sea and, in particular, the Bay of Agios Nikolaos (Vött *et alii* 2008, 2010; May *et alii* 2007, 2010). During the Holocene, this inlet was occupied by a lagoon that was isolated from the sea by a series of coastal bars, the *Plaka beachridge* (Vött *et alii* 2007c, 2008, 2010), made of *beachrock*²². These small thresholds present a north-northeastern/south-southwestern orientation and emerged just a few kilometres to the west of the coast as it is today. These are the remains of a palaeo-coastline shaped by a sea level that was a little lower than that of today, beginning in the fifth millennium BC and lasting up until at least 3,000 years ago (Vött *et alii* 2008). With the rise in sea level (2-3 metres) and the stabilisation of the last 2,000 years, these *beachrock* bars were submerged²³ to a minimal depth, effectively protecting the Bay of Agios Nikolaos from the waves. Their exposure to the open sea led to their deterioration, being broken up, above all, by the tsunamis that have taken place in this area. This much is confirmed by the fields of blocks fragmented by large waves and their displacement from their original position (Vött *et alii* 2007c, 2008, 2010; May *et alii* 2007, 2010). The main part of the Actium Headland presents a number of small lagoons (Kokkala and Saltini) and diverse dune complexes (<8 metres in height), both active and inactive, as well as various coastal spits, amongst which we might highlight the Phoukias Sand Spit, which, for the last 3,000 years, has slowly advanced towards the south, restricting the small Cheladivaron Bay, which is where the city of Agios Nikolaos is located.

8.2. The Coast of Acarnania between the Plagia Peninsula and the Achelöus River Delta

The coast along this stretch is made up of various linear segments featuring a south-southwestern/north-northwestern orientation interspersed with various inlets, whose plains provided the location for the cities of Palairos, Mytikas and Astacus. At the northernmost end we come across Leucas Sound, which separates the island of the same name from the Plagia Peninsula, a waterway that served as an important navigation channel during Antiquity.

²² This consists of carbonate-cemented sandstone that accumulates on beach shores.

²³ Remnants of this bar can be seen at the southernmost end (Plaka), close to the Lagoon of Leucas.

8.2.1. The Plagia Peninsula and Leucas Sound

The Plagia Peninsula (Fig. 3) has a rugged aspect, its backbone being made up of a series of reliefs whose highest peak is Mt. Sterna (508 m.a.s.l.). To the north-east it is demarcated by Lake Voulkaria, whilst its entire southern shore runs along Leucas Sound, featuring a coast that is generally low and presents a few beaches. This narrow waterway, measuring just a few kilometres wide, runs north-northeast/south-southwest and is flanked by a series of sheer blocks that have been affected by complex vertical upward and downward movements, effectively displacing sea levels that date back 130,000 years BP (Brockmüller *et alii* 2007). At the bottom of the tectonically-sunken strait we can find a number of shallow lagoons, amongst them the Lagoon of Leucas, which is always very well protected from winds from the west. We know that around ~600 BC a navigable channel was excavated by the Corinthians through this narrow strait, which became an obligatory maritime route that provided access from the Gulf of Patras to the Island of Coreyra and towards Italy (Milan 2022).

Two minimal barriers connect the Island of Leucas with the rocky coast of the Plagia Peninsula, protecting the northern entrance from the waves of the open sea (see Fig. 3). The outer barrier consists of the series of submerged beachrock formations (6-10 metres thick) that we described above in the Bay of Agios Nikolaos. The remains of the extensive and broken Plaka Beachridge formed part of a palaeo-coastline shaped between the fifth and the third millennia, featuring a sea level that was somewhat lower than that of today (Vött *et alii* 2007a; 2008; May 2010). The inner barrier close to the lagoon coincides with an extensive series of long and narrow bars, spits and beaches made up of sands and highly-rounded gravels where no cementation exists. This barrier has witnessed significant changes in certain sections between 1864 and the present day (May 2010).

At the Strait's northern entrance, marine-shoreline conditions coincided up until 4,700 cal BC, when they were replaced by lagoon environments, which, in around ~300 cal BC would be disturbed by sudden tsunamis (Vött *et alii* 2006c; 2006b; 2009a; Brockmüller *et alii* 2007). In the vicinity of the small fortification of Aghia Mavras (14th century) the existence of certain sedimentary evidence of tsunamigenic origin has been detected (washover fans). This evidence suggests the possibility that these events were responsible for the fact that the navigation channel became inoperable during certain periods throughout Antiquity (Brockmüller *et alii* 2007; Vött *et alii* 2009a; May 2010). In this respect, Murray (1982)

has increased the number of periods in which sea traffic was interrupted along the channel during Archaic and Roman times to three.

The Port of Leucas would have been strategically located at the southern end of the Strait and before ~2800-2700 cal BC the waters in the harbour would have been shallow. The presence of the “Mole of the Corinthians” (close to the fortification of Agios Giorgios) is of great interest (Fig. 3). Today this infrastructure is under water, but it has been interpreted as being a breakwater built to protect the harbour and even a possible loading pier. The age of this infrastructure suggests that the Port of Leucas, which began to operate in the 7th century BC, maintained its activity between the 4th century BC and 6th century AD (Murray 1988; Brockmüller *et alii* 2007). Subsequently, the shorelines of the Strait were subject to the impact of high-energy waves, presumably associated with tsunamis (Brockmüller *et alii* 2007; Vött *et alii* 2009c).

An isthmus jutted out at some point between the two entrances during Archaic-Classical times. The existence of this isthmus would have made the Island of Leucas a continental appendage attached to the Acarnanian mainland. According to the accounts of various authors from Antiquity, this strip of land was located close to the ancient city of Leucas. Close by, a bridge connected the two sides of the Strait (Negris 1904) during the Hellenistic to Roman Period, whose ruins have been fossilised by sediment today (Brockmüller *et alii* 2007). A hypothesis exists that this bridge, which would have rested on the isthmus, was washed away by the tsunami of ~300 cal BC (Brockmüller *et alii* 2007). Other researchers²⁴ during the first half of the twentieth century stated that the isthmus had a different location, being situated further north, close to the fortification of Agia Mavra. Some years ago, reference was made to the possible existence of a series of sudden and sporadic co-seismic events in order to explain the subsidence and submergence of the Corinthian Mole, as well as the remains of the above-mentioned bridge (Murray 1982; 1988). These observations suggest a rise in sea level of ~3 metres over the last 2,000 years (Negris 1904) or last 3,000 years (Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012).

8.2.2. The Palairos Coastal Plain

The Palairos Plain is situated in a sunken block that runs north-south and links Voulkaria Lake and the Bay of Pogonia (Fig. 3). Its western

²⁴ Amongst them, we might mention Partsch (1907), Von Marées (1907).

edge is linked to a series of reliefs that make up the backbone of the Plagia Peninsula, with the highest peak being Mt. Sterna (508 m.a.s.l.). It was on this slope, located on Kechropoula Hill (266 m.a.s.l.), that the ancient city of Palairos was founded in the 6th century BC²⁵ (Fig. 3), at the foot of which there was a freshwater lake whose origin dates back to at least the 5th millennium BC, situated over a former lagoon (Vött *et alii* 2006c). The Aearnanian Mountains rise up on the other side, reaching a height of 1,589 m.a.s.l. (Psili Korifi).

The layout of the Palairos depression and the altimetric position of its substrate has led to the hypothesis that the Plagia Peninsula may have been an island in the 2nd millennium BC (Fels 1951/52). This hypothesis has been refuted by Philippson (1958), a view that was subsequently corroborated by Wacker (1996) and Jahns (2005). However, sediments obtained by exploratory drilling at the southern end of the Palairos Coastal Plain (Vött *et alii* 2006c) have identified marine environments that penetrated up to one kilometre inland, dating from the 7th millennium BC. For their part, the sediments that have been studied from the northern end of the plain suggest an extensive lagoon that lasted up until the 4th millennium BC. Fewer doubts surround the island character (at least artificially) acquired by the Plagia Peninsula in the 6th century BC due to the existence of an artificial or natural channel that would have connected the Bay of Palairos-Pogonia and Voulkaria Lake, a channel that would have been used for navigation. At that time, the middle of the Palairos Plain was higher and it was here that various anthropogenic activities took place. Ancient Palairos stood on a sheer promontory in this sector²⁶, with the nearby wetlands disappearing from the landscape little by little due to the silting processes generated by the nearby channels.

Beyond the Bay of Pogonia-Palairos and up to Mytikas, the coast continues in a less rugged manner, featuring numerous pebbles and/or sandy beaches, which give way to rocky shorelines where the mountains tumble down to the coast.

²⁵ This city and Leucas imported cereals from North Africa between the years 330-326 BC (Wacker 1996). After its defeat during the Battle of Actium (31 BC), the city entered into a period of decline that lasted for some time, until it was finally abandoned during the Byzantine Period.

²⁶ Its harbour would appear to have been located in the south-east of the Plagia Peninsula, specifically, close to the present-day town of Pogonia.

8.2.3. The Bay of Mytikas

This bay (Fig. 4), and its adjacent plain, are hemmed in by foothills that rise up to 1,460 m.a.s.l. On one of the slopes are located Panagoula and Archontochori. Ancient Alyzia was also located here, which, according to Strabo (10.2.21), was situated some 15 stadia from the coast, where its harbour dedicated to Heracles could be found. In recent millennia, the plain was flooded by a shallow lake. In the vicinity, the level of the Ionian Sea witnessed its maximum transgression at 5,900 cal BC, influenced by the tectonic subsidence of this sector (Vött *et alii* 2006a). Further to the south, opposite the Island of Kalamos, the coast is still rocky, except for certain stretches where sediments have accumulated, brought down from the nearby hills by different ephemeral watercourses.

8.2.4. The Astacus Coastal Plain

The area around Astacus (Fig. 4) and its bay make up another coastal landscape of considerable interest. The evolution of this coastline has been determined by the interaction of different sedimentary environments: a shallow sea inlet, a lagoon, as well as a coastal lake subject to dynamic processes involving changes in sea level, vertical land movements and the contribution of sediments from the shoreline. The Bay of Astacus constitutes a well-protected natural harbour, sheltered by the surrounding hills and the presence of various islands (Drakonera, Karlónisi, Provati) which, just a few kilometres offshore, break the swell of the open sea (Mauro 2017). These favourable conditions led to the development of ancient Astacus, located on the western slope and built some 100 metres above the bay's current shoreline.

The progressive rise in sea level, the vertical geological mobility of this segment (subsident above all²⁷) and the morphogenetic processes recorded on the sides of this depression are all responsible for the complex evolution of this stretch of coast and the different scenarios that have been played out over the last few millennia, where Man's presence has been recorded since the mid-Holocene Period (Vött *et alii* 2006a).

²⁷ The subsidence tendencies of this area were identified some three decades ago, when an Early Helladic settlement from the 3rd millennium BC (2900-2000 BC) was found in the vicinity of the Bay of Astacus. This settlement would have been situated 1-2 metres above the sea level at that time, today being submerged to a depth of 5 metres (Delaporta, Spondylis 1990; Berkthold 1996).

At around 6,200 cal BC, sea level was located at some 12 m.b.s.l. and waters flowed in at the end of the plain, with the shoreline being located around ~700 metres further inland compared to the current position. A coastal lake served as a transitional medium between the sea and the deluges sedimented by the high-energy currents of the River Xeropotamos at the north-western end. These conditions did not change that much until 5,500 cal BC, nor for several centuries later, in spite of the sea's transgression up to 8.30 m.b.s.l. (5,100 cal BC) and the river's energetic sedimentary action. One millennium later, at around ~4500 cal BC, and following a prolonged period of stability that only expanded the area's alluvial fans, the shoreline witnessed a regression that brought it closer to the position it occupies today. This was when the lake reached its maximum size, due to the increase regarding the inflow of surface water. Between 4,500 and 2,500 cal BP, the beach strandline continued to move seawards, pushed by the deluges from the River Xeropotamus, whose waters flanked the western edge of the lake. At circa 2,500 cal BC, the sea level had risen -2 metres, standing at 5.40 m.b.s.l., possibly due to the co-seismic effect of subsidence caused by a nearby earthquake. Nevertheless, the coast remained in an almost identical position to that of today. A new elevation of the tectonic plates to 2.20 m.b.s.l. in around 500 cal BC, displaced the shoreline several hundred metres towards the north, leaving it in its current position. During the Roman Period (27 BC-395 AD), sea level was established at 1/2 m.b.s.l., before it acquired its present-day level.

From the southern edge of the Bay of Astacus and that of its present-day harbour, the coast continues to be rocky and highly structured. The only exceptions are the small alluvial fans created by the watercourses that tumble down from the hills nearby.

8.3. The Acheloüs River Delta

The changes witnessed by the coast along the stretch formerly occupied by the Acheloüs River Estuary and today by its delta (Fig. 4), were already observed during Antiquity. (Hdt. 2.10.3). In this respect, they have been subject to numerous studies since the 19th century (Heuzey, 1860) and, above all, since the 20th century (Weil 1903; Villas 1984; Murray 1985; Freitag 1994; Fouache *et alii* 1998; 2005; Besonen *et alii* 2003; Vött *et alii* 2004; 2007a; 2007b; Schriever 2007). The studies have mainly focused on the ancient city of Oeniadae, which Strabo (10, 2, 22) located some 70 stadia away from the shoreline during the first century AD,

and whose ruins are today located in the north of the palaeo-island of Triardo (Fig. 4), which emerges in the form of a hill in the middle of the Achelous Delta, surrounded by its alluvia. In this delta environment, Nasso was another city located on the nearby palaeo-island of Skoupa (Murray 1985). The palaeogeographic and historical interest of both port cities lies in the fact that they are situated some ~10 km from the current coastline, having gradually been pushed by the delta progradation of the Achelous River. These palaeo-islands of minimal altitude, together with those of Panagias, Lesini and Taxiarchis, were included in the Echinades Archipelago and are made up, above all, of limestones and dolomites dating from the Triassic Period.

Analyses of the borehole sediments (Fouache *et alii* 2005) obtained through numerous vibracore samples taken in eastern and western parts of the delta (Vött *et alii* 2007a and 2007b) confirm a series of marine conditions that predominated everywhere. Over time and as of the 6th millennium BC, a regressive tendency began, associated with the delta's initial progradation, which gradually shifted the shoreline towards the west. Thus, the former open marine environments were replaced by lake, swamp and river environments (Vött 2007b; Vött *et alii* 2007a; Jahns 2017). Their location and development over time were always conditioned by the tangential mobility of the distributary arms of the River Achelous and the contribution of its sediments.

On the palaeo-island of Triardo, the contrasting exposure of its shores to the sedimentary build-ups associated with the progradation of the delta towards the west, led to the specific development of each of its flanks. However, they shared certain factors: initial marine environments featuring shallow waters, then a progressive transition towards lake (and, later on, swamp) environments, which were subsequently silted up by alluvia from the Achelous River (see Vött *et alii* 2007b for further details).

The evolution mapped out (6,000 cal BC-1,500 AD) by Vött *et alii* (2007a), and reproduced in a series of detailed drawings, establishes the initial deltaic progradation towards the south-west at around ~6000 cal BC, directed by two fluvial emissaries of the Achelous River coming from the north and the east. Centuries later (~4500 cal BC), these distributary emissaries, with their respective bar fingers, had created an initial bird-foot delta that placed an extensive lagoon to the north of Triardo between the arms of the river. Between 4,500-3,100 cal BP, both waterways situated their sedimentary limits in the vicinity of Triardo, surrounded on all sides by the lagoon.

The advance of the eastern channel, and of its prolonged sandy strips, reached the vicinity of Triardo in around 3,100 cal BC. In spite of this, during the Early Helladic Period an anchorage existed on the south-eastern edge of Triardo and on the banks of a lagoon which, little by little, also gradually evolved to become a marsh. Little by little, the island was surrounded by the two fluvial distributaries between ~1,350-1,000 cal BC, which, nevertheless, contributed abundant waters to the lagoon system, thus enabling the ongoing harbour facilities of the bays on this side to operate between 1,300 and 1,100 BC (Vött *et alii* 2007a) at the end of the Helladic Period (Mycenaean Period).

Progradation placed the delta-front shoreline close to Skoupas in around 600 cal BC. Both islands, thus, lost their island character, but this did not prevent the north of Triardo from being connected to the sea during the 5th-3rd centuries BC. Nevertheless, a contrary view also exists that suggests that this flank was directly linked to an open bay (Fouache *et al* 2005).

Sea level during these centuries stood at around ~3.25 m.b.s.l., rising slightly (~3,1 m.b.s.l.) during Classical-Hellenistic to Roman times (Vött 2007a, 2007b). In around 200 cal BC, as described by Polybius (4, 65, 2-9), a channel from the Achelous flowed towards the north of Triardo, feeding an immediate lake environment and making it possible to navigate towards the open sea (Vött *et alii* 2007a). The accumulation of further sediments cut off access to ships in around the year 1BC/AD and the lagoon silted up entirely in the second century AD (Vött *et alii* 2007a). The delta front continued its progradation towards the south-west during the Byzantine Period, an epoch that witnessed its hey-day between the 8th and 17th centuries (Vött *et alii* 2004).

8.4. The Gulf of Patras: The Etoliko-Mesolonghi Lagoon Complex

The Gulf of Patras constitutes the western prolongation of the Corinthian Gulf Rift. The Etoliko-Mesolonghi Lagoon Complex (Fig. 4) is located on the northern shore, situated over a sunken tectonic block of transverse nature and running north-northeast/south-southwest, which has been silted up with Holocene sediments. This makes up one of the most important coastal lake environments in the Mediterranean Sea and the most extensive complex in Greece (Fourniotis 2018). Two mountain ranges of different altitude border the gulf:

- (a) Reliefs that rise no higher than 250 metres demarcate its western

side and are made up of limestone and gypsum outcrops from the Triassic Age, structured by various faults, amongst which we might highlight the Amphilochia Fault.

(b) The Arakynthos Mountains rise up on the eastern side, featuring peaks that approach an altitude of 1,000 metres. Their boulders belong to a Tertiary bedrock (Palaeogene), featuring predominant strata of limestone and sand-siltstone that are made uneven by different faults. On one of the slopes was located, first, “Old Pleuron”, and later on (235 BC) “New Pleuron” at a nearby site, but at a lower altitude (Vött *et alii* 2007b).

The Etoliko Lagoon (29 metres maximum depth) is located adjacent to the deltaic sediments of the Acheloüs River (Fig. 4), whilst to the south it is separated from the Mesolonghi Lagoon by a sandy threshold (the Paracheloitis Pass) measuring ~5 km in length and featuring a height of less than 2 m.a.s.l. (Vött *et alii* 2007b), which is where the town of Etoliko is situated.

The Etoliko Lagoon has a sedimentary record whose analysis has enabled us to study the environmental variations that have taken place throughout the Holocene, starting in 11,670 cal BP and continuing up until the end of the Hellenistic Period. Four stages have been identified (Haenssler *et alii* 2013): the oldest (11,670-8,310 cal BP) was a lake environment, which was then followed by a prolonged stage (8,310-1,350 cal BP) in which the transgressive rise of the sea caused the sporadic arrival of salt-water into the lake basin; in around ~1,350 cal BP, the sudden rise in sea level meant that the amount of freshwater that reached this environment was significantly reduced, due to its link to the sea. Land use during the same period, consisting of the cultivation of adjacent areas, led to a significant granulometric increase in earthy deposits sedimented in the lagoon, a process that took place between the Late Helladic Period (1,700-1,100 cal BC.) and continued up until the end of the Hellenistic Period (30 cal BC).

To the south, the Mesolonghi Lagoon makes up the most extensive wetland area in Greece. Its waters cover (<1 metre in depth) the submerged surface of the Acheloüs Delta, which, between 4,750 and 1,550 cal BC, pierced the threshold mentioned above, flooding the lake environment that had previously been isolated from the sea by a barrier (Vött *et alii* 2007b). Today, the shores of the lagoon (Fig. 4) are partially isolated from the waters of the Gulf of Patras, to the south, by a prolonged spit measuring more than 12 kilometres in length (see Vött *et alii* 2007b for further details).

9. The Coastlines of the Islands of Leucas, Cephallenia and Ithaca

The shape of the coast is mainly influenced by the nearby mountains (>1,500 m.a.s.l.), which at times tumble directly down into the sea and, at others, merge into fertile alluvial plains of variable size, replete with remnants of ancient port cities.

Located in an area of high seismic activity, these islands have witnessed recent upward and downward seismic movements, which were identified some 30 years ago (Pirazzoli *et alii* 1994) and have been responsible for the relative variations in sea level throughout the Holocene Period. The coasts of these islands present a series of shared characteristics in terms of the shape of their western and eastern shorelines. Thus, the shores that are exposed to the waves of the open Ionian Sea are overlooked by cliffs sculpted from faulted structures and limestone rocks resistant to erosion. At the foot of their basal segments, we frequently find small and narrow gravel beaches. Nevertheless, the coasts on the other side present shorelines that are more sheltered from the winds and feature less rugged topographical profiles. Here we find alternating rocky coastlines (without cliffs), large beaches and diverse bays.

9.1. Island of Leucas

According to Dörpfeld (1927), this island (~300 sq. km.) is of elongated shape, running north-northeast/south-southwest, and presents 117 km of coastline (Fig. 5a). Its morphology is rugged (<1,158 m.a.s.l.), consisting of multiple and short intramontaneous valleys covered with abundant vegetation. The northern coast presents a tendency towards tectonic uplift, as witnessed by marine evidence discovered at ~12 m.a.s.l. (Vött 2007), whilst the eastern coast runs along Leucas Sound, which we have already described, continuing towards the south via the Bay of Drepano and various embayments. Some of these are highly sheltered, such as Nydri Bay (Bathrellos *et alii* 2009), although they still present vestiges of minor tsunamis (May 2010). The most sizeable tsunami witnessed waves of 4-6 metres and took place during the Classical-Hellenistic Period (Rondoyanni *et alii* 2012).

The west coast presents a straight and rigid profile that runs parallel to the threatening Athani Fault (NE-SSW). Its exposure to the open sea means that it presents local evidence of a certain degree of tsunamigenic activity. On this side of the island, different uplift phenomena predominate,

as witnessed by the existence of high functional cliffs and false cliffs²⁸ (Pefkoulia). On the escarpments of some cliffs, we can see that sea erosion features (*notches*) have been sculpted at different sea levels, testifying to the coast's uplift tendency (Randoyanni *et alii* 2012). Furthermore, at the foot of the cliffs we find a series of short and very narrow beaches, usually consisting of gravel. However, landslides and rockfalls abound (Megali Petras), in which respect we can state that this shoreline morphology is closely linked to gravitational and instability phenomena, due to the cataclastic nature of the rock mass (Randoyanni *et alii* 2012). Further south we come across various bays that are well sheltered from the wind thanks to their north-south orientation (Mikros Gialos) and the existence of various reliefs close by that rise up to 600 m.a.s.l. (Vasiliki).

9.2. Island of Cephalonia

Cephalonia (~760 sq. km.) has an extensive coast (>270 km in length) that is highly irregular due to the existence of different capes, gulfs (Myrtos, Argostoli, Sami) and several small peninsulas (Paliki, Erissos, Livatho) (Fig. 5b). We might highlight the size of the Paliki Peninsula. Some 70% of the coast is of steep and rocky character. In particular, the western seaboard is dominated by high cliffs (240 metres high), which are associated with tectonic phenomena and resistant geological outcrops. Along the basal segments we can see numerous large blocks that have fallen by gravity (north of Alaties), as well as small beaches consisting of gravel and pebbles. The Paliki Peninsula breaks up the coastline with its rocky shore at the northern end, where cliffs and false cliffs alternate bordering Myrtos Bay, close to Zola. The same littoral morphologies alternate again along the western and southern sides of the Paliki Peninsula, replete with gravel beaches at the base (Platia Ammos, Kounopetra, Ammos, close to Skala).

The west-northwestern/east-southeastern orientation of the west coast of the Paliki Peninsula is brusquely interrupted by the Argostoli Gulf (Fig. 5b). This narrow inlet (<3.5 km wide) runs north-northwest/south-southeast, an orientation it maintains for more than 13 km, featuring shallow waters (5-25 m.b.s.l.). Its origin is tectonic, being linked to the fault system of Livadi (Stiros *et alii* 1994), and this was where a river valley

²⁸ These rocky coasts have not been sculpted by wave processes, but consist of slopes shaped by gradient processes, belonging to the reliefs that run adjacent to the coast and are, therefore, washed by the sea.

was formerly located that was flooded by marine transgression during the Holocene Period (Gaki-Papanastassiou *et alii* 2010). Here we find rocky shores and a few beaches, except for in the northern sector (Koumarid). We might highlight the existence of various wetlands between Argostoli and Dropano. The shores of this gulf make up one of the natural areas in Acarnania that are best sheltered from the storms generated by winds from the west and north-west. This high degree of protection is based on: the gulf's strategic orientation, its narrowness and the effect of the reliefs and cliffs that flank it, especially in the east (Medatlas Group 2004). Furthermore, this sheltered character means that the high-energy marine sediments detected in the lagoons throughout the sector can be genetically linked to tsunamis. This is even the case in the lagoon (Vött *et alii* 2013) located in the adjoining and highly constricted Bay of Koutavos (Fig. 5b) (1.5 km long, 900 metres wide and <1 metre in depth) which, furthermore, features an almost perpendicular orientation (north-west/south-east) with regard to the Gulf of Argostoli. Ancient Crane was situated at the south-eastern end on the side of a limestone hill, which would have overlooked the town's harbour facilities, whose exact location has yet to be discovered (Vött *et alii* 2013).

Another exceptional aspect is the existence of eight levels of marine terraces along the coast of the Paliki Peninsula, to the east of Cape Schiza. These were formed at sea level during different epochs of the Pliocene and Quaternary Periods, but today are situated at elevations between + 440 m.a.s.l. and + 2 m.a.s.l.²⁹ (Gaki-Papanastassiou *et alii* 2010; Karymbalis *et alii* 2013). This location is the result of an ongoing and energetic uplift process (>1000 metres) witnessed in this area since the Pliocene, caused by the convergent action of world-wide changes in sea level and vertical tectonic movements (Hinsbergen *et alii*, 2006). The marine notches and beachrock formations that hang (<6 m.a.s.l.) off this coast (Karymbalis *et alii*, 2013) are witnesses to its Late Holocene uplift.

The eastern side of the Paliki Peninsula is subject to geographical and historical debate (Milán 2022), especially the corridor that links Myrtos Bay to the north with the Gulf of Argostoli, to the south (Fig. 5b). The controversy surrounds Homer's descriptions in *the Odyssey* during the Trojan War (13th century BC) and, subsequently, those of Strabo. Some researchers believe that these sources enable us to suggest that the island was split into two portions, separated by a narrow sea corridor. Thus, it

²⁹ Remnants of these formations of marine origin can also be found along the southern coast at elevations between 2-4 metres and + 142-170 metres.

has been proposed that this peninsula was a small island that was separate from the island territory of Cephallenia, being linked by an isthmus later on. Other commentators have proposed the same idea, although they have contributed new information regarding the processes that led the two islands to be joined. A geomorphological survey of the Thinia Valley (6 km in length and 2 km in width) detected the existence of various landslides brought about by co-seismic events from the unstable mountain slopes that flank the valley (Underhill 2008). One took place in the northern part, close to the town of Zola, whilst another occurred near Kardakata at the southern end of the valley. It was here that the landslide assumed colossal proportions of more than 4 km in length and more than 1 km in width, which would have effectively filled in the marine channel that existed at the time, Strabo's Channel (Underhill 2008), turning the present-day Paliki into a Peninsula of Cephallenia (Underhill *et alii* 2018). The topography of the roof of the landslide (~180 m.a.s.l.), made up of voluminous rockfall material, would perhaps have fossilised the bottom of the Thinia Valley. This interpretation has not yet been fully accepted by the very authors that proposed the hypothesis: it would be necessary to obtain samples from below the exceptionally thick landslide in order to reach the hypothetical marine sediments fossilised beneath. Nevertheless, dating of the landslides is being carried out by means of cosmogenic radionuclide exposure methods (Underhill, Styles 2021). In this respect, it could be established whether both phenomena took place at the same time or not. Above all, it would determine the age of the landslides, which would reveal whether they took place before or after the period referred to in *the Odyssey*.

The eastern coast of Cephallenia presents less rugged topographical profiles, having been formed over vulnerable Pliocene limestone. Along the shoreline we frequently find small coastal plains, which are complemented by certain sandy beaches such as Saraniko, Poros and Sami (Gaki-Papanastassiou *et alii* 2010).

9.3. Island of Ithaca

The Island of Ithaca (~110 sq. km.) is separated from Cephallenia by a narrow sound (4-6 km). The island is longitudinal (23 km) and features a general north-south orientation. Its coasts are ~100 km long. (Fig. 5b), A series of reliefs physiographically divided the island into two small peninsulas bordering Molos Bay on the east coast of the island. This is where the main ports are located, sheltered from storms from the west. We

might highlight the spectacular Aetos Ithmus, featuring landscapes that are no more than 600 metres in width and present their highest altitude levels at the northern end (260 m.a.s.l.).

The limestone meseta-like reliefs that make up the backbone of the northern part of the island run down to the coast, giving rise to a gulf in the north with pebble beaches (Afeles), which are bordered by functional cliffs and the inlets of Frikes and Kioni. For its part, the southern end of the island presents a small peninsula with rocky coasts on its eastern side, although we can also find a few beaches. One of the inlets provides the location for Vathi, situated in the vicinity of Sarakiniko Bay, an authentic natural harbour. Further south we come across Paralia Kaminia, featuring beaches that run adjacent to the reliefs flanking the coast. This entire stretch is rocky, and it continues like this along the entire west coast, which is characterised by a number of false cliffs.

10. Tsunamis

Tsunamis are catastrophic marine events, generally of seismic origin, that are capable of drastically changing the shape of the coastline and its ecosystems. The destructive capacity of their impact depends on different variables, the most important being the following: the height of the tsunami's waves, the topography of the surf zone, the exposure of the coast (Uma Devi, Shenoj 2012). Reconstructing the impact of palaeo-tsunamis raises numerous uncertainties that derive from the subsequent mobilisation and reshaping caused by secular coastal processes. Problematic issues include the following: (i) the difficulty of distinguishing real tsunamitic phenomena from other exceptional high-energy waves associated with sea storms (Morton *et alii* 2007) and (ii) precisely establishing the dates of these uncertain events, due to their erosional basal effects and the subsequent re-silting of previously accumulated sediments.

Strong and frequent seismic activity is a factor that determines the extensive catalogue of Prehistoric and historical tsunamis recorded on the western side of Greece, which have been analysed in numerous studies³⁰. Whilst rocky coasts tend to be immune to the impact of high-energy waves, those made up of detrital sediments are highly vulnerable and, therefore, highly susceptible to significant coastal changes. This means that the rugged cliff-lined coastlines that flank the western side of the Ionian islands and

³⁰ A recent summary can be found in Mavroulis *et alii*, 2023.

certain stretches of mainland Acarnania have barely been modified by the impact of palaeo-tsunamis. However, the low-lying coasts have witnessed extensive changes in coastline configuration, due to significant erosion and subsequent silting of substantial amounts of sediment in relatively short time-spans. Amongst these, we might highlight river mouth environments, where the fragility of their unconsolidated alluvial deposits (gravel, sand, etc..) is responsible for significant beach shoreline retreats of several hundred metres and consequent coastal land losses.

Evidence of tsunamigenic events essentially consists of the following: sands with shell debris layers, large washover fans³¹, and blocks dislocated by wave action and often displaced by several dozen metres. Their geochronostratigraphy can be determined by means of ¹⁴C-AMS dating and archaeological age estimations of ceramic fragments. An analysis of these indications along certain stretches of the Acarnanian coast, especially in its lagoons, has enabled us to detect various beds containing materials mobilised by tsunami waves. In this respect, these coastal wetlands constitute marvellous geo-archives, effectively incorporating interstratified matter amongst their materials, which are characteristic of quiescent waters, providing clear geomorphological, sedimentological and geochemical evidence of the tsunamis that have taken place over the last few millennia. Together with lagoons, the profiles of ancient inner harbours constitute another ideal sedimentary geo-archive when it comes to detecting violent tsunamis that took place more or less around the time of their heyday (Vött *et alii* 2013). The high-energy sediments found at such sites tend to have been deposited by events of tsunamigenic character and not by large waves generated by the wind, especially in view of the need for such harbours to protect ships from strong storms.

A considerable number of palaeo-tsunamis have taken place along the coasts of Acarnania, and these have been listed chronologically by numerous research studies: Antonopoulos 1979; Vött *et alii* 2006d, 2007c; 2008; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2011; May *et alii* 2007; May 2010; Papadopoulos *et alii* 2010; Willershäuser *et alii* 2013; Willershäuser 2014; Karkani *et alii* 2022. The majority of these tsunamis were caused by intense seismic activity³² on the seabed, where numerous epicentres have been located,

³¹ A geomorphological formation that adopts the shape of a detrital fan, whose sediments are transported landward by marine waters flowing through or across a coastal barrier and which accumulate inside lagoons or coastal lakes.

³² It has been established that, in this Mediterranean region, the existence of earthquakes with a magnitude of 6.8 ± 0.15 would be required for tsunamigenic phenomena to be generated (Soloviev 1990).

especially along the Hellenic Trench, the most important tsunami source in the region, as well as along other associated faults. However, we also find tsunamis genetically linked to supra-regional events, which have left different kinds of evidence on numerous coastal landscapes throughout the Eastern Mediterranean (Soloviev 1990; May 2010). Evidence of tsunami events during historical times includes the following: a tsunami on 21st July AD 365, which originated to the west of Crete, devastated and flooded multiple coastal landscapes in North Africa, the Adriatic, Greece and Sicily; and on 8th August AD 1303, a tsunami would appear to have been generated by an intense earthquake near Rhodes and, like the previous event, caused devastation to different coastlines.

Amongst the sections of the coast where clear evidence of tsunamigenic events have been detected during the Late Holocene³³, we might highlight (Table II and Figs. 3 and 5b):

The Ambracian Gulf and its surroundings: (i) the Aktio Headland, which partially holds back the waters of the Gulf, has witnessed the erosive effects of successive tsunamis, together with the nearby Phoukias Sand Spit (Vött *et alii* 2007a); (ii) the Bay of Aghios Nikolaos, which was formerly a lagoon separated from the Ionian Sea by a series of coastal barriers made of beachrock. In the western parts of the Bay (Plaka) we can identify abundant tsunamigenic sediments, amongst which we might mention various blocks ($>10\text{ m}^3$) freed from their original locations and shifted various dozen/hundreds of metres by tsunami waves that could have been up to six metres high (Vött *et alii* 2007a, 2008a 2008c, 2010; May *et alii* 2007); (iii) the nearby inner Voulkaria Lake, whose slow and calm sedimentation was disrupted by the periodic arrival of such strong waves that sea shells and allochthonous sand sheets were washed into the depression (Vött *et alii* 2009b).

The Island of Leucas, where numerous manifestations of tsunamis have been analysed in Leucas Sound and the lagoons in the surrounding area (Vött *et alii* 2006a, 2008c and 2009a).

The coast of the Palairos-Pogonia Coastal Plain, with evidence that dates back to the Mid-Holocene (Vött *et alii* 2011a),

The Island of Cephalonia, featuring abundant tsunami remains corresponding to different events harboured in very narrow inlets, such as the Gulf of Argostoli (Willershäuser 2013 and 2014) and its appendage, the even narrower Kutavos Bay.

³³ Out of the total number of tsunamis reported, only the most recent in historical terms have been well documented.

The Ionian Islands and Acarnania

Table 1L- Potential Tsunami Events occurring along the Acarnanian Coasts from Antiquity up to 12th century AD.

Events and Chronology	Acarnanian Gulf, Arctian Headland and the Bay of Agios Nicholas	Island of Leros	Vonikoria Lake	Peloponnesian Coastal Plains	Island of Cephalonia Gulf of Argosoli	Others Plains
Early 1 st millennium BC	Tsunami events in isolation of Lake of Orkizades (Vann et al., 2006a)	Lagoon of Lefkada in marine sub-tidal zone used (Vann et al., 2006b)	Marine sediments in freshwater lake (Vann et al., 2006a)	~2000 val BC (Vann et al., 2006a)	5414-5118 val BC Gulf of Argosoli (Wilfongkiet et al., 2012 and 2014)	
Before around 4240 val BC				~4000 val BC (Vann et al., 2011)	~4100 val BC Plains of Livadi and the Ancient Harbour of Orest (Vann et al., 2011b; Wilfongkiet et al., 2011)	4000 + 2000 val BC Western Peloponnese Ancient Harbour of Pheia (Vann et al., 2011c)
At the beginning of the 1 st millennium BC	2910-2140 val BC Arctian Headland, Phocian Bay and the Subit Lagoon (Vann et al., 2007; Bay et al., 2007)	2000 val BC Inland of Leros (Vann et al., 2006a)	2010-2100 val BC (Vann et al., 2006a)		~3100 val BC The Bay of Kalamas : Ancient Harbour of Orest (Vann et al., 2011b; Wilfongkiet et al., 2011)	1000-2000 val BC Gulf of Corinth (Korrikian et al., 2011)
At the beginning of the 1 st millennium BC	~4000 val BC Arctian Headland, The Bay of Agios Nicholas Plains and Phocian Head Bay (Vann et al., 2007; Bay et al., 2007; Bay, 2010)	~4000 val BC (Vann et al., 2006a)	~4000 val BC Marine sediments in freshwater lake (Jahan, 2006; 2007; Vann et al., 2006a)		251-402 val BC The coastal plain of Livadi (Wilfongkiet et al., 2011)	1200-1000 val BC Gulf of Corinth (Korrikian et al., 2011)
4240 val BC					~4100 val BC (Vann et al., 2011)	
~2000 val BC	~2000 val BC Arctian Headland, The Bay of Agios Nicholas, large washover fans in Phocian	~2000 val BC Large washover fans in Inland of Leros (Wilfongkiet et al., 2011)				121 val BC Helon : Gulf of Corinth (Bay, 2010)

[illegible]

11. Final Considerations

An extensive repertoire of contributions regarding Acarnania and the main islands of the Ionian Sea enables us to establish the geographical characteristics of the region in which an important chapter in Greek history was played out during Antiquity. The physical landscapes that made up this region were conditioned by structural factors that have been manifested geologically. The behaviour of these different factors has been governed by a strangely unique situation consisting of the collision and/or shifting of various tectonic plates and sub-plates within this small Mediterranean territory. This geo-physical mobility was responsible, first of all, for the Alpine fold which, without deforming the region's reliefs to any great height, endowed them with an intricate topography on their slopes. Subsequent distensive tectonic movements reactivated the multitude of faults that crossed the territory and sank a large number of blocks that were occupied by gulfs, lakes and numerous valleys. Frequent and intense seismic activity and a series of local upward/downward vertical movements are the present-day sequences that geo-physically destabilise this structural framework.

Amongst the exogenous factors, we might highlight Acarnania's location in a subtropical domain surrounded by the Ionian Sea. Mediterranean storms pushed by winds from the west reach the western side of Greece and its coastal reliefs. This endows them with a specific Mediterranean character featuring environments of relative humidity, conditions that have determined the climate over the last few millennia and the development of the region's vegetation cover. Nevertheless, the rugged topography has helped to liberate voluminous amounts of sediment from the moment early Neolithic deforestation broke the phytostabilisation of the slopes. The most intense stages of morphogenesis have been linked to the increase in anthropogenic activities regarding the land. These were the result of the founding of cities throughout Acarnania in the sixth century BC during the post-Roman-Byzantine Period and, above all, a consequence of the expansion of cultivated lands during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The dynamic interactions that have occurred between a wide-ranging and complex series of factors have been responsible for the highly variable and rapid changes witnessed by the region's coasts throughout the Holocene. Fundamental factors in this coastal evolution not only included the glacio-eustatic rise in sea level, but also (and decisively) the role played by the local tectonic uplift tendencies (Preveza Strait, west of Leucas and Cephallenia, south of the Paliki Peninsula) or subsidence tendencies

(Boukka, Astacus, Mytikas), both interrupted, in turn, by sudden co-seismic phenomena and the modifying consequences of tsunamis. These circumstances mean that different areas have witnessed a specific and matching series of transgressions/regressions over the last few millennia. The original character of this coastline is enhanced by the capacity with which certain delta systems have displaced the seashore. In particular we might mention the Acheloüs River Delta, whose sediments offer a typical example. Here, the ancient port for the city of Oeniadae lost its connection with the sea, whose shoreline is today located some ten kilometres away. Finally, we might highlight the fact that the different sea-levels recorded throughout the Holocene never managed to surpass the levels of today, an aspect of considerable palaeogeographical and historical interest.

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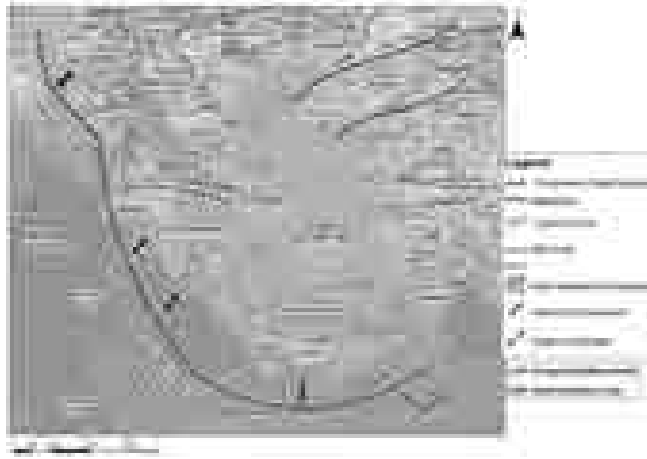


Fig. 1. Simplified geophysical map of the study area. (Map modified and synthesized from Clews *et alii* 1989; Sachpazi *et alii* 2000; Van Hinderbergen 2006; Vött *et alii* 2007; Willershäuser 2014; Karymbalis *et alii* 2016; Haddad *et alii* 2020).

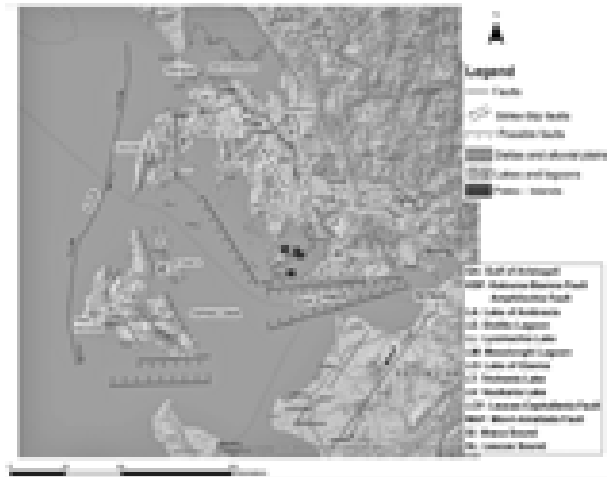


Fig. 2. Main tectonic structures and seismic activity of the Acarnanian Region in the northwesternmost area of the Hellenic Arc. Fault traces from: Brockmüller, 2005; Lagios *et alii* 2007; Underhill *et alii* 2018; Haddad *et alii* 2020, Lefils *et alii* 2023.

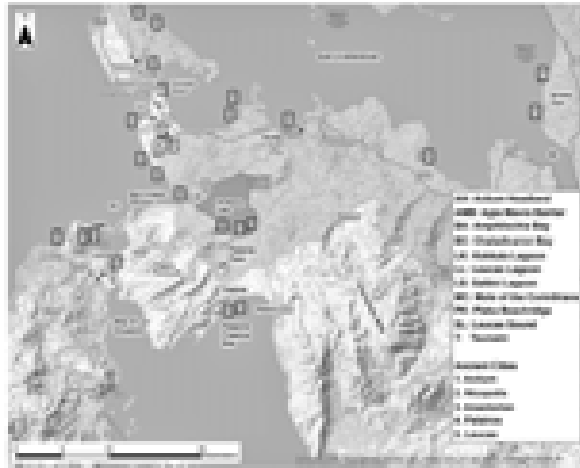


Fig. 3. Schematic map of the south-eastern seaboard of the Ambracian Gulf, Plagia Peninsula, Leucas Sound and Palarios-Pogonia Bay. Tsunami evidence location from: Vött *et alii* 2006d, 2007c, 2008, 2009b, 2010, 2011; Willershäeuser 2014; Röbbke *et alii* 2018.

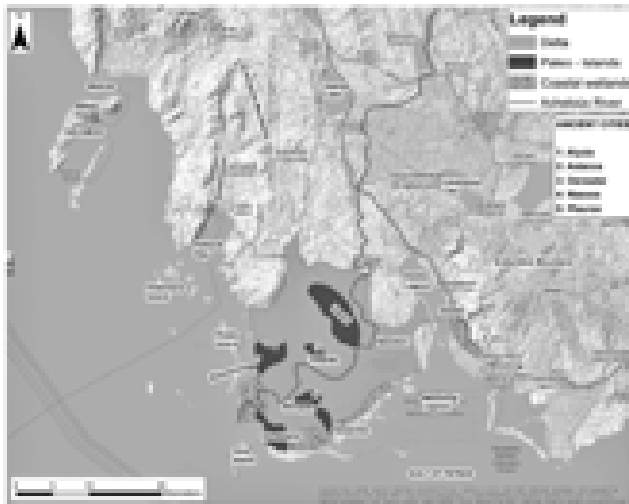


Fig. 4. Schematic map of the Acarnanian coast between the Bay of Mytikas and the Etoliko-Mesolonghi Lagoon Complex.

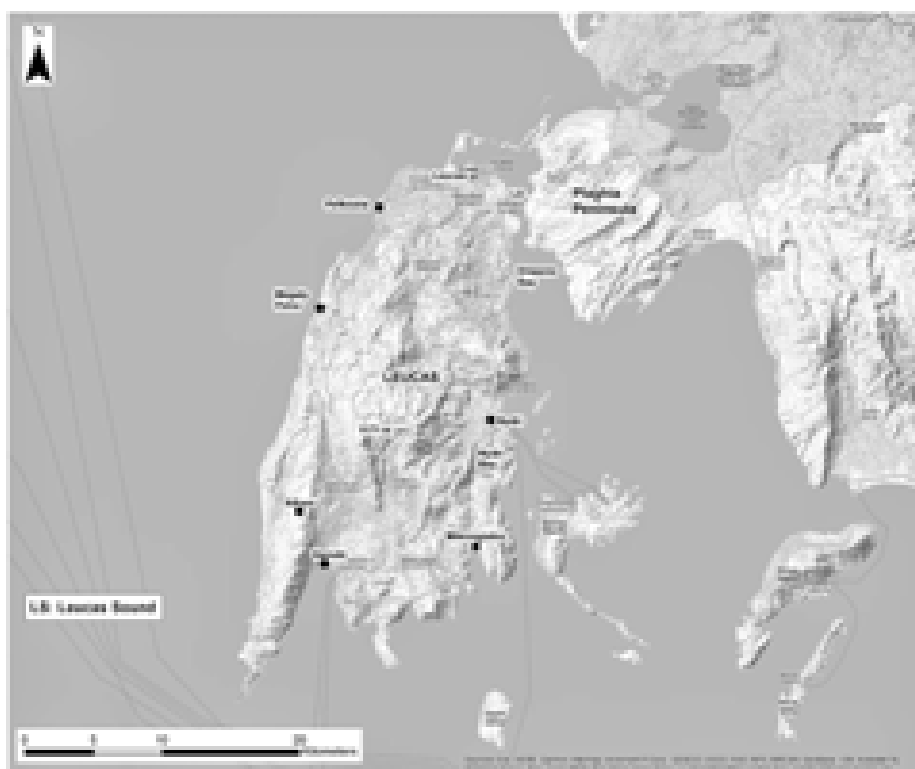


Fig. 5a. Schematic map of the coastlines of the Island of Leucas. Tsunami from: Vött *et alii* 2006d, 2009a, 2010, 2013; Brockmüller 2007; May *et alii* 2007; May 2010; Willershäuser 2014.

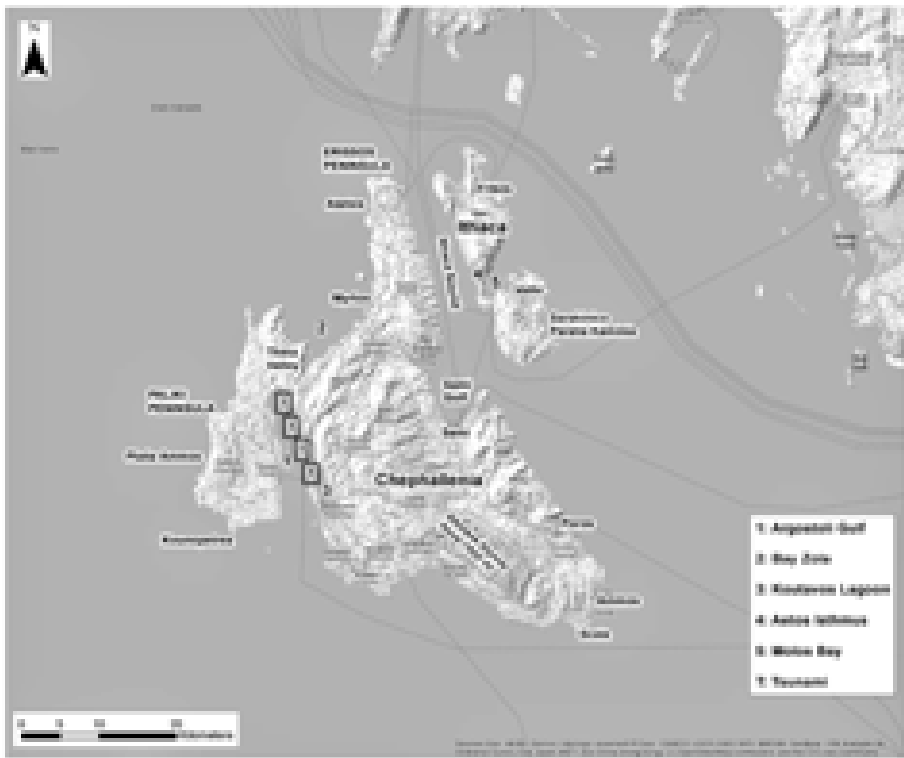


Fig. 5b. Schematic map of the coastlines of the Islands of Cephalonia and Ithaca (5b). Tsunami from: Vött *et alii* 2006d, 2009a, 2010, 2013; Brockmüller 2007; May *et alii* 2007; May 2010; Willershäuser 2014).

LEUKAS. ZUR ANTIKEN BESIEDLUNG UND ZU DÖRPFELDS ALTFUNDEN

Vor 100 Jahren fand unter Leitung Wilhelm Dörpfelds die bislang einzige systematische archäologische Erkundung der Insel Leukas statt. Sie konzentrierte sich auf die Auffindung des Palasts von Odysseus mit zugehörigen Siedlungen und Nekropolen – unter der Annahme, Leukas wäre Ithaka – und verfehlte vollständig ihr Ziel. Bedeutend sind diese sehr strukturiert und sorgsam ausgeführten Arbeiten aber dennoch, denn sie lieferten reiche Erkenntnisse zur prähistorischen und antiken Besiedlung der Insel. Stichproben von Funden dieser landeskundlichen Forschungen werden in der Sammlung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts der Abteilung Athen aufbewahrt¹. Mit Hilfe der damaligen Grabungstagebücher können Fundkomplexe verortet werden, womit das ländliche Siedlungsbild geschärft wird und sich weitere Fragen zur Besiedlung entwickeln. Während die prähistorischen – früh – und mittelhelladischen – Zeugnisse umfassend neu aufgearbeitet wurden², blieb eine Neubeurteilung der Funde aus den antiken Epochen, der archaischen bis römischen Zeit, bislang aus.

1. Naturräumliche Grundlagen

Leukas, die viertgrößte der Ionischen Inseln, prägt die Nähe zum Festland Akarnaniens. Nur wenige hundert Meter trennen im Nordosten die Insel vom Festland. Im Kern gebirgig mit verschiedenen fruchtbaren Hochebenen, zur offenen See im Westen schroff und siedlungsfeindlich,

¹ Wir danken Katja Sporn, DAI Athen, für die Möglichkeit, das Material zu publizieren, und Florian Ruppenstein, DAI Athen, für die Unterstützung in der Athener Sammlung. Der Beginn unserer Leukas-Forschungen reicht in die 1990er Jahre zurück, mit umfassender und großzügiger Unterstützung der damaligen Ephoren Angelika Dousougli und Konstantinos Zachos. Für Hilfestellungen danken wir zudem Anna-Laura Honikel.

Da die Bestände der archäologische Sammlung des DAI Athen im Projekt „Shapes of Ancient Greece“ digital erschlossen wurden, sind alle Sammlungsobjekte in der idai.world zugänglich (<https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/6939355>). Die Objekte können in Kombination mit dem Schlagwort „Leukas“ und der Inventarnummer in der Datenbank aufgerufen werden.

² Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005.

besitzt die Insel drei Gebiete, die als geschlossene Kammern für eine Besiedlung außerordentlich gute Bedingungen schaffen (Abb. 1). Jonathan Ritter, Manuel Fiedler.

Die Schwemmlandebenen 1) im Süden beim heutigen Vasiliki, in Sichtweite zu Kephallonia und Ithaka, 2) im Osten beim heutigen Nidri mit einer tiefen, geschützten Bucht sowie 3) die gesamte, zum Festland ausgerichtete Nordostspitze der Insel. Es ist bezeichnend, dass – anders als etwa in Kephallonia – sich dennoch nie drei gleichartige Siedlungszentren ausbildeten. In früh- und mittelhelladischer Zeit hatte man die Nidri-Ebene sicherlich wegen der als Hafen gut nutzbaren Bucht als Inselzentrum gewählt. Dass seit der Antike der Hauptort aber im Nordosten lag, hängt mit dem Seeverkehr und der schmalen Meerenge zwischen Insel und Festland zusammen: Die Umfahrung der schroffen Westküste stellte vor Einführung der Motorschifffahrt ein gefährliches Unterfangen wegen starker Strömungen, wechselnder Winde und dem weitgehenden Fehlen geschützter Ankerbuchten dar. Der Seeverkehr hatte daher eine östliche Umfahrung der Insel mit Durchquerung der Meerenge vorzuziehen, auch wenn dies – die Schriftquellen geben beredte Auskunft darüber³ – mit anderweitigen Schwierigkeiten verbunden war: Versandungen scheinen ein Durchkommen oft unmöglich gemacht zu haben, weswegen Kanäle gebaut und Fahrrinnen offen gehalten werden mussten, die ihrerseits von Versandungen frei zu halten waren (und noch heute sind). Dass aber trotz dieser Schwierigkeiten die Inselzentren – in der Antike und wieder seit der frühen Neuzeit – an der Meerenge eingerichtet waren, charakterisiert diese Niederlassungen: Der Seehandel und die Dominanz über die Meerenge spielten hier die entscheidende Rolle, und das führte eben zugleich dazu, dass sich in den zwei weiteren Siedlungskammern der Insel seit Erlöschen des bronzezeitlichen Ortes bei Nidri keine gleichartigen Siedlungen entwickeln konnten: Alles beherrschend in Leukas war die Meerenge.

2. Eisenzeit

Über die eisenzeitlichen Verhältnisse vor Ankunft der Korinther sind wir noch kaum informiert. Aus einer Textstelle bei Strab. (10, 2,8) lässt sich ersehen, dass die Korinther ein einheimisches Nerikos bei ihrer Ankunft verpflanzten: Offenbar bestand also auf dem Gebiet der entstehenden

³ RE XII 2, 1925, 2213; s.v. Leukas, Leukadia; Oberhummer 1887, 12 f.; Murray 1982, 224-265.

Kolonie eine einheimische Siedlung, deren Bewohner umgesiedelt wurden. Bestätigung dürften die jüngsten Forschungen von Catherine Morgan liefern: Unter den Scherben des DAI Athen fanden sich eine Handvoll Stücke aus dem 8./7. Jh.v.Chr., die aus dem Stadtgebiet der späteren Kolonie, von der Akropolis, stammen⁴.

3. Die korinthische Kolonie Leukas

Seit dem dritten Viertel des 7. Jhs.v.Chr. beherrschte *ein* Ort die Insel mitsamt der Umgebung auf dem akarnanischen Festland: die von Seiten Korinths gegründete Kolonie Leukas. Ihre Lage ist bezeichnend (Abb. 2): An der schmalsten Stelle der Meerenge, an der also sämtlicher Seeverkehr bestens kontrolliert werden konnte, positionierte man den Ort. Gegenüber, auf dem Festland, gehörte das zur Meerenge orientierte Gebiet als *peraia* ebenfalls zu leukadischem Besitz, um Leukas-Stadt und die Meerenge mit ihrem Schiffsverkehr zu schützen.

Dass die Koloniegründung keinesfalls als ein isoliertes Ereignis betrachtet werden darf, sondern – im Gegenteil – erst im größeren Zusammenhang verständlich wird, verdeutlichen einerseits die – sehr wagen – Überlieferungen in den Schriftquellen (Thuk. 1, 30; 3, 94; Stickler 2010), umsomehr aber die topographischen Zusammenhänge: Denn zeitgleich mit Leukas wurde seitens Korinth noch Anaktorion am Eingang zum Ambrakischen Golf sowie Ambrakia am Flußunterlauf des Arachthos im Epirus gegründet. Weiter im Norden entstanden in diesen Jahrzehnten unter Beteiligung von Siedlern aus Korinth und Kerkyra - Apollonia am Unterlauf des Aoos sowie Epidamnos/Dyrrhachion – Beide Orte lagen an der Straße von Otranto gegenüber der italischen Küste. Allen diesen Gründungen ist ihre exzellente Lage an den Hauptverkehrswegen zu Lande und zu Wasser gemein, so dass Korinth im Verein mit seinen Kolonien also ein Netzwerk schuf, die See- und Landwege zwischen griechischem Mutterland und dem griechischen Westen zu dominieren. Leukas oblag demnach die Sicherung der entscheidenden Meerenge zwischen der Insel und dem akarnanischen Festland, und damit wird auch klar, dass es sich um eine bedeutsame Hafenstadt und einen Warenumsschlagplatz an einer der Hauptrouten des antiken Seeverkehrs handelte.

Als Siedlungsterrain wählte man einen möglichst nah an die Küstenlinie tretenden Hügel mit zwei Anhöhen für zwei Akropolen, sowie für

⁴ Morgan in Druck. Für die Diskussionen danken wir herzlich!

die Wohnstadt einen zur Meerenge ausgerichteten Hang mit einem vorgelagerten, bis ans Ufer tretenden Streifen Flachland (Abb. 3). Aus dem Verlauf der Stadtmauer lässt sich ein Stadtareal von ungefähr 100 ha ersehen – ein auch für die übrigen Kolonien übliche Größe. Das Wohngebiet prägte ein rechtwinklig angelegtes Straßennetz mit langschmalen *Insulae*: Wir haben es mit einer für Kolonien typischen urbanen Struktur zu tun, einer sog. Streifenstadt⁵. Noch wenig ist von städtischen Elementen oder gar Monumenten bekannt: Ein innerer Hafen muss in das Stadtgebiet integriert gewesen sein⁶; als äußeres Hafenbecken diente die Meerenge, die im Süden durch eine Mole⁷, im Norden vermutlich durch eine Nehrung geschlossen war. Im Stadtgebiet unweit des Ufers ist eine Agora nachgewiesen. Ein Theater, aus hellenistischer Zeit, wird derzeit untersucht – Dörpfeld und sein junger Assistent Emil Krüger hatten es entdeckt⁸. Und ein ebenfalls dieser Zeit zuzuschreibendes Monument, eine Steinbrücke hinüber zum akarnanischen Festland, kann als Symbol einer Zeit verstanden werden, in der ein jahrhundertelanger Kontrast zwischen Leukas und den feindlich gesinnten Nachbarn auf dem Festland überwunden war: Der Akarnanische Bund ernannte im 3. Jh.v.Chr. Leukas zu seinem Versammlungsort als offensichtlich bedeutendsten Ort unter den akarnanischen Städten – in der Zeit, als Stratos durch die Aitoler besetzt war. Diese Steinbrücke – die längste in ganz Griechenland – mag die Zusammengehörigkeit von Leukas mit dem Bund symbolisieren⁹.

Historisch relevant ist schließlich, dass die Schlacht von Aktion, die 31 v.Chr. nur unweit der Inselnordspitze Oktavian/Agrippa gegen Antonius/Kleopatra ausfochten, das Ende der Stadt bedeutete. Oktavian gründete als Siegesymbol Nikopolis *ad aktio* und ließ die Bevölkerung aus den alten Städten der Umgebung dorthin umsiedeln: Die gesamte Siedlungsstruktur Nordwestgriechenlands wurde damit umgestaltet. Die Funde aus dem Stadtgebiet¹⁰ sowie das Erlöschen der Nekropolen¹¹ bestätigen, dass die alte Kolonie Leukas einige Jahrzehnte nach der Aktion-Schlacht verlassen gewesen sein muss.

⁵ Fiedler 2003; Sarris u.a. 2008 zu geophysikalischen Messungen.

⁶ Die Umriss eines Hafenbeckens scheinen sich während Dörpfelds Forschungen noch abgezeichnet zu haben, siehe D-DAI-ATH-Leukas-0310.

⁷ Murray 1982, 224-265; Murray 1988.

⁸ Pliakou 1997; <http://www.kolivas.de/archives/449823>.

⁹ Fiedler, Hermanns 2011.

¹⁰ Fiedler 2003, 82-83.

¹¹ Nur wenige römische Gräber aus den nachchristlichen Jahrhunderten sind nachgewiesen; Pliakou 2001.

4. Siedlungsstrukturen und -entwicklung des Landes in archaischer bis römischer Zeit

Betrachten wir neben dem Hauptort Leukas nun die ländliche Besiedlung seit archaischer Zeit, eignet sich die Ebene von Nidri aufgrund der intensiven Erforschung unter Dörpfeld als hervorragendes Beispiel. Grundlage hierfür bilden die wenigen publizierten Notizen vornehmlich in Dörpfelds Hauptpublikation „Alt-Ithaka“, vor allem aber die im Archiv des DAI Athen aufbewahrten Grabungstagebücher Dörpfelds sowie die Keramik in der dortigen Sammlung.

Die Nidri-Ebene befindet sich im mittleren Teil der Insel, an der durch Hügelland und Buchten geprägten Ostküste (Abb. 4). Der Ebene schließt sich die flaschenförmige, durch eine Halbinsel geschützte Vlichos-Bucht an. Die Größe der Ebene beträgt ca. 350 ha. Sie ist dreiseitig von hohen Bergen umgeben, die Übergänge von Flach- zu Bergland sind zumeist recht steil. Zwei vor allem im Winter starke Bäche durchqueren die Ebene; sie sorgten für die Bildung des fruchtbaren Schwemmlandes, das sich stetig gen Meer erweitert. Tief liegen antike Strukturen verborgen, wofür ebenfalls die Alluvion gesorgt hat.

Dörpfeld, auf der Suche nach dem Odysseus-Palast, ließ die Ebene mitsamt ihrer Umgebung umfassend erkunden: Dazu gehörten 1) zunächst Oberflächenprospektionen, 2) darauf folgend in einem bestimmten System ausgeführte Sondagen, und 3) darauf basierend Flächengrabungen an ausgewählten Stellen.

Die Oberflächenprospektionen bezogen hauptsächlich die Hänge um die Ebene ein. Im Flachland selbst zeichnen sich Fundstellen meist nicht als Fundstreuungen an der Oberfläche ab, wegen der erheblichen Tiefe archäologischer Befunde. Dörpfeld entschied sich deshalb, Reihen von tiefen Sondagen durch die gesamte Ebene zu legen¹². Aus den Notizen, die in den Tagebüchern festgehalten wurden, lässt sich rekonstruieren, welche Sondagen Fundplätze anschnitten und welche fundleer blieben. Erweiterungen zu Flächengrabungen wurden dann vor allem an den sog. Königsgräbern von Nidri (aus der frühen und mittleren Bronzezeit¹³) umgesetzt.

Aus der Verbreitung von Fundplätzen ergibt sich ein konsistentes Bild zur antiken Besiedlung (Abb. 5)¹⁴. An den Ebenenrändern, zumeist leicht erhöht, lagen die Siedlungsplätze, mit Abstand von 100 bis 500 Metern

¹² Dörpfeld 1927, Taf. 2; die Karte in „Alt-Ithaka“ verzeichnet diese Gräben.

¹³ Kilian-Dirlmeier 2005.

¹⁴ Fiedler 1993, 94-98; Fiedler 1996, 164-167. Abb. 25.

voneinander entfernt. Sie lassen sich anhand von Mauerabschnitten oder Scherbenkonzentrationen in den Dörpfeld'schen Sondagen eruieren. Etwas oberhalb der Ebene können weitere, aber wenige Plätze nachgewiesen werden. Innerhalb der Ebene sind dagegen so gut wie keine Fundplätze erkennbar, woraus zu schließen ist, dass das fruchtbare Land der Agrarnutzung vorbehalten und von Wohnbebauung zumeist frei blieb. Wir haben es also mit einer Streusiedlung, mit isoliert voneinander gelegenen Einzelplätzen –wohl Gehöften–, und keinem geschlossenen Siedlungszentrum zu tun.

Das Gemeinwesen an der Nidri-Ebene unterhielt gemeinsame Einrichtungen: Ein Weg, der sich teilweise noch Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts als Trasse im Gelände abzeichnete und den die Dörpfeld'schen Arbeiten an verschiedenen Stellen anschnitten¹⁵, umlief randlich die Ebene und verband die einzelnen Siedlungsplätze¹⁶.

Frisches Quellwasser führte man über eine Tonrohr-wasserleitung von einer Quelle beim früheren Bergdorf Palaiochori ca. 300 m hinab in die Ebene¹⁷. Obgleich Dörpfelds Grabungen (ab 1901 und nochmals in den 1930er Jahren¹⁸) den Endpunkt der Leitung nicht finden konnten und seine Datierungen überholt sind, lässt sich doch eine Länge von mindestens 2000 m rekonstruieren. Zwei Typen von Rohren, einfache unprofilierte, leicht konische Rohrsegmente (Abb. 6; Kat. 1-2) sowie ein mit Muffe versehenes Rohrsegment (Abb. 7; Kat. 3) waren verbaut. Ersteres lässt sich zwischen archaischer und römischer Zeit kaum datieren¹⁹, für den profilierten Typ lassen sich Vergleiche überwiegend aus dem 3. Jh.v.Chr. finden²⁰.

Zwei besonders im Winter starke Bäche durchfließen die Ebene: der Dimosari im Norden und der Steno im Süden. Beide Bäche wurden durch Stützmauern in feste Bachbetten geleitet²¹, um eine Überflutung zuungunsten der angrenzenden Felder zu verhindern.

¹⁵ In der Zeit der venezianischen Herrschaft und englischen Protektion scheint dieser Weg ausgebaut und weiter genutzt worden zu sein; er wird öfter als venezianischer/englischer Weg in Dörpfelds Dokumentationen und Publikationen bezeichnet (siehe hier auch Abb. 8.)

¹⁶ Dörpfeld 1927, 204-205 Abb. 14.

¹⁷ von Marées 1904, Karte 3; Dörpfeld 1927, 196-197 Abb. 9; Karo 1935, 211; T VIII, 24-27. 29-34.

¹⁸ Dörpfeld 1927, 196-198; Karo 1934, Sp. 162; T II, 2-5, T VIII, 6-9.

¹⁹ Nach Tölle-Kastenbein lässt sich ab dem 4. Jh.v.Chr. eine Tendenz hin zu zylindrischen Rohren erkennen. Tölle-Kastenbein 1990, 86. Die Datierung solcher Rohre bleibt ein Desiderat der Forschung.

²⁰ Wellbrock 2016, 39, 43, 65, 70-72 (Typ A), mit weiterer Literatur.

²¹ von Marées 1904, Karte 3; Dörpfeld 1927, 192-196 Abb. 7. 8; Fiedler 2007, 280 Abb. 17.

Schließlich scheint die Gegend in das Wacht- und Signalpostensystem der Insel integriert gewesen zu sein: Ein Wachturm, ein Rundturm von 6,50 m Durchmesser, ist auf der Bergspitze Krupa auf der Halbinsel gegenüber von Nidri nachgewiesen²²: Bei Gefahren müssen von hier aus Signale an die Bewohner gegeben worden sein. Thukydides (3, 94) berichtet von einem Fall, dass feindliche Schiffe die Wachen (φρουρούς) eines Ortes Ellomenon im Zuge des Peloponnesischen Krieges überfallen hätten – es ist gut möglich, dass sich die Notiz auf die Gemeinde an der heutigen Nidri-Ebene bezieht.

Die Struktur einzelner Siedlungsplätze lässt sich angesichts der punktuellen Untersuchungen nur schwer im Detail erkennen (Abb. 8). Beispielhaft für ein Haus eines solchen Siedlungsplatzes kann ein Gebäude gelten, das Dörpfeld in den 1930er Jahren freilegen ließ (Abb. 9)²³.

Errichtet mit Lehmziegeln auf einem Bruchsteinfundament, besaß es einen annähernd rechtwinkligen, länglichen Grundriss von 8 m x 6,50 m, mit einem größeren Hauptraum und zwei assoziierten Nebenräumen – ähnlich wie wir es in städtischen Häusern in der Kombination von ‚Oikoi‘ mit Nebenräumen kennen. Westlich schloss sich ein gepflasterter Hof an. Überliefert sind eine Sitzbadewanne sowie ein Komplex zahlreicher Webgewichte und Eisenschlacken. Auch damit erinnert das Gebäude an städtische Häuser. Es kann gut sein, dass es sich um das Haupthaus eines Gehöftes handelt, zu dem dann aber noch diverse Nebengebäude gehört haben müssten, die für das Funktionieren eines landwirtschaftlichen Betriebs unabdingbar waren. Das Gebäude scheint aus hellenistischer Zeit zu stammen. Ein im DAI Athen aufbewahrtes Terrakotta-Palmettenantefix (Abb. 10; Kat. 4) stammt von hier – die Zusammenhänge lassen sich aber nicht mehr rekonstruieren. Vergleiche finden sich zwar in der leukadischen Wohnarchitektur, da aber nach Dörpfeld Grabmauern Simabekrönungen trugen und unweit Gräber lagen, ist ein solcher Zusammenhang ebenfalls nicht auszuschließen.

Ähnlich wie bei dieser Siedlungsstelle am Westrand der Ebene lässt sich am Nordrand, am Fuße des Skaros, erkennen dass die Gebäude mit Abstand voneinander standen. Auch hier ist der antike Weg, dem Ebenenrand folgend, nachgewiesen, darüber scheint es mehrere befestigte Terrassen (für Wohnbauten?) gegeben zu haben (Abb. 11).

²² Entdeckt während der Dörpfeld-Forschungen: T I 79. 82; Fiedler 1993, 171-172.

²³ Karo 1934, 162; Karo 1935, 211-212. Die in den Vorberichten gegebene Interpretation als Brunnenhaus hat sich als falsch erwiesen und erklärt sich aus dem Zusammenhang mit der Suche Dörpfelds nach einem Brunnenhaus am Ende der Wasserleitung. Ein Plan des Gebäudes ist veröffentlicht: Kilian 1978-80, Tafeln.

Aus hellenistischer Zeit stammen aber auch eine Reihe von Turmgehöften, von denen Dörpfeld insgesamt sechs an der Nidri- Ebene (Abb. 12) und noch weitere auf der übrigen Insel entdeckte²⁴. Er charakterisierte sie zu Recht als Mischung eines Wehrbaues mit landwirtschaftlichem Hintergrund. Ihre Position an unteren Hängen, mit beschränkter Sicht in die Umgebung, lässt sie oft klar von Wachttürmen unterscheiden, die über eine Weitsicht verfügten und der reinen Verteidigung und Signalgebung bei Gefahren dienten. In den Türmen der Turmgehöfte konnten sich bei Gefahr die Bewohner mit ihrem Hab und Gut für gewisse Zeit zurückziehen. Am Stavros bei Elleniko ist ein Turm mit 8,30 x 6,15 m Grundfläche, bei Palaioikatouna mit 9,70 m x 8,70 m Grundfläche erhalten, die aus starken Fundamenten, je nach verfügbarem Material aus Polygonal- oder Quadermauerwerk bestanden. Südlich und am Ostufer der Vlichio-Bucht standen weitere solcher Gebäude. Auch Rundtürme sind nachgewiesen. Besonders gut erhalten hat sich ein Turmgehöft mit zugehörigen Landwirtschaftsanlagen 9 km südlich von Nidri bei Poros – Turmgehöfte sind also auch sonst charakteristisch für die Insel²⁵.

Eindeutig ist, dass jedem Siedlungsplatz Gräber zugeordnet waren (Abb. 5; 8) und es keine zentralen Nekropolen abseits der Siedlungsplätze gab. Verstreut um die Ebene fand Dörpfeld einige klassische Grabstelen, deren Streuung ebenfalls gegen ein zentral gelegenes Nekropolenareal sprechen²⁶.

Bei Palaioikatouna, am Westrand der Nidri-Ebene und vielleicht zugehörig zu dem Fundplatz mit dem hellenistischen Gebäude, scheinen Gräbergruppen an dem rekonstruierbaren Weg gestaffelt und z.T. in Grabgärten mit oberirdischen Markierungen zusammengefasst gewesen zu sein (Abb. 8). In einem Fall richtete sich eine Grabmauer, die Dörpfeld mit einer Rankensima bekrönt interpretierte, auf den Weg aus und war entsprechend repräsentativ positioniert. Hinter der Mauer fanden sich z.T. reich ausgestattete Steinkistengräber, deren Grabbeigaben – darunter goldene Arm-, Finger- und Ohrringe, eine Silberfibel, Bronzespiegel und Strigileis – heute im Athener Nationalmuseum aufbewahrt werden²⁷.

Betrachtet man die Areale bei Palaioikatouna in ihrer Entwicklung, ergibt sich aus den Baubefunden und Funden, dass das Gebiet in klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit intensiv genutzt wurde. Ferner lässt sich aus der

²⁴ Dörpfeld 1927, 256-262.

²⁵ Morris 2001, 292-310.

²⁶ Einige Grabstelen sind im Museum von Leukas ausgestellt. Dörpfeld 1927, 252. 329. Preuner 1902, 360-371.

²⁷ In den 1930er Jahren gegraben: Kilian 1978; zur Terrassenmauer Dörpfeld 1927, 204-205 Abb. 14.

Datierung von Gräbern mit ihren Beigaben ableiten, dass die Nidri-Ebene mindestens seit dem 6. Jh.v.Chr. in dieser Art besiedelt war.

Zu den frühen Funden zählen mehrere schwarzgefirnisste Lekythen und ein Skyphos aus einem Kindergrab bei Palaioikatouna. Aus weiteren Grabbefunden des 6. Jhs.v.Chr. sind mehrere Lekythen, Kylikes, Kannen und Strigileis bekannt²⁸.

Die Funde aus den Gräbern unterhalb des Turmes bei Palaioikatouna geben einen ähnlichen Datierungshorizont wieder (Abb. 13): Das früheste Objekt, eine kleine schwarzgefirnisste Lekythe (Abb. 13; Kat. 5), ist in die erste Hälfte des 5. Jhs.v.Chr. einzuordnen. Charakteristisch bei diesem Stück ist der schlanke zylindrische Gefäßkörper sowie der hohe, diskusartig profilierte Fuß²⁹. In der Fundchronologie folgt die Terrakotte eines Frauenkopfs, deren Typus sich durch das hervortretende Kinn, den schmalen Mund, die gereihten Buckellocken und den Polos auszeichnet (Abb. 13; Kat. 6). In der Mutterstadt Korinth ist dieser Typus stark vertreten³⁰; weiterhin findet er sich auf der Plagia-Halbinsel bei dem Heiligtum von Lachidia und in einigen Hauskontexten der Stadt Leukas wieder³¹.

Das winzige Fragment eines bauchigen Reliefkantharos mit Glanzton datiert in das 4. Jh.v.Chr. (Abb. 13; Kat. 7)³². Präziser – und zwar in die Mitte des 4. Jhs.v.Chr. – lässt sich der Boden eines Skyphos des attischen Typus (Abb. 13; Kat. 8) anhand der Form und dem abgesetzten Fuß einordnen³³. An diesem Stück fällt der hellgelbe feingeschlemmte Ton mitsamt des abgewaschenen hellorangefarbenen/rotbraunen Tonschlickers auf, der auch drei weitere undiagnostische Wandfragmente charakterisiert³⁴. Diese sind wahrscheinlich als lokal einzuordnen³⁵. Die klassischen Funde bestätigen und ergänzen die bereits von Dörpfeld in „Alt-Ithaka“ erwähnten Funde dieser Zeit.

Unter den Funden des Hellenismus sticht das Bruchstück eines matrizengeformten Terrakotta-Pinax hervor (Abb. 13; Kat. 9)³⁶. Dieser

²⁸ Dörpfeld 1927, 321-322.

²⁹ Corinth 13, 162. Kat. 272-9. Kat. 274-6.

³⁰ Corinth 15, 2, Klasse 12, 10. 14; Croissant 1983, Nr. 180. 181, Typ M1 (um 525 v. Chr.).

³¹ Leukas-Lachidia in: Dörpfeld 1927, Blg. 78a. Stadt Leukas in: Fiedler 2003, 241 Kat. 603.

³² Athenian Agora 12, 110 Kat. 711 Taf. 29; Corinth 18, 34, Kat. 84.

³³ Athenian Agora 12, Kat. 350-353.

³⁴ Archäologische Sammlung Athen Inv. 26451, 26452, 26454.

³⁵ Morgan im Druck, Kat. 17. 18.

³⁶ Einige Terrakotta-Pinakes hatte Dörpfeld bei dem Heiligtum bei H. Kyriaki ausgegraben; Dörpfeld 1927, 323. Beil. 76.

zeigt eine Kline mit dickem Polster, vor der sich eine Schlange windet. Derartige Pinakes finden sich in der Stadt Leukas in häuslichen Kontexten³⁷ und beim südöstlichen Tor der Agora³⁸. Dargestellt ist eine Bankettszene mit einem lagernden Mann und einer thronenden Frau, zumeist mit einem Tisch und einer Schlange im Vordergrund³⁹. Die Pinakes werden aufgrund ihrer Ikonographie von der Forschung in Verbindung mit Heroenkulten gebracht. Des Weiteren wird in Betracht gezogen, ob sie ähnlich wie Totenmahlreliefs in Grabkontexten aufgestellt worden sein könnten⁴⁰. Der Terrakotta-Pinax aus Palaioikatouna würde diese These stützen.

Ebenfalls hervorzuheben ist das Fragment einer weiblichen Protome (Abb. 13; Kat. 10), das aufgrund des obergegürteten Chitons mit starkem Faltenwurf wohl hellenistisch zu datieren ist. Weitere Funde, wie eine vollständig erhaltene tongrundige Miniaturschale (Abb. 13; Kat. 11)⁴¹ und das Randfragment eines grobkörnigen Mortariums mit ungleichmäßigen Knubben, können ab der Mitte des Hellenismus eingeordnet werden (Abb. 13; Kat. 12)⁴². Allgemein in klassische bis hellenistische Zeit datieren Wandfragmente eines Kraters/Krateriskos sowie einer Kanne, beide mit schwarzem Glanzton überzogen. Nur wenige aus gleicher Zeit stammende Funde fanden Erwähnung in der „Alt-Ithaka“-Publikation, sodass das Bild der hellenistischen Phase für das Areal bei Palaioikatouna durch die hier aufgeführten Funde geschärft werden konnte⁴³.

Das Ende des Datierungshorizontes bilden ein bauchiger Kochtopf wohl aus dem 1. Jh. n. Chr. sowie eine Eastern Sigillata A-Schale der flavisch-hadrianischen Zeit⁴⁴, die Dimitris Grigoropoulos bereits vorlegte. Sie erweitern die Datierung von Dörpfeld, der die römische Phase nicht untergliederte⁴⁵.

³⁷ Fiedler 2003, 260-261 Kat. 718. 719.

³⁸ Die Funde der Stadt Leukas und aus Meganisi wurden erst kürzlich publiziert und mit anderen Orten verglichen: Gkiza, 2017; Dousougli – Zachos 1994, 45 Taf. 20a. Weitere Funde aus der Mitte des 3. Jhs.v.Chr. in Korinth: Corinth 12, Kat. 302-304.

³⁹ Gkiza 2017, 187-189, Typ 1, Abb. 1. Das Fragment von Palaioikatouna besitzt eine Gesamtgröße von: 8,1 cm x 6,0 cm. Dicke der Schlage: 2,7 cm. cf. Gkiza 2017, 188. Abb. 1. Maße: 12,8 cm x 14,6 cm und Fiedler 2003, Kat. 718. Maße: 13,2 cm x 13,7 cm.

⁴⁰ Gkiza 2017, 192 f.

⁴¹ Indikator für die Datierung ist das geschwungene Profil und die ausgezogene Lippe, das mit der Form der „saucer bowls“ korreliert; cf. Corinth 12, 107. Kat. 219-224; Corinth 18, 97. Kat. 119.

⁴² Corinth 7. 3, 111 Abb. 626. 627.

⁴³ Dörpfeld 1927, 245. 250-254.

⁴⁴ Grigoropoulos 2011, 187. Kat. 5. 32; Archäologische Sammlung Athen, Inv. 26453. 26423.

⁴⁵ Dörpfeld 1927, 255. 318-321.

Leukas. Zur antiken Besiedlung und zu Dörpfelds Altfunden

Aus der Einordnung der Sammlungsfunde geht hervor, dass die Bestattungsaktivitäten im 6. Jh.v.Chr. in der Nidri-Ebene begannen. Der Schwerpunkt bildet die klassische und hellenistische Zeit. Vereinzelte Kleinfunde, wie der Terrakotta-Pinax und der weibliche Terrakottakopf, erweitern das Beigabenrepertoire und werfen Fragen zu hellenistischen Bestattungssitten auf.

Zum Verständnis der Umsiedlungsmaßnahmen im Zuge der Gründung von Nikopolis sind die römischen Funde von besonderem Interesse. Aus römischer Zeit sind zahlreiche Gräber an der Ebene belegt, beispielsweise am Südfuß des Skaros, bei Palaikatouna sowie an den bronzezeitlichen Königsgräbern von Steno⁴⁶. Bei Steno wurden fünf römische Ziegelgräber an dem antiken Weg gefunden, die wohl in Grabbezirken angelegt waren⁴⁷. Feinchronologisch sind sie bislang nicht zu fassen.

Grigoropoulos zeigte anhand des Sammlungsmaterials, dass lokale westgriechische Keramik, Eastern Sigillata A sowie arrentinische Sigillata vertreten sind. In „Alt-Ithaka“ werden einige Lampen des 2. Jhs.n.Chr. erwähnt. Weitere Funde sind noch bis in das späte 4. Jh.n.Chr. zu datieren⁴⁸. Insgesamt bleibt es noch ungewiß, ob es zu einem Siedlungsabbruch nach der Nikopolis-Schlacht, wie in Leukas-Stadt, kam. Jedenfalls belegen die Funde und wohl auch die Gräber eine Siedlungsaktivität im späteren 1. und im 2. Jh.n.Chr., und eher spärliche Funde deuten auf eine Besiedlungskontinuität bis in die Spätantike hin⁴⁹.

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⁴⁶ Drei geläufige Grabtypen sind bekannt Steinkistengräber, Pithosbestattungen und aus Dachziegel errichtete Gräber: Dörpfeld 1927, 245 Abb. 21. 247-251. 255. Zu den Grabinventaren: Dörpfeld 1927, 323.

⁴⁷ T-III, 3-5; Dörpfeld 1927, Taf. 12; Vergleichbare zerstreute Ziegelgräber römischer Zeit wurden bei der Nord-Nekropole von Leukas bei Tsechlibou gefunden: Pliakou 2001, 152.

⁴⁸ Grigoropoulos 2011, 185. 186 Kat. 26-28; Archäologische Sammlung Athen, Inv. 26479. 26480.

⁴⁹ Dörpfeld 1927, 258. 259 Abb. 25a.

Katalog

Kat. 1 (Abb. 6): Konisches Tonrohr mit deutlichen Drehrillen auf Außen- und Innenseite (Inv. 28824), vollständig erhalten, an den Öffnungen leicht bestoßen, gesamte Oberfläche ist stark versintert und verwittert, auf dem Rohr die Aufschrift „LEUKAS, Nidri“. Maße: Dm. an der schmalen Öffnung: 7,0 cm, Dm. an der breiten Öffnung: 11,5 cm, L: 32,0 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: 7,5 YR 8/3; 7y5YR 8/4.

Kat. 2: Konisches Tonrohr mit deutlichen Drehrillen auf Außen- und Innenseite (Inv. Nr. 36659), fast vollständig erhalten, an der schmalen Öffnung gebrochen, gesamte Oberfläche ist stark versintert und verwittert, auf dem Rohr moderne Aufschrift „LEUKAS, Nidri“. Maße: Dm. an der schmalen Öffnung: 6,8 cm, Dm. an der breiten Öffnung: 11,4 cm, L: 31,9 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: 7,5 YR 8/3; 7y5YR 8/4.

Kat. 3 (Abb. 7): Tonröhre mit abgesetzter Muffe (Inv. 29625), vollständig erhalten, gesamte Oberfläche versintert, auf dem Rohr moderne Aufschrift „Leukas“. Maße: L: 27,0 cm, Dm. an der schmalen Öffnung: 9,0 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 10YR 8/6.

Kat. 4 (Abb. 10): Terrakottaantefix (Inv. Nr. 28825), erhalten ist der obere Bereich des Antefixes mit einer Palmette, nach unten hin unter dem ovalen Kern gebrochen, nach oben hin an den Palmettenblättern unregelmäßig gebrochen, Farbreste auf der Vorderseite erhalten, gesamte Oberfläche ist leicht verwittert, auf der erhaltenen Vorderseite eine offene leicht plastische Palmette aus einer Matrize, elf erhaltene rundbogige Blätter entspringen aus einem ovalen Kern, Mittelblatt ragt senkrecht auf, beigefarbiger Überzug auf der Palmette, zwischen den Blättern dunkler Überzug, die tongrundige Rückseite ist halbrund gearbeitet. Maße: H: 10,6 cm, B: 9,7 cm, L: 4,1 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 7,5YR 7/6, Überzug auf der Vorderseite: Munsell 10YR 7/6, Schlicker zwischen den Palmetten: Munsell 5YR 2,5/1.

Kat. 5 (Abb. 13): Kleine Lekythos mit profiliertem Fuß (Inv. Nr. 26448), von Fuß bis zum Bauch erhalten, nach oben hin unregelmäßig gebrochen, am Fuß eine kleine Abplatzung, am Fuß und am Bauch leicht bestoßen. Maße: Dm: 3,5 cm, H: 7,1 cm, 100% Boden erhalten. Farbbestimmung: Munsell 7,5YR 6/4 Glanzton: GLEY 2,5/N.

Kat. 6 (Abb. 13): Weibliche Terrakotte (Inv. Nr. 01571), fragmentiert, nach unten hin am Hals und nach oben hin am Polos gebrochen, mittig im Gesicht vertikal gebrochen, rechte Gesichtshälfte fehlt, gesamtes Stück fast bis zur Unkenntlichkeit abgerieben, starker Sinter auf der Oberfläche, Fragment eines Frauenkopfes, ovales Gesicht, hervortretendes Kinn, Ansätze eines „archaischen Lächelns“, Haar ragt auf die Schultern herunter, auf dem Kopf trägt sie einen Polos, Vorderseite aus Matrize, auf der Rückseite Druckspuren händischer Bearbeitung, tongrundig. Maße: H 4,7 cm, B: 2,5 cm, Dicke: 0,5-1,0 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 10YR 7/4.

Kat. 7 (Abb. 13): Wandfragment eines schwarzgefirnissten gerippten offenen Gefäßes (Inv. Nr. 26455), Maße: H 2,4 cm, B: 3,0 cm, Dicke: 0,5 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: 7,5YR 6/4 Glanzton: Munsell GLEY 3/N.

Kat. 8 (Abb. 13): Boden eines Skyphos (Inv. Nr. 26457), nach oben hin im unteren Bauchbereich ungleichmäßig gebrochen, ca. 35% des Fußes erhalten, innerer Gefäßgrund vollständig erhalten, auf Außen-, Innen- und Unterseite Reste des gleichmäßig aufgetragenen roten Überzuges; die gesamte Oberfläche ist leicht versintert. Maße: H: 3,0 cm, Dicke an Wandung: 0,4 cm, Dm: 7,0 cm, 35% des Fußes erhalten. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 5YR 7/6, Roter Überzug: Munsell 2,5YR 5/8.

Kat. 9 (Abb. 13): Fragment eines Terrakotta-Pinax (Inv. Nr. 26446), an allen Seiten gebrochen, Oberfläche leicht abgerieben und versintert, Teil der vertikalen Klinenrahmung samt gepolsterten Kissen, Schlangenkörper windet sich von unten hoch auf die Kline, Vorderseite aus Matrize geformt, Rückseite geglättet, keine Druckspuren auf der Rückseite. Maße: H: 8,1 cm, B: 6,0 cm, Dicke: 0,5-1,1 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 10YR 8/6.

Kat. 10 (Abb. 13): Frauenprotome (Inv. Nr. 26445), Frauenoberkörper mit obergegürtetem Chiton, Gewand rafft sich unter der Gürtung, Vorderseite aus Matrize, auf der Rückseite Druckspuren, tongrundig, erhalten ist der untere Abschluss der Terrakotte, über der linken Brust nach oben hin unregelmäßig gebrochen, nach links und rechts ebenfalls gebrochen, leichte Bestoßungen auf der Außenseite. Maße: H: 4,5 cm, B: 6,0 cm, Dicke: 0,8 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell 7,5YR 7/6.

Kat. 11 (Abb. 13): Miniaturschale (Inv. Nr. 27599), vollständig erhalten, weiße Sinterspuren auf dem Gefäß, scheibengedreht, jedoch verformt, an der tiefsten Stelle im Inneren des Gefäßes sich kreuzende rautenförmige Ritzungen, Fuß ist gleichmäßig abgedreht. Maße: Dm: ca. 7,6 cm; H: 2,4 cm. Farbbestimmung: Ton: Munsell: 7.5YR 6/6 mit goldenem Glimmer.

Kat. 12 (Abb. 13): Randfragment eines Mortariums (Inv. Nr. 26450), die gesamte Oberfläche ist stark abgerieben, am Rand drei ungleichmäßig große „Knubbel“, sehr grobkörnig gemagert mit kleinen Flussteinen (0,1 cm), Ton besitzt unterschiedliche Farbtöne durch den Brand. Maße: H: 4,4 cm, B: 5,5 cm, Dicke am Rand: 4,0 cm, Dm: 26,0 cm, 7% Rand erhalten.

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Abb. 1. Antike Fundplätze auf der Insel Leukas.



Abb. 2. Skizze Dörfelds von Stadt Leukas und Umgebung.



Abb. 3. Stadt Leukas mit Skizze des Straßen-netzes.

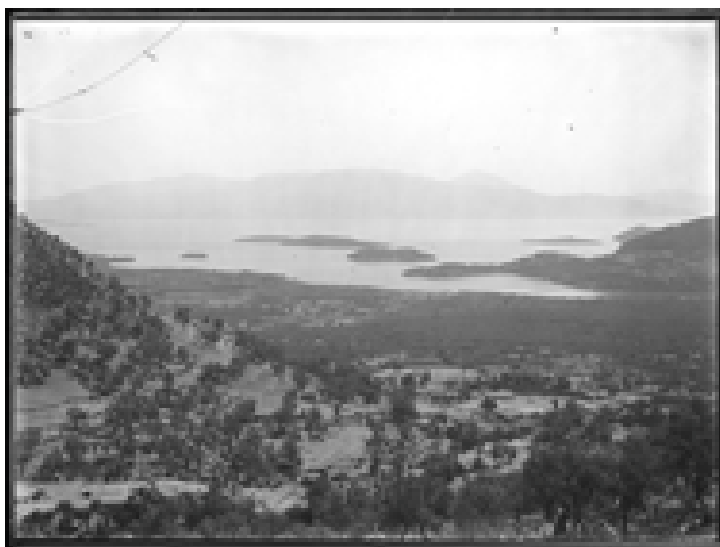


Abb. 4. Leukas. Blick auf die Nidri-Ebene um 1900.



Abb. 5. Leukas. Besiedlung an der Nidri-Ebene (Quadrat = Siedlungsstelle; Rechteck = Turm; Dreieck = Grab); Schraffur = Scherbenstreuung/Siedlungsplatz).

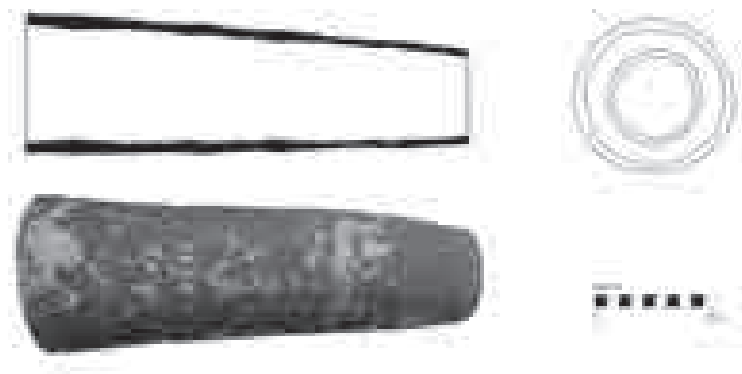


Abb. 6. Leukas. Konisches Segment der Wasserleitung bei Nidri.



Abb. 7. Leukas. Zylindrisches Segment der Wasserleitung bei Nidri.

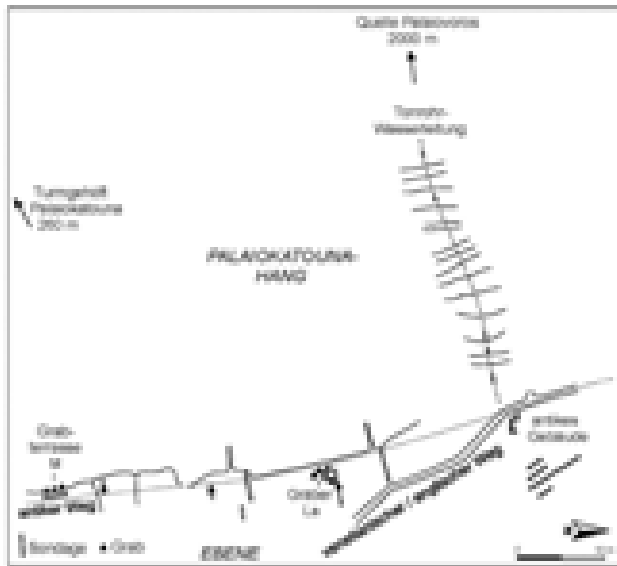


Abb. 8. Leukas. Gebäude, Gräber und Wasserleitung bei Palaiokatouna (Umzeichnung einer Skizze im Grabungstagebuch Dörfelds T IX, 22).

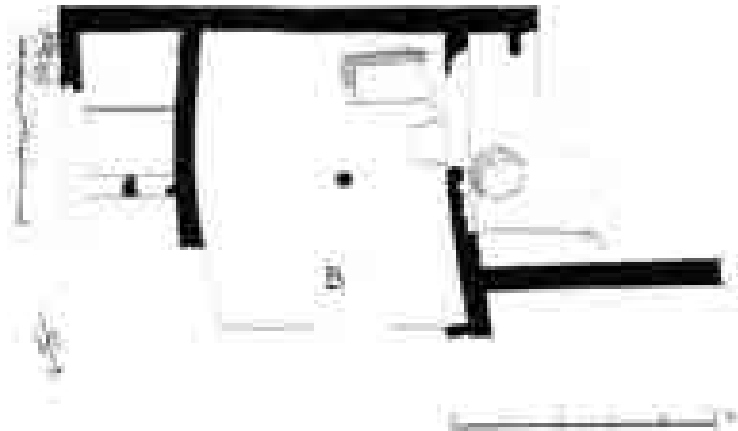


Abb. 9. Leukas. Antikes Gebäude unterhalb von Palaiokatouna.



Abb. 10. Leukas. Palmettenantefix in der Sammlung des DAI Athen.

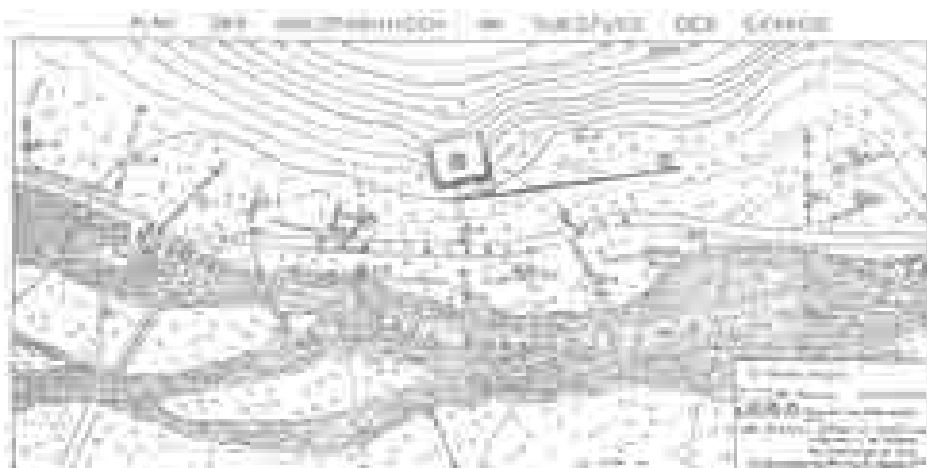


Abb. 11. Leukas. Siedlungsspuren am Skaros.



Abb. 12. Leukas. Das Turmgehöft bei Palaioikata.



Abb. 13. Keramik und Terrakotten aus den Gräbern bei Palaioikata, in der Archäologischen Sammlung des DAI Athen.

IL RUOLO COMMERCIALE DI LEUCADE E LA PRESENZA DI STRANIERI NELL'ISOLA¹

Λίγο κρασάκι έχω εδώ / απ'τη Λευκάδα / για πίοσιμο / γλυκό σα μέλι:
così Ateneo di Naucrati nei *Deipnosophisti* (I. 29, a) descrive il vino prodotto a Leucade, definendolo “dolce come il miele”. Ancor prima di Ateneo, Plinio il Vecchio nella *Naturalis Historia*² riporta che Apollodoro elogiava il vino dell'isola come uno dei migliori del suo tempo, raccomandandolo a Tolemeo. Famoso nell'antichità era inoltre l'olio aromatico ottenuto dalla frantumazione di un tipo di giglio noto come *Leucadia iris*³ rappresentato anche nella monetazione (Fig. 1).

Le parole di Ateneo e di Plinio il Vecchio sono un buon punto di partenza in un contributo inerente al ruolo commerciale di Leucade. Ma lo storico che decide di affrontare l'argomento in questione ha la fortuna di avere a disposizione molteplici fonti, che se fatte dialogare tra loro, permettono di ricostruire e fare luce su quest'isola dello Ionio⁴.

Concepito inizialmente come uno studio che ponesse il *focus* sulla documentazione epigrafica di Leucade attestante gli stranieri, la ricerca si è poi evoluta in un'analisi più ampia che facesse un quadro su tutta la documentazione che ci “parla” dell'isola come snodo commerciale tra Occidente e Oriente. Le iscrizioni sono sicuramente documenti privilegiati, ma spesso “il potenziale storico dei singoli documenti epigrafici emerge veramente solo se questo è visto in una prospettiva più ampia accostandolo con altre fonti”⁵. Partendo dunque dalla fondazione della città e dalla realizzazione del *διόρυκτος* da parte dei Corinzi, ci si soffermerà poi sulle

¹ Un sentito ringraziamento va alla Prof.ssa Claudia Antonetti per avermi dato la possibilità di partecipare a questo volume. Desidero ringraziare inoltre Olympia Vikatou e Vivian Staikou dell'Ephoríá Archaiotítou Etoloakarnanías & Lefkídas che molto gentilmente mi hanno fornito la bibliografia necessaria alla scrittura del contributo

² Plin. *HN* 14, 76. o.

³ Plin. *HN* 21, 42.

⁴ Per una panoramica sulla storia dell'isola *s.v.* Büchner 1925; Rondogiannis 1980; Strauch 1996, 308-316; Pliakou 2001; Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004; per una panoramica topografica e sulle indagini archeologiche: Fiedler 1996; Andreou 1998; ADelt 2001-2004, B5,171-172; Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 87-90. Per uno studio più generale sull'area dello Ionio si rimanda a Bearzot 2010 e Morgan 2010.

⁵ Panciera 2012, 71.

evidenze archeologiche relative al porto e agli edifici legati alle attività produttive dell'antica colonia corinzia, per arrivare infine alle iscrizioni che attestano la presenza di stranieri nell'isola.

1. La fondazione di Leucade e lo scavo del διόρυκτος

Αὕτη δ' ἦν τὸ παλαιὸν μὲν χερρόνησος τῆς Ἀκαρνάνων γῆς, καλεῖ δ' ὁ ποιητὴς αὐτὴν ἄκτῃν ἡπειροῖο, τὴν περαίαν τῆς Ἰθάκης καὶ τῆς Κεφαλληνίας ἡπειρον καλῶν· αὕτη δ' ἐστὶν ἡ Ἀκαρνανία: ὥστε, ὅταν φῇ ἄκτῃν ἡπειροῖο, τῆς Ἀκαρνανίας ἄκτῃν δέχεσθαι δεῖ. [...] Κορίνθιοι δὲ πεμφθέντες ὑπὸ Κυφέλου καὶ Γόργου ταύτην τε κατέσχον τὴν ἄκτῃν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ Ἀμβρακικοῦ κόλπου προῆλθον, καὶ ἦ τε Ἀμβρακία συνωκίσθη καὶ Ἀνακτόριον, καὶ τῆς χερρόνησου διορύξαντες τὸν ἰσθμὸν ἐποίησαν νῆσον τὴν Λευκάδα, καὶ μετενέγκαντες τὴν Νήριτον ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον, ὃς ἦν ποτὲ μὲν ἰσθμὸς νῦν δὲ πορθμὸς γεφύρα ζευκτός, μετωνόμασαν Λευκάδα, ἐπώνυμον δοκῶ μοι τοῦ Λευκάτα.

“Anticamente, Leucade era una penisola dell'Acarnania, ma il poeta la chiamava riva della terraferma, utilizzando il termine terraferma per quel territorio collocato tra Itaca e Cefalonia, e quel territorio è l'Acarnania. [...] Ma i Corinzi inviati da Cipselo e Gorgo presero possesso di questa riva e avanzarono fino al Golfo di Ambracia; e sia Ambracia che Anaktorio furono colonizzate in questo periodo; e i Corinzi scavarono un canale attraverso l'istmo della penisola e fecero di Leucade un'isola; e trasferirono Nerikos nel luogo che, sebbene una volta fosse un istmo, ora è uno stretto attraversato da un ponte e cambiarono il suo nome in *Leucas*”.

Il passo di Strabone appena citato⁶, ci fornisce elementi utili al nostro contributo. Il primo, indubbiamente, è quello relativo alla fondazione di Leucade. Il Geografo ci informa che i Corinzi inviati da Cipselo (657-625 a.C.) fondarono la colonia dove era collocata la Nerico citata da Omero nell'*Odissea*⁷, situata sulle pendici della collina di Koulmos. Celebre è il coperchio di uno specchio in bronzo datato alla metà del IV sec. a.C. e rinvenuto in un corredo funerario di Corinto, dove vi è la rappresentazione incisa di Corinto, eroe e mitico fondatore della città, che viene incoronato da Leucade, rappresentata come una giovane⁸ (Fig. 2).

Strettamente collegata alla fondazione è la realizzazione, nello stretto lungo appena 6 km che collegava l'estremità settentrionale di Leucade con la penisola di Plagia, nella costa occidentale dell'Acarnania, di un canale

⁶ Strab. 10, 2, 8.

⁷ Hom, *Od.* 24, 3779.

⁸ IG IX 1² 4 1477. Una riflessione sull'oggetto in questione, soprattutto in riferimento al legame tra la madrepatria Corinto e le sue colonie è fornita da Antonetti 2011, 58-61.

navigabile, il διόρυκτος⁹. Secondo W. Murray¹⁰, sebbene Strabone non faccia esplicito riferimento alla costruzione di un porto, esso venne realizzato contestualmente alla fondazione di Leucade e all'apertura del διόρυκτος: sarebbe difficile spiegare il lavoro per la costruzione di un canale navigabile se non fosse previsto anche un porto per la neonata fondazione.

La sua realizzazione, d'altra parte, ridusse al minimo la durata e i pericoli legati alla circumnavigazione dell'isola; esso contribuì a rendere l'isola, sulla rotta costiera tra il golfo di Corinto e di Ambracia, un importante snodo nelle comunicazioni marittime.

Dal momento che il passaggio delle navi attraverso il suo porto era obbligatorio, in età classica Leucade divenne una delle stazioni per il commercio di olio e vino: essi erano i prodotti maggiormente sportati dall'isola, come evidenziato dalla monetazione¹¹ (Fig. 3 e 4).

Per quel che concerne la navigabilità del canale, impossibile sapere quando divenne impraticabile a causa dei forti venti che periodicamente lo insabbiavano¹², ripristinando il collegamento con la terraferma su una distanza di 3 stadi¹³. Con molta probabilità questo era già avvenuto nel corso della Guerra del Peloponneso: dalle parole di Tucidide¹⁴ apprendiamo che le flotte da guerra venivano trasportate attraverso l'istmo mediante l'impiego di rulli e argani, in modo tale da poter sfuggire al nemico. Polibio¹⁵, inoltre, riporta che durante la spedizione contro gli Etoli del 218 a.C., Filippo dovette ripristinare il canale affinché le sue navi potessero passare.

Arriano fa menzione del canale nella sua opera dedicata all'India: lo storico paragona la navigabilità dell'area nei pressi dell'isola di Margastana, anch'essa poco profonda e sabbiosa, con lo stretto tra l'isola di Leucade e l'Acarnania, è possibile, dunque, che l'area fosse nuovamente percorribile nel II sec. d.C.¹⁶.

⁹ Thuc. 3 94,2; Polyb. 5, 5, 12; Plin. *NH* 1, 50; 4 1,5; Scyl. 34.

¹⁰ Murray 1988, 102-103.

¹¹ Per la rappresentazione del grappolo d'uva: Barclay Head 1963, 129, n. 47, pl. XXXV.15 (400-330 a.C.); per il ramo di ulivo: Barclay Head 1963, 126, n. 21, pl. XXXIV.12 (400-330 a.C.).

¹² Sulla navigabilità del canale: Oberhummer 1887, 7-14; Dörpfeld 1927, 68-75.

¹³ Così riporta Plinio: Plin. *NH* 4, 1, 5.

¹⁴ Thuc. 3, 81, 1.

¹⁵ Polyb. 5, 5, 12.

¹⁶ Nello specifico Arriano fa riferimento alla presenza di pali che segnalavano i punti più ostici del percorso; è possibile che la descrizione derivi da un'autopsia diretta da parte dello storico romano. Arr. *Ind.* 41 2-3: 'Ενθένδε δὲ ὑπὸ τὴν ἔω ἐκπλώσαντες κατὰ βραχέα ἐκομίζοντο ἐπὶ μιῆς νεός: πασσάλοισι δὲ ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν πεπηγρόσιν ἀπεδηλοῦτο τὰ βραχέα, κατὰπερ ἐν τῷ μεσσηγῶς Λευκάδος τε νήσου ἰσθμῷ καὶ Ἀκαρνανίης ἀποδέδεικται σημήνια τοῖσι ναυτιλλομένοισι τοῦ μὴ ἐποκέλλειν ἐν τοῖσι βραχέσι τὰς νέας. Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Λευκάδα ψαμμώδεα ἔοντα τοῖσιν ἐποκέλασι ταχέαν τὴν ὑπονόστησιν ἐνδιδοῖ κείθι δὲ πηλὸς ἔστιν ἐπ' ἑκάτερα τοῦ πλεομένου βαθὺς καὶ ἰλυώδης, ὥστε οὐδεμιᾷ μηχανῇ ἐποκέλασιν ἦν ἀποσωθῆναι ("Salpati di lì sul fare del giorno, oltrepassarono i bassifondi facendo procedere una nave dietro l'altra; i bassifondi erano segnalati da alcuni pali piantati al suolo da una

La seconda considerazione desumibile dal passo di Strabone è quella relativa al legame tra la nuova fondazione e l'ἄκτὴν ἡπίεροις ο χερρόνησος, ovvero l'Acarnania. In merito alla strettissima vicinanza tra il continente e Leucade, eloquente è un passo di Livio, il quale definisce lo stretto che le divideva *stagno similiora quam mari*¹⁷. Strabone fa riferimento a un ponte di pietra che doveva collegare Leucade con la sua περαία, sulla costa dell'Acarnania. Il ponte fu identificato per la prima volta da Leake, che vide grandi pietre squadrate nell'acqua bassa su entrambi i lati del canale, in particolare verso la cosa dell'Acarnania¹⁸.

Il ponte assicurava un legame tra le colonie di Corinto (Leucade-Anaktorio-Ambracia) creando uno stretto legame con la “terraferma”, l'Acarnania appunto. A tal proposito, lo scavo del διόρυκτος non è l'unica opera di intervento dei Corinzi nell'area: realizzarono opere di drenaggio e di miglioramento del territorio attraverso una rete di canali ad ovest di Ambracia al fine di rendere un'area prima paludosa, produttiva e fertile. Ai Corinzi si attribuisce anche l'apertura di due canali che collegavano l'attuale lago Voulkaria con il Mar Ionio a nord e con il golfo tra l'Acarnania e Leucade a sud. L'opera facilitò i collegamenti con la vicina Anaktorio e offrì a Palairos, anch'essa colonia corinzia, un collegamento diretto con Leucade e il suo porto¹⁹.

Una connessione geografica che fu anche storica, come testimoniano le vicende che resero Leucade e l'Acarnania prima antagoniste poi alleate dal III sec. a.C.²⁰.

Il legame tra l'isola e la sua “terraferma” è confermato anche dalla cultura materiale²¹ e in parte dalla documentazione epigrafica, come si vedrà in seguito.

2. Le evidenze archeologiche (Fig. 5)

Il porto meridionale e principale²² era collocato nella zona di mare tra l'isola e la costa opposta dell'Acarnania, nell'area tra l'odierna spiaggia di

parte e dall'altra, come nello stretto tra l'isola di Leucade e l'Acarnania sono stati posti dei segnali ben visibili per i navigatori, in modo che le navi non si incagolino nei bassifondi.”).

¹⁷ Liv. 33, 17, 6.

¹⁸ Leake 1835, 16.

¹⁹ Andreou 1998, 148-149.

²⁰ Sull'argomento e sulle ipotesi relative all'entrata di Leucade nella Lega Acarnanica: Dany 1999, 65-68.

²¹ Morgan 2010, 37; Faklari 2017, 215.

²² Andreou 1998, 177-178.

Ligia e l'isolotto di Volios; le sue dimensioni lo inseriscono tra i più grandi del mondo antico²³. L'ingresso era delimitato da un molo²⁴ costituito da grossi blocchi di pietra, ora non visibile a causa dell'innalzamento del livello del mare. I resti della struttura sono stati rinvenuti tra il 1980 e il 1983 a seguito di indagini subacquee, le quali, unitamente ad alcuni blocchi in situ, hanno permesso di ricostruire il suo percorso: lungo circa 600 m e largo 35 m, esso aveva il fine di far passare le navi, proteggere il porto stesso dai venti meridionali e di garantire il controllo dello stretto. A nord del molo, un ponte di pietra (lo stesso citato da Strabone), lungo circa 750 m, con aperture finalizzati al passaggio delle navi, collegava Leucade con la costa opposta.

Il molo sud di Leucade costituisce uno dei primi e grandi esempi di ingegneria portuale greca. Resistette per secoli al mare prima che il suo innalzamento lo mettesse fuori uso. Secondo le indagini, la fortezza di Agios Geórgios sulla costa acarnana avrebbe permesso una protezione diretta all'ingresso del porto. Pertanto, è abbastanza probabile che vi fosse una corrispondente fortezza sulla costa di Leucade, sebbene non sia ancora stata rinvenuta.

Per quel che riguarda la datazione della costruzione del porto principale, è probabile che vada collocata contestualmente al periodo della colonizzazione corinzia del VII sec. a.C.

Si ipotizza inoltre che dovesse esserci un secondo porto a nord-est della città antica, seppur di piccole dimensioni, ma necessario per regolamentare il movimento delle navi da e per l'estremità settentrionale del canale.

Indagini archeologiche in prossimità del porto antico hanno inoltre individuato strutture legate all'attività commerciale della città²⁵. Nel corso degli scavi avvenuti tra il 1992 e il 1993 nella zona costiera di Ligia presso Koinótitas Karyotón, collocata a circa 1 km più a sud rispetto alle mura della città antica, è venuto alla luce un complesso costituito di due edifici (κτίριο A e κτίριο B; Fig. 6), destinato allo stoccaggio e al commercio del vino. Il materiale rinvenuto al suo interno permette di circoscrivere la sua costruzione tra il IV e il III sec. a.C.: il ritrovamento di frammenti di anfore di tipo B di Corinto²⁶ con anse bollate (Fig. 7), frammenti di laterizi con il monogramma ΔΑ (δαμόσιος) (Fig. 8), una bilancia di piombo del peso di 375,9 gr con l'iscrizione ΔΕΥΚΑΔ attestano il carattere pubblico del

²³ Andreou 1998, 177 n.100.

²⁴ Murray 1988.

²⁵ Douzougli 1993, 290-293.

²⁶ Whitbread 1995, 258-261.

complesso e che il commercio fosse sotto l'autorità statale. Tra l'edificio A e B è stato individuato un ampio spazio esterno destinato allo stoccaggio delle anfore.

È stato ipotizzato che il complesso di Koinótitas Karyotón sia stato distrutto durante l'assedio dell'isola nel 197 a.C. operato da Tito Quinto Flaminio. Congettura rafforzata anche dal ritrovamento, in uno strato di distruzione dell'edificio A, di un proiettile di pietra pertinente, forse, ad una catapulte. Nei pressi della zona del porto e dell'antico molo dove attraccavano le navi mercantili sono state inoltre rinvenute ulteriori anfore, molte delle quali presentano il bollo con Λ o LEYKA²⁷. I bolli in questione testimoniano la fabbricazione locale di anfore destinate al commercio dei prodotti di Leucade.

Alle evidenze appena illustrate si aggiunge il rinvenimento di strutture²⁸ (probabilmente case con annessi laboratori di produzione) che forniscono ulteriori informazioni sull'economia di Leucade e sull'occupazione degli abitanti dell'isola: lo scavo ha restituito strumenti legati alle attività di lavorazione dell'olio, come macine e un frantoio²⁹ (Fig. 9). Tra i materiali rinvenuti si segnalano anche oggetti in pietra³⁰ e in piombo per le operazioni di pesatura: uno di questi pesi presenta forma rettangolare con il monogramma di Leucade³¹, mentre un altro riporta un'iscrizione graffita che è stata interpretata come δαμ(όσιος)³².

A queste evidenze si aggiungono quelle relative agli scavi più recenti, avvenuti negli anni Duemila, all'esterno delle mura antiche presso odos Filosófon³³. Nello specifico sono stati messi in luce due complessi edilizi destinati alla produzione del vino e dell'olio. Le strutture erano in uso nel IV e nel III sec. a.C., e vennero poi sostituite, nel corso dell'età romana, da complessi ancor più estesi. Il dato va a confermare l'informazione circa l'installazione di latifondisti/mercanti romani sul territorio, come si evidenzierà più avanti.

Queste strutture si trovavano lungo le strade principali che portavano alla città, nei pressi delle quali sono state individuate nuovamente attrezzature per l'estrazione e la produzione dell'olio³⁴: bacini di frantumazione e torchi.

²⁷ Douzougli 1993, 293.

²⁸ Douzougli 1993, 293-296.

²⁹ Un *mortarium* è esposto al museo di Leucade: nr. inv. 2169.

³⁰ Douzougli 1993, πιν. 95δ.

³¹ Douzougli 1993, πιν. 95ε.

³² IG IX 1² 4, 1468.

³³ Pliakou 2004.

³⁴ Si segnalano anche noccioli di olivo frantumati.

Le indagini archeologiche hanno restituito evidenze relative a un'altra attività praticata nell'isola: la lavorazione della porpora³⁵. In uno degli spazi ausiliari del complesso edilizio presso odos Filósofon è stato rinvenuto uno spesso strato di conchiglie frantumate della specie nota come *murex* la cui lavorazione conferisce il pregiato pigmento rosso. Tale lavorazione è testimoniata a Leucade anche da uno statere d'argento del IV sec. a.C.³⁶ (Fig. 10).

3. La documentazione epigrafica

La presenza di stranieri a Leucade è già stata messa, seppur sinteticamente, in evidenza³⁷.

Il *corpus* epigrafico della città antica è costituito principalmente da iscrizioni ascrivibili alla categoria dei *tituli sepulcrales*. La natura del materiale documentale costituisce una difficoltà sia per quel che concerne l'inquadramento cronologico, sia per risalire alle attività svolte o alle magistrature rivestite dagli abitanti. Difatti la quasi totale assenza di iscrizioni di carattere ufficiale (fatta eccezione per un decreto di fondazione³⁸) non ci permette di conoscere l'organizzazione sociale di Leucade³⁹.

Eccetto le iscrizioni in cui non viene fatto esplicito riferimento al contesto di rinvenimento, tutta la documentazione presa in esame è pertinente alle necropoli meridionale e settentrionale di Leucade⁴⁰; due iscrizioni provengono dall'area dello stretto. Per quel che riguarda le caratteristiche delle iscrizioni analizzate, esse sono tutte in lingua greca, salvo la bilingue

³⁵ Il *katagogion* di Cassope ha restituito una piccola cisterna per la lavorazione del pigmento: Dakaris 1971, 17. Si ricorda inoltre un'iscrizione di III sec. d.C. che menziona un *procurator rationis purpurarum* per le province di Achaia, Epiro e Tessaglia (CIL III 536).

³⁶ Head 1963, 128, n. 32, pl. XXXIV 20 (400-330 a.C.).

³⁷ Strauch 1996, 309-310.

³⁸ IG IX 1² 4, 1231 (II sec. a.C.).

³⁹ Una stratificazione sociale potrebbe essere testimoniata dal ritrovamento, nel corso delle indagini avvenute nel 2007 presso la necropoli meridionale, di un monumento sepolcrale con dimensioni 3 x 2,40 m e un'altezza superstite di 0,80 m. Si è ipotizzato che possa essere appartenuto a una famiglia di Leucade che prosperò durante la tarda età classica: Staikou 2016, 175.

⁴⁰ Sulle necropoli di Leucade: Andreou 1998, 181-185; Douzougli 2001. La necropoli meridionale si colloca entro i confini di Kariótes e si estende per 500 m. La maggior parte delle iscrizioni sono state rinvenute tra le mura e la fonte *Spasméni Brúsi*: Kostoglou 1970; Agalopolou 1972; Douzougli 1992a; Douzougli 1992c. La necropoli settentrionale si colloca nei pressi di *Kalligóni e Zechlímpá*: Kalligas 1968, 321-322; Douzougli 1989, 266; Douzougli 1992b; Douzougli 1994, 388-390.

del *Puteolanus A. Cossinius Philocratis*. Le lapidi, scolpite in calcare bianco locale, sono prive di decorazione e originariamente erano poste sopra la tomba o direttamente nel terreno. L'iscrizione si sviluppa sempre in campo epigrafico aperto; i nomi dei defunti si presentano in caso nominativo, secondo l'uso regionale.

Partendo da questa premessa, il proposito è quello di riprendere quanto già precedentemente evidenziato alla luce delle più recenti indagini nelle necropoli di Leucade, le quali hanno contribuito ad accrescere il materiale antroponimico dell'antica città e ad arricchire le nostre conoscenze circa le sue usanze funerarie. Difatti, tra il 2004 e il 2010 più di cento pietre tombali sono venute alla luce durante scavi di emergenza condotti dall'Ephoría Archaiotíton Etoloakarnanías & Lefkádas sotto la direzione di M. Stavropoulou-Gatsi⁴¹. Il materiale va ad aggiungersi a quello già pubblicato dagli scavi degli anni precedenti dall'Ephoría Proistorikón & Klassikón Archaiotíton sotto la direzione di A. Douzougli⁴² e I. Faklari⁴³, nonché al quarto fascicolo del volume nono delle *Inscriptiones Graecae*, edito da Klaus Hallof.

Vengono qui analizzate tutte le iscrizioni di natura funeraria in cui l'etnico che accompagna il defunto permette di definirne con certezza la provenienza.

Per ogni iscrizione viene fornita una scheda riassuntiva con informazioni circa il luogo di rinvenimento, il supporto, un commento onomastico, la datazione. In merito alla bibliografia di riferimento di ogni epigrafe, escludendo quelle rinvenute durante gli scavi degli anni 2004-2010, vengono citate le *Inscriptiones Graecae* che costituiscono l'ultima edizione (2001). Ad esse si rimanda per la precedente bibliografia. Tutti gli individui attestati sono catalogati in base alla provenienza.

3.1. Ambracia

Dallo scavo del 2010 nel lotto Mikroni-Logotheti, collocato all'interno dei confini della necropoli settentrionale, provengono quattro iscrizioni menzionanti defunti originari di Ambracia⁴⁴. Sulla base dell'apografo di due di esse, si tratta di stele prive di decorazione; tutte le iscrizioni si

⁴¹ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2018.

⁴² Douzougli 2001.

⁴³ Faklari 2015.

⁴⁴ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2018, 301-302.

sviluppano su due linee in campo epigrafico aperto, in nessun caso si fa menzione del patronimico.

Le iscrizioni vengono datate al III sec. a. C.

1. (Fig. 11) Ἀνβρακιώτας
Ἀντιγένης

L'etnico precede il nome. Il nome maschile Ἀντιγένης nella Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato solo in Etolia (LGNP III.A 44).

2. (Fig. 12) Κλείδαμος
Ἀνβρακιώτας

Il nome maschile Κλείδαμος conosce solo un'attestazione nella Grecia nord-occidentale, nello specifico in Epiro, proprio ad Ambracia (LGNP III.A 244).

3. Λέων
Ἀμβρακιώτας

Il nome Λέων è molto diffuso nel mondo greco (LGNP I-V. A).

4. Φρόνων
Ἀμβρακιώτας

Il nome maschile Φρόνων è attestato in Acarnania, a Stratos, in Epiro, ad Ambracia e a Cassope, nello Ionio a Itaca (LGNP III.A 469).

5. Dallo scavo dello stesso lotto è stata rinvenuta anche una stele che menziona una defunta, probabilmente originaria di Ambracia. Sebbene la donna non porti l'etnico Ἀμβρακιώτας, è possibile che il nome Ἀμβρακίς rimandi alla sua origine.

Πειθίς
Ἀμβρακίς.

Unica attestazione del nome femminile Πειθίς.

3.2. Cartagine

IG IX 1² 4, 1439

Incerto il luogo di rinvenimento. III sec. a.C.

[Ὀν]ασίμα.
[Β]λάννων
[Καρ]χηδόνης

Unica attestazione nella Grecia nord-occidentale e nello Ionio del nome femminile Ὀνασίμα. Occorrenze del nome si trovano invece a Creta e a Rodi (LGPN I 350). In tutto il mondo greco il nome Βλάννων è attestato unicamente da questa iscrizione, ma Β'ΛΗΝ' ricorre spesso nelle iscrizioni puniche e fenicie⁴⁵. Un Βλάννων, secondo la testimonianza di Diodoro⁴⁶, fu un legato cartaginese ("un certo Blanno disse parole adatte all'occasione e parlando con disperato coraggio ma con tutta franchezza suscitò sentimenti di pietà in tutti coloro che lo ascoltavano"). Il suo discorso è riportato da Appiano⁴⁷, anche se lo storico registra il nome Βάννων, soprannominato Tigillas.

3.3. Corcira

1. IG IX 1² 4, 1254.

Rinvenuta in contesto di reimpiego presso la porta della Chiesa degli Arcangeli presso Paleí Kariótes, ora al museo di Leucade (inv. n. 593). Dalla necropoli meridionale. Stele in calcare bianco mancante a destra; cimasa superiore. Seconda metà del III sec. a.C.

Φιλιστὶς Ἀρισ-
τομέδοντος,
Ἡράκλεια Ἀρισ-
τομέδοντος,
5 Κορκυραῖαι.

L'epitaffio ricorda due sorelle, figlie di un Aristomedonte, entrambe originarie di Corcira.

Nella Grecia nord-occidentale il nome femminile Φιλιστίς è attestato solo in Acarnania, nello specifico a Palairos (LGPN III.A 453); il nome femminile Ἡράκλεια è attestato in Acarnania, ad Anaktorio e a Thyrraeion (LGPN III.A 193), nello Ionio a Corcira⁴⁸; il nome Ἀριστομέδων non conosce attestazioni in Grecia nord-occidentale⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Benz 1972, 90-93; 288-290.

⁴⁶ Diod. Sic. 32, 6, 3.

⁴⁷ App. Pun. 82: καὶ Βάννων, ᾧ Τιγίλλας ἐπώνυμον ἦν.

⁴⁸ IG IX 1² 2, 1006 (prima età imperiale).

⁴⁹ Un'attestazione dall'Illiria meridionale, *Dyrrachium* (LGPN III.A 64).

2. IG IX 1² 4, 1289 (Fig. 13)

Rinvenuta durante gli scavi condotti vicino la fonte Spasméni Brísi, vicino al villaggio Paleí Kariótes. Dalla necropoli meridionale, sepolcro XVII; ora al museo di Leucade (inv. n. 576). Stele in calcare, ornata da una cornice modanata; iscrizione su due linee in campo epigrafico aperto. Hallof data l'iscrizione al II sec. a.C., Fraser e Matthews propendono per il III-II sec. a.C.

Φιλικά
Κορυραί[α].

Il nome femminile Φιλικά è attestato solo nello Ionio: un'altra attestazione da Leucade (LGPN III.A 450) e una da Itaca⁵⁰.

3. IG IX 1² 4, 1398 (Fig. 14)

L'iscrizione si colloca nel gruppo dei *tituli e freto Leucadio servati*; attualmente al Museo di Leucade (inv. nr. 10). Si tratta di una stele in calcare bianco mutila della parte finale e coronata da una cornice modanata. Iscrizione su due linee in campo epigrafico aperto. II-I sec. a.C.

Ἀλεξά
Κορυραία

Unica attestazione del nome nello Ionio e nella Grecia nord-occidentale (LGPN III.A 23).

4. IG IX 1² 4, 1406 (Fig. 15)

L'iscrizione si colloca nel gruppo dei *tituli e freto Leucadio ervati*. Attualmente al museo di Leucade (inv. n. 7). Stele in calcare mutila nella parte sinistra, lavorata a gradina. Iscrizione su due linee in campo epigrafico aperto. III sec. a.C.

[K]λεινόμαχος
Κορυραῖος

Unica attestazione del nome nello Ionio e nella Grecia nord-occidentale (LGPN III.A 245).

⁵⁰ IG IX 1² 4, 1599 (età ellenistica).

3.4. Cidonia/Crotone?

IG IX 1² 4, 1386

L'iscrizione, una stele in calcare mutila, si colloca nel gruppo dei *tituli e freto Leucadio servati*, attualmente perduta. III sec. a.C.

[A]ρχῆς
[Δ]εξιλάου
[- -]ωνιάτης.

Ἀρχῆς è la forma contratta del nome Ἀρχέας; in Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato solo da questa iscrizione. Il nome Δεξιλάος in Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato in Epiro e a Itaca (LGPN III.A 120). In merito all'integrazione dell'etnico, potrebbe essere sia [Κροτ]ωνιάτης sia [Κυδ]ωνιάτης.

3.5. Epiro

Gli scavi di recupero avvenuti nel 2003 ai piedi della collina di Koulmos⁵¹ hanno restituito una stele in calcare bianco che menziona un Epirota. L'iscrizione, datata su base paleografica al III sec. a.C., si sviluppa su due linee:

Στρόβιος
Ἀπειρώτας.

Il nome maschile Στρόβιος è attualmente un *unicum* nel panorama onomastico.

3.6. Macedonia

IG IX 1² 4, 1271

Dalla necropoli meridionale, entro i confini di *Kariótes*, attualmente perduta. I sec. a.C. – I sec. d.C.?

Μνησίκλεια
Πελλαία χαῖρε
χρηστὴ γυνή
ὦ παριόντες.

Il nome femminile Μνησίκλεια, definita χρηστὴ γυνή dai parenti, che

⁵¹ Faklari 2015, n. 12, 225-226.

posero la pietra, non ha ulteriori attestazioni nella Grecia nord-occidentale.

3.7. Massalia

IG IX 1² 4, 1284

Rinvenuta vicino la fonte Spasméni Brísi, reimpiegata nella parete di un edificio “in rovina”, entro i confini della necropoli meridionale. Stele in calcare bianco, attualmente perduta. Età ellenistica.

Δημήτριος
Μασσαλιώτης.

Il nome Δημήτριος è ampiamente attestato in tutto il mondo greco (LGPN I-V. A).

3.8. Mileto

IG IX 1² 4, 1298 (Fig. 16)

Rinvenuta sulla via che dalla fonte Spasméni Brísi conduce a Palei Kariótes; dalla necropoli meridionale, sepolcro V; ora al museo di Leucade (inv. n. 437). Stele in calcare bianco, sormontata da una cornice modanata; iscrizione su tre linee. Prima metà del III sec. a.C.

I Διονύσιος
Μιλήσιος.
II Ἰάς.

Il nome maschile Διονύσιος è attestato ampiamente in tutto il mondo greco (LGPN I-V. A). Il nome femminile Ἰάς non conosce ulteriori attestazioni nella Grecia nord-occidentale.

3.9. Mitilene

IG IX 1² 4, 1280

Rinvenuta vicino la fonte Spasméni Brísi, reimpiegata nella parete di un edificio “in rovina”, entro i confini della necropoli meridionale. Stele in calcare bianco mutila inferiormente e nella parte destra, ornata con una cimasa. II sec. a.C.

Δίων
Μιτυληναῖο[ς]

Il nome maschile Δίων è ampiamente attestato in tutto il mondo greco (LGPN I-V. A).

3.10. *Puteoli*

CIL III 574; IG IX 1² 4, 1451 (Fig. 17).

Incerto il luogo di rinvenimento. Ora a Piazzola sul Brenta, Lapidario della Villa Contarini-Simes (inv. n. 13). Stele pseudocuspidata, al centro del timpano, delimitato da una cornice a solco semplice analoga a quella dello specchio, vi è una *patera*. I sec. a.C.

A(ulus) Cossinius Philocratis Puteolanus
ᾠλος Κοσσίνιος Φιλοκράτης Ποτιολανός χαῖρε.

I *Cossini* nel I sec. a.C. erano un'importante famiglia di *Tibur*. Il primo membro della famiglia è considerato *L(ucius) Cossinius*⁵², *equus Romanus* che ottenne la cittadinanza sotto Silla dopo aver vinto un caso contro *T(itus) Caelius*. Si ipotizza che l'*equus* faccia parte della "prima generazione" dei *Cossinii* "storici".

Vi è poi il più ben noto *L(ucius) Cossinius*⁵³ menzionato da Varrone, proprietario terriero che si occupava dell'allevamento di bestiame in Epiro: amico di Cicerone, viene citato dall'oratore in una delle sue lettere ad Attico nel 60 a.C.⁵⁴. A tal proposito, di notevole importanza è il rinvenimento, durante le recenti indagini presso la villa romana di Agios Donatos in Tesprozia⁵⁵ di 17 laterizi con il bollo COS⁵⁶: essi confermerebbero la notizia in merito ai possedimenti di *L(ucius) Cossinius* (o dei suoi discendenti) in Epiro.

Per quel che concerne la documentazione epigrafica, i *Cossinii* sono noti in Campania quasi esclusivamente a *Puteoli*, dove sono attestati a partire dalla prima età augustea. Essi facevano parte delle *gentes* più note dell'oligarchia puteolana, dedite principalmente ai traffici su larga scala; i *Cossinii* puteolani si distinguevano quasi esclusivamente per il *praenomen Aulus*. Camodeca ha ipotizzato che un legame fra il ramo tiburtino e quello puteolano della *gens* potrebbe essere costituito dal *Cossinius* menzionato proprio in

⁵² Münzer 1901 a.

⁵³ Münzer 1901b.

⁵⁴ Cic. *Att.* 1 19; 1 20; 2 1.

⁵⁵ La villa romana, datata al II sec. a.C. e costruita su una precedente fortezza di età ellenistica, si localizza sul lato occidentale della catena montuosa di Paramythia. Forsén, Reynolds 2011.

⁵⁶ Forsén 2011, 18; Forsén 2019, 19-20.

questa iscrizione. Già Hatzfeld⁵⁷ aveva espresso la teoria secondo la quale il *Philocratis* di Leucade potesse essere un liberto legato alla clientela di uno dei *Aulii Cossinii* di Pozzuoli e che si fosse recato nell'isola rappresentando il suo padrone. Il fatto che l'epitaffio di *Philocratis* sia bilingue confermerebbe una precisa volontà di rimarcare la sua origine italica.

3.11. Siracusa

1. IG IX 1² 4, 1277.

Rinvenuta vicino la fonte Spasméni Brísi, reimpiegata nella parete di un edificio "in rovina", entro i confini della necropoli meridionale. Stele in calcare bianco. Ancora *in situ*?

Seconda metà del III sec. a.C.

Συρακόσιος.
Βουβαλῖς
Ἐπιγένεος.

Non si conserva il nome del primo defunto. Il nome femminile Βουβαλῖς⁵⁸ nella Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato in Acarnania, ad Anaktorio, in Epiro, a Butrinto (LGPN III.A 93), il nome del padre, Ἐπιγένης, nello Ionio, nello specifico a Corcira⁵⁹.

2. IG IX 1² 4, 1308 (Fig. 18)

L'iscrizione proviene dagli scavi realizzati presso il fondo Vláchos⁶⁰, lungo la strada rurale per Kariótes. Dalla necropoli meridionale, περίβολος B. IV sec. a.C.?

Παρμονίσκ[ος]
Ἀριστοφῶν[ος]
Συρακόσιος.

Il nome maschile Παρμονίσκος nella Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato solo da questa iscrizione⁶¹.

Alla seconda linea, o per ω. Il nome Ἀριστοφῶν in Grecia nord-occidentale è attestato solo in Acarnania, a Thyrræion (LGPN III. A 67).

⁵⁷ Hatzfeld 1975, 38-39.

⁵⁸ Fraser 1957, 166; Robert 1963, 22.

⁵⁹ IG IX 1² 2, 209, 20 (II sec. a. C.).

⁶⁰ Douzougli 1992 a, 287.

⁶¹ È altrimenti noto da un'iscrizione dalla Dalmatia, Issa, e dall'Illiria meridionale, Apollonia (LGPN III. A 353).

3. Dagli scavi del 2004⁶² per la realizzazione di una piscina su un lotto privato in località Spasméni Brísi, si dà notizia di una lapide con un defunto originario di Siracusa. Purtroppo, non vengono date ulteriori informazioni circa il supporto. Dell'iscrizione, datata all'età ellenistica, viene riportata la trascrizione in maiuscolo:

ΣΩΝΙ[- - -]
ΜΕΛΗ[- - -]
ΣΥΡΑΚ[- - -]

Non conoscendo le dimensioni del supporto conservato, ogni integrazione è puramente ipotetica. Tuttavia, per il primo nome si potrebbe pensare solamente al femminile Σωνίκα o al maschile Σώνικος.

3.12. Stratos

IG IX 1² 4, 1259

Stele in calcare rinvenuta vicino la fonte Spasméni Brísi, entro i confini di *Kariótes*, necropoli meridionale. Perduta. II sec. a.C.

Φάλαρις
Αἰσχρίωνος
Στράτιος.

Unica attestazione del nome maschile Φάλαρις nella Grecia nord-occidentale. Il nome Αἰσχρίων è ampiamente attestato nel mondo greco (LGPN I-V. A); nella Grecia nord-occidentale è noto in Etolia, Acarnania, Epiro, nello Ionio a Corcira (LGPN III. A 20). Il Klaffenbach ha ipotizzato che potesse trattarsi del fratello di [Ε]πίγνητος Αἰσχρίωνος attestato in qualità di μάρτυς nell'iscrizione IG IX 1² 2, 394 da Stratos.

L'evidenza epigrafica ci consente di fare alcune considerazioni di natura storica in merito alla presenza di stranieri nell'isola, oltre che a ricostruire, in linea ipotetica, la rete commerciale la interessava.

La presenza di Siracusani non deve stupire: le ragioni vanno individuate nella ripresa di una politica espansionista di Agatocle, che a seguito della pace con Cartagine del 306 a.C. assunse, come gli altri diadochi, il titolo di βασιλεύς⁶³. Espugnata Corcira⁶⁴, dove Cassandro aveva imposto una

⁶² Staikou 2016, 173, n. 15.

⁶³ Sulla politica di Agatocle si veda Marasco 1984, Consolo Langher 2002, De Vido 2015; riflessioni sulla regalità di Agatocle sono presenti in De Vido 2013.

⁶⁴ Sull'intervento di Agatocle a Corcira e le successive operazioni nell'area si veda Intrieri 2011, 438-450.

guarnigione tra il 314 e il 312 a.C., Agatocle vi lasciò dei presidi in modo tale che l'isola divenisse un avamposto contro eventuali attacchi verso l'area siceliota e magno greca. Sulla base della testimonianza di Plutarco, insieme a Corcira anche Leucade divenne possesso di Agatocle; notizia che troverebbe conferma nel fatto che entrambe nel 290 a.C. passarono nelle mani di Demetrio Poliorcete⁶⁵, che aveva sposato Lanassa dopo che quest'ultima si era separata da Pirro (al quale portò in dote, come è noto, proprio Corcira). Anche la documentazione numismatica sarebbe in favore della notizia circa il controllo siceliota di Leucade: lo attesterebbero il gran numero di stateri («Pegasi») di Leucade rinvenuti in Sicilia⁶⁶. Nello specifico si fa riferimento sia a un tesoretto rinvenuto a Pachino, dove dei 600 stateri di Corinto⁶⁷ 56 sono di Leucade⁶⁸, sia a un tesoretto rinvenuto a Megara Hyblea⁶⁹, dove anche in questo caso domina la moneta di Corinto: dei 175 stateri corinzi⁷⁰, 45 sono stati conati a Leucade⁷¹.

La monetazione ci aiuta inoltre nella ricostruzione di una rotta marittima e commerciale che in età ellenistica toccava la Sicilia e le isole dello Ionio e che risalendo la sponda orientale dell'Adriatico arrivava fino in Italia settentrionale e, per via fluviale, in Svizzera⁷²: la rotta sarebbe testimoniata dal ritrovamento a Modena e ad Almendingen⁷³ di circolante greco.

Il legame con la Sicilia è riflesso anche nell'onomastica: alcune delle attestazioni antroponimiche accomunano Leucade con l'area siceliota: un esempio è rappresentato dal nome maschile Φύτις⁷⁴: equivalente dorico dei nomi in Φιλ-, esso ci riporta alla Sicilia, dove vi sono molte occorrenze del nome, nello specifico nell'area di Siracusa e Morgantina⁷⁵.

Come si evince dalle circostanze in parte sintetizzate, sia Corcira che Leucade sono state caratterizzate da una vicenda storica comune oltre

⁶⁵ Plut. *Demetr.* 36-37.

⁶⁶ Di Vita 1958-1959.

⁶⁷ La circolazione monetaria nella Sicilia Orientale dalla fine del IV e dei primi decenni del III sec. a.C. era dominata dai pegasi di Corinto; non deve dunque stupire che le monete delle sue colonie (non solo di Leucade, ma anche di Ambracia e di Anactorio) siano presenti in gran quantità nel tesoretto di Pachino: Di Vita 1958-1959, 163. Sul legame tra Corinto e le sue colonie e la coniazione di Pegasi in Grecia nord-occidentale: Antonetti 2011, 55-57.

⁶⁸ Di Vita 1958-1959, nn. 140-146.

⁶⁹ Nicolet-Pierre 2009.

⁷⁰ Come nel tesoretto di Pachino, anche in questo caso sono presenti le monete delle sue colonie: Ambracia, Anactorio e Leucade: Nicolet-Pierre 2009, 34-38.

⁷¹ Nicolet-Pierre 2009, 36-38.

⁷² Gorini 1973.

⁷³ Delle 26 monete di bronzo rinvenute ad Allmendingen, tutte databili tra il 300 e il 168 a.C., vi sono due monete in bronzo di Leucade. Gorini 1973, 22.

⁷⁴ IG IX 1² 4, 1344 (III sec. a.C.).

⁷⁵ Fraser 1993, 172.

che da una vicinanza geografica; dunque, non deve stupire la presenza di Corciresi sepolti a Leucade⁷⁶.

Stessa motivazione si può avanzare in merito alla presenza degli Ambraciotti e del Φάλαρις da Stratos, così come potrebbe essere per l'epirota Στρόβιος.

È stato evidenziato⁷⁷ che in età ellenistica esisteva una rotta di navigazione che da *Massalia* muoveva verso la Sicilia, nello specifico verso Siracusa, che veniva poi utilizzata come base per proseguire alla volta della Grecia attraverso lo Ionio e le sue isole, stazioni intermedie verso il continente greco. Questa rete commerciale giustifica l'attestazione di un Massaliote nella necropoli di Leucade⁷⁸. D'altra parte, per la loro natura di *emporoi*⁷⁹, i Massalioti erano destinati al commercio marittimo. Sembrerebbe inoltre che il loro vino fosse di scarsa qualità⁸⁰: pertanto si potrebbe anche pensare che si rifornissero di tale bevanda a Leucade, che, come già evidenziato all'inizio, sembra fosse di ottima qualità.

La stessa rotta commerciale che in età ellenistica muoveva da *Massalia* aveva anche l'Africa come seconda destinazione. Ma in merito alla presenza del *Blannon* Cartaginese, ad oggi né la cultura materiale né la documentazione numismatica attestano una eventuale rotta che poteva collegare l'area dello Ionio con il nord Africa.

Il *Philocratis* di *Puteoli* testimonia invece la presenza di *negotiatores* romani che con molta probabilità avevano possedimenti nell'isola. Come è stato evidenziato, i complessi dedicati alle attività produttive vengono ampliati proprio in età romana, segno, questo, di un interesse da parte di uomini d'affari romani ad impiantarsi nel territorio, con molta probabilità attratti dalle possibilità offerte dall'isola. Alle evidenze archeologiche si aggiunge la testimonianza di Livio: lo storico nel raccontare i dettagli dell'assedio di Leucade da parte di Flaminio nel 197 a.C. e della strenua difesa dell'isola da parte dei suoi abitanti, riporta che i Romani prevalsero grazie alla presenza di *exules Italici* che li fecero entrare nella città⁸¹.

Poco si può dire in merito al caso isolato della Macedone, Μνησίκλητα, originaria di Pella. Essendo cronologicamente più tarda, si rileva però un'evoluzione nel linguaggio epigrafico, più ricco rispetto a quello "standard" e attestato a Leucade: lo si può notare sia nel qualificare la defunta χρηστή

⁷⁶ Una Φιλωτίς / Λευκαδία è attestata a Corcira (IG IX 1² 4, 945 III-II sec. a.C.).

⁷⁷ Manganaro 1995.

⁷⁸ Manganaro 1992, 198.

⁷⁹ Lepore 1989, 116.

⁸⁰ Villard 1960, 120.

⁸¹ Liv. 33, 17.

γυνή, ma anche nel riportare il vincolo di parentela che legava la defunta con coloro che avevano eretto il sepolcro, i *παριόντες*.

Per quel che riguarda la presenza di un Mitileiano e di un Milesio, essi documentano i contatti con l'Egeo settentrionale e la penisola anatolica; rapporti attestati anche dalla presenza di un abitante di Leucade nell'isola di Kos⁸². Si sottolinea inoltre la presenza, al museo di Leucade (inv. n. 53) di una moneta in bronzo di II-I sec. a.C. di Elea di Ionia. All'Oriente greco rimanderebbe anche il nome *Κλειτοφῶν*, attestato in un'iscrizione funeraria di III sec. a.C. dalla necropoli meridionale⁸³. Si tratta dell'unica occorrenza del nome in Grecia nord-occidentale e nello Ionio; risulta invece attestato nell'Asia Minore costiera (LGPN V.A 247), in Caria e Licia (LGPN V.B 236) e nelle isole dell'Egeo (LGPN I 260).

Dall'analisi delle iscrizioni emerge che la maggior parte degli stranieri presenti a Leucade vennero sepolti nella necropoli meridionale. Rimanendo nel campo dell'ipotetico si potrebbe pensare che la necropoli in questione fosse designata alla sepoltura di stranieri o di individui di *status* differente; a tal proposito è interessante notare che gli Ambraciotti, invece, vengono sepolti nello stesso lotto della necropoli settentrionale. Tuttavia, l'esigua documentazione a nostra disposizione non ci permette di dire nulla di certo in merito allo statuto giuridico delle necropoli prese in esame.

4. Conclusioni

La documentazione presa in esame offre uno scorcio su una città la cui vitalità commerciale può essere rintracciata soprattutto a partire dall'età ellenistica. Stazione intermedia tra la Grecia, le coste dell'Adriatico, l'Italia e i porti ancora più a Occidente, la prosperità di Leucade, pertanto, fu dovuta alla sua posizione strategica e al suo porto, che la inserirono a buon diritto nei commerci di ampio e medio raggio. Un dinamismo che continuò anche nel corso del II sec. a.C., come attesta la coniazione di monete con la rappresentazione della prua di una nave⁸⁴ (Fig. 19). La sua natura commerciale e produttiva, nonché l'affiliazione dal 167 a.C. alla sfera d'influenza romana, fu la ragione dell'insediamento di *mercatores* o *negotiatores*, come attesta la presenza del *Philocratis* di Pozzuoli.

⁸² *Θρασυκλῆς | Λευκάδιος* (IG IX 1² 4, 1464; III sec. a.C.).

⁸³ IG IX 1², 4, 1247.

⁸⁴ Monetazione che si data tra il 167 e il 30 a.C. Vd. ad esempio Braclay Head 1963b, 180, n. 98, pl. XXXVIII 16.

In questa prospettiva, l'analisi del materiale epigrafico e archeologico di Leucade testimonia il suo inserimento nei flussi commerciali che da *Massalia* giungevano fino a Mileto, ma non solo. Essa getta maggiore luce su una realtà che è rimasta sullo sfondo rispetto alla vicina Corcira -sulla quale gli storici hanno sempre posto maggiore attenzione- e conferma l'importanza dell'area dello Ionio come punto di incontro tra Occidente e Oriente.

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Fig. 1. Statere d'argento di Leucade (400-350 a.C.). R/testa di Atena con elmo Corinzio e *Leucadia iris* (da Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 13).



Fig. 2. Coperchio dello specchio in bronzo con rappresentazione di una giovane Leucade che incorona Corinto, ora al Louvre di Parigi (n. inv. 1699), metà IV sec. a.C. (da Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 45).



Fig. 3. Statere d'argento di Leucade (400-330 a.C.) D/pegaso; R/testa di Atena con elmo Corinzio e grappolo d'uva (da Barclay Head 1963, n. 48, pl. XXXV.15).



Fig.4. Statere d'argento di Leucade (400-330 a.C.). R/testa di Atena con elmo Corinzio e ramo di ulivo (Barclay Head 1963, 126, n. 21, pl. XXXIV.12).



Fig. 5. Foto satellitare dell'area dell'antica città di Leucade con le evidenze archeologiche (immagine tratta da Google Earth).

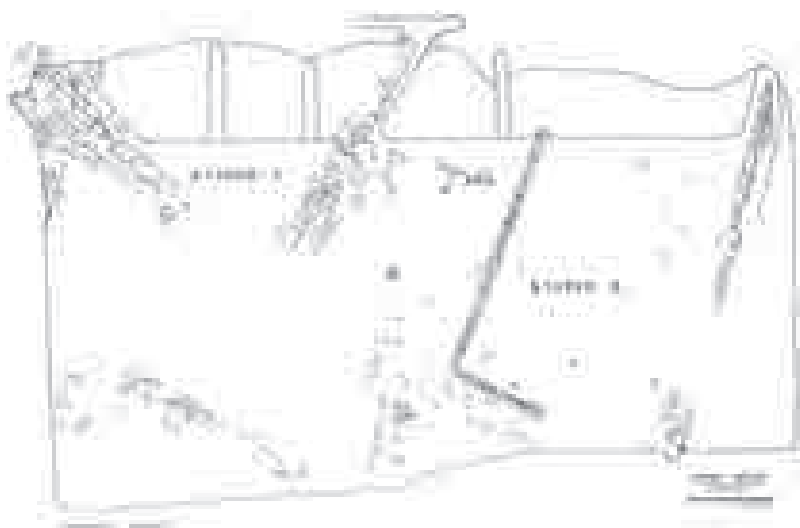


Fig. 6. Complesso destinato allo stoccaggio e al commercio del vino presso Koinótitas Karyotón (da Douzougli 1993, 292, Σχέδ. 13).



Fig. 7. Anse bollate dallo Κτίριο A (da Douzougli 1993, πιν. 93).



Fig. 8. Frammento di laterizio con il monogramma ΔΑ (da Douzougli 1993, πιν. 93).

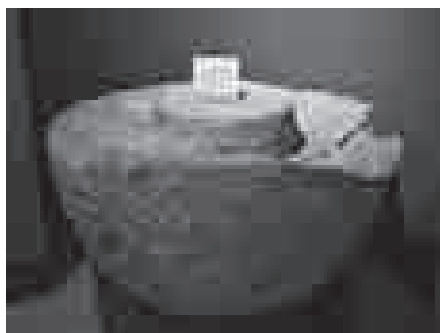


Fig. 9. *Mortarium* esposto al museo di Leucade (nr. inv. 2169).



Fig. 10. Statere d'argento di Leucade (400-330 a.C.) D/pegaso; R/testa di Atena e *murex* (da Head 1963, 128, n. 32, pl. XXXIV.20).

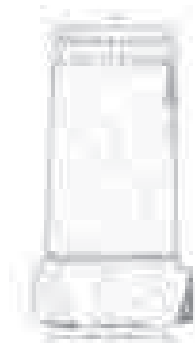


Fig. 11. Stele funeraria di Ἀντιγένης di Ambracia, III sec. a.C.



Fig. 12. Stele funeraria di Κλείδαμος di Ambracia, III sec. a.C.

(da Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2018, 313)



Fig. 13. Stele funeraria di Φιλικά di Corcira, III-II sec. a.C.? (IG IX 1² 4, 1289, tab. XXXI).



Fig. 14. Stele funeraria di Ἀλεξά di Corcira, II-I sec. a.C. (IG IX 1² 4, 1398, tab XXXII).

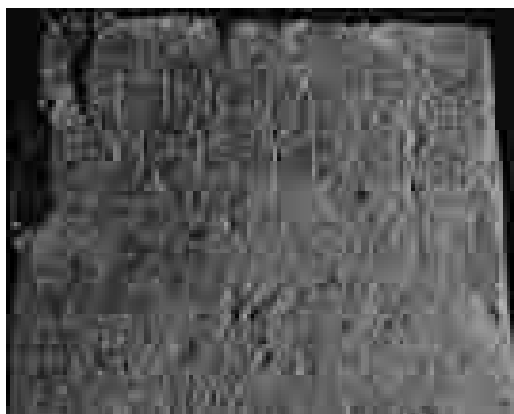


Fig. 15. Stele funeraria di [Κ]λεινόμαχος di Corcira, III sec. a.C. (IG IX 1² 4, 1406, tab. XXIX).

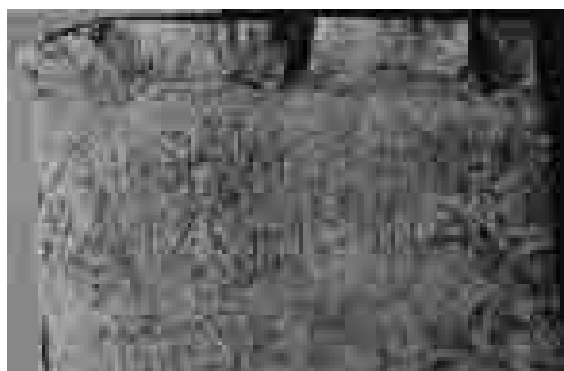


Fig. 16. Stele funeraria di Διονύσιος di Mileto e Ἰάς, prima metà del III sec.a.C.



Fig. 17. Stele funeraria di *A(ulus) Cossinius Philocratis Puteolani*, I sec. a.C. (da Driuzzo 1815, n. 63).

Fig. 18. Stele funeraria di Παρμονίσκος, Siracusano, IV sec. a.C.? (da Douzougli 1992 a, 71).



Fig. 19. Statere d'argento di Leucade (167-31 a.C.) R/Prua di una nave. Al di sopra: ΔΕΥΚΑΔΙΩΝ/ΔΑΜΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ (da Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 45).

THE FLOURISHING PORT OF ANCIENT LEUCAS. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Ports were vital for the growth and development of ancient Greek coastal cities, since they served as centers for trade, commerce, and cultural exchanges. Even though some fundamental research for the understanding of ports, harbours and other coastal infrastructures from the Bronze Age to the Roman period has been conducted¹, our scientific knowledge about the development of many ancient Greek harbours is rather incomplete, because the very nature of many harbours is difficult to study from a historical and archaeological point of view². Many ancient ports have been lost due to natural disasters, coastal erosion, or human intervention, making it challenging to conduct research on these sites. The excavation of an ancient harbour is a relatively rare occurrence that holds immense significance in unraveling the rich historical, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of a region.

The aim of this study is to examine what the harbour of the ancient town of Leucas would look like during the late Classical and Hellenistic periods. It primarily relies on recent archaeological findings, as we had the opportunity to investigate various areas that constituted the extensive harbour of the island. These investigations contribute significantly to drawing some conclusions about the layout and the organization of the port facilities and infrastructures, thus shedding light on Leucas' trade networks and further economic activities.

¹ Catsambis *et alii* 2011, 810; Blackman *et alii* 2013, where a comprehensive bibliography on ancient harbours can be found. Also see Nakas 2022.

² Mauro 2019.

1. History and Topography

During the 7th century BC Leucas became a colony under the control of the Corinthians, who were acutely aware of the island's strategic importance due to its location, close to the entrance of the Ambracian Gulf. In order to augment the island's strategic value, the Corinthians undertook the ambitious project of carving a canal through the narrow isthmus that connected Leucas to the Acarnanian mainland. The Dioryctus construction transformed the continental land into an independent, insularity entity. With the opening of the canal, the short and safe passage from the Peloponnese and areas of Western Greece to Illyria and the Adriatic became feasible. The canal became a significant route across the Ionian Sea and played a crucial role in facilitating trade and communication between the ports of Epirus and Acarnania. Its construction showcased the engineering capabilities of the Corinthians and had strategic importance for military movements and regional coordination.

Although Strabo, referring to the opening of the canal³, fails to mention the presence or the construction of a port, this should be considered a given. The construction project that made the crossing of Leucas possible would allow the safe movement of ships in the calm waters of the channel, and therefore sailors would naturally seek an anchorage on this side, avoiding the windy western shores of the island. We can hypothesize that the opening of the canal, in combination with the development of the port, was a comprehensive project that took place at some point during the Archaic period.

The city of Leucas was built on the northeastern part of the island, overlooking the Dioryctus, and experienced great prosperity from the late Archaic until the end of the Hellenistic period. It was surrounded by a wall that spanned the hill of Koulmos, with its northern and southern portions stretching all the way to the sea. South of the city walls, in the present-day area of Lygia town, lies the southern and main harbour of ancient Leucas⁴ (Fig. 1).

The harbour occupies a 450-meter section of the shoreline, with the mole positioned about 1300 m. to the south of the city walls. The decision to build the main harbour of the island in this specific location was based on the site's advantageous features, such as the short distance between

³ Strab. 10, 2, 8.

⁴ Lehmann-Hartleben 1923,263-267; Murray 1982; Murray 1988; Andreou 1998, 177-178, Blackman *et alii* 2013, 570-572.

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the opposite shores of Leucas and Acarnania, the geological substrate, the formation of the coastline, the sheltered bay and the control of the channel. At the southern edge of the harbour, the ancient mole which almost connects Leucas with Acarnania remains visible beneath the sea surface nowadays (Fig. 2).

The mole had a width of 8-10 m. and a total length of 600 m., divided into two sections of 424 m. (west) and 133 m. (east), with a passage opening for ships of 35 m. wide⁵. Based on ceramics found at this location, Murray suggests that its construction dates back to before 428 BC⁶. and appears to have remained in use for many centuries. The mole created a protected area within the harbour, shielding it from the full force of prevailing winds and waves. This natural protection enhanced vessel safety, facilitated smoother navigation, and reduced the risk of damage to both ships and harbour infrastructure during adverse weather conditions and functioned as an obstacle to sand deposition.

Leucas was a significant naval power, as evidenced by the minting of coins depicting the prow of a ship on their reverse side⁷. The Leucadians sent three ships to fight the Persians in the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC⁸. Although the number is not large when compared to sources for other cities-states, it still attests to the power and prosperity of the island. The existence of a closed military harbour within the area of the mole, in a location that would allow for the operation of warships, should not be excluded⁹. Examining the position of the harbour, apart from the city walls, we can assume that its protection was achieved through the fortified position of Agios Georgios of Plaghia¹⁰. It may be worth investigating as well the presence of fortification walls on the mainland of Leucas, even if they were of limited extent. The available archaeological data, as will be analyzed further, indicates that the port experienced a significant peak in

⁵ Murray 1982; Murray 1988. Murray's measurements regarding the length of the two sections differ from those of Fiedler-Hermanns (2016). Additionally, Partsch (1889) and v. Marées (1907) report an opening of 80m.

⁶ Murray 1988. Lehmann-Hartleben (1923) argues that the harbour mole was constructed in the 3rd century BC.

⁷ The portrayal of ships on coins was a deliberate choice aimed at asserting the naval dominance of a city, making it a purposeful and non-random theme in terms of iconography, see Bonelou 2020, 118-120.

⁸ Hdt. 8, 45.

⁹ Andreou 1998, 178.

¹⁰ The remnants of ancient city fortifications, constructed with a polygonal architectural system dating back to the 5th century BC, can be found surrounding the Ottoman fortress of Agios Georgios. This city is believed to be either the Homeric city of Nericus or, more likely, the well-known city of Sollion mentioned by Thucydides (2, 30).

the late 4th century BC and throughout the 3rd century BC. All commercial activities ceased in 197 BC when Lucius Quinctius Flaminius launched a fierce siege against Leucas, during which the harbour facilities were destroyed, resulting in a major blow to the transit trade sector. This is supported by the fact that afterwards, Leucas' coins were not circulated outside Western Greece¹¹.

Within the entirety of the port facilities, we should also mention a stone bridge, slightly further north within the canal, inside the city walls. It had a length of 750 m. and featured 200 pillars strategically positioned to allow the passage of ships. It is considered to be the longest stone bridge in the ancient Greek world¹². The remnants of its foundations can still be seen in a linear alignment extending from the islet "Agios Konstantinos" or "Fortino" to the "Rouga" or "Bouga" small cape along the Acarnanian coast (Fig. 3).

According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus the Trojans fleeing with Aeneas from Troy founded temples to an Aphrodite Aineias in Leucas, Zacynthus, Actium, and Ambracia¹³. Although the precise location of the sanctuary site of Aphrodite near the Dioryctus remains unknown, there have been proposals regarding potential locations. Three possible sites suggested are the islet of Ag. Nikolaos, situated in the lagoon north of Grivas fortress, the islet Alexandros and the islet Vardacosta, located near the south mole of the city harbour. If we consider the indications provided by the ancient historian, the sanctuary of Aphrodite would have been situated somewhere near the harbour area. This is in line with other Aphrodite Aineias cults found in coastal areas, which are commonly associated with maritime themes and offer protection to sea travelers like Aeneas and his companions.

The location and nature of the cult indicate a potential connection between Dionysos' Aphrodite Aineias and Aphrodite Limenarchis, the "commander of the harbour," whose statue was restored by Damophon¹⁴. It is likely that these were different names for the same goddess. The cult of Aphrodite in the harbour area held significant importance in the pantheon of Leucas. It not only oversaw the harbour, which was vital for the island community's livelihood, but also protected the Dioryctus shipping route across the Ionian Sea. Besides the main port near the modern town of

¹¹ Bonelou 2016, 132.

¹² Negris 1904; Fiedler-Hermanns 2016.

¹³ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50, 3-4; Melfi 2016; Bonelou 2020, 114-116.

¹⁴ IG IX 1 4, 1475.

Lygia, we also know that a second harbour was operating north of the ancient city. Livy mentions the existence of a fortified harbour, where there was also a Heraion¹⁵, which possibly should be sought in the broader area of the “Fleva” Bay. In 1822, Goodisson mentioned the existence of ancient remains associated with port facilities in “Mandraki” area, near the chapel of Agios Ioannis Antzousis¹⁶. During a survey conducted in 2015 at the far end of the beach of “Kaminia” near the location of “Kryoneri,” ancient architectural material was discovered (Fig. 4) which is likely associated with the remnants observed by Goodisson and related to this second harbour in the northern part of the island¹⁷.

2. The archaeological data

During the last decades, several rescue excavations have been conducted in the coastal area along the harbour’s shore, revealing significant architectural remains and archaeological data that help us form an image of its plan and facilities¹⁸ (Fig. 5). Some of the rooftiles found in the building ruins bear the stamp of the letters “ΔΑ” (Damosion), indicating that the buildings had a public character and furthermore, that trade was under the protection and control of the city-state authorities¹⁹.

At the northernmost end of the harbour (location 1 on map. 7), a large complex of public buildings was investigated²⁰ (Fig. 6). The walls of Building A are made of carefully crafted large-sized rectangular limestone blocks. The floor of one of the buildings was paved with pebbles, as evidenced by the few remnants found in situ. Fragments of a sima with relief decoration, two fragments of pan roof tiles with painted decoration, and a fragment of a clay acroterion featuring an anthemion were found in the upper part of the building. A plethora of amphora fragments was collected from the excavation layers, but only a minimal amount of common household ceramics was present. The presence of amphora handles bearing the monogram “ΔΑ” and the discovery of lead weights clearly indicate the commercial

¹⁵ Livy 33, 17, 2.

¹⁶ Goodisson 1822.

¹⁷ Vikatou, Staikou 2015.

¹⁸ I would like to express my sincere appreciation to archaeologist Barbara Giza for her outstanding commitment and expertise in all the harbour excavations, conducted since the year 2000. Her meticulous attention to detail, disciplined approach, and genuine passion have played a vital role in the successful execution and meaningful outcomes of this study.

¹⁹ Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 71.

²⁰ Douzougli 1992; Douzougli 1993.

nature of the site (Fig. 7). Two outdoor spaces between the buildings of the complex appear to have served as storage areas for amphorae, based on the abundance of such pottery fragments. The presence of amphorae suggests a connection between the building complex and the storage and trade of wine and oil. According to the excavators, the architectural ensemble was erected in the late 4th century BC and was likely destroyed during the siege of 197 BC.

Slightly southward (location 2), during another rescue excavation, three walls made of rubble stones were discovered, defining an indeterminate structure. Here, in contrast to the excavation at location 1, mainly household utilitarian ceramics dating to the later Hellenistic and early Roman periods were found²¹.

Further southward (location 3 on map), building remains related to a craft installation were investigated in 2004²² (Fig. 8). Specifically, a rectangular reservoir with masonry walls coated with lime mortar and another basin with a square plan were revealed. The two reservoirs found in 2004 appear to be associated with the clay purification process²³. The discovery of 42 wedges used as supports for kilns also indicates ceramic production in this area (Fig. 9).

The rescue excavation conducted during the construction of a public sewage network, although carried out within narrow trenches, yielded significant findings²⁴. In the so-called “Section A”, approximately 130 m. from the coastline (location 4 on map), a rectangular space with meticulously constructed walls was uncovered. It had a width of 14 m. and in its center, three rectangular limestone bases with carved mortises to accommodate the attachment of the column (Fig. 10). According to the archaeological report, these bases appear to divide the building into four equally wide corridors. The arrangement of the space, as well as the layer of sand and gravel backfill, led the excavator to identify this space as ship sheds.

In another part of the drainage project, in the so-called Section B (location 5 on the map), sections of two ancient roads running perpendicular to each other were investigated, as well as portions of three buildings developed on

²¹ Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2005.

²² Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2004.

²³ Ancient ceramic production involved collecting clay-rich soil, which contained impurities such as rocks, organic matter, and debris. To purify the soil, potters created basins or settling tanks where water was added to the collected soil. The purification process required multiple repetitions, transferring the settled clay from one basin to another.

²⁴ Pliakou 2001.

either side (Fig. 11). The pavement consists of compacted clay and gravel, while a constructed water conduit and a narrow open drain channeled rainwater. A large number of commercial goods were found in the buildings, including amphorae, transport containers, and pottery vessels, indicating their role in commercial activities.

Right in front of the harbour's mole (location 6 on map, Fig. 12), another rescue excavation was carried out in the years 2016-2017²⁵. The excavation trench had dimensions of 17 x 15 m. Near the edge of the trench, parallel to and along its western side, a carefully constructed wall was revealed. It had a width of 0.60 m and it was visible along a length of 16.30 m., extending beyond the excavation area boundaries towards the north and east. The elongated wall retained three courses, reaching a maximum height of 0.64 m. The upper course preserved ten rectangular stone blocks that were finely crafted with a chisel, leaving a plain band on the lower part of their external eastern face (Fig. 13). Additionally, nine of these blocks had triangular lifting bosses either partially preserved or completely worn away. It is noteworthy that no other wall with such a carefully worked façade has been found in any other excavation on the island of Leucas.

This upper course of the wall likely represented the stylobate of a colonnade. This is indicated by the preserved imprints of rectangular bases for the columns. The courses were roughly dressed with a chisel, while the areas where the bases rested, measuring 0.57 x 0.60 m., were more finely smoothed (Fig. 14). Overall, the imprints of five bases could be distinguished, spaced 1.5 m. apart. Therefore, it can be inferred that the colonnade was diastyle.

The particularly meticulous masonry, as well as the indications of a colonnade, allow us to identify the building as the main stoa of the harbour. The space to the southeast was left undeveloped, ensuring the required open area in front of the colonnade.

Within the excavation area, remnants of three walls were discovered on the northern side, with only their foundations preserved. A section of an internal partition wall was revealed further to the North. The walls continue beyond the edge of the excavation trench and as a result, only a small portion of the defined building could be explored. No floors or other structures were found inside these walls. All areas subjected to excavation between 2016 and 2022 exhibited strata of destruction, the careful removal of which yielded a diverse assemblage of pottery fragments. Inside the buildings and above the surface of the walls, within a layer approximately

²⁵ Staikou 2023a.

40 cm thick, broken amphorae, stamped handles of amphorae, vessel fragments (cooking or unpainted utensils, painted vessels, primarily cups and closed jars), tiles (some stamped with the characters “ΔΑ”), a few bronze coins, one loom weight and some bronze nails were found.

During the years 2018-2022, an excavation was conducted 20 m. west of the big stoa, which revealed two partially preserved buildings with porticoes that belonged to a wider complex (location 7 on map, Figs. 15, 16)²⁶.

All walls are constructed from limestone rubble and are preserved to a low height (2-3 courses). Building 1 is defined by four walls and has overall external dimensions of 12.50 m. in length and 5.60 m. in width. An intermediate wall divides the space into two andrones, with internal dimensions of 2.80 m. (E-W) × 3.60 m. (N-S). Their floor is constructed with fine pebbles and clay, featuring a raised perimeter zone, 0.91m in width, that served as a platform for placing the *klinai* (bed-couches)²⁷. These two rooms share very similar architectural features with the andrones found in many houses of Leucas (Fig. 17)²⁸. The interior surfaces of the walls are also coated with plaster. On their western façade, they feature well-crafted doorway thresholds measuring 1.20 m. and 1.26 m. in length and 0.37 m. in width, respectively. Right outside the north chamber and a section of the south chamber, a narrow water conduit for draining water from the interior of these two rooms, was unearthed. A drainage groove originating from the north andron's floor runs alongside the threshold and intersects with the outdoor conduit, where it incorporates a clay pipe at its end (Fig. 18). A comparable drainage groove has also been cut into the floor of the southern andron.

Tiles arranged in a continuous formation were discovered in the central lower section of the southern andron's floor, spanning a total area of 3.40 m. (N-S) by 3.50 m. (E-W). Notably, certain tiles within this arrangement

²⁶ This excavation remained unpublished until now, with this paper marking the first publication of its results. For a short report regarding the first stages of excavation see Filis, Staikou 2022. Due to the elevated water table at the specific site, excavation was carried out under unfavorable conditions, characterized by the presence of mud. Work could only take place during the summer months, necessitating the continuous utilization of pumps to address the accumulation of water.

²⁷ For the dimensions of the *klinai* and their arrangement in the andrones see Miller 1978, 219-224. For beds and couches see Andrianou 2009.

²⁸ Most of the andrones in Leucas' ancient houses exhibit floors that bear a striking resemblance to the paired andrones in the harbour area. Both feature similar flooring compositions, comprising a mixture of mortar and small pebbles. For the houses of Leucas see Andreou 1998, 170-174; Fiedler 2005; Fiedler 2009. For ancient Greek houses and households in general see Ault, Nevett 2005.

bear the distinctive stamp “ΔΑΜ.” The exact purpose behind the installation of these tiles remains uncertain; however, it is plausible that this addition occurred during a subsequent phase, possibly intended to raise the central part of the floor to match the height of the surrounding platform. This adjustment may have been undertaken in order to achieve a uniform and level floor throughout the entirety of the room.

At the north part of the excavation area Building 2 is defined to the south by an elongated wall with a length of 13 m. Two intermediate walls shape three internal spaces. Building 2 extends further to the west, beyond the excavated area.

Both buildings 1 and 2 have a portico in front, and their floors are covered with compacted clay and mortar. The Portico of Building 1 (Portico 1) has a width of 4m., while the Portico of Building 2 (Portico 2) is 3m wide. Four bases with dimensions of 0.62×0.60 m. intended for supporting columns, were identified at equal distances between them (2.27-2.30 m.), thus forming a columnar arrangement and corresponding to a sub-pillar space west of the andrones. An ancient well or reservoir was discovered between the column bases. Since it was constantly filled with water, it was impossible to investigate its interior. The opening of the well measures 0.42×0.45 m., while its external dimensions are 0.96×0.96 m., constructed with stones and mortar.

Additionally, three more rectangular bases were found in Portico 2 area, but since Building 2 extends further to the west, at least one more base is hidden in the area that we could not investigate. The easternmost base of Portico 2 aligns with the bases of Portico 1, creating a corridor in Γ shape. Further excavation to the south and west is necessary to unveil the architectural plan of the complex, allowing us to determine whether it exhibits a Γ-shaped configuration or if it follows a rectangular layout

In the Portico of Building 2 two octagonal columns, with a height of 0.80 m., were found parallel to each other lying on the floor (Fig. 20), which probably were supporting the porticoes' roof.

Outside Portico 1 and Portico 2 two drains run parallel to the colonnades. The drain in front of Portico 2 has a width of 0.88 m. and crosses almost the entire excavation area in the north-south direction. In the better-preserved areas, stone slabs from the drain's cover are still *in situ*. The bottom of the drains was partially paved with tiles.

No architectural remains were found in the SW part of the excavated area, only few remnants of the same clay floor that was found in the two porticoes. This area can be identified as a central courtyard, or an open space surrounded by the porticoes.

No conclusive artifact was collected from the interior of the andrones that could lead to a direct identification of these spaces. The finds are similar to those found in the main stoa. More specifically in the complex with the twin andrones, except from utilitarian ceramics and abundant fragments of amphorae, a few special items were found as well: eight cylindrical stands for amphorae (four of them in Portico 2, Fig. 21), five loom weights (one inside the northern andron, Fig. 21), 11 stamped amphora handles, six bronze coins, and a fragment of a clay lamp.

Based on the preliminary dating of the movable finds, the use of the area is dated to the later Classical and Hellenistic periods²⁹.

3. Trade Amphorae: Clues to Leucas' Harbour History

Historian-archaeologist Lehmann-Hartleben has argued that the harbour of Leucas never became a significant commercial station, despite the ambitious vision of the Corinthians, because the channel was shallow enough to hinder the passage of large merchant ships³⁰. Murray, on the other hand, counters that many commercial vessels operating in the Greek region were of moderate size and could pass through the narrow passage without any problem, unlike the large ships of the open seas³¹.

The trade amphorae found in the harbour can contribute information to this debate. Recently, an extensive study was conducted aiming to examine the amphorae found in the aforementioned excavations at the ancient harbour³². The majority of the studied amphora fragments (over 90% out of 1951 sherds) belong to the so-called Corinthian-Corcyraean Type B and date back to the late 4th century BC and the 3rd century BC. The Type B amphorae are not identical. Differences can be observed both in the neck, especially in the tall neck with one or two plastic rings. Some of these belong to the ceramic production of Corcyra (Corfu).

Leucas was renowned for its wine³³, while the research conducted at many ancient farmhouses has shown that olive cultivation was widespread³⁴. It is

²⁹ Due to the completion of the excavation in Area 7 a year ago, the material remains are currently undergoing cleaning and conservation. As a result, we are yet unable to draw any additional conclusions regarding the chronology or obtain a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the assemblages.

³⁰ Lehmann-Hartleben 1923.

³¹ Murray 1988.

³² Filis, Staikou 2022.

³³ Plin. *NH* 14, 76.

³⁴ Pliakou 2004; Giza 2016.

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therefore logical to assume the existence of a local ceramic production that would supply the farmers with amphorae to store and trade their products. The overall examination of the material from all the rescue excavations leads to the conclusion that there is a local Leucadian production of Type B amphorae. Ceramic workshops may not have been discovered yet, but burnt amphora fragments, cylindrical stands, as well as ceramic kiln spacers were identified, which support our hypothesis. The adoption of the widely used Type B amphorae by Lefkadian potters for transporting local products can be seen as a logical choice. These amphorae were commonly found in the northern Peloponnesian, Ionian Sea, and Adriatic Sea regions, and were primarily intended for regional exports. It is likely that Leucas, along with Corfu and potentially other Ionian production centers, capitalized in the use of these amphora types in the Hellenistic period. Despite their similar geographic positions, trade links, and commodities (presumably wine), these regions found value in utilizing the same amphorae to reach markets further west.

The study also demonstrated the presence of imported amphorae that testify to the contacts of the harbour of Leucas with other parts of the ancient world. Corinthian Type A amphorae, a limited presence of amphorae from the Aegean (Thasos, Chios, Eretria), Greco-Italic type amphorae from central or southern Italy, as well as a fragment of a Carthaginian amphora were identified³⁵.

Finally, of great interest is the presence of over two hundred intact stamped handles found in almost all excavated areas of the port. The stamps appear at various points on the handle and have a round, rectangular, triangular, or oval shape. The stamp mainly consists of one, two, or three letters, while less frequently, motifs such as a rosette, cross, or amphora are encountered. While they likely indicate individual potters or workshops, they could also relate to wine or oil producers. Thus, the interpretation of these stamps suggests diverse possibilities in the region's commercial activities, during the 3rd c. BC.

³⁵ An exotic glass necklace, originating from Carthage, has also been found in the South cemetery of Leucas, see Staikou 2023b. Limited indications of foreign individuals, potentially including traders, are derived as well from the inscriptions on gravestones discovered in the ancient cemeteries of the island. Consequently, it is evident that certain occupants of the Leucas cemeteries originated from regions such as Asia Minor, Crotone, Syracuse, Marsalis, Taranto, and Carthage, see Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 72.

4. Discussion

The archaeological evidence of numerous warehouses along the Lygia coastal area, the extensive presence of amphorae, both locally produced and imported, and the numerous stamped handles all support the hypothesis that the ancient port of Leucas was a flourishing hub of commercial activities. The combination of local production, regional trade, and connections to wider Mediterranean networks indicates a bustling harbour that played a significant role in the exchange of goods and commodities especially during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC.

The main stoa featured a prominent facade overlooking the harbour and served as the commercial and administrative center of the wider area. Positioned prominently at the southern edge of the harbour, the stoa's elongated dimensions would have undoubtedly captured attention. It stood as a distinguished structure among the various harbour facilities and warehouses in the vicinity. The vast open area to the east of the stoa, in front of the mole, likely served as a marketplace, bustling with activity, featuring stalls and vendors offering their wares³⁶.

Through the excavation of the area situated behind the main stoa, significant remnants have been discovered, providing compelling evidence for the operation of a katagogion by the port³⁷. Ancient Greek lodgings are often found in large harbours, such as Delos or Piraeus, according to ancient written sources³⁸. Considering the location of the recently discovered complex with the paired "andrones" near the harbour, it is plausible to propose that it could have catered to the needs of travelers, sailors, and merchants passing through the port. Such establishments near harbours often provided lodging, dining, and entertainment services to accommodate the influx of visitors.

The resemblance between the peristyle columns of the katagogion in Cassope and those found in the similar structure in Leucas' harbour is an

³⁶ The proximity of the commercial agora to the ancient harbour of Leucas could have served as an ideal location for a fish market, amongst other food stalls. Fish markets were typically situated in close proximity to the harbour to facilitate the quick and easy transfer of fresh seafood from the boats to the market stalls, as is the example of Kos, see Rocco, Livadioti 2011, 394.

³⁷ Michel, Fournier 1851; Kraynak 1984; Ault 2005, 150-155; Papamartzivanou 2016. Katagogia in various locations in ancient Greece had an internal peristyle courtyard and rooms surrounding it. Some hostelries with a peristyle courtyard incorporated andrones, such as Leonidaion in Olympia, or the Building M in Avlida, Euboea. Γ-shaped plan hostelries, such as the one found in Oropos, have also been recognized.

³⁸ Xenophon (*Poroi*, 3, 12) refers to the need for constructing additional katagogia in the port of Piraeus to accommodate sailors and serve foreign visitors.

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intriguing affinity worth discussing. The *katagogion* in Cassope, known for its distinctive octagonal peristyle columns, has been interpreted as a *makellos agora*³⁹, showcasing its importance as a multifunctional public building. Octagonal columns can provide structural stability while adding a visually appealing aspect to the building's design. The discovery of similarly shaped octagonal columns in the building complex of Leucas suggests a potential architectural influence or regional design preference during the relevant period (end of 4th c. BC).

The water facilities (drainage grooves inside the andrones, the water conduit outside the andrones, the well, and the extended drain network), suggests a significant consideration for cleanliness and sanitation in the operation of the complex⁴⁰. Water management would have played a crucial role in facilitating the cleaning process after banquets or gatherings held within the twin andrones. The waterproof mortar and the drainage grooves embedded within the floors of the andrones would have allowed for the efficient use of water, enabling the thorough washing and rinsing of the space. This could indicate a level of sophistication in the architectural design, incorporating water supply systems to cater to the specific needs of the symposia rooms. The presence of a well within the portico area further emphasizes the significance of water in the complex. The well would have provided a reliable and easily accessible water source for various purposes, including cleaning and daily activities within the establishment. Its central location in the portico area suggests its purposeful inclusion to serve the needs of both clients and staff.

The two uniform andrones could have served as a space for dining, *symposia*, and entertainment⁴¹. The presence of the twin chambers that resemble the andrones found in the houses of the ancient town of Leucas raises questions regarding their function within such non-private settings⁴². The paired andrones, furnished with *klinai*, could serve as

³⁹ Hoepfner *et alii* 1994. For the *makellos agora* see also Evangelidis 2019.

⁴⁰ Drains along the peristyle were discovered in Cassope and the Leonidaion of Olympia. The provision for water supply in complexes that can be identified as hostleries or brothels, may further indicate parallel manufacture activities, such as textile production, see Ault 2016, 91.

⁴¹ For the symposium, banquets and hetairai in andrones see Corner 2011; Kelly-Blazeby 2006. For the ancient Athenians' consuming passions for food, wine and sex see Davidson 1998.

⁴² The differentiation between restaurants and lodging establishments poses challenges, particularly when the building exhibits evident features of bed installations. This is mainly because the possibility of dining spaces within a lodging establishment cannot be discounted, see Ziebarth 1906.

communal dining areas within the lodging complex, where guests could enjoy their meals and entertain themselves. Identifying the true nature of mixed commercial-residential complexes that encompassed courtyards, lodgings, restaurants or *tabernae*⁴³ where various activities occurred, such as drinking, gambling, and potentially prostitution, can be challenging⁴⁴.

Building Z in Kerameikos possessed at least twenty-two rooms (more than one of which were certainly andrones, or banquet rooms) and had two courtyards. Three large cisterns, a well, and three drains indicate a high level of water consumption. The complex has been identified as a brothel or at least a *katagogion*⁴⁵. Immediately to the southeast of Building Z, a smaller structure, Building Y had two entrances, two andrones for dining and drinking, multiple cisterns, and drains more than a single dwelling would need and thus suggestive of a nonresidential function. The two andrones opened to a central peristyle courtyard, they were paved with polished pebble mosaic floors and both banquet rooms had walls decorated with red plaster. If this building was indeed used for prostitution, as a *graffito* suggests, and not for banqueting purposes, then it would have been a more upscale sort of brothel⁴⁶.

It is imperative to exercise prudence when attributing the operation of a brothel to the complex of Leucas, despite its proximity to the port and the parallels it shares with the buildings in the Kerameikos, such as the presence of the well and many drains, the twin andrones, and the peristyle courtyard. In order to firmly establish its classification as a brothel, the discovery of diagnostic artifacts, inscriptions, or *graffiti* directly associated with such activities would be essential⁴⁷. In the absence of these concrete

⁴³ For the ancient Greek *kapeleion* or *taberna* see Kelly-Blazey 2006.

⁴⁴ The Villa of Good Fortune in Olynthus, with its luxurious andron has been proposed to be a hall of gambling, drinking and lovemaking, but other scholars prefer to describe it as a hostelry, while still others avoid specifying its purpose. For a detailed discussion over this debate see Papamartzivanou 26-34.

⁴⁵ Knigge 2005. For a comprehensive discussion of the topic, including an extensive list of earlier bibliography see Glazebrook 2011, 39; Ault 2016.

⁴⁶ Glazebrook 2011, 43-45, where dining rooms associated with peristyle courtyards are also discussed.

⁴⁷ Several criteria for identifying a “house of ill repute” have been suggested, included those noted here. Another criterion is the strategic location of such establishments, often found near high-traffic areas like ports, marketplaces, or city gates. The design of these complexes is also noteworthy, characterized by a considerable number of rooms arranged around a central hall or courtyard, multiple dining rooms, bathing facilities, and convenient access through multiple entrances. Furthermore, the provision of an ample water supply beyond the needs of a typical household can indicate the nature of the establishment, see generally Glazebrook and Tsakirgis 2016. For brothels in the ancient Greek world see Kapparis 2017, 284-302.

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pieces of evidence, it would be premature to make definitive conclusions about the true nature of the complex. At this stage, it would be more appropriate to accept a multiplicity of functions for these buildings⁴⁸, rather than making further specific claims.

In the coming years, further exploration is planned in the southern and western areas near the twin andrones. This may provide valuable insights into distinguishing the dimensions of the complex and the layout of the surrounding buildings.

Returning to the identification of the structure in Section A (location 4) as a shipshed, concerns can be raised due to its considerable distance from the shoreline, which has remained largely unchanged since the Hellenistic period. Furthermore, the orientation of the building here, positioned perpendicular to the sea, presents additional challenges to its classification as a shipyard. Upon careful examination of the available archaeological evidence, it becomes more apparent that the structure in question should be classified as part of a building featuring a colonnade. The significant proximity of this structure to the complex housing the twin andrones, coupled with the striking resemblance observed between the column bases discovered in both areas (location 4 and 7), strongly implies a potential link between them. If this hypothesis proves accurate, it will indicate that the wider complex (encompassing the two andrones, Building 2, the courtyard, the structure with the colonnade in section A, and maybe another portico to the North of section A) possessed substantial dimensions, befitting its role as part of a large-scale establishment.

Additionally, by further investigating other parts of the maritime zone in Lygian area, we will have the opportunity to gain significant knowledge regarding the development of the harbour, from its initial establishment to its eventual abandonment.

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⁴⁸ Ault supports the idea that during its first three phases, Building Z served simultaneously as an inn, a commercial structure, a tavern, a weaving workshop, and a brothel (Ault 2016, 92-93). The presence of many loom weights, amphorae sherds, and amphorae stands in the peristyle building of Leucas indicates that the establishment not only served as a residential or lodging space, but also encompassed spaces for textile production and storage of goods.

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Fig. 1. Map of the NE part of the island of Leucas, depicting the canal, the ancient town, and the location of the two harbours (map credits K. Prassas).



Fig. 2. North of the mole, which almost remains visible beneath the sea surface, one can observe the well-preserved ancient harbour area, with the prominent Alexandro's Venetian salines located further ahead. The canal is also noticeable in the vicinity (Aerial Photo credits: S. Papoutsopoulos).

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Fig. 3. Aerial view capturing the presence of ancient architectural remnants in the coastal area near the Acarnanian shore, potentially potentially associated with the foundations of the ancient stone bridge (Photo credits: S. Papoutsopoulos).



Fig. 4. Ancient architectural material at the “Mandraki” site near the “Kaminia” beach in Tsoukalades, possibly related to the northern ancient harbour of Leucas (EphAAITL archive).

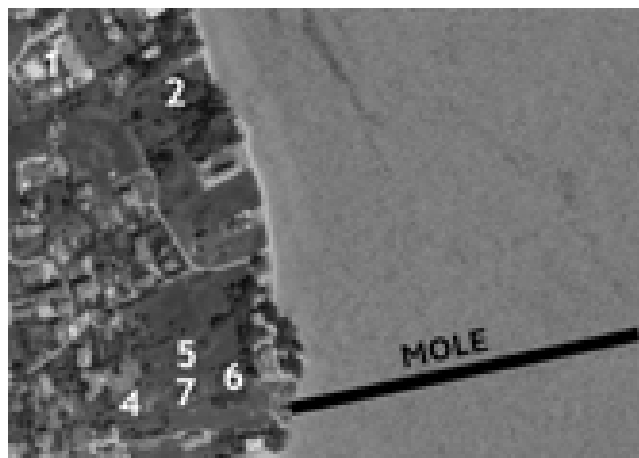


Fig. 5. Satellite image of the southern harbour area, indicating the location of the rescue excavations: 1. Fatourou plot. 2. Papadatos plot. 3. Stavrakas plot. 4. Section A of the Drainage construction Project. 5. Section B of the Drainage Construction Project. 6. The main stoa in the Katopodi-Fotinou plot. 7. The complex with the twin andrones, in the Katopodi-Fotinou plot.



Fig. 6: Excavation of a building complex at the ancient harbour of Leucas (EphAAITL archive – Fatourou plot).



Fig. 7: Lead weights from the excavation at the ancient harbour. (EphAAITL Archive - Fatourou plot).

Fig. 8: Excavation unveiling architectural remnants linked to a ceramic production craft installation (EphAAITL archive – Stavrakas plot).



Fig. 9: Clay wedges used as supports for kilns. (EphAAITL archive – Stavrakas plot).



Fig 10: A trench excavation at “Section A” uncovered three column bases in a row directed E-W (EphAAITL archive).



Fig. 11: A trench excavation at “Section B” uncovered an ancient road flanked by warehouses on both sides (source: Zachos, Douzougli 2003).

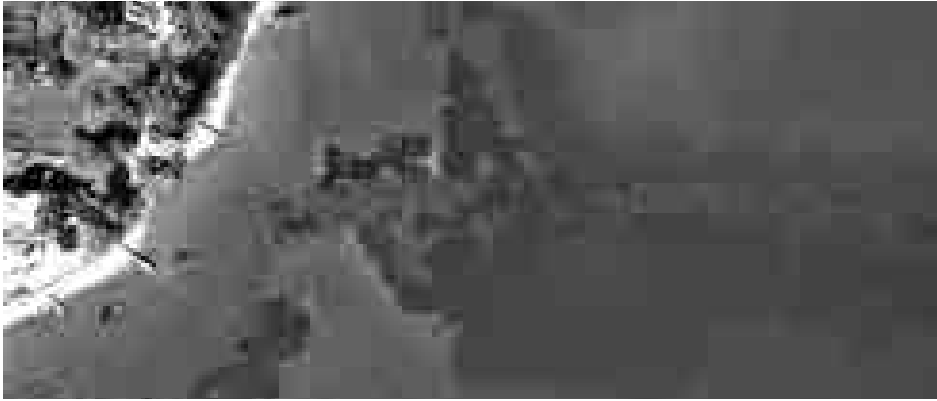


Fig. 12: Aerial view capturing the submerged mole, while the box grid excavation site, where the remains of the main stoa were uncovered, is still visible in the upper left corner of the image (Photo credits: S. Papoutsopoulos).



Fig. 13: The eastern wall of the main stoa of the harbour (EphAAITL archive– Fotinou plot).

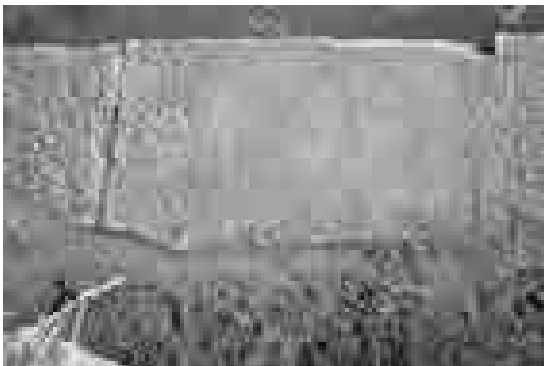


Fig. 14: Evident marks etched onto the stylobate surface, revealing the placement of a column (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot).



Fig. 15: Plan drawing illustrating the architectural remains of the complex uncovered during the excavation (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot, drawing by M. Ioannidou).

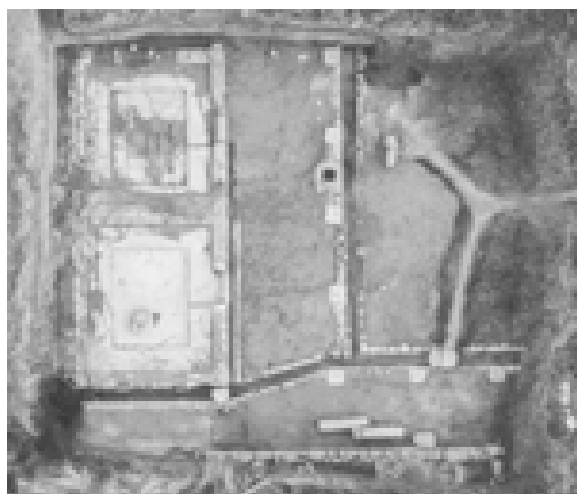


Fig. 16: Aerial photograph after the completion of the excavation in September 2022 (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot, photo credits E. Chalikiopoulou).



Fig. 17: Andron of a typical house in the ancient town of Leucas (EphAAITL archive – Fourou plot).



Fig. 18: The drainage groove that originates from the north chamber's floor runs alongside the threshold and incorporates a clay pipe at its end, meeting the water conduit outside of the andrones' facade (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot).



Fig. 19: Close-up view of The floor in the south chamber, displaying a meticulous arrangement of adjacent tiles (EphAAITL archive –Katopodi-Fotinou plot).



Fig. 20: Close-up view showcasing the two distinctive octagonal columns, in the early stage of the excavation (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot).

Fig. 21: Two well preserved cylindrical amphorae stands and the loom weights that were found at the katagogion during the excavation (EphAAITL archive – Katopodi-Fotinou plot).



IL TEATRO ANTICO DI LEUCADE DALL'IDENTIFICAZIONE DEGLI INIZI DEL XX SECOLO AL RILIEVO E ALLA RICERCA UN SECOLO DOPO

1. Introduzione

La posizione strategica di Lefkada le ha offerto una relazione privilegiata con il mondo esterno, con le coste continentali e con il Nord e l'Ovest, sviluppando una comunicazione bidirezionale con queste zone (Fig. 1). Nel suo percorso storico conobbe una grande prosperità economica e culturale. È stata quest'isola ad accorciare le distanze e ad assicurare comunicazioni e contatti, dando vita a ricche interazioni, attraverso la circolazione di persone, idee e tecnologie, ma anche di invidie ed inimicizie. Data la sua posizione attuale di controllo delle rotte marittime, non è un caso che la città sia stata fondata nel contesto della colonizzazione dei Corinzi. La sua importanza si cristallizza con la trasformazione in seconda capitale dell'Akarnanikon Koinon. Sebbene la ricerca nell'antica città di Leucade sia condotta su scala limitata nell'ambito degli scavi di recupero della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Etoloakarnania e Lefkada, sia grazie a progetti pubblici che privati, sono stati scoperti vasti resti antichi. L'unico scavo sistematico sull'isola è stato effettuato negli ultimi sei anni nel teatro della città, che è in fase di completamento, ed ha riportato alla luce un monumento imponente e molti elementi interessanti. In questo articolo viene data solo una prima presentazione dello scavo del teatro, in quanto non ancora completato.

2. Topografia dell'antica Leucade

Fondata all'estremità NE dell'isola, l'antica Leucade era una potente città-stato che, grazie alla sua posizione cruciale e al suo porto, conobbe una grande ricchezza¹. La città fu fondata nell'ultimo quarto del VII secolo

¹ Il suo nome deriva probabilmente dal promontorio più meridionale dell'isola, conosciuto oggi come Capo Doukato, che era chiamato Lefkas Akra o Lefkas Petra, dal colore bianco delle sue rocce. Secondo altre tradizioni mitologiche, il nome è dovuto al compagno di Ulisse Lefkos, o al mitico eroe Lefkadios, fratello di Penelope e Alyzea. Il nome più antico dell'isola non ci è noto, tuttavia rimanda a uno dei nomi delle isole citate nell'epica omerica come vicine di Itaca, mentre studiosi, come

a.C. dai regni marittimi Corinzi, nell'ambito del piano di colonizzazione della metropoli di Corinto che, nello stesso periodo, fondò le colonie di Ambracia (l'odierna Arta) e le città di Anactorion e Sollion in Acarnania².

Leucade occupa una posizione strategica all'ingresso del golfo di Amvrakikos, sulle rotte commerciali marittime verso l'Occidente e l'Adriatico, mentre di fondamentale importanza per la sua scelta è stato lo stretto di mare tra Leucade e Acarnania che si chiudeva all'estremità NE, unendo entrambe le coste e offrendo un attracco sicuro. A questo punto i Corinzi aprirono un canale, il Dioryctus, come riportano gli scrittori della prima età imperiale riferendosi a questa importante opera tecnica. Così, lo stretto tra Leucade e Acarnania divenne la rotta marittima più sicura verso il Mar Ionio, consentendo alle navi di evitare la difficile circumnavigazione di Capo Doukato. La città, che si estendeva attraverso la catena collinare di Koulmos e la pianura costiera fino al mare, aveva il controllo di questo passaggio marittimo, nonché la supervisione delle sue coste settentrionali e occidentali e degli spostamenti terrestri³.

La città murata, con una superficie di circa 980 acri, situata tra gli attuali insediamenti di Kalligoni e Karyotes, vicino alla moderna città di Lefkada, possedeva un'Agorà, un teatro, santuari pubblici, una zecca⁴, porti e due cimiteri organizzati a nord e a sud delle sue mura⁵. Fonti antiche riportano l'esistenza di tre santuari all'interno della città, dedicati ad Artemide, Afrodite Eneide ed Hera, le cui ubicazioni non sono ancora state individuate⁶. L'organizzazione urbana seguiva il sistema ippodameo, dove ampi viali si intersecavano con strade più strette, creando isolati rettangolari mentre nelle parti pianeggianti sono state individuate parti delle strade della città e del "viale" centrale. Invece,

il tedesco W. Dörpfeld, l'avevano identificata con la patria di Odisseo. Cf. Rodoghiannis 1980, 238; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 43; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 2; Vikatou 2019, 14; Bonelou 2020, 21-22 con bibliografia precedente.

² Pylades, uno dei figli illegittimi di Kypselos, è menzionato come colono, cf. Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 2; Vikatou 2019, 23. Per la colonizzazione vd. Rodoghiannis 1980, 132-139; Andreou 1998, 147; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 43; Andreou 2008, 251; Bonelou 2020, 25-31 con bibliografia precedente.

³ Le coste opposte di Acarnania divennero territorio di Leucade, la sua cosiddetta *peraea* (estremità) sulla terraferma. Vd. Andreou 2008, 251. Per il Diorycto ect, cf. Rodoghiannis 1980, 135-136; Andreou 1998, 148-149; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 43; Andreou 2008, 251; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 4-5; Vikatou 2019, 16; Bonelou 2020, 14, 83.

⁴ Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 75-80; Bonelou 2016; Bonelou 2020.

⁵ Per i cimiteri vd. indicativamente Andreou 1998, 152, 181-185; Douzougli 2001; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 89-94; Andreou 2008, 259-260; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 10-11; Staikou 2016; Vikatou 2019, 26; Vikatou *et alii* in press.

⁶ Rodoghiannis 1980, 237-259; Andreou 1998, 178-181; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 95-109; Andreou 2008, 257-258; Vikatou 2019, 26-27; Bonelou 2020, 86-87.

sul pendio della collina Koulmos, la città seguiva il rilievo ad anfiteatro e fra gli uliveti odierni rimangono visibili tutt'ora le fondamenta di edifici e possenti mura di sostegno. Strade minori salivano fino alla sommità del colle, dove probabilmente si trovava un santuario, come testimonia l'esistenza di un edificio a forma di tempio. Sulla vetta più alta del colle più a nord, in località "Pyrgos", si trova l'acropoli dell'antica città⁷, della cui identificazione però non esistono indicazioni archeologiche certe. Sul pianoro che si viene a creare si conservano i resti di una piccola cittadella medievale, costruita in parte sull'antica cinta muraria. In questa località, alcuni studiosi ritengono che probabilmente si trovasse la città omerica di Nirikos⁸.

L'Agorà era situata nella parte pianeggiante, dove aveva un accesso diretto con il ponte di pietra per l'Acarnania, il porto e i magazzini commerciali situati più a sud nella zona di Lyghia. Nell'Agorà è stato esplorato un ampio portico, orientato verso il mare, nella zona dove iniziava il suddetto ponte in pietra ritenuto il più grande dell'antichità⁹.

Le possenti mura della fortificazione, lunghe circa 4,5 chilometri, racchiudevano la parte collinare e pianeggiante della città. Oggi, sul crinale di Koulmos, sono visibili i tratti occidentali e settentrionali delle mura, costruite secondo il sistema poligonale, e in diversi punti si conservano fino ad un'altezza superiore a 4 m. Parti di esse sono integrate in vecchie case. Nella zona pianeggiante l'opera muraria non è visibile ma il suo percorso viene via via rivelato dagli scavi. Sono stati individuati gli angoli NE e SE della fortificazione, definendo così i confini dell'area murata. Un tratto importante della parte settentrionale delle mura è stato individuato sulla strada che attraversa l'abitato di Kalligoni, sotto il canale di un mulino ad acqua in rovina del XIX secolo. È stato costruito con il sistema pseudo-isodomico, si conserva fino ad un'altezza di 2,90 m e la sua larghezza raggiunge i 4 m. La fortificazione era rafforzata con torri rettangolari, quattro delle quali sono state individuate nella parte pianeggiante settentrionale, mentre nella parte collinare le torri erano collocate in maniera più diradata. Delle porte della cinta muraria è stata individuata la

⁷ Cf. Andreou 1998, 174-175; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 4, 8.

⁸ Vd. Andreou 1998, 150-170 (con ampi riferimenti alle strade e ai viali della città). Andreou 2008, 255; Per la topografia della città, l' Agorà, il nome di Nirikos e la cittadella medievale vd. Goodisson 1822; Rodoghiannis 1980, 267-274; Hoepfner *et alii* 1994; Hölcher 1998; Pliakou 2001; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 6-9; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 47-51; Bonelou 2020, 17-19, 80-81 con bibliografia precedente.

⁹ Vd. Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 47-9; Fiedler, Hermanns 2016; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 5; Vikatou 2019, 16, 23-24; Bonelou 2020, 85.

parte SE, larga 4,50 m, che conduceva nella “piazza” dell’Agorà e un’altra vicino all’angolo NE delle mura¹⁰.

Le case erano collocate a coppie all’interno di ciascun isolato allungato, con una conduttura di drenaggio tra di loro. La maggior parte delle abitazioni che sono state scavate risalgono al periodo classico ed ellenistico, mentre alcune sono state utilizzate fin dall’epoca arcaica. Nel periodo classico avevano molte stanze, spesso disposte su un piano e organizzate intorno a un piccolo cortile centrale, in cui si trovava il pozzo. Attorno ad esso si sviluppavano sei o sette stanze: l’androne, di solito vicino all’ingresso, l’oikos, dove era il focolare e, attorno ad esso, gli spazi ausiliari per le attività domestiche quotidiane (optanium-cucina, camere da letto, magazzini, officine, locali igienici). Gli alloggi delle donne erano solitamente situati al primo piano. Le abitazioni erano dotate di bagni con vasche in argilla, servizi igienici e un sistema di approvvigionamento idrico e di scarico. In epoca ellenistica le case mantennero lo stesso impianto strutturale, con limitati interventi architettonici. Pavimenti curati negli androni, colonne nel peristilio del cortile e suppellettili, costituite da utensili di lusso, indicano la prosperità finanziaria dei rispettivi proprietari¹¹.

In tutto il contado sono state individuate strutture agricole, mentre le unità più organizzate erano anche di carattere fortificato, appartenenti alla tipologia del casale con torre. Sono circa 15 le strutture di questo tipo venute alla luce sia nella parte sud-est dell’isola¹², sia nei pressi della città di Lefkada lungo la strada che porta al porto¹³. L’estensione e la quantità

¹⁰ La datazione esatta della fortificazione e le fasi costruttive non sono state verificate dallo scavo. Le parti del tratto pianeggiante settentrionale risalgono all’età ellenistica (fine IV sec. a.C.), ma furono utilizzate anche in epoca tardo-romana. Infine, un possente antimuro (*protichisma*) rafforzava la sicurezza della parte nord-occidentale della città e proteggeva il suo secondo porto, nella baia di Phleva. Questo muro aveva una direzione E-O, raggiungeva la spiaggia, e portava nel corso di via Philosophon, nell’odierna città di Lefkada. cf. Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 47; Andreou 2008, 253-254; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 7; Vikatou 2019, 24-25.

¹¹ In tutte le case sono stati rinvenuti pesi in terracotta che rivelano l’occupazione delle donne con la tessitura, effettuata sui telai che esistevano in ogni casa. In diversi casi sono state individuate anche grandi aperture nelle fondamenta, costituite da fosse dove venivano deposti piccoli vasi con offerte e ossa di animali. In generale, per le case, vd. indicativamente Fiedler 1992; Douzougli 1993; Andreou 1988, 170-174; Fiedler 2003; Fiedler 2005; Fiedler 2009; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 53-55, 82-88; Andreou 2008, 256-257; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 9-10, 13-15; Vikatou 2019, 25-26.

¹² Vd. Morris 2001. Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 57-60; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 9-10, 13-15; Giza 2016; Vikatou 2019, 24; Inoltre, per i vari laboratori di ceramica vd. Andreou 1998, 181.

¹³ Per i due porti di Leucade vd. Andreou 1998, 177-178; Andreou 2008, 253; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 4-5, 7; Bonelou 2020, 82-85; Staikou in questo volume.

dei resti residenziali, degli edifici pubblici e privati di grandi dimensioni, delle strutture portuali, delle suppellettili di lusso rinvenute nei cimiteri, ma anche l'esistenza di una zecca dall'inizio del V sec. a.C., testimoniano il boom economico di una città prospera che sviluppò in modo particolare il commercio, in quanto esportava i suoi famosi prodotti, principalmente olio di oliva, olio aromatico (dal giglio, noto come iris di Leucade) e vino¹⁴.

3. Il teatro antico/Storia della ricerca

I resti residenziali e sepolcrali che vengono costantemente alla luce nell'area dell'antica città di Leucade sono il risultato di scavi di recupero degli ultimi decenni, come precedentemente riferito, nel contesto sia di progetti privati che pubblici. È interessante notare che il primo scavo sistematico eseguito, dopo quelli effettuati da Dörpfeld all'inizio del XX secolo, è quello del teatro antico presentato in questo articolo, iniziato nel 2017.

In una città di tali dimensioni e importanza come Leucade non poteva mancare il teatro, edificio pubblico indispensabile come luogo di ritrovo per un gran numero di persone, che serviva da un lato alla creatività letteraria e al teatro, dall'altro alle istituzioni politiche e credenze religiose della fiorente città, poiché ospitò ovviamente una grande varietà di eventi religiosi e politici.

Prima dell'inizio dello scavo sistematico del monumento, le uniche testimonianze del teatro conosciute fino al 2015 provenivano dal lavoro svolto nel 1901 da E. Krüger, collaboratore di W. Dörpfeld, di cui si fa solo un breve accenno nel libro di Dörpfeld, *Alt Ithaka*¹⁵. Tuttavia, molto più tardi, una descrizione dettagliata dei resti scoperti del teatro e la pubblicazione dei disegni, conservati presso l'Istituto Archeologico Germanico, viene fornita da M. Fiedler nella sua tesi inedita di master¹⁶ (Fig. 2).

Durante i primi lavori del 1901 sembra che siano stati rilevati parte dell'orchestra, l'euripo, tra l'orchestra e il koilon, alcuni tratti dei sedili, i muri che si collegano alla scena e parti dei due muri di sostegno del koilon,

¹⁴ Il ritrovamento di oggetti di uso domestico quotidiano (vasi in terracotta, macine, uncini in rame, pesi per reti in piombo, ancore in pietra), nell'area delle abitazioni, forniscono preziose informazioni sulla vita quotidiana dei residenti e testimoniano le loro occupazioni con la coltivazione di cereali, di olive e con la pesca. cfr Rodoghiannis 1980, 212-219; Zachos, Douzougli 2003, 61-74; Vikatou, Chavela 2013, 10. Per il commercio e gli trasporti v. Filis, Staikou 2022.

¹⁵ Dörpfeld 1927, 156-157, 267; Rodoghiannis 1980, 34-55, 75-131.

¹⁶ Fiedler 1992, 61-62, dis. 9-10 e tav. Vi.

uno realizzato con il sistema di muratura poligonale e l'altro con quello isodomico. Tuttavia, una volta terminati questi lavori, gli scavi di prova furono ricoperti di terra e nel tempo non si seppe più l'esatta ubicazione del teatro, poiché uliveti e depositi estemporanei ricoprirono tutta l'area e il monumento (Fig. 3).

Molto più tardi, negli anni '90, la sua ubicazione fu ritrovata senza alcun intervento di scavo. La ricerca della posizione fu effettuata dalla IB' Soprintendenza alle Antichità Preistoriche e Classiche, all'epoca responsabile del Servizio Archeologico per l'isola di Lefkada fino al gennaio 2004¹⁷. Nell'estate del 2009 si tentò di nuovo di avviare delle indagini nel teatro antico, da parte dell'allora LST' Soprintendenza alle Antichità Preistoriche e Classiche, che però non ebbero successo.

All' inizio dell'anno 2011, quando ho assunto la direzione della LST' Soprintendenza, io e i miei colleghi abbiamo programmato lavori di evidenziazione di importanti monumenti di Leucade¹⁸. Allo stesso tempo abbiamo proceduto, con notevoli sforzi, allo scavo sistematico del teatro, finalmente con successo, e nel dicembre 2015 sono state effettuate ricerche per alcuni giorni, nella proprietà di Nikolaos Mikronis, dove si trova la parte più grande dell'antico teatro¹⁹. Questa proprietà occupa un'area di circa 7 acri e si estende ad anfiteatro nella sua parte più grande, terminando in un

¹⁷ Vd. Pliakou 1997, 37-42, tav. 6-8; Andreou 1998, 175-177. La Pliakou, in questo importante articolo, riferisce dettagliatamente quanto citato da Fiedler, il quale a sua volta aveva ricercato il materiale rilevante delle prime indagini nell'archivio dell'Istituto Archeologico Germanico.

¹⁸ Negli anni 2011-2015, nell'ambito del progetto "Evidenziazione di parti del reticolato residenziale dell'antica Leucade", sono stati eseguiti lavori per mettere in evidenza due monumenti della città antica, una stoà pubblica e un complesso di case (vd. Vikatou, Chavela 2013; Vikatou 2021, 177-181). Nello stesso periodo abbiamo realizzato un secondo importante progetto a Nydri, che riguardava la riscoperta, conservazione e messa in luce dei tumuli preistorici di Steno, che costituiscono il complesso sepolcrale più importante e più ricco del periodo PE II, sia dal punto di vista dell'organizzazione del sito che per i reperti, e uno dei più antichi cronologicamente in territorio greco (vd. Vikatou 2014; Vikatou 2019, 19-21; Vikatou 2021, 181-185). I progetti sono stati finanziati dal Programma Operativo "Grecia Occidentale-Peloponneso-Isole Ionie, 2007-2013".

¹⁹ Questa prima ricerca per trovare l'esatta ubicazione del monumento, è stata effettuata a spese del Comune di Lefkada dopo la mia collaborazione con l'allora sindaco Sig. K. Drakontaidis, che ringrazio sinceramente. Inoltre, lo scavo del teatro non sarebbe iniziato se il proprietario dell'immobile, il defunto Nikolaos Mikronis, non avesse dato il suo consenso alla realizzazione di saggi di scavo e al successivo scavo sistematico, prima dell'esproprio della sua proprietà. Lui stesso, pur entusiasta all'inizio delle ricerche, non riuscì a vedere il completamento degli scavi del teatro, a causa della sua morte prematura. Purtroppo i proprietari vicini, nei cui poderi si trovano soprattutto parti della scena e del koilon, non hanno dato il loro consenso, con conseguenti ritardi nelle ricerche. La nostra Soprintendenza ha proceduto al procedimento di esproprio forzato di tutte le proprietà all'interno delle quali si estende il monumento, affinché si possa completare lo scavo del teatro.

tratto pianeggiante allungato ad est. All'interno della proprietà era visibile parte di un antico muro ad ovest della stessa, mentre materiale edilizio antico era stato utilizzato per la costruzione di muri di contenimento più recenti e per la realizzazione dei muri di un deposito rurale situato nella parte sud-est²⁰. A sud del deposito erano visibili alcuni intagli nella roccia.

Basandomi su queste indicazioni sono state effettuate, per la localizzazione del monumento, 13 saggi di scavo in alcuni punti selezionati. I risultati di questi lavori sono stati particolarmente importanti, in quanto è stata accertata l'esatta posizione del teatro²¹. L'area del koilon si estende nella parte ad anfiteatro della proprietà, dove sono stati effettuati 6 saggi di approfondimento nei punti in cui vi erano tracce di intagliature nella roccia naturale e dove sono state individuate file di sedili (Fig. 4)²². Allo stesso tempo, è stato accertato che le sedute erano piuttosto danneggiate, probabilmente a causa delle attività agricole e dell'apparato radicale dei grandi ulivi che ricoprivano la zona.

I saggi di approfondimento nella parte inferiore del koilon, dove c'erano anche muri di sostegno contemporanei alle cui basi erano stati murati grandi filari di pietra calcarea lavorata, rivelarono serie di sedili scavati nella roccia e ovviamente questi filari costituivano il loro rivestimento. Infine, al livello pianeggiante della proprietà, dove si ipotizzava fosse la posizione dell'orchestra, sono stati effettuati cinque scavi di prova e una parte di essa è stata localizzata ad una profondità di circa 2 m (Fig. 5). La collocazione dell'orchestra conferma l'orientamento N/NE del teatro²³. Con i saggi di scavo abbiamo localizzato anche parti delle mura di sostegno del koilon, calcolando così lo spazio dei parodoi. Un muro costruito con particolare cura è visibile ad est dell'orchestra, all'interno di un'altra proprietà e ad un livello molto più basso (lo stesso trovato da Krüger). Si tratta del muro di sostegno della scena ed ha una lunghezza visibile di 25 m. È realizzato con il sistema isostrutturale e si conserva per un'altezza di due file di blocchi, fino a 0,75 m di altezza, sopra le fondamenta (Fig. 6). Durante le ricerche di Krüger era stato identificato per una lunghezza di 30 metri, solo che allora su di esso non era stato costruito il muro di sostegno più recente.

²⁰ Pliakou 1997, 41-42.

²¹ Vikatou 2015, 616-617; Vikatou 2019, 26; Vikatou 2022, 563-564. Vikatou *et alii* in press.

²² I sedili erano situati nel saggio più lungo (no 1) con una lunghezza di 11 m e con una larghezza fino a 3,50 m. Nel resto dei tratti del koilon sono stati individuati altre serie di sedili, anche all'interno del deposito agricolo. Circa a metà del koilon sono state rinvenute file di sedili intagliate nella roccia, su cui poggiavano i muri di sostegno più recenti. Nella parte più alta della proprietà, in altri due tratti, è stata rinvenuta la roccia senza tracce di intaglio.

²³ Pliakou 1997, 41; Andreou 1998, 175-177.

4. Lo scavo sistematico del teatro antico

La collocazione sul versante della collina, per la posizione del teatro, è stata scelta per la sua pendenza, dove il koilon poteva essere realizzato senza grandi sforzi, sfruttando il rilievo naturale secondo la pratica costruttiva comune agli antichi teatri greci. Inoltre, la composizione del terreno ha giocato un ruolo importante nella scelta poiché era ricco di pietra calcarea biancastra, che veniva appositamente scolpita, e il materiale per il rivestimento dei sedili poteva essere estratto in loco. Il teatro²⁴ è situato all'interno delle mura (Fig. 1), in una zona centrale della città antica, mentre sulla sommità del colle, a sud-ovest, si trova un edificio a forma di tempio, che ancora non è stato indagato. Si tratta forse di un santuario al quale era collegata la funzione del teatro di promuovere attività e manifestazioni.

Il teatro si trova a circa 3 km a sud della città di Lefkada sul versante NE della collina mediana di Koulmos²⁵, con vista panoramica sul canale, lo stretto passaggio marino tra Leucade e Acarnania, sulla pianura e sulla parte costiera pianeggiante in cui si estendeva la città, dove si trovava l'Agorà e il suo porto. Oggi l'area del teatro rientra in terreni privati, e il monumento si trova nell'area di tre proprietà. La maggior parte di esso, nella quale vengono eseguiti anche i lavori di scavo, come precedentemente riferito, si trova nella proprietà di N. Mikroni. Il teatro ha un orientamento N-NE²⁶ e per la sua realizzazione fu opportunamente scolpito il substrato roccioso, duro e calcareo, da cui furono ricavati i filari per il rivestimento dei sedili.

Poiché l'ubicazione del monumento è stata ormai identificata con certezza dai saggi di scavo, nel 2017 è iniziato lo scavo sistematico a cura della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Etoloakarnania e Lefkada, e sotto la mia direzione, con il finanziamento della Regione delle Isole Ionie e del Comune di Lefkada, mediante un Accordo Programmatico con il Ministero dei Beni Culturali²⁷. Fino al 2023 gli scavi archeologici hanno rivelato il grande

²⁴ Il termine teatro deriva dalla parola greca θέατρον (veduta), che non si limita semplicemente alla visione di performance artistiche, ma si riferisce all'immagine complessiva creata dallo spazio intorno. Vd. Lampaki 2013, 10. In generale, per i recenti studi riguardo all'orologia del teatro, vd. Frederiksen, Vikatou 2023, 3, 7, con bibliografia precedente.

²⁵ Le pendici della collina di Koulmos e l'area intorno al teatro sono disseminate di numerosi resti visibili e muri di sostegno, necessari per la creazione di terrazze, e tracce di passaggi scolpiti nella roccia naturale che seguono il rilievo e conducono alla cima della collina.

²⁶ Per l'orientamento dei teatri antichi e il commento cf. Frederiksen, Vikatou, 2023, 49.

²⁷ La Regione e il Comune hanno finanziato la ricerca con la somma di 100.000 euro ciascuno. Essendo uno scavo sistematico, questo è stato effettuato per due mesi all'anno, in

e imponente teatro che domina la città antica. Si tratta del primo teatro venuto alla luce nelle Isole Ionie. Lo scavo sistematico del monumento è stato particolarmente difficile e impegnativo (Fig. 7-8) poiché si dovettero rimuovere parecchi ulivi di grandi dimensioni, il cui apparato radicale aveva causato gravi danni, eseguire espropri e trasferire grandi quantità di terra, demolire le costruzioni più recenti e spostare diversi elementi architettonici che non erano nelle loro sedi originarie²⁸.

Le ricerche finora hanno messo in luce in gran parte il koilon, l'orchestra e l'euripo, i *parodoi*, i muri di sostegno del koilon e gran parte della scena, la quale si conserva al livello delle fondamenta. In generale, lo stato di conservazione del teatro non è ottimale, soprattutto nella parte alta del koilon, a causa dell'attività umana, sia nell'antichità che in epoca moderna, e della coltivazione del terreno (Fig. 9).

Il koilon è privo di precinzione (diazoma), almeno nella parte indagata, ed è costituito da 28 serie di sedili, mentre è certo che ve ne fossero altre più alto, intagliate nella roccia naturale. È suddivisa da 13 *klimakes* a raggiera (ognuna da 0,72 a 0,78 m di larghezza) che formano 12 *kerkides*. Nella parte inferiore del koilon, i sedili e la *proedria* si conservano meglio, soprattutto nella zona centrale, dato che si sono preservati i filari calcarei della loro copertura, le alzate dei gradini e le lastre del corridoio fra i sedili, fino alla 5^a fila. Alcuni sedili sono sparsi sulle *kerkides* 8 e 9, nelle file da 13 a 17. Nelle parti più alte si conservano solo gli intagli delle sedute nella roccia naturale, mentre nella parte NO la roccia è tagliata con una pendenza uniforme (Fig. 10). I sedili sono costituiti da un filare allungato, con una curva scolpita nella sua facciata e una bordatura nella parte posteriore della superficie, che costituisce la seduta principale, mentre lastre di piccole dimensioni formano il poggiapiedi. La lunghezza dei filari varia da 0,80 a 1,30 m, la loro larghezza, cioè la profondità della seduta, va da 0,33 a 0,38 m e l'altezza da 0,29 a 0,38 m. I sedili poggiano direttamente sulla roccia naturale opportunamente intagliata. Resti di un edificio più recente sono stati scoperti nell'area delle *kerkides* 8 e 9, tra le file dalla 6^a alla 12^a, del quale si conserva la parete meridionale allungata.

Al livello più basso del *koilon*, davanti alla prima fila di sedute, è stata localizzata la *proedria*, realizzata in pietra porosa (Fig. 11, 12), che si è conservata in cinque punti. È costituita da sedili singoli, lunghi 1,30 m.

cinque periodi di interventi. La ricerca è stata sospesa nel 2020 e nel 2021 a causa della pandemia covid.

²⁸ Il team scientifico comprende gli archeologi Vivian Staikou e Varvara Giza, l'architetto Nikos Hadjidakis, l'ingegnere-geometra Georgios Lolos e la conservatrice di opere d'arte Aphrodite Teligada.

profondi 0,65-0,70 m, oppure da due uniti tra loro, per una lunghezza totale di 2,60 m. Poggiano su una base di calcare bianco e molti di essi si sono conservate al loro posto. Nello spazio attorno a questi sedili si trovano sparse parti delle proedrie che sono andate distrutte. Si segnala tuttavia che nello spazio compreso tra la 6^a e la 10^a *klimaka* attualmente non è stata individuata nessun'altra proedria.

L'orchestra (Fig. 13), in parte scavata nella roccia naturale, è un cerchio completo con un diametro esterno di 16,65 m e interno 15,60m²⁹. È circondata da un bordo in pietra, composto da tre file di pietre in altezza, che presentano una cimasa (kimation) alla base della facciata. Tuttavia, i filari non si sono conservati in tutto il perimetro, dato che nella sua parte più grande si sono preservate la prima e la seconda fila, in pietra calcarea, mentre la terza fila, in materiale di arenaria, si è conservata solo in alcuni punti. La fila superiore ha le facciate esterne ed interne intonacate nella parte più grande che si è salvata, mentre la sezione antistante la proedria, a nord dell'11^a *klimaka*, riporta anche una cimasa sulla facciata esterna. Riteniamo che la roccia levigata, che è stata individuata in alcuni punti, rappresenti la pavimentazione dell'orchestra. Un elemento interessante è l'individuazione, nel corso delle nostre ricerche, del saggio di scavo effettuato da W. Dörpfeld all'inizio del XX secolo, approssimativamente sull'asse della 5^a *klimaka*.

All'esterno dell'orchestra, ad un livello inferiore, si trova l'euripo che è costituito da due ordini di pietre porose intagliate, sulla cui superficie superiore è modellata una intelaiatura, sulla quale erano appoggiate le lastre di copertura (Fig. 14). Lo spazio tra l'orchestra e la prima fila di sedili era riempito di pietre lavorate, spostate dalla loro posizione originaria, e per questo motivo l'euripo non è visibile in tutta la sua circonferenza. Tra gli elementi più interessanti della ricerca c'è il ritrovamento, nella zona dell'euripo e dell'orchestra, di parti di troni in pietra porosa, riccamente decorati in rilievo con zampe di leone, delfini, etc. In particolare, a NE della 6^a *klimaka* e della proedria, sopra l'euripo, è stato rinvenuto un trono in arenaria, caduto su un fianco, di cui si conserva lo schienale e il piede leonino destro (Fig. 15).

È decorato con una cimasa lesbio sul lato principale e posteriore del sedile. Ad una distanza di 2,50 m da questo e a NE della 7^a *klimaka* è stata individuata parte di un secondo trono, anch'esso in arenaria. Attualmente è stato scoperto ancora un frammento di trono (dimensioni visibili: 0,90 m

²⁹ Come l'orchestra nei teatri di Acarnania, Oiniades, vd. Gogos 2003, 43-64 (Oiniades), e Stratos, vd. Karadedos *et alii* 2018; Vikatou *et alii* 2022.

x 0,50 m x 0,27 m), decorato con il rilievo di un leone su di un fronte, e un delfino e il muso di un animale sull'altro. Alla sua base si trova una cimasa lesbio. Nell'area dell'euripo sono state trovate altre due parti di troni, una decorata con un leone in rilievo e una cimasa lesbio alla base, e l'altra con una testa di uccello (oca?) in rilievo rivolta all'indietro (Fig. 16, 17, 18).

Per quando riguarda i due muri di contenimento del koilon, sono conservati in parte e realizzati con materiale poroso. Quello settentrionale è lungo 28 m, largo circa 1 m e in alcuni punti si conserva una seconda serie di filari fino a un'altezza 0,53 m. Quello meridionale è stato individuato per una lunghezza di 20,40 m e 0,60 m di larghezza. Nei primi 13,18 m i filari si sono mantenute in situ, mentre successivamente si è conservata solo la roccia intagliata, sulla quale sarebbero stati collocate (Fig. 10, 19, 20).

L'edificio scenico, che aveva anche un secondo piano, è stato realizzato alla periferia orientale dell'orchestra. È lungo circa 20,00 m e si è preservato in situ una parte delle fondamenta dello stilobate (Fig. 13, 20). I numerosi frammenti di colonne in arenaria e gran parte dell'architrave (*epistylion*), finora individuate (Fig. 21, 22), permettono di rappresentare in larga misura la facciata ionica del proscenio, che si stima avesse 10 semicolonne. Tuttavia questo verrà confermato dallo studio architettonico del monumento, che è in corso. Due pietre, collocate all'interno del proscenio, con grandi incavi quadrati per l'incastro di elementi lignei, costituiscono probabilmente i supporti per i meccanismi scenici o i sostegni per il soffitto della struttura scenica. Elementi corrispondenti sono stati trovati anche in altri teatri.

Ai due lati corti del portico ionico erano state ricavate rampe (Fig. 19, 20, 23, 24), lunghe 9,00 m, il cui pavimento inclinato partiva dai parodoi e terminava nel logeion, cioè la copertura del portico al secondo piano, dove comparivano gli attori. Il coronamento delle pareti delle rampe è sagomato con una fascia in rilievo (Fig. 23).

L'inizio di entrambe le rampe è stato individuato in situ, e, come si deduce dalle fondamenta scoperte nel parodo meridionale, esistevano porte che chiudevano i parodoi. Il possente muro di contenimento che si trova a una distanza di 13,00 m, alle spalle del proscenio e ad un livello molto più basso, costituisce probabilmente il limite orientale dell'edificio scenico. Tra il proscenio e il muro di contenimento posteriore doveva esserci un muro intermedio che divideva longitudinalmente la struttura scenica in due zone allungate. La larghezza dell'edificio scenico è stimata in 13 metri (Fig. 20).

I parodoi, larghi 4,90 m sono delimitati dalla rampa della scena, lunga 8,95 m e larga 2,43 m, e dal muro di sostegno del koilon (Fig. 13, 19). All'interno della rampa settentrionale è stato individuato uno spazio

delimitato da due muri rustici, all'interno dei quali sono stati rinvenuti frammenti di statuette e vasellame (la ricerca nell'area non è ancora stata completata). Nella zona dei parodoi sono stati rinvenuti numerosi elementi architettonici, spostati dalla loro posizione originaria (Fig.13). Questo materiale da costruzione, dopo essere stato fotografato e disegnato sul posto, è stato poi rimosso in modo da proseguire le ricerche (Fig. 10,19). Si tratta di filari calcarei appartenenti alle sedute del koilon, altri di pietra porosa provenienti dai muri di contenimento e di blocchi di arenaria delle rampe della scena. Sono state rinvenute anche numerose sezioni di semicolonne di piccole dimensioni, frammenti di architrave (il più grande di 0,99 m di lunghezza, 0,54 m di larghezza e 0,46 m di altezza) così come molti altri elementi architettonici che dimostrano l'entità della distruzione che ha subito il monumento (Fig. 21, 22).

Per quanto riguarda i reperti del teatro, oltre ai resti architettonici, sono stati raccolti cocci di ceramica, frammenti di statuette, monete in bronzo e parti di oggetti in rame e piombo³⁰.

5. Considerazioni

Il teatro di Leucade, che è il primo teatro antico venuto alla luce nelle Isole Ionie, è un imponente monumento centrale del tessuto urbano della città, testimone della gloria e della prosperità della potente colonia corinzia di Leucade, che dal 272 a.C fino al 197 a.C. divenne la seconda capitale dei Koinon di Acarnani³¹. Il teatro, in cui si riuniva il *φιλήχων και φιλοθεάμων* pubblico, cioè “amante dell'ascolto e amante dello spettacolo”³², costituiva anche la scena della vita pubblica e probabilmente ospitava assemblee politiche e convegni della città e dell'Akarnanikon Koinon³³.

³⁰ Al momento il restauro di tali oggetti non è stato completato e la loro registrazione non è ancora stata conclusa.

³¹ Vd. Rodoghiannis 1980, 167-177, 188-194; Bonelou 2020, 54-68 con bibliografia precedente.

³² Platone (Politia v. 437a-b) attribuisce queste caratterizzazioni al pubblico teatrale.

³³ I limitati scavi di recupero nella grande città dell'antica Leucade non hanno rivelato altri grandi edifici pubblici, come ad esempio il Bouleuterion. È possibile che le assemblee si svolgessero nel teatro della città. Per i teatri dove si riuniva l'*Ekklesia del Demos*, cfr Orlandos, Travlos 1986, s.v. teatro: *luogo in cui si radunava l' Ekklesia del Demos*. Inoltre in diverse città l'Ekklesia del Demos si riuniva in teatro, si annunciava l'assegnazione di onorificenze e venivano collocati monumenti onorari, come ad Atene, al Pireo (teatro di Mounichia), ai teatri di Thorikos, di Sicione e di Tegea (la Confederazione Achea), e di Argos era convocata anche l'Ekklesia del Demos, ed a tanti altri. Nel teatro di Sparta si tenevano giochi e sport di gruppo e, probabilmente anche assemblee pubbliche. Vd. bibliografia precedente raccolta in

Il teatro antico di Leucade

Sembra che sia stato abbandonato dopo la fine dell'antichità e gran parte del suo materiale sia stato rimosso per costruzioni più nuove, alcune delle quali edificate sul koilon.

Il teatro è completamente integrato nella geomorfologia naturale, in quanto il koilon è scavato nel pendio roccioso della collina, mentre l'orchestra e la scena si sviluppano sul livello pianeggiante, sorretto da un possente muro di contenimento, con vista panoramica sull'ampia regione (Fig. 25). Nel complesso costituisce senza dubbio il monumento più importante e imponente venuto alla luce nell'antica Leucade. Il diametro del koilon è di 82 m e ciò classifica il monumento nella categoria dei teatri medi. Poiché la parte superiore del koilon non è stata identificata, probabilmente aveva misure più grandi. La priorità principale della nostra ricerca ora è chiarire e definire il limite esterno del koilon³⁴ e completare lo scavo dell'edificio scenico.

Il teatro di Leucade ha dimensioni simili all'equivalente di Stratos³⁵, con il quale presenta molti caratteri costruttivi e morfologici comuni, più gli altri teatri dell'Etoloakarnania³⁶ (Oiniades³⁷, Kalydona³⁸, Pleurona³⁹, Makynia⁴⁰). Si stima che la sua capienza, secondo i dati finora raccolti dagli scavi, superava i 6.000 spettatori. Anche il suo edificio scenico presenta notevoli somiglianze con il teatro di Stratos e Kalydona, in quanto entrambi,

Lampaki 2013, 18. Al teatro di Gitana di Thesprotia che fungeva da luogo di incontro per l'*Ekklesia del Koinon* locale e il Koinon degli Epiroti, cf. Pliakou *et alii* 2022, 20-22.

³⁴ Le file superiori di questa zona del koilon dovevano essere costruite con terra e pietre più piccole, aggiunte al livello della superficie originaria, in modo da raggiungere lo stesso livello del resto delle file. Vedere caso simile nel teatro Calydon, discusso in Frederiksen e Vikatou, 2022, 52-3.

³⁵ Le pubblicazioni finali del teatro, che è in fase di restauro da parte della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Aitolokarnania e Lefkada, nell'ambito del programma ESPA della Grecia occidentale che implementa il progetto "Manutenzione, sistemazione e restauro del teatro antico di Stratos", non sono ancora avvenute. Riferimenti al teatro v. Lampaki 2013, 57-60; Karadedos *et alii* 2018; Vikatou *et al.* 2022.

³⁶ Ad oggi conosciamo con certezza sei teatri nelle città di Makynia, Kalydona, Pleurona, Oiniades, Stratos, Amphilochikon Argos. Tutti sono stati sistematicamente scavati e i teatri di Pleurona, Oiniades e Stratos sono stati restaurati. Solo il teatro di Amphilochikon Argos, che non è stato ancora evidenziato, presenta elementi architettonici visibili sparsi nell'area, v. indicativamente Kolonas *et alii* 2009. È probabile l'esistenza di teatri nella città di Tuirreio in Acarnania, senza tuttavia che ci siano elementi di prova.

³⁷ Gogos, Kolonas 1998, 305-31; Kolonas 2006, 483-492; Gogos 2003, con la bibliografia precedente. Kolonas, Stamatis 2016, 148-151.

³⁸ Vikatou, Frederiksen 2015, 628-630. Si è recentemente conclusa la pubblicazione dello scavo sistematico del teatro, cfr Frederiksen, Vikatou, 2023.

³⁹ Kolonas *et alii* 2009, 25-33; Karadedos 2015. Kolonas, Stamatis 2016, 122-129;

⁴⁰ Funzionava anche come bouleuterion: Kolonas 1994, 79-95; Stiros, Psimoulis, Kolonas, 2005, 299-313; Saranti 2018, 163-177; Chatzidakis 2016.

oltre alle rampe, hanno anche possenti muri di contenimento dietro la scena⁴¹. Tuttavia, per quanto riguarda invece la scena a due piani del teatro di Leucade, che per le sue dimensioni sarebbe estremamente sensazionale, al momento non abbiamo la possibilità di fare ulteriori approfondimenti, poiché il suo scavo è ancora in atto.

Come è noto, la decorazione dei teatri antichi era limitata ai soggetti scultorei che talvolta recavano le sedute della proedria, ai dipinti e alle cimase decorative, in stile dorico o ionico del proscenio e delle porte dei parodoi. Uno degli elementi più interessanti del nostro teatro è il ritrovamento di troni in pietra, frammenti dei quali sono stati rinvenuti sparsi nell'area dell'euripo⁴². Poiché i reperti non sono stati ancora restaurati, il numero esatto dei troni esistenti non è ancora chiaro.

Come accennato in precedenza, i frammenti preservano, ai piedi dei troni, una decorazione in rilievo di zampa di leone, mentre nelle altre parti si possono osservare delfini, muso di animale, pelle di leone, testa di uccello rivolta all'indietro e cimasa lesbio sul davanti e sul retro (Fig. 15-18). L'esempio più vicino in questa regione, dell'esistenza di troni è quello di Stratos, la prima capitale dell'Akarnanikon Koinon, dove ai margini dell'orchestra furono rinvenuti i resti di tre troni, che sono separati dalle sedute della proedria, con l'euripo e un corridoio lastricato attorno ad esso. Tenendo conto della posizione in cui sono state ritrovate le parti delle proedrie nel teatro di Leucade, probabilmente si sviluppavano anche queste attorno al perimetro dell'orchestra e in seguito sono crollate nell'euripo.

Abbiamo altri esempi di troni decorati provenienti da diversi teatri, tra cui il più imponente è il teatro di Dioniso ad Atene (IV sec. a.C.), dove un totale di 67 troni in marmo pentelico delimitano l'orchestra⁴³. Si distingue dagli altri il trono con iscrizioni e riccamente decorato del sacerdote di Dioniso, che reca l'epigrafe: *ιερέως Διονυσίου Ελευθερίου* (del sacerdote di Dionysos Eleftherios)⁴⁴. Nella proedria di Ramnuda c'erano cinque troni

⁴¹ Per il teatro di Strato vd. Karadedos *et alii* 2018; Vikatou *et alii* 2022. Per il teatro di Calidone vd. Frederiksen, Vikatou 2023, 30-48, con bibliografia.

⁴² In generale per il catalogo dei troni provenienti da diversi teatri, il loro simbolismo, la loro decorazione e funzione vd. Lampaki 2013, vol. 2, 7-16, 358.

⁴³ Tutti hanno alti schienali con sostegni curvi per la testa. Solo quello centrale aveva braccioli, poggiapiedi e decorazioni in rilievo. Su ciascuno è iscritto il nome della personalità ufficiale a cui era destinato e costituiscono la testimonianza più importante dell'istituzione della proedria, riconoscimento onorifico che distingueva i membri della comunità cittadina, come sacerdoti e dignitari, i quali occupavano posti separati nella prima fila del koilon.

⁴⁴ Lampaki 2013, 109, 111-114, con bibliografia. Nella zona tra le zampe del leone è raffigurata una decorazione in rilievo di Arimaspi che lottano con i leondoghipes (metà leoni e metà avvoltoi), due Satiri e tra loro, un grappolo d'uva, mentre sul lato esterno dei braccioli

(IV sec. a.C.)⁴⁵, mentre nel teatro di Oropos i cinque troni in marmo, con una ricca decorazione floreale in rilievo, si trovano alla periferia dell'orchestra e risalgono al I sec. a.C.⁴⁶. A Delo vengono riferiti due troni (inizi del III sec. a.C.) che recano decorazione floreali⁴⁷. A Messina due dei sei troni conservati attorno all'orchestra risalgono all'età ellenistica. Hanno piedi leonini e uno, posto quasi al vertice del semicerchio dell'orchestra, sembra fosse destinato al sacerdote di Dioniso. Lo schienale conserva alla sua estremità sinistra una testa d'oca rivolta all'indietro, simile all'esempio del teatro di Leucade⁴⁸. Nell'orchestra del teatro dell'Orchomenos Arcadico⁴⁹ si trovano due troni marmorei (III sec. a.C.) e il basamento di un terzo, probabilmente destinati a funzionari religiosi più alti in carica. Le facciate anteriori e laterali presentano decorazioni in rilievo che imitano gli elementi decorativi dei mobili in legno. Del teatro di Tegea sono noti due imponenti troni di marmo, rinvenuti durante i primi scavi (1888-1889). Uno, più grande e ornato in modo più elaborato, era evidentemente destinato a un importante personaggio pubblico, di carica superiore rispetto alla persona a cui era destinato il trono più piccolo⁵⁰. Ovviamente i troni del teatro di Leucade erano anch'essi destinati a persone di spicco, sacerdoti o funzionari della città o dell'Akarnanikon Koinon.

è raffigurato un Eros alato, inginocchiato, che tiene in mano un gallo pronto a duellare con un altro. Fasce ornamentali in rilievo, che terminano con viticci, foglie di palma e corone (premi delle gare), completano la decorazione.

⁴⁵ Lampaki 2013, 240-248. I troni recavano iscrizioni e corone incise.

⁴⁶ Lampaki 2013, 303, i troni risalgono al periodo di Silla. Lo schienale ha una linea di contorno curva e i piedi hanno la forma di zampe di leone. I lati dello schienale sono decorati con steli spinosi e le facciate laterali delle sedute sono decorate con germogli con molte nervature e si chiudono con un'imponente viticcio. Il rilievo è di buona fattura. Tutti e cinque recano incisa sulla facciata la stessa iscrizione.

⁴⁷ cfr Lampaki 2013, 342-345.

⁴⁸ cfr Lampaki 2013, 405.

⁴⁹ Probabilmente c'erano cinque troni presidenziali in totale, come nel caso dei teatri di Oropos, Priene e altrove. L'esistenza di fori sulla parte anteriore dello schienale, probabilmente è in relazione all'inserimento di elementi decorativi metallici, cfr Lampaki 2013, 94-95.

⁵⁰ Lampaki 2013, 99-100. La differenziazione è sottolineata anche dalla decorazione. Le gambe anteriori di entrambi hanno la forma di una zampa di leone con un poggiapiedi rettangolare fra di loro. La facciata laterale sinistra del grande trono è decorata con una acanto in rilievo (quella destra è disadorna), da cui si originano due apofigi elicoidali contrapposti, con uno stelo al centro, e da cui si genera un apofige lanceolato. La parte superiore del trono è decorata con viticci, mentre al centro è presente un acanto stilizzato. La stessa decorazione era riportata anche dal trono più piccolo, nel lato destro (il lato sinistro è privo di decorazioni), come si deduce dalle parti di viticci che si sono salvati. I lati non decorati di entrambi dimostrano che erano collocati uno di fianco all'altro e che solo il lato esterno rivolto verso lo spettatore era decorato.

Per quanto riguarda la datazione del monumento è ancora prematuro giungere a conclusioni definitive, dato che sia lo scavo che la redazione dello studio architettonico sono ancora in corso, mentre i reperti rinvenuti (cocci e scarsi frammenti di statuine che appartengono al periodo ellenistico) non hanno fornito particolari elementi utili all'indagine. Tenendo conto del fatto che i teatri dell'Etoloakarnania, e soprattutto dell'Acarnania, furono costruiti all'inizio del IV sec. a.C., si ritiene che probabilmente anche il teatro di Leucade fu costruito nel IV sec. a.C., così come altri edifici pubblici, quando la città conobbe grande benessere e prosperità economica. Si prevede che il completamento dell'indagine sistematica di scavo, lo studio del monumento e dei reperti, ma anche la ricerca delle fonti antiche possa fornire risposte precise circa la data della sua costruzione, le sue eventuali fasi costruttive, la sua esatta forma architettonica, nonché le sue possibili funzioni in relazione al percorso storico dell'antica Leucade.

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Il teatro antico di Leucade

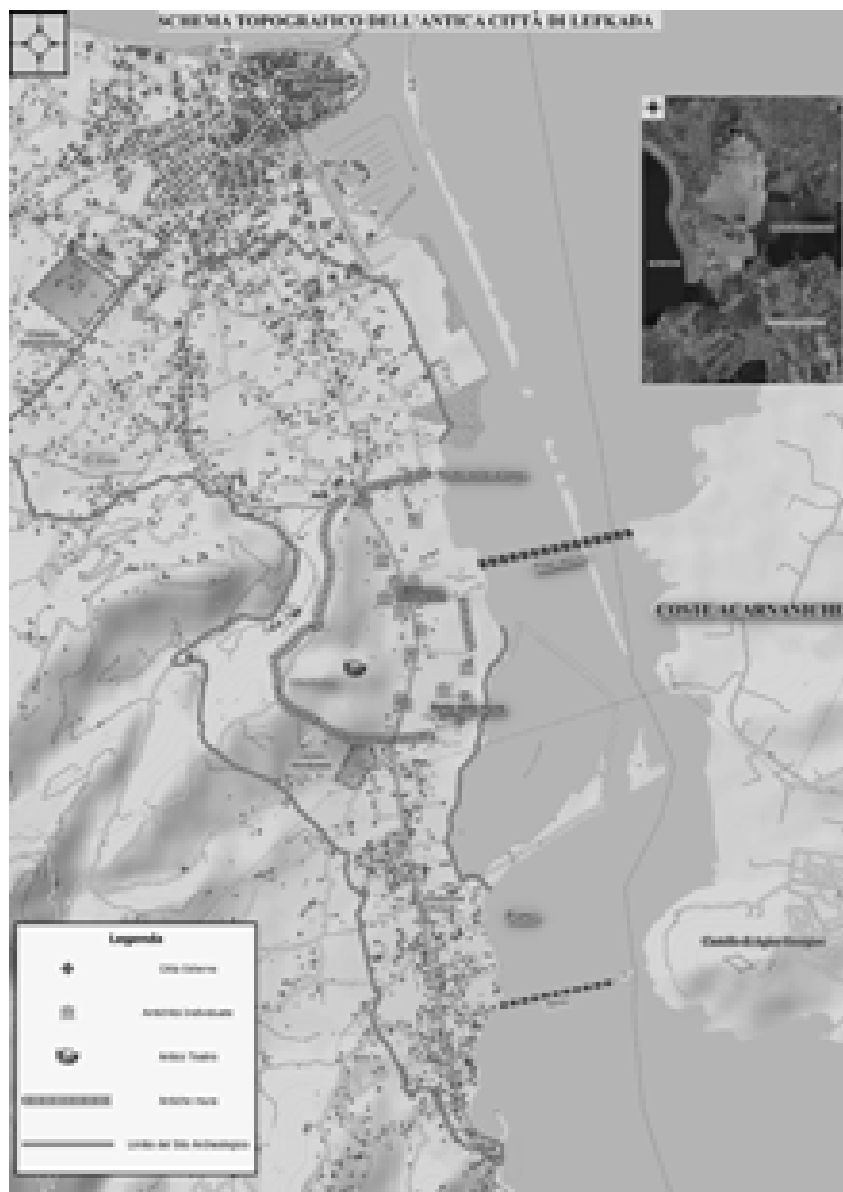


Fig. 1. Cartina dell'isola di Lefkada e cartina topografica dell'antica Leucade. Sono segnate le mura, il teatro, le abitazioni, i cimiteri, il porto, il ponte, etc.

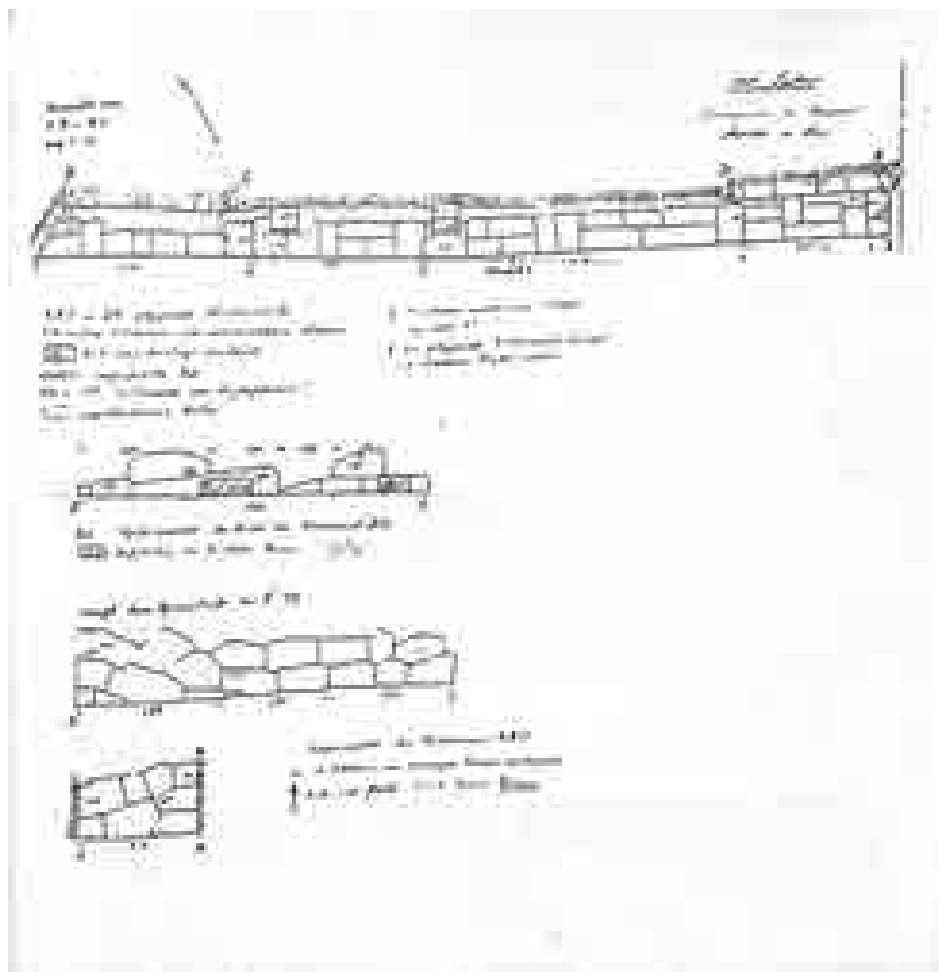


Fig. 2. Gli schizzi di Krüger dopo la prima ricerca nel 1901.



Fig. 3. Il teatro prima degli scavi. La zona in cui si trovava era ricoperta da un rigoglioso uliveto.



Fig. 4. Individuazione dei sedili durante i saggi di prova nel 2015.



Fig. 5. Sezione
dell'orchestra identificata
durante i saggi di
approfondimento nel 2015.



Fig. 6. Il muro di sostegno
dell'orchestra nel 2015.



Fig. 7. L'area del teatro
durante il taglio degli alberi
all'inizio dei lavori dello
scavo sistematico.

Il teatro antico di Leucade



Fig. 8. I lavori al teatro all'inizio dello scavo sistematico.



Fig. 9. Il teatro dopo i primi tre periodi dello scavo sistematico.



Fig. 10. Fotografia aerea alla fine dell'ultimo period degli scavi (2023).



Fig. 11. Fotografia aerea della parte centrale del teatro (orchestra, proedria, euripo e le prime serie di sedili).



Fig. 12. Particolare della prima proedria e della klimax (parte settentrionale).



Fig. 13. Fotografia aerea della parte centrale del teatro (2023). Si vedono l'orchestra, i parodoi con il materiale caduto, le rampe e l'edificio scenico. Parte della scena si trova nella proprietà adiacente, dove ci sono anche gli ulivi, e ancora non è scavata.



Fig. 14. Particolare dell'euripo.



Fig. 15. Frammento del trono decorato col piede leonino.

Fig. 16. Frammento del trono condecorazione in rilievo di leone, delfino e testa di animale.



Fig. 17. Frammento del trono con decorazione di leonte in rilievo.



Fig. 18. Frammento del trono con testa d'oca in rilievo rivolta all'indietro.



Fig. 19. Veduta generale del teatro da Sud. In primo piano il muro meridionale di contenimento del Koilon e la rampa.

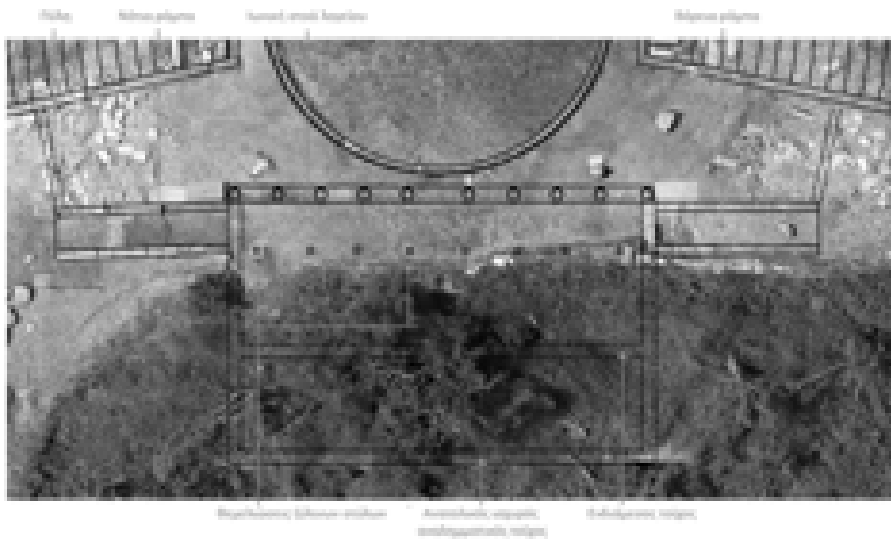


Fig. 20. Fotografia aerea dove si vedono l'edificio scenico, le rampe, i parodoi e i muri di sostegno del koilon e della scena (sono segnate le loro dimensioni).



Fig. 21. Frammento della parte inferiore di una semicolonna proveniente dalla facciata della scena. Trovata al parodo nord.



Fig. 22. Parte dell'architrave ionica (epistylion) della scena. Trovata al parodo sud.



Fig. 23. Il muro della rampa settentrionale, dove si distinguono l'inizio della rampa e la fascia decorativa obliqua in rilievo.



Fig. 24. La rampa sud. In primo piano, all'interno della scena, si vede la pietra con un incavo dove probabilmente era incastrato un palo di sostegno in legno.



Fig. 25. Fotografia aerea del teatro con veduta panoramica del canale e delle coste dell'Acarnania.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WIND, SLOPE AND SHADE: BIOCLIMATIC ADAPTATION OF LEUCAS' CITY PLAN AND HELLENISTIC HOUSES

When one means to have the right sort of house, must he contrive to make it as pleasant to live in and as useful as it can be?

Xen. *Mem.* 3, 8, 8. Translation by E.C. Marchant.

1. Introduction

The Island of Leucas is part of the Ionian Archipelago, although its connection with the mainland is and was so strong that the ancient Greeks called it a peninsula or *chersonesos* (Strabo 10, 2, 2). In Homeric epic it is called *Nerikos* and is also described as a promontory forming part of the mainland (*Od.* 24, 376-378). The ancient city of Leucas was founded by the Corinthians in around 655-625 BC, during the process of colonisation of the Adriatic by Corinth and its colony Corcyra, which took place in the 7th century BC¹. Before the arrival of the Corinthians, the island had been populated by Acarnanians as indigenous inhabitants². The urban centre of the newly founded city was located on the approximately 600 m wide strait separating the Island of Leucas from the Acarnanian coast. The site chosen for the location of the new city was a strategic point that allowed control of the strait between the island and the mainland³. This strait was made navigable by the Corinthians⁴, who opened a channel in the 7th or

¹ Domínguez Monedero 1993, 19, 137.

² Pliakou 2001b, 147.

³ Despite the strategic importance of the Leucas Canal, little is known about the sites from which visual control over the strait was exercised. Morris (2001) studied the farmstead towers of Leucas, identifying 15 towers from the Classic Period, among which only Krupa-tower and, less clearly, Maiomeno-tower functioned as watchtowers, but not at the Leucas Canal close to the ancient town.

⁴ As early as Mycenaean times, the cabotage navigation route of the so-called Western circuit ran through the Ionian Islands. The Western circuit was a long-distance route connecting the Peloponnese with the northern and western Adriatic coasts and with the Italic Peninsula (Milán Quiñones de León 2022, 393, 393 fig. 3, 395 fig. 4, 396).

6th century BC (Livy 33, 17, 6), which in later times became waterlogged from time to time and needed new interventions to become navigable again⁵. During the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Periods the Leucas Canal became a strategic passage to control maritime traffic along the Western Route connecting the Peloponnese and the Gulf of Corinth with the Adriatic coast, the Italic Peninsula and Sicily. During Hellenistic times Leucas was the seat of the Acarnanian Confederacy from about 230 BC⁶, with the assembly of the Confederacy meeting in Leucas (Livy 33, 17, 1)⁷. After Octavian's victory at Actium in 31 BC, Leucas became dependent on the newly founded Nicopolis⁸. In the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD⁹, the city of Leucas was abandoned¹⁰, as its inhabitants were forcibly relocated in order to populate Octavian's new "victory city", meeting the same fate as Cassope or Ambracia¹¹.

At the present time, the site of ancient Leucas remains sparsely inhabited and land use in this area of the island is still mainly agricultural. Due to increasing tourist pressure on the island, single-family houses have been built in the area of the ancient town. Even so, most of the area remains unbuilt and under cultivation, which made it possible in 2002 to carry out a geophysical prospection survey¹² of an area measuring 80,000 m² in

⁵ Pliakou 2001b, 149.

⁶ Pliakou 2001b, 147.

⁷ The Acarnanian Confederacy was allied with Philip V in the Second Macedonian War (200-197 BC), and Leucas was besieged and conquered by Lucius Quintus Flaminus in 197 BC. Leucas remained the seat of the Acarnanian Confederacy after Titus Quinctius Flaminus' declaration at Corinth establishing the freedom of the Greek cities, until 168 BC, when, after the Battle of Pydna, Leucas became independent of the Acarnanian Confederacy. It came under the control of the Romans, who from the mid-1st century BC used the island as a naval base, such as when Agrippa used it against Antonius (Pliakou 2001b 147).

⁸ Pliakou 2001b, 147.

⁹ The date of abandonment can be established between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD. In Leucas House AII6 the last coin recovered was minted in Rome in 15 BC, and in House AV a fragment of terra sigillata stamped with a seal used between 20 BC and 15 AD by the workshop of L. Tettius (Samia) was documented (Fiedler 2003, 83; Id. 2005, 100).

¹⁰ During the process of abandonment some movable or reusable construction elements, such as bathtubs, well heads and roof tiles, were removed from the Leucas houses, presumably to be reused in other constructions (Fiedler 2003, 82-83).

¹¹ Fiedler 2003, 82-83; Id. 2005, 100.

¹² The geophysical survey was carried out in 2002 and published in 2008 (Sarris *et alii* 2008) by the team made up of G. Pliakou (12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities) and A. Sarris, S. Topouzi, F. Triantafyllidis and S. Soetens (Laboratory of Geophysical - Satellite Remote Sensing & Archaeo-environment, Institute of Mediterranean Studies - Foundation of Research & Technology (F.O.R.T.H.)).

the south-eastern part of the old town¹³. Since the 1960's, and mainly in the last two decades, certain areas have been excavated, preserving the existing structures in several parts of the ancient city and documenting the different phases of construction of several houses¹⁴. In spite of these isolated actions, the majority of the surface of the ancient city of Leucas remains unexcavated.

The aim of this study is to investigate the adaptation of both the city plan of Leucas and its domestic Hellenistic architecture to the topography of the terrain and to the climatic conditions. We shall analyse how the streets and Hellenistic houses of Leucas took advantage of the benefits of orientation, slope, prevailing winds, sunlight and protection against solar radiation. We shall study which factors were prioritised by the ancient builders of Leucas and reflect on the choices they made to maximise the advantages of their location and minimise the disadvantages, both in urban planning and in building the Hellenistic phase of the houses¹⁵.

2. The Adaptation of Leucas' City Plan to the Topography and Climate of Its Location

Archaeological studies on the Island of Leucas began with the work of Partsch¹⁶. Later on, Leucas was explored by Dörpfeld¹⁷, who directed the German Archaeological Institute's excavations on the island from 1901 and published his results in 1927¹⁸. As mentioned above, most of the site of ancient Leucas remains unexcavated, but some of its structures have been excavated and studied, especially in the last two decades. The layout of the city walls has been studied in particular by Zachos and Douzougli¹⁹. The urban fabric and some of the houses have been investigated mainly by

¹³ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

¹⁴ Fiedler 2003; 2005.

¹⁵ Due to the length and focus of this study, it is not our aim to discuss in depth the materials and building techniques used in the construction of the houses of Leucas.

¹⁶ Partsch 1889.

¹⁷ Dörpfeld (1927) identified Leucas with Homeric Ithaca (Pascual 2022, 496 n. 5) and devoted much of his life to his excavations on the island.

¹⁸ Dörpfeld's work (1927) is still considered a landmark and his tomb rests in a privileged enclave in the Bay of Nidri.

¹⁹ Zachos, Douzougli 2003.

Zachos and Douzougli²⁰ and by Fiedler²¹. The city had at least three necropolises, which have been studied by Pliakou²² who has also documented several suburban farmsteads²³. If we analyse together some of the excavated structures that have been documented and the results of the geophysical survey carried out in 2002²⁴, we can draw some conclusions that allow us to understand how the urban fabric was laid out in general terms.

In this study we offer an approximate topographical plan²⁵ (Fig. 1), as a graphic synthesis, of some of the structures of the ancient city of Leucas that have been excavated in different archaeological campaigns over the years or have been documented by geophysical prospection surveys²⁶, providing an idea of the possible layout of the urban fabric. In our plan we have included a possible layout of the wall, on the basis of information from relevant publications and satellite photography²⁷. The wall has a perimeter of approximately 4.5 km²⁸ and encloses an area of between 90 and 100 hectares²⁹. Part of the wall is preserved in good condition, up to a height of about 2.5 m³⁰ on the north and southwest sides, following the ridge of the northeast foothill of the Koulmos Hill, which encloses the city on the west. In the east, near the coast, a shorter section of the wall is preserved, and in the south of the city the position of the wall has not been verified³¹. On the hillside of Koulmos is located the ancient theatre of the city of Leucas, which has been excavated, although the findings have not yet been published³².

²⁰ Zachos, Douzougli 2003.

²¹ Fiedler 1999; Id. 2003; Id. 2005.

²² Pliakou 2003.

²³ Pliakou 2001a.

²⁴ Sarris *et alii* 2008.

²⁵ To the topographic information we have added the runoff map from topoguide.gr/geology/geology_hydrology_en.php (viewed 10/02/2023).

²⁶ Sarris *et alii* 2008.

²⁷ In our plan we have followed the layout of the wall proposed by the Ecole Française d'Athènes and the British School at Athens, as shown on the map in the documentation of the emergency excavations carried out in 2000 by G. Pliakou, available on the website chronique.efa.gr/?kroute=report&idf=1646 (viewed 11/02/2023).

²⁸ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 78.

²⁹ Fiedler 2005, 100.

³⁰ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 78.

³¹ The 2002 geophysical survey (Sarris *et alii* 2008, 84) collected data that suggests that part of the southern wall followed the route of the present dirt-road that heads east from the junction with the provincial road that now runs along the east coast of the island. We have included it in our plan in a lighter tone until it is verified.

³² Through satellite photography and field survey we have located the theatre and other excavated areas.

In order to study the layout of the ancient city, we can analyse information from various excavations and from the geophysical prospection survey³³. The data yielded by the geophysical anomalies detected during this geophysical survey make it possible to verify certain points of the layout of the urban fabric of the ancient city. Thanks to the use of vertical magnetic gradient and soil resistance techniques, it was possible to recognise a pattern of parallel streets, 3.75-4.5 m wide and running east-west, about 35 m apart, with drainage pipes on their north side³⁴. These streets would have been crossed by other perpendicular streets with a north-south direction³⁵ and 5.5-6 m wide³⁶, which would be the main axes and are known to us thanks to the intersections revealed during the survey³⁷. On our map we have marked the position of the east-west axes revealed by the geophysical survey³⁸. Due to the similarity between the outlying housing plots, which we shall discuss later, it is possible that the succession of parallel streets extended into the unsurveyed areas, generating regular blocks, and we have included them on our map in a lighter tone until their existence is confirmed. We have also included the north-south transverse axes documented in the geophysical survey on our map and have extended them towards the unprospected area, in a lighter tone until their existence is verified. Sarris *et alii* consider that the blocks occupied by the houses would be rectangular, with their longest side placed in an east-west direction³⁹, but they do not establish a length for the blocks. Knowing the position of House BII3, which we shall explain later, and deducing that its entrance door would be located on the east side⁴⁰, we can conclude that this house would possibly be located on the eastern edge of its block, bordering one of the north-south axes of the city, which we have included on the map in a light tone until its existence is proven. The distance to the north-south street documented by the geophysical survey could determine the length of the block of Houses BI4 and BII3, which we have included on our map and

³³ Sarris *et alii* 2008.

³⁴ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 82.

³⁵ The north-south axis identified in the geophysical survey extends southwards in a direction that appears to be heading towards the ancient port of Lygia, the port of the ancient city of Leucas where there was a mole used to connect to the Acarnanian coast (Sarris *et alii* 2008, 83).

³⁶ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

³⁷ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 82 fig. 5.

³⁸ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 83 fig. 7.

³⁹ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

⁴⁰ As shall be explained below, the last strip on the east side of House BII3 remains unexcavated, but no doorway has been found on the rest of its sides.

extended over the rest of the city grid, in a lighter tone until their exact dimensions are confirmed.

Considering the above-mentioned characteristics of the possible urban fabric of the ancient city of Leucas, we shall now analyse its suitability to the climatic conditions of its location. The ancient city of Leucas was situated between the hillside of Koulmos and the coast, facing the strait separating the island from the Acarnanian coast. This location allowed it to be sheltered from the wetter winds from the open sea, while at the same time being more exposed to the strait and easterly winds. Situating cities on a hillside was considered beneficial, especially if they were exposed to favourable easterly winds, and sheltered from more harmful winds, as Aristotle explains:

“The site of the city itself we must pray that fortune may place on sloping ground, having regard to four considerations: first, as a thing essential, the consideration of health: for cities whose site slopes east or towards the breezes that blow from the sunrise are more healthy, and in the second degree those that face away from the north wind, for these are milder in winter. [...] And since we have to consider the health of the inhabitants, and this depends upon the place being well situated both on healthy ground and with a healthy aspect”.

Arist. *Pol.* 7, 1330a-1330b. Translation by H. Rackham.

In July and August, the months of the year when wind is most desirable to relieve heat, the dominant wind in the strait between the Island of Leucas and the Acarnanian coast is the Maistros or Maestral⁴¹, which blows, albeit with little intensity, from the north-northwest. As we can infer from the different widths of the streets mentioned by Sarris *et alii*⁴², the main axes of ancient Leucas were oriented to the north-northwest, the dominant wind direction in summer, which favoured ventilation and salubrious conditions of both public spaces and private houses. During the rest of the year the Maistros or Maestral is replaced by westerly, northerly or southerly winds, which blow strongly on the Island of Leucas. In the colder months it is necessary to protect houses from the prevailing winds to avoid excessive cooling of the homes. In ancient Leucas the westerly

⁴¹ In the Adriatic Sea the Maistros or Maestral is an anabatic wind from the north-northwest that blows gently in summer from the sea towards the east coast of the Adriatic. On the Island of Leucas, it blows from the sea towards the mainland and across the strait separating the island from the Acarnanian coast. This information concerning the prevailing winds in Leucas has been obtained from the website www.windfinder.com (viewed 16/02/2023).

⁴² Sarris *et alii* 2008, 82.

Taking advantage of wind, slope and shade

winds from the open sea were blocked by the Koulmos Hill, behind which the town was sheltered. Due to the direction of the axes of the urban fabric, unfavourable winds found it more difficult to move through the streets of the city in winter than the favourable Maistros or Maestral which blew in summer from the north-north-west.

The western part of the city⁴³ was built on the slopes of Koulmos Hill and the eastern part of the city was laid out across the coastal plain at its foot. In addition to being oriented towards the winds that prevail in summer, we can say that the main streets follow the direction of the contour lines of the Koulmos Hill to the west of the city. This layout facilitates circulation along the main streets, while the slight unevenness of the terrain is overcome by the minor cross-streets. The location of Leucas on the hillside was beneficial in facilitating the drainage of the waste pipes that ran along the northern side of the secondary transversal streets⁴⁴, following the maximum slope of the hillside, as well as the existing natural run-offs. This arrangement allowed the drainage pipes to be directed towards the coast, ensuring the correct evacuation of wastewater towards the sea and favouring the cleanliness and sanitary conditions of the entire city. As we have already mentioned, the blocks were rectangular, and their longest side was laid out in an east-west direction. Traversing them longitudinally in an east-west direction, following the slope of the hillside, ran a central rear passageway with a drainage pipe⁴⁵, into which the waste from all the houses in the block⁴⁶ could be discharged. The houses were lined up in two rows within each block, one row to the north of the passageway and another row to the south of it. This efficient drainage system would keep the main axes of the city free of filth and excess rainwater, while mud and dirt would be diverted into the drainage pipes of the secondary streets towards the coast, following the slope of the Koulmos Hill.

⁴³ Remains of the theatre and possible cult buildings have been found on the hillside within the walls. Part of the city was also located on this hill, but the urban fabric on the hillside did not follow the orthogonal pattern that existed on the plain (Sarris *et alii* 2008, 78, 80).

⁴⁴ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 82.

⁴⁵ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

⁴⁶ Fiedler (2005, 104, 112) identifies a narrow space equipped with a small drain placed to the south outside House AII6 as a latrine, being located in the longitudinal rear passageway through which the drainage pipe ran.

3. The Importance of the Position of the Upper Floor Regarding the Bioclimatic Performance of Two-storey Houses in Priene, Olynthus and Hellenistic Leucas

Ancient Greek cities with regular blocks occupied by “type houses” or “Typenhäuser”⁴⁷ provide interesting information on the decision-making and design mechanisms at work when designing the volumetric distribution of Greek houses. The “type houses” are doubly interesting when analysing the bioclimatic adaptation of Greek domestic architecture. On the one hand, they allow us to study the main characteristics that define each typology, and which remain unchanged despite individual variations and modifications. On the other hand, the variants that exist within the same “type house” typology may be due to the changing needs of the users, providing historical, anthropological and sociological information of great interest. Variants may also be the result of the adaptation of the “type house” to the specific circumstances of each house, such as its position within the block or the existence of an adjoining street on one side or the other. In this case, the variants arising from the bioclimatic and functional adaptation of the “type house” to the different circumstances provide significant information on the design process of domestic architecture.

The Greek house, although it may give rise to different “type houses”, is usually organised as a “courtyard house”⁴⁸, as the courtyard acts as the structuring element of the house. The courtyard, generally located in the central area of the house and near the entrance, functions as the heart of the Greek house, and plays a crucial role in its functioning in multiple ways: connection with the exterior, circulation between different rooms, visual connection between inner and outdoor spaces, visual and physical interactions between occupants of the house⁴⁹, domestic cult and memory of ancestors⁵⁰. The courtyard of the Greek house is also essential for the

⁴⁷ Hoepfner and Schwandner (1986) defined the “type house” or “Typenhaus” as a house of similar plan and equal plot size that vertebrated the blocks of the Classical orthogonal *polis*, and considered it to be a result of the idea of *isonomia*, over and above the practical considerations that conditioned the regular planning of the cities.

⁴⁸ The domestic typology known as “courtyard house” is present in most Mediterranean cultures, with variants adapted to the climatic, social, religious and cultural conditions of each region. The Greek house is a clear example of the “courtyard house”.

⁴⁹ For more information on the segregation of the different members of the family in ancient Greek domestic spaces, and especially women, we refer to the articles by Cohen (1989) and Antonaccio (2000).

⁵⁰ A small domestic altar, which could be fixed or portable, was usually placed in the courtyard of the house.

bioclimatic functioning of the house, both for ventilation and sunlight. The “courtyard house” is characterised by being surrounded by walls, with few and small openings to the outside⁵¹. Therefore, the courtyard served to ventilate all the domestic spaces and renew the air inside the rooms. The courtyard also allowed the sun’s rays to penetrate the interior of the house, providing light and warmth to the different rooms. In combination with the courtyard, the porticoes played a crucial role, preferably open to the south in order to optimise their bioclimatic performance. The porticoes made it possible to modulate the amount of sunlight that would penetrate the rooms behind them⁵², exploiting the advantages of the variation in the height of the sun, which is higher in summer and lower in winter, so that in summer it would be blocked by the eaves, but in winter it would reach the interior of the rooms behind the porticoes.

In Greek two-storey houses, in order for the courtyard to have an optimal bioclimatic performance, the volume of the upper storey had to be correctly positioned. Below we shall study the importance of good coordination between the courtyard and the upper storey, the variants that could be adopted depending on the objectives pursued in each case in different cities and, in particular, the possible layout adopted in several Hellenistic houses excavated in ancient Leucas.

Written sources mention two-storey Greek houses (Lys. 1,9), although archaeology can rarely document the existence and characteristics of the upper storey. We can obtain information by analysing the thickness of the preserved walls of the lower floors, as wider and sturdier structures were necessary to build higher walls, either to create rooms with high ceilings, or to build a two-storey area of the house. Another indicator of the location of the possible upper floor, once its existence is attested, is the layout and size of the rooms on the lower floor. For constructive economy, the upper floor will be placed where it requires the fewest resources, or where it brings the greatest advantages to the house as a whole. The smaller rooms on the lower floor, with walls closer together, will facilitate the construction of an upper storey above them, as the upper floor slab will benefit from

⁵¹ We have little information about the existence of windows in Greek houses. On the ground floors, they would have been few and small and would have been located in the upper part of the wall to prevent intruders from entering (Antonaccio 2000, 525). On the upper floors it is possible that there were windows from which women could observe the street without being seen, or even converse with their female neighbours without leaving their houses (Antonaccio 2000, 530).

⁵² The entry of the sun’s rays could also be modulated by means of mobile elements such as curtains or shutters, which would also make it possible to control the visual and physical interactions between the different occupants of the house (Antonaccio 2000, 530-531).

less distant supports and will require a smaller beam structure. Likewise, the walls of the rooms with low ceilings on the ground floor can more easily support the weight of the upper floor without their slenderness being an added disadvantage. In addition to logic and economy of construction, it is also important to consider bioclimatic parameters when deciding on the location of the upper floor. In a two-storey “courtyard house” it is crucial to coordinate the position of the upper storey with the position of the courtyard, in order to achieve the desired bioclimatic effects, especially with regard to sunlight. The two-storey houses in different Greek cities, which we shall analyse below, present distinct functional and climatic conditions that have been masterfully resolved, adapting to the specific needs and circumstances of each case.

First of all, we shall analyse, from the point of view of bioclimatic design, the “type house”⁵³ of the ancient city of Priene⁵⁴. The urban grid of Priene is orthogonal, and its main streets follow the contour lines, while its secondary cross streets follow the direction of the steep slope and its steps bridge the height differences between the terraces of the city. The blocks are rectangular and measure approximately 35 m wide by 47 m long, with their long side following the north-south direction⁵⁵. Within each block (Fig. 2), eight “type houses” are distributed in two rows of four. All the houses have similar typologies and plots with the same dimensions. The plot of each house is elongated, of 1:3 ratio, and measures approximately 9 m wide by 23 m long, with its longest side in a north-south direction and a longitudinal arrangement within the block⁵⁶. On the southern strip of each plot there is a one-storey volume with service and storage rooms. The courtyard of the house is located in the central strip of the plot. On the northern strip of the plot there is a two-storey volume that dominates the entire plot and contains the living quarters. Access to the houses is carried out in different ways depending on their position within the block. Access to the two houses located in the centre of the north side of the block is not satisfactorily resolved, as they are accessed from the side streets through a long, narrow, angled corridor.

⁵³ For the “type house” at Priene we will follow the configuration published by Hoepfner (Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 171; Hoepfner 1999, 346).

⁵⁴ The urban fabric and domestic architecture of Priene dates from the mid-4th century, when the town was re-founded and moved to the lower part of the steep southern slope of the Mycale Hill, where it was organised according to an orthogonal plan.

⁵⁵ Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 176.

⁵⁶ Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 176.

Taking advantage of wind, slope and shade

The volumetric configuration adopted in Priene turns out to be optimal for making the most of the sunlight in the courtyard and in the two-storey volume. This is due to the fact that the location of the upper floor allows the sun's rays to reach the entire courtyard, passing over the service volume and completely bathing the south façade of the main volume of the house.

The distribution of the rooms within this main volume makes the most of the sunlight on the south façade, as the lower floor has a portico that helps to monumentalise and acclimatise, both in summer and winter, the main room or *oikos*⁵⁷, is situated the *andron*, which is small in height and size, as part of the upper floor is located above it. The solution adopted in Priene gives priority to the optimal solar exposure of the courtyard located behind it. Inside the *oikos* there is a staircase leading to the upper floor, and outside the *oikos* and the main façade, which faces south in all the houses. Nevertheless, this solution causes the *andron* to have a low ceiling and fails to resolve the issue of access to the houses located in the centre of the north side of the blocks, which are accessed through long, narrow, angled corridors.

Secondly, we shall analyse, from the point of view of bioclimatic design, the “type house”⁵⁸ of the ancient city of Olynthus⁵⁹. The orthogonal urban grid⁶⁰ of Olynthus creates rectangular blocks that are approximately 36 m wide by 86 m long⁶¹, with its largest dimension oriented in an east-west direction. Within each block (Fig. 3) ten “type houses” of similar dimensions and the same typology are lined up: five houses on the south side of the block and five houses on the north side of the block. A rear passageway runs between the two rows, as was the case in Leucas, and is intended to evacuate waste from the houses. The plots are square and measure approximately 17.7 m

⁵⁷ The word *oikos* was used to refer to the house as a household, in the wide-ranging sense of the word (including property, descendants and ascendants beyond the nuclear family) (Roy 1999, 1-2), and to the house as a building (Westgate 2007, 236). Within the house, the main room, where the hearth was located and where most of the domestic daily activities took place, was also called *oikos*.

⁵⁸ For the “type house” at Olynthus we shall follow the configuration published by Hoepfner (Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 47-49; Hoepfner 1999, 268-269, 275).

⁵⁹ Olynthus extends over the tops of two hills, North Hill and South Hill, located to the south of the Polygyros Hills.

⁶⁰ The orthogonal urban fabric on the almost flat top of the North Hill dates from after 432 BC, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, when the Chalcidians moved inland and were brought together in a single fortified city, Olynthus (Thuc. 1, 58, 2). Olynthus was besieged and destroyed by Philip II of Macedon in 348 BC and abandoned. The remains of the buildings and their contents are preserved in an unusually good condition.

⁶¹ Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 47.

on each side⁶². In the northern half of each plot stands the main volume of the house, which is two storeys high. In the centre of the southern half of each plot is located the courtyard of the house, surrounded on the east and west sides by built volumes, generally one storey high. All the houses have the same volumetric configuration as described above, which optimises the solar exposure of the courtyard and the south façade of the main volume, in the same way as in Priene. The transition between the courtyard and the interior spaces of the main volume takes place through a portico, which in summer provided protection from the sun and when the weather permitted could host domestic tasks, in a semi-open space, protected from the sun and rain, but open to light and ventilation.

Each house is accessed from the adjoining street, which in each plot is located on a different side, generating varied distributions of the rooms on the ground floor of the different houses. The rooms connected to the exterior, such as the *andron* and its vestibule, are placed, in the majority of the houses, near the entrance door, regardless of the location of this door on the plot. In certain houses whose door is located in the north of the plot, in order to avoid unwanted crossings between the male visitors entering the *andron* and the female members of the family, the main domestic rooms are not placed behind the portico to the north of the courtyard, which would be the optimal position, from a bioclimatic point of view, to enjoy maximum sun exposure and the protection of the portico. The Olynthus' "type house" offers an intelligent solution to these conditioning factors, conveniently resolving the access to each house directly from the nearest street and, at the same time, prioritising the solar exposure of the courtyards, the porticoes and the rooms open to the south of the main volume. Nevertheless, the layout of the rooms on the ground-floor varies from house to house, offering combinations that are not always entirely appropriate.

Thirdly, we shall analyse the bioclimatic aspects of the volumetric configuration of four Hellenistic houses in the ancient city of Leucas. As we have already mentioned, the urban grid of Leucas creates rectangular blocks whose largest dimension approximately follows an east-west direction⁶³. Within these blocks, the archaeological surveys and excavations carried out indicate that there were two rows of houses, one row on the north side of the block and one row on the south side. Between the two rows ran, at least in the excavated blocks, a central rear passageway with a drainage

⁶² Hoepfner 1999, 269.

⁶³ The direction of the long side of the blocks has a slight northeast-southwest inclination.

pipe⁶⁴ into which the waste generated by the inhabitants of the houses was discharged. The orthogonal grid of ancient Leucas may date back to the 6th century BC⁶⁵ and this conditioned the shape of the plots and the houses built on them. During the following centuries, the plots remained broadly stable⁶⁶, although renovations led to changes in the interior layout. The floor plans of the houses are varied, and it is possible that, from the beginning, each house had a layout different from its neighbours. In the Hellenistic phases of the four houses we are going to study at Leucas, we cannot identify a “type house” typology, as each one is the result of the evolution and adaptation of the construction to the needs of its owners and occupants⁶⁷. Nevertheless, we can detect some general elements and criteria, which we shall study with caution due to the limited number of examples we can compare. Below we shall analyse the bioclimatic aspects of the volumetric configuration of two pairs of houses in ancient Leucas, in their last construction phase of the Hellenistic Period⁶⁸. The first pair (Fig. 4) was located in a block close to the city centre and consists of the Hellenistic House AI in phase 4, known as AI4⁶⁹, and the adjoining Hellenistic House AII in phase 6, known as AII6⁷⁰. The second pair (Fig. 5) was located in a block in the southern part of the city and consists of the Hellenistic House BI in phase 4, known as BI4⁷¹, and the adjoining Hellenistic⁷² House BII3⁷³. The four houses occupied square plots of approximately 14 m on

⁶⁴ Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

⁶⁵ Fiedler 2005, 100.

⁶⁶ Modifications were made to some plots, such as the extension of the plot of House AII6, which shall be discussed below.

⁶⁷ Fiedler 2005, 100.

⁶⁸ The floor plans and construction phases of the houses are taken from the publications of M. Fiedler (2003; 2005) and we shall follow their dating and nomenclature.

⁶⁹ House AI had a Late Archaic or Early Classical phase AI1, a Classical phase AI2, and then two Hellenistic phases, AI3 and AI4. During the AI3 phase the house was renovated, with better quality rooms and pillars, and in the last phase AI4, a wall was added to make access to the northeast rooms independent from the portico (Fiedler 2003, 42-43).

⁷⁰ The plan of the Hellenistic House AII dates from the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC and corresponds to phase AII5. The plot was enlarged, as will be discussed, in its last building phase AII6 in the 1st century BC (Fiedler 2005, 101).

⁷¹ House BI was rebuilt in its Hellenistic phase BI3, without following the layout of the previous buildings. During its last Hellenistic construction phase BI4 the southern area was reorganised: the central room was enlarged at the expense of part of the courtyard and an anteroom was added to the southeastern set of rooms (Fiedler 2003, 33).

⁷² House BII was rebuilt in the Hellenistic Period, at the latest in the 2nd century BC, in phase BII3, without incorporating the earlier buildings on the site (Fiedler 2003, 34).

⁷³ Fiedler 2003, 33-34, 42-43, 109; 2005, 100-101.

each side⁷⁴, which could indicate that the urban fabric was spread out in a regular way, giving rise to blocks of similar proportions in different areas of the city. We do not know the length of the blocks of these houses, but we can deduce that, as was the case in Olynthus, each block would have two rows of houses⁷⁵, one row on the north side of the block and another row on the south side of the block, since, in the two pairs of houses studied, the narrow rear passageway between them has been preserved. This rear passageway divided the block lengthwise and separated the two rows of houses, and a drainage pipe ran through it⁷⁶.

We shall now briefly comment on the layout of the four Hellenistic houses at Leucas that we are going to study and, afterwards, we shall analyse the relative position of the built volumes and the courtyards in each house and their advantages from a bioclimatic point of view. In order to do this, we shall observe the organisation of the spaces in each house and their relationship with the courtyard and the entrance door, without discussing in detail the possible use of each room⁷⁷. For the description of these four houses and for the elaboration of Figs. 4 and 5 we will take as a basis the plans published by Fiedler⁷⁸.

Houses AI4 and AII6 (Fig. 4) are located to the north of their block and share the wall that divides them, with House AI4 to the west and House AII6 to the east. House AI4 is partially excavated, so we do not know the distribution of its west area and the position of its entrance door⁷⁹. In the centre of its eastern side was located the *andron*⁸⁰, which was accessed from a portico that opened to the west⁸¹ onto the central courtyard of the

⁷⁴ The plot of House AII has larger dimensions. In its phase AII5, dating from the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC, it measured 14 m x 13 m, but in its phase AII6, in the 1st century BC, it was extended to the east and measured 14 m x 15.8 m (Fiedler 2005, 101, 104).

⁷⁵ In the block of Houses AI4 and AII6 we do not know which buildings would have been located south of the rear passage, but to the south of Houses BI4 and BII3 there were auxiliary buildings (Fiedler 2003, 41).

⁷⁶ Waste from the latrine that Fiedler (2005, 104, 112) identifies in House AII6 would have been dumped into this passageway. Sarris *et alii* 2008, 80.

⁷⁷ For information on the use of each room and on the fragments recovered from House AII6 at Leucas we refer to Fiedler (2003, 48-81; Id. 2005, 101-116).

⁷⁸ Fiedler 2003, 33, 34, 43; 2005, 102 fig. 7.2, 105 fig. 7.7.

⁷⁹ Although some areas of the houses are not fully excavated, the specific aspects that we are going to study can be analysed on the basis of the elements that we know.

⁸⁰ We can identify the *andron* (Fiedler 2003, 42) because of its proportions and dimensions, its off-centre entrance and the perimeter plinth.

⁸¹ The orientation of the portico towards the west is remarkable, as the porticoes of the "type houses" we have studied in the cities of Priene and Olynthus were oriented towards the south.

house⁸². At the south end of House AI4 there was a second courtyard, connected to the portico, which could also be connected to rooms located to the west. At the southeast end there was a small L-shaped room whose function could be linked to the rear passageway with a drainage pipe that ran south of the house along the block.

House AII6 is fully excavated and stands on a site that exceeds the dimensions of the rest of the plots, because between its Hellenistic phases AII5 and AII6 it was extended to the east and three service rooms were added⁸³. The entrance door opened in the centre of the north side of the plot, leading directly to the entrance courtyard. From the entrance courtyard there was access to the two largest rooms on the entire ground floor, the *andron*⁸⁴ to the west and the *oikos* to the east, at the southern end of which the remains of the hearth are preserved. When the ground floor was extended in phase AII6, two small rooms were added, opening onto the *oikos* on the east side. Beyond the south wall of the entrance courtyard was a second, more private courtyard, with access to two groups of small rooms with concatenated entrances. The eastern group was connected to the *oikos* through the rooms added during the extension. The rooms in the western group were the smallest on the ground floor. From the southwest room access was provided to the rear passage to the south of the house, and to a narrow space in the passage that had a small drain and could be used as a latrine⁸⁵. It is possible that the upper floor of the house, if it existed, was accessed via a staircase on the south side of the private courtyard⁸⁶.

Houses BI4 and BII3 (Fig. 5) are located to the north of their block and share the wall that divides them, with House BI4 to the west and House BII3 to the east. House BI4 is partially excavated, so we have no information about its west side. The entrance door opened in the centre of the north wall and gave direct access to a large central courtyard from which the

⁸² In the last Hellenistic construction phase AI4, a small wall was built to separate the access to the north-eastern rooms (Fiedler 2003, 43-44).

⁸³ Fiedler 2005, 101, 104.

⁸⁴ The *andron* can be identified by its location next to the entrance, its proportions and dimensions, its off-centre threshold and the remains of white and red painted plaster on its walls (Fiedler 2005, 112-113).

⁸⁵ Fiedler 2005, 104, 112.

⁸⁶ The dimensions and breaks in the walls on the north side of the private courtyard would make it difficult to place a staircase, so it would probably be located on the south side. If the staircase were attached to the south wall of the private courtyard, it could only give access to rooms on one of the two sides of the courtyard. Therefore, the position of the staircase proposed by Fiedler (2005, 105 fig. 7.7) is plausible, with a raised walkway attached to the south wall, giving access to upper rooms on both sides of the private courtyard.

rest of the house was accessed. To the east of the courtyard was a large, long, narrow room attached to the east wall, with the doorway centred in the wall separating it from the courtyard⁸⁷. The southeast corner of the ground floor was occupied by a group of four small, concatenated rooms, accessed from the corner of the courtyard. These rooms could be linked to the drainage pipe that ran south of the house through the rear passageway that divided the block lengthwise. To the south of the courtyard was a large, partially excavated room.

House BII3 has been excavated almost entirely, except for its eastern edge, in the central area of which the entrance door was probably located, as it has not been identified in any other perimeter wall. The door would probably have opened onto a small vestibule which would lead to the central courtyard, of square proportions and surrounded by rooms on all sides. To the north of the courtyard was located the *andron*⁸⁸, and from the west of the courtyard access was probably provided to the rest of the rooms in the house, which were of varying proportions and similar large sizes. The partially excavated rooms on the east side were separated from the rest of the house by blind walls, so they would presumably have been accessed from the vestibule or directly from the street⁸⁹. If an upper floor existed, it would probably have been accessed via a staircase attached to the south side of the courtyard⁹⁰.

Although we do not know the dimensions of the blocks of ancient Leucas, we can deduce that the four houses in question belonged to the row to the north of their respective blocks, since the entrance doors of Houses AII6 and BI4 opened onto the streets to the north of their respective plots⁹¹. We have noted, when analysing the variants of the “type houses” of Priene and Olynthus, that the houses located to the north of the blocks posed greater

⁸⁷ We do not know the function of this room, but given its proportions it is unlikely that it was an *andron*.

⁸⁸ The *andron* can be identified by its dimensions and proportions and by its perimeter plinth.

⁸⁹ If the rooms on the east side of House BII3 were accessed from the street, they would probably function as shops or workshops. This is compatible with their location on one of the north-south axes of Leucas, which were wider than the east-west transversal streets that separated the blocks from each other, as observed during the 2002 geological survey (Sarris *et alii* 2008, 82).

⁹⁰ The position suggested by Fiedler (2005, 102 fig. 7.2) seems appropriate, as the rest of the sides of the courtyard have openings that would coincide with the mid-height of the staircase and would prevent it from being attached to any other wall.

⁹¹ We have mentioned that House BII3 was probably accessed from the east, so it would have been located in the northeast corner of the block, but we cannot verify this because the eastern edge of the house remains unexcavated.

design problems. The challenge lay in combining direct access from the street with a satisfactory distribution of the ground floor rooms and with an optimal bioclimatic adaptation derived from a correct layout of the volume of the upper floor. As these four houses of ancient Leucas belong to the northern row of their respective blocks, by analysing certain aspects that we shall discuss below, we can draw some interesting conclusions about the relationship between the climatic conditions and the possible layout of the upper floor. Although there is no excavated archaeological evidence that these four houses at Leucas had two storeys, the layout of their ground floor, and also the functioning of the dwellings excavated in other Greek cities, could suggest the existence of an upper floor. Nevertheless, the considerations we present here on the possible position of the upper storey of these houses at Leucas are only proposals and cannot be considered definitive statements.

In the houses studied in Leucas, the courtyard is located in the central area of the plot, and in three⁹² of the four houses analysed we can identify the *andron*, which is located in the northern area of the plot and is accessed from the courtyard. In the houses with direct access from the north street to the courtyard, and access to the *andron* from the courtyard, it is logical from an organisational point of view that the *andron* should be located in the northern part of the plot, close to the entrance. Thus, the symposium participants could access the *andron* without passing through the private rooms of the house, which are located further away from the door and, therefore, in the southern area. However, in House BII3 the entrance door would presumably have been located on the east side of the plot, whilst the courtyard is located in the centre of the house. The placement of the *andron* on the north side of the plot of this house has no organisational advantages over its placement to the south of the courtyard. Its location to the north could be due to another criterion, which would be related to the adaptation of the house to the climatic conditions, an aspect that we shall discuss later. If we look at the size of the other rooms in the four houses analysed in Leucas, and their distribution throughout the ground floor, we can see that the largest rooms, in addition to the *andron*, are also located in the northern half of the plots⁹³.

⁹² If there was an *andron* in House BI4, it would have probably been located in the unexcavated northwest area and would presumably have been accessed from the entrance courtyard.

⁹³ This is particularly evident in Houses AII6 and BI4, both of which have a large room, accessed from the entrance courtyard, which occupies the northern half of the eastern strip of each plot.

Taking these factors into account, and in accordance with the principles of constructive logic and economy of resources referred to in previous paragraphs, we can consider it probable that, in Houses AII6, BI4 and BII3, the upper floor, considering it probable that it existed, would have been built above the southern part of the lower floor, where the smaller rooms of each house were located. As we have commented above, it is constructively simpler and more economical to place the upper floor above the smaller rooms, which would have lower ceilings (avoiding unnecessarily raising the upper floor slab) and walls closer together (avoiding over-dimensioning the thickness of the upper floor slab). This deduction is consistent with the probable position of the staircases in houses AII6 and BII3, in which Fiedler⁹⁴ places the start of the staircases leading to the upper floor at the southern end of the courtyards, where they are compatible with the existence of upper storeys on the southern half of the plots.

The location of the upper floor volume, if we consider it probable that it existed, would determine the areas of the lower floor of the house that were exposed to or protected from direct solar radiation, which would condition the bioclimatic functioning of the house. We have noted how, in the “type houses” studied in the cities of Priene and Olynthus, the volume of the upper storey was located in the northern part of the house, to avoid casting shade on its own courtyard and façades. This maximised the sunlight entering the courtyard and the portico of the main façades, which faced south. If we consider it probable that, in the houses of ancient Leucas, the upper storey was placed on the south side of the plot, we must try to understand the reasons that led to this, and why they differ from the reasons that led the upper storey to be placed on the north side of the plot in Priene and Olynthus.

It is enlightening to look at Holger Grönwald’s⁹⁵ perspective drawings of a possible reconstruction of the Hellenistic houses of Leucas AII6 and BII3, in which he placed the upper floors on the south side of the plots⁹⁶. Holger Grönwald’s drawings do not depict the cast shadows, so, based on them, we have created perspective drawings of Houses AII6 (Fig. 6) and BII3

⁹⁴ Fiedler 2005, 102 fig. 7.2, 105 fig. 7.7.

⁹⁵ The drawings of the German archaeologist Holger Grönwald, born in 1974, are on display in the Archaeological Museum of Lefkada and were published by Fiedler (2009, 42–43). Fiedler (1999, 418, 421) presents an uncoloured version of these drawings.

⁹⁶ In House AII6, where there were no rooms in the central area of the south side of the ground floor, Holger Grönwald drew a two-storey wall. To this wall he attached a raised walkway that was accessed by the staircase and led to the two sections of the upper floor, located on both sides of the private courtyard. This wall would cast a shadow over the courtyard to the south of the house.

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(Fig. 7), completing them with the corresponding shadows projected on the walls and courtyards⁹⁷. Looking at these drawings we have created (Figs. 6 and 7), with the shadows cast by the built volumes, we can see how the courtyards of the houses would enjoy shaded areas if the upper floors were located on the south side of each plot. The volumes of the upper floors in Holger Grönwald's drawings extend to the south of the houses, but also to the west, which coincide with the directions of greatest exposure to solar radiation. The shadow cast by the upper floor, located to the south and west, would prevent the courtyards and adjoining walls from overheating in the middle of the day and in the evening, whilst continuing to radiate heat in the hours that followed⁹⁸. This would contribute to keeping the courtyard cooler, allowing ventilation of the rooms of the house, and would also prevent the interior spaces from overheating.

Unlike Olynthus and Priene, where the sun was favoured, we can see that in the examples analysed in Leucas, priority was given to keeping the courtyards and rooms cool at times of maximum solar radiation, and this meant that the upper floors were located on the south side of the plots, instead of on the north side. We shall now analyse the climatic data of the site of the ancient city of Leucas and note that the high temperatures and the high humidity recorded in summer made it advisable to prioritise shade in the warmer months, at the expense of dispensing with the southern sun inside the rooms and courtyards in the winter months. The minimum winter temperatures at the site of the former Leucas are not too low. They, therefore, posed less of a problem than the overheating that the houses and their courtyards would have suffered in summer, had they not been protected by the shadows strategically cast by the built-up volumes of the upper storeys, which would probably have occupied the south side of the plots.

In order to understand the reasons that led the inhabitants of Leucas to favour shade in their courtyards, instead of prioritising the sun as they did in Priene and Olynthus, we have created a series of diagrams that allow us to analyse the existing historical data on average maximum temperatures, minimum temperatures and relative humidity⁹⁹. We can study the climatic

⁹⁷ We have calculated the cast shadows by taking into account the position of the sun at the time of highest radiation intensity in the central hours of the day in summer.

⁹⁸ Solar radiation comes from the south during the middle of the day and from the west in the evening. Radiation from the west causes overheating, as the heat is accumulated within the mass of the walls, which, due to their thermal inertia, continue to radiate heat into the interior rooms throughout the night.

⁹⁹ The historical climate parameters we have used to create our diagrams come from the weather-atlas.com database.

data at the location occupied by the ancient city of Leucas, and compare them with the data corresponding to the locations of the ancient cities of Priene and Olynthus¹⁰⁰. We can then compare the climatology of the three ancient cities with the different architectural solutions adopted in each of them to achieve the highest possible hygrothermal comfort¹⁰¹. The main parameters affecting hygrothermal comfort are temperature and relative humidity. There are several calculation methods, with their respective diagrams, to study both parameters in combination, and also the corrective measures that can be applied in each situation, such as evaporation, wind or radiation, in order to achieve hygrothermal comfort. In our analysis we shall use the bioclimatic chart, or climograph, created by Olgyay¹⁰², which establishes a so-called hygrothermal “comfort zone”¹⁰³ for certain combinations of temperature and relative humidity values. We have created three diagrams¹⁰⁴ (Figs. 8, 9 and 10), which show Olgyay’s climograph adapted to the location of the ancient cities of Leucas (Fig. 8), Olynthus (Fig. 9) and Priene (Fig. 10), which allow us to compare their different historical climate data.

In the diagram (Fig. 8) corresponding to the Olgyay climograph for the location of the ancient city of Leucas, we can observe a high relative humidity that remains almost constant throughout the year. We can also observe that the average maximum temperatures are high in summer and moderate in winter, and are combined with average minimum temperatures that are mild in winter and high in summer. Winters are gentle, with

¹⁰⁰ Mean maximum temperatures and mean minimum temperatures may have undergone some variation in absolute terms over the centuries. In order to analyse the climatic data of the locations corresponding to the three ancient cities, we are interested in comparative relative data, not absolute data. Therefore, historical variation in absolute data does not significantly affect our results.

¹⁰¹ An individual with light clothing and sedentary activity experiences hygrothermal comfort when the body’s thermoregulatory mechanisms, such as sweating or energy metabolism, do not have to intervene. Hygrothermal comfort is achieved at certain combinations of ambient temperature and relative humidity.

¹⁰² Viktor Olgyay (1910-1970) was a pioneer of bioclimatic urban planning and architecture. In his diagram he combines temperature and relative humidity to determine whether the combination of these parameters makes it possible to achieve a state of hygrothermal comfort.

¹⁰³ The “comfort zone” is delimited by the temperature and relative humidity values within which humans experience hygrothermal comfort (Fariña Tojo 2001, 171).

¹⁰⁴ In order to create our diagrams, we have used the Olgyay climograph published by J. Fariña Tojo (2001, 176), adapted to regions with temperate climates (40°N), taking into account the following latitudes: Leucas 38°N, Olynthus 40°N, Priene 37°N. In the climograph we have entered historical climate data for the locations of the three ancient cities from the weather-atlas.com database.

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minimum temperatures just slightly below 10°C (and only in January and February), which are compensated by maximum temperatures of around 13-14°C in the warmest hours of the day. However, summers are very hot, with four months (June, July, August and September) featuring high average maximums and, more worryingly, high average minimums, resulting in “tropical nights”¹⁰⁵. These high minimum temperatures do not allow the atmosphere to cool down during the night, leading to a cumulative heat effect. The high relative humidity, together with the high daytime and night-time temperatures, would have caused a suffocating and humid heat that, presumably, would have tormented the inhabitants of ancient Leucas throughout the summer. At the beginning of this study, when we analysed the adaptation of Leucas’ urban fabric to the climatic conditions, we noted how the main streets of the city were oriented to the prevailing winds in summer, the Maistros or Maestral, which blows from the north-northwest. This measure favoured the ventilation of public spaces and the renewal of the air inside the houses, improving the city’s health conditions. However, the winds would have been insufficient to combat the humid heat of the Leucas summer, as they are at their lowest in June, July and August. The Olgyay climograph diagram shows two months (July and August) of hygrothermal conditions outside the “comfort zone” throughout the day, and two months (June and September) in which this “comfort zone” is only reached during some night-time hours. We are facing four months a year of suffocating heat, with little wind and high humidity, which probably determined the configuration of the houses in ancient Leucas, where, in the absence of wind, the best ally for cooling the atmosphere would have been the shade.

In accordance with the data analysed, it can be assumed that the volumetry of the houses studied in ancient Leucas was conditioned by a conscious search for shaded areas. Therefore, it is consistent that, as we have mentioned, the built volume of the upper floors was placed on the south and southwest side of each plot, so that it would cast shade over the courtyard and the façades of the rooms open to the courtyard to the south and west, preventing them from overheating and transmitting heat to the interior¹⁰⁶. Given these climatic conditions, it is plausible that the builders of the Leucas houses we have analysed prioritised shade in the summer months, sacrificing the benefits of direct sunlight during the winter months.

¹⁰⁵ In climatology, a “tropical night” refers to nights when the minimum temperature does not fall below 20°C.

¹⁰⁶ Due to the thermal inertia of the walls, heat transmission into the interior would also be prolonged during the night hours, worsening the conditions of the already warm “tropical nights”.

In previous paragraphs we observed how this situation appeared to be inverted in the “type houses” of the ancient cities of Priene and Olynthus, where the emphasis was on solar gain in winter, therefore the volumes of the upper floors were located in the northern part of the plots. In order to understand the reasons for the different criteria imposed on the design of the houses in these cities, we can also study their historical climate data with diagrams showing the Olgyay climograph applied to their sites.

If we analyse the diagram corresponding to the Olgyay climograph for the ancient city of Olynthus (Fig. 9), we can see that the average minimum temperature drops in winter to 5°C while the average maximum temperature rises to 29°C in July and August. Night-time minimums during these two summer months are high, although not as high as in Leucas, but thanks to a relative humidity in Olynthus of around 56%, the situation remains within the hygrothermal “comfort zone” for most of the day. However, in Leucas, the high relative humidity makes the heat sweltering and pushes all the daylight hours of both months out of the “comfort zone”. In contrast to Leucas, the months of June and September in Olynthus have mild average temperatures and comfortable relative humidities throughout the day. For the rest of the year, during most of the day and throughout the night, the weather conditions remain below the “shadow line”¹⁰⁷. December, January and February are truly cold months, with average minimum temperatures below 5°C and average maximum temperatures around an insufficient 10°C. The cold is permanent over these three months, both at night and during the day, so the sun’s warmth is very necessary. In spring and autumn the minimum temperatures remain low, and the solar heat contribution is much appreciated.

Bearing these climatic conditions in mind, it is clear that in Olynthus it was necessary to maximise solar gain for most of the year. Moreover, in the warmer months there were no sweltering conditions, therefore the shadows of the porticoes and movable solar protections (such as awnings, curtains or shutters) would have been sufficient to mitigate the heat in the central hours of the day. We can conclude that in Olynthus the volumetric layout that we have studied in the “type house” is coherent, placing the two-storey building in the northern part of the plot, in order to favour the entry of sunlight into the courtyard and portico and avoid casting shadows on the rest of the house.

Finally, let us analyse the diagram (Fig. 10) corresponding to the

¹⁰⁷In the Olgyay climograph, the “shadow line” marks the limit below which solar radiation is necessary to achieve hygrothermal comfort.

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Olgyay climograph for the ancient city of Priene. The wide thermal variation between the average maximum and minimum temperatures in the warmest months of the year is striking. In addition, the variation in mean relative humidity between the coldest and warmest months is also broad. Average maximum temperatures reach almost 34°C in July and August, the highest values of the three cities studied, but the corrective factor of wind, with high wind speeds in August and especially in July, maintains the situation within the hygrothermal “comfort zone”. Although the maximum temperatures in June, July, August and September are high, the relative humidity and minimum temperatures during these months are low enough to allow evaporation and to enable the heat accumulated throughout the day to dissipate during the night. In contrast to Leucas, the hot summer days at Priene were mitigated by strong winds and balanced by moderated nights, allowing the overheated walls to cool down and the rooms to be cooled by the night breeze.

Taking these climatic data into account, the configuration of the “type house” studied at Priene seems appropriate, as it favoured the entry of the low winter sun through the porticoes into the rear rooms, while the high summer sun was blocked by the eaves. As in Olynthus, the upper storey volumes were placed on the north side of each plot to avoid casting shade on the courtyards and south-facing façades. Thus, the impact of solar radiation was maximised, as this was essential to combat the cold in winter, and not excessively harmful in summer, since, in the warmer months, the temperature and humidity were not as stifling as in Leucas, and could be controlled thanks to the porticoes, shutters, curtains and the effect of the winds.

4. Conclusions

By analysing the domestic typologies of different cities in ancient Greece, and contrasting the historical climatic data corresponding to their locations, we have been able to understand exactly which factors of construction design were a priority in each case. We have confirmed that Greek domestic architecture was the result of adaptation to the specific conditions of each location. The different volumetric configurations of Greek houses, always functioning as “courtyard houses”, made it possible to favour sunlight or shade depending on the needs of each situation. For this purpose, as we have noted, in two-storey houses the location of the volume of the upper floor and its relationship with the position of the courtyard was crucial.

In Leucas, in order to ascertain the importance of the possible location of the upper floor in the bioclimatic design, we first needed to deduce what area of the plot could have occupied the upper floor in the Hellenistic houses we analysed. When studying domestic structures, we very often have to analyse the lower floor in order to infer where the upper floor slab would rest, in the event that it existed. Studying the dynamics of the circulation flows, the crossed visuals that were favoured or avoided, constructive economy and the architectural logic, we can try to understand the volumetric configuration of the house as a whole, despite the fact that we might only have a few rows preserved *in situ*. From our analysis, we have deduced that the upper floors of the houses studied at Leucas, if it existed, would probably be located to the south of each plot, seeking to create shaded areas in the courtyards. By collecting historical climate data pertaining to the location of ancient Leucas, we have corroborated that winters were mild and could be endured without excessive reliance on sunlight entering the houses. However, the high temperatures, high relative humidity and low wind would make the summers sweltering, so casting shade on walls and courtyards would have been essential to prevent houses from overheating.

In the “type houses” of Olynthus and Priene, we can observe the opposite situation, since, instead of seeking shade, as was the case in Leucas, priority was given to allowing solar radiation to reach the courtyards and façades. In these cities the winters were cold and required abundant sunlight to enter the houses, while the high summer temperatures were tempered by a relative humidity that was not as high as in Leucas and could be mitigated by porticoes and winds. The beneficial effect of winds in mitigating summer heat and improving the healthiness of houses was already pointed out by Aristoteles.

“In constructing a homestead, we have to provide for the stock which it is to shelter, and for its health and well-being. (...) For well-being and health, again, the homestead should be airy in summer, and sunny in winter. A homestead possessing these qualities would be longer than it is deep; and its main front would face the south”.

Arist. *Oec.* 1345a. Translation by G.C. Armstrong.

The providential wind that eased Priene’s summer did not blow strongly enough in the warmer months in Leucas, where the humid heat plunged its inhabitants into a constant stifling heat that gave no respite, either day or night. Therefore, as we have ascertained, at Leucas the aim was to create shade in the courtyards and on the walls of the rooms. In contrast, in the other two cities we studied, despite the higher maximum temperatures, the heat could be kept within comfortable parameters thanks to the strong

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winds, lower relative humidity and the not excessively warm nights. Winters were mild in Leucas, while in Olynthus and Priene they were colder and wetter, so it was necessary to prioritise the entry of the winter sun into the “type houses” of these two ancient cities. To this end, we have seen that the courtyards were placed on the south side of each plot, and the two-storey building volumes on the north side, so as not to block the sun from entering the courtyard and the main south-facing façade. Thanks to this arrangement, the low winter sun warmed the courtyards, the porticoes and the interior of the rooms behind them. In summer, the eaves of the porticoes blocked the high sun’s rays and helped to keep the interior spaces cool. This construction solution would not have been sufficient to counteract the sweltering heat in the humid Leucas summers, so the houses there were not designed with south-facing porticoes¹⁰⁸. Instead, the upper storey was strategically placed on the south side to cast as much shade as possible over the courtyard¹⁰⁹.

The combination of two-storey volumes on the north side of the plot with south-facing porticoes gave rise in Olynthus and Priene to a type of house known as the “solar house”. The bioclimatic benefits of houses with this layout were already extolled by Socrates, as recorded by Xenophon (*Mem.* 3, 8, 9; trans. E.C. Marchant):

“Now in houses with a south aspect, the sun’s rays penetrate into the porticoes in winter, but in summer the path of the sun is right over our heads and above the roof, so that there is shade. If, then, this is the best arrangement, we should build the south side loftier to get the winter sun”.

However, this configuration was not optimal in all climatic circumstances. We have observed how, in the houses studied in Leucas, the opposite layout to the one known as the “solar house” was chosen, placing the upper floor on the south side instead of the north side. Thus, by means of the inverse procedure to the “solar house”, a clever volumetric distribution made it possible to cool the houses in summer in Leucas, despite the humid heat that hit the island day and night. By inverting the position of the upper floor, it could cast shade over the courtyard and the walls of the house, helping to keep them cooler. This decision was not excessively detrimental in winter, as temperatures did not drop to very low values. We could spe-

¹⁰⁸ Of the four Hellenistic houses studied at Leucas, only House A14 had a portico, but it faced west, not south, so its bioclimatic functioning would be different.

¹⁰⁹ To keep the courtyard cool in the central hours of the day, it would be necessary to supplement the shade cast by the upper floor with light horizontal sun-shading elements, such as awnings.

ak of an “inverted solar house” adapted to the climate of ancient Leucas, which would contradict Socrates’ recommendations regarding the specific optimal position of the portico and the upper floor. However, it would follow his advice in the essentials since, if we go back to the quote with which we began our study, Socrates, according to Xenophon, recommended building houses that would be pleasant to live in during all months of the year, to which end they should be adapted to the climatic conditions of each place.

“Again his dictum about houses, that the same house is both beautiful and useful, was a lesson in the art of building houses as they ought to be. He approached the problem thus: When one means to have the right sort of house, must he contrive to make it as pleasant to live in and as useful as it can be?” And this being admitted, “Is it pleasant,” he asked, “to have it cool in summer and warm in winter?” (...) “To put it shortly, the house in which the owner can find a pleasant retreat at all seasons (...)”

Xen. *Mem.* 3, 8, 8-10. Translation by E.C. Marchant.

The comparative study of the architectural solutions used in different cities of ancient Greece has shown that, in each location, priority was given to the most appropriate volumetric configurations and construction elements to make the houses pleasant all year round. By adapting to different climatic circumstances, the “type houses” of Priene and Olynthus prioritised sunlight, while the Hellenistic houses analysed in Leucas favoured shade. This study has allowed us to appreciate how the ancient Greeks skilfully handled architectural design, varying the layout and volumetry to achieve the most comfortable hygrothermal conditions possible in each house. Their ability to achieve the best architectural solution in each circumstance demonstrates the mastery of the Greeks, who designed and built their houses always taking into account the needs of the inhabitants and the conditions of the different locations. Greek architects knew how to choose the optimum solution in each situation, prioritising sun or shade, and mastered the complex art of construction, the aim of which, as Aristoteles reminds us, is the house.

“Between a house and a builder there is nothing that is produced in common, but the builder’s craft exists for the sake of the house”.

Arist. *Pol.* 1328a. Translation by H. Rackham.

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Fig. 1. Graphic synthesis of some of the structures documented in the ancient city of Leucas and possible layout of the urban fabric. Author's elaboration.

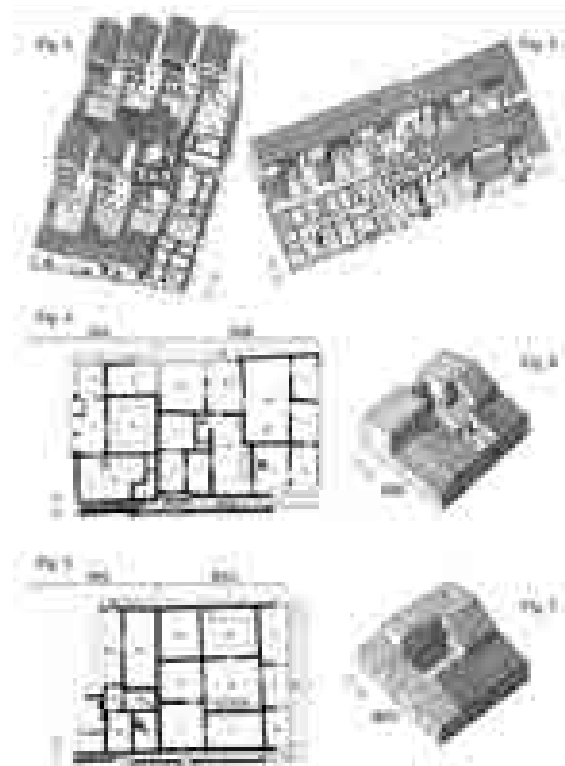


Fig. 2. Block with “type houses” from Priene (Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 171; Hoepfner 1999, 346).

Fig. 3. Block with “type houses” from Olynthus (Hoepfner, Schwandner 1986, 47).

Fig. 4. Leucas houses AI4 and AII6. Author’s elaboration juxtaposing the floor plans published by Fiedler (2003, 43; 2005, 105 fig. 7.7).

Fig. 5. Leucas houses BI4 and BII3. Author’s elaboration juxtaposing the floor plans published by Fiedler (2003, 33, 34).

Fig. 6. Shadows cast on hypothetical reconstruction of Leucas house AII6. Author’s elaboration based on the drawing by H. Grönwald in the Archaeological Museum of Lefkada (Hoepfner 1999, 418).

Fig. 7. Shadows cast on hypothetical reconstruction of Leucas house BII3. Author’s elaboration based on the drawing by H. Grönwald in the Archaeological Museum of Lefkada and published by Hoepfner (1999, 421).

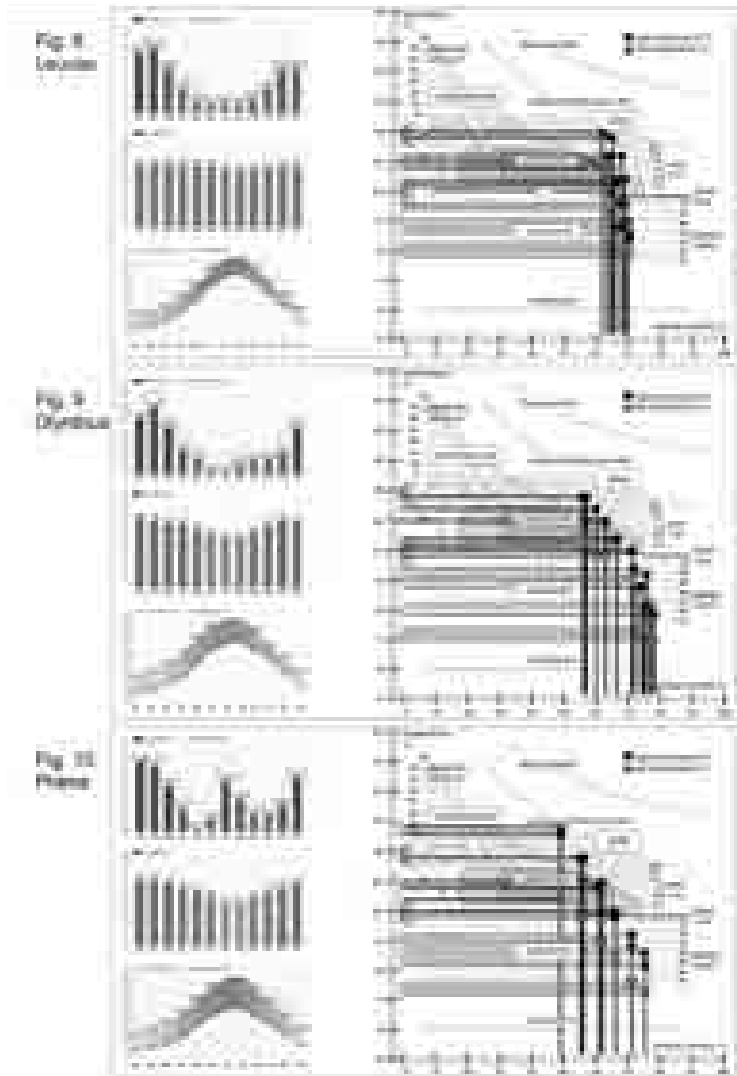


Fig. 8. Diagram showing the Olgyay climograph adapted to the site of the ancient city of Leucas. Author's elaboration.

Fig. 9. Diagram showing the Olgyay climograph adapted to the site of the ancient city of Olynthus. Author's elaboration.

Fig. 10. Diagram showing the Olgyay climograph adapted to the site of the ancient city of Priene. Author's elaboration.

THE LEUCADIAN *PERAEA*

1. Leucas, the Island, the Isthmus, the Channel and Moles

Leucas is one of the largest of the Ionian islands, located to the north of Cephallenia and Ithaca and to the south of Corcyra. It is one of the most mountainous islands featuring three ranges over 1000 metres, extending 303 sq. km., the highest peak being 1,182 m (Mt. Elati) in the centre of the island; the whole island is made up of gorges and valleys and on the west coast the mountains directly end at the coast. As it occurs with the other Ionian islands, Leucas is subject to high seismic activity and in this respect, it is one of the most active regions in the Mediterranean. This activity takes place in the area where the continental plates of Africa and Europe meet, in the northern part of the Hellenic Arch and there is a high tsunami risk due to the right lateral strike-slip Cephallenia Transform Fault (CFT) and its northern prolongation, the Lefkada Transform Fault (LFT)¹.

One of the most notable aspects of the Leucadian area is the channel between the eastern coast and the west coast of continental Greece. As we might imagine, this channel is the easiest route for navigation from Cephallenia towards the north, to reach Corcyra and then continue the route either to the West, to Italy or towards the north to reach Illyria. Today Leucas links up with Acarnania by means of a lagoon on its north-eastern side, which extends via a land-spit, an isthmus, just south of the entrance to the Ambracian Gulf (Fig. 1). The existence, nature, and composition of the isthmus, have been the subject of controversy from the days of Antiquity and right up until today. The debate revolves around whether Leucas should be considered an island or a peninsula.

According to Strabo's interpretation of Homer's poem (Strabo 10, 2, 8), Leucas was a peninsula and only after the foundation of the colony of Leucas, in the seventh century, the Corinthians would have dug a canal to facilitate navigation through the channel and avoid the dangerous west

¹ May 2012, 331; Mavroulis *et alii* 2022, 3; González *et alii* in this volume.

coast of the Island. As Thucydides reports during the Peloponnesian War, Peloponnesian ships, had to be dragged across the isthmus, which means that it was closed at that time (Thuc. 3, 81, 1; 4, 8, 2). Pseudo-Scylax, around 348 BC², mentions that “Leucas is now an island by digging a trench at the isthmus” (Ps. Scylax §34) and in 218 BC, Philip V used the canal as a shortcut for his fleet³. Pliny mentions the Peninsula of Leucadia, formerly called Neritis, once cut off from the mainland but filled again with the sand accumulated through the action of the winds (Plin. *HN* 4, 2). He mentions Neritis and Neritus (Nericus) probably referring to the name mentioned by Homer in *the Odyssey* (26, 375-382). He describes the formation of the ‘dioryctus’ (a trench or canal) by the accumulation of sand through the action of the winds and gives some information about its length, namely three stadia:

“Passing out of the Ambracian Gulf into the Ionian Sea, we come to the coast of Leucadia, with the Promontory of Leucate, and then the Gulf and the peninsula of Leucadia, which last was formerly called Neritis. By the exertions of the inhabitants, it was once cut off from the mainland but was again joined to it by the vast bodies of sand accumulated through the action of the winds. This spot is called Dioryctus, and is three stadia in length; on the peninsula is the town of Leucas, formerly called Neritus” (Plin. *HN* 4, 2).

The same indication can be found in Polybius (5, 5, 11-13) and we also find a reference to the canal between Leucas and Acarnania in Arrian (*Ind.* 41, 2-3).

Thus, as Murray already states, there is a continuous process of dredging and silting up of the canal⁴, one that is well attested to in ancient sources, which consider that Leucas was connected to the Greek coast by an isthmus. Conversely, some modern scholars, geographers and geologists deny the existence of any isthmus, such as Dörpfeld, Partsch and Von Marées⁵, stating that Leucas is an island.

A group of German geographers and geologists have carried out extensive research on the region, leading to some important conclusions. In 2009 the results of a study on tsunami inundation of the Sound of Leucas since the mid-Holocene based on the analysis of sediment cores revealed that the Sound had been affected by catastrophic wave events and the possibility that multiple tsunamis could have eroded a natural channel. This appears

² Murray 1982, 245 and n.51.

³ Murray 1982, 246.

⁴ Murray 1982, 247.

⁵ See for a discussion Murray 1982 with references in pages 248-251 and page 260, n. 43.

to demonstrate that the navigable channel across the Sound was repeatedly filled with sediments by tsunamigenic inundation⁶. It is important to the debate to quote one of the conclusions of their study: “Our results suggest that the Corinthians, known to have excavated a navigable waterway in the 7th century BC, may just have re-opened or widened a natural tsunamigenic channel. The channel has been repeatedly choked with tsunami sediments in the following centuries”⁷.

Furthermore, in 2011, a study on the Lefkada barrier and beach rock system and coastal evolution was published. The study demonstrates that the extensive barrier system between the Island of Leucas and the Actium Headland, “is characterised by highly active gradual littoral dynamics and that during the Holocene, these processes, such as coastal longshore drift and spit evolution, involved the formation of several extensive spit and barrier structures which are now represented by a sequence of (partly submerged) beach rock-dominated palaeoshorelines”. Furthermore, active tectonics contribute to the evolution of the coastal system, as in the case of extreme wave and tsunami events⁸. In view of the above-mentioned scientific investigations and results as well as Murray’s opinion, we can consider this debate closed⁹. Consequently, Leucas became an island in the Neolithic Period since it was formerly connected to the Greek mainland as has been proven by geological and palaeographic studies in the area¹⁰.

Another interesting point regarding the Leucadian canal is the existence in ancient times of a harbour, called the ‘South Mole’, which has been thoroughly studied and analysed by W.M. Murray¹¹. It has special importance, since this mole extends, east to west, from a small islet near the Acarnanian shore where the site of Agios Georgios¹² is located on a small hill measuring 70 metres in altitude, to the shore of Leucas. It consists of two sections, the shorter one extending 133 metres from the islet (eastern side) and the longer one measuring 424 metres (western side) from the eastern side with a break of 35 metres between the two sections¹³ and featuring a width of 8-10 metres. As defined by Murray, the mole is

⁶ Vött *et alii* 2009; Brockmüller *et alii* 2007; May *et alii* 2012; Brockmüller, Vött, Brückner 2013.

⁷ Vött *et alii* 2009, 126.

⁸ May *et alii* 2012, 345.

⁹ Murray 1982, 238, 246-248. See Staikou in this volume.

¹⁰ Brockmüller, Vött, Brückner 2013, 21.

¹¹ Negris 1904, 357-359; Murray 1982, 226-243; Murray 1988, 101-118.

¹² As we shall see later, this is one of the relevant points of the Leucadian *peraea*.

¹³ Murray 1982, 229.

‘highly massive’ and “necessary for the creation of any port south of the city” (Murray 1982, 234) to unload the merchandise that the ships brought to Leucas performing a protective function. The mole/harbour can be dated back to at least the fifth century according to the Corinthian amphora fragments found by Murray on the western arm of the mole, but we cannot rule out the idea that construction of the mole could have taken place at the same time as the foundation of Leucas, which is to say, in the seventh century¹⁴. Undoubtedly, the city of Leucas controlling the route towards the West was an important trading centre. The South Mole of Leucas is one of the most extensive harbour installations of ancient Greece and, if it could be dated back to the same time as Corinthian colonization, it could be considered the earliest and largest example of a harbour in Greece¹⁵. No reference to the South Mole exists in ancient sources¹⁶.

Apart from the South Mole mentioned above, there are other constructions in the Canal worth citing¹⁷. Strabo mentioned twice the existence of a bridge (1, 3, 18 and 10, 8, 2), whose remains were identified by travellers¹⁸. The bridge, described by Negrís as a Roman bridge, runs from the coastline of Leucas to a small fortress located on the Acarnanian shore as was mentioned by von Marées and traced on one of his figures. Negrís also designed what he called the ‘pont antique’ giving some measurements of the blocks of the bridge, which Von Marées disagreed with¹⁹. When the modern Canal was dredged in 1902, a reconstruction of the bridge was undertaken although this is not visible today²⁰. Locating the points mentioned by the authors, the bridge must have measured between 2.5 and 3 kilometres. It is important to highlight the fact that the end of the bridge on the Acarnanian shore lies just under the site of Peratia and it could be possible, that, at the time the bridge was constructed, the coastal shore was different and the sea reached the small hill where Peratia is located and thus, the bridge may have measured close to 3 kilometres, which agrees with the calculations made by Negrís regarding the distance between the pillars that he draws in his composition²¹.

¹⁴ Murray 1982, 236, 241; Murray 1988, 115.

¹⁵ Murray 1988, 116. See Staikou in this volume.

¹⁶ See Murray 1982, 238-239.

¹⁷ Murray 1982, 251-253.

¹⁸ Goodisson 1822, 45, 88, 92; Leake, 1835, 165.

¹⁹ Also, Goodisson 1822, 45, 88, 92; Negrís 1904, 355-357; von Marées 1907, 12.

²⁰ Murray 1982, 252-253.

²¹ Negrís 1904, 356. See Staikou in this volume.

2. Description of the *Peraea* , Concept, and Sites

Regarding the *peraea* of Leucas, we have a reference in Thucydides when he mentions the territory within and outside the isthmus in the year 426:

“The Leucadians, finding themselves outnumbered, were obliged to remain quiet, although their lands were being ravaged both without and within the isthmus, τῆς τε ἑξω γῆς δηρομένης καὶ τῆς ἐντὸς τοῦ ἰσθμοῦ, where stands Leucas and the temple of Apollo” (Thuc. 3, 94, 2).

As already mentioned by Funke (1999, 36), control of the *peraea* served as a protective mechanism for some islands, especially when only a short distance existed from the mainland and control of the opposite coast was essential. In the case of the city of Leucas, together with this defensive need, we might also mention the city’s commercial control of passage through the Canal²².

Although we all have in mind what the word *peraea* means, especially in ancient times, it is worth pausing to consider this concept in greater depth. As P. Funke mentions, research regarding the *peraea* in ancient Greece is largely devoted to the study of the Rhodian *peraea* while other parts of Greece have been less studied or not even considered. The term is somewhat or, at least, could have many different meanings. The meaning relevant to our case refers as “a strip of land in relation to the island in front of it” (Funke 1999, 57), which is to say the coastline of the Plagia Peninsula just in front of the island of Leucas. Nevertheless, the type of relationship between the Greek island state and its *peraea* is not clear. Carusi has the same approach but is more extensive: the *peraea* would be the part of a territory which exists in relation to an island not only from a geographical point of view but also some kind of dependency as we know from the Rhodian case. It is important to distinguish whether, beyond the geographical aspect, there is some sort of political dependency and, especially, whether that part of the coastline forms part of the territory of the Greek city²³. Considering the different interpretations about whether Leucas should be considered an island or a peninsula, a matter already clarified based on geological studies, it is also true that the *peraea* of Leucas can be considered an unusual example compared to that of other Greek city-states²⁴.

²² Murray 1982, 285.

²³ Carusi 2011, 89-90.

²⁴ Carusi 2011, 95.

We do not have many direct ancient sources for the term *peraea* but we do have some references in the Homeric poems relating to the territory of the mainland pertaining to an island²⁵. As we have seen, in the case of Leucas, we have an indirect mention in Thucydides when he relates the attack to Leucas by the Athenians, and he mentions the territory within and outside the isthmus (3, 94, 2)²⁶.

The Plagia Peninsula²⁷ is a peninsula located in the north-west of Acarnania and is linked to the Island of Leucas on its western side and to the Acarnanian Mountains on the eastern side. It is a peculiar area, one that is sparsely inhabited and difficult to traverse, featuring two ranges of mountains of around 400 metres in altitude separated by a plain, and only accessible by goat paths²⁸, it measures approximately 90 sq. km. The west coast is the one that constitutes the *peraea* of Leucas, whilst to the north lies the Bay of Agios Nikolaos and to the north-east, Lake Voulkaria. Just by looking at the landscape, we can see that it has changed tremendously over time and that its appearance today has nothing to do with what it would have looked like in Prehistory and ancient times. It was probably an island in the past²⁹. Several geological, geoarchaeological and palaeogeographical types of research have been carried out in the Sound of Leucas and in the Coastal Plain of Palairos which confirm the evolution and changes in the landscape of the region over different periods detecting the changes in sea level, tectonic movements, the high impact of tsunamis through different historical episodes and different changes in the landscape. Regarding the eastern part of the Plagia Peninsula it is important to note the conclusions regarding the Palairos Coastal Plain since it has been suggested that during tsunami events, one dating from the late second millennium BC and the other from the fourth and third century BC, the Palairos Coastal Plain was inundated by tsunami waters from its northern and southern sides³⁰. This information is fundamental for our study of the Leucas *peraea*, together with its frontiers and its sphere of influence.

Below, we shall describe the different sites that made up the Leucas *peraea* from north to south, including those in the north of the Plagia Peninsula.

²⁵ *Il.* 2, 635; *Od.* 4, 634-635; 14, 100 (see also Funke 1999, 58).

²⁶ Thuc. 3, 94, 2. See also Schoch 1997, 19. Gomme (1956, 399-400) places the attack by the Athenian general Demosthenes in the summer of 426 precisely in the *peraea* of Leucas.

²⁷ Murray 1982, 184-223.

²⁸ Murray 1982, 184; Wacker 1999, 11-13.

²⁹ Wacker 1999, 13.

³⁰ Vött *et alii* 2006; Vött *et alii* 2011, 237 ; May *et alii*, 2012.

2.1. Agios Athanasios³¹

On the south-east slope of Lamia Hill, in the north of the Plagia Peninsula above the Agios Athanasios Chapel, we can find a small fort built in a polygonal masonry style. Inside, various fragments of Corinthian and Laconian-type roof tiles have been discovered. Based on these few pottery fragments, Murray dates the fort back to the 4th century BC. This tower not only surveys the isthmus and the city of Leucas but, to the north, the entrance to the Ambracian Gulf.

2.2. Vigla³²

In the north of the Peninsula of Plagia, between the Ionian Sea to the west and Lake Voulkaria to the east, there is a hill featuring an altitude of 77 metres. South of the village of Agios Nikolaos the remains of Vigla were found at the top of this hill. Murray discovered an ancient site with remains of a double-shell polygonal wall and, in the centre, a small circular tower that he defines as being of Hellenistic type, together with remains of poor-quality black glaze sherds. The site was excavated later, and, at the highest point of the hill, there was another tower measuring 7x7 metres. This is probably the earliest evidence of Vigla and thus, dates back to the 6th century BC. A second ring of walls was interpreted as being the fortifications, with the ones in the southeast corner, where the round tower was later built, being of high-quality construction. Additional remains of walls have been found on the hill to the west of Vigla, and, to the north, the Channel of Cleopatra which connects the sea with Lake Voulkaria. This is where Wacker mentions the existence of some remains of fortifications of ancient use.

The tower could be a control-point on the coastal route from Leucas to Actium, as well as on the internal route to Palairos from the south of Lake Voulkaria (this route is approximately 4 km. long). The site of Vigla has been connected to the location of Sollium³³.

³¹ Murray 1982, 135-138; Wacker 1999, 15.

³² Wacker 1999, 52-54; Murray 1982, 161-163.

³³ Bertold, Faisst, 1993; see forward 2.12.

2.3. Peratia

Peratia is located just in front of ancient Leucas, in the north-east of the isthmus, on a small hill of approximately 40 metres in altitude and surrounded by fertile plains. It is possible that the coastline was different from the coast we see today³⁴, especially to the north-east, where more than one kilometre could have been gained from the sea. Murray records the remains of a polygonal circuit wall along the hill where the church of Agios Ioannis is located and whose ashlarls have been taken by the locals. The modern village has covered up the remains of various building foundations. He also mentions the discovery of a limestone sarcophagus, with others also having been reused by locals. A grave stele from the third century was also discovered³⁵. Murray relates Peratia to the ‘Dioryctus’ mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1, 50, 4)³⁶ and the ‘periodictio’ named in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*³⁷. The above sources could perfectly refer as Wacker also mentions³⁸, to the Roman bridge that connected the *peraea* with Leucas, as mentioned above.

2.4 Kastri Lakidia³⁹

Located in Kastri, a range of three hills some 70 metres above sea level on the plain between Nea Plagia and Peratia, Dörpfeld excavated here in 1906 and found numerous clay figurines identifying the site as lying, 1.7 km. from Agios Georgios towards the north-east⁴⁰. Murray does not mention this Kastri. Wacker reports the presence of pottery and on the highest summit, some stone walls and several fragments of Corinthian roof tiles, offering us a detailed description of the figurines and dating most of them back to the Archaic Period and some back to the Hellenistic Period⁴¹. He also mentions the possibility that, following ancient sources (Dion. Hal.

³⁴ May *et alii* 2012, 345.

³⁵ Murray 1982, 184-186. For the stele see n. 7, p.442.

³⁶ This word usually means the Leucas Canal. The term is also mentioned in Pliny (*NH* 4, 2, 5). See also Oberhummer’s (10, n.1) interpretation.

³⁷ Murray 1982, 191.

³⁸ Wacker 1999, 33.

³⁹ Wacker 1999, 26-27.

⁴⁰ Dörpfeld 1927, 269 fig.30. In the reconstruction plan of Ag. Georgios there is an indication of the direction towards Lakidia and the distance (see Wacker 1999, 26).

⁴¹ The figurines are perfectly illustrated by Dörpfeld (1927, appendix 78a).

Ant. Rom. 1, 50, 4), a temple dedicated to Aphrodite Aenesias could have been located on an island just in front of the city of Leucas and its dock could have been located at Kastri Lakidia⁴².

2.5. Agios Georgios⁴³

On a small hill measuring more than 73 metres altitude near modern Plagia in the south-west of the peninsula, we find the Ottoman fortress of Agios Georgios, constructed in 1807 by Ali Pasha. At the bottom of the hill, near the coastline, is where Dörpfeld first excavated the site, and although he first reported the existence of a circuit wall that was reproduced in a plan, later in 1926, he mentioned that he had only found some isolated parts of the wall and two towers of polygonal style, similar to those of the city of Leucas and, therefore, associated with the date of foundation of the *polis* of Leucas⁴⁴. When Murray visited the site 50 years later, he could not see any traces of the wall at all. Following the plan designed by Dörpfeld and Murray's observation, there is a road that could lead directly to the South Mole⁴⁵. It is possible that many of the ashlar of the ancient wall were used for the construction of the Ottoman fortress⁴⁶. Wacker also describes some parts of the wall and the towers but proposes a date after the 3rd century BC⁴⁷. Furthermore, Dörpfeld identified the site with ancient Neritum as mentioned in *The Odyssey* (24, 377) and by Thucydides (3, 7, 4)⁴⁸. The location of ancient Neritum in ancient sources is well described by Murray (1982, 187-190). He accepts the location of Neritum at Agios Georgios in the fifth century although he does not take it for granted⁴⁹. Nevertheless, only future excavations could confirm the dating and other aspects of the ancient site of Agios Georgios. No doubt its specific purpose was that of controlling the navigation through the Sound of Leucas and it was also linked to the South Mole mentioned above.

⁴² Wacker 1999, 26-27 and plate VIII.14.

⁴³ Murray 1982, 186-190. Wacker 1999, 16-21.

⁴⁴ Dörpfeld 1927, 269 and fig.30.

⁴⁵ Murray 1982, 187.

⁴⁶ Wacker 1999, 16.

⁴⁷ Wacker 1999, 16-17.

⁴⁸ Dörpfeld 1927, 269.

⁴⁹ Murray 1982, 190.

2.6. Kastraki Lithies⁵⁰

Kastraki Lithies is located 2,5 kilometres eastwards from Agios Georgios to the south-west of Mt. Ixos; it is situated 70 metres above sea level and features difficult access. Murray refers to a small fortress consisting of polygonal blocks with two small gates aligned in a north-south axis. Inside, many fragments of roof tiles were discovered. Scarce pottery finds dating from the fourth and third centuries included a rim of a Corinthian type of saucer and fragments of two lamps. Wacker refers to the existence of a well or a small cistern that was filled with roof tiles⁵¹. Murray does not believe that Kastraki Lithies is a watchtower since it only overlooks the channel area on the north and south sides⁵². With a viewshed from the site, we can see that it surveilled the east side of the channel at the height of the South Mole. In Murray's opinion, this fort was built as a defence against small-scale pirate attacks⁵³.

Wacker states that its location on a rocky outcrop and north of the Kotsypholimpa Corridor makes its interpretation rather tricky. He believes that it could have served as a refuge for people from the nearby farmsteads, such as Kotsypholimpa, who could have used it in times of crisis and also because it had water resources⁵⁴.

2.7. Kasteli⁵⁵ or Kagali⁵⁶

Murray refers to this site as Kasteli at Phagia and locates the site approximately two kilometres south of Kastraki Lithies. He saw the remains of a foundation and describes what could be a rectangular fortification featuring, poor pottery finds, among them a Corinthian amphora toe of the 6th century plus a small fragment of glass, a Hellenistic alabastron and a flint blade⁵⁷. Wacker believes that it could be the remains of a farm and

⁵⁰ Murray 1982, 192-195; Wacker 1999, 24-26.

⁵¹ Wacker 1999, 24.

⁵² Murray 1982, 195.

⁵³ Murray 1982, 194.

⁵⁴ Wacker 1999, 24,26.

⁵⁵ Murray 1982, 195-197.

⁵⁶ Wacker 1999, 23-24.

⁵⁷ Murray 1982, 197. With details of n. 22, it is possible to determine the exact location of the site.

leans more towards its dating from Hellenistic times⁵⁸. He also believes that it could be a candidate for the site of Sollium, despite the lack of water resources⁵⁹.

2.8. Kotsypholimpa⁶⁰

On a natural plateau located on an outcrop of the Kotsypholimpa Corridor, Wacker refers to a farmstead with water resources. The building is in a poor state of preservation and some ceramics from the fourth to third century were found. This site is only one kilometre from Kastraki Lithies.

2.9. Vathy Avali/Vatheia⁶¹

Located in the south of the Plagia Peninsula to the west of Cape Kephali, we have one of the best-protected harbours between Leucas and Pogonia (Palairos Harbour). Murray refers to the remains of various small platforms to the east of the bay and to the west, the foundations of a rectangular building and the interior with Laconian roof tiles, but no pottery. In his opinion, it could have been a tower or a medium-sized house⁶². Near to the above, there is a coarse defensive wall. Murray mentions the possibility that during the Hellenistic Period, it could have been a farm. Although he had thought he had found Sollium, when he visited the site, declared that he was sure that he had not⁶³. Wacker reports that near Vatheia upstream and close to a naturally protected harbour, there was a small, unfortified settlement with a maximum of 15 to 20 houses. He dates Vatheia back to the third century⁶⁴, being located upstream from a naturally protected harbour. The site is only 2.5 km away from Variko and was probably in use as of the 4th century and, for certain, as of the 3rd century BC.

⁵⁸ Wacker 1999, 24.

⁵⁹ See Murray 1982, 205 and n. 43.

⁶⁰ Wacker 1999, 27.

⁶¹ Murray 1982, 198-200; Wacker 1999, 51-52.

⁶² Murray 1982, 198-199, fig. 30.

⁶³ Murray 1982, 199-200.

⁶⁴ Wacker 1999, 52.

2.10. Variko⁶⁵

To the south of the Chondro Vouni mountain, there is a plain that leads to a natural harbour bay, containing the islet of Agios Nikolaos. The field name Variko refers to a fruiting chamber that opens to the south of the massive Chondro Vouni mountain. On one of the slopes, as Wacker mentions, an ancient settlement was found, indicated by a large number of ceramic fragments on the surface. In 1985, a sanctuary was excavated in the north of the plain, consisting of a small building oriented to the east. The pottery found dates from the Classic and Hellenistic Periods. Wacker remarks that this sanctuary is located near the Bay of Variko, a naturally protected harbour between Leucas and Mytikas (the Port of Alyzeia) plus the suggestion that it could be the location of Sollium; he suggests that its status as a *polisma* could mean that the settlement could have been an emporium dependent on Leucas or a military port⁶⁶. An interesting point of this area of Variko is its quarry, in the small bay in the prolongation of Cape Variko, where we can see the extraction marks of blocks taken from the rock in various places. Wacker suggests an ancient use of the quarry due to the remains of a pier found 2 to 2.5 metres below sea level, as well as certain parallels with other quarries. Supposedly this material was loaded and transported by ship or for various constructions on the coastline, such as the South Mole⁶⁷.

2.11. Pogonia⁶⁸

Located in Palairos Bay, south of the Plagia Peninsula, on the Palairos coastal plain and east of the modern quay at Pogonia. Murray found the remains of an ancient harbour just in front of the ancient road towards Palairos. The situation is determined by the topography and must have had an east-west direction approximately 270 metres from the shoreline. He found Corinthian amphora fragments from the 4th to 3rd centuries that were 500 metres to the north of the mole, where a tomb dated later with an inscription was found⁶⁹. For Wacker, the interpretation of Pogonia as a port of Palairos as well as the road to the city is only hypothetical⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ Wacker 1999, 47- 51.

⁶⁶ Wacker 1999, 48.

⁶⁷ Wacker 1999, 49-52 and plates XIV 26, 27, XV 28, 29.

⁶⁸ Murray 1982, 165-172; Wacker 1999, 34.

⁶⁹ Murray 1982, 165-166, fig.26.

⁷⁰ Wacker 1999, 34.

The Palairos coastal plain was subject to palaeogeographical research between 2001 and 2004 (Vött *et alii* 2006) and the results suggest that the Bay of Palairos-Pogonia, during the Holocene, was affected by tsunami inundation⁷¹. The current topography of Palairos shows the effects of these events, with the highest elevation between the beach and Lake Voulkaria on the plain being five metres above sea level⁷². The remains of the ancient mole were shifted inland due to a tsunami effect. The investigations and data recorder have shown that tsunami events took place at the beginning of the 6th, mid-5th, the 4th/3rd and at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, as well as during the 4th/3rd century BC. They suggest that the Palairos coastal plain was inundated by tsunami events both from the northern and southern sides⁷³.

2.12. Sollium⁷⁴

Our first source is Thucydides, who mentions this site on three different occasions. He reports that, in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians took the Corinthian *polisma* and gave it over to Palairos (2, 30, 1)⁷⁵. Later, in 426 BC, on the occasion of the take-over of Leucas by Demosthenes and the subsequent campaign of Aetolia, we have a second reference to Sollium: “So he set sail from Leucas with his whole armament in spite of the unwillingness of the Acarnanians and went along the coast to Sollium” (Thuc. 3, 95, 1). In the third mention, the Corinthians later complain that neither Sollium nor Anactorium have been returned (Peace of Nicias)⁷⁶. As Murray recalls, Thucydides mentions that Sollium was a *polisma*, that is a small *polis* and that it was founded by the Corinthians and was delivered to Palairos in the first year of the Peloponnesian

⁷¹ Vött *et alii* 2006; Vött *et alii* 2007.

⁷² Vött 2011, 214 and Fig.7.

⁷³ Vött 2011, 237.

⁷⁴ Murray 1982, 200-206.

⁷⁵ “Meanwhile the Athenians in the hundred vessels were still cruising round Peloponnese. After taking Sollium, a town belonging to Corinth, and presenting the city and territory to the Acarnanians of Palairos, they stormed Astacus, expelled its tyrant Evarchus, and gained the place for their confederacy.” (Thuc. 2, 30, 1).

⁷⁶ “But the Corinthians, in the presence of all their allies who had not themselves accepted the treaty—for they had on their own responsibility summoned them beforehand—in reply to the Lacedaemonians said in what respects they had been wronged, not stating outright that the Lacedaemonians had failed to recover from the Athenians for them Sollium or Anactorium.” (Thuc. 5, 30, 2).

War. When Demosthenes decided to undertake a campaign against the Aetolians, advised by the Messenians, he decided to leave Leucas and sail along the coast to Sollium with the rest of the army since the Acarnanians did not agree. Murray reviews the different candidates for the *polis* of Sollium up to the date of his thesis dissertation and after reviewing the locations chosen by other scholars in the past, he states that Sollium should be in the south of the Plagia Peninsula, specifically Vathy Avali or Phagia (Kastelli/Kagali)⁷⁷. In relation to Vathy Avali/Vatheia, after visiting the site, he declared that he was sure that he had not found Sollium⁷⁸.

Heuzey visited the site of Sterna and identified the site as Sollium, and he also mentions a 'Kastri' as a dependency of Sterna, which Murray identifies as Kastraki Lithies⁷⁹. Like others, Murray does not believe that Sterna can be Sollium since it is too far away from the sea.

Another suggestion was made in 1993 for the location of Sollium on the hill of Vigla⁸⁰. This publication indicates nine possible locations (with references) and concludes that Vigla could be Sollium. Bertold and Faisst point out that the attack from the Athenians came from the north and, that Demosthenes would have left Leucas and travelled along the coast up to Vigla, stating that it was not possible to sail towards the south (Pogonia or Zaverda) because the harbour canal was not navigable at the time. Most importantly, if Demosthenes had sailed northwards to Vigla/Sollium, considering the canal connecting the Bay of Agios Nikolaos with the one that runs south of Lake Myrtuntium (Lake Voulkaria), he could have reached the Ionian Sea between Pogonia and Zaverda avoiding the circumnavigation of Leucas⁸¹. Vigla is near Leucas and Palairos, which taken together with the finds from excavations at Vigla, plus the investigations about the effects of tsunami events on the coastal plain of Palairos, would favour the hypothesis that of Sollium was located here, in the north of the Plagia Peninsula (see Fig. 1). In 1997, Schoch in his chapter on Corinthian colonies up to 431 BC, approaches the question of Sollium's location, naming seven possible sites, but Vigla is not included. He only refers to Vigla by quoting

In conclusion, the possible candidates for Sollium until now include Vigla, Pogonia or some site on the Bay of Zaverda. In the case of Vigla, the geological and geographic research that has been carried out in the

⁷⁷ Murray 1982, 201-206 with references.

⁷⁸ Murray 1982, 198-200.

⁷⁹ Heuzey 1860, 396; Murray 1982, 194, 204; Bertold, Faisst 1993, 6.

⁸⁰ Bertold, Faisst 1993, 1-12.

⁸¹ Bertold, Faisst 1993, 1-12, fig 2.

region is crucial. Vött (2011) has demonstrated that strong tsunami events, dating back to Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic times, could have caused the flooding of the Palairos coastal plain from the north to the south side, which would favour the possibility of Vigla being the location of Sollium as proposed by Berktold and Faisst (1993). This is not the only possibility since, in principle, it appears that when Demosthenes sailed to Sollium, this meant he intended to sail in a southerly direction.

It looks as though demonstrating the exact location of Sollium is going to be quite problematic. After Thucydides mentions the site, the name never appears again, and this could mean, as suggested by Schoch, that once Sollium was transferred to Palairos, it was integrated into the *polis* of Palairos and lost its independence⁸². The coastal configuration that we see today has nothing to do with the different transformations caused by tectonic, seismic and tsunami events that have occurred in the region throughout history and especially after the Holocene⁸³ and this affects the entire coastline of the Plagia Peninsula.

To sum up, Sollium, founded by the Corinthians, and following Thucydides, must have been a small colony with its corresponding city and territory (Thuc. 2, 30, 1), one that probably lost its independence when it was handed over to Palairos. There is no doubt that it was a site located on the coast (Thuc. 3, 95, 1) and it must have been a kind of fortified port located not far away from Leucas and Palairos since it would be important for both *poleis*. In this regard, another hypothesis could be Peratia which has not been considered previously (see 2.3). However, the findings are scarce, and we also need to learn more from research on the coastline modifications. Information on routes and visibility is provided later.

With the information at our disposal, in my opinion it is difficult to choose any of the locations proposed. Pogonia is too far away from Leucas, while Vigla and Peratia could be two hypotheses.

2.13. Pyrgos on Koutoupa⁸⁴

Murray refers to a watchtower, of small size located on the summit of Aetopholia on the ridge named Kotoupa at 344 metres in altitude in the south of the Plagia Peninsula. It is built with polygonal blocks and on a bedrock

⁸² Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 371.

⁸³ Vött 2007; Vött *et alii* 2011; Floth *et alii* 2013.

⁸⁴ Murray 1982, 206-208; Wacker 1999, 36-37.

outcrop for its northwest wall. Further down the slope, some Corinthian fragments were found dating from the mid-4th to the 3rd century. The most interesting aspect of the site is the light of sight. It offers surveillance of Leucas and its harbour, the isthmus, Antipaxos Island, Sterna, Trikorpho, Kalamos Island and Cephallenia. Wacker also mentions that this tower had been in use for a long time, having found some additional sherds on the southeast slope dating from the 5th and 4th centuries, including some fragments consisting of Attic imports⁸⁵.

2.14. Trikorpho⁸⁶

Located to the north-east of Pyrgos in Koutoupa, on the highest of the three peaks and at an altitude of 480 metres, the remains form a square of polygonal walls with a small gate in the eastern wall. The interior was divided into two parts, one of them containing some fragments of a large pithos and the other possibly a courtyard. The western side is closed by a wall, and Murray interprets this as being the sleeping quarters for the guards. Evidence includes Corinthian and Laconian roof tiles. Wacker mentions the possible evidence of a cistern which would confirm the site as a military fort with important connections. An excellent photo published by Wacker shows the impressive ashlar of the walls⁸⁷. The view from this point covers the eastern part of Acarnania and the east coastline of the Leucas Canal. Regarding the line of sight with other sites, Trikorpho covers Palairos, Sterna, Pyrgos Koutoupa, Kastraki Lithies and Kotsypholimpa, whilst as Murray has pointed out, the city of Leucas is not visible. No doubt this site served as a point of observation and a signal relay as well as a guard fort.

2.15. Sterna⁸⁸

Sterna is one of the highest points on the Plagia Peninsula, located at an altitude of 508 metres on the ridge of mountains that crosses the Peninsula from north-east to south-west, creating an important topographical

⁸⁵ Wacker 1999, 37.

⁸⁶ Murray 1982, 208-211; Wacker 1999, 45-46.

⁸⁷ Wacker 1999, plate XII, 23.

⁸⁸ Murray 1982, 211-218; Wacker 1999, 41-45.

division. Heuzey identified the site as being the location of Sollium⁸⁹. The fortress built in a polygonal style is over 50 metres in length and up to 10 metres wide in some places, featuring a cross wall that divides the fortification in two. The one towards the south-west shows a gate⁹⁰. Wacker suggests that there could have been two phases of construction⁹¹. There were two cisterns, the largest one inside the eastern section and the other, smaller cistern close to the north-west wall. Access to freshwater confirms the permanent use of this fortification. Near the largest cistern and after a ramp, there is a building with several rooms that has been subject to different interpretations (palace, storeroom), none of which can be confirmed⁹². Sterna would have been used, in both Murray and Wacker's opinion, as of the mid-5th century and throughout the 4th and 3rd centuries⁹³.

There is no doubt that Sterna was an important garrison fortification or a place of refuge featuring special functions for the surveillance of the Plagia Peninsula, in particular the northern part. The question is who founded this site? Leucas or Palairos? And did it belong to the Acarnanian territory or not? Murray states that the fortification of Sterna was built by Palairos as a border fort, observation point and signal station up until the 3rd century and, moreover, as a garrison post for the Epirotes between 253 and 231 BC. The other aspect to be considered is the function of this site within the context of the forts and watchtowers on Palairos territory⁹⁴.

2.16. Ixos⁹⁵

On the same mountain ridge as Sterna's, Wacker mentions the existence of a well-preserved wall up to 1.59 metres high, which could be a barrier wall. He also believes that it could mark the frontier between Palairos and Leucas territory.

In short, according to our current state of knowledge, the occupation of the *peraea* seems to have started at least in the 6th century (Kasteli, Kastri Lakidia, as well as Vigla). Palairos may have responded to the extension of Leucas' power by occupying the central area of the Peninsula with Sterna

⁸⁹ Heuzey 1860, 396.

⁹⁰ Murray 1982, fig.30; Wacker 1999, fig.8.

⁹¹ Murray 1982, 212; Wacker 1999, 41.

⁹² Wacker 1999, 43.

⁹³ Murray 1982, 215; Wacker 1999, 43.

⁹⁴ See Wacker 1999, 43-45, 67-72.

⁹⁵ Wacker 1999, 22.

from the mid-5th century and Pyrgos on Koutoupa also in the 5th century. They watched over the borders with Leucas and they also surveilled the main overland routes, so that it is possible that the border between Leucas and Palairos was established around this area. The settlement of *peraea* and of the entire Peninsula of Plagia gained momentum during the 4th century and culminated in the 3rd century (Agios Athanasios, Agios Georgios, Vathy Avali, Pogonia, Kastraki Lithies, etc.). It is possible that the fortification system was completed with polygonal masonry in the 3rd century, as is the case, for example, of Peratia. It is not just about the creation of a defensive area, but we have indications of the integration of the *peraea* into the territory of the city of Leucas also with the establishment of farmsteads for agricultural exploitation (Kotsypholimpa) and sanctuaries (Variko).

3. GIS analysis, routes, sites, viewsheds

In order to gain a more precise idea of the different sites referred to on the Leucadian *peraea* and their relationship with the city of Leucas and surveillance of the Canal, it is worth analysing the territory with the help of various GIS tools⁹⁶.

In Fig. 1 we can see the Leucas Canal and the Plagia Peninsula with all the sites mentioned in the text plus the South Mole and the Roman harbour. It is worth noting the situation on the Plagia Peninsula with regard to Lake Voulkaria possibly Lake Myrtuntium cited by Strabo⁹⁷. Lake Voulkaria is separated from the inner Bay of Agios Nikolaos, a formal lagoonal environment that was previously off from the Ionian Sea⁹⁸. The Cleopatra's Channel to the north of ancient Palairos links Lake Voulkaria and the Palairos coastal plain.

In order to provide an approximate idea of the extension of the territory of Leucas, we shall consider what Thucydides refers to as the territory of Leucas including the land both within and outside the isthmus (3, 94, 2) and endeavour to show its frontier with Acarnania on the Plagia Peninsula. Wacker already sought to approach the territories of both *poleis*, Leucas and Palairos and as he states, only archaeological or topographical

⁹⁶ We have used ArcGIS Desktop 10.7.1. SRTM 90m DEM Version 4 obtained from CGIARCSI (<https://srtm.csi.cgiar.org>).

⁹⁷ "Between Leucas and the Ambracian Gulf is a salt lake, called Myrtuntium" (Strabo 10, 2, 21).

⁹⁸ Vött *et alii* 2009, 3 and fig.1.

studies can help to define the territories. The border between Leucas and Palairos must have changed, particularly after Leucas joined the Acarnanian Confederacy, since they were formerly opponents⁹⁹. We know from Thucydides that in 426 BC, Leucas was besieged by the Athenians and Acarnanians (Thuc. 3, 94, 2), that in 262 BC¹⁰⁰ it formed part of the Acarnanian Confederacy and in 230 BC Leucas was its capital¹⁰¹.

The Island of Leucas, with its islets included, currently has an extension of approximately 303 sq. km. to which we should add the part of its territory on the Plagia Peninsula. Applying the nearest-neighbour method, we have hypothetically defined the frontier between Leucas and Palairos and thus, obtained a theoretical approach to the size of Leucadian territory on the *peraea*. In Fig. 1 we can see the frontier with Acarnania which we have designed by applying this method. The extension of the Leucas *peraea* amounts to approximately 36.87 sq. km. If we accept this frontier, this means that Agios Athanasios, Pyrgos Koutoupa and maybe Vathy Avali were all frontier sites in Leucas' territory, while Sterna belonged to Palairos together with Trikorpho and Pyrgos Tavros. As we have said, the western borders of Leucas, in the *peraea*, must have changed several times in Antiquity depending on its relationship with Acarnania.

Regarding Palairos (Krechopoula Hill) and applying the same method as in the case of Leucas, the *polis* would have an extension of ca. 75.14 sq. km. and its borders could be Vigla to the north and Lake Voulkaria to the north-west; its eastern frontier would be the one shared with Leucas on the Plagia Peninsula, while its western border would have reached the western limits of its coastal plain and the southern border was directly the sea in the Bay of Palairos. Through Vigla it linked up with Actium and Anactorium to the north. A great extent of its territory would have been mountainous, which could be used for pasture, whilst the coastal plain could be used for agriculture. It is accepted that the Port of Palairos is Pogonia, on the coast of Zaverda Bay, which is where Murray found the remains of an ancient mole which dates from the fourth century onwards. He connects the location of these remains to an ancient path that leads to ancient Palairos. Wacker doubts the existence of this road and the assumption that these ancient harbour remains belong to the Port of Palairos.

The terrestrial route between Leucas (from Agios Georgios) and Palairos is 18 kilometres (shortest coastal path) and, as can be seen in Fig. 2, it runs

⁹⁹ Domingo-Forasté 1988, 109-119.

¹⁰⁰ IG IX 1² 1, 3. See Pascual 2018, 78 and Pascual 2017 for the 3rd century.

¹⁰¹ Livy 36, 11, 9.

all along the valley to the north of the ridge of the mountains where Sterna is located and surveils the terrestrial pass. This route was mentioned by Wacker (1999, 73) and could also begin in Paliochalias, where the Roman bridge has one of its borders. Other routes to be considered are the one from Palairos to Vigla (7.58 km.) and the one from Peratia to Palairos (16.05 km.).

Visibility analysis is an important method for the analysis and interpretation of archaeology as well as the study of archaeological landscapes. Beyond other considerations, its application serves to our purpose of studying the *peraea* of Leucas and its locations, as Wheatley mentions: “Visibility can be important between related or similar sites, as in the case of watchtowers or signalling systems” (Wheatley 2002, 180).

GIS tools permit us to incorporate visibility into our archaeological analysis and, the viewshed calculation offers the techniques required to incorporate visibility into an archaeological analysis. A viewshed calculation, defines the area of study that can theoretically be seen from a specific site. The calculation of lines of sight or viewsheds is quite easy once we incorporate a DEM (digital elevation model) into our study and a layer with the sites we wish to include in our visibility analysis¹⁰².

We have produced viewsheds for all the points displayed in Fig. 1 but in order not to overextend ourselves, we have selected those that are most relevant for our analysis, which is to say Agios Athanasios, Peratia, Agios Georgios, Leucas, Pyrgos Koutoupa and Palairos (see figs 3, 4 and 5). In each of the viewshed figures the area visibility from the site appears in black.

From the small fort of Agios Athanasios (see 2.1), located on the north side of the Plagia Peninsula, the isthmus, and the Sound of Leucas are completely visible covering the entire east coast of Leucas up to the Drepanos Gulf. The purpose of this fort is very clear. As already stated by Wacker (1999, 15) it had to be constructed to control the trade route from Corinth to Corecra after the foundation of Leucas and, as we can see, it also surveils entrance to the Ambracian Gulf to the north¹⁰³. The line of sight reaches Leucas, Agios Georgios, Kastri Lakidia, Paliochalias and Sterna (Fig. 3a).

From Peratia, visibility of the Canal is nearly complete, including the entire western side up to the Drepanos Gulf and the eastern side up to Paliochalias. It has direct lines of sight with Agios Athanasios and Sterna (Fig. 3b).

¹⁰² Wheatley, Gillings 2002, 182-183.

¹⁰³ See also Domingo-Forasté 1988, 6-22.

The Leucadian Peraea

Leucas visibility figure shows its control of the isthmus, the Sound, and the western coastline up to the South Mole. Since its location is by the sea, it needed other points on its territory to monitor transit through the entire channel. Regarding the lines of sight, from the city of Leucas, Agios Athanasios, Agios Georgios, Kastri Lachidia, Peratia, Pyrgo Koutoupa and Sterna can be seen (Fig. 4a).

Agios Georgios, possibly the Neritus mentioned by Thucydides (3, 7, 4), is a highly strategic point to monitor most of the Canal from the isthmus, passage through the South Mole and the Drepanos Gulf. In addition, the viewshed fig shows that it covers an extensive territory of Leucas. The line of sight from this site reaches Agios Athanasios, Peratia, the city of Leucas, Kasteli, Pyrgos Koutoupa, Kastraki Lithies and Kotsypholimpa. Furthermore, sites in Palairos: Sterna, Trikorpho and Pyrgos Tavros (Fig. 4b).

Pyrgos on Koutoupa (or Aetofolia) (see 2.12), defined by Murray as a 'watch tower' has a broad line of sight covering not only both sides of the entire Leucas Canal, but also the entrance to the Ambracian Gulf and part of Western Acarnania. Wacker believes that it belonged to the territory of Palairos and was part of the network of towers that shared visual connections¹⁰⁴. The line of sight from this site reaches Leucas, Agios Georgios, Paliochalias and, in Palairos territory: Sterna, Trikorpho and Pyrgos Tavros (Fig. 5a).

Besides controlling navigation through the Canal, once Leucas formed part of the Acarnanian Confederacy, all the interior points mentioned above also served to control the terrestrial routes from the south to the Ambracian Gulf.

Regarding Palairos, this site surprisingly has visibility of Leucas and the part of the Canal between the Roman Bridge and the South Mole and part of the route between Agios Georgios and Palairos to the west; to the north, it has visibility up to Actium and the Ambracian Gulf, whilst to the east it covers all of its theoretical territory, including Lake Voulkaria and the coastal plain and Zaverda Bay. The line of sight reaches the sites of Sterna, Ixos, Trikorpho and Pogonia (Fig. 5b).

¹⁰⁴ See Wacker 1999, 67-68 and the table with the views from the sites and distances between them.

4. Conclusions

To conclude, although we have some information on the Leucas *peraea* from scarce ancient sources, it is not easy to reconstruct the whole Leucas territory here, since it must have changed over time depending on its relationship with Acarnania. In addition, one of the principal obstacles is the reconstruction of the landscape at that time, since, as has been demonstrated, due to its location in an area of special tectonic activity, the landscape we see today probably has nothing to do with the one that existed in Antiquity, or more precisely, the period of the foundation of the Corinthian colony up to Roman integration¹⁰⁵. We still have some unresolved questions, which will probably never be solved, such as the location of Sollium or the exact border between Palairos and Leucas before 425 BC. Nevertheless, what can be confirmed is that Leucas was an island, that the isthmus could be opened up every time it became silted up and, thus, the channel was probably navigable every time it was required, even from the Bronze Age. The Corinthians founded Leucas in order to control the passage through the channel and, thus, the defence and security of the channel was of primary importance, this need being perfectly covered from the north of the Peninsula of Plagia (Agios Athanasios) to the south (Pogonia Bay) with a system of forts and watchtowers not only on the coast but also inland. Leucas also had the opportunity to profit from the fertile plains of the Plagia Peninsula in between the mountain ranges.

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¹⁰⁵ See in this volume Gonzalez *et alii* on Acarnania region and its coast.

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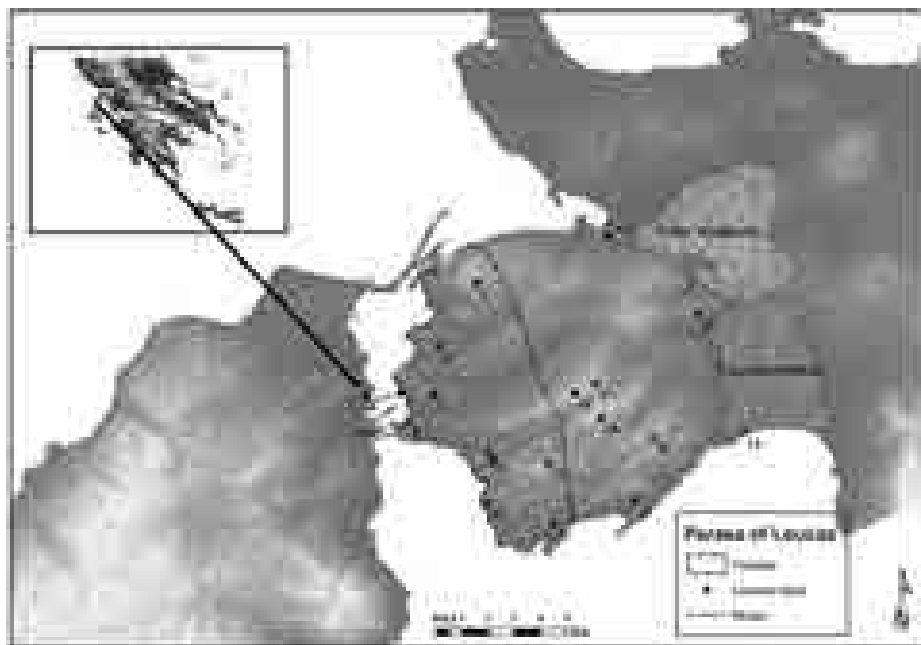


Fig 1. The Sound of Leucas and the peraea with sites mentioned in the text. All figures have been elaborated by the author.

1. Vigla	11. Kagali
2. Ag. Athanasios	12. Vatheia
3. Peratia	13. Variko
4. Leucas	14. Pogonia
5. Paliochalias	15. Trikorpho
6. Kastri Lakidia	16. Isos
7. Ag. Georgios	17. Sterna
8. Kastraki Lithies	18. Paliaros
9. Kotsypholimpa	19. Pyrgos Tavros
10. Pyrgos Aetopholia	

The Leucadian Peraea

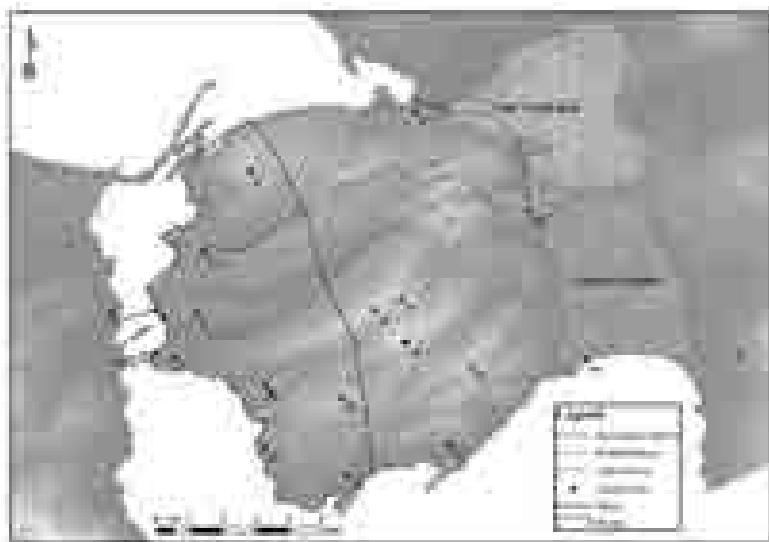


Fig 2. The *peraea*, sites, frontiers, and routes.

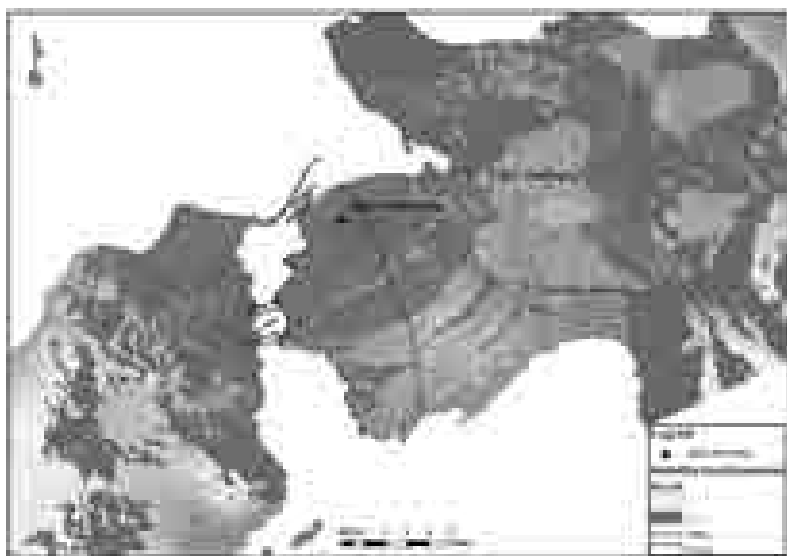


Fig 3a. Visibility from Agios Athanasios.

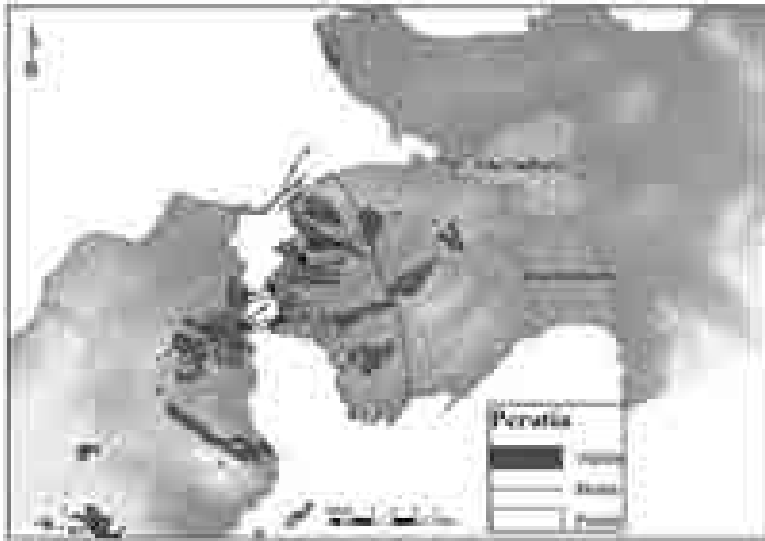


Fig. 3b. Visibility from Peratia.

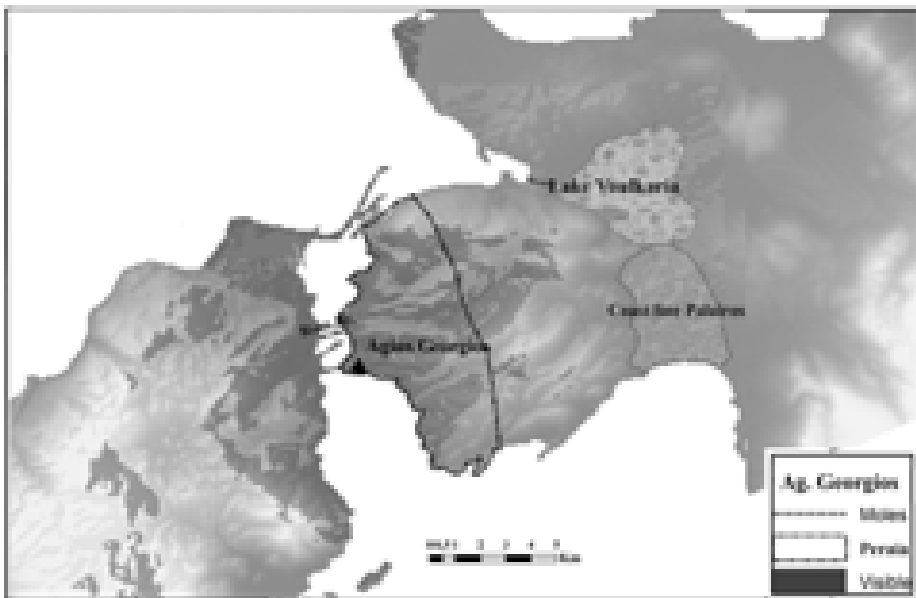


Fig 4a. Visibility from Agios Georgios.

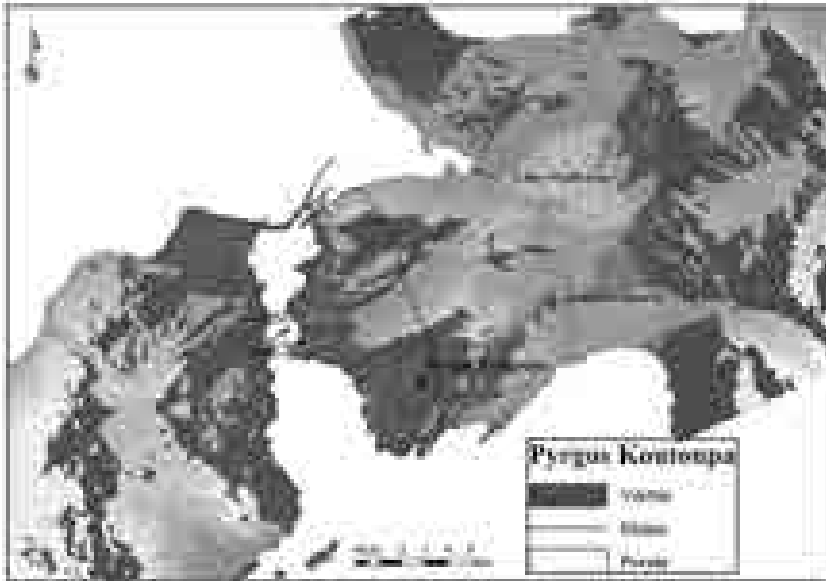


Fig 4b. Visibility from Pyrgos Koutoupa.

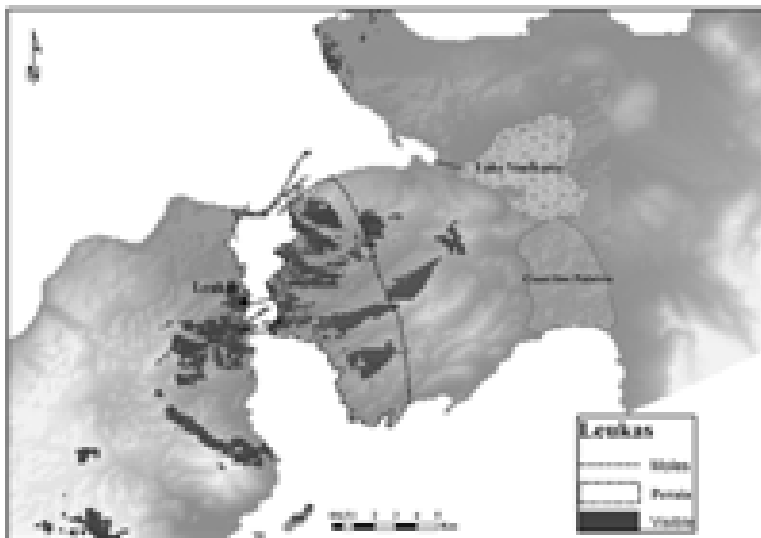


Fig 5a. Visibility from Leucas.

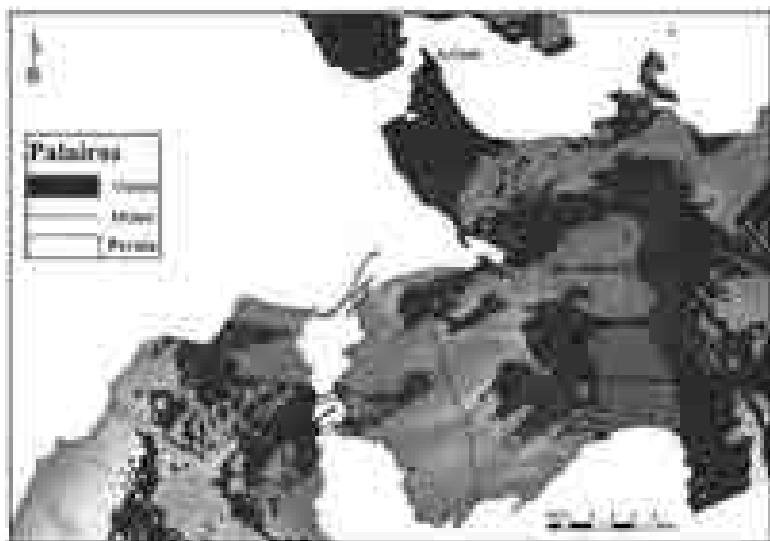


Fig 5b. Visibility from Palairos.

THE *TETRAPOLIS* OF CEPHALLENIA: TERRITORY, *POLEIS* AND *ETHNOS* IN THE CLASSICAL AGE

1. The Cephallenian Landscape

Cephallenia, the largest island in the Ionian archipelago, occupied a key strategic position as a transit point on the grand naval route that linked the Eastern Mediterranean with the Italic Peninsula and the Central and Western Mediterranean, this probably being the most important in the Mediterranean in the Ancient world¹. This maritime route, which departed from the Aegean, went round Cape Maleas and followed the western coast of the Peloponnese² in the direction of Cape Iapygia, or progressed by open sea towards the Strait of Messina³ and followed the Strait of Ithaca or Cephallenia, measuring barely two nautical miles in width and separating Cephallenia from Ithaca, constituting an almost obligatory point of passage and a veritable bottleneck⁴ (Fig. 1). Consequently, when the Strait of Cephallenia was closed, as occurred due to piracy in the year 190 BC, the link between Greece and Italy was broken⁵. Not only did it play a central role in the links that existed between Greece and Italy, but, at a regional level, the island served as a key transit point along the naval route that

¹ Randsborg 2002, 2.65; Wirbelauer 2006; Sotiriou 2010, 97; Id. 2013, 6; Id. 2018, 31.

² The route passed by Cythera, the coast of Messenia, the mouth of the River Alpheus, Cape Ichthys (the present-day Cape Katakolo), Pheia, Cape Chelonatas (the promontory between the present-day Capes Tripiti and Kyllini), Cyllene and Cape Araxus (cf. Thuc. 2, 7, 3; 4, 9, 9; Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 13; Diod. Sic. 12, 43, 3; Strabo 8, 3, 2; 8, 4, 12). From Cape Ichthys or from Pheia there was also direct access to Cephallenia (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 12, 31; Diod. Sic. 13, 43, 5; Strabo 8, 2, 2; 8, 3, 12, 26; 10, 2, 15).

³ Polybius (5, 3, 7-8) highlights the strategic location of Cephallenia, opposite the Corinthian Gulf, which also controlled the route that headed towards the Sea of Sicily (see Thuc. 7, 31, 1-3; Strabo 2, 5, 20). Thus, from Lilybaeum ships passed through the Strait of Messina in the direction of Apollonia and the mouth of the River Aous, and from here they could reach Cephallenia in two days, sailing day and night (Polyb. 5, 109, 6; 5, 110, 2-5). Ships along this route came from Sicily with grain from the West (Thuc. 7, 57, 7; Dem. 32, 8-9, 14, 22-23).

⁴ *Od.* 15, 25; Strabo 10, 2, 13; Livy 37, 13, 11-12; Sotiriou 2010, 97-98. Cf. Ps. Scylax *Per.* 34 and Ps. Scymn. 450: close to Ithaca.

⁵ Livy 37, 13, 12: *infestum id latrocinio Lacedaemonius Hybristas cum iuventute Cephallanum faciebat, clausumque iam mare commeatibus Italicis erat.*

ran from the Peloponnese and the Corinthian Gulf to Leucas, Coreyra and Apollonia and that connected the whole of North-western Greece. Thus, from Cephallenia it was possible to reach Zacynthus and the Corinthian Gulf⁶, as well as Leucas, Acarnania and the Gulf of Ambracia⁷, and further north, Coreyra, Epirus, Dyrrachium and Apollonia in Illyria⁸. It was precisely from Apollonia that the naval routes departed for the northern parts of the Adriatic towards Ancona, Adria and the Po Delta⁹.

As an illustration of the importance of the routes that passed the island, Demosthenes (32, 8, 9, 14, 22, 23) mentions an Athenian merchant ship that was heading towards Syracuse to buy wheat and which the “magistrates” of Cephallenia forced to return to Athens (Dem. 32, 9)¹⁰. The Cephallenians themselves took part in this traffic, and Pausanias (4, 20, 8) refers to a Cephallenian merchant who already traded with the Peloponnese in the Archaic Period.

Nevertheless, in spite of its strategic position on the route towards the West, located as it is in the middle of the Ionian Sea between the Greek and Italic Peninsulas, Cephallenia is barely mentioned in sources. This lack of information obliges us to turn to other approaches and methodologies that derive from the realms of geomorphology and geography and, above all, from the employment of GIS, with the principal aim of expanding and integrating the scarce and fragmented information we have into a single historical account. In this analysis we shall pursue a threefold objective:

First, we shall endeavour to analyse the Cephallenian Landscape. Second, we shall investigate the manner in which the Cephallenian *poleis* occupied, exploited and defended their territory and the development of Cephallenia during the Classical Period, this being a decisive and highly dynamic age in which the island’s *poleis* began to develop, timidly at the beginning of the fifth century and rapidly during the fourth century, culminating in the

⁶ Zacynthus: Diod. Sic. 16, 6, 5; 16, 9, 4; Plin. *NH* 4, 19, 3, featuring a distance between the two islands of twenty-five thousand steps, some 18 km, or sixty stades (11 km) according to Strabo (10, 2, 18), although the distance between the two islands actually comes to 15 km. See also Polyb. 5, 3, 3, 13: from Patra to Proni in Cephallenia and from Cephallenia to Aetolia.

⁷ By sailing for two days ships could reach Leucas and, from there, they could sail on to the Gulf of Ambracia and reach the city of the same name (Polyb. 5, 5, 11-12). The island was also situated in a highly advantageous position opposite Acarnania.

⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 33, 38; Diod. Sic. 15, 36, 5; Polyb. 5, 2, 8; 5, 109, 1-9; Livy 42, 48, 8-10.

⁹ Beaumont 1936; D’Adria 1990, esp. 290.

¹⁰ Dem. 32, 9: ἀποστυχὼν δὲ καὶ τούτου, καὶ τῶν ἀρχόντων τῶν ἐν τῇ Κεφαλληνίᾳ γνόντων Αἰθῆναζε τὴν ναῦν καταπλεῖν.

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Hellenistic Period. Finally, we shall analyse the aspects that shaped the identity and political organisation of the Cephallenians during this period.

Cephallenia presents a general north-west/south-east orientation and measures some 780.65 sq. km. (904 sq. km. for the former administrative unit that included Ithaca and the Island of Arkoudi)¹¹, featuring a perimetral distance of 228 km, an approximate length of 53 km (running in a straight line) and a width of 38 km¹². Corcyra, measuring some 585.3 sq. km., is 25% smaller; Zacynthus, measuring 406 sq. km., is approximately half the size of Cephallenia (52%); Leucas does not reach 40% of its size (303 sq. km., without the adjacent islands or the *Peraea*; 38.80%), whilst Ithaca (107 sq. km.) is very small and comes to less than 14% (13.7%) of the total size of Cephallenia.

From the perimetral point of view, *grosso modo* the islands of the Ionian Sea can be grouped together into two main categories: Zacynthus (123 km) and Leucas (117 km) are what we might call compact islands, whilst Cephallenia, Corcyra (217 km) and Ithaca (114 km) present more uneven coastlines¹³ and, in the case of the latter two, a very long profile. The jagged and also relatively long profile of Cephallenia, featuring two eccentric peninsulas, Paliki and Erissos, to the north-west and north-east respectively (see Fig. 2), creates, for example, greater difficulties in terms of land cultivation, given that it requires both a large number of settlements and settlements that are smaller, which either means some cultivatable areas must be left uncultivated or must be left to extensive agriculture.

One of the main characteristics of Cephallenia is the central location of the high-altitude Mount Aenus range (see Fig. 2). The summit of Mount Aenus, measuring 1,628 metres, is the highest in the Ionian Islands. This mountain chain is especially rugged in the south and descends towards the north in the direction of Mount Imerovigli (994 m.a.s.l.)¹⁴. The central position of the Mt. Aenus chain entailed some important consequences for the history of Cephallenia.

First, it divided the island into two areas, east and west, respectively. In the eastern part, running from north to south, were located the Peninsula of Erissos, the Valley of Pylaros, the Plain of Sami, the Valley of Kouroulata and the Massif of Mounts Avgo (929 m), Kokkini Rachi (1,079 m) and

¹¹ The administrative unit today measures some 786.575 sq. km. and includes the Island of Petalas (5.497 sq. km.) and other minor islands.

¹² The distance between Fiskardo in the north and the Temple of Skala in the south is 75 km by road today.
Wirbelauer 2006, 313; González, Fidalgo *et alii* in this volume.

¹⁴ All altitudes are m.a.s.l. (meters above sea level).

Atros (894 m) to the south of Same. After this came the Plain of Tzanata in the territory of Proni, and the Plains of Skala and Katelios in the south. The western part of the island included the Peninsula of Paliki, which made up the territory of Pale, and the Plain of Alafonas and the Meseta of Metaxa in the territory of Crane.

Second, the Cephallenian *poleis* occupied a peripheral position with regard to the centre of the island. This made land communications extraordinarily difficult, especially along the east-west axis (see Fig. 3). In fact, communication between Same in the east and Crane in the west through the GIS optimum route tool is practically only possible via the narrow valley that separates Mount Libidi (638 m) to the north and Mount Kavelopetra (655 m) to the south. Between Pale and Same the route ascended the Valley of the River Petali, passed the Mount Agia Dynati (1,131 m), slipped between Chalio Kardakata and Agrilia, and then bordered the west coast of the Bay of Livadi¹⁵. Between Crane and Pale the best link was by sea, as occurs today with the ferry, and the same applied when travelling between Proni and Crane, if you did not want to cross the territory of Same. The distances between the *poleis* on the island ranged between 20 km (Same-Crane) and 30 km (Same-Proni, Crane-Pale), which is to say between five and seven hours on foot.

Third, the Mt. Aenus chain ate up the land available for cultivation, to the extent that, as we shall see, probably less than 15% of the island could be classed as cultivatable land. Finally, the mountain range broke up the cultivated land into various areas distributed throughout the island. This dispersion and isolation of cultivatable areas undoubtedly led to Cephallenia's political, economic and social fragmentation, with the island being divided during the Classical Period into four *poleis*: Same, Crane, Proni and Pale¹⁶.

As we have said, the island measures approximately 781 sq. km., of which less than 20% (19.83%), some 154 sq. km., is located below 100 metres in altitude; some 19.41 % is located between 100 and 200 metres in altitude (151.56 sq. km.); 14% between 200 and 300 metres; and 9% between 300 and 400 metres. The rest, accounting for 38% of the terrain, is situated above 400 metres in altitude (see Table I). Although olive trees grew up to an altitude of 500 metres in the 19th century, with vines growing up to an altitude of 800 metres¹⁷, conditions during the Classical Period

¹⁵ Sotiriou 2013, 41-45, figs. 48-49; Id. 2018, 59-60.

¹⁶ See Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 352-378.

¹⁷ Randsborg 2002, 2.66.

The Tetrapolis of Cephallenia

were different, judging by the distribution of the known settlements¹⁸. In this period, the cultivatable areas were normally located below 100 metres in altitude, although not all of these areas could be exploited, given that, as we shall see, this altitude was compounded by other factors such as the edaphological conditions, the proximity of population centres and the rise of the land.

At an altitude of around 100 to 200 metres the land could have been devoted largely to extensive agriculture, whilst above this altitude there was only mountainous terrain that was largely unproductive. That is to say, more than 60% (474.25 sq. km.) of the island was mountainous, and another 20% semi-mountainous, which perfectly matches the description of *παιπαλοέσσης* (precipitous) in *The Odyssey* (*Od.* 4, 671, 845; 15,2 9) or *ὄρεινή* (mountainous) in Strabo (10, 2, 15).

This lack of cultivatable land also has to do with the types of soil on the island¹⁹. Most of Cephallenia is made up of Paxoi-zone carbonate series soils originating in the Cretaceous Oligocene Age, which are largely unproductive and of high elevation. In the eastern region we can also find Ionian-zone carbonate series soils of the Jurassic Cretaceous Age, similar to those that predominate on neighbouring Ithaca, which are characteristic of precipitous and largely unproductive areas. Specifically, this kind of soil can be found on Mounts Avgo and Kokkini Rachi to the south-east of Same, surrounded by a band of evaporites and Oligocene Miocene flysch and clay beds; it can also be found at Megali Rachi to the east of Proni.

In the territory of Same, except for certain dispersed areas on the Peninsula of Erissos, we find three kinds of cultivatable land based on the kind of soil, although they are all different, situated in the Valley of Pylaros, the Plain of Sami and the Valley Kouroulata. The Valley of Pylaros is made up of alluvial deposits at its mouth, scree and talus conus in its middle section, and Oligocene Miocene flysch and clay beds at its head. This cultivatable area measures some 5 sq. km. in total. For its part, the alluvial Plain of Sami also includes scree and talus conus and makes up an area measuring some 13 sq. km²⁰. The Valley of Kouroulata, measuring 4 sq. km., is made up of alluvial deposits and scree and talus conus.

¹⁸ Even in the 19th century, less than 20% of the island was cultivatable: 124 sq. km. was occupied by olive groves, vineyards and cereal crops, with another 28 sq. km. being devoted to other crops (cf. Randsborg 2002, 2.66).

¹⁹ Lekkas *et alii* 2001, 11-17; González, Fidalgo *et alii* in this volume.

²⁰ See Leake 1835, 58.

Altitude (m.a.s.l.)	Sq. Km.	Percentage (%)
0-100	154.83	19,83
101-200	151.56	19.41
201-300	109.73	14.06
301-400	69.66	8.92
401-500	63,87	8.18
501-600	58.90	7,55
601-700	55.49	7.11
701-800	44.33	5.68
801-900	33.41	4.28
901-1000	16.44	2.11
1001-1100	8.31	1.06
1101-1200	4.38	0.56
1201-1300	3.77	0.48
1301-1400	2.87	0.37
1401-1500	2.27	0.29
1501-1627	0.82	0.11
Total	780.65	100

Table I. The Island of Cephallenia. Hypsometric map.

In the case of Proni, the main area of cultivation extends between Poros and the *asty*, featuring a soil made up of scree and talus conus, surrounded by evaporites, which provides a cultivatable area of some 6-7 sq. km. in size. On the southern coast, there were two cultivatable areas at Skala, consisting mainly of Pliocene marls (approximately 4 sq. km.), and at Katelios (some 3 sq. km.), consisting of scree and talus conus.

In the case of Crane, one cultivatable area extended along the small Meseta of Metaxa, on the southern side of Mount Aenus, made up of scree and talus conus and measuring some 7 sq. km. This area was probably exploited very little during the Classical Period due to its incline, remoteness and the lack of any harbour. The main cultivatable part of Crane undoubtedly consisted of the alluvial Plain of Alafonas, measuring some 26 sq. km., consisting of a large area of Pliocene marls. These Pliocene marl soils also predominate

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in the territory of Pale, whilst a small alluvial area extends along the north-western part of the Gulf of Livadi. Both areas provided a total cultivatable resource measuring 36 sq. km.

As we can observe on the slope map (Fig. 4), cultivatable terrain did not only depend on the kind of soil and the altitude, but also on the incline itself. In this respect, the vast proportion of this kind of land was located in flat or slightly inclined ($<3\%$) areas.

Above this percentage incline, we can barely find any cultivatable areas. In this respect, the reason for considering the land above 200-300 metres mountainous does not only have to do with the altitude, but also with the steep incline, which is especially significant on the sides of Mount Aenus, in the Bay of Myrtos to the north, on the Peninsula of Erissos and on Mount Avgos to the south of Same. Conversely, lack of incline favoured exploitation of the land on the Plain of Alafonas, with a substantial part of this area being located between 100 and 200 metres in altitude, as well as in the Valley of Kouroulata and in the area of Atheras in the Valley of Livadi, in Pale.

Finally, a last factor to be taken into account would be the proximity or remoteness of the *asty*. This could be one of the reasons for the practical non-existence of settlements on the Meseta of Metaxa in Crane, on the Peninsula of Erissos in Same or at Skala and Katelios in Proni. In short, it is possible that only between 12% and 13% of the surface area of the island, some 100 sq. km., could be considered to be arable land during the Classical Period, consisting mainly of areas below 100 metres in altitude.

Cephallenia had few harbours that had sufficient capacity to cater for any considerable maritime traffic (see Fig. 2). In fact, 70% of the coast was rocky and inhospitable²¹. On the east coast was located the small harbour of Agia Evtimía, featuring very little capacity, whilst Poros to the south was the main harbour of Proni. In the centre, the Port of Same was undoubtedly the most important harbour on the entire island. The south and west coasts were exposed to the winds, in which respect Skala and Katelios only appear to have acquired any importance during the Roman Period, whilst on the west coast harbours only existed in the Gulf of Livadi, sheltered from the winds, with Pale located on the western shore of the Gulf, and Crane on the eastern shore, in the Gulf of Koutavos, the latter being highly exposed to silting from the interior. Sailing towards the harbours of Crane and Pale required a crossing by open sea around the island that was quite dangerous, being exposed to the winds and to stormy weather²².

²¹ Wirbelauer 2006, 393 and González, Fidalgo *et alii* in this volumen.

²² See the storm that forced ships to anchor at Cephallenia in Heliod. *Aeth.* 4, 20.

There does not appear to have been any harbour on the north coast, in the wide Bay of Myrtos. In addition to the fact that this bay was exposed to the etesian winds (from the north), the main difficulty was the steep incline and non-existence of usable land behind that could have sustained some kind of settlement in the area, however small it might have been. In summary, out of the four main harbours, three coincided with the *asty* of each *polis*, Pale, Same and Crane, whilst the other harbour, Poros, served the *polis* of Proni²³. There is no doubt that one of the main aspects that contributed to the location of the *asty* was precisely the existence of a harbour at the settlement itself, featuring the possibility of bringing in supplies from outside, coupled with direct access to marine resources and sea traffic. In this respect, on Cephallenia, except for Proni, the combination of an inland *asty* with a harbour, which was so common in other parts of the Greek world, is difficult to find.

2. The *tetrapolis* of Cephallenia

Whilst the other islands of the Ionian featured just one *polis*, Cephallenia featured four different *poleis*: Same, Crane, Proni and Pale. Thucydides (2, 30, 2)²⁴ referred to them as a *tetrapolis*. If these settlements had been able to join as a single *polis*, it would have been the largest on the Ionian islands. As it was, the four *poleis* were amongst the smallest on the archipelago, alongside Ithaca. Bearing in mind the island's size, the average extension of a Cephallenian *polis* would be around 200 sq. km. However, the four *poleis* were asymmetrical, being unequal in terms of size, importance and wealth. Same, with its 314 sq. km., was the largest *polis* and accounted for some 40% of the total surface area of the island. Crane measured 220 sq. km. and accounted for 28% of the island, whilst Pale, in the north-west, and Proni, in the south-east, measured 129 sq. km. (16.5%) and 118 sq. km. (15.1%), respectively (Table II). These measurements are approximate, given the difficulty of determining the exact borders between the four *poleis*, but based on the evidence we have we can be confident that the figures provide a relatively realistic picture. In short, Cephallenia was made up of two large central *poleis* that occupied some 70% of the island, complemented by two smaller peripheral *poleis*. Same was 30% larger in

²³ Fiskardo-Panormo would only become important as of the Roman Period: vd. Andreatou 2013, 69-94; Sotiriou *et alii* 2015.

²⁴ Thuc. 2, 30, 2: τετραπόλις οὖσα, Παλιῆς, Κράνιοι, Σαμαῖοι, Προνναῖοι.

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size than Crane and more than 40% larger than Proni and Pale. Crane, for its part, was practically twice the size of Pale and Proni.

Altitude m.a.s.l.	Same (sq. km.)	Crane (sq. km.)	Pale (sq. km)	Proni (sq. km)
0-100	35.81	41.39	58.17	18.96
101-200	42.43	52.93	36.96	19.29
201-300	43.74	24.01	20.33	21.83
301-400	25.87	19.67	11.34	12.74
401-500	28.36	24.44	2.37	8.97
501-600	31.58	16.00	-----	11.11
601-700	37.61	12.30	-----	5.65
701-800	31.10	7.84	-----	5.32
801-900	21.72	7.68	-----	4.01
901-1000	9.52	3.98	-----	2.34
1001-1100	2.21	3.73	-----	2.09
1101-1200	1.35	1.14	-----	1.69
1201-1300	0.72	1.79	-----	1.40
1301-1400	0.83	1.11	-----	1.16
1401-1500	0.72	0.83	-----	1.10
1501-1627	0.06	0.71	-----	0.64
Total	313.63	219.55	129.17	118.30

Table II. The extension of Cephallenian *poleis*

In general, the *poleis* on the islands of the Ionian Sea can be classified into two categories: the largest *poleis* that measured around or more than 400-350 sq. km., such as Corcyra, Zacynthus and Leucas (if we add the mainland *peraea* and the adjacent islands); and the smallest *poleis*, which measured between 100 sq. km. and 200 sq. km., such as Ithaca, Crane, Proni and Pale. That is to say, some 100 sq. km. was the minimum size required for a *polis* to operate as a viable state in the Ionian context. Same was in an intermediate category.

2.1. Same

The territory of Same occupied the north-eastern part of the island and consisted of the Peninsula of Erissos in the north and the eastern side of the Mount Aenus Mountain Range, stretching from Mt. Agrilia (458 m) and the Gulf of Myrtos in the north to the area close to the summit of Mt. Aenus (1,628 m), heading in a north-west/south-east direction through the mountains known as Imerovigli (994 m), Vrachonas (944 m), Xerakia (1,065 m) and Gioupari (1,627 m). To the south, the *chora* of Same included Mount Avgo (928 m), stretching up to the border with Proni, passing through the mountains known as Strongylo (966 m) and Kokkini Rachi (1,079 m), Fig. 5.

In spite of its large size, the *chora* of Same was extraordinarily rugged. Only 10% of its territory (35.81 sq. km. or 11.42%) was situated below 100 metres. In this respect, we might mention the areas located between 100 metres and 200 metres (42.43 sq. km.), between 200 metres and 300 metres (43.74 sq. km.) and between 600 metres and 700 metres (37.61 sq. km.). All of the latter surpassed the surface area located below 100 metres. Other parts came very close to this size: 500 metres to 600 metres (31.58 sq. km.) and 700 metres to 800 metres (31.1 sq. km.). The gradients were also very steep, especially between 200 and 300 metres and between 600 and 700 metres. This complex terrain forced the inhabitants of Same to adopt various strategies in order to make use of their territory: a) intensive exploitation of the areas between 0 and 100 metres, together with cultivation of some areas at an altitude above 100 metres; b) cultivation of areas that were somewhat distant from one another, and c) design of a defence and surveillance system that would fulfil various purposes within a territory characterised by considerable fragmentation.

The *asty* of Same featured two acropolises, Paliokastro (277 m, Fig. 6) and Agioi Phanentes (220 m), *Arx maior* and *Cyneatis* respectively, according to Livy (38, 29, 10). The city's extensive fortifications included polygonal, trapezoidal and rectangular walls, dating from different periods, featuring five monumental gates²⁵.

The dating of walls based on stylistic criteria raises a number of difficulties, such as, for example, the possibility that different groups of artisans using different styles were working at the same time, or the fact that repairs were

²⁵ Petraki 1994, 107; Randsborg 2002, 1.37-52, 88-89, 90-91, 94; 2.216, 222, 224, 227, 231, 240, 241, 243, 245; Gerhke, Wirbelauer 2004, 371, n. 136; Sotiriou 1989, 147-148; Id. 2012, 372-374; Id. 2014, 1850-1853.

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carried out in a combination of different styles. Randsborg's classification must be used with considerable caution. It is too exhaustive and the differences between one style and another are, sometimes, rather minimal. Likewise, the chronological periods are sometimes too broad for historical analysis. Thus, for example, we might mention the Type 8 and 11 polygonal walls, which date between 375 and 250, and even up to 200. It is also possible that various Randsborg dating schemes (the last two cases, for example) featured a later chronology in the third century. Any comparison of the fortifications of Epirus also presents its difficulties. This is especially due to the fact that the *polis* emerged in Epirus during a later period, throughout the fourth century²⁶, whilst the Cephallenian *poleis* were undoubtedly formed during the early years of the Archaic Period or even at the end of the Geometric Period. This means that, at least in relation to the early construction phases, the fortifications of the Cephallenian *poleis*, although of similar style, would have been raised earlier than those of the Epirote *poleis*. Anyway, it is clear that the majority of the stone fortifications in Epirus correspond to the third century²⁷. However, it is possible, for example, that in the case of Elea the building of the stone wall would have begun at the end of the fourth century (ca. 330-340)²⁸. At Butrint, what is known as the Cyclopean Wall (A) dates from between the fourth and third centuries, the Great Bastion (B) from between the third and the second centuries, and parts of Walls C and D from the second century (Giorgi, Lepore 2020). We can state that, in general, throughout Epirus walled enclosures made of stone would have begun to be built in around 330-300 (Suha, 2019), although the majority of the walls that have been preserved belong to the third century.

Bearing in mind the different variations of each, the stone walls of the Cephallenian cities basically consist of three styles: ashlar (essentially pseudoisodomic), trapezoidal and polygonal. The polygonal style predominates on the island, whilst the ashlar sections that have been preserved are few and far between. One key aspect in terms of dating is the location of the different styles along the perimeter of the wall. In general, we must assume that the earliest stone enclosures were built at the acropolis and that both the lower parts of the city and the extended urban areas were raised somewhat later. In the year 219, Philip V and his allies attacked Proni, which was fortified in stone. After renouncing the siege

²⁶ See Domínguez 2018; Pascual 2018.

²⁷ See Gerogiannis 2020 for the Valley of Louros; or Phoinike in Bogdani 2012; Bogdani, Giorgi 2012, and Suha 2009, Id. 2011.

²⁸ Suha 2016, 337-338.

of Proni, they turned their attention towards Pale, whose walls were also strongly fortified²⁹. In this respect, the *terminus ante quem* for the stone walls of the cities of Cephallenia can be dated at around the year 220. It is possible that the stone-walled enclosures had something to do with the more conflictive conditions that existed in the third century, featuring the confrontation between the Aetolians and the Macedonians and their allies in the region, compared to the Athenian hegemony of the Classical Period. However, we cannot rule out the possibility *a priori* that the Cephallenian *poleis* may have also included some kind of fortification made of adobe or brick or that they may have been completely defenceless.

Same's fortifications are especially important because they enable us to define the stone fortification periods throughout the entire island. At Agioi Phanentes, a tower measuring 10 x 10 metres was built before the walls, subsequently being incorporated into the latter (Fig. 7). The inner part of the wall at Paliokastro was also built with rectangular masonry, together with the section of wall that linked the two acropolises and the part of the wall that stretched from Cyneatis to the sea (Fig. 8). Trapezoidal masonry was also used to build part of the wall surrounding Cyneatis, as well as the eastern outer wall of the acropolis of Paliokastro and the northern wall that linked Paliokastro with the coast and that defended the harbour that was located close to the present-day Square of Konstandatou. The rest of the wall, which encompassed the entire settlement, including the harbour, was built with polygonal masonry.

Thus, in the case of Same, the pseudoisodomic ashlar style is essentially concentrated around the southern part of the Acropolis, at Cyneatis and along the western wall that links both acropolises (*Arx maior* and Cyneatis) to the city. The polygonal style can be found to the south-west, along the wall that linked Cyneatis to the coast, whilst the trapezoidal style predominates in the northern part, along the wall that links the acropolis to the coast in this part of the city. The tower at Agioi Phanentes dates from the fifth century. Then, we can deduct that during the last part of the fourth century both of the city's acropolises were fortified with stone walls, whilst the western wall that linked them was also raised, precisely in the most vulnerable part of Same. The south-west wall that linked Cyneatis with the coast would have been built in the third century and, subsequently, although still in the third century, the northern wall was built in trapezoidal style. The parts of the wall in trapezoidal and polygonal style at the acropolis and along the western wall could well be repairs carried out in the third century.

²⁹ Polyb. 5, 3, 3-4, 12; Pascual 2021.

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In short, the stone fortifications probably began to be built in the fifth century with the construction of the towers at the two acropolises. The fortified enclosures were extended during the fourth century, expanding out from the acropolis with rectangular stone walls and encompassing, first, the acropolis and then the entire settlement, a process that would have culminated in the Hellenistic Period, in the third century, completed with polygonal and trapezoidal masonries. In addition to possible urban sanctuaries, on the hill opposite the East Gate, located some 350 metres to the north-east of the acropolis, Alponovouni (236 m) probably provided the site for a suburban temple outside the city walls³⁰. The city possessed four necropolises, located at the four cardinal points, with the southern necropolis being the most ancient³¹.

In addition to the expansion and fortification of the urban settlement in stone and the size of the Classical and Hellenistic necropolises, other aspects reflect the city's growth during the Classical Period. In fact, Same began to mint coins as of the fifth century³². The first inscriptions we find date from the fourth century (IG IX 1² 4, 1516-1517) and from between the fourth and the third century (IG IX 1² 4, 1518-1521, 1562 and possibly also IG IX 1² 4, 1522)³³.

The main cultivatable area consisted of the Plain of Sami, measuring some 12 sq. km. (as measured with GIS technology), which was situated to the west and south-west of Same, and which was largely exploited from the *asty* itself. To the north, at Drakopoulata-Karavostasi (circa 75 m), in the Valley of Pylaros, there was a small settlement made up of a complex of buildings (up to five separate constructions), featuring a long wall measuring 110-130 metres³⁴.

³⁰ Alponovouni: Sotiriou 1993, 150-151; Id. 2018, 39. A sanctuary in the *chora*, located in the Cave of Melissane at Karamylos, to the west of the *asty*, was dedicated to Pan and the Nymphs and has been dated back to the Hellenistic Period (Marinatos 1964, 17-22; Dontas 1967, 28-35; Randsborg 2002, 2.94).

³¹ Papapostolou 1977, 183-186; Petropoulos 1985, 144-147, 1987, 165-169; Menenga 1988, 199-200; Sotiriou 2000, 336-338. As a result of the city's expansion in the third century, the former eastern necropolis on the Hill of Agioi Phanetes was brought inside the city's wall.

³² Kraay 1976, 96; Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 371. Cf. Postolakas 1868, 98-101; Biedermann 1887, 69-71; Head *HN*² 428; Babelon 1910, 2.803-806; Grose 1926, nrr. 6695-6696; *SNG Cop. Acarnania* 472-477.

³³ From the third century: IG IX 1² 4, 1523-1526, 1528 and perhaps also IG IX 1² 4, 1527, and from the Hellenistic period IG IX 1² 4, 1532-1533 and perhaps IG IX 1² 4, 1534-1537.

³⁴ Sotiriou 1991, 168; Id. 1997, 310; Id. 2013, 35; Id. 2018, 53; Randsborg 2002, 1.54-55, 61, 81 nrr. 319-320.

The main purpose of this complex was to exploit the cultivatable area in the Valley of Pylaros measuring some 5-6 sq. km. in size. Just opposite, at Palatia, at the bottom of a hill, rose up a bipartite tower made of trapezoidal and polygonal masonry. We might consider here that we are dealing with a grouped settlement, a fortified *chorion*, one similar to the so-called School of Homer at Ithaca. One of the primordial purposes of the Palatia Tower would have been visual communication with Same. This settlement might possibly have been equipped with a small quay in the Bay of Agia Evtimia³⁵. One of the main characteristics of the *chora* of Same consists of the relative proliferation of farmsteads, of which we are aware of up to seven³⁶. These farms were concentrated in particular in the Valley of Kouroulata to the south-east of Same, which featured a cultivatable area similar in size to that of the Valley of Pylaros.

These farmsteads were endowed with a tower, which, in addition to providing defensive protection, would have served to store and protect surplus produce, also against rodents. This kind of fortified farmstead, whose purpose was more to defend the exploitation itself rather than the *polis*, is characteristic, for example, of Epirus in the third century (Bogdani 2011). Certainly, it is possible that this kind of exploitation would have culminated in the third century, but from what we know, for example, from the rural necropolises of Crane (Keramies or Metaxata), we can state that this process may have started at least during the fourth century (see below). In short, given the smaller size of the Plain of Sami around the city compared to other *poleis* (Pale or Crane), Same was obliged to develop a system of exploitation that was typically dispersed, being adapted to the characteristics of the *chora*. An important part of the land was exploited from the *asty*. The most distant parts, located in the Valley of Kouroulata, were exploited through farmhouses, whilst in the Valley of Pylaros, the land was possibly occupied by means of a fortified *chorion*. It is not very probable that the remote and rather rugged Peninsula of Erisos featured any intensive exploitation. The rest of the territory was made up of mountainous terrain.

The defensive system of the Cephallenian *poleis* can be studied with the help of GIS visibility analysis tools (see Fig. 9). It is true that this kind of analysis cannot really define the constructive period of the walls of these

³⁵ Partsch 1890, 67-68; Randsborg 2002, 1.81-82, 305-307; 2.55, 57, 136 (Pl. B XII.2), 137 (Pl. XIII.1), 232-233 (figs. IX 36-38), 237; Sotiriou 2013, 35; Id. 2018, 53.

³⁶ For example, in Kouroulata, Kokkilia, Psara and Sternoules and also probably Chaliotata: Sotiriou 1998, 285-287; Id. 2009; Id. 2018, 41; Randsborg 2002 1.37, 80, 268 nrr. 223-229, Pl. DXXVIII.

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small fortifications or the scarce pottery findings found within them that are datable. Nevertheless, two aspects can be established: the fortification system of the Cephallenian *poleis* was completed in the third century, but it was already being developed in the fifth century and, above all, in the fourth century, and it could have even begun in Archaic times. Thus, for example, Kastri Kouroulata can be dated back to the Archaic Period, whilst Chalio Kardakata in Crane can be dated back to between the end of the fifth century and the fourth century; Rachi Kouroulata and Kastri Avgo in Same feature remains dating from the Classical Period, whilst at Kastro Vlachaton in Crane tiles from the Classical and Hellenistic Periods have been discovered. Finally, we should point out that visual communication between two fortified points does not necessarily mean that they both belonged to the same *polis*, but that a border may have passed between them, in which respect they each belonged to different *poleis*³⁷.

In the area of Erissos, to the north of Same, a small fort was built at Pyrgos at an altitude of 360 metres. This fort surveilled the Peninsula of Erissos and, above all, visually monitored the northern part of the Strait of Cephallenia, which was not visible from Same. The tower at Psili Rachi, close to Dichalia, a small circular construction measuring 8 metres x 11-12 metres, which was also close to Same, fulfilled the same purpose of monitoring the ships that passed through the southern part of the Strait of Cephallenia. Finally, the *asty* of Same monitored the central part of the Strait and featured direct visual communication with Aetos, the *asty* of Ithaca. In this manner, the entire Strait of Cephallenia was kept under surveillance.

To the south of Pyrgos, at the head of the Valley of Pylaros, two small forts have been discovered, one at Divarata, consisting of a small convex fortification possibly dating from the Hellenistic Period, and at Karousata³⁸. Both forts only featured visual communication with Palatia, in which respect their purpose was restricted to that of monitoring the cultivatable area in the valley. In fact, throughout the entire Valley of Pylaros, Palatia was only visible from Same, which may be the main reason why a fortress was established here and not at Drakopoulata in from of her.

A series of southern fortresses monitored the border with Proni, communicating with Psili Rachi and the latter with Same. In this respect, Psili Rachi fulfilled the double role of monitoring the approach from the

³⁷ See below for references.

³⁸ Partsch 1890, 67-68; Randsborg 2002, 2.55, 56; Sotiriou 2013, 34-35; Id. 2018, 52-53, n.59.

south along the Strait of Cephallenia and providing visual communication between Same and the southern border. From Psili Rachi, Kastri Avgo was visible, located on a hill measuring 909 metres in altitude. A fort may well have existed here³⁹. From this point looking south-west, Kastri Kouroulatas (405 m) could be seen, consisting of a circular fort with a diameter of approximately 38-42 metres and walls some four metres thick. This construction dated from the Archaic Period and was possibly the only asset in this area⁴⁰. Its main function, other than that of providing visual communication in the direction of Same and the border with Proni, was that of monitoring the cultivatable area in the Valley of Kouroulata, effectively providing the only form of communication between Proni and Same.

From Kastri Avgo, Korindos, on the border with Crane, was visible, consisting of a circular fort some 20-25 metres in diameter⁴¹. This fort monitored the route between Same and Crane.

The fort may have belonged to either of the two *poleis*, but it was only visible from Same, in which respect it probably belonged to the latter. Further north rose up the oval fort of Lithokoulomos, featuring a diameter of 25 metres⁴², which surveilled the route that stretched from Same to Pale and was located opposite Chalia Kardakata, a fortified post that may have belonged to Crane. In this case it is also possible that Lithokoulomos belonged to Same rather than to Crane and that the border passed between the two posts.

Finally, in the north-western part of the territory of Same there were three forts: Agrilia, a smaller tower featuring a diameter of five metres, Chalia Kardakata and Kastelli⁴³. In view of the location of these forts and bearing in mind that the border between three of the *poleis* on the island passed through this area, we might suggest that each of the forts would have belonged to a different *polis*. In this respect, Agrilia would have belonged to Same, Kastelli to Pale and Chalia to Crane.

In short, Same's fortifications fulfilled various functions, none of which were mutually exclusive. First, they provided visual surveillance of the Strait of Cephallenia; second, they monitored the cultivatable lands in the surrounding area, as in the case of the Valleys of Pylaros and Kouroulata; third, they watched over the borders with the other three *poleis* on the island; and they also surveilled the main overland routes.

³⁹ Sotiriou 2018, 53.

⁴⁰ The sites located close to Kastri Kouroulata could have been Mycenaean or could have dated from previous periods, vd. Sotiriou 2018, 54.

⁴¹ Randsborg 2002, 1.32-35, 79, 207; 2.212-213; Sotiriou 2018, 55.

⁴² Sotiriou 2014, 1915; Id. 2018, 55.

⁴³ Sotiriou 2013, 37-38; Sotiriou 2014, 1915; Id. 2018, 58.

2.2. Crane

The territory of Crane stretched from the western side of the Mt. Aenus Mountain Range to the sea. In the north, this territory began at Chalio Kardakata (287 m), running along the side of Mt. Aenus to Mt. Limi (647 m) and encompassing the eastern shore of the Bay of Livadi, the Gulf of Koutavos, the Plain of Alafonas, which ran to the south and south-east of the city, the Bay of Lourdas and the Meseta of Metaxa (see Fig. 5).

Although of smaller size than that of Same, Crane's territory nevertheless included a larger area of land located under 100 metres in altitude, namely 41.39 sq. km. or approximately 19% of the overall territory. However, the most extensive area was located between 100 and 200 metres (53 sq. km.), with some 57% of the overall territory lying above 200 metres, replete with some very steep slopes on the western side of Mt. Aenus and on the south-east coast.

The city of Crane was spread over two hills, Rachi (251 m) to the north and Kastelli-Pezoules (109 m) to the south, making up its double acropolis, and stretching down to the sea, which is the area that makes up the Koutavos marshes today (Fig. 10). The city walls were 1,090 metres long and featured 21 towers and an extraordinary Dypilon-type gate at Razata, in the eastern part of the enclosure⁴⁴. The polygonal style predominates in the walls that have been preserved at Crane, and we can only observe the use of a trapezoidal style in the south-east wall, starting at the Dypilon Gate. Thus, we can state that the stone wall at Crane was essentially built in the third century, featuring a first phase in polygonal style and a subsequent phase in trapezoidal style, although the latter would have been chronologically very close to the former (Figs. 11 and 12)⁴⁵.

However, several indications would point to the city's growth as of the fifth century. The necropolis, dating from the Classical Period, was located on the hills to the south-west of the city⁴⁶, and in the area of Drakospilia, some 500 metres to the east of the city, where the tombs dating from the Classical and Hellenistic Periods are especially numerous. The steles of Mnasia (IG IX 1² 4, 1479) and of Melesius can, perhaps, be dated back to the fifth century (IG IX 1² 4, 1493), whilst the stele of Cleodorus would belong to the first half of the fifth century (IG IX 1² 4, 1482). Crane also

⁴⁴ Gehrke, Wirbelauer 2004, 364 n. 125; Sotiriou 2014, 1808-1809, 1812-1813; Sotiriou, Andreiatou 2020.

⁴⁵ Kyparissis 1919, 90-91; Kalligas 1969, 270-272; Randsborg 2002, 2.214, 218, 222, 229, 231, 240, 243, 245; Sotiriou 2013, 23, 27.

⁴⁶ Sotiriou 2014.

minted coins as of the fifth century, perhaps being the first city on the island to do so, featuring the head of Cephalus, the hero after which the island is named, on the obverse side, and a ram or an ox and the legend KPA, KP, K or H as monograms on the reverse side⁴⁷.

At Kastelli there may have been a temple, which has been linked with a dedication to Demeter and Core (IG IX 1² 4, 1478), possibly dating from the second-first century⁴⁸. At Drakospilia, there may have existed a suburban cave sanctuary⁴⁹, whilst another temple was located at the present-day Airport of Minies, replete with walls dating from between the sixth century and mid-fifth century⁵⁰. At the summit of the Hill of Chalio Kardakata, a sanctuary rose up that featured an oval *temenos*, which has also produced a series of Classical and Hellenistic finds. This would have been a border sanctuary close to the territories of Pale and Same.

Most of the cultivatable area and the settlement at Crane was concentrated around the *asty* on the Plain of Alafonas. A series of necropolises were located precisely in the south-eastern part of the plain, the part furthest away from the *asty*. Out of the eight necropolises we are aware of, various have produced materials dating from the Hellenistic Period, such as Kompotekrata, Liostasakia and Phokata, but some have produced materials from the Classical and Hellenistic Periods, such as Metaxata, and specifically from the fourth and third centuries, such as Keramies⁵¹. This means that this area would have begun to be occupied by at least as early as fourth century. We would be dealing with small settlements, but more than just grouped multi-family sites, *komai* or *choria*, in view of the number of known necropolises, we would have to think of farmhouse-type establishments. In short, we would basically be dealing with an area of concentrated farming. A good part of the Plain of Alafonas was exploited directly from the *asty*. Around the fourth century, cultivation of the land by means of farmhouses would have begun to spread in the more distant parts of the plain. It appears that only the Plain of Alafonas was subject to intensive exploitation. The territory of Crane was especially elongated, and it is possible that the small strip of cultivatable land that stretched from Karavados to Mavrata (the Meseta of Metaxa), was not exploited intensively during the Classical Period, due to its distance from Crane, the steep incline of the land and the lack of any harbour.

⁴⁷ Postolakas 1868, nrr. 900, 904, 914, 921-922.

⁴⁸ Kalligas 1969, 270 pl. 269; Id. 1978, 136-146.

⁴⁹ Partsch 1890, 91; Kyparissis, Philadelphus 1912, 117-118.

⁵⁰ Kyparissis 1919, 105-107; Sotiriou 2014, 1915.

⁵¹ Sotiriou 2010, 100.

Crane's location inside the Gulf of Koutavos meant that it was particularly exposed to the approach of ships from the entrance to the Gulf of Livadi. In this respect, Chalio, which constituted a small acropolis located in the inner part of the Gulf of Livadi, monitored the ships that passed through the Gulf on their way to the Harbour of Crane⁵². It would have also surveilled the border with Same and the overland route. Further to the north, another site, Chalio Kardakata, monitored the border with Pale and Same opposite Agrilia and Kastelli⁵³.

Two forts monitored the border with Same and Proni to the south-east. First, we might mention the fort built to the north of Karavados, some 2,350 metres away from Agios Georgios, which measured 63 x 43 metres⁵⁴. Although no pottery has been found that enables us to date this site, visual contact with Kastri Vlachaton (or Vlachata) would suggest a Classical/Hellenistic dating. Second, Kastro Vlachaton, measuring some 20 metres in diameter, has produced a number of Classical/Hellenistic tiles⁵⁵. The border in this area used the summit of Mt. Aenus as a point of reference and it would have run somewhere between Kastro Vlachaton and Kampoulia, which belonged to Proni. Visual surveillance from Kastro Vlachaton, which presented no sight communication with Kampoulia, would suggest a border located close to Kato Katelios, following the summit of Mt. Aenus down to the sea.

2.3. Pale

Pale occupied the Paliki Peninsula to the north-west of the island. Its territory was characterised by a marked contrast between the steep northern and western coasts, with Mt. Lacthies (517 m) to the north and Mt. Mylo Vouno (457 m) to the south, and the gentle and flat coastlines in the south and east around the Bay of Livadi and the Valley of Atheras (Fig. 13).

Pale was by far the flattest *polis* on the island. Some 58 sq. km., more than 45% of its territory (2.5 times more than Crane and 4 times more than Same), was located below an altitude of 100 metres. Furthermore,

⁵² Sotiriou 2013, 37; Id. 2018, 55-56: it measured 23 metres running north-south and 17.30 metres running east-west. Materials dating from the end of the fifth century and early fourth century have been found here.

⁵³ Sotiriou 2014, 1915; Id. 2018, 58.

⁵⁴ Sotiriou 2014, 1915.

⁵⁵ Sotiriou 2018, 57.

36.96 sq. km. (29%) was situated between 100 and 200 metres, and only 34.04 sq. km. (26%) was located between 200 and 500 metres in altitude. Its territory corresponds faithfully to Polybius' description (5, 3, 5) of fertility, with this ancient source stating that it was capable of feeding an entire army⁵⁶.

The acropolis of Pale was located on the Hill of Palaiokastros (68 m), which rises up some 1.5 kilometres to the north of present-day Lixouri (Fig. 14)⁵⁷. The walls of the city have not been preserved due to the fact that they were dismantled in 1636 in order to build defences against the Turks⁵⁸. Remains of various residences dating from the fourth/third centuries have been found at Reskou Thomopoulos⁵⁹, whilst a cemetery dating from the fourth century has been documented at Kolona⁶⁰. Another necropolis was situated in the area of Legatou⁶¹. The harbour may have been located close to the present-day curves that descend between 4 and 10 metres in altitude as they shape two bays to the east of the city (Fig. 15). Pale minted coins as of the fifth century, featuring images of a ram, the crown of a fir tree, Cephalus and possibly Persephone, as well as a sprig of barley⁶².

Exploitation of the territory appears to have been concentrated around two main areas. First, we might mention the entire southern and central area that could be reached from the *asty*. In the north, in the Valley of the River Livadi and Atheras, occupation and exploitation of the land may have taken place through farmsteads. In fact, two have been discovered on the route between the Gulf of Livadi and the small Bay of Atheras⁶³.

The *asty* would have served to monitor the approaches to the Gulf of Livadi, whilst to the north, at Kastelli a small square tower, possibly dating from the Hellenistic Period⁶⁴, surveilled both the border with Crane

⁵⁶ Polyb. 5, 3, 5: συνιδὼν δὲ ταύτην τὴν χώραν γέμουσαν σίτου καὶ δυναμένην τρέφειν στρατόπεδον.

⁵⁷ Gerhke, Wirbelauer 2004, 369-370 nr. 132; Sotiriou 2010, 102-103; Id. 2013, 31-32 figs. 38-39; Id. 2018, 50-51. With regard to the remains of residences to the north and south of the acropolis, see D'Agostino 2002; Sotiriou, 2014, 1847-1848.

⁵⁸ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 333-334; Randsborg 2002, 2.281-282.

⁵⁹ Vikatou 2016, 1122-1223; Id. 2018, 12; Vikatou, Papaphloratou 2022, 797-809; Papaphloratou 2020, 212-213.

⁶⁰ Vikatou 2015, 856-857; Id. 2018, 11-12; Vikatou, Papaphloratou 2022, 797-809; Papaphloratou 2020, 212-213.

⁶¹ Sotiriou 2014, 1901.

⁶² *BMC Peloponnesus* 84 nr. 1: Postolakas 1868, 94-96; Biedermann 1887, 67-68; Head *HN*² 427-428; Babelon 1910, 2.2. 795-802; Grose 1926, nrr. 6684-6693; Kraay 1976, 96; *SNG Cop. Acarnania* 460-468.

⁶³ Sotiriou 2018, 70 map. 3.

⁶⁴ Sotiriou 2013, 37-38; Id. 2018, 58.

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and Same and the cultivatable area on the north-western side of the Gulf of Livadi and the Valley of Atheras.

2.4. Proni

The territory of Proni was the most rugged in the whole of Cephallenia, located in good part in the south-east of the island between Mounts Kokkini Rachi in the north, Mount Aenus in the west and the sea to the east and south (Fig. 16). Proni stood in stark contrast to Pale, featuring only 19 sq. km., which is to say 16% of the territory, below 100 metres in altitude. A similar part of the territory was situated between 100 and 200 metres, whilst almost 70% of the land (80 sq. km.) was located above 200 metres in altitude, including the summit of Mount Aenus (1,628 metres). The territory matches the description provided by Polybius (5, 3, 4), who stated that Proni was very difficult to besiege due to the narrowness of the territory⁶⁵.

Proni was located on the Hill of Paliokastro (570 m, Fig. 17), replete with a possible double acropolis on the neighbouring Hill of Dakiri (520 m) and was surrounded by trapezoidal⁶⁶ and polygonal masonry walls⁶⁷. In this case, both the walls of the acropolis and those of the lower city were built in the polygonal style and only a small section of the southern part of the lower city, close to one of the gates, was fortified with a trapezoidal wall. Evidently, the city's acropolis and a good part of the lower city were walled first using the polygonal style. The trapezoidal section would have been built after the rest of the wall was completed. If we date the polygonal style back to the third century, the trapezoidal section can be dated to a later period, although within the same century.

Various indications also point to the city's progressive growth throughout the Classical Period. Thus, at Perdikovrysi we can find an extensive cemetery that appears to have been founded during the second half of the fifth century and would continue to be used up until the Early Hellenistic Period⁶⁸. The oldest stele that has been preserved, that of

⁶⁵ Polyb. 5, 3, 4: ὁρῶν δὲ τό τε πολισμάτιον [τοὺς Πρόννους] δυσπολιόρκητον ὃν καὶ τὴν χώραν στενήν.

⁶⁶ Gerhke, Wirbelauer 2004, 370-371; Wall S in Randsborg 2004, 2.258-262; Sotiriou 2010, 103-104.

⁶⁷ Kalligas 1969: 271-273; Randsborg 2002, 1.15-20, 84-86; 2.258-262.

⁶⁸ Randsborg 2002, 1.18-19; 2.221, 228, 231; Sotiriou 2012, 372; Id. 2014, 1896-1897; Bonelou, Sotiriou 2017.

Timocretus, dates back to the fifth century (IG IX 1² 4, 1500), whilst this of Hipposstratus, Clenagoras and Theoproca(s?) belong to the second half of the fifth century (IG IX 1² 4, 1501)⁶⁹. Proni minted silver and bronze coins, probably as of the fourth century, featuring the head of Cephalus, the head of Zeus or a female head (perhaps Procris), with the other side depicting a sprig of barley, a pine-cone and the legend ΠΡΩΝΝΩΝ or a monogram⁷⁰.

An urban sanctuary, in the form of an altar sculpted out of rock, was located in the *asty* itself. Another sanctuary was located in the Cave of Drakaina/Diakata at Poros, dedicated to the Nymphs⁷¹. The Temple of Agios Georgios at Gradou Skalas was built during the Archaic Period, in the sixth century, and it remained in use until the fourth or even the third century⁷². The temple served as a point of reference for all ships that approached the Strait of Cephallenia from the south. Finally, the Altar of Zeus Aenesius also belonged to Proni, being situated on the summit of the hill and serving as a point of reference for navigation throughout the entire Ionian Sea.

Compared to the other three *poleis* on the island, Proni was the only *asty* that did not possess a harbour, entailing all the consequent difficulties with regard to involvement in trade traffic and the supply of provisions, especially in view of the cost and distance from the *asty*. Its harbour may have been located at Poros⁷³, some four kilometres to the east running in a straight line. On the hills to the west of the city Poros features an extensive wall replete with the remains of buildings, in which respect we would be dealing with a fortified *chorion*.

The cultivatable area at Proni in the Classical Period would appear to have been practically limited to the plain that extended from the northern slopes of the city and the Harbour of Poros, in the area of Tzanata and Agia Irini. The small coastal plains of Skala and Kato Katelios do not appear to have been exploited intensively until the Roman Period, being

⁶⁹ Stelae dating from the third century abound (IG IX 1² 4, 1502-1504), especially from the second half of the century (IG IX 1² 4, 1505-1507), reflecting the city's development during this period.

⁷⁰ Postolakas 1868, 97-98; Biedermann 887, 71; Head *HN*² 428; Babelon 2.2. 807-808; Grose 1926, 6694; Kraay 1976, 96; *SNG Cop.* Acarnania 469-471.

⁷¹ Myranda-Hatziotou, Stratouli 2000, 63-70.

⁷² It consists of a Doric Temple measuring 34.44 x 13.10 ms dating from the sixth century, a stoa and an enclosure (Vikatou 2018, 22-23). Cf. Kalligas 1969, 273-276; Sotiriou 2000, 336; Vikatou, Papafloratos, 2015.

⁷³ Randsborg 2002, 1.30-31, 87; 2.216, 221, 262-264.

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located too far off from the *asty* and being exposed to attack from the sea. No farmstead dating from the Classical Period has been found at Proni, so these would have been an exception. In this respect, we would be dealing with a cultivatable area that was concentrated inland, stretching from the *asty* at one end to a fortified *chorion* at the other.

The territory of Proni was strongly fortified and closely monitored. In addition to the *asty* and the Harbour of Poros, in the west, the Tower of Kampoulia surveilled the border with Crane. To the north, Kastri Hemerovigli, located at an altitude of 1,078 metres, with its ellipsoidal wall, provided visual surveillance of the border with Same⁷⁴. In the Valley of Kouroulata, the Fort of Tsakarisianos, with its extensive fortifications, communicated with Paliokastro in the area of Agios Nikolaos, featuring an entrance that has been preserved; this site communicated with Andriolata, which provided visual communication with Proni and Poros⁷⁵. This system of fortifications surveilled the border with Same and monitored the main route between Proni and Same. Finally, Vouterpse⁷⁶ served as a means of communication between Proni and the Temple of Agios Georgios. The fortifications of the Classical-Hellenistic Period fulfilled three essential purposes: surveillance of ships approaching from the sea, monitoring of overland routes and surveillance of the borders with Crane and Same.

In short, the Cephallenian *poleis* witnessed a period of economic and demographic growth in the Classical Period, one that started in the fifth century, gained momentum in the fourth century and culminated in the third century and the early years of the second century. All of the settlements were located at the periphery of the cultivatable areas, which had to do with the visual monitoring of the territory, as well as a desire to leave as much land available for cultivation as possible. In view of the limited cultivatable land available, the Cephallenian *poleis* complemented their economies with all the resources the island could offer, exploiting its livestock, salt-pans⁷⁷, limestone reserves and the famous *Abies cephalonica*, which they used for ship-building⁷⁸. They developed local pottery production⁷⁹ and took part in the trade that flowed along the island's coasts. A large part of the economic resources of all the *poleis* on the island were used up by the fortification of their respective territories and, in particular, that of their main population

⁷⁴ Sotiriou 2013, 35; Id. 2018, 56.

⁷⁵ Sotiriou 2018, 56-57.

⁷⁶ Sotiriou 2018, 58.

⁷⁷ Sotiriou 2018, 48.

⁷⁸ Randsborg 2002, 2.65-66; Sotiriou 2018, 37.

⁷⁹ Sotiriou 2010, 100; Id. 2018, 41.

centres. This defensive system may not have only existed to provide defence against other *poleis* on the island, but also to prevent incursions from outside, especially those of pirates, a practice the Cephallenians may also have also pursued.

Unfortunately, we know nothing about the internal organisation of the Cephallenian *poleis* during the Classical Period. We can only gain a glimpse of what it was like during the last few years of the third century and during the second century thanks to two key inscriptions, IG IX 1² 4, 1582 and 1583. The first inscription (IG IX 1² 4, 1582) presents a decree whereby the polis of the Sameans recognises the Festival of Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia-on-the-Meander. The *polis* grants a proxeny to the emissaries of Magnesia and also chooses a *theodorokos*. The decree is headed by the three eponymous archons, who also assume responsibility for recording the decree in stone. These archons are assisted by a secretary, with a priest from the Temple of Artemis also featuring, which implies the existence of a cult (ll. 1-2). The prytaneum (ll. 32), the official building of the magistrates, testifies to the existence of at least one council and/or assembly. The city staged Dionysias, which would indicate a cult devoted to Dionysius, as well as a series of *agones* in honour of Cephalus (ll. 19-20). Inscription IG IX 1² 4, 1583 is a decree that grants a proxeny from the *polis* (ll. 8) of the Craneans (ll. 1) to Damophon, son of Philip, from Messene, which mentions the *boule* and the *ekklesia* of the Craneans (ll. 2-3), sending an ambassador to Messene in order to raise awareness of the decree granted by the *polis*⁸⁰.

3. Conclusion: the Cephallenians, an ethnos without Confederacy

Ethnicity can be defined as a feeling of belonging to a community, self-perception of that community or self-adhesion to it, normally recognised by other groups, consisting usually of an intermediate identity between the *polis* and Greekness, with which it shares certain elements, values and symbols. Although these characteristics can vary according to the case

⁸⁰ Apart from these decrees, we only have an idea of the organisation of the Cephallenian *poleis* during the Roman Period. In Pale, a dedication made in the Imperial Period to Aristomantis, the Empresses' priestess, mentions the existence of a *boule* and *demos* (the assembly) at the *polis* (IG IX 1² 4, 1495). Inscription IG IX 1² 4, 1585, dating from the period of Hadrianus, also mentions the *polis* of the Paleians. A *bouleuta* of Panormus, a *polis* founded by the Romans, is mentioned in the fourth century AD (IG IX 1² 4, 1580). In the Roman Period we also find a mention of the *boule* and the *demos* of the Sameans (IG IX 1² 4, 1513, from 195 to 197 AD and IG IX 1² 4, 1514-1515, both dating from the third century AD).

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in question, the characteristic aspects of an ethnic identity included the following: a) reference to the tradition of an ancestor shared by the entire ethnic group, one that would have served to explain the remotest origins of the lineage, understood in terms of genealogy, articulating notions and relationships of kinship and common descent; b) the existence of a series of widely disseminated cults throughout each ethnic community, in which respect the *ethnos* also constituted a cult-based community; c) ties to primordial territory belonging to the *ethnos*, which may or may not have coincided with that which was inhabited during the first millennium; d) and awareness of possessing a series of historical, dialectal and cultural traditions and shared customs.

Cephallenia as an island, a delimited and characteristic geographical area, appears in a good number of ancient works⁸¹, whose authors generically refer to the Cephallenians as the inhabitants of the island⁸². However, Cephallenia also formed part of a mythical space, one that was considered historical, namely the Kingdom of Odysseus, which also included Ithaca and some other islands such as Crocyleia, Aegilips and Zacynthus⁸³. The Homeric Poems do not expressly mention the term Cephallenia, but tend to identify it in general with Same, which, rather than appearing as a city, constitutes an island with sheer cliffs, located alongside Ithaca on the strait that separated the two settlements (*Il.* 2, 634; *Od.* 1, 245; 15, 367), this being the habitual channel for navigation (*Od.* 4, 671, 845; 15, 19). Although the Poems differentiate Dulichium from Same, attributing another ruler to it, Meges (*Il.* 2, 625-627), ancient tradition came to consider that Dulichium⁸⁴ was another name for the island, identifying the Sameans with Dulichium or, as Pausanias (6, 15, 7) did, identifying the Dulichians not with Same, but with Pale⁸⁵. Whatever the case may be, as far as we are concerned here, the Homeric Poems highlight the fact that the island belonged to the Kingdom of Odysseus, whilst perhaps also reflecting the importance of Same within the Cephallenian context. Although the island

⁸¹ Thuc. 2, 7, 3; 2, 80, 1; Dem. 32, 8; Ps. Scylax 34; Ps. Scymn. 450; Diod. Sic. 11, 84, 6; 12, 43, 4; 14, 34, 2; 16, 6, 5; 16, 9, 4; Polyb. 5, 3, 4, 9; 5, 109; 5, 110, 5; Livy 37, 13, 11; 37, 80, 5; 38, 10, 2; 42, 48, 1; 42, 56, 1; Plin. *NH* 4, 9, 13.

⁸² Cf. for example, Diod. Sic. 12, 43, 5.

⁸³ Crocyleia and Aegilips: *Il.* 2, 633. Zacynthus: *Il.* 2, 634; *Od.* 1, 246; 9, 24; 10, 131; 16, 123, 249; *Hym. Apoll.* 3, 397; Strabo 8, 2, 2.

⁸⁴ *Il.* 2, 625, 629; *Od.* 1, 246; 9, 24; 14, 335, 397; 16, 123, 247, 396; 18, 396; 19, 131, 292.

⁸⁵ Vd. also: *Hym. Apoll.* 3, 397; *Apoll. Bibl.* 2, 5, 5; *Epit.* 7; Strabo 8, 2, 2; Ov. *Met.* 13, 705; Verg. *Aenid* 3, 258; Plut. *Mor.* 603E.

is not mentioned by its name, the *ethnos* does appear, in which respect the magnanimous Cephallenians furnished their ships and fought in tight columns at Troy under the command of Odysseus⁸⁶. This epic tradition is recorded by Sophocles (*Philoctetes*, 260) and Euripides (*Cyclops*, 41), who refer to Odysseus as the King of the Cephallenians.

Over and above the realm of the epic itself, Cephallenia's belonging to the Kingdom of Odysseus and the Cephallenians' participation in the Trojan War under the command of the king himself entailed a series of important consequences with regard to the identity of the Cephallenians and the way they were regarded by the rest of the Greeks. This certainly endowed them with all the prestige of a history linked to the hero and the Greek's shared enterprise against Troy, but it also made them part of a Hellenic identity. The epic tradition highlighted the Hellenic origin of the Cephallenians, in contrast to other populations who were considered barbarians, such as the Epirotes⁸⁷, or other regions that had originally been barbarian such as Acarnania or that were still partially inhabited by barbarians, such as Amphilochia⁸⁸. And this Greek origin and this Hellenic identity was recognised by the rest of the Greeks.

Cephallenia's identity revolved around the tradition of Cephalus as a shared ancestor and eponymous hero of the Cephallenians, also reinforcing their awareness of their Hellenic origin⁸⁹. Cephalus was the son of Deioneus and came from Thoricus in Attica. He married Procris, the daughter of Erecteus. From the hands of Minos or Artemis, Procris received a dog, Laelaps, which no prey could escape from, as well as a spear that never missed its target, which Procris handed over to Cephalus. Cephalus employed the dog and the spear to hunt the Teumessian fox and he accidentally killed Procris by mistaking her for a wild animal. Exiled from Attica as a result, he sought refuge in Thebes at the Court of Amphytrion, with whom he took part in an expedition against the Taphians and the Teleboans. After this expedition, Amphytrion made Cephalus Lord of the Teleboans and the islands. Finally, he reached Cephallenia, which he is named after. Cephalus' four children, Proni, Samus, Peleus and Cranius

⁸⁶ *Il.* 2, 631: αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦγε Κεφαλλήνας μεγάρους. *Il.* 4,330: πὰρ δὲ Κεφαλλήνων ἀμφὶ στίγες οὐκ ἀλαπαδναί.

⁸⁷ Thuc. 2, 68, 9; 2, 80, 5-6; 2, 81, 3-8; 2, 82.

⁸⁸ The barbarian Teleboans in Acarnania and the Ionian Sea: Hesiod. *Sh.* 1, 15; Apoll. *Bibl.* 2, 4, 5-8; Str. 10, 2, 14; Plin. *NH* 4, 19; Paus. 1, 37, 6. With regard to Amphilochia, part of its population was considered to be barbarian: Thuc. 2, 68, 5.

⁸⁹ Cf. for example Apoll. *Bibl.* 2, 4, 7; 3, 15, 1.

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are the eponyms and *oikistai* of the four Cephallenian *poleis*⁹⁰. Cephalus brings together all of the characteristic aspects of the hero and is of Greek origin, whilst all of the main characters in the story, both human and divine, are Greek. As a mortal he suffers a fateful destiny. He is also a warrior, a victorious military leader, a civilising hero who battles against the barbarians and a figure who founds and populates cities.

Cephalus' importance to the Cephallenians can be observed in the coinages produced by the *poleis* on the island. In this respect, Same minted various silver and bronze coins with a male head, which could be that of Cephalus rather than Apollo, and with the head of a dog on the other side, which may make reference to the hunting expedition in which Procris died⁹¹. Crane also produced coins in silver and bronze, featuring a male head, which could well be Cephalus. Proni issued silver coins featuring the head of Cephalus and Pale also minted coins with the head of Cephalus, accompanied by the legend ΠΑ and/or ΚΕΦΑΛΟΣ or ΚΕΦΑ or ΚΕΦΑΛ. Furthermore, Same staged a series of *agones* in honour of Cephalus, which reveals the existence of a heroic cult dedicated to the founder of the lineage and probably reflects Same's status as the most important *polis* of the Cephallenians. At the same time as Cephalus represented the shared historical tradition of all the Cephallenians, the same myth, through the four founding children of the *poleis*, sanctioned the division of the island into a *tetrapolis* and ruled out the idea of a unitary *polis*, thus very probably reflecting the conceptions of the island's aristocracy.

According to Pausanias (1, 37, 6, Cephalus was the first to inhabit the island, lending his name to it (τὴν νῆσον οἰκῆσαι πρῶτον, ἣ νῦν ἀπ' ἐκείνου Κεφαλληνία καλεῖται). As a consequence, Cephallenian tradition seems to evoke the idea of an unpopulated island, which is to say, one not previously populated by barbarians. Cephalus gave his name to the island and populated it with Cephallenians, Greeks all descended from his lineage. Thus, in Cephallenia, an historical and primordial territory, a kind of autochthony-based myth was created that reaffirmed the Greekness of its inhabitants.

Alongside our eponymous hero, the cult of Zeus Aenesius was one that may have been widespread in all of the Cephallenian *poleis*. The cult was

⁹⁰ Hes. *Teog.* 986; Apoll. *Bibl.* 1, 94; 2, 4, 7; 3, 14, 3, cf. *Od.* 11, 593-600; Strabo 10, 2, 8; Paus. 3, 18, 12; 10, 29, 6; 10, 13, 1; 10, 37, 6; Ovidio *Met.* 7, 700-713; Antoninus Liberalis *Met.* 41; Hig. *Fab.* 189; Gehrke 1994, 110-112; Ruiz de Elvira 2001.

⁹¹ Postolakas 1868, 98-101; Biedermann 1887, 69-71; Head *HN*² 428; Babelon 1910, 2.803-806; Grose 1926, nrr. 6695-6696; Kraay 1976, 96; *SNG Cop. Acarnania* 472-477.

concentrated around the summit of Mount Aenus (Strabo 10, 2, 15, Fig. 18), the highest on the entire island and clearly visible from all parts of Cephallenia. This site consisted of an open-air sanctuary, without a temple, but featuring an altar, around which the ossified remains of sacrifices have been discovered, which clearly indicates the presence of a cult. The altar was located in the territory of Proni and this city's coins featured the head of Zeus on the obverse side. It is possible that the fir tree was a symbol of this god and, in this respect, the other side of the coins from Proni and Pale, which represented a fir tree, may also have made reference to Zeus Aenesius. In short, the Cephallenians shared the idea that they descended from the same lineage and that they shared certain cults, based on the same territory and featuring the same traditions. They possessed a shared ethnic identity and formed an *ethnos*, over and above their separation into different *poleis*.

A certain number of accounts might lead us to believe that the Cephallenians may have possessed a closer union of a federal nature⁹². One of the first accounts comes from Diodorus (11, 84, 7), one that is rather difficult to interpret. According to this author, at the time of Tolmides' expedition, Zacynthus belonged to Cephallenia (τῆς Κεφαλληνίας εἰς Ζάκυνθον)⁹³. Tolmides took control of this island and also ensured the submission of all the cities in Cephallenia. If Cephallenia was divided into *poleis* that did not make up a shared state, then it is difficult to understand how Cephallenia exercised control over Zacynthus. We can only assume that Zacynthus was dominated at the time by one of the Cephallenian *poleis*, or that it was controlled by the Cephallenian federal state. It is more difficult to believe that Zacynthus may have been jointly governed by four independent *poleis*. For his part, Thucydides (3, 94, 1; 7, 57, 7) states that during the Peloponnesian War the Cephallenians joined the Athenians as independent allies, which is to say they were not members of the Delian League. The same author mentions that the Cephallenians joined Demosthenes, together with the Zacynthians and the Corcyraeans (two *poleis*), and they contributed troops (Thuc. 3, 95, 2), ships in 426 (Thuc. 3, 94-98) and hoplites in 413 (Thuc. 7, 31, 2). Demosthenes (32, 8, 14, 22, 23) mentions the magistrates (archons) of Cephallenia, whilst Aristotle wrote a *politeia* of the Cephallenians (Κεφαλλήνων πολιτεία nr. 79, Gigon). Pausanias (10, 7, 4) mentions that a Cephallenian, without

⁹² Bengston 1962, nr. 262; Dreher 1995, 199 n. 116.

⁹³ Diod. Sic. 11, 84, 7: ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἀναχθεῖς ἔπλευσε τῆς Κεφαλληνίας εἰς Ζάκυνθον: ταύτην δὲ χειρωσάμενος καὶ πᾶσας τὰς ἐν τῇ Κεφαλληνίᾳ πόλεις προσαγαγόμενος,

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a *polis*-based sub-ethnic denomination, won the contest for singing accompanied by the zither at the Pythian Games of 568. At Delphi during the first half of the third century, at least two Cephallenians made a dedication as Cephallenians of the Paleians (IG IX 1² 4, 1579), using both the Cephallenian ethnic denomination and the *polis*-based subethnic denomination at the same time.

Thucydides (2, 30, 2) tells us that Cephallenia formed a *tetrapolis*, which in principle could be compatible with the existence of a federal state. Nevertheless, in a reference of key importance, this author states that, in 435, the Corinthians requested help from their allies during their expedition against Corcyra and that the Paleians of Cephallenia contributed four ships (Thuc. 1, 27, 2). This express reference to one of the *poleis* would indicate that the other three *poleis* did not join the Corinthians. On their return trip from this expedition (Thuc. 2, 30, 33), the Corinthians went ashore on Cranean territory and were unexpectedly attacked by them. The Craneans may perhaps have sympathised more with the Athenians⁹⁴ or they may have been neutral, but they certainly do not appear to have been allies of the Corinthians. In short, whilst Pale would seem to have been favourable to the Corinthians and, therefore, hostile to the Corcyraeans and Athenians, Crane followed a different policy with regard to that of Pale. This differing stance may have been due to the suspicion that existed between two neighbouring *poleis* such as Pale and Crane, but, whatever the case may be, it is difficult to reconcile this account with the existence of a federal state that directed and implemented a unitary foreign policy. During this same expedition, we might note that the Corinthians used the outer route round the island and did not pass through the Strait of Cephallenia, possibly because they used the port at Pale and also possibly because of the hostility of the other Cephallenian *poleis*. Finally, Herodotus (9, 28, 5) tells us that the Paleians sent two hundred men to fight at Plataea, although they do not appear on the Serpent Column. The truth of this account has been called into question⁹⁵, but it does once again highlight the independent foreign policy of the island's *poleis*.

Xenophon (6, 2, 33) writes that in 374 Iphicrates subjugated the cities of Cephallenia and then left for Corcyra (καταστρεψάμενος δὲ τὰς ἐν τῇ Κεφαλληνίᾳ πόλεις). After adding the Corcyraean fleet to his own, Iphicrates returned to Cephallenia, where he proceeded to raise funds,

⁹⁴ As proof of this, shortly afterwards the Athenians installed the Messenians of Pylos in Crane, obviously with the consent of the Craneans (Thuc. 5, 35, 7).

⁹⁵ Büchner 1921, 210, 212-213.

partly voluntarily and partly by force (Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 38: εἰς Κεφαλληνίαν πλεύσας χρήματα ἐπράξατο, τὰ μὲν παρ' ἐκόντων, τὰ δὲ παρ' ἀκόντων). This testimony appears to suggest that the Cephallenian *poleis* had a different attitude in relation to the exaction of money, featuring greater and lesser degrees of resistance, which would also indicate separate policies. Similarly, in 373, when the Athenian fleet, under the command of Timotheus, reached Cephallenia (Diod. Sic. 15, 36, 5), the Athenian *strategos* docked at the cities on the island, which would also seem to suggest that they were independent cities⁹⁶. The constitution of the League of Corinth in 337 only named the Island of Cephallenia (IG II² 236 b 12: Κεφαλληνίας)⁹⁷, and it did not reflect the ethnic denomination, which was habitual for other states that signed the treaty. The island may have been mentioned to encompass all of the Cephallenian *poleis*, precisely because they lacked a federal state. Furthermore, a Delphian decree (FD III 3, 204, ll. 1-2) grants proxeny to Λέωνι Δ[αμ]ολέοντος, Κρανίωι ἐκ Κεφαλλανίας. In the Attic inscriptions, dating from the mid-fifth century, Damaenetus and Chareas are only referred to as Paleians (IG IX 1² 4, 1575-1576) and, similarly, in the fourth century, Hippaenus, Peisanoridas and Aristones all come from Pale (IG IX 1² 4, 1577). In short, in this case the appearance or absence of an ethnic denomination does not seem to reveal the existence of a federal state. The Decree of Magnesia-on-the-Meander, which we have already mentioned (IG IX 1² 4, 1582; *I Magnesia* 35), dated to around 207 BC, by which the Sameans recognised the Festival de Artemis Leukophryene, mentions the other three *poleis* on the island in addition to the Sameans (ll. 16, 15, 18, 27, 29, 39), but no reference is made to a federal state. This contrasts with the same Acarnanian decree regarding the same matter, in which the Acarnanian Federal State, on behalf of all the *poleis* that make up the state, recognises the Festival of Artemis Leukophryene (IG IX 1² 2, 582, l. 1). Sometime later, in the year 189, the Consul Marcus Fulvius Nobilior arrived on Cephallenia and, according to Livy's account (38, 28, 5), he asked all of the cities whether they preferred to surrender to the Romans or whether they wanted to try their luck with a war. Apparently, all of the cities surrendered individually and each *polis* separately handed over twenty hostages. Subsequently, the Sameans, but not the rest of the *poleis* on the island, betrayed the agreement (Livy 38, 28, 6-8). Livy's account suggests that there was no centralised authority

⁹⁶ Diod. Sic. 15, 36, 5: Τιμόθεος δὲ παραλαβὼν τὴν ναυαρχίαν καὶ πλεύσας εἰς τὴν Κεφαλληνίαν, τάς τ' ἐν αὐτῇ πόλεις προσηγάγετο.

⁹⁷ Bentgson 1962, nr. 403.

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capable of negotiating with the Romans and that each *polis* independently agreed to surrender to the Romans. The Cephallenians do not appear to have minted coins in their name and there is no *polis*-based coinage that recognises the existence of a Cephallenian federal state, as occurs, for example, in the case the Achaean⁹⁸. Finally, as we have seen, the borders of the four *poleis* on the island were strongly fortified, which would seem to testify to a certain distrust amongst them and the lack of any federal state that might arbitrate in internal conflicts. Furthermore, the fortifications on Cephallenia appear to have been the work of each of the *poleis* separately, rather than the result of a federal strategy.

In relation to the current state of our knowledge regarding the matter, alongside Thucydides' testimony concerning the Corinthian expedition against Corcyra, the negotiations that were carried out for the expansion of the Second Athenian League in 375 constitute a key piece of evidence. The Second Athenian League was created in February 377 (IG II² 43). A subsequent inscription (IG II² 96, dating from the second prytany of 375/4 (August-September 375), authorised the Secretary of the Council to add the names of Corcyraeans, Acarnanians and Cephallenians to the common stela of allies, so that ambassadors from these states could make their oaths (ll. 8-15. Furthermore, the allies were invited to send *syndroi* to the League's Council (ll. 23-24).

This expansion could be linked with the Athenian expeditions throughout the Ionian Sea and the Athenian victory at the naval Battle of Alyzeia in 375, this being just before the Peace of 375, which was signed at the beginning of autumn. The inscription states that the names of the cities must be added to the list of allies (l. 13-14, establishing a special procedure for the Acarnanians (l. 25. This specific procedure may have to do with the fact that the Acarnanians constituted a Confederation and, in fact, the stela in question inscribes the Acarnanians as a whole, without any Acarnanian *polis* appearing on its own. However, in the case of Cephallenia, the Pronians were the only ones added to the stela (IG II² 43, B12⁹⁹). The other three cities may have signed a bilateral treaty and each city may have sent its own independent ambassadors (IG II² 96, ll. 8-10, but the incontrovertible fact exists that only one Cephallenian *polis* appeared in IG II² 43, which contradicts the existence of a federal state, whose *raison d'être* is precisely that of administering a joint foreign policy.

⁹⁸ Vd. *BMC Peloponnesus* plates XXIII-XXIX.

⁹⁹ Bengtson 1962, nrr. 262 and 267; Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 33, 37; cf. Dreher 1995, 191, 199.

This situation can be linked with the signing of the King's Peace in the spring of 386, in which the ambassadors, all Thebans, sought to sign on behalf of all the Boeotians, given that Boeotia was part of a Confederation at that time. The Lacedaemonians' refusal to allow the Thebans to sign on behalf of all the Boeotians and the subsequent signing of each of the Boeotian cities individually led to the dissolution of the Confederation. Perhaps Aristotle wrote his *Politeia of the Cephallenians* in the sense that the Cephallenian *poleis* possessed a similar *politeia*, and perhaps the archons who acted as judges of foreigners in trade conflicts came from a specific Cephallenian *polis* (Dem. 32, 9, 14, 22-23). The inscription of Proni in the Decree of the Second Athenian League indicates that each Cephallenian *polis* followed a separate foreign policy and that no Cephallenian Federal State existed. In short, we are dealing with an ethnic identity, an *ethnos*, that did not reach the point of constituting a federal state in the Classical Period.

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Abbreviations

- BMC Peloponnesus* = P. Gardner, *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Peloponnesus (excluding Corinth)*, London 1887.
IMagnesia = O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*. Berlin 1900.
SNG Cop. Acarnania = *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Denmark, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum. Vol. 12 Epirus-Acarnania*, Copenhagen 1943.

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Fig. 1. The Strait of Ithaca-Cephalenia from Same with Ithaca on the right background.

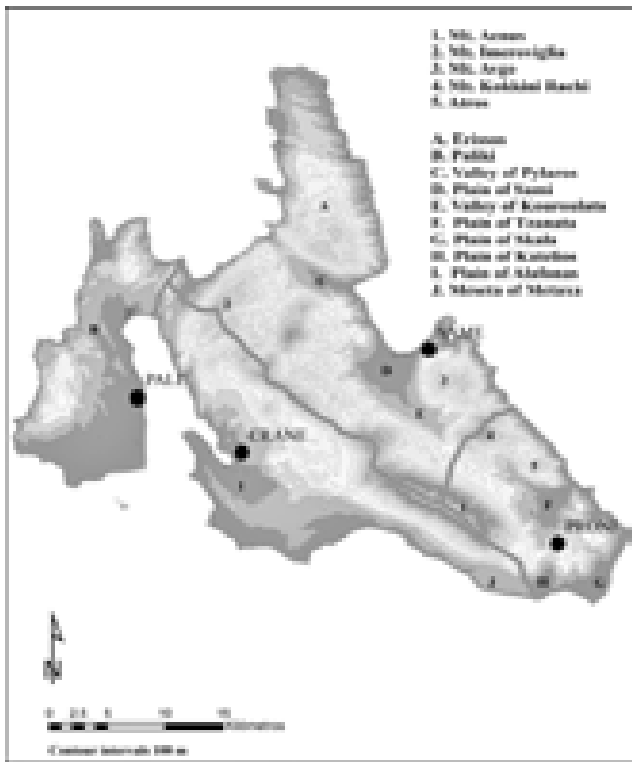


Fig. 2. The Island of Cephalenia.

The Tetrapolis of Cephallenia

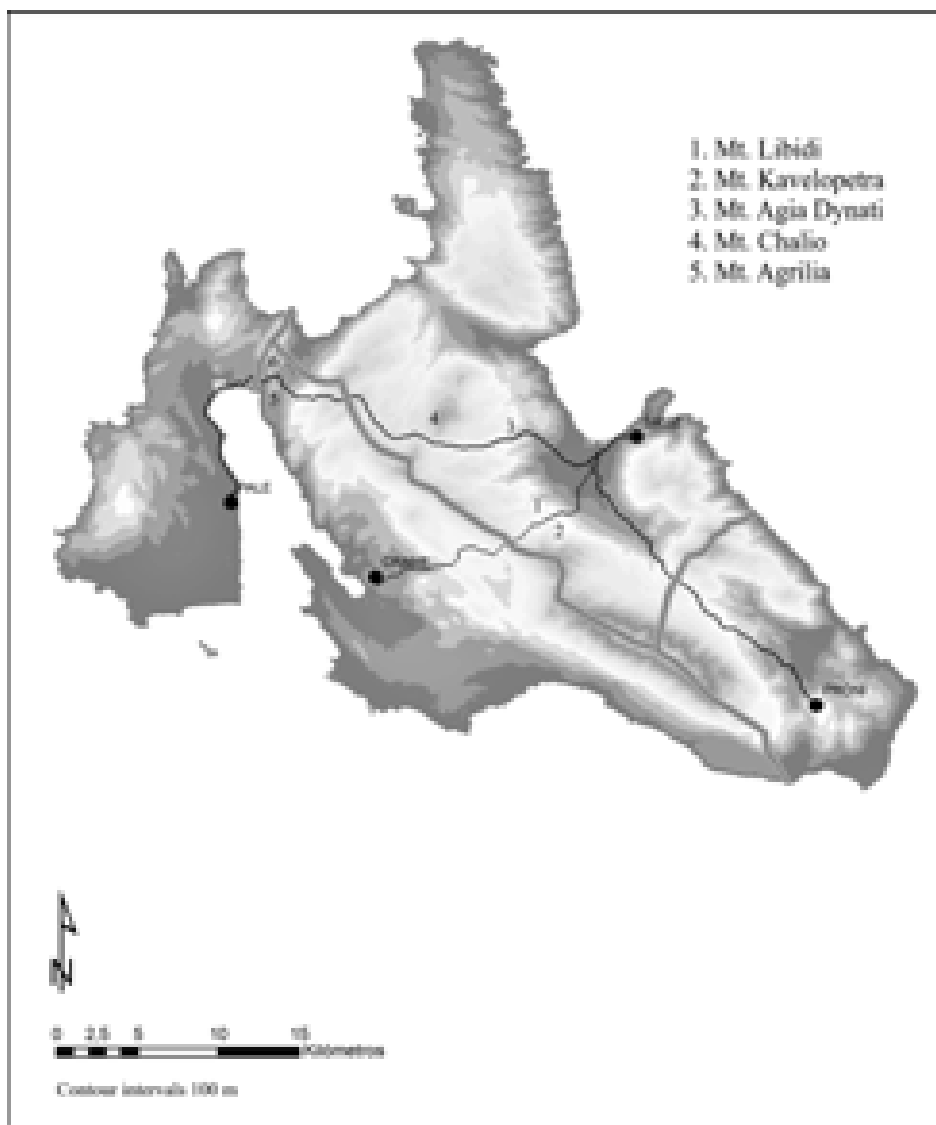


Fig. 3 GIS optimum routes.

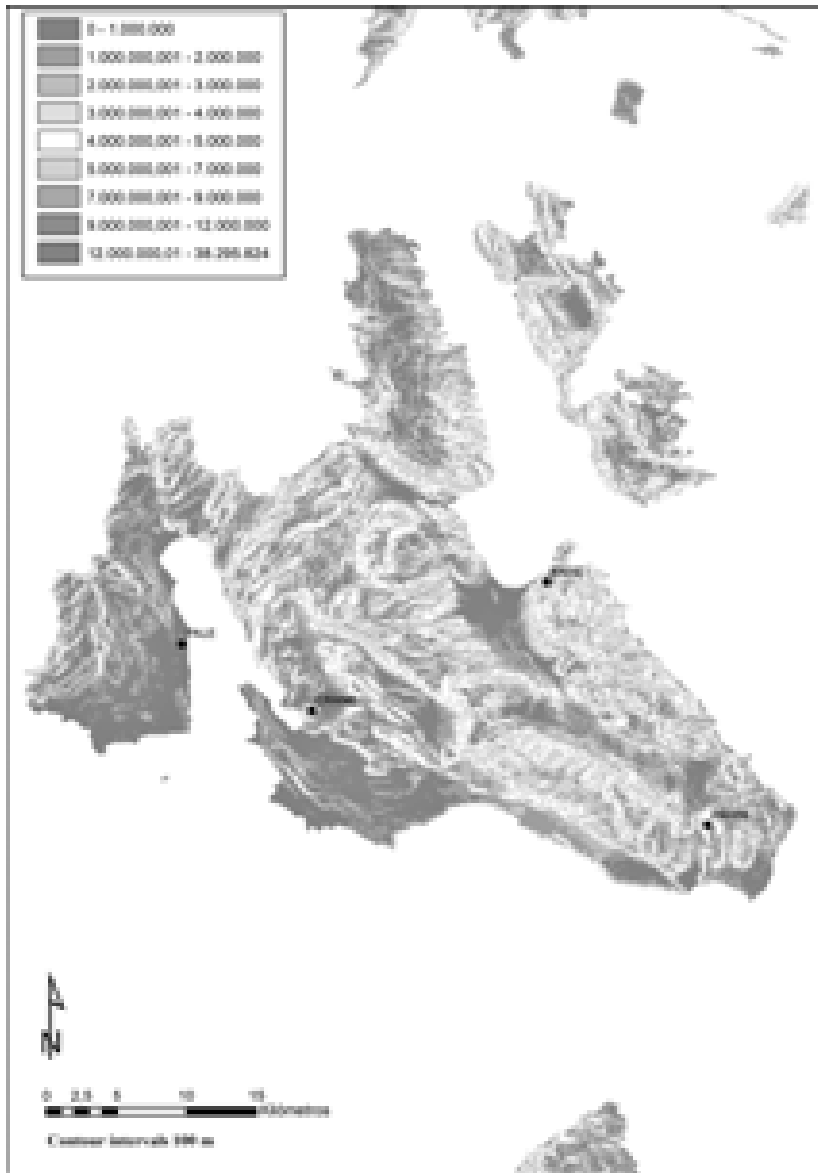


Fig. 4. Cephalenia. Slope map.

The Tetrapolis of *Cephallenia*

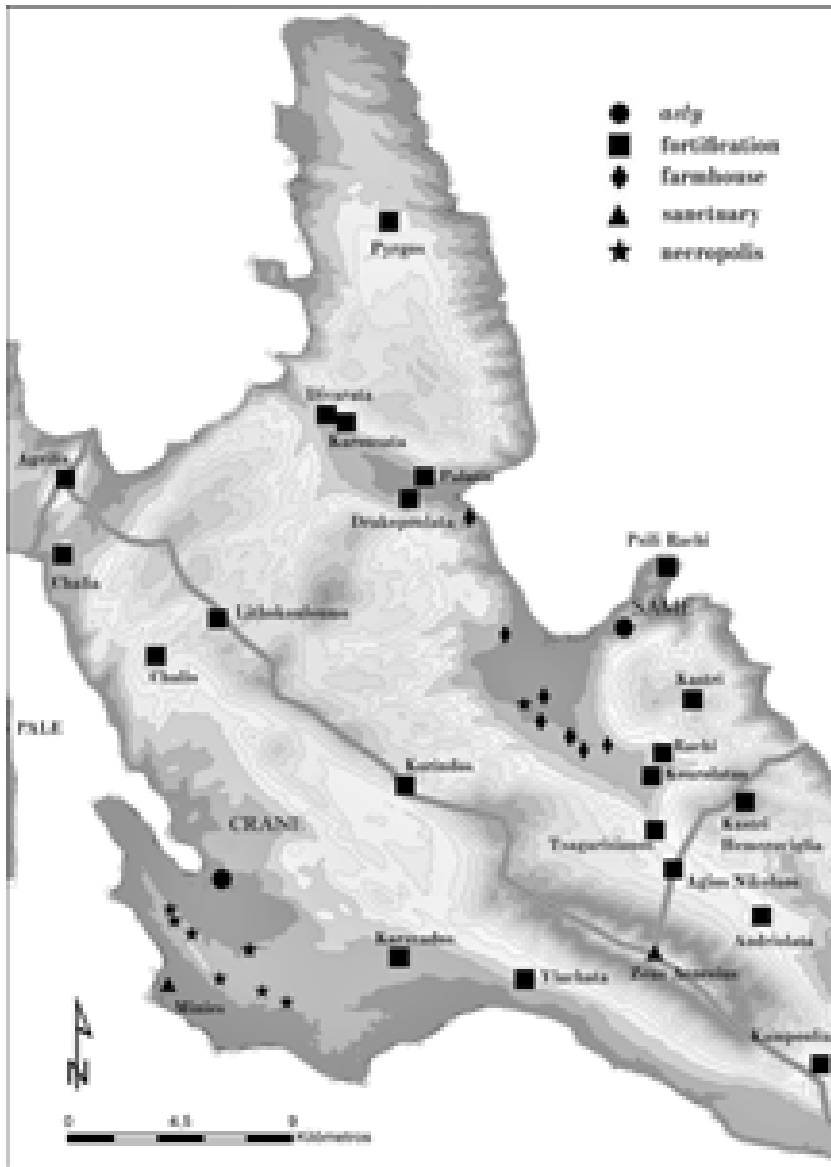


Fig. 5. Same and Crane



Figure 6. Same.
Paliokastro from
Agiói Phanentes.



Fig. 7. Same. The
Tower of Agiúi
Phanentes.



Fig. 8. Same.
Rectangular
isodomic
masonry.

The Tetrapolis of Cephallenia

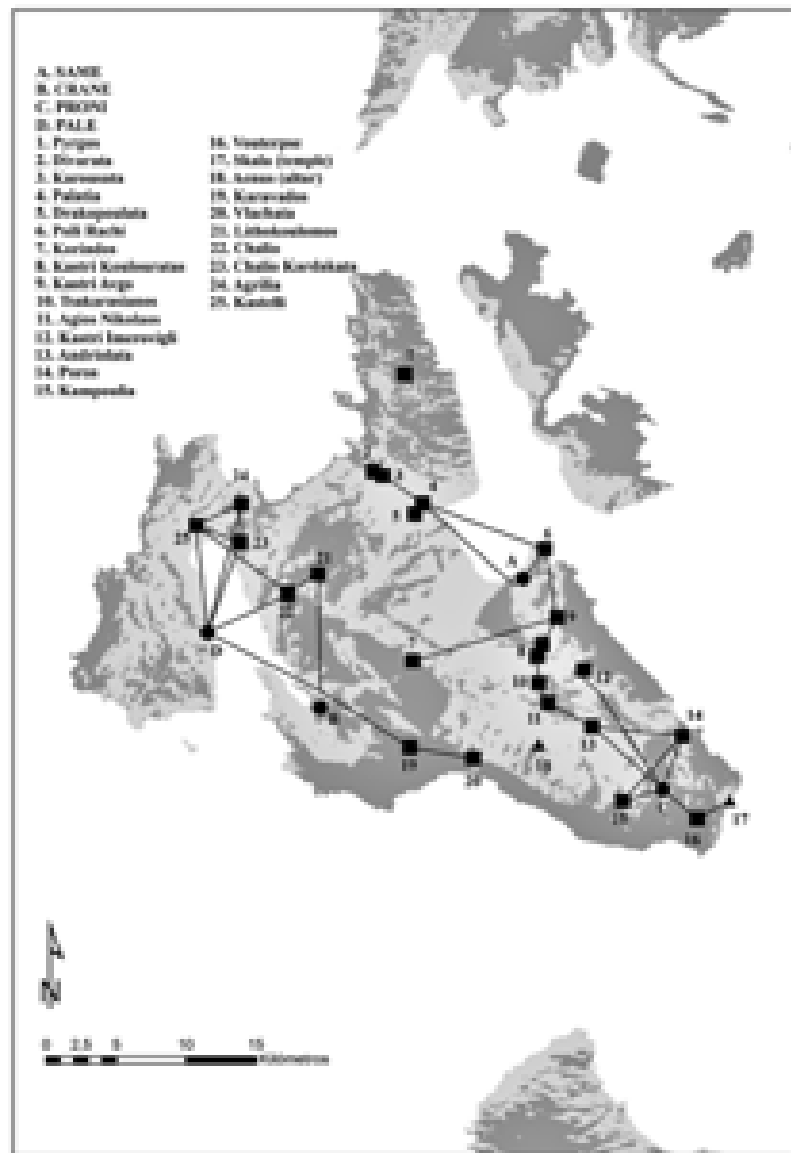


Fig. 9. Cephallenia. Defensive system.



Fig. 10. Crane.
Rachi
from Kastelli-
Pezoules.



Fig. 11. Crane.
Pseudo-isodomic
rectangular style.



Fig. 12. Crane.
Polygonal masonry.

The Tetrapolis of Cephallenia

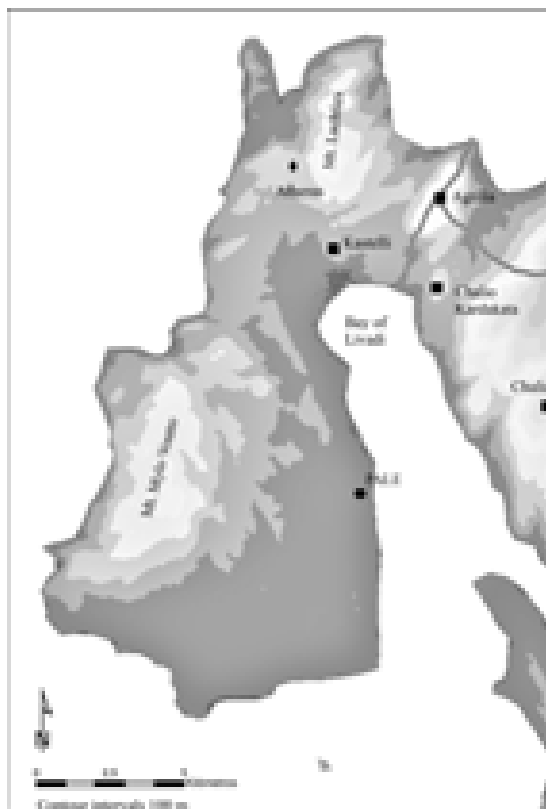


Fig. 13. Pale.



Fig. 14. Pale.
Paliokastro Lixouris.

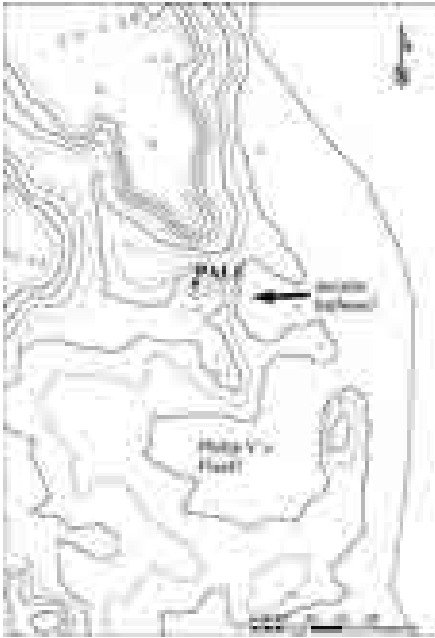


Fig. 15. Pale.
Ancient Harbour?

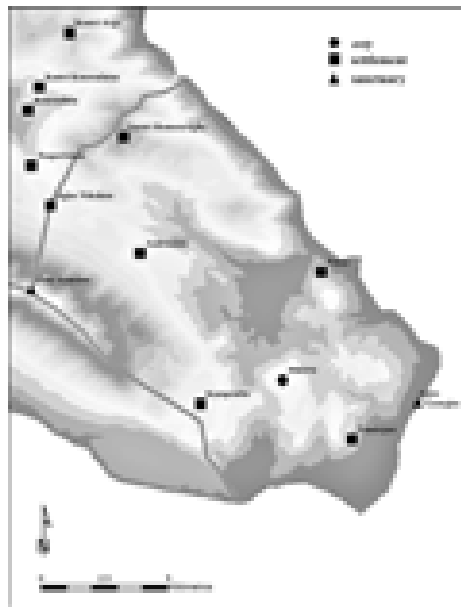


Fig. 16. Proni.

The Tetrapolis of Cephallenia



Fig. 17. Proni. Paliokastro.



Fig. 18. Mt. Aenus from the West.

IN THE SHADOW OF ODYSSEUS A HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH, AND CONTRACT ARCHAEOLOGY IN ITHACA

1. Introduction

Ithaca is a small and mountainous island in the central Ionian Sea with an area of ca. 105 sq. km. Wedged between the larger islands of Cephallenia to the west and south, and Leucas to the north (Fig. 1), it has the shape of an odd hourglass, made up by two almost equally sized landmasses connected by a narrow and similarly mountainous isthmus called Aetos (Fig. 2). Over the last five centuries, to the extent that demographic data are available, Ithaca's population has only once exceeded ten thousand people. Sharp fluctuations in population can be observed in some periods, though not frequently, these being triggered by a combination of factors such as war, devastating earthquakes, disease, and emigration to urban centres in the pursuit of greater economic opportunities. Those who remained behind typically cultivated the land, mainly the currant, a lucrative cash-crop, or went to sea becoming expert seamen and prosperous ship-owners connecting Ithaca with distant peoples and places. Intensive small distance cabotage went hand in hand with overseas expansion and colonisation of the inner archipelago of the central Ionian Sea. As a result, the islands of Kalamos (ancient Karnos), Kastos, and the smaller Echinades islands became from the 16th century and remained Ithacan administrative dependencies until the second half of the 20th century. A small rocky island with much restricted natural resources, Ithaca has never been the apple of discord between regional or distant colonial powers. Rather like Aesop's mouse among the lions, the Ithacans have always confronted their surroundings both as a scene of dangers and source of opportunities, as well as convenient sources of supplies or places to find refuge.

To illustrate this with an example: during the second Ottoman-Venetian war (1499-1503), the Ithacans – the island had been already conquered by the Ottomans in 1479¹ – evacuated the island. At the war's end the

¹ Miller 1921, 264. Special thanks go to Kyriaco Nikias and Greg Deftereos for transforming my manuscript into a readable text.

Venetians had conquered both Cephallenia and Leucas (Santa Maura). In the subsequent peace treaty, the former remained Venetian whereas the latter was restored to the Ottomans. Nobody seemed to care about the fate of Ithaca. The Ithacans returned and declared themselves to be faithful subjects of Venice, since formerly they had also been subjects to the Tocco family fiefdom like the Cephallenians². The response of the Venetian Governor (*proveditor*) of Cephallenia revealed his fear of renewed hostilities with the Ottomans. He therefore advised the Ithacans to remain aloof until Venice could take a formal decision. The Ottomans seem to have been equally indifferent to the fate of Ithaca, and the next year, in 1504, the Venetians accepted the *fait accompli* and the island was resettled officially as a Venetian colony³. Even in the most critical circumstances the Ithacans could make their own history. Always a frontier island where state rule has been tenuous, to say the least, the Ithacans were involved in hostilities against the mainland Ottomans and the Muslim corsairs stationed in Leucas until at least 1685⁴. At the same time, Ithaca became a notorious pirate nest even for the English pirates smuggling currants⁵. Ithaca's strategic position sometimes rendered it desirable, as indeed indicated by the proposal of Samuel Pepys, the English Secretary of the Admiralty in 1675, to have the island serve as a base for the Royal Navy against the Barbary corsairs⁶.

Early modern and modern Ithacans have long had and maintained a strong island identity forged in shared adversities. The small size of the island's population, the familiarity of its society and limited extent of vertical social stratification, a strong island identity when abroad, and a shared disdain for higher state authorities, be they from Cephallenia, be it Venice, the United Kingdom, or Greece, have reinforced a sense of belonging. When Heinrich Schliemann met a Greek in Russia and asked him where he was from, he received the following answer: "I am an Ithacan, by God!"⁷. Exceptional disgust and resentment have always been upheld against neighbour Cephallenians, caused by the humiliating and colonial attitude of an administration located at Argostoli since the Venetian period (1504-1797)⁸. When William Gell visited Ithaca for the first time in 1801,

² Nikias 2022, 60-61.

³ Zapanti 1995-1998, 129-130.

⁴ Lunzi 1858, 348-349; Tsakiri 2015.

⁵ Lamansky 1884, 602-603.

⁶ Tanner 1909, xii, 48. In the end, Malta was chosen instead.

⁷ Schliemann 1973 [1869], 42.

⁸ For the notoriously incompetent and corrupt Cephallenian Governors of Ithaca in the Venetian period, see Scrofani 1799, 38-39; Lunzi 1858, 350; Nikias 2023, 404, 406-407.

he noted that: “They say they owe much to the French who delivered them from the Cephallonians by whom under the Venetians they were enslaved”⁹. When the first Ithacan historian Nikolaos Karavias Grivas had to deal with the statement that most Ithacans descended from Cephallenian settlers after 1504 (himself of non-Cephallenian descent), he was indignant: “This is a false claim! Because the majority of Ithacans are of Cretan stock, whose ancestors [...] settled in Ithaca, and today they constitute about one seventh of the population”¹⁰. The selective exaggeration of certain aspects of behaviour, like the colonial attitude of some Cephallenian administrators, has always been a strategy for the formation of identity.

Another crucial force in forming a strong Ithacan identity over centuries has been the Homeric heritage of the island as the homeland of Odysseus. Already in the 17th century foreign travellers made record of local beliefs that ancient ruins on the isthmus of Aetos were the “Castle of Odysseus”¹¹. In 1758 the Ithacan corsair Stephen Solomon would receive a *letter of marque* by the Admiralty for his ship named *Ulysses* to prey on England’s enemies¹². That is not to say that the practice of using Homeric names for their ships was widespread. On the contrary, Christian names were employed as a rule, but the exception of the captain Solomon asserting his island identity in a foreign context is significant. Neither was the ancient heritage of the island lost to the Venetians (*pace* Gell 1807, 10). As early as the 1420s in the work of the cartographer Christoforo Buondelmonti the small island called “Val di Compare” by Italian seamen was associated with ancient Ithaca¹³. When the Venetian high-ranking official Marino Sanuto chronicled the 1504 decree by which Venice declared Ithaca its colony, he notes that “Val de Compari” was in fact “Ytacha”¹⁴. In 1590 the Venetian Governor of Cephallenia (to which jurisdiction Ithaca belonged), Anzolo Basadonna recalls that modern Teachi was ancient Ithaca, the “famous island of Odysseus”¹⁵. The Venetians being practical entrepreneurs and mediators, merely accepted the demotic name used by the islanders themselves: Teachi¹⁶. Things changed in 1797 when General Napoleon

⁹ Gell 1801, 36. General Bonaparte’s French Army of Italy had taken over Ithaca from mid-1797 until the end of 1798.

¹⁰ Karavias Grivas 2010 [1849], 69-70.

¹¹ Spon, Wheler 1678, 133.

¹² The National Archives (UK): HCA (High Court of Admiralty) 26/10/8, f. 9r.

¹³ Sinner 1824, 57.

¹⁴ Stefani 1881, 1009.

¹⁵ Tsiknakis 2008, 104.

¹⁶ Here it is interesting to note, as Kyriaco Nikias informs me, that during the Venetian

Bonaparte conquered Venice and its overseas dominions. Cognisant of the Classical inheritance, like most educated French revolutionaries, Napoleon succeeded in fostering nationalism among the islanders. In his administrative reforms to the region, he established a jurisdiction called the *Département d'Ithaque*, comprising the islands of Ithaca, Cephallenia, Leucas with their dependencies, and the towns of Preveza and Vonizza. For the first time, the name Ithaca was at the forefront in the administrative context, but in practice the capital remained at Argostoli in Cephallenia as it had been under the Venetians¹⁷. It was from then on, that the name “Ithaca” comes into regular use in the local official documents. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that in this environment where the Classical inheritance weighed heavily on the local community, the first Greek to become a professional archaeologist, Andrea Papadopulo Vretto, was born in 1800 and was raised in Ithaca¹⁸.

In this essay I suggest that the processes which have formed the identity of Ithacans today build on the long presence which the ancient heritage of the island has had in the minds of Ithacans through the Early Modern period. No doubt, this has been reinforced by non-Ithacan actors too, whose influence – intended or unintended – has shaped the way Ithacans perceive the history of their island, and the way this finds expression (even, exaggeration). In attempting to write a history of the archaeology of Ithaca, we must be aware of how both Ithacans and non-Ithacans have sought to maintain, or to undermine, a strong local identity which associates the island with a particular ancient history. These objectives have shaped both the theory and the practice of archaeology in Ithaca over centuries, and continue to intervene to this day. Moreover, these forces have also shaped the formation of the archaeological record with which research is obliged to deal into the future. The archaeology of Ithaca has a complex history spanning more than two centuries, which the first part of this article endeavours to review through a critical lens.

It is my belief that small islands like Ithaca do not write their history, and I would add that they do not write the history of their archaeology. Therefore, it should be noted that this article is an attempt made by an Ithacan to write a history of Ithacan archaeology with the experience of having undertaken fieldwork on his island for more than a decade. This ought to be noted because it is not self-evident in a country like Greece,

period the Greek administrators employed by the Ottoman rulers on the mainland sometimes use the island's Classical name Ἰθάκη in correspondence.

¹⁷ Bellaire 1805, 10.

¹⁸ Zanou 2018, 144-160.

which is a highly centralised state. Among the Greek islands those larger and more populated serve as regional centres which, in turn, administer smaller islands as their subjurisdictions (as indeed with the subordination of Ithaca to Cephalonia throughout Venetian rule and today). The same goes for archaeology. The regional offices of the Greek Archaeological Service, the Ephorates for Antiquities (Εφορείες Αρχαιοτήτων), are only to be found in the larger islands. Normally, they are unwilling to undertake fieldwork in the small far-off islands – or to recruit archaeologists from those islands considered “remote” – except when it becomes absolutely necessary. As a consequence, the small-islands’ archaeology suffers from neglect and “invisibility”. Archaeologists from the smaller islands are rarely (if ever) employed, rarely provided with access to the archaeological record and, therefore, they are usually forced to leave their home to seek employment elsewhere. The only chance they have to be employed on their home island is when a regional director is willing to give them a chance, or when they are recruited by a foreign or a university mission.

In the last decades it has been acknowledged that the vast majority of archaeological data are generated by contract archaeology¹⁹. Ithaca had been an exception, just like some other archaeological “outliers” such as Zacynthus, where contract archaeology has not taken off. That had to, and still must, change. Doing contract archaeology in Ithaca is an ongoing struggle against all odds, and, therefore, when I was given the opportunity to do it, I was obliged to dig deeper to find answers, both literally and metaphorically. The second part of this essay is a summary of my digging.

2. A history of archaeology in Ithaca

2.1. A chronicle

It all began during the Napoleonic Wars, when in 1807 Sir William Gell published *The Geography and Antiquities of Ithaca*, the product of his two visits on the island, in June 1801 and in April 1806. Gell’s aim was that of closely correlating the actual geography of the island with the text of Homer’s *Odyssey*, and, by doing so, to dispel any doubts raised by Jacob Spon and George Wheler with regard to the Homeric identity of the island²⁰. He did so with striking self-confidence in a meticulous account

¹⁹ Roskams 2001, 27.

²⁰ Spon, Wheler 1678, 132; Gell 1801, 36; 1807, 12.

of Ithaca's visible ancient remains accompanied by numerous illustrations and produced the earliest known modern map of the island. He located two major archaeological zones: one at the isthmus of Aetos in the middle of the island, and the second around the village of Stavros in the north-west (henceforth Greater Stavros). Through his reading of the Homeric text, the former was the site which he identified as the ancient city of Ithaca and, on its acropolis, he envisioned the residence of Odysseus, of which he drafted a totally imaginary plan. The latter he identified with the city of Alalkomenai, a city mentioned by Strabo and Plutarch, especially the visible ancient ruins on Pilikata hill²¹. His Ithacan interlocutors were not impressed with his self-assurance, and advised restraint since the *Odyssey* being a poem could not be considered an accurate geographic account. Gell, however, confidently dismissed every reservation²².

The Ithacans were fully aware of their island's Homeric legacy, and they had already been somewhat exposed to western European antiquarianism since the beginning of the 18th century, when the Venetian Nani family collected antiquities from Ithaca and other parts of Greece²³. An apparently very old ruin at a site today called Paliokaravo, at the northern shore of Vathy harbour, was identified by the Ithacans as a temple of Artemis²⁴. The Homeric identity of the island was beyond dispute even by the upper classes of Cephallenia. Indeed, the portrait of Marino Pignatorre, the Cephallenian Governor of Ithaca in 1719, displays in the caption the Classical name of the island "Ithaca" and not the then officially used "Teachi"²⁵ (Fig. 3). The Sicilian traveller Saverio Scrofani recounts an anecdote that the Cephallenian Governors out of vanity used to name their sons after Odysseus and Telemachus²⁶. Ithacans might have also participated in classical debates with a distinguished English scholar and aristocrat who resided on Ithaca for the whole year of 1791, became fluent in Modern Greek, and converted to the Eastern Orthodoxy. That man was Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford, the younger son of the Prime Minister of Great Britain Frederick North, 2nd Earl of Guilford. In Ithaca, North wrote the poem Αἰκατερίνη Εἰρηνοποιῶ in Modern Greek as homage to the Russian

²¹ Gell 1807, 108; Strab. 10, 2, 16; Plut. *Mor. Quaest. Graec.* 43.

²² Gell 1801, 36; 1807, 9.

²³ Paciaudi 1761a, 48-52, 139-204; 1761b, 100, 110; Calvelli, Crema, Luciani 2017. Ithaca was a Venetian dominion from 1504 until 1797, when the Republican French forces took over after vanquishing the *Serenissima Repubblica*.

²⁴ Dodwell 1819, 71.

²⁵ Nikias 2023, 407.

²⁶ Scrofani 1799, 38-39.

Tsarina Catherine the Great²⁷ (Fig. 4). He must have been the “English Nobleman” Gell alluded to in 1801 as being on the island for the far less romantic reason, that is, of spying on Lambros Katsonis, a Greek corsair in the Tsarina’s service during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1789-1792, who sheltered his flotilla and his family in Ithaca while Venetian authorities turned a blind eye²⁸.

Foreign visitors looking for antiquities were not, therefore, a complete novelty for the Ithacans when Gell set foot on the island, and there was already someone ready to ridicule his venture. That man was the Archbishop Paisios Vrettos, an inhabitant of Exoghi village. He accompanied Gell to the nearby site of Palaiokastro, where the chapel of Aghios Athanasios stood, and showed him a flight of steps, a levelled surface, and some niches, all cut in the natural rock. Vrettos claimed that in antiquity that place was a school where Homer once taught. Gell suspected that Vrettos’ story was an invention, but he nevertheless accredited the possibility and named the spot “School of Homer”²⁹. Three decades later William Mure was informed that afterwards Vrettos “often chuckled with delight over his ingenuity in outwitting the celebrated English antiquary at his own art; and still more at this creation of his fancy having been immortalized with so much pomp and circumstance in the standard work on Ithacan topography”³⁰.

In September of 1806, barely four months after Gell’s visit, the Captain of Royal Artillery William Martin Leake also set foot on Ithaca. Far from being a romantic, Leake was a disciplined, efficient and perceptive topographer, whose identification of even the most obscure ancient Greek settlement has been proven almost always correct. On Ithaca he likewise recognised the two main archaeological areas at Aetos and at Greater Stavros, and he also remarked that a considerable ancient town may have stood at Vathy. At Aetos he seems to have undertaken a one-day excavation from which he procured some Ithacan bronze coins, though he bought more

²⁷ Papadopulo Vreto 1846, 8; Gennadius Library B/GC 5520.

²⁸ Stamou 2011, 84-86, 132-133, 258, 435, 437, 440, 458. It would be interesting to note that in those years in Ithaca two newborn boys were baptized with ancient Greek names. In 1790 the newborn son of the bandit Androutsos was baptized Odysseus by the Ithacan Zannetto Zavo (Menelaidou 2013, 24). Two years later, in 1792, the son of Lambros Katsonis was baptized Lycurgus by the nephew of the bandit Androutsos (Stamou 2011, 405).

²⁹ Gell 1807, 111-113. Gell also suspected to be an invention the toponym *Melanydros* for a water spring close by the ruins of the “School of Homer”. This toponym, however, is already attested in a notary document of 1585. See Kallinikos 1991, 86, 90-91.

³⁰ Mure 1842, 77. For similar expressions of cunning cleverness among the Ionians in the 19th century, see Gallant 2002, 45-49.

and better preserved ones from local farmers. Contrary to Gell, however, he placed both the “Homeric”, and Classical capital of the island in the Greater Stavros area. He identified Aetos with Alalkomenai³¹. It seems that Leake chose not to consider the fortifications of Aetos and the Ithacan coins found there as sufficient evidence to identify it with the island’s ancient central place. And this is all the more remarkable since coinage was one of his principal aids for identifying ancient sites with cities mentioned in the texts³².

Leake published his work *Travels in Northern Greece* in 1835, and by then he must have read Gell’s monograph. Is it possible, then, that with his competing identification, Leake aimed to intentionally rebut Gell? His motive seems to have been partly for his own self-aggrandizement. It is difficult to judge Leake’s egotism through his published work. However, a more complex character emerges from Leake’s official dispatches. William Martin Leake was sent to Greece by the Foreign Office during the Napoleonic Wars on intelligence missions monitoring French advances in the Eastern Mediterranean, and his activities there produced numerous dispatches. In 1809, his correspondence with the Secretary of State George Canning, the Vice-Admiral Cuthbert Lord Collingwood, and Commodore George Eyre is, I would suggest, revealing of his personality. He was convinced he could manoeuvre them all into following his chosen course of action, namely an attack by Ali Pasha of Ioannina against the French-occupied island of Santa Maura, now Leucas. He appeared so confident that he lamented to both Collingwood and Canning that there was no British ship stationed off Prevesa ready to forward his dispatches to Malta³³. Further, he goes so far as to proffer advice on naval issues, on what he thought as better deployment of the warships of the squadron blockading Corfu then under Napoleon’s France³⁴. In the end, Collingwood’s reading of strategic issues proved to be correct and Leake was proved wrong in every respect. Ali Pasha had outwitted Leake. Ali Pasha did not, in the end, and actually had never planned an attack against Leucas³⁵. After these setbacks, Leake chose to make a name for himself solely on his Classical scholarship. Therefore, given his character, it appears Leake indeed desired to rebut

³¹ Leake 1835, 48.

³² Marsden 1864, 21-22.

³³ The National Archives, FO 78/65, Leake to Canning, No1, 12 February 1809, ff. 11r-14v; No2, 24 February 1809, ff. 15r-16r; National Maritime Museum, COL/6, No98, Leake to Collingwood, 10 April 1809, pp. 160-164.

³⁴ The National Archives, FO 78/65, Leake to Canning, No4, 13 March 1809, f. 24r.

³⁵ Mackesy 1957, 340-348.

Gell purely out of vanity. Despite the disagreement, by identifying two major ancient habitation centres at Aetos and at Greater Stavros, Gell and Leake essentially set the fieldwork agenda of the archaeological research in Ithaca for the next two centuries.

With regard to collecting of the island's antiquities, in addition to the Venetian Nani family's collection of Ithacan antiquities, more artefacts – mostly coins – had already found their way into private collections. The travellers themselves provide the information. Gell remarks that one Ithacan coin was in possession of the British vice-consul Konstantinos Zavòs, and three others were in the collections of three British gentlemen. His travelling companion, Edward Dodwell, notes that Zavòs possessed two, not one, Ithacan coins³⁶. Leake was told that a gold ring found in an ancient grave at Polis valley was bestowed to the then Governor (the *Prytano*) of the island³⁷. The turning point for the collectors of Ithacan antiquities, however, was the British take-over of the island in October 1809. Six months later, the military Governor of Leucas, Ithaca, and Cephallenia, Colonel Hudson Lowe of the Royal Corsican Rangers, a regiment of light infantry, issued orders for the construction of public roads. In Ithaca priority was given to a road connecting Vathy to the harbour of Pisaetos³⁸. The works were in progress when the new Civil and Military Commander arrived in early June of 1810: Captain Antonio Guitiera, another native of Corsica, of the Royal Corsican Rangers.

When the road works reached Aetos, antiquities begun to emerge, and it seems that Captain Guitiera received some of them³⁹. News of these finds seem to have excited the curiosity of the Governor of Cephallenia, Major Charles-Philippe de Bosset. A keen collector himself, and having already excavated several antiquities on Cephallenia, de Bosset travelled to Ithaca and undertook excavations at Aetos and at Polis valley, in the Greater Stavros area⁴⁰. He does not seem to have recorded his excavations, nor his finds. He seems to have been primarily interested in coins, subsequently publishing an essay on the coinage of Cephallenia and Ithaca. Of his collection, four Ithacan bronze coins appear and de Bosset remarks that he found them at Aetos. He adds, significantly, that the Ithacan coins could be

³⁶ Dodwell 1819, 71.

³⁷ Leake 1835, 45.

³⁸ British Library, Add MS 20186, Corbara to Lowe, 27 Aprile 1810, ff. 258r-259r.

³⁹ The spelling "Guitiera" appears in numerous documents in the Ithaca Archive bearing his signature; Lee 1849, 39.

⁴⁰ Benton 1927-1928, 113.

found solely at Aetos and none in the northern part of the island⁴¹. That was a key observation which still holds true to this day.

It is hard to overstate the impact Gell's publication of 1807 had on the archaeology of Ithaca, and Lord Byron's review of it in 1811 hits the nail on the head. With his sharp pen Byron concludes his overall positive review by remarking that: "With Homer in his pocket, and Gell on his sumpter-horse or mule, the Odyssean tourist may now make a very classical and delightful excursion; and we doubt not that the advantages accruing to the Ithacenses, from the increased number of travellers who will visit them in consequence of Mr. Gell's account of their country, will induce them to confer on that gentleman any heraldic honours which they may have to bestow, should he ever look in upon them again. *Baron Bathi* [i.e. Vathy] would be a pretty title ..."⁴² Byron was not only interested in the scholarly reception of Gell's publication, but also in its effects on the contemporary Ithacans since, as he put it bluntly, it would boost tourism for the economic benefit of the islanders. For Byron, Gell made Ithaca an international tourism brand.

No sooner had Byron's review seen publication than a group of collectors were already disembarking in the British-held Ionian islands. Zacynthus (Zante) – the headquarters of the British Ionian islands until 1814 when the French evacuated Corfu – became the shelter and the venue for the auctioning of the sculptures removed from the temple of Aphaia on Aegina and of the temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai in the Peloponnese. The removals were undertaken by the "Xenioi", a fellowship of northern Europeans passionate of ancient Greek art. They were Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, Carl Haller von Hallerstein, Jakob Linckh, Peter Oluf Brøndsted, Georg Heinrich Carl Koes, Charles Robert Cockerell, and John Foster⁴³. In November 1812 in Zacynthus, Stackelberg, Linckh, and Foster were joined by John Fiott (John Lee from 1816 onwards) and Franz Luz and decided to make an excursion to Cephallenia and Ithaca. The group arrived in Ithaca on December 23rd, except Stackelberg, who joined a week later⁴⁴. Only Fiott/Lee and Stackelberg left descriptions of their excursions, and from those texts it becomes evident that they were aware of Gell's work, as Byron had predicted, as well as of the de Bosset excavations. Fiott/Lee states clearly that he decided to excavate at Aetos

⁴¹ De Bosset 1815, 10-11, Pl. 5; Dowler 2023.

⁴² Lord Byron 1811, 380.

⁴³ Stoneman 2010, 181-182.

⁴⁴ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 70, 80.

because de Bosset and previous travellers were successful, and in the northern part of the island he examined the hill of Pilikata⁴⁵. Stackelberg mentions the Cave of the Nymphs just outside the harbour of Vathy, at Dexà bay, which is at the spot where Gell placed it, and when describing the site “School of Homer”/Aghios Athanasios, he employs the place name “School of Homer” which first appeared in Gell’s account⁴⁶.

Once on Ithaca, John Fiott/Lee and his companions requested and received Captain Guitiera’s assent to excavate. They began at Aetos, where they managed to open several undisturbed graves containing beautiful artefacts of precious metal. Back at Vathy, they displayed those finds to anyone interested, a gesture which according to Fiott/Lee was imprudent and provoked the envy of some Ithacans who reacted with protestations. Consequently, the Ithacan notables demanded from Guitiera to suspend further excavations. From then on, the dispute deteriorated into an almost personal feud between Fiott/Lee and Guitiera: orders went out prohibiting further excavations while Fiott/Lee tried to undermine Guitiera’s authority. The Ithacan landowners reacted for not being compensated for the disturbance of their land, and the issue acquired scandalous overtones. Armed guards were subsequently positioned at Aetos and Guitiera informed Fiott/Lee that he would not allow further excavations without orders from the British Government at Zacynthus. The British gentleman protested that while he was at Exoghi, Guitiera himself had gone to Aetos and resumed excavations recovering more precious artefacts in the process. Having reached an impasse, Fiott/Lee decided to quit the island but before doing so he penned an open letter, so that Guitiera could read it, to the Governor of the Ionian islands at Zacynthus, Major General George Airey, requesting an order permitting to any future traveller to excavate where he saw fit. Fiott/Lee then travelled to Leucas and afterwards he returned to Zante where he was informed that General Airey had indeed issued such an order: “... directing that travellers in future should not be prevented from excavating, provided only that they first obtained the consent of the proprietor of the land.”⁴⁷

It seems that, with this communication, Fiott/Lee aimed to humiliate Captain Guitiera in the eyes of his British commanding general. Fortunately, I have been able to trace in the island’s historical archive Airey’s response

⁴⁵ Lee 1849, 40-41. His explicit reference to Gell on page 41 might have been included in 1849 for the submission of his report for publication.

⁴⁶ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 73, 75.

⁴⁷ Lee 1849, 39-54.

order addressed to Guitiera, which suggests that Fiott/Lee was not very honest in his published account. Written in Italian and dated 8 January 1813, General Airey orders that⁴⁸: “As it is the full prerogative of the government within the territories of its jurisdiction to allow excavations to be carried out for the discovery of antiquities or for other purposes for the benefit of locals or foreigners, it is likewise its prerogative to prohibit them, and in either circumstance its orders must undoubtedly be respected and obeyed. Therefore, in response to the Official 3rd of current month, foreigners who excavate therein must comply with those orders that the government prescribes to permit, suspend and prohibit such operations, and as long as they are permitted, they are absolutely obliged to compensate the owner of that land for all damages that he may have suffered.” So, John Fiott/Lee lied.

General Airey had clearly endorsed Guitiera’s conduct and warned all future travellers to comply with his Captain’s orders. It is also clear that Fiott/Lee was not acting in good faith, a complication in want of an explanation. He contrasted his experience in Ithaca with that at Zacynthus and Leucas. When he arrived at Zacynthus from the Levant, he was delighted to be “... again amongst my countrymen, in an island under the protection of the British flag”, and he enjoyed the hospitality of the British officers. He painted the same rosy picture of the hospitality he received in Leucas by the British Colonel McCombe, who gladly facilitated his archaeological exploration⁴⁹. Therefore, I would suggest that Fiott/Lee did not expect any objection to his activities in Ithaca relying on the political weight of his being a British gentleman⁵⁰. He would certainly not accept objections by a Corsican in British pay and by the Ithacan notables. In fact, Guitiera’s subordinate, Lieutenant Franz Ludwig von Bibra, a member of an aristocratic Franconian family, defied his Captain and supported Fiott/Lee and as a consequence he was put under arrest. On the other hand, Captain Guitiera sought to defend both his authority and the interests of the Ithacan landowners.

Despite his imperialist snobbery – or, for that reason, perhaps – Fiott/Lee’s fieldwork report is very interesting as a piece of archaeological

⁴⁸ ΓΑΚ – Ιθάκης, *Αρχείο Εικοσαετίας 1797-1817*, φάκ. ΦΡ 40/16, Airey to Guitiera, 8 January 1813. Author’s translation.

⁴⁹ Lee 1849, 36, 54.

⁵⁰ This is how Thomas Smart Hughes (1820, 157) described his fellow Englishmen on Zacynthus in 1813: “... that lofty carriage and hauteur which the Englishman generally preserves, and in that distance which he interposes between himself and those whom he considers his inferiors.”

scholarship. Besides the dispute, he offers plans of the areas he investigated, describes the form of the graves, and provides a detailed catalogue of the grave goods. However, he describes in detail only the most impressive artefacts made of gold, silver and bronze, whereas the pottery is summarily accounted for. Some dexterous and effective illustrations of the most remarkable artefacts accompany the text. The catalogue is not divided into lots belonging to specific graves. He does not seem to have cared much about the human remains, nor about the treatment of the dead or positioning of the grave goods. He, however, makes a noteworthy general remark claiming that archaeological investigations were important for throwing light on the local history, although this could have been an elaboration made just prior to the publication⁵¹. Fiott/Lee's excavations seem to have been extensively reported in the Zacynthus official newspaper *Gazzetta delle Isole Jonie Liberate* in two installments⁵².

Otto Magnus von Stackelberg arrived in Ithaca a week later than Fiott/Lee, and at Vathy he met Linckh and Luz who showed him their finds from Aetos and informed him of the excitement they stirred. With Aetos off limits, he decided to try his luck at Exoghi, but when he arrived at the village he was in for a shock: "When I arrived in Oxoi [= Exoghi], an immense number of people immediately swarmed together, surrounded me, shouting wildly and always about treasure digging⁵³". He abandoned the effort, and after some days spent in leisure, he left the island.

When Stackelberg returned to Athens, he met Carl Haller von Hallerstein, the fellow "Xenios" who had not travelled to Ithaca. Stackelberg's drawings of Fiott/Lee's findings combined with William Gell's acquaintance a year earlier, fueled Hallerstein's desire to try excavating in Ithaca. In May of 1814 he was in Zacynthus, and after the conclusion of the auction of the Bassai marbles, he set sail for Ithaca together with Thomas Burgon. On May 31st they disembarked at Vathy and they immediately visited the site of Aetos. They were informed that Captain Guitiera was excavating at Stavros and went to meet him. Provided with recommendation letters from General James Campbell, who had succeeded Airey as Governor of the Ionian islands, and Colonel Richard Church, they were cordially

⁵¹ Lee 1849, 53.

⁵² Kallinikos 1991, 118-121. Kallinikos' citations seem to be wrong. He in his turn cites the Zantiot author Dinos Konomos, and perhaps Konomos' citations were wrong. The Zacynthus *Gazzetta* reported all archaeological excavations undertaken in the islands or in the mainland. In that wartime period, British dominion and archaeology went hand in hand.

⁵³ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 73, 75.

welcomed by the Governor and invited to dig next to him⁵⁴ (Fig. 5). They were disappointed after excavating only three graves containing very few artefacts, and decided to move further afield at Stavros area. They spotted a field which looked promising and agreed with the landowner for his compensation⁵⁵. Hallerstein located and excavated twelve more Classical and Hellenistic graves and Burgon several more.

Hallerstein produced an astoundingly meticulous report addressed to his financier, the Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig, accompanied by a set of illustrations of almost photographic accuracy. After relating the Stavros geographical setting, he goes on by describing the spatial arrangement of the graves, the reasons behind his decision to excavate at the chosen spot, the grave types, his excavation methodology, the burial practices, and offers a detailed catalogue of the grave goods accompanying each burial (Fig. 6). He goes as far as to attempt to interpret what he observes when he remarks that each separate burial group belonged to a discrete family, and through that he attempts to interpret the settlement pattern of the whole island; or when he assumes that multiple burials in one grave should be considered as the result of a contagious disease. Contrary to Fiott/Lee, Hallerstein showed an interest in every aspect of the archaeological record: he reports with great interest the small bronze rings found on some skeletons' feet as what remained of their sandals, and he goes as far as to state that a meticulous fieldwork could throw light on the ancient burial customs and was not just an unpleasant chore in order to recover objects of ancient art. One could arguably claim that Hallerstein's was the earliest modern archaeological fieldwork report in Greek archaeology, and well ahead of its time⁵⁶.

Captain Antonio Guitiera was recruited in the Corsican regiment probably from its formation under the command of Hudson Lowe during the wars of the French Revolution. Already an officer in 1801, he was taken prisoner at the battle of Alexandria in Egypt in 1801 while fighting on the front line⁵⁷. Promoted to Captain, he fought in the battles of Maida in 1806 and of Capri in 1808⁵⁸. He must have proven himself an able

⁵⁴ As a Captain of the Royal Corsican Rangers and Guitiera's close acquaintance, Richard Church led the British troops which conquered Ithaca in 1809, see *The London Gazette* No 16322, 1809, 1946.

⁵⁵ He also endeavoured to excavate at Aetos, but the landowners did not give their consent, Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 134.

⁵⁶ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 106-146.

⁵⁷ *The London Gazette* No 15362, 1801, 495.

⁵⁸ Knowles 1918, 166, 233.

officer both in the line of fire and in administrative duties, so that he was chosen by Lowe to replace him in the governorship of Cephallenia while he was at the siege of Leucas in March and April 1810. When Colonel Lowe established his HQ in Leucas he appointed Guitiera to the governorship of Ithaca. His first task was to construct the road connecting Vathy to Pisaetos harbour, and it is through this undertaking that he must have bumped into the archaeology of Aetos. Eventually, what must have sparked Guitiera's interest in archaeology could have been de Bosset's digging activity and the realization of the significance the ancient artefacts had for the classically educated aristocratic collectors.

Since Guitiera himself did not leave behind a record of his excavations, we must rely on indirect evidence provided by contemporary witnesses. His activities begun in earnest at Aetos in 1811 and ended at Stavros in 1814. In 1827 a catalogue of his findings was published, in which one reads that he excavated 200 graves. Their yield consisted in hundreds of coins, jewelry of astonishing quality in gold and silver, silver, bronze, and glass vessels, pottery vases, figurines in bronze and terracotta, and more than a dozen inscribed tombstones⁵⁹. Some of these were seen and illustrated by Hallerstein, but those drawings remained unpublished until 2002⁶⁰. However, a fairly representative sample of his finds was illustrated before his departure: the Ithacan Dr. Marato must have had commissioned the Corfiot sculptor and artist Paolo Prossalendi, with Guitiera's consent, to make drawings of several of his finds. Some of these were published by Hermann von Pückler-Muskau in 1841 who had seen them in the hands of Dr. Marato during his visit in Ithaca in 1836⁶¹. Several more were published as lithographs right after Prossalendi's death in 1837 (Fig. 7).

Guitiera's distressing interaction with John Fiott/Lee, earned him an unenviable infamy. He has become a hate-figure, a bogeyman of Ithacan archaeology. His contemporary English travellers and antiquarians demonised him as "semi-barbarian", ignorant, and greedy; "An Ithacan Elgin" remarked the Ithacan historian Athanasios Lekatsas⁶². He was accused of exercising an excavation monopoly for which he was not, supposedly, entitled, and for doing so irrespective of the Ithacan landowners' opposition⁶³. The most serious accusation, however, was that of melting

⁵⁹ Guitiera 1827.

⁶⁰ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 118 fig. 45, 119 fig. 46, 120 fig. 47, 137 fig. 59.

⁶¹ Prossalendi 1837; Pückler-Muskau 1841, 531-532.

⁶² Hughes 1820, 162; Goodisson 1822, 124; Lekatsas 1999, 90.

⁶³ Holland 1815, 57; Kendrick 1822, 78-79.

down silver artefacts in order to make cutlery⁶⁴. This accusation still today finds its way into the archaeological bibliography⁶⁵. But, was this really the case? Two eyewitnesses, the then adolescent Ithacan Nikolaos Karavias Grivas and the traveller Henry Holland made no mention of such an act⁶⁶. Even those British travellers who accused Guitiera do so by endorsing rumours and by stating that they were informed by others. None of them actually witnessed such an act, although most of them travelled to Ithaca in 1813 and had certainly met Captain Guitiera. The British travellers displayed a remarkable single-mindedness in trying to discredit Guitiera, who after all was “not an Englishman” as Williams notes⁶⁷. Interestingly enough, the German traveller Christian Müller accuses the British civil and military officers in general for melting gold and silver artefacts looted from ancient tombs in Ithaca and at Sami in Cephallenia in order to make cutlery. This comes as no surprise, by employing a typical rhetorical scheme a member of a nation which missed a share in precious ancient artefacts accused the other of plundering and destruction. For Müller “... no one can be astonished at this profanation of Greek antiquities by the English, who has seen what class of men the British government think proper to send out for the government of the Ionian republic!”⁶⁸.

Was Guitiera entitled for an excavation monopoly and did the Ithacans oppose his proceedings? General Airey’s orders fully authorised Guitiera to monitor excavation permits and admitted full discretion for him to monopolise excavations. That Guitiera was acting for the benefit of, and was fully supported by, the Ithacans seems highly likely both at Aetos and at Stavros. At Aetos he was prompted into action by the Ithacan landowners who resented Fiott/Lee’s neglect to compensate them. Indeed, the above-mentioned Dr. Marato, who appears to have been one of Guitiera’s closer associates, was one of the Aetos landowners. His ancestor Giacomini Pettalà Marato owned currant vineyards at Aetos already in 1758, and he also cultivated the currant field belonging to the monastery of Kathara⁶⁹. That

⁶⁴ Hughes 1820, 162; Goodisson 1822, 124; Kendrick 1822, 79; Lee 1849, 45 n. a; Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 114-115 (Hallerstein).

⁶⁵ Kalligas 1979, 48.

⁶⁶ Karavias-Grivas 1849, 7-8; Holland 1815, 56-57.

⁶⁷ Williams 1820, 196.

⁶⁸ Müller 1822, 41, 47.

⁶⁹ ΓΑΚ-Ιθάκης, *Αρχείο Βενετικής διοίκησης*, b. Giovanni Spiridion Crassan (1758–9, [III]), Register of vineyards, ff. 17r-22v (toponyms under lemma ,Α’). The Marato family was a branch of the extended Petalà family. I am indebted to Kyriaco Nikias who discovered and provided me the document.

also explains why Guitiera and the Ithacan President of the Council told Fiott/Lee that his Aetos findings were “*robba di Chiesa*, Church property”, a justification Fiott/Lee and his associates could not fully grasp⁷⁰. That Guitiera resumed excavations at that same Kathara field, with Marato’s consent, can be documented by Hallerstein’s published sketch entitled: “Gräber so in dem Weingarten, des Klosters Katharra, am Fuß von Aitos ausgegraben wurden⁷¹.” Likewise at Stavros, Hallerstein found Guitiera and his men lodged in the house of the local landowner Tzanni-Metaxa⁷². Therefore, one could assume that Guitiera excavated with the landowner’s consent and they had agreed to some sort of compensation.

Guitiera’s vilification should, I suggest, be understood in the context of imperial and colonial encounters of the British travellers and proto-archaeologists with the locals who would not accept their claim to cultural superiority and would not acquiesce to their invasive quests for antiquities. The educated British claimed that they were preserving Ithaca’s past by removing the antiquities to Britain and rescuing them from the allegedly ignorant and greedy “Mediterraneans”, who could not possibly appreciate the grandeur and legacy of ancient Greece. On the other hand, for Captain Guitiera and especially for the Ithacans it was a matter of property rights and of all the benefits they could draw from it, as General Airey’s orders clearly demonstrated. Both Guitiera and the Ithacans soon realised how desirous the westerners were in collecting antiquities – treasure hunting, more precisely – and were ready to accommodate them, but on their own terms. For them the antiquities were a lucrative commodity trade, just like the contemporary and equally lucrative currants trade⁷³. In fact, according to Hallerstein, Guitiera was hoping to sell his collection in England for 2,000 pounds sterling and if he failed, he was willing to then sell it to the Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig⁷⁴. However, we should not consider Guitiera the only individual involved in those transactions. The fact that Dr. Marato held a copy of the antiquities’ drawings long after their excavation leaves open the possibility that he would also receive a share from the value of the artefacts when sold. Perhaps that was his agreed compensation. Maybe that is why Prossalendi’s drawings were produced in the first place, as a “marketing flyer”, and Maratos was probably acting as Guitiera’s “agent”

⁷⁰ Lee 1849, 45.

⁷¹ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 117 fig. 44.

⁷² Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 112-113.

⁷³ For the currants trade in the southern Ionian islands, see Fusaro 1996; Fusaro 2015, 43-63, 124-135, 276-277, 300-354.

⁷⁴ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 102.

on the island by promoting the antiquities to any interested traveller. Even the farmers were poised to ride the wave and make a profit, by selling the random coins found in their fields to any interested traveller⁷⁵.

Clearly, the Ithacans considered the foreigners' passion for ancient artefacts silly enough to confront it with mockery, as did the Archbishop Vrettos by making fun of Gell in the case of the bogus "School of Homer". That is not to say that the Ithacans were totally indifferent to the antiquities around them. On the contrary, they publicly voiced their own attitudes towards them. When they argued with John Fiott/Lee that he had no right to disturb the ancient tombs, they claimed that his was a sacrilegious act. They added that the grave goods were property of the Church, probably because the land in which they were found belonged to the Monastery of the local patroness, the Virgin Mary of Kathara⁷⁶. Moreover, it is possible, perhaps likely, that when the Ithacans came across ancient tombs while working their land, they might have had the tendency to bestow that land to a church as a sign of piety and respect for the dead. The Ithacans would also donate antiquities from their land when they saw fit. For example, the priest of Aghios Athanasios Papa-Leondio Vretto gave William Martin Leake an ancient architectural fragment as a present⁷⁷. And as Leake himself noticed, an ancient gold ring was donated by the Ithacans to the Governor of the island.

For an observer today, it was only with Hallerstein that pure colonial treasure hunting begin to morph into modern day archaeology, albeit unexpectedly. It is a pity that Hallerstein's forgotten in the archives report waited nearly two centuries to be published. However, his findings had not passed unnoticed. In one of the earliest major works of synthesis in Greek archaeology, Stackelberg's *Die Gräber der Hellenen* published in 1837, the Ithacan archaeological record is conspicuous. Stackelberg had copied the drawings which Hallerstein had drafted of his and Lee's grave goods, and some of them appear in five of the volume's plates⁷⁸ (Fig. 8).

Meanwhile, Leake's survey was published two years earlier (1835), and Lee's report twelve years later (1849). Therefore, by the mid-19th century

⁷⁵ Leake 1835, 36; Williams 1820, 193. Tertius Kendrick claimed that he saw Ithacan antiquities on sale at Zacynthus, see Kendrick 1822, 79.

⁷⁶ Lee 1849, 52. In 2012 I was excavating some ancient graves at Stavros village in the Raftopoulos family property, when the landowner appeared in visit and she felt so uneasy by the sight that she expressed a heartfelt desire to deliver extreme unction.

⁷⁷ Leake 1835, 43.

⁷⁸ Stackelberg 1837, 41-42, 47-48, Pl. LIV, LXXII-LXXIV. Stackelberg erroneously states the Pl. LIV artefacts as coming from Cephallenia, whereas in fact they come from Grave K at Stavros. The same goes for Pl. LXXIV said to come from Athens, but in fact from Ithaca.

the archaeology of Ithaca was no more a case of casual pillaging for objects of curiosity, but had developed into a true field of archaeological research. Not only that, but one could argue that the modern field archaeology of Greece was born in Ithaca as well as in Athens. By 1850 one can observe in Ithaca the whole package of a modern archaeological research: survey, map-making, excavation, public awareness and engagement, reports in the press, controversies over superintendence, state legislation, and finally publication.

As Byron had predicted in 1811, travellers continued to arrive in Ithaca every year, and in 1842 William Mure of Caldwell bragged about the British involvement in Ithacan archaeology: "... the zeal of English classical research rescued Ithaca once more from the obscurity in which for ages it had lain"⁷⁹. In 1862 even the Prince of Wales Albert Edward (later King Edward VII) could not resist the temptation to visit a "Homeric" site, and he visited Marmarosplia, or the "Cave of Ulysses" as he notes in his diary, which was by then identified as the grotto of the Nymphs mentioned in the *Odyssey*⁸⁰. Why, then, did archaeological research not carry on in earnest, given also the fact that the island was under British control? Back in 1813, when the British rule of the Ionian islands was still provisional, the antiquities of Ithaca were considered as evidence of a cultural progress equal, or even superior, to that of the more celebrated continental regions such as Attica⁸¹. That changed after 1815, when the islands became a British Protectorate by treaty. The emerging Greek nationalism intensified as a reaction to the British Lord High Commissioner's authoritative regime, and the outbreak of the Greek Revolution of 1821 against the Ottomans sent waves of patriotic enthusiasm in the islands. The British authorities responded by a policy of denial of the islanders' history and by denigrating them "degenerate descendants" of the ancient Greeks⁸². Therefore, excavating Greek antiquities would run contrary to the official British colonial policy.

In the meantime, British military and civil officials carried on pillaging ancient tombs whenever and wherever they turned up⁸³. No further

⁷⁹ Mure 1842, 40.

⁸⁰ Royal Archives, *The Prince of Wales's Journal: 6 February – 14 June 1862*, f. 93r, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/exhibitions/cairo-to-constantinople/the-queens-gallery-buckingham-palace/the-prince-of-wales-journal-6-february-14-june-1862>; Ansted 1863, 264-265.

⁸¹ Hughes 1820, 161.

⁸² Goodisson 1822, 203; Gallant 2002, 18-24.

⁸³ Mure 1842, 81; Benton 1927-1928, 114.

recorded or published excavations, however, were carried out. On the other hand, the debate over the Homeric geography of Ithaca continued with undiminished interest amongst the travelling scholars scrutinizing the published accounts of Gell and Leake. By the end of the 19th century, two distinct parties of scholars had developed: those who by following Gell identified the ancient capital and residence of Odysseus at Aetos, and those who by following Leake identified both in the Greater Stavros area⁸⁴. All of them based their opinion on visual observations and philological criticism, without engaging in excavations. That was to change after 1864, when Ithaca, together with the other Ionian islands, united with the Kingdom of Greece.

In July 1868 Heinrich Schliemann set foot on Ithaca fascinated by its Homeric legacy⁸⁵. During his stay he met people willing to sell him antiquities which he gladly purchased: the farmers at Aetos sold him a silver coin and at Vathy the elderly captain Nikolaos Petalas Petas sold him a coin of Philip II. In the northern part of the island, at Polis Bay, he purchased a good deal of various antiquities said to come from working the land, from a ruined seaside cave and other nearby locations. Schliemann, initially a follower of Leake's theory, identified the Greater Stavros area with the capital of Odysseus. However, in his published account he had changed his mind, and by shifting to Gell's theory he concluded that Odysseus' palace must have stood just north of the Aetos mountain summit. He also undertook excavations at Aetos and seems to have found some interesting evidence with regard to the Ithacan burial customs (if one considers his account reliable). So far it is evident that Schliemann was no different than the earlier travellers and proto-archaeologists, his experiences and beliefs followed closely in their footsteps. However, he was the first to go beyond the legacy of Gell and Leake, and by using the local peoples' knowledge, he visited and reported two new archaeological sites, Polis Cave in the north and Elliniko in the south⁸⁶. From both cases it also becomes clear that by that time the Ithacans actively participated in identifying new archaeological sites and communicating that knowledge to those individuals whom they considered better qualified. Others, however, were willing to make fun of yet another foreign Homerist. Schliemann

⁸⁴ Partsch 1890, 54.

⁸⁵ Schliemann 1973, 14-78; Stillman 1888, 38-42; Lehrer, Turner 1989, 231-236; Turner 2007, 349-354, 378-386.

⁸⁶ Schliemann 1973 [1869], 46; Turner 2007, 381-382, 385. The pieces of the bronze sword Schliemann purchased at Polis may have been those published in 1993 by Kilian-Dirlmeier (1993, 173-174, Tafel 34 No 228A).

recollects an episode in which he read a passage of the Ὀδύσσεια to a village gathering, saying that at the end they all wept with emotion. Instead, the tears of his Ithacan audience were of laughter, due to what they considered a silly and amusing pronunciation of the Greek language⁸⁷.

Ten years later, in 1878, Schliemann returned to Ithaca⁸⁸. This time he returned as the founder of a whole new archaeological discipline, that of Aegean prehistory. Through his excavations at Troy and at Mycenae, he was convinced that the world described in the Homeric Epics must be identified with the Late Bronze Age, or “Mycenaean” period, and, therefore, the identification of Odysseus’ palace should be attained by locating Mycenaean architecture, artefacts, and pottery. By the initial sentences of his published account in 1881, it becomes once again clear that his original belief was that Odysseus’ palace must have stood somewhere in the Greater Stavros area. He undertook excavations in all the sites identified during his first visit on the island, except Polis Cave but including Marmarospilia, and he notes with frustration that none of them produced Mycenaean pottery. He also hastily examined the ruins of the old Venetian-period abandoned town at Perachori. A recurring remark in Schliemann’s report is the lack of sufficient “accumulation of *débris*” in every site he investigated. What he meant was that the natural rock appeared everywhere very shallow under the surface, and there were no sufficiently deep soil deposits in order to excavate deeper than the Classical depositions to reach possible Mycenaean remains. This must have been a methodological approach he must have developed at Troy, where he reached the prehistoric layers deeply buried under the Classical deposits.

In the meantime, less archaeologically ambitious but equally perceptive travellers, continued to arrive in Ithaca. Alexander Freiherr von Warsberg arrived in Ithaca in 1870 and he visited all the well-known archaeological sites⁸⁹. At Polis he was offered to purchase several antiquities found in the surrounding fields, and he was mostly impressed by two Classical glass vessels with blue and yellow colour bands. He informs us, however, that a marble sarcophagus lid was found at the Dendrinos property at Vathy, sculpted in the style of a reclining couple, together with other graves and a mosaic floor. He notes that the sarcophagus lid was transported to Athens⁹⁰. Indeed, today it lies in the storerooms of the National Archaeological

⁸⁷ Schliemann 1973 [1869], 40; Stillman 1888, 37.

⁸⁸ Schliemann 1881, 45-50.

⁸⁹ Warsberg 1887.

⁹⁰ Warsberg 1887, 69. Today that plot still belongs to the Dendrinos family, and it is rented for the County seat (Επαρχείο Ιθάκης).

Museum in Athens with registry nr. 1498⁹¹ (Fig. 9). Warsberg was also the first to notice and visit the ruins of the abandoned Venetian-period settlement around Perachori.

This period corresponded to the first time the Kingdom of Greece took notice, and actually did something for, the antiquities of Ithaca. In 1866 three terracottas from Ithaca were available for sale in Athens and were purchased by the Archaeological Society at Athens. In 1902 a group of antiquities from the Eustathios Maratos property at Aetos – of the same Maratos family we encountered above – found its way into the storerooms of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. It consists, among others, of a large part of a female statue, a bronze figurine, several small bronze artefacts, terracottas, and numerous pottery sherds⁹². It is interesting to note, however, that despite the mounting number of antiquities from Ithaca circulating here and there, no attempt was made by the Greek Archaeological Service to return and keep them on the island.

In 1870 or around, the American author and photographer William James Stillman arrived in Ithaca. He made some bold claims for Aetos: “The city whose ruins are now called the Castle of Ulysses was as unknown to the Epoch of Homer as to ours. No one in the whole action of the Odyssey goes in or out of its gates, or turns aside from his path to speak of or visit it.”; He is even bolder about Pilikata hill: “The fragments of substructure shown on the hill above and near the village of Stavros are undoubtedly medieval, and belong to the piratical city which was established here, and which was destroyed in the latter part of the sixteenth century⁹³”. Despite his highly confident assertions, Stillman was the first to get a photograph of an ancient Ithacan artefact of which he found a missing fragment: the inscription from Polis mentioning Athena and Hera first documented and published by Schliemann⁹⁴. The photograph was published in 1881 by the Italian epigraphist Domenico Comparetti, to whom Stillman had the insight to entrust⁹⁵ (Fig. 10). He had something to say about the rigorous Greek archaeological legislation of the time, which intimidated the casual farmer-finder with regard to antiquities and lead him to conceal them or melt them down if made of precious metal. He concludes by observing that

⁹¹ Kallipolitis 1958, 33, nr. 228; Kalligas 1978-1979, 68; Choremi-Spetsieri 2011, 42. I am grateful to Despoina Ignatiadou and Evridiki Leka who helped me locate the artefact in the deepest end of the bewildering storerooms and allowed me to get photographs.

⁹² Kalligas 1978-1979, 53, 55-60.

⁹³ Stillman 1888, 32, 37.

⁹⁴ Schliemann 1973 [1869], 45-46; Stillman 1888, 38.

⁹⁵ Comparetti 1880-1881, 83-85; Stillman 1888, 38-42; IG IX I² 4, 1614.

that state of affairs resulted in losing the artefacts' context: "Until Greek legislation on archaeological research is more intelligent, it will be gravely handicapped. The greater part of the value of an object is often to know where it came from, and this we never know of objects found in Greece by chance or private excavation"⁹⁶. Stillman was also sensitive enough not to entirely dismiss the locals' approach to archaeology, already informed, however vaguely, by the Homeric text, but he tried to comprehend it: "The attribution of the particular spot we visited as the garden of Laertes is doubtless due to the reading of the *Odyssey*, and, like the location of the "Castle of Ulysses" on Aetos, arose from a popular rendering of the story as handed down by literature and converted into legend, which is located wherever the crude antiquarianism of the people judges best"⁹⁷.

Another eminent tourist, the Austrian Archduke Ludwig Salvator visited Ithaca for several consecutive years at the turn of the 20th century. He followed the usual archaeological itineraries and noticed the places where excavations had been carried out but not reported in detail. He was equally interested in the contemporary island and its people, and he did not fail to notice the shifting attitudes of the Ithacans towards the island's archaeological record, the patriotism attached to it and the public awareness of the debates surrounding the search for Odysseus. In the Apostolata neighbourhood of Stavros village he visited the physician Panos Raftopoulos and saw his collection of antiquities⁹⁸ (Fig. 11). He also made the acquaintance of an old man nicknamed "the Archaeologist", who was convinced that he knew where the palace and tomb of Odysseus were and he was only waiting to meet the right person to reveal his secret, and by digging together to reveal the buried glories. When Salvator asked him if he really believed in the existence of Odysseus' palace and tomb, he answered: "Yes, sir! How can I not believe in it when everyone has been putting it into my head for decades?"⁹⁹.

In the above instances regarding the collector Raftopoulos and the peasant "archaeologist", one can, I suggest, see that all Ithacans had by then fully adopted the western ideal of Hellenism in its Homeric aspect. From vendors of antiquities, the Ithacans had by the end of the 19th century turned into collectors, while others decided to bring their finds to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Even the peasants

⁹⁶ Stillman 1888, 41-42.

⁹⁷ Stillman 1888, 46.

⁹⁸ Salvator 1905, 166-167.

⁹⁹ Salvator 1905, 295-296.

were educated enough to identify what the professional archaeologists would consider important. However, something important was missing, something that would authenticate indisputably the island as the home of Odysseus: that is, the Mycenaean buildings and artefacts to provide the tangible, material landmarks. The quest for Odysseus' palace and tomb was on, this time with a clearly imagined materiality, the same as that revealed at Mycenae and Tyrins, Odysseus had to be "Mycenaean". In the case of the peasant "Archaeologist", one could also perceive an attitude that assumes chiliastic overtones: a saviour complex by the expectations of future felicity by excavating and revealing the supposedly well-concealed palace and tomb of Odysseus.

In 1890 Schliemann together with Wilhelm Dörpfeld had finalized a plan for intensive excavations in Ithaca, but the untimely passing of the former halted these proceedings. However, a new patron emerged, the Dutchman Adriaan Goekoop, who was willing to finance Dörpfeld to carry out further excavations in Ithaca¹⁰⁰. Dörpfeld spent just one week excavating the already identified sites in the northern part of the island only (Fig. 12). His research question was clear: "Our excavations were only intended to establish whether remains of the Mycenaean period had really been preserved at the place where renowned scholars believed the palace of Odysseus to be located according to the statements of the Epic." Mycenaean remains were, naturally, Dörpfeld's key objective and in every place he excavated he explicitly stated that he did not find any. At Aetos he refused to even try excavating, because: "... according to Homer's statements, the city of Ithaca could not possibly have been situated here." It becomes evident that for Dörpfeld the literary context and Mycenaean remains had to go necessarily hand in hand, they had to coincide and the latter would have been the material depiction of the former. Obviously, he had already formulated the idea that the Homeric descriptions fitted better the neighbouring island of Leucas. But what he did not mention is that his former patron, Heinrich Schliemann, relied heavily on Pausanias and Strabo, not only Homer. Unfortunately for Dörpfeld, Pausanias had written nothing about Ithaca (or Leucas for that matter), and Strabo had not visited the island. In the literary context, lack of written sources implied lack of undeniable discoveries. To state his reasoning better, Dörpfeld himself remarks that Mycenaean remains could be expected "... at the best harbour and in the largest plain of the island near the present capital Vathy." Since, however, "... the places where I expect to find them do not correspond to

¹⁰⁰ Salvator 1905, 301-304; Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 190-191.

Homer's information about the location of the city of Ithaca", he decided instead to look for it on Leucas.

Ludwig Salvator was a careful observer and a brilliant intellectual who could not hide his frustration with regard to Dörpfeld's approach¹⁰¹. He asked: "...how could the identity of a settlement with the Homeric *polis* be deduced from an epoch without inscriptions? What right would one have to call a larger building, if one were to come to light, the palace of Odysseus?" He attacked the then dominant text-driven approach head on and in a few words stressed its severe limitations. Further, he also questioned the notion that Ithaca's archaeological record should have been expected to match exactly that of the Mycenaean centres in the Argolid. For that reason, he formulated a theory innovative for his time: "Perhaps the dwelling of the Homeric shepherd-kings was entirely simple – and we have confirmation of this in Homer himself when we read Telemachus' astonishment at the richness of other palaces – perhaps made largely of wood, perhaps all the splendour of which the poet tells us was only a creation of his imagination. I have often thought that these little kings of the ancient world were about what the present kings of many islands of the South Seas are: Chiefs who, through their means, were given a certain supremacy over their neighbours until they finally grew into rulers, their kings." This is a remarkable approach, one that could also be considered anti-colonial. Schliemann's and Dörpfeld's approach did not consider seriously the possible local variations, but the assumption was that a homogeneous Mycenaean cultural package must have existed throughout the Greek world.

Goekoop the patron seems not to have been satisfied with Dörpfeld's half-hearted effort in Ithaca and looked for a replacement. In 1903 he approached a compatriot of his, the young Wilhelm Vollgraff, who undertook excavations in Ithaca for four months in 1904¹⁰². Contrary to Schliemann and Dörpfeld, Vollgraff's starting point was not the Epic, but the landscape of the island. He identified three major settlement chambers with sufficient cultivable land to sustain a human community: the coastal plain of Vathy harbour, Aetos, and the Greater Stavros area. For the first time Vathy was considered a promising archaeological ground, even if Vollgraff records the hearsay that ancient walls had never been discovered there. He, however, proceeded by excavating some trenches in the plain behind the town, but the results were disappointing. At Marmarosilia he resumed Schliemann's excavations recovering some Greek and Roman pottery and

¹⁰¹ Salvator 1905, 295.

¹⁰² Vollgraff 1904; 1905.

lamps, while he fully exposed a rock-hewn altar. At Aetos around the chapel of Saint George he discovered a votive deposit of terracottas, probably a *bothros*, and a cluster of three Archaic pithos burials¹⁰³. He then moved to the northern part of the island and at Polis Cave he brought to light the first ever recorded Mycenaean pottery sherds on the island, whereas over at Pilikata hill he discovered pottery which he dated to a pre-Mycenaean period.

Vollgraff focused his main effort, however, at the so-called “School of Homer”. There he fully uncovered the monumental building which proved to be a tower, as well as remains of houses, a monumental rectangular precinct wall, and a roughly circular stone-built water cistern. Vollgraff also includes in his publication a descriptive catalogue of a selection of his finds, the first to do it after Fiott/Lee and Hallerstein, and he also accompanied it with photographs. In both of his reports Vollgraff never mentions the names of Homer and Odysseus, not even once. At the end, he records his disappointment that the soil deposits on the island are too shallow to allow for further discoveries, following in this sense Schliemann’s theory and the then dominant fieldwork methodological approach: that is, long and deep trenches to reach the Mycenaean deposits below more recent depositions or architectural remains. His final observation regarding the totality of Ithaca’s archaeological record was highly relevant for the prospect of Ithacan archaeology: “... it could be that their historical value has been relatively great for an island that lacks written sources for its history and whose very ancient name has recently been disputed”¹⁰⁴.

Vollgraff also happened to chronicle the second “Homeric” deception recorded in Ithaca, after that of the “School of Homer”, this time embellished with Mycenaean embroidery. Emil Reisch had published in 1896 the notice that at the “School of Homer” was found a “column capital”, which the above-mentioned physician and antiquities collector Panos Raftopoulos insisted and publicly declared in the newspapers was Mycenaean¹⁰⁵. Initially Vollgraff seems to have fallen for it, but after tracing another similar one in a neighbouring vineyard he definitively concluded that they were fragments of ordinary millstones from ancient oil presses¹⁰⁶. By this time the fully western Hellenised Ithacans were telling tall tales about supposed Mycenaean artefacts, while the young western archaeologist retained the

¹⁰³ Vollgraff 1905, 147.

¹⁰⁴ Vollgraff 1905, 163.

¹⁰⁵ Reisch 1896, 156; Paizis-Danias 2011, 502-504.

¹⁰⁶ Vollgraff 1904, 437-438; 1905, 160-163.

required circumspection. That role reversal should also be understood in the context of Dörpfeld's theory of Leucas as the true Homeric Ithaca, a supposition by an eminent scholar which was perceived as a direct affront to the Ithacans' local identity and patriotism. It could not go unanswered and every contemporary Ithacan fully backed Raftopoulos' effort to rebut it.

Goekoop lost interest in Ithaca since he formed the opinion that Cephallenia was the "Homeric Ithaca", and it was not until the late 1920s that new patrons appeared interested in financing excavations to prove once and for all the Homeric identity of Ithaca. The Athenian architect Philippos Oikonomou, together with the Ithacans Konstantinos Petalas and Antonios Stathatos financed excavations in the southern part of the island between 1929 and 1932, mostly around Vathy where he believed the palace of Odysseus was located¹⁰⁷. The excavations were carried out by the archaeologist Nikolaos Kyparissis, himself having strong family bonds in Ithaca¹⁰⁸. Their reports, published in the Athenian and the Ithacan press, were monuments to grandiose delusion. They were convinced that they had located Odysseus's palace on a hill to the south-east of Vathy and they telegraphed accordingly to the Greek Archaeological Service. At that point the Archaeological Service was fully enchanted and, through the Greek Ambassador in UK, went as far as to publish the story in the London *Times*. Wilhelm Dörpfeld warned of a hoax and the Archaeological Service was deeply embarrassed. Therefore, a committee of three high-ranking Greek archaeologists was sent to Ithaca for inspection: Kourouniotis, Oikonomos and Orlandos¹⁰⁹. They suspended Kyparissis' excavations and advised that he should concentrate his effort in locating ancient cemeteries.

To that end a new Ithacan patron appeared, Antonios Lekatsas, who granted Kyparissis a large sum of money. Once more Kyparissis pompously declared in the newspapers that he had located an extensive Mycenaean cemetery at Palaiochora, the site of the Venetian-period abandoned settlement outside Perachori. Since, however, he could not substantiate his false claims with actual Mycenaean artefacts, he stated that all of the 15 graves he excavated were completely and carefully looted. He proved to be so unscrupulous to even insinuate that the looter must have been none other than Captain Guitiera. He went on to declare that he had located a "strong Mycenaean citadel" at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer, and he identified as Mycenaean tholos tombs what others, "erudite local

¹⁰⁷ Kyparissis 1931a; 1931b; 1932; Mousouris, Kouvaras 1931; Oikonomou 1938.

¹⁰⁸ Paizis-Danias 2011, 526 n. 274.

¹⁰⁹ Director of the Greek Archaeological Service, director of the National Archaeological Museum, and director of the Restoration Service, respectively.

gentlemen” and “sage researchers and archaeologists”, those days and in the past recognised as ancient wells¹¹⁰. In the end the ancient wells proved to be ancient wells, the “strong Mycenaean citadel” never materialised, and his efforts ended in ignominy. Money-wise, however, it must have been a lucrative enterprise. This was the first time an opportunistic archaeologist exploited the candid yearning of the Ithacan people to affirm their recently and repeatedly disputed Odyssean identity for personal gain. It would not be the last.

In that period when emotions were running high, the British gentleman Sir James Rennell Rodd appeared as the patron of a British archaeological project. The project’s aim was once again purely Homeric – and anti-Dörpfeld – and his interpretation of the Epic led him to believe that Odysseus’ palace was located at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer¹¹¹. Despite some initial misunderstandings and hesitations, an archaeological team was formed under the direction of Walter Heurtley and work begun in earnest in 1930¹¹². The project profited greatly by Vollgraff’s excavation diaries which he readily provided. The British mission excavated almost exactly the same sites formerly tested by Vollgraff¹¹³. In fact, the British concentrated their efforts on the well-established archaeological zones of Aetos and Greater Stavros as had been identified by Gell and Leake. This time, however, a team of experienced archaeologists was available to assist the director and explore several locations at the same time. The project continued for the best part of the decade up until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Heurtley appeared confident that a Mycenaean palace stood on top of Pilikata hill, at short distance to the north of Stavros village. Despite the scant Mycenaean remains, in fact no more than a few pottery sherds, as a former military man Heurtley recognised the locality’s inherent military characteristics as ideal for a citadel. Extensive retaining walls built with large stones surround the hill, and in every instance the excavations proved their date of construction in the Early Bronze Age (Early Helladic period). Heurtley believed that pottery of the Early Helladic style continued to be produced down to the Late Helladic period and the lack of a Mycenaean palace he explained through a combination of shallow deposits, levelling of the surface in subsequent times, a “provincial” local Mycenaean culture

¹¹⁰ Kyparissis 1932.

¹¹¹ Rennell 1932-1933; Waterhouse 1996, 301.

¹¹² See Morgan, *A century of navigation*, forthcoming; Morgan, *From Macedonia to Ithaca*, forthcoming, for a fascinating account of those opening moves.

¹¹³ Heurtley 1939-1940, 1.

and a construction made largely of wood¹¹⁴. His arguments for the lack of a Mycenaean palatial edifice follow those made by the previous excavators, Schliemann, Dörpfeld, and Vollgraff, and the “provincial” argument echoes Ludwig Salvator’s theory¹¹⁵.

In 1930 Sylvia Benton undertook excavations at the seaside Polis Cave. The situation there was very demanding since the ancient deposits were buried under a huge heap of large boulders and soil. Not only that, but the excavation had to be carried out below the sea level. Extreme conditions required extreme measures. The boulders were removed with the help of explosives, followed by extensive damming with cement bags, and the constant employment of a high-capacity water pump¹¹⁶. The subsequent excavations revealed rich in finds deposits ranging from the Early Bronze Age (or even from the Neolithic) to Imperial Roman times¹¹⁷. The site stratification was heavily disturbed and difficult to disentangle and, therefore, the nature of the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age activity is not clear. Benton identified two major events of space organization: what she considered a pavement dated in the 6th century BC, and the construction of a retaining wall with a step in the late 4th century BC¹¹⁸. A cult seems to have been established in the Early Iron Age most prominently represented by the fragments of 14 bronze Geometric tripod-cauldrons. Together with a clay mask sherd inscribed with a dedication to Odysseus: ΕΥΧΗΝ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙ, dated in the 2nd century BC¹¹⁹, these were perhaps the most spectacular findings of the project, those that still today are considered with extreme pride by the Ithacans for their apparent associations with the Homeric narrative and Odysseus. The cult of the Nymphs in the Hellenistic period was finally proven with epigraphic evidence.

At Aetos, Heurtley and Benton investigated an area roughly the size of a basketball court immediately to the south of Saint George Chapel, and came across rich depositions containing pottery and other artefacts dating from the Late Bronze Age to the Orientalizing and later¹²⁰. The depositions were particularly rich in Protogeometric, Geometric, and Orientalizing

¹¹⁴ Rennell 1932-1933, 16-17; Heurtley 1939-1940, 8-9.

¹¹⁵ Whether or not Heurtley had read Salvator’s book on Ithaca, I cannot say. Catherine Morgan, who has thoroughly studied Heurtley’s career, informs me that almost certainly he had not read it.

¹¹⁶ Heurtley 1932a, 3; Benton 1934-1935, 47.

¹¹⁷ Benton 1934-1935a; 1934-1935b; 1938-1939; Deoudi 2008; Morgan, Hayward 2021.

¹¹⁸ Benton 1934-1935a, 51-54.

¹¹⁹ IG IX I² 4, 1615.

¹²⁰ Heurtley, Lorimer 1932-1933; Heurtley, Robertson 1948; Benton 1953.

pottery, and complemented by dozens of small votives in bronze, ivory, and other materials. The subsequent study of pottery revealed a thriving local pottery production, capable also of imitating Corinthian products. The whole assemblage appears votive and ritual in character which had been formed over an extended period of time and associated with a nearby sanctuary, whose exact whereabouts remain somewhat unclear. Pottery later than Archaic has not been adequately published and, therefore, the date of the assemblage formation remains uncertain. Heurtley also explored a square tower in the middle of Aetos saddle and established a date in the 4th century BC¹²¹. He also undertook an exploration at the north-western extremity of Pisaetos beach where he excavated a polygonal wall roughly 20 metres long perpendicular to the sea shore dating in the 4th-3rd century BC, and a circular cave-like depression in the natural rock containing, among others, some Mycenaean pottery¹²².

Returning to the Greater Stavros area, the British mission explored the surrounding of the tower and a subterranean spring-chamber at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer. Nothing was able to be dated before the 3rd century BC and further excavations were postponed¹²³. At the western slope of Polis Valley, at a site called Tris Langades, Sylvia Benton partially excavated a Mycenaean settlement. Parts of four houses were revealed, one rectangular and three apsidal, as well as Mycenaean pottery dating from the Late Helladic IIB to the Late Helladic IIIB period¹²⁴. A considerable amount of handmade Late Bronze Age pottery was also recovered. At the village of Stavros proper came to light a long curvilinear “substantial wall of undetermined date which crossed the ridge”, or “probably of the 4th century BC”, and “a number of tile-graves grouped on the northern outskirts” of the village at a place called Aghios Elias¹²⁵. It seems that those tile-graves did not contain any datable grave good since none is mentioned.

At the south-western outskirts of Stavros, at the road junction leading south towards Polis beach, 15 Classical and Early Hellenistic graves were excavated, 14 tile graves and one simple burial, all dug into the natural

¹²¹ Heurtley 1939-1940, Pl. 5B.

¹²² Heurtley 1932b, 2; Rennell 1932-1933, 20; Heurtley 1939-1940, Pl. 5A. Those two features are easily traceable today, although rather concealed in the scrub. I would dare to suggest that Heurtley implied, or wished for, that there might have been a sea side “cavern” of the “Odyssean” period at Pisaetos, although force majeure did not allow him to carry on this research.

¹²³ Heurtley 1931a, 20-21; 1931c, 5; 1939-1940, 2.

¹²⁴ Benton, Waterhouse 1973; Mountjoy 1999, 469.

¹²⁵ Heurtley 1931a, 21; 1931c, 5; 1939-1940, 3.

rock and among heavily disturbed Bronze Age depositions¹²⁶. Two grave clusters were identified, each consisting of four graves roughly parallel to each other, from east to west, or from north-west to south-east. Some interesting burial customs were observed: “besides a complete skeleton an extra skull” in Grave XV, and “half a crater containing bones, which was found near by” the Grave IX which in itself contained three skeletons, scattered bones and nine more skulls. The most prominent grave offerings were two complete bronze high-handled cups, fragments of a third, a complete bronze skyphos¹²⁷, and part of a bronze mirror-case. At the eastern edge of the excavated area, part of a straight wall running from north to south with two cross-walls to the east. This structure was dated prior to the early fifth-century BC. Apparently, Sylvia Benton had bumped into the general area of the cemetery in which Guitiera and Hallerstein had excavated, and as a result their findings were comparable. Naturally, both Benton and Waterhouse were unaware of Hallerstein’s excavation, although they may have had a suspicion or two of earlier excavations, especially when citing Pl. IV in Stackelberg’s *Die Gräber der Hellenen*, where, as we saw above, the objects illustrated were erroneously supposed to have come from Cephallenia¹²⁸.

It would be hard to understate the impact the 1930s British Mission led by Heurtley had in the archaeology of Ithaca. The British publications remain a reference point for any scholar interested in Ithaca. With regard to their mission statement, that is, the elucidation of the so-called “Homeric question”, their contribution has been decisive. They demonstrated that two key-sites on the island, Aetos and Polis Cave, present continuous and intensive activity from the Late Bronze Age to the Archaic period, the latter site with direct reference to Homer’s Odysseus. It must also be stated that the British Mission was also firmly embedded in the theoretical milieu of its time. Its approach to interpretation was cultural-historical and every significant change in pottery was explained by means of migration of peoples¹²⁹. Sylvia Benton and Helen Waterhouse suggested that a Corinthian colony was established in the Greater Stavros area, although this interpretation might have been an overstretch of an underlying

¹²⁶ Waterhouse 1952.

¹²⁷ Benton 1938-1939, 29; Kalligas 1978-1979, 67, Pl. 26, fig. 26.

¹²⁸ Waterhouse 1952, 233 n. 15.

¹²⁹ Heurtley 1934-1935, 40-43; Heurtley, Robertson 1948, 122-124; Waterhouse 1996, 313; Coldstream 2003, 187, 242. Coldstream (2003, 190 n. 87) doubts that Aetos was a permanent Corinthian settlement or colony. Kalligas (1978-1979, 61) accepted the theory of Ithaca as a Corinthian colony.

assumption that North and South of the island were somehow different, but not in a very well-defined way¹³⁰.

In 1931, in the wake of the first successful season of the British excavations, the Ithacans realized that the island had an obvious shortcoming: there was not a museum to store, protect, and display the archaeological finds. Tourists had always been arriving in Ithaca, yet there was not any local institution to curate the island's archaeological record. The archaeological finds of the past excavations were all transported to Athens. Other notices of chance findings from 1913 drawn from the Ithacan Constabulary archive, report pottery at the village of Aghioi Saranta in northern Ithaca; the pottery and a metallic object were transferred to Argostoli museum in Cephallenia never to return home¹³¹. Therefore, the Ithacans themselves took the initiative to erect two museums, one at Vathy and the other at Pilikata. At Vathy a storeroom belonging to the Maratos family was made available, and a room in the Stathatos High School was employed as a temporary museum¹³². It was that temporary museum that King George II visited in May 1936 together with the Ithacan-born Prime Minister (later Dictator) Ioannis Metaxas, and the pair were received by Sylvia Benton and Martin Robertson¹³³. By the late 1930s, the Ithacans were confident and optimistic with regard to the archaeology of the island. That was not to last long.

Right after the Second World War, and the following Greek Civil War, a decade of devastation and abject poverty fell over the whole country, new interest was shown in the archaeology of Ithaca. This was from the well-known Cephallenian archaeologist Spyridon Marinatos. In 1951 he published a paper in a periodical issue dedicated to Ithaca in which he recounts the following episode: in 1931 when Kyparissis sent the telegram announcing he is about to discover the palace of Odysseus, he travelled to Ithaca to check for himself. He was astonished, however, not by Kyparissis' hyperbole, but by the fact that that same telegram was intercepted by a French cruise ship which, by the desire of her tourist passengers changed her course and reached Ithaca¹³⁴. One of those French tourists was the

¹³⁰ Benton 1938-1939, 22; Waterhouse 1952, 242.

¹³¹ *Αρχαίο Χωροφυλακής Ιθάκης*, Αρ. πρ.: 2344, 06/09/1913.

¹³² Heurtley 1939-1940, 4; Paizis-Danias 2011, 799-841.

¹³³ ΗΧΩ. 'Όργανον επικοινωνίας και αλληλεγγύης των απανταχού Επανησίων, nr. 45-46, Μάιος-Ιούνιος 1936, 6-7.

¹³⁴ Marinatos 1951.

famous Byzantinist Charles Diehl¹³⁵. Marinatos was unmistakably piqued, and probably felt humiliated, by the fact that an eminent visitor visited Kyparissis' excavations in Ithaca and not his own in Cephallenia¹³⁶. Marinatos appeared to realise the fascination and drawing power that Ithaca and Odysseus attained to the wider public of European tourists: Ithaca was after all already an international tourism brand. Therefore, in 1951, Marinatos sought to exploit Ithaca's brand for the financial benefit of his native Cephallenia.

In that 1951 paper of his, entitled *Ithaca-Cephalonia: A Geographical, Historical, and Archaeological Brotherhood*, he outlines his mission. He openly admits that the British excavations resolved once and for all the issue of Ithaca's identity and remarked that the island "will not lose its touristic future". Contrary to the title of his paper, his arguments are pure mythological fads: "The only thing we can *scientifically* claim and *indeed prove*, is that Cephallenia and Ithaca were closely connected to each other even in the realm of the *myths*, and that none of them can be considered separately not even in the Homeric poetry" (my italics); "[...] the Cephalonians took over Cephalonia [...] from there her *little sister* Ithaca was *colonised*" (my italics); "At least one ancient tradition tells us that Ithacus and Neritus were Cephalonians (Acusilaus)". He went on to comment that Odysseus' subjects were collectively called "Cephalonians" and his kingdom had its most flourishing community – a Mycenaean one, for Marinatos – in Cephallenia. Therefore, according to Marinatos, Cephallenia could equally claim to be Odysseus' homeland. He goes on to claim that Ithaca and Cephallenia had always been twinned in their present and past historical trajectories "like two Siamese twins". And he concludes: "Let Greece and her *tourism* be able to make good use of this island's tradition, of *both islands*, the ships of which still today scour the seas, as once did the flotilla of the "much-travelled Odysseus" (my italics). Marinatos' line of reasoning is based purely on mythology, not in history, nor in archaeology, and his attitude towards Ithaca is markedly colonial. The portrayal of Ithaca as a "little sister" is a pure colonial trope: treating a group of people as childlike and puerile has always been a behaviour calculated to keep the colonized subordinated to the dominant colonist. Moreover, Marinatos misrepresents

¹³⁵ Mousouris, Kouvaras 1931. The local newspapers also reported that 400 more French tourists arrived in Ithaca in 1931, all members of the Les Budés publishing house. See Paizis-Danias 2011, 824.

¹³⁶ In those same years Marinatos was undertaking large scale excavations in Cephallenia, abundantly financed by the Goekoop family, with the aim of finding "Homeric Ithaca", see Marinatos 1932; 1933.

Ithaca's past, and by doing so, he denies the Ithacans their place in history and their distinct identity. These are all figures of speech employed by the British colonists in the 19th century vis-à-vis the Ionian islanders. He also arbitrarily retrojects the administrative situation of Ithaca in 1951 into antiquity, thus inventing an imaginary past for a hypothetical and deceiving "twinning" of Ithaca with Cephallenia that never was.

Marinatos' mission today appears cynical and unscrupulously opportunistic. He aimed at a particular target group: not to the international scholarly community, but to the incipient phenomenon of modern international tourism attracted by the brand names of Ithaca and Odysseus. It is arguable that for Marinatos, Cephallenia was bound to draw economic benefit from Ithaca's brand. At that time, who could argue with him? Marinatos was the toast of the town, a professor of archaeology, part of the social elite under a Greek authoritarian regime in a society emerging from a bloody civil war (later on, under the Dictatorship of 1967-1974, he became the Director of the Greek Archaeological service), and social dissent could land the dissenter in the concentration camp of Makronisos for "re-education"¹³⁷. It was not by chance that 1951 was the year in which the "Xenia" hotel program was initiated throughout Greece: a state-sponsored program to improve tourism infrastructure. Cephallenia was destined to obtain two such hotel facilities, one at Argostoli (the island's capital) and another one at Assos; none were assigned to Ithaca. Marinatos' paper and the devastating Ionian Islands earthquakes of 1953, saw Cephallenia receive renewed archaeological attention. Excavations were carried out at Skala and at Sami with the intention of creating tourist attractions¹³⁸. At the same time, a new museum was built at Argostoli, displaying a large part of Marinatos' Mycenaean finds from Cephallenia. Preferential funding and employees' appointments followed.

For Ithaca, however, a long period of archaeological marginalisation had just begun. Fortunately, the museum at Pilikata survived the 1953 earthquakes, but it only reopened to the public in 1962¹³⁹. At Vathy, the Stathatos High School was badly damaged and was eventually demolished, many artefacts lost forever¹⁴⁰. Notwithstanding the persistent pleas by the Ithacans, the construction of a new museum only began in 1961 at a locality called Valtos [= swamp] because it is actually a swamp, the

¹³⁷ For Marinatos' political outlook see Hamilakis 2007, 169-173, 198-199, 214.

¹³⁸ Kallipolitis 1959; 1960; 1963; Marinatos 1964.

¹³⁹ Paizis-Danias 2011, 850-851.

¹⁴⁰ Benton 1953, 361.

backfilled estuary of Ithaca's longest and largest natural watercourse. By 1965 the construction was concluded, but the opening to the public had to wait a further twelve more years until 1977 and it only occurred unenthusiastically, under the pressing demand of the Ithacans and the tourist agents¹⁴¹. By then, the effects of the island's humidity, combined with the swampy conditions, were clearly visible eroding the building's infrastructure. Today the museum ground is still subject to flooding in each rainy season. As soon as the new museum opened its gates in 1977, the Greek Archaeological Service had the intention, without consulting with the local community, to close down the Pilikata museum and transfer all the finds to Vathy. The northern Ithacans were justifiably outraged; they reacted vigorously by gathering around the museum and by blocking the transportation. In the end the relocation was aborted¹⁴². The northern Ithacans had another important reason to be vexed. Sometime after the 1953 earthquakes, the bronze tripod-cauldrons from the Polis sanctuary were taken away, supposedly for restoration¹⁴³. After some decades of silence regarding their whereabouts or status, they reappeared in the early 1990s and today can be seen in the Pilikata museum.

Despite the highly successful British excavations some 50 years before, the Greek Archaeological Service moved at a remarkably slow snail's pace bordering on neglect, with regard to the archaeology of Ithaca. Aetos was only scheduled as an archaeological zone as late as 1992, followed two years later by the Greater Stavros zone, while inexplicably excluding Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer site. At that time, and today, no archaeologist, permanent or in fixed-term contract, has been stationed on Ithaca and, interestingly enough, Sylvia Benton functioned as a "parallel" archaeological service¹⁴⁴. When she retired to Scotland in 1970, no archaeologist remained on the island¹⁴⁵. This is all the more puzzling since from the 1970s onwards economic growth and urban renewal with hundreds of construction sites appeared every year removing tons after

¹⁴¹ For the history behind the erection of the Vathy museum, which the locals called "the ghost museum", and the debate surrounding it see Petropoulos 2007; Paizis-Danias 2011, 845-858.

¹⁴² With contemptuous neo-colonial attitude Petropoulos describes the locals' indignation as "foolish insular ebullition", see Petropoulos 2007, 86.

¹⁴³ Paizis-Danias 2011, 586-587.

¹⁴⁴ Morgan, *From Macedonia to Ithaca*, forthcoming.

¹⁴⁵ Even the ABSA volumes with relevance for Ithaca which were left by Benton for the Vathy museum library were transferred to Patras, the seat of the then competent 6th Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities.

tons of soil. It seems awkward to a today's observer that no antiquities were unearthed from the 1970s to the early 2000s. At the same time, from those same years onwards, as it appeared in the successive volumes of the *Archaialogikon Deltion* (the annual proceedings of the Greek Archaeological Service), in neighbouring Cephallenia and Leucas rescue fieldwork has been the driving force behind the vastly increased archaeological record. The earliest rescue excavations carried out in Ithaca were reported as late as 2001 in a locally published volume¹⁴⁶. It was as if the successful British excavations condemned Ithaca to an archaeological dormancy; as if the Greek Archaeological Service decided that enough had been done, and further commitment was, for some unknown reason, disagreeable.

Ithaca, however, never lost its appeal to ambitious archaeologists. Thus, in the early 1980s, a mission of Washington University of Saint Louis under the direction of Professor Sarantis Symeonoglou begun fieldwork and research at Aetos. With much help from the newly elected Mayor of Ithaca Spiros Arsenis, who had a very clear idea of the connection between the figure of Odysseus and the tourism industry, Symeonoglou's aim was to locate the Mycenaean town and Odysseus' palace¹⁴⁷. In his mission statement he declared that he planned to achieve his goal "by the study of the ancient written sources and with the aid of the archaeological fieldwork." He chose Aetos because, as he remarked, it presented continuous habitation activity from the Late Bronze Age to Roman times.

From 1984 to 1992 he excavated numerous trenches but failed to locate a Mycenaean palace or town. He has not yet fully published his work. However, his preliminary reports reveal that important new archaeological evidence came to light¹⁴⁸. The habitation history of Aetos was pushed backwards into the Late Helladic IIIA period; considerable new deposits of Protogeometric and Geometric pottery were excavated; numerous houses of the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic times were located and partially excavated; and several fragments of ancient tombstones were collected. Moreover, he documented for the first time the habitation of Aetos in the Middle Byzantine period. Symeonoglou's team also made the most up-to-date and detailed topographical map of the Aetos fortifications and of the architectural remains uncovered by the excavations¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁶ Basakos, Paschalidis 2001. Only Zacynthus presents a similar state of affairs where, despite the exploding commercial development, rescue archaeology is effectively non-existent.

¹⁴⁷ Symeonoglou 1986a.

¹⁴⁸ Symeonoglou 1984; 1985; 1986b; 1989; 1990; 1992; 1995.

¹⁴⁹ Perhaps it would be interesting to note that the Greek Archaeological Service has never made any topographical map of any archaeological site in Ithaca.

It would be hard to understate the importance of some of Symeonoglou's finds in relation to the identity of both the ancient and contemporary Ithacans. He found more than a dozen Ithacan coins confirming that they can be found exclusively at Aetos and, moreover, they were recovered and recorded for the first time in their archaeological context. Their dates ranged from the 4th to 2nd-1st century BC. What is more, he recovered a fragmentary tombstone bearing the name Πράυλος, a name which also appears on the Magnesia-on-the-Maiandros inscription as the father of Ἰγέρτας. If not the latter's father, he must have been a member of the same prominent Ithacan family, as John Fossey convincingly argues¹⁵⁰. Thus, Symeonoglou's project confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that Ithaca's ancient urban centre stood at Aetos.

With the "Mycenaean palace" and town at Aetos remaining as elusive as ever, after 1992 Symeonoglou concentrated his efforts in the cave of Marmarospilia, on a mountain slope above and west of Vathy. Apparently, his aspiration was to match the British success at Polis "cave" with an equally or even more spectacular archaeological outcome, perhaps by an inscription bearing the name of Odysseus or Late Bronze Age artefacts. He excavated the cave's deposits deeper than anyone previously and confirmed that it was a sanctuary of the Nymphs in the Hellenistic and Roman periods by the numerous inscribed votives. However, by removing stalactites from the cave's interior and by using them as ornamentation for landscaping its exterior, he clearly exceeded his authority granted by his permit, which, after a public outrage, was revoked.

Symeonoglou's highly contentious conduct coincided with a startling public announcement in the early 1990s that in neighbouring Cephallenia was discovered "the tomb of Odysseus"¹⁵¹. The Ithacans were in a state of shock, especially since the exaggerated story was leaked to the press by no other than the then Director, and excavator of that tomb, of the competent authority, the 6th Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. To Ithacans it seemed as if the official state structures had finally chosen Cephallenia instead of Ithaca as the homeland of Odysseus. They felt insulted, and that they were once more (this time more decisively) scorned and denied of their heritage and local identity. They were not, however, naïve. They understood very well the impact that announcement

¹⁵⁰ IG IX 1² 4, 1654, 1729; Symeonoglou 1995, 215; Fossey 2001, 174, 180; Fossey 2003, 10, 67-68.

¹⁵¹ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 9. It was the discovery and excavation of the Mycenaean tholos tomb at Tzanata near the town of Poros in Cephallenia.

would have on the tourism industry. Not the scholarly opinion about the “Homeric Ithaca” was at stake, but the opinion of the common people both as inhabitants and most importantly as tourists. That announcement and the accompanying archaeology were perceived as a hard blow for Ithaca’s tourism industry. Something had to be done.

The Mayor of Ithaca, with the support of almost all Ithacans, realised Symeonoglou’s failure to deliver the Mycenaean palace he had promised and, therefore, summoned another archaeological mission to look for it elsewhere. Again, by the initiative of Mayor Spiros Arsenis, the locomotive engine of Ithaca’s tourism, his invitation was accepted by the Professors of Aegean Prehistory Thanasis Papadopoulos and Litsa Kontorli-Papadopoulou of the University of Ioannina. The project got under way in 1994 in the Greater Stavros area only. Once more the aim was to locate the “Homeric” town and the Mycenaean palace of Odysseus¹⁵². They tested all the sites previously excavated by the British mission, apart from Polis Cave. So far only preliminary reports have been published which, however, are fairly indicative of the aims, the strategy, and the highly controversial results of the Ioannina mission¹⁵³.

Initially the efforts focused on Pilikata hill, but after two years they concentrated solely at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer and carried on until 2011. That was the seventh excavation at that site after Fiott/Lee, Schliemann, Dörpfeld, Vollgraff, the British mission, and Kyparissis. What seems incomprehensible in this change of focus is that they did not concentrate their efforts on expanding the excavation at Tris Langades, the only Mycenaean settlement site which they had already located with precision. The answer, it seems, does not lie on the hard archaeological evidence, but on the theories attached to each specific site. They followed exactly the reasoning of the British mission. First, they concentrated on Pilikata because Heurtley had formulated a theory for the hypothetical existence of a Mycenaean palace there, a theory which the Ioannina mission considered plausible. When it did not emerge, they moved on to Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer following Rennell’s theory¹⁵⁴. Therefore, the Ioannina mission built its strategy by following theories based on modern interpretations of the *Odyssey*, and far less by examining the archaeological

¹⁵² Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, 317-318, 329.

¹⁵³ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001; 2008; 2014-2015; 2016; Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos 2001; Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos, Owens 2005; Knauss 2006; Papadopoulos 2015; Papadopoulos 2017, 423-425; Papadopoulos 2021; Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, 187-217; Papadopoulos *et alii* 2022; Buchholz 2009.

¹⁵⁴ See Rennell 1932-1933, 18; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 469 n. 12.

evidence which had already been uncovered. Thus, the Ioannina mission believed it would succeed where other archaeologists had previously failed.

When the sought-after Mycenaean evidence failed to emerge, the justifications were by no means novel. The lack of Mycenaean layers was attributed to the shallow soil accumulation, intensive modern cultivation of the land, and a supposed provincial palace structure unlike anything similar to those in the known Mycenaean palace centres¹⁵⁵. An astute reader must have already realized that these justifications repeat almost verbatim those previously advocated by Heurtley and, ultimately, Ludwig Salvator. One further justification was offered: that the supposed continuous later on-site habitation, from the Late Bronze Age to Roman times, had obliterated the Mycenaean deposits¹⁵⁶. However, it has never been suggested that at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer there was anything like continuous habitation. All researches mention only its well-known occupation from late 4th century BC to Roman times¹⁵⁷. There has never been evidence for habitation in Protogeometric, Geometric, Archaic, and Classical times.

More serious contradictions can be traced in the published reports. A deposit with a considerable amount of hand-made coarse pottery and lithics was excavated, which the same author in one report interprets it as Late Bronze Age “Barbaric ware”, whereas in a more recent one as “Final Neolithic”¹⁵⁸. Another assemblage of hand-made coarse pottery was published as Early Bronze Age pottery coming from an excavation trench on Pilikata hill at landowner Sobolas’ plot, whereas in a recent publication it is presented as coming from the supposed “megaron” area at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer¹⁵⁹. A roughly circular stone-built cistern had been excavated by Vollgraff at the site’s eastern limits¹⁶⁰. It was re-excavated by the Ioannina mission, and now called either “kykloteris” or “tholos”, and initially interpreted as a Minoan vaulted tomb similar to those at Mesara valley in Crete¹⁶¹. Several photographs of that feature have been published, but in the most recent publication a different cistern appears, one not to be found on Ithaca and of different construction¹⁶². Moreover,

¹⁵⁵ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 468-470.

¹⁵⁶ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 475.

¹⁵⁷ Whitley 2002-2003, 44; Morgan 2007, 81-82.

¹⁵⁸ Papadopoulos 2017, 425; *contra* Papadopoulos *et alii* 2022.

¹⁵⁹ Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos 2001, 67 bottom-right; *contra* Papadopoulos 2021, 33, fig. 8 centre-right.

¹⁶⁰ Vollgraff 1905, 154 fig. 18 D, 156.

¹⁶¹ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, 327.

¹⁶² Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, fig. 18; Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos 2001,

in the recent publications the “*kykloteres*” and the “*tholos*” appear as the same feature in the text, and as two different features in the topographic plans¹⁶³. From the backfill of that cistern, the Ioannina mission recovered a piece of ancient tile with ambiguous inscribed squiggles. It was interpreted as “possibly a badly-preserved tablet” with “what may be a possible Linear sign”; the sign “would appear to be AB 09 [...] “SE”¹⁶⁴. That interpretation has been seriously challenged and eventually rebutted¹⁶⁵. One of the major objections is that the so-called “tablet” is a piece of a baked-clay object¹⁶⁶. Even in this last case, I would suggest that the Ioannina mission attempted to somehow emulate the British mission with an “inscribed” sherd analogous, or even far more important and decisive for the quest for Odysseus, to those found by Heurtley at Pilikata¹⁶⁷.

These ambiguities are, I would suggest, a highly revealing example of how the quest for Odysseus can shape the research and the formation of the archaeological record of Ithaca, especially the published record. Epistemology does not occur in a social vacuum, but it is deeply embedded in the present social context of a living community. The Ioannina mission responded to a public call that demanded the discovery of the palace of Odysseus. For the Ithacans, Odysseus is the most important asset the island has to offer, and at the same time, every excavation seeking Odysseus is a promise of a better future. The Ithacans were outraged by the Cephallenians challenging their identity and compromising their touristic development, and displeased by the long-lasting neglect suffered by the Greek Archaeological Service. The Ithacans had a clear and present opponent and they would not sit idly. Therefore, the Ioannina mission should not be considered as purely archaeological. It was also an Ithacan public mission and every discovery or supposed discovery must be viewed

74, centre-right; Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, 203-204, fig. 257-259; Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2014-2015, 496, fig. 18; *contra* Papadopoulos 2017, Pl. 64b.

¹⁶³ Papadopoulos 2017, Pl. 157a (features 12, 15), Pl. 164b; Papadopoulos 2021, 21, 28 fig. 3 (features 12, 15).

¹⁶⁴ Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos, Owens 2005, 184.

¹⁶⁵ Civitillo 2008-2009, 80-87.

¹⁶⁶ In a public lecture in Ithaca a year ago Professor Yannis G. Lolos of Ioannina University, who with his team studies the material recovered from the Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer excavations, admitted that that “tablet” is a piece of a Hellenistic tile. However, Lolos added that it will be set on display when the new Museum of Ithaca reopens its doors. If that is true, then I can claim that the new Museum of Ithaca will be the first museum on the block to showcase a confirmed hoax.

¹⁶⁷ For the enigmatic “inscribed” sherds from Pilikata, see Heurtley 1934-1935, 24, nrr. 80-81, n. 4, Pl. 7. For an up-to-date discussion of those sherds see Civitillo 2008-2009, 73-80.

through the local “patriotic” lenses. Ultimately, however, the responsibility lied on the shoulders of the Ioannina Professors. They had to make a choice: either to follow the archaeological ethics and admit that the evidence is in disagreement with their wishes, or ride the wave of the public opinion and somehow deliver what they were asked for. They chose the latter. They invested in an economy of hope, promising that their results would bring about salvation from all problems facing the Ithacans¹⁶⁸. Ambition, vanity, self-aggrandizement, and fear to admit failure have always been human frames of mind.

Not everything, however, looks bleak. At the turn of the 21st century a new wind was blowing bringing about a much-needed change in the archaeology of Ithaca. It was the “Stavros Valley” survey project directed by Professor Catherine Morgan: a re-examination of the record produced by the British mission in the 1930s, final publication, and fieldwork around Stavros and in Polis valley¹⁶⁹. Steering clear of the treacherous “Odysseus’ palace” waters, Morgan’s declared aim has been the island’s settlement history integrated in its regional context. So far, a long series of insightful and stimulating papers and essays have been published, providing valuable new data and much needed insights into the archaeology of Ithaca¹⁷⁰. As I see it, Morgan’s research questions could be summarized as follows: Where in the archaeological record are the Ithacans? What is the relationship between the two sanctuaries of Aetos and Polis Cave? What evidence does the archaeological record provide with regard to the long-term settlement history of Ithaca? How was the *polis* of Ithaca formed, developed, and maintained in time and space? Morgan recognizes the striking difference in the votive assemblages of the two sanctuaries and interprets it as a strategy of the Aetos Ithacan elite to project their power to the northern part of the island and claim it as the *chora* of their *polis*. While the votive assemblage at Aetos is dominated by personal ornaments and objects associated with family gatherings, Polis Cave sanctuary is markedly different: “[...] with mass consumption and then monumental bronze offerings” comparable to the ritual and votive practices of the western elites as observed in the Panhellenic sanctuaries of Olympia and Delphi¹⁷¹. In support of this argument, comes the scarcity of Early Iron Age material from northern

¹⁶⁸ For archaeology as a promise for a better future and the notion of the economy of hope, see Greenberg, Hamilakis 2022, 10-11, 85.

¹⁶⁹ Whitley 2002-2003, 42-44; Morgan 2007.

¹⁷⁰ Morgan 1988, 315-316; 1998; 2001; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2020; Morgan, Hayward 2021; Pentedeka, Morgan, Sotiriou 2014; 2018; 2021.

¹⁷¹ Morgan 2011, 120. See also Waterhouse 1996, 309-310; Malkin 1998, 94-119.

Ithaca, not including, obviously, Polis Cave. All things considered, Morgan provides much food for thought and many new stimulating research questions arise.

2.2. Long-term implications

For most part of its history, the archaeology of Ithaca developed as a quest for Odysseus. It has been text-driven research which has retained much of its 19th century character well into the 21st. More fundamentally, it played an important role in the formation of the archaeological record, especially the published record. It has dictated what was considered important for publication and what was not. Those finds that could somehow be connected to Odysseus have been published in detail and often detached from their archaeological context. Very few of the British mission's post-Orientalizing findings have been published, and there was need for Morgan's project to bring them to evidence. The same goes for the Saint Louis mission led by Symeonoglou and the Ioannina mission led by Kontorli-Papadopoulou. Despite the fact that the bulk of their finds are Classical, they have received little attention and their study and publication have been left for an undetermined later stage. Consequently, the text-driven "Odyssean" approach established a hierarchy of value: both scholars and the public consider a research agenda important only when it is somehow connected to the quest for Odysseus.

That brings us to the locals' attitude towards the practice and aims of archaeology; it did not remain unchanged over time, but has been subject to changes according to circumstance and the dominant ideology. In the early days, archaeology was for the Ithacans a source of income, and ancient artefacts were considered commodities for sale. The point had been made very clear by the Ithacan Nikolaos Karavias Grivas who observed in 1849 that Captain Guitiera had finally managed to sell his collection for 6,000 pounds sterling, but he could have obtained 10,000 had he not cleaned up the soil of them¹⁷². Karavias Grivas, and we can presume all Ithacans, was fully comfortable with the dealings of price-fixing ancient artefacts intended for sale. Compensation to the landowners for excavation, the sale of the random artefacts and the steadily growing tourist arrivals went hand in hand with the archaeological quest for Odysseus. In Ithaca, archaeology and tourism are two inseparable phenomena. Ithaca's tourism is not like, for

¹⁷² Karavias Grivas 2010 [1849], 8.

example, the Cyclades, where tourism developed after the mid-20th century thanks to their fabulous beaches and picturesque landscapes, regardless of their archaeological heritage. Ithaca's chief asset, the one that sets her apart from any other destination – its symbolic capital – has always been Odysseus and the quest for the material confirmation that would provide the landmark in the island's landscape.

Whether excavating for Odysseus or not, during these two centuries fieldwork has focused exclusively in the archaeological zones of Aetos and Greater Stavros. Already identified by William Gell, every mission returned again and again in these two areas hoping for a breakthrough where all the previous missions had failed. It is remarkable how influential Gell and Leake have been to the next generations of researchers. Even the so-called “Homeric” geography of Ithaca has less to do with the Homeric text itself and more with Gell's or Leake's interpretation of it. However, that is not to say that the areas of Aetos and Greater Stavros have been systematically explored. On the contrary, excavations have been patchy with small in size trenches covering only a restricted area of each site in overall dimensions. Only at Pilikata the test pits were numerous and resulted in the excavation of a fairly representative area. The only comparable excavation to that at Pilikata is that of the Ioannina mission at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer. The most extensive, as well as intensive and systematic fieldwork has been the Stavros Valley survey project. Hence, the Greater Stavros area is better explored than the isthmus of Aetos and its surroundings. As a result, in terms of systematic fieldwork Ithaca remains comparatively little studied.

The lack of systematic fieldwork is, in my understanding, primarily due to the long-lasting and perplexing hesitancy of the Greek Archaeological Service to commit itself on the island. There has never been an archaeologist permanently stationed on Ithaca, neither Ithacan nor non-Ithacan. Perhaps because Ithaca is considered “remote”. That does not, however, explain the reluctance of the Greek Archaeological Service to keep a watching brief on development, to undertake salvage work and rescue excavations if necessary, and to recruit Ithacan personnel even in fixed-term contracts, or to modernise and promote the museums and archaeological sites of Ithaca. For example, in the last two years, new roads were opened and new networks of water supply pipes were installed in Cephallenia and, as a consequence, the Archaeological Service recruited several contract archaeologists to keep watching briefs. The same public infrastructure projects occurred in Ithaca, but no archaeologist was ever recruited. These double standards employed at the expense of Ithaca cannot be, in

my opinion, unintentional negligence by one or two individuals during an adverse period of time. The evidence points to the impression that the Cephallenia regional office follows in the footsteps of Marinatos with the aim of marginalising and depreciating the archaeology of Ithaca. It is a Cephallenian policy of neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism to commit an act of “Elginism”¹⁷³ upon Ithaca and the Ithacans by denying the local community of its cultural heritage by what appears to be a deliberate failure to protect and promote it.

In the context of those unsystematic and text-driven archaeological ventures, the driving force behind the development of the archaeology of Ithaca has been the role of a few dynamic individuals and the initiatives they took in setting aside Homer while working in the interstices of each successive quest for Odysseus. Despite their colonial snobbery, Fiott/Lee and Hallerstein were able to realise the potential of the study of the material culture to understand the ancient local society. In a similar fashion, a century later Wilhelm Vollgraff stressed the importance of landscape, excavation and the totality of the recovered archaeological record as a source for Ithacan history. Heurtley and Benton showed a sensibility to the landscape of Ithaca – which opposed their patron’s tendency to favour a different archaeological site – and were willing to study it diachronically. Although he never undertook fieldwork in Ithaca, Petros Kalligas worked in the museum of Vathy – being a curator in the National Archaeological Museum at Athens – and stressed the need to move away from the bias of “Homeric” archaeology and explore instead the settlement history of Ithaca throughout the past¹⁷⁴. Perhaps in this way he tactfully decried the Greek Archaeological Service’s disregard for, and depreciation of, Ithaca’s archaeology. Catherine Morgan took up the torch of the British mission by publishing what was left unpublished and re-evaluating the whole evidence in its insular and regional context. Moreover, by employing up-to-date survey methodologies – never before undertaken on Ithaca – attempts to reconstruct both the physical setting and the settlement history of the Greater Stavros area. Processual and post-processual archaeology had finally arrived in Ithaca.

It becomes evident that so far, the archaeology of Ithaca had been practiced and written down by non-Ithacans. Therefore, the dominant perspective in both synthetic and analytical works has been determined by

¹⁷³ For the concept of “Elginism” with regard to the local communities see Hamilakis 2007, 268 n. 32.

¹⁷⁴ Kalligas 1978-1979, 69.

the preferences of non-Ithacans who, inevitably and understandably, make analogies and draw inferences from other regions of Greece more familiar to them. The local inhabitants interested in archaeology have always been discouraged by the obvious indifference shown by the Greek Archaeological Service and the difficulty of communicating with foreign scholars who made their appearance on the island only for brief periods of time. In other words, the local society never developed permanent bonds with the figure of a field archaeologist living constantly among them, interacting with them, discussing their inquiries and sharing their anxieties. Being an Ithacan and as an undergraduate having excavated with the Ioannina mission for three consecutive years and being aware of the progress of the Stavros Valley project, I soon realised the impact archaeology had on the local society, I realised the negative role played by the Greek Archaeological Service, and I realised the epistemological conflict of paradigms. Indeed, I recognised what harm can be done to the local communities and to the island's archaeological record by the obstinate and one-sided quest for an Odyssean heterotopia.

3. Doing contract archaeology in Ithaca¹⁷⁵

In this last part of this article, I move beyond the survey of historical archaeological missions on Ithaca to describe the most recent work on the island from my own experience as a contract archaeologist. Being familiar with the unfamiliarity of the non-Ithacans with Ithaca, I was lucky enough to start working on my native island in 2005, fresh out of the University and having concluded my military service. Lucky, because the then Director of the competent Ephorate, Andreas Sotiriou, was willing to recruit a local Ithacan archaeologist. Given the spatial and temporal gaps remaining in our knowledge, we must ask: Why, despite the recent boom in construction works no rescue excavation has ever taken place? What else is there waiting to be discovered in the large unexplored swaths of Ithaca? Why the best natural harbour featuring the most fertile plain on the island – that is Vathy – is considered to have been uninhabited in antiquity? How can I change the picture of the archaeology in Ithaca? Although I am far less qualified, I would dare to suggest that my aims coincided in broad terms with those of Morgan's.

¹⁷⁵ The following account with the accompanying material is published thanks to the permits granted to this author by the Greek Ministry of Culture: 939/22.07.2015, and 1644/19.12.2016. All photographs were taken by this author. All drawings were made by this author.

However, cognisant of the privilege of easier access on an island where I am resident, I have sought to make more frequent and broader-scope surveys of sites around the island. Thus, I proceeded in three directions: to explore the history of archaeological research on Ithaca, which was surveyed in the preceding part; to explore Ithaca's landscape with all its evidence for multi-period occupation by extensive pedestrian surveys; and to undertake rescue excavations. The starting point for my account of these attempts is Vathy, which represents something of a great unknown for the archaeology of the island until now. While the modern capital has been the site of significant ancient finds, this has not corresponded to a proportionate allocation of interest by archaeologists. The following seeks to identify the reasons for this, and to present how contract archaeology might contribute to reviving interest.

3.1. Prehistoric and Classical Vathy

Short references in Schliemann's and Vollgraff's excavation reports had created the incorrect impression that Vathy was uninhabited in antiquity¹⁷⁶. That impression was reinforced by Heurtley when he remarked: "Vathy is unlikely [for a settlement in prehistoric times]; it is too low-lying and shut in; from the neighbouring heights only the approach from the mainland could be commanded; the harbour is a cul-de-sac, not a port of call like the Pelikata or Aetos harbours"¹⁷⁷. It seems that Heurtley's point of view has influenced Catherine Morgan's, who considers Vathy "dangerously secluded", thus unlikely for any important settlement¹⁷⁸. Yet, the first travellers to Ithaca had already reported an ancient ruin at a site in Vathy which is today called Paliokaravo, and that a 2nd-3rd century CE inscription mentioning a sanctuary and temple of Artemis had been removed from the church of Gardelaki in western Vathy¹⁷⁹. Goodisson records to have seen several sarcophagi in the town of Vathy and as we have already seen, Warsberg reported the recovery of a Roman sarcophagus and the alleged existence of a mosaic floor and several graves¹⁸⁰ (Fig. 12, nr. 5). In 1931 Anastasios Orlandos reported that some Early Byzantine sarcophagi

¹⁷⁶ Schliemann 1881, 49; Vollgraff 1905, 145-146; Lekatsas 1998 [1933], 142.

¹⁷⁷ Heurtley 1934-35, 44 n. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Morgan 2007, 75.

¹⁷⁹ IG IX 1² 4, 1700; Bellaire 1805, 230; Gell 1807, 36-38; Dodwell 1819, 71; Livitsanis 2020b.

¹⁸⁰ Goodisson 1822, 116; Warsberg 1887, 69.

had been found the previous year during the construction of the notary Georgios Vlassopoulos' house in western Vathy (Fig. 12, nr. 7), of which only one survives¹⁸¹.

Measuring 2 m in length, 0.77 m in width and 0.76 m in height, it bears early Christian crosses in relief (Fig. 13). They appear on one long and one short side only, which may suggest that originally it may have been placed inside a mausoleum. Another badly damaged sarcophagus cut in the natural rock, with part of its lid fallen further downslope, has always been visible on the western slopes of Vathy; the Ithacans call it "kasonàki". In 1969 Petros Kalligas published a 4th century BC marble head of a female statuette, which was found years earlier incorporated in a stone fence at Vathy¹⁸².

In 1979, Kalligas stated that a Roman habitation centre and cemetery once existed at Vathy, accepting the local historian Athanasios Lekatsas' opinion that a small Roman town stood at Vathy, and since tombs had been revealed during reconstruction works after the 1953 earthquakes¹⁸³. That was a surprising statement since no such claim had ever been advanced before by a professional archaeologist, and certainly no such excavation or other activity of the Greek Archaeological Service had ever been reported or published. By such a surprising remark, Kalligas was perhaps attempting to urge the Archaeological Service to pay more attention to Vathy. More recently, the existence of a Roman cemetery at the High School terrain has been confirmed by a brief evaluation excavation¹⁸⁴. A Vathy museum inventory entry dating in 1970 erroneously states that a life-size Roman marble bust, probably representing Emperor Titus or Domitian, was allegedly found in the High School cemetery¹⁸⁵ (Fig. 14). However, a local newspaper report, dating back to 1937 with an accompanying photograph, clearly indicates that it was recovered from a private property to the south-east of Aghios Nikolaos church in western Vathy¹⁸⁶. Moreover, handmade

¹⁸¹ *Αρχαίο Χωροφυλακής Ιθάκης*, Αρ. 86/88/1, 08/07/1930; Orlandos 1931. A decade later it was published again by Georgios Sotiriou (1942, 146, fig. 87). Perhaps it is interesting to note that this sarcophagus remained in Vlassopoulos' backyard until the 1990s, although the Ithacan Constabulary had readily informed the superior authorities at Argostoli in Cephallenia. I remember it there as a neighbourhood kid, playing around it. Spiros Arsenis took the initiative and brought it to the Vathy museum. The Ephorate of Patras reacted negatively to that relocation for mysterious reasons. It has not yet taken an inventory number.

¹⁸² Kalligas 1969, Pl. 268a.

¹⁸³ Lekatsas 1998 [1933], 142-143; Kalligas 1978-1979, 68.

¹⁸⁴ Sotiriou 1989.

¹⁸⁵ Vathy Museum Inv. nr. 797.

¹⁸⁶ Mousouris 1937; Tsiproudīs 1937; Livitsanis 2021.

prehistoric pottery had been collected, and published, at the outskirts of the town to the east¹⁸⁷. For all the above reasons, it was evident to me that Ithacan archaeology had missed something important at Vathy, and that this southern part of the island merited attention.

3.1.1. The Final Neolithic colonisation of Ithaca

Intensive monitoring of construction works accompanied by rescue excavations and evaluation trenches soon yielded startling and promising results. A substantial amount of pottery and lithics was brought to light, which can be dated in the Final Neolithic period. Findspots extend to an area of approximately nine hectares at the eastern slopes of Vathy harbour and coastal plain, which suggests that this was a settlement of significant size¹⁸⁸ (Fig. 12, nrr. 1-3). Unfortunately, no intact stratification has been so far revealed. Findspots were either depressions among large rocky outcrops or alluvial sediments containing mixed material of various periods. Some Final Neolithic pottery sherds have also been found in the deposits of the Roman cemetery in the High School yard (Fig. 12, nr. 4).

The pottery is in a highly fragmentary state and consists of semi-coarse and coarse wares. Semi-coarse wares contain a small number of inclusions, and most belong to thin-walled with burnished surface and colours ranging from red to grey/black. They seem to belong to wide-mouthed vessels with vertical strap handles. Coarse wares are characterized by a high number of inclusions and thicker walls. Decorative elements consist in applied cordons with fingertip impressions, buttons and mastoid protrusions. All fabrics are soft and friable to the extent that they disintegrate when even a small amount of pressure is applied. As part of the Stavros Valley project led by Catherine Morgan, 21 ceramic samples from the Manias and Anastasatou plots assemblages were submitted to petrographic analysis. The results demonstrate a strong local tradition of pottery production in prehistoric Vathy¹⁸⁹.

From the stone tool assemblage, the most characteristic are blades and bladelets. They are all made of local flint of various colours. Abundant sources of raw material are available on the hills to the east of Vathy.

¹⁸⁷ Basakos, Paschalidis 2001, 313-314.

¹⁸⁸ Final Neolithic pottery and lithics were found by this author in the properties of Manias, Mavrokefalos, Chrysanthos Karavias, Sobolas, and Anastasatou.

¹⁸⁹ Pentedeka, Morgan, Sotiriou 2021.

Both the pottery and the lithics find close parallels in other western Greek assemblages: Limnes cave in Achaea¹⁹⁰, Pangali in Aetolia¹⁹¹, and the cave assemblages in Leucas and Cephallenia. Housing remains have not been located, although an interesting lump of clay, flat on one side and bearing deep reed impressions on the other, is evidently a piece of daub from a wattle and daub hut¹⁹².

Since these Final Neolithic finds constitute the earliest evidence for farming groups' colonisation of Ithaca, it would be interesting to compare them with the available evidence from the Aegean, even if only for heuristic purposes. According to Cyprian Broodbank's studies in the patterns of colonisation of the Aegean islands employing the "seafaring nursery" approach, the Cyclades were colonized during Late-Final Neolithic Saliagos culture. Broodbank has also identified a seafaring nursery in the central Ionian Sea around Ithaca¹⁹³. If we turn to the settlement patterns of this horizon, we observe fairly extensive settlements covering several hectares and "most are situated on knoll-tops or bluffs dominating major bays and the flat valley lands at their head"¹⁹⁴. The analogies between Saliagos settlements and the Vathy Final Neolithic settlement seem interesting enough to set a line of research on the Neolithic colonisation of the central Ionian islands.

3.1.2. From Late Helladic to Hellenistic

Staying at the eastern slopes of Vathy, at a height of 40 m.a.s.l. a test trench measuring 3 by 3 m was excavated in a private property in order to evaluate the archaeological potential of the area called Kanata¹⁹⁵. Together with a large quantity of Final Neolithic pottery, three diagnostic sherds of Late Bronze Age cups were recovered. One of them seems to be the stem and foot of a Late Helladic IIB Ephyrean goblet; two other sherds of longer stems probably represent Late Helladic III *kylix* vessels (Fig. 15). Moreover, at least one sherd with clearly Geometric decoration was identified in the assemblage. Moving downslope from that property, at the sea level, a rescue excavation was carried out due to housing development¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁰ Sampson 1997.

¹⁹¹ Dietz *et alii* 2006, 116-161.

¹⁹² For photographs of the above-mentioned artefacts, see Livitsanis 2013, 101.

¹⁹³ Broodbank 1999, 26 fig. 1.4.

¹⁹⁴ Broodbank 2000, 147.

¹⁹⁵ Anastasatou plot.

¹⁹⁶ Georgakopoulos plot.

In a trench measuring 4 by 2 m, I reached the natural rock laying roughly at today's sea level. Spread over the natural rock was a deposit of black greasy soil with bits of charcoal, charred animal bones, and a considerable quantity of Archaic pottery. Spanning both the 7th and 6th century BC, the pottery assemblage includes drinking and serving vessels, like kotylai and hydriai, while besides Corinthian and, seemingly, Attic imports, there are also locally made fine and coarse wares (Fig. 16). It seems that that deposit was the result of the clean-up and disposal of a pyre, or hearth, but whether its original context was domestic or ritual, it is difficult to say. At least one sherd from a Corinthian cup could be dated in the Geometric period (Fig. 17). Immediately to the east of this deposit, stood a badly preserved kiln-like structure whose date, however, remains unknown. I should also mention that some sherds, especially base fragments of wheel made pottery found at Mavrokefalos' plot at Paliorogka neighbourhood (Fig. 12, nr. 3), seem to date in the Protogeometric period.

What are still lacking around the area of the town of Vathy are deposits of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. The lack of visible fortification walls or other monumental architecture may suggest that those deposits are still challenging to locate. However, there is some evidence to suggest that it was not uninhabited. Marmarospilia cave, with its established Classical and Hellenistic cult of the Nymphs, is situated on the western slopes and much closer to Vathy than to Aetos (Fig. 12. No 9). Therefore, we should not overlook the possibility that the Marmarospilia sanctuary was established by a community residing at Vathy, and not by that at Aetos¹⁹⁷. Some architectural remains of two structures that could be considered as tower-farmhouses have been identified at the sites of Sotira-Pagano and Mnimata¹⁹⁸. Both are visually connected both to Aetos and Vathy, thus establishing a communication network between the two. The Hellenistic tombstones at Vathy museum recovered from around the town, may also suggest the existence of a cemetery which still remains unlocated.

3.1.3. The Roman-Late Antique town and cemetery

In the Vlassopoulos plot, property of 300 m² in the western part of Vathy and which was destined for development in 2009, the partial remains

¹⁹⁷ Morgan, Hayward (2021, 71, 88 n. 8) get confused Marmarospilia with the supposed beachside grotto of the Nymphs which William Gell identified at Dexà Bay. In fact, they are two different sites.

¹⁹⁸ Livitsanis 2013, 104-106.

of four buildings and four graves came to light, all dating from the 1st to the 6th century CE (Fig. 18). The earliest building, which I have denoted Vathy 2, was probably a granary (*horreum*) or store building at least 8.85 m long and 7.85 m wide. Its layout consists of two elongated and equal in size rooms for which access was gained through doors located on the southern wall flanking the southern end of the interior partition wall. Therefore, each room was accessible only from outside the building, and there seems not to have been any communication between the two. Another feature of Vathy 2 is the small rectangular room at its eastern exterior corner, Room X3. The excavation showed that it formed an integral part in the initial layout. Measuring just 1.50 m by 1.10 m, it can barely accommodate one person. It faces west thus flanking the entrances to the elongated rooms, and a man standing there controls effectively the access into the building. The overall layout of Vathy 2 is strikingly similar to the Roman-period granaries (*horrea*) at Myra in Lycia with analogous custodians' rooms, although the Myra *horrea* is a massive monumental construction¹⁹⁹. Interestingly enough, it is the earliest Roman building so far identified at Vathy, and it could be associated with the foundation of the town. Its date of construction remains unclear, though it must have been abandoned towards the end of the 1st century CE. Indeed, the construction of the cist-burial T.BI truncated the western outer wall of Vathy 2, and the burials inside it date in the early 2nd century CE, a *terminus ante quem* for Vathy 2. Perhaps the *horrea* were necessary for the supply of the earliest settlers.

Perhaps it is significant to note that both the ruins of Vathy 2 and the cist-grave T.BI were not encroached upon by later constructions throughout the subsequent centuries. Later interventions consisted of the removal of T. BI's cover, perhaps its selective looting, and possible ritual activity represented by a deposit of black greasy soil with ash and some cooking vessels. Moreover, the northern outer wall of Vathy 2 was demolished for the construction of the Vathy 3 building.

The significance of their visibility remains obscure; however, the radical refurbishment of the custodian's room X3 may provide an idea. Room X3 was transformed into a small cult-room with a masonry altar measuring 0.50 m by 0.50 m and 0.37 m in height. Its surface was covered by black greasy soil. A small bench consisting of two stone slabs was later added adjacent to the back wall. Above, around and below these features the soil deposit was packed with sherds of clay lamps of the Broneer XXVII type. Few animal bones were recovered. Significant artefacts were a fragment

¹⁹⁹ Rickman 1971, 139.

of a stone portable altar and a heavily corroded iron object with a spear-type socket. If it is complete, it resembles a sickle or a crescent-shaped object; if it is not, then it must have been something like a horn-shaped “spear-point”. Principally, it would have been attached to a shaft as a sort of sceptre. However, at the opposite side of the altar, a bronze base was found which upper circular depression was filled with iron. Its diameter fits with the socket and it is therefore probable that the “spear-point” was originally attached to that base (Fig. 19). Below this odd “spear-point” most significant of them all seems to have been an Asclepius-type bronze figurine with a combination of Campana and Velia features (Fig. 20). Curiously enough, it is evident that its hands had been remodelled: the liver usually appearing held in the right hand seems to have been removed, and the left hand had also been completely removed and replaced with another holding a papyrus roll. Thus, the figurine had been remodelled probably to represent a philosopher or a poet. Two bronze coins of the Tetrarchy period provide a *terminus post quem* for the formation of the deposit.

There is not enough evidence for the beginnings of cultic activity, but there is some evidence to allow discussion of its duration. Outside the walls of Room X3 an extensive deposit half a metre thick was excavated, densely packed with pottery, relief bowl sherds, clay lamp fragments, vessel glass, bone pins, and animal bones. If we assume that this deposit had accumulated over time by discarding materials from the shrine, what emerges is a period of use stretching from the 2nd century CE to around the middle of the 4th, since the latest coin found therein was a commemorative issue for the foundation of Constantinople. At first glance this shrine appears to be a typical household shrine. However, it is not associated with any house. In fact, it was a freestanding shrine in an open area. The nearest contemporary building was Vathy 3, nine metres to the north. Vathy 3 is a partially excavated building which seems to have been an ordinary residence. It has two distinct building phases. The earliest phase appears with two rooms connected by a door with a monolithic threshold, and seems to have been abandoned in the second half of the 4th century CE. The second phase followed again with two rooms, and this time each room has its own entrance. Associated with the earlier phase is the built cist-grave T.BII, immediately outside the eastern outer wall. It contained three inhumations and from the numerous grave goods it can be dated in the first half of the 3rd century CE²⁰⁰ (Fig. 21). Cult-rooms in *horrea* were

²⁰⁰ It is perhaps interesting to note that T.BII had been looted by demolishing the southern long and western short walls and then rebuilding them with different materials. Every non-precious material grave good seems to have been left in place.

common, but in this case the *horreum* was already abandoned when the cult was established. Therefore, and in the context of its contemporary spatial setting, I would suggest that the Room X3 shrine could be much more plausibly interpreted as a *compitum*, a crossroads or neighbourhood shrine²⁰¹.

The latest building phase on the site is represented by the bath Vathy 1. The excavated part measures 18 m in length and 4 m in width. Three hypocausts were revealed with their partition walls and their communication openings measuring 0.45 m in width. In Room X1 some of the circular bricks that once formed the pillars were found in situ. At a later phase a new *praefurnium* was built on the outer face of the exterior wall, and one of the hypocaust openings was blocked. The construction date of Vathy 3 is unclear, since no foundation trench dug into the natural soil has been identified. However, the foundations were sunk inside the deposit associated with the shrine X3, which suggests that Vathy 3 was built in the 4th century CE or later. It was abandoned in the 6th century CE, as was the case with the second phase of Vathy 2.

On the opposite eastern side of Vathy²⁰², a cluster of three partially preserved 3rd century CE Roman graves (two tile-graves and one simple inhumation) was excavated which seems not to be associated with any building or cemetery. So far, the only Roman cemetery located and partially excavated is that of the post-1953 earthquakes High School. There, at the western corner of the yard, I excavated in in 2008 on the same spot where Andreas Sotiriou had excavated 20 years earlier²⁰³, and located ten more undisturbed burials in pits 1-1.50 m below the surface (Fig. 22). Each pit contained one or more burials. Seven of the burials date in the second half of the 1st century CE and three in the 2nd century. An infant tile grave cannot be dated with any certainty. There were nine inhumations and a cremation in a clay cooking vessel. Orientation seems random since no clear pattern emerged. Except one all burials seem to be of adolescents judging from the size of the skeletal remains. Most had a bronze coin in the mouth but only one was well enough preserved to identify an issue of Nero. Grave goods consisted in clay plates, cups, lamps, and glass unguentaria. The pottery in the 1st century burials consists predominantly of thin-wall wares (*pareti sottili*), but in the 2nd century it is replaced by red-ware plates and pitchers.

²⁰¹ For the *compita* see Bakker 1994, 118-133, 195-204, 243-250.

²⁰² Georgakopoulos' plot.

²⁰³ Sotiriou 1989.

It was observed in most burials the use of one grave good as a container for others. In two instances, graves T.VIII and T.XII, half a cooking vessel was used for that purpose, whereas in burial T.VII (2nd century CE) a red glaze fineware plate was found containing a lamp, two glass unguentaria and a bone pin (Fig. 23). The richest burial was that of an adult dated in the 1st century CE (T.XII), with a bronze and a silver ring, two gold earrings, a presumably wooden box wrapped in a bronze chain harness attached on a lock plate, glass unguentaria, three thin-walled cups, a glass pitcher and two glass cups. No stacking of grave goods was observed in this burial. However, in the Vlassopoulos' plot cist-graves T.BI and T.BII a similar custom of stacking grave goods was observed. In T.BI a lamp and a pitcher were placed in each of the two plates, whereas in the T.BII two plates were found stacked one inside the other and a lamp seems to have been initially placed inside a third plate.

3.2. Coastal depositional and material behaviour

When the grave goods of the Aetos cemetery were first encountered in the early 19th century, the regional differences in the depositional behaviours of the ancient Greek world did not pass unnoticed. As Thomas Smart Hughes remarked: "Nothing like these was ever discovered in the sepulchres of Attica or any part of Greece before"²⁰⁴. In fieldwork the archaeologist is most likely to encounter assemblages of things deposited on or in the ground by people predisposed by their local and regional context of behaviour, and the choices they made with regard to the spatial setting. Archaeologists unaware of those local, regional, and spatial depositional idiosyncrasies might fail to correctly evaluate fieldwork expectations. Ithaca is no exception. For example, in 2007 I told a Cephallenian colleague, who was unfamiliar with the Ithacan archaeological record, that in a property under development I expected to find tile-graves and we had to monitor it closely²⁰⁵; he dismissed my concern as excessive. In the end I proved correct and, moreover, from one tile-grave I recovered a late-4th century BC bronze cup of the so-called "Panaitios group"²⁰⁶. When I informed him, he was astonished and exclaimed: "How can this be? It is just a tile-grave!".

Nothing illustrates better the complexities of the ancient Ithacan

²⁰⁴ Hughes 1820, 161.

²⁰⁵ Catherine Morgan, then at Stavros, also expected them.

²⁰⁶ Nikolaos Vassilopoulos' plot at Stavros village.

depositional behaviour than the archaeology of the beachside Polis Cave sanctuary (Fig. 24). Although recent geological observations show that it was not a true cave, it seems that the ancient Ithacans considered it cave-like enough to establish a cult to the Nymphs in the Hellenistic period at least²⁰⁷. Epigraphic evidence for the cult of Odysseus also in the Hellenistic period had greatly influenced the interpretation by which the hero's cult could be traced back in the Early Iron Age based on the bronze tripod cauldrons²⁰⁸. Catherine Morgan emphasised the fact that this reasoning is strongly *Odyssey*-driven and, therefore, highly selective, one that takes no account of the totality of the archaeological record²⁰⁹. She also highlights the fact that conspicuous consumption of monumental bronze dedications was common among western Greek elites, such as those at Olympia, Delphi, and Dodona, and, therefore, Polis Cave is no exception in its regional context²¹⁰. However, Polis Cave never acquired Panhellenic status, which makes it somewhat exceptional, at least in its immediate island surroundings. Morgan also introduces in the analysis the Ithacans' agency, mainly by arguing that the elite of Aetos was responsible for the establishment of the Polis Cave sanctuary and the monumental bronze dedications²¹¹.

Moreover, Morgan, probably influenced by the emerging evidence on the opposite side of Polis Bay, has recently proposed an insightful interpretation of Polis Cave. To summarise it in her own words: "It was a place of deposition of vessels linked to consumption and, in time, of purpose made votives ... But vessels for consumption were deposited at the final stage in a sequence of events probably conducted for the most part elsewhere around the bay"²¹². She recognises the same pattern of deposition throughout the first millennium BC²¹³. And that brings us to Fitzgerald & Steven's plot, where a rescue excavation conducted from 2007 to 2010 revealed three rich and largely undisturbed artefact assemblages closely associated with

²⁰⁷ IG IX I² 4, 1616-1619.

²⁰⁸ Waterhouse 1996, 309-310.

²⁰⁹ Morgan, Hayward 2021, 70.

²¹⁰ Morgan 2007, 76-78; Morgan, Hayward 2021, 82.

²¹¹ Morgan 2011. There are no problem-free pottery sequences, especially in Ithaca where, as I have already discussed, fieldwork has been very patchy and geographically restricted. That said, it seems that the Early Iron Age pottery sequence at Polis Cave predates that of Aetos. Moreover, the lack of substantial Early Iron Age and eighth century evidence in northern Ithaca, which Morgan correctly and repeatedly emphasises, could be attributed to the lack of long-term systematic fieldwork.

²¹² Morgan, Hayward 2021, 79.

²¹³ Morgan, Hayward 2021.

considerable amounts of black, greasy soil and ash, which I refer to as “pyres”²¹⁴. The earliest one, Pyre 2, can be dated in the first quarter of the 5th century BC; Pyre 3 in the third quarter of the 4th century BC; and Pyre 1 can be roughly dated in the Hellenistic period²¹⁵. Pyre 1 displays a platform-like square feature formed by rough stones and tile fragments measuring 0.65 by 0.65 m. This feature was covered by a 20 cm thick deposit of black, greasy soil containing numerous tile and pottery sherds (Fig. 25). The latter are undiagnostic, since no rim, base or handle sherds were present in the assemblage, and all seem to be plain. The undiagnostic character of the Pyre 1 pottery assemblage is highly interesting in itself, especially when compared to those of Pyres 2 and 3.

Located to the north of Pyre 1, and at a lower level, Pyre 3 appears as an ovoid in plan, black horizontal deposition 3 m long and 2 m wide, with its maximum thickness at the centre reaching 0.40 m. It is a fairly clean deposit containing very few and small animal bones and only an olive pip. The southerly winds, to which Polis Bay is exposed, had blown a portion of it to the north, thus covering the assemblage of pottery and other objects which skirted the northern and north-eastern edge of the pyre. The ceramics assemblage consists of almost all categories: transport amphorae, cooking ware, tableware, and “oil” containers (Fig. 26). Most of them are locally made, followed by enough western Greek imports and some Attic and, probably, Corinthian. What I consider remarkable is that most of the vessels were found in their original place and quite a few of them still standing on their bases. Furthermore, their fragmentary state combined with the observed damage patterns, suggest that the assemblage was left exposed to view for a considerable period of time. Not only that, but patches of pavement made of small pebbles were revealed, which suggests that the place had been carefully prepared both before and after the event. All in all, I would strongly suggest that Pyre 3, in its state exposed by the excavation, was a curated deposition of an assemblage destined to function as a visible memorial after a gathering accompanied by feasting activities.

To the north-west of Pyre 3 one more pyre was revealed, Pyre 2, which appeared as a dump of black earth, pottery, and other small finds (Fig. 27). The deposit was found lying against the inner face of a substantial retaining wall built to level the ground above it. This deposit represents the cleanup and disposal of the remains of another feasting event. The find

²¹⁴ For a detailed account of this excavation, see Livitsanis 2014.

²¹⁵ Pyre 2 has been fully excavated. From Pyre 1 a small amount of the pottery assemblage still lies buried. A considerable part of Pyre 1 remains unexcavated.

spots of pottery and other small finds suggest that the disposal occurred in a direction from north to south. Exactly to the north of the deposit a bronze cauldron was found roughly 0.60 m in diameter containing black earth only, and laying as it was left, only crushed and buckled by stones and soil fallen from the above steep slope (Fig. 28). The pottery assemblage shows a higher degree of vessel completeness than that observed in Pyre 3. However, here too the post-depositional damage observable on the bronze cauldron and on some of the pottery, suggests that the assemblage was left exposed to view for a period of time. After the cleanup and disposal, only the bronze cauldron was left as a visible memorial, or event-marker.

The analysis of the pottery assemblages of Pyres 2 and 3, reveals that mostly local, and western Greek, ceramics were accompanied by a careful selection of imports, mainly Corinthian and Attic. The strategy behind the selection of imports seems to have been that of the least difference, especially in decoration. The imports selected bear either banded or plain glazed decoration, features shared with the local style. Figurative decoration seems to have been excluded, since the preferred shapes for that – like Attic cups and lekythoi – found in the assemblages are all plain black glazed. Thus, it seems that although the Ithacans enjoyed an accessibility to all the major styles of pottery moving around their island, they made careful choices on what to bring to their island, and once in the local Ithacan context of consumption, they seized to be foreign and became “Ithacanised”. Moreover, the observed strategy of leaving the assemblage exposed to view, rendered them social actors, thereby having an impact on the people and, possibly, dictating to viewers which stylistic features were locally acceptable and which not.

Repeatedly occurring in a littoral, and thereby liminal, spatial context, those gatherings were, I would suggest, carefully conceived rituals organised by the well-connected local seafaring elite in an attempt to stay conservative and avoid possible social unrest influenced by new ideas coming from the sea. The seafaring outlook of the local elite does not emerge solely by the selected space for the gatherings. Interestingly enough, for that matter, the only figure appearing in the Pyre 2 pottery assemblage is an incised warship on a local jug. The coins present in Pyre 2 could have also been symbols of trading and making profits from seafaring. In Pyre 3 the likely symbolic meaning of some artefacts may suggest something similar. Transport amphorae would readily evoke trade, as well as the silver and bronze coins. The apparently odd presence of loomweights in the assemblage may suggest that they acted as symbols of ships, ship-building, and of the importance of women in a

maritime society. It has been convincingly, to my view, argued that there are conspicuous semantic similarities in the ancient Greek terminology between weaving, ship-building, and sailing²¹⁶. Their female connotations may be more apparent even in a hypothetical connection with Penelope, the mariner's wife par excellence. That wives in a maritime community were very important figures, may also explain the inscription found somewhere in Polis valley recording Athena *polias* and Hera *teleia*²¹⁷. The latter was not only the goddess of marriage and childbirth; she was also a matronly figure, a staid and dignified figure. All these could have been qualities highly appropriate for mariners' wives that had to stay behind and assume the role of the household leader. They have certainly been required qualities in modern and contemporary Ithaca, since many islanders are absentee mariners, and those qualities are widely accredited to and respected by all Ithacans.

The gatherings at Fitzgerald & Steven's seem to have been somehow connected to Polis Cave, not only by intervisibility and spatial proximity, but also in the display of monumental bronzes. The bronze cauldron Pyre 2 deposited as an event-marker seems to have been a depositional behaviour analogous to that of the tripod-cauldrons displayed at Polis Cave²¹⁸. Even if the details are elusive, it is evident that the Greater Stavros elite engaged in conspicuous consumption and display of monumental bronzes not only at Polis Cave, but also in other locations on the Polis coastline. Another similarity between the two sites is, as the archaeological record suggests, the evidence for Late Bronze Age activity. Upslope of Pyres 1, 2, and 3, and at a distance of just 15 m in straight line, three Roman tile-graves were excavated, in the area denoted NK III. Two of them had heavily disturbed a deposit containing Late Archaic-Early Classical, and Early Hellenistic, pottery, probably "pyre" depositions, lying at the foot of a rocky outcrop. Those pottery deposits had in their turn heavily disturbed a Late Helladic burial, the first Mycenaean burial ever discovered in Ithaca. The bones were completely disintegrated and only shadowy lines were visible on the white chalk. Nevertheless, eight pottery vessels, nine steatite *conuli*, stone beads and a clay spindle-whorl were recovered (Fig. 29). Of the vases, five are small monochrome spherical juglets with a vertical handle (Fig. 30), two alabastra with linear decoration and one monochrome inside-out deep body of what appears to be a rounded *kylix* cup with everted rim, or a deep

²¹⁶ Nosch 2016.

²¹⁷ IG IX I² 4, 1614.

²¹⁸ Four tripod-cauldrons found flanking the step leading onto the built platform were arranged in the late-4th century reorganisation.

bowl²¹⁹.

They all seem to date in the LH IIIA and IIIB, thus contemporary to the settlement at Tris Langades at the opposite side of the valley. The underlying geology of soft chalky limestone suggests that a Late Helladic cemetery may have existed in the area. Turning to the Late Helladic evidence from Polis Cave, it would be interesting to note that initially Heurtley suspected that there were Mycenaean burials inside the cave²²⁰. Even the excavator Sylvia Benton observed that “I found a skull carefully buried *by itself* in the disturbed earth of B under half a pithos”²²¹ (my italics). It seems, however, that the burials interpretation was not further advanced, since the cult aspect and the consequent continuity of cult from the second to the first millennium was instead favoured²²². Whatever the case, it seems evident that in the Classical period the users of both sites were fully aware of the Late Helladic remains in their places of interest.

Similar coastal depositions can be observed, I would suggest, in all the principal harbours of Ithaca, not only at Polis. As we have seen above, at Vathy the Archaic pottery deposit associated with black earth, presents some similarities with the “pyres” at Fitzgerald & Steven’s. There is little doubt that this was also a beachside deposition representing consumption of food and drink and, moreover, there is earlier Geometric and Late Helladic evidence of use nearby. Unfortunately, however, the true extend of the deposit is difficult to discern since it lies beneath a densely built-up area. At Pisaetos harbour the beachside deposit partially excavated by Heurtley presented both Classical and Late Helladic pottery. At the opposite side of the isthmus, at Brosta Aetos, part of the rocky shoreline has been heavily eroded by the waves. There, I came across a true “carpet” of Classical tiles and pottery exposed in section. There seem to be more pottery sherds than stones laying on the ground. The deposit’s true extend must have been considerable since the exposed section covers a distance of nearly 70 m. Among the Classical pottery, there are enough Bronze Age handmade pottery sherds (Fig. 31).

²¹⁹ Unfortunately, these and other finds still await conservation, since the Ephorate has never appointed any conservator in Ithaca, even in fixed-term contract. Therefore, they still await proper study and publication.

²²⁰ Heurtley 1932a.

²²¹ Benton 1934-1935a, 46 n. 5.

²²² As Waterhouse (1996, 303-304) impatiently stated: “... the cult aspect of the cave is assured, as the Mycenaeans did not *live* in caves.” (italics in the original).

3.3. Burials and burial customs

After more than two centuries of patchy fieldwork, combined with the Archaeological Service's longstanding indifference, nothing establishes more firmly the limits of our ignorance on the archaeology of Ithaca than the conspicuous lack of burial evidence. With the exception of a couple of Early Helladic pithos-burials at Pilikata, the first Late Helladic burial mentioned above, and the three Archaic pithos-burials at Aetos reported by Vollgraff, the Ithacan burial evidence begins in the 5th century BC, but mostly in the 4th. The most extensive and best recorded cemetery excavations in Ithaca had been those undertaken by Hallerstein in 1814 and Sylvia Benton in 1937. By combining the evidence, a plausible sequence of burial customs and depositional behaviours can emerge. Most of the burials were found in tile-graves, followed by simple inhumations and the rare built cist-grave. The cemetery seems to have been dispersed in a fairly extensive area, and divided into distinct burial plots, as Hallerstein had observed with regard to Captain Guitiera's excavation and the two clusters excavated by Benton in trenches 1 and 14²²³.

An enigmatic wall foundation with partially dressed stones running north to south and having two short cross-walls to the east, was excavated by Benton in trench 7, which was interpreted as a building²²⁴. More plausibly, it seems to have been the retaining wall of roadside family burial plots facing a cemetery road connecting the Stavros area to Polis harbour. With regard to the depositional practices of grave goods, it seems that in the 5th and the greatest part of the 4th centuries BC, the burials were accompanied only by ceramics, often by a coin, and the occasional personal ornament. In the late 4th and 3rd centuries, however, ceramics become rare and are substituted by lavish drinking vessels in bronze and silver, bronze mirrors, marble pyxides, silver rings and coins. It is also probable that Benton found the remains of a cremation near the grave cluster in trench 14, since there is a published remark stating: "Half a large krater containing bones, which was found nearby, may also be part of this burial-complex"²²⁵.

In 2007, while I was away contracted to work in Cephallenia, I was urgently summoned to inspect earth moving works for the development of the triangular in plan property in which Benton had excavated her trenches 1, 4, and 10. I was informed that one tile-grave had been partially destroyed.

²²³ Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 116, 120 fig. 47; Waterhouse 1952, 229 fig. 3, 231 fig. 4.

²²⁴ Waterhouse 1952, 227-229 fig. 2.

²²⁵ Waterhouse 1952, 232.

The information proved correct, and upon arriving in the evening I opened trench T. OB, located roughly 5 m to north of Benton's trench 4, and 10 m west of her trench 10 (Fig. 32). I found three burials lying side by side in a shallow rectangular pit dug into the natural rock. The pit was lined with upright fragments of Corinthian-type tiles. Unfortunately, only the parts from the hips down had survived, the rest was gone. All three were oriented north-south, with the heads to the north. The easternmost burial, T. OBI, was a simple inhumation not covered with tiles. Ten centimetres above the femurs, there was a skull which, I believe, did not belong to the skeleton, but it was an "extra skull"²²⁶.

The adjacent burial T. OBII was a true tile-grave, the body was laid on tiles and covered with six more, while the short sides were closed with tile fragments set upright. At the right hip emerged a bronze coin, a silver ring²²⁷, and a remarkable bronze cup of the so-called "Panaitios group"²²⁸ (Fig. 33). This is the second "Panaitios group" cup from Stavros, the other one – now in the British Museum – was found in 1814 by Hallerstein in Grave G²²⁹. Next to T. OBII there was another tile-grave, T. OBIII, less elaborate from the former, and with no grave goods. Only on the feet I was able to collect several iron hobnails, evidence that the dead was buried with his sandals on. Interestingly enough, Hallerstein had also found small bronze rings from sandals at the feet of the burials A and D²³⁰. Curiously, one of the hobnails was found nailed into one of the ankle bones. There is no doubt that this cluster of burials was another one like those already recorded by Hallerstein and Benton.

Immediately to the south of Trench OB, there was a thick deposit of black earth with numerous sherds of what appeared to be a large ceramic vessel. The vessel's lowest part was recovered almost intact and found to contain the cremated remains of an individual. By partially piecing the sherds together, I realised that it is a large belly-amphora elaborately

²²⁶ For an "extra skull" in Benton's Grave XV, see Waterhouse 1952, 232.

²²⁷ For a same type silver ring from the Fiott/Lee collection, see Steinhart, Wirbelauer 2002, 220 fig. 99.

²²⁸ Sideris 2002, 167-171.

²²⁹ Steinhart & Wirbelauer 2002, 124-125, 241-242. All three artefacts, together with some other small metal artefacts from Fitzgerald & Steven's and Aetos, were transferred in 2007 at Patra for conservation. They have not returned to Ithaca, and nobody can inform me of their whereabouts. Some years ago, I was told that once at Patra, their accompanying tags were lost! Other artefacts taken from Cephallenia in the same mission have returned years ago to the larger island. There is reason to claim that this neglect is another manifestation of "Elginism", that is, denying the Ithacans of their cultural heritage by every means possible.

²³⁰ Steinhart & Wirbelauer 2002, 116, 119, 121 fig. 48.

decorated. It is fully black glazed and combines decorative elements from various sources: moulded foot with a relatively tall hollow stem like those of the Panathenaic amphoras, whereas the overall shape and decoration follows that of the Ambracian pelikai²³¹. The body is decorated with densely arranged, vertically scraped grooves, with relief ivy leaves at base of handles and appliqué frogs on mid-neck (Fig. 34). Among the sherds there is also a turned and tilted young head, a posture commonly associated with Alexander the Great's portraits²³² (Fig. 35).

The fabric seems Ithacan since both local varieties, the pale and the reddish, appear in different parts of the vessel. The coexistence of inhumation and cremation in the same cemetery throws new light on the burial customs of the northern Ithacans (Fig. 36). Perhaps it was not the only cremation in the vicinity, since that "half a large krater containing bones" of the 1937 excavation may have also been one. It is impossible to know how widespread cremation was, but that excavated by the Ioannina mission in the Patrikios property, and dated in the 2nd century BC, may suggest that the practice continued down to the later Hellenistic period, at least for some individuals of the Stavros community²³³.

The Patrikios burial occurred in a built shaft-grave and was accompanied by rich grave goods: a bronze bucket, a silver cup, a gold ring, a silver ring, and a silver coin. This last case illustrates, I would suggest, the shifting depositional practices related to the consumption of lavish metal artefacts. Whereas until the 5th century the northern Ithacans displayed their wealth in metals in ritual activities around Polis Bay, in the 4th century metals and perhaps other valuables accompanied the dead. That this was a wider island development is also attested by the exceptionally rich Hellenistic burials at Aetos (Fig. 37). The elite of Aetos chose to deposit lavish precious metal objects (mostly vessels and jewellery) in graves²³⁴.

In the Roman period, two cemeteries have been located, one at the northern outskirts of Stavros village in Aghios Elias and Varkà neighbourhoods, and the other at Fitzgerald & Steven's property. Aghios Elias was excavated by the British mission. At Varkà in the Raftopoulos family property I excavated three graves. One was an infant burial inside

²³¹ Aggeli 2004.

²³² For the head posture of Alexander's portraits, see Kiilerich 2017, with extensive bibliography.

²³³ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, 319.

²³⁴ Lee 1849. For the sanctuary of Athena and the *Odysseion*, see IG IX I² 4, 1729, and Fossey 2001.

a Late Roman-Early Byzantine amphora 0.50 m in height²³⁵. The second was a tile-grave containing three child burials one buried on top of the other. A badly preserved closed-shape vessel was placed outside the tiles. What was remarkable in this grave is that the skulls of the two lower burials were removed and placed on the waist of the uppermost. Another tile-grave, this time of an adult, was also excavated but there were no grave goods. At Fitzgerald & Steven's property, I excavated seven tile-graves. All except one had a small bronze coin in the mouth, but only one had a red-ware plate as a grave good. Overall, these graves are much poorer than those excavated at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer. The latter were accompanied by grave goods comparable to those encountered at Vathy, which we have seen above²³⁶. Returning at Vathy, it could be interesting to note here that the coexistence of inhumation and cremation is also encountered at the High School Roman cemetery. Burial XII of the 1st century CE was the richest inhumation of the cemetery, but at its feet there was a secondary inhumation as well as the cremated remains (Burial XIV) of an individual in a cooking vessel (Fig. 38).

3.4. Principal city, towns and the *polis* of the Ithacans

As we have already seen, William Gell and William Martin Leake suggested that two ancient towns existed on the island, one at Aetos and the other at Greater Stavros, although they disagreed in their identification. It was Carl Haller von Hallerstein in 1814 that came up with a different reading of the then available evidence. By making an analogy with his contemporary settlement patterns, he drew the inference that in antiquity the capital stood at Aetos dominating a rural hinterland located in the greater Stavros area dotted with small rural communities and farm complexes²³⁷. Thus, Hallerstein attempted to interpret the island's evidence from an insider perspective.

Indeed, if one wishes to identify the island's principal city on the ground, Aetos seems the obvious choice. Its Classical-Hellenistic fortifications are the most extensive and impressive on the island. They are situated on a naturally defensible position strategically sited on the isthmus connecting the two halves of the island. The fortified area covers roughly 21 ha and

²³⁵ A similar amphora grave was excavated by Hallerstein, see Steinhart & Wirbelauer 2002, 117 (Grave B).

²³⁶ For the Roman graves at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer, see Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, 325-326.

²³⁷ Steinhart & Wirbelauer 2002, 113.

when combined with the partially uncovered harbour works at Pisaetos beach, and the beachside deposits at Brosta Aetos, the figure can be tripled. Several trenches excavated by Benton and Symeonoglou in various places on the Acropolis and the fortifications, have brought to light ceramic evidence dating in the Archaic and Classical periods²³⁸. Substantial evidence for Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic housing has been revealed in the Aetos saddle, but detailed publications are still lacking²³⁹.

Since it has always been visible, a square tower measuring 8 by 8 m at the centre of the saddle has always been a noticeable feature, and a small-scale British excavation dated it in the 4th century BC. Its identity as a tower had never been questioned, until Symeonoglou partially re-excavated the feature and, astonishingly, concluded that instead of a tower it must have been the foundation of a temple of Apollo. He added that Heurtley's square-plan reconstruction was probable, but no western wall survived since the natural soil appeared at a higher altitude than that of a hypothetical western wall²⁴⁰. Through his small-scale excavation, he suggested that the feature was built in the 6th or 5th century BC, while its date of destruction remained undetermined. Symeonoglou established, however, that it was not a free-standing structure, since its south-eastern corner was connected to a polygonal wall running straight to the east²⁴¹.

In 2008 I had the chance to undertake a small-scale excavation on that feature in an attempt to resolve the issue. I focused on the spot where a western wall should be expected if the feature was indeed a square tower. At a depth of just 0.10-0.20 m below the surface, the upper course of the western wall emerged. It was built with smaller and roughly worked stones, unlike the dressed blocks of the northern and eastern walls. This western wall is 1.30-1.40 m wide and 8 m long. In fact, the feature is indeed a square tower measuring 8 by 8 m (Fig. 39). Not only that, but was also established that just as its south-eastern corner is connected to a long wall, so too its north-western corner connects to another wall running to the north. A stratigraphic section was also exposed at the north-western interior corner, which suggests that the tower fell out of use in the early or mid-4th century BC. From then on it was left more or less as it stands today. I was not able to ascertain its construction date, but the recovered pottery suggests that 5th century seems highly likely.

²³⁸ Benton 1938-1939, 22 n. 2; Symeonoglou 1985, 209-213.

²³⁹ Symeonoglou 1984; Id. 1985; Id. 1986; Id. 1990.

²⁴⁰ Symeonoglou 1986, 236-237; Id. 1990, 272-274 and n. 6.

²⁴¹ Symeonoglou 1990, 273-274.

If Aetos is the most likely site for the island's central place, then certain institutions should have been in place, and since their architectural expression has not yet been revealed by excavation, their presence must be plausibly inferred by other material evidence. At this point, inscriptions and coinage come to our aid²⁴². Symeonoglou's excavations produced more than a dozen local bronze coins bearing the ethnonym ΙΘΑ or ΙΘΑΚΩΝ and depicting Odysseus. For the first time we have Ithacan coins coming from datable contexts confirming their earliest appearance in the 4th century²⁴³. The Magnesia inscription (IG IX I² 4, 1729) dated in 208 BC, is the only local source attesting to the political institutions located at the urban centre of the *polis*, and bears testimony to the architectural expression of urban political institutions, such as the *patrios hestia*, where the Magnesian ambassadors were hosted, the sanctuary of Athena and the *Odysseion*. Comparison with the other inscriptions of the Magnesia corpus of the Ionian islands, allows to infer that the *patrios hestia* was the *prytaneion*. Moreover, since in the case of Ithaca one of the inscribed stone stelai would have been deposited into the *Odysseion*, it would not be inconceivable to assume that it had the same function as the *prytaneion*, that is, the public archive²⁴⁴. Therefore, I would suggest that the *patrios hestia* and the *Odysseion* were the same building: the *prytaneion*, always located in the principal city of a *polis*, in this case Aetos²⁴⁵. That Aetos was indeed the principal city of the *polis* of the Ithacans, seems to be confirmed by the funerary inscription of Praylos, a name which appears also in the Magnesia decree as the name of the father of the elected *thearodokos* Igeratas²⁴⁶. If it is not the same person, he must have been a member of the same prominent Ithacan family. The local bronze coinage suggests that it was the island's

²⁴² Although I do not believe that there are "b-series" sources, I am cautious of the work of non-Ithacan ancient authors if their claims are not corroborated by local evidence. Outsiders' views of small regions, especially islands, all the more small islands, are frequently biased, and tend to reflect their authors' agendas rather than the actual state of things on the island itself. See, e.g., Broodbank 2000, 6-35; Rainbird 2007, 1-25.

²⁴³ C.-P. de Bosset's observation that Ithacan coins are only to be found at Aetos, still holds true.

²⁴⁴ The Ithacan decree presents this peculiarity, to be recorded in two stelai and placed in two separate sanctuaries, that of Athena and at the *Odysseion*. See Fossey 2001, 175.

²⁴⁵ Crema 2010, 218; De Vido 2010, 270. In the corresponding inscription from Sami in Cephallenia (IG IX I² 4, 1582), it is explicitly stated that the *koine hestia* is the *prytaneion*, where those same ambassadors were hosted. I cannot accept the hypothesis that the *Odysseion* could have been outside the island's administrative centre, in northern Ithaca or elsewhere.

²⁴⁶ IG IX I² 4, 1654, end of the 3rd century BC. Symeonoglou 1995, 215; Fossey 2001, 174; 2003, 10.

major retail centre, whereas the fortifications suggest that large-scale public infrastructure likely begun to emerge in the 5th century BC.

What about the Greater Stavros area? I argue here that at the northern outskirts of modern Stavros – the southern extremity of the Pilikata-Stavros ridge – a fairly well organised ancient settlement, with visible architectural remains, lays unnoticed right in front of our eyes. Once again at the Raftopoulos family property at Varkà neighbourhood, a segment of a retaining wall was excavated, running from north to south. Its length inside the Raftopoulos property is 20.50 m, although it has been ascertained that it continues in both directions (Fig. 40). It is built with large roughly worked blocks, with only one or two dressed sides. Its maximum preserved height is 0.90 m. Its foundation trench was packed with tile fragments and pottery dating in the 4th century BC. Among these was found an amphora handle bearing a stamp with the letters **ΣΩ** (Fig. 41).

By surveying the surrounding area, it was possible to locate another retaining wall, uphill from and parallel to the Raftopoulos wall, at a distance of 23 m to the west. It can be traced for a distance of nearly 50 m (Fig. 42: Long Wall; Fig. 43). At 50 m to the north-west of this long wall, at the property of Travlos family, a segment of a third retaining wall was excavated (Fig. 42). It was preserved at the length of 3.70 m, with a preserved height of 0.75 m (Fig. 44).

The pottery in its foundation trench revealed that this segment also can be dated in the 4th century BC. Of interest, furthermore, was that its southern end presents a right-angle termination, which suggests a passage, or gate, on the axis east-west. Nothing was found further to the south, probably because that area was heavily disturbed by contemporary interventions. Immediately to the east of this retaining wall, a deposit of domestic pottery of the 4th century and burned soil was brought to light, possible evidence of habitation.

Staying on the Travlos property, 40 m to the north-west, another 5 m long stretch of retaining wall built with large stones, again facing east, is visible on the surface²⁴⁷ (Fig. 45). These four parallel segments of 4th century retaining walls cover the eastern, gently sloping flank of the Stavros ridge. The opposite western flank, towards Polis valley, is much steeper. There too, however, there is some evidence for a retaining wall. In 1994 the Ioannina mission excavated a stretch of what they interpreted as a fortification wall built with equally large blocks, at E. Raftopoulos

²⁴⁷ It was plainly visible in 2008, that this stretch of wall had been investigated by an excavation trench. It is not known to me, however, when and by whom.

property, 150 m to the south-west of Raftopoulos family plot²⁴⁸. All these partially traced walls seem to converge at the road junction towards Frikes to the north-east and Pilikata to the north-west, thus forming concentric rings of retaining walls with level terrain behind them. It is probable that that wall excavated by the British mission, reportedly crossing the Stavros ridge, could have been a connecting stretch between these newly identified retaining walls. These architectural remains cover an area of roughly 5 ha, and future research can only increase this figure. It must be a public infrastructure ready to become a town and host a substantial community in a somewhat urbanised setting. However, despite the effort to establish that infrastructure, it seems that a settlement never took root. What has not been found in any of the excavations, is remnants of housing or other buildings. This cannot be accidental, since in every case a fair amount of area was tested with this question in mind. What has been found, so far, are small accumulations of pottery and tile fragments which could have resulted from short-lived dwellings. None of that pottery seems to be later than 4th century. Therefore, I am inclined to think that that evidence is what remains of a failed synoecism. Perhaps the rise of Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer in the second half of the 4th century, might have been the reason why it was abandoned. The new site is smaller in size, roughly 3 maximum 4 ha, but it was better fortified and enjoyed a much better water supply. Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer, however, never rose to become an urban centre, and the late Hellenistic houses' layout follows the natural topography with many rock-cut features²⁴⁹.

Let us now return to the inscription of Athena *polias* and Hera *teleia* which, as its text states, was dedicated in a sanctuary somewhere at Polis valley by the *peripoloi*, the patrollers. This is the earliest hint for the existence, in mid-6th century BC, of a *polis* in Greater Stavros, or at least a polity politically self-conscious and organised enough to mobilise a body of people that could be regarded as citizens. The elite of Greater Stavros engaged in conspicuous consumption of monumental bronze artefacts at beachside places, in the liminal zone, where those patrollers were probably also active. The material culture accompanying those gatherings was carefully selected, and at the end of each event some of it was exposed in view as event-marker. The elite of Greater Stavros was conscious enough

²⁴⁸ Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2001, 320; Kontorli-Papadopoulou, Papadopoulos 2001, 66-67.

²⁴⁹ The recently expressed view of “a dense and varied pattern of centralised urban life” (Papadopoulos *et alii* 2022, 47) at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer is highly misleading, and is uttered by people with only a shallow understanding of the archaeology of Ithaca.

to display its maritime connections and, at the same time, use the material culture to curate archaisms in order to avoid unwanted social change. It seems they were aware of the impact material culture had on people, even the apparently unimportant pottery. They somehow understood that during their absence, their power resided, and was maintained, even in the small things such as pottery.

If the Greater Stavros polity was indeed a *polis* that does not entail it was city-centred, that there had to be an urban centre and its citizens followed an urbanised lifestyle. Indeed, so far, no monumental architectural remains have been located in Greater Stavros, such as monumental temples, large-scale fortification walls, or anything like an urban grid plan. A *polis* could have been a political community without an actual urban centre. Only in the 4th century BC there is evidence that an effort to establish something like an urban centre was undertaken, possibly in an attempt to emulate developments already occurring at Aetos. However, that effort was short-lived. Towards the end of that century things changed. The principal town seems to have been relocated at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer, even if it was smaller. The offerings at Polis sanctuary show signs of decline and a spatial reorganisation takes place²⁵⁰; monumental bronzes cease to appear in beachside depositions and start being deposited in burials; and after the 4th century the pottery in feasting depositions at Fitzgerald & Steven's becomes almost unrecognisable.

At Aetos too, things changed in the 4th century. The fortifications on the saddle seem to fall out of use, and habitation expands outside of the square tower covering also the eastern part of the saddle²⁵¹. Local coinage appears for the first time, on which Odysseus and his patron deity Athena figure prominently²⁵². In the Hellenistic period Odysseus is indisputably present in the sanctuary of Polis Cave, and perhaps his worship emerged after the reorganisation of the shrine in late-4th century²⁵³. I fully agree with Catherine Morgan that it was from then on, that Odysseus became the most prominent means of identity expression for the whole island, perhaps as a foundation myth for a probably newly established political organisation. It is in this context of the late-4th century changes that I would be inclined to accept Pseudo-Skylax's statement that Ithaca was a one-polis island, but not earlier²⁵⁴.

²⁵⁰ Morgan, Hayward 2021, 76-77, 80.

²⁵¹ Symeonoglou 1984.

²⁵² Gardner 1887, xliii, 105-106; Head 1887, 359; Symeonoglou 1984, 112.

²⁵³ Morgan, Hayward 2021, 85-86.

²⁵⁴ Ps. Skylax 34: Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πόλις Φαρὰ καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα νησός ἐστιν Ἰθάκη, καὶ

4. Unexpected evidence for expected questions

Contract archaeology often entails going out in the field to look for and collect data without having a particular question, or research agenda, in mind. However, unexpected encounters with artefacts in a landscape generate questions that, probably, might have not been raised otherwise. Such unexpected encounters offer opportunities to try to formulate and then answer them, or revisit evidence and inferences produced in the past. Two such cases are being briefly discussed here: the question of when Ithaca was first inhabited, and whether the Early Helladic settlement at Pilikata was surrounded by one or more circuit-walls.

4.1. The first humans on Ithaca

In the south-eastern extremity of the island is located the small karstic plateau of Marathias (Fig. 2). It lies at an altitude of 260-300 m.a.s.l. and it is characterised by a rugged karst surface of rocky outcrops and reddish soil. The overall physical setting presents itself as a natural balcony overlooking the inner Ionian archipelago and offers a view as far as Elis in the Peloponnese to the south-east. During a brief field-walking a large surface scatter of stone artefacts was located. It seems to be a typical “surface site”, that is, “... a class of sites that exist entirely on the surface with no relationship to a stratified deposit”, with slight possibility of remaining stratified deposits²⁵⁵. Thick low shrubs entailed a collecting-from-the-goat-tracks strategy, but the number of lithics present on those tracks is by no means low. A sample of ca. 200 artefacts was collected randomly but with a view to selecting finished tools and microliths for chronological purposes. They are all made of local flint and judging by their shape they can be classified as blades, backed blades with blunt ends, crude end-scrapers, burins, denticulates, and non-geometric microliths. Some years ago, Late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic tools have been tentatively identified in this lot²⁵⁶. The site affords good sources of raw material, both in pebbles and in veins traceable on weathered limestone

πόλις καὶ λιμὴν· μετὰ ταῦτα νῆσος Κεφαλήνια. The further the ancient author ventures off the continental coast, the less detailed his description becomes. Therefore, as in the previously described island of Leucas, the existence of only one *polis* on Ithaca is by no means certain. For Pseudo-Skylax in general, see Shipley 2012; Mauro 2022.

²⁵⁵ For a definition of the “surface site” see Runnels, Karimali, Cullen 2003, 135.

²⁵⁶ Livitsanis 2013, 99.

surfaces. Therefore, the multi-period lithics assemblages may suggest an established stone tools processing site. The ongoing evaluation of the recovered sample has shown that the history of the site must be pushed backwards, since both Middle Palaeolithic and Early Upper Palaeolithic artefacts have by now been identified. Morphological characteristics suggest that the former is represented by at least one Levallois core and three Levallois points (Fig. 46), whereas the latter is represented by Aurignacian blade and burin products²⁵⁷ (Fig. 47).

4.2. Early Bronze Age wall or walls at Pilikata?

When Gell and Leake visited northern Ithaca, they reached a hilltop called Samikou, to the north of Stavros village²⁵⁸. There they observed the above ground remains of a circuit wall built with large stone blocks surrounding the summit. Gell identified those remains with ancient Alalkomenai. Later on, the toponym changed by the Pilikas family residing there, and from then on it is called Pilikata. Guided by Vollgraff's excavations, Walter Heurtley undertook an intensive exploration and examined the above ground remains of the circuit wall in several places. At one place he was able to trace two stretches of wall parallel to each other, and he tentatively identified the one downslope as the remains of a bastion²⁵⁹. The Ioannina mission also undertook extensive excavations at Pilikata, and in one of the trenches they uncovered a stretch of wall which they identified as a "fortifications tower", making direct reference to Heurtley's observation²⁶⁰.

There is, however, another possibility. Namely, that there existed two, and not only one, concentric circuit walls. In 2008 I had the chance to excavate two evaluation trenches in Dimitrios Vlassopoulos' plot, the same plot in which the Ioannina mission had excavated the "fortification tower".

²⁵⁷ For analogous lithic industries identified on the small islands of the inner Ionian archipelago, see Galanidou *et alii* 2018, 451-452, 464. My acknowledgments go to Professors Marie Soressi and Georgia Kourtessi-Philippakis for their advice.

²⁵⁸ Gell 1807, 107-108; Leake 1835, 44.

²⁵⁹ Heurtley 1934-1935, 3 n. 4, Pl. 1: at the two Xs between the excavation areas V and VI. It is probable that Heurtley's suggestion was influenced by Gell's (1807, 108) observation that: "... the curtain is strengthened by towers." In the British topographic plan of Pilikata, it is evident that around Areas II, V, and VI, Heurtley excavated numerous test trenches projecting radially outward of the circuit-wall. They seem to suggest that he suspected the existence of a second concentric circuit-wall, but in the end, he was not convinced.

²⁶⁰ Papadopoulos, Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2003, 189 fig. 230, 190.

That trench and the architectural remains were still visible. A little to the north-east of the Ioannina trench, at a distance of 50 m east-southeast of Heurtley's northernmost stretch of circuit wall, another stretch of wall 15 m long was identified and partially excavated (Fig. 48).

It is built with similarly large stone blocks roughly worked with smaller stones filling the gaps. Only one course of blocks is preserved with a maximum height of 1 m. Some of the blocks have been tipped over from their initial position, but overall they retain their original position. After clearing the front, two test-trenches were sunk in its interior face with the intention of dating its foundation. It was found that the wall had inner face built with equally large stones, and the abundant pottery inside the foundations was invariably Early Bronze Age (Fig. 49). Its width results in roughly 1.50 m. This stretch of wall is located on the same contour line as that in Heurtley's excavation area V, and it seems to be its continuation towards the north. Therefore, I would suggest that instead of a single circuit wall surrounding Pilikata hilltop, there are two.

The Pilikata circuit walls seem to be a very rare instance of Early Bronze Age architecture of communal character built with large blocks. Indeed, their size often leads the archaeologist to identify them as Late Bronze Age or even Classical. However, as Sylvia Benton had observed²⁶¹, with every excavation trench these walls are tested, the pottery recovered from their foundations is purely Early Bronze Age. Perhaps it would be of interest to note at this point that, despite this important prehistoric site being known for 90 years, the Greek Archaeological Service has never produced a topographical map. Neither had the Ioannina mission in the 1990s. That of the British mission remains the only one. Moreover, both Greek and foreign archaeologists visiting the site today comment with astonishment when informed that the hilltop has not yet been scheduled as a no-build zone, an act of neglect which puts in jeopardy its integrity and preservation.

5. The landscape of Ithaca

The promising results which I have surveyed here, though preliminary and modest, are serious contributions made by contract archaeology to the archaeology of Ithaca despite the ongoing neglect of the island by the Greek Archaeological Service. This makes it all the more painful to note

²⁶¹ Waterhouse 1996, 302.

that no contract archaeology has taken place on the island since 2013. No new rescue excavations have been undertaken for a decade, nor have Ithacan archaeologists been employed on their island during this period. It is as if there is no more archaeology in Ithaca. And this is all the more remarkable in the context of expanding development, since public and private construction has continued unabated. In light of all this it is necessary to recall that the archaeology of Ithaca has always been a political affair, engaging interests both big and small, a general problem not unique to Ithaca. This consideration helps to put into context the fact that decisions made about archaeology on Ithaca do not always follow the strict academic ethics of the discipline not do they always engage honestly with the archaeological community, let alone with the Ithacan or wider public. One of the results of this has been an official disinterest in the contribution of contract archaeology, in some instances amounting to the denial by some elements in the Greek Archaeological Service of due credit for work done by others. My recent efforts towards preliminary surveys of the island's Early Modern settlement patterns have met such a fate. In response to my work on the Venetian heritage of the island²⁶², in mid-2022 I received an official communication from the Ephorate of Cephallenia which threatened to infringe my rights as an independent researcher, no less clearly than with the following claim: "The endless invocation of intellectual rights is a thing of the past for us"²⁶³. The aim here is not merely to appropriate the work of another for the benefit of the Ephorate. By showing that the intellectual rights of researchers will be violated, the official policy seems to be to intimidate and impede any future initiative in Ithaca, all the while assuming the results which independent research offers in the context of the inaction of the Greek Archaeological Service itself. For this author, at least, making efforts to do archaeology in my home island has turned out to be a good enough reason for the authorities to drive me out of home²⁶⁴. In sum, the picture seems to be clear. The strategy of the Cephallenian Ephorate over

²⁶² See Livitsanis 2020a. See also the lecture to the Ithacan Historical Society (Melbourne), 'Towards an archaeology of Venetian Ithaca' (5 September 2022): https://youtu.be/zy6F-_fR_60.

²⁶³ Αρ. πρ.: οικ. 430694/09.09.2022, Γρηγορακάκης προς Λιβιτσάνη: «Η αιώνια επίκληση πνευματικών δικαιωμάτων αποτελεί για μας παρελθόν.» Intimidation and bullying in archaeology are by now a well-known phenomenon, especially against contract archaeologists who in Greece are considered of lower professional status. See, Coltofean-Arizancu *et alii* 2023.

²⁶⁴ It is a bitter irony that during the last three consecutive years I have been posted to projects in Cephallenia as a contract archaeologist, yet never in Ithaca, as though the Ephorate considers me qualified enough to work on Cephallenia but unqualified on Ithaca.

the last century, as we have seen, and until today, seems to be to neglect the archaeology of Ithaca, to discredit the island's historical significance, and further to appropriate what remains of its widely attractive heritage. Despite all this, the strong local identity of the Ithacans and their pride in the heritage of the island means these islanders have developed a profound appreciation for the importance of archaeology, with an awareness of the high stakes involved both in its scientific practice and in its public outreach. This has been demonstrated by many initiatives led by Ithacans, often with the support of the island's wide foreign network, to revive activity and restore interest in their island's heritage.

Despite these adversities, the preliminary results I have surveyed here show that contract archaeology in Ithaca can make a serious contribution to our understanding of the island's history. The indications, though results of work of small scope, even allow us to observe some long-term historical processes. Most importantly for the discourse on the island's landscape is the indication that there had been three, not two, major long-term habitation districts on Ithaca: Vathy, Aetos, and Greater Stavros. The dominant one among multiple centres, that is, where the principal settlement was located, could shift between those three districts to adapt to changing sociopolitical, economic, and strategic circumstances. Thus, it seems that during the Final Neolithic period Vathy was preferred, while the Greater Stavros area seems to have dominated the island from the hilltop at Pilikata during the Early Bronze Age. By the first millennium BC, Aetos had grown to become the principal nucleated site and the *asty* of the *polis* of Ithaca. Perhaps the scant (so far) evidence for Classical and Hellenistic habitation in Vathy is explained by the rise of Aetos from the 5th century onwards. During the Roman Imperial period, another major shift occurred, and a settlement founded again at Vathy appears to have served as the island's capital. Such are the indications of contract archaeology in Ithaca, which promise no less than the possibility of discovering a hitherto lost ancient city; more than one, if we add the indications of contract archaeology from Stavros.

After the 6th century CE, Vathy seems to have been abandoned, and people moved to more elevated locations, following a pattern observed widely in Greek islands. There, at Perachori, Anoghi, and Aetos (which seems to have been reoccupied) the scant (so far) Byzantine remains are mostly to be found. It seems that this settlement pattern persisted throughout the Late Medieval and Venetian periods, and only in the 18th century coastal locations became again the preferred places to live. The causes of the striking shift in site location after the 6th century were likely

multiple, perhaps a response to dangers coming from the sea, such as raids, and the risk of deadly infectious diseases. But from the Roman period until today, the wider district of Vathy seems to have retained its leading role in the island's settlement hierarchy. The dominant modern, post-17th century, urban character of the harbour town of Vathy, however, has played a crucial but suppressive role in people's attitude towards this site's archaeological potential. Wanting to suppress the existence of antiquities beneath their houses and in their backyards, it seems the inhabitants of Vathy preferred to explain the presence of ancient artefacts by claiming they were brought from Aetos. We have seen this when the Vathysanoi said to Wilhelm Vollgraff that no ancient walls were ever encountered at Vathy; it is why Tsiproudīs claimed that the Roman marble bust was transferred from Aetos²⁶⁵; and it is also why the Hellenistic tombstones from Vathy were said to come from Aetos²⁶⁶.

Today, the beach sites of Ithaca are built-up areas for habitation, or dedicated to leisure activities. In Classical antiquity they seem to have been the venues for another important long-term phenomenon in the Ithacan landscape: beachside depositions. Special events involving gatherings of people associated with feasting and, subsequently, the exposure to view of event markers, seem to be well enough documented at Polis Bay. It is also highly probable that similar events took place in other major bays of Ithaca that were the harbours of substantial communities. They were at least communities well enough established in those locations and capable of arranging such special events and at the end leave the markers behind. To my view, this is a very interesting subfield for future archaeological research to pursue in Ithaca, one that deserves additional focus and more intensive fieldwork.

By turning to more particular topics such as these, the archaeology of the little island of Ithaca can contribute much to the discourse on pressing issues in Mediterranean archaeology and history. One of those topics is the earliest human colonisation of islands, especially the smaller islands such as Ithaca. Roughly twenty years ago, no finds from Ithaca earlier than the Bronze Age could be reported with absolute confidence²⁶⁷. Thanks to the results achieved by contract archaeology, the picture has changed²⁶⁸. From the Marathias "surface site" evidence, it can now be argued that

²⁶⁵ Tsiproudīs 1937.

²⁶⁶ Kalligas 1978-1979, 67.

²⁶⁷ Cherry 1981; Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 6-7.

²⁶⁸ Cherry, Leppard 2018.

In the Shadow of Odysseus

Ithaca was inhabited already in the Middle Palaeolithic, and by a different human subspecies. Although it may have been inhabited only sporadically, the evidence seems to suggest that humans visited the island throughout the Upper Palaeolithic. In the latest glacial maximum, Ithaca joined Cephallenia and Zacynthus to form one large island, much closer to the continental coast than it appears today²⁶⁹. Whether or not the evidence suggests a regularity of visits, it seems that Ithaca was accessible to humans in all kinds of environmental conditions. A permanent colonisation seems to have occurred in the Final Neolithic period, in a time when most small islands received their earliest permanent inhabitants. In the end, the Final Neolithic evidence from Vathy has also allowed the identification of other comparable and contemporary finds by contradicting dubious claims regarding their chronology, as we had seen in the excavations at Aghios Athanasios/School of Homer.

To sum up, the archaeology of Ithaca has much more to offer when it is freed of its Homeric shackles. This is not to be misunderstood, however, as a denial of the important role the figure of Odysseus has held, and will continue to hold, as the symbol of the long heritage of the island, no less important for the local pride of the Ithacans than for their foreign friends whom the heritage of the island has long fascinated. This is something those involved in the archaeology of Ithaca should not deny, since the rich and promising archaeological possibilities of Ithaca offer themselves to the initiatives of multiple contributors seeking to leave their mark in the island's historiography. Despite the long and continued domination of the regional branch of the Greek Archaeological Service, by Cephallenian interests, and its efforts to suppress the promotion of the smaller island's archaeological heritage, the Ithacans and their many friends beyond the wine-dark seas have long shown motivation to find a way forward. On Ithaca, with its modern tradition of archaeological practice spanning centuries, the archaeologist, for better or worse, has a special privilege and a decided responsibility. In this odyssey of ours, *Mētis* be our guide.

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²⁶⁹ Ferentinos *et alii* 2012.

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Fig. 1. Map of Ithaca
in the central Ionian
archipelago.
(Graphics Author)



Fig. 2. Map of Ithaca with
sites mentioned in the text
(Map: Markku Ylisirnio).



Fig. 3. Detail of the portrait of Marino Pignatorre, native of Cephallenia and Governor of Ithaca in 1719, displaying the Classical name of “Ithaca” (Photo: Author, curtesy of the Focas Cosmetatos Foundation, Argostoli).

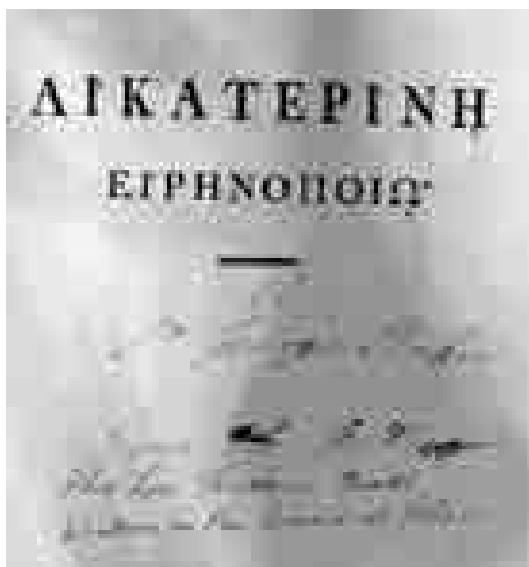


Fig. 4. Detail of the frontispiece of Frederick North’s poem with a handwritten dedication stating: “Written in the Island of Ithaca” (Photo: Author, courtesy of Gennadius Library).

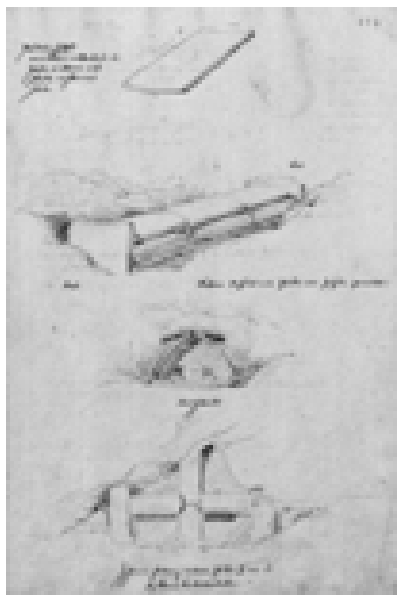


Fig. 5. Carl Haller von Hallerstein's drawings of tile-graves excavated by Captain Guitiera at Stavros (Coll. and fotogr. BNU de Strasbourg).

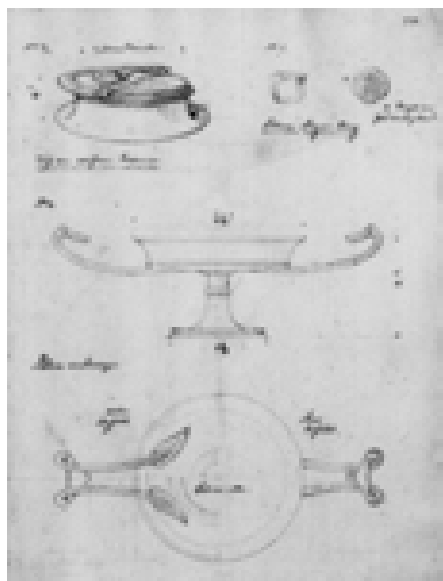


Fig. 6. Carl Haller von Hallerstein's drawings of some of the grave goods he excavated at Stavros. In evidence the bronze cup of the so-called "Panaitios Group" (Coll. and fotogr. BNU de Strasbourg).

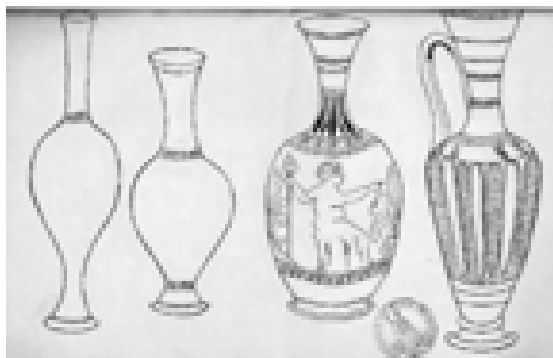


Fig. 7. Lithographs of some of Captain Guitiera's finds. In evidence a squat-lekythos of the so-called "Agrinion Group", and an "Elean" lekythos (Coll. and fotogr. Library of the Hellenic Parliament).

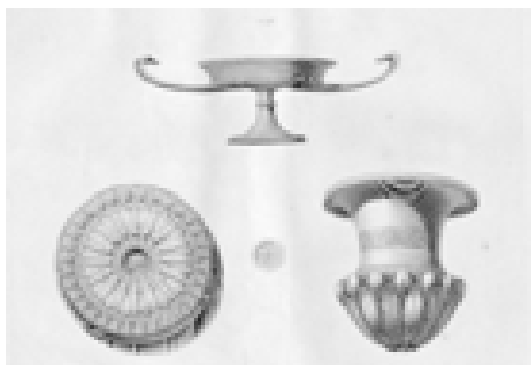


Fig. 8. Lithographs of Hallerstein's and Fiott Lee's find from Ithaca (After Stackelberg 1837, Pl. 54).

Fig. 9. The Roman sarcophagus lid from Vathy (Photo: Author, courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum and Despoina Ignatiadou).





Fig. 10. The earliest known photograph of an ancient Ithacan artefact, IG IX 12 4, 1614 (After Comparetti 1880-1881).



Fig. 11. The Panos Raftopoulos collection of antiquities (Coll. and photogr. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Athen).

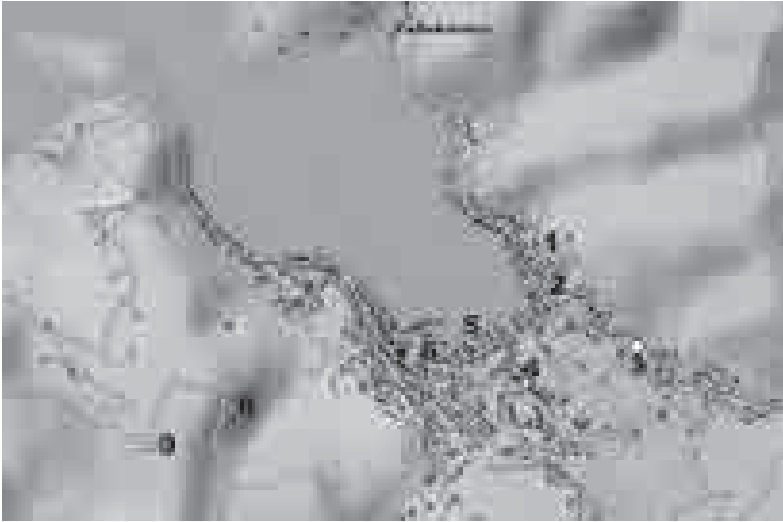


Fig. 12. Map of Vathy with sites mentioned in the text: (1) Anastasatou plot, (2) Georgakopoulos plot, (3) Manias, Mavrokefalos, Chr. Karavias, and Sobolas plots, (4) High School, (5) Dendrinos plot, (6) Vlasopoulos plot, (7) Notary Vlasopoulos' plot, (8) Kasonàki, (9) Marmarospilia (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 13. An Early Byzantine sarcophagus from Vathy (Photo: Author).



Fig. 14. A Roman marble bust from Vathy (Photo: Courtesy of Takis Tokkas).



Fig. 15. Mycenaean pottery sherds from Vathy (Photo: Author).



Fig. 16. Archaic pottery from Vathy (Photo: Author).

Fig. 17. A Late Geometric or Early Proto-Corinthian sherd from Vathy
(Photo: Author).



Fig. 18. Plan of the excavated part of the Roman town at Vathy (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 19. The iron “spear-point” from the Roman sanctuary at Vathy
(Photo: autor)



Fig. 20. The bronze figurine from the Roman sanctuary at Vathy
(Photo: autor)



Fig. 21. Roman lamp of the “ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ” workshop from tomb T. BII at Vathy (Photo: Author).

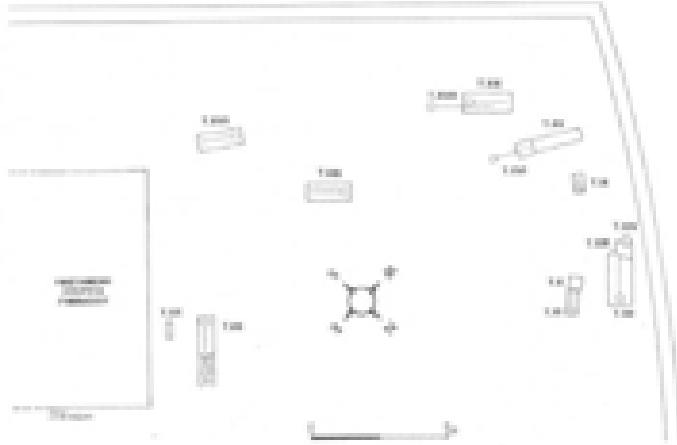


Fig. 22. Plan of the excavated part of the Roman cemetery at Vathy (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 23. Stacked grave goods at the Roman cemetery at Vathy (Photo: Author).



Fig. 24. Map of Stavros-Polis area (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 25. Partial view of Pyre 1, Fitzgerald & Steven's plot, Polis.(Photo: Author).



Fig. 26. Late Classical
feeders from Pyre 3,
Fitzgerald & Steven's
plot, Polis
(Photo: Author).



Fig. 27. A selection of
pottery from Pyre 2,
Fitzgerald & Steven's
plot, Polis.
(Photo: Author).

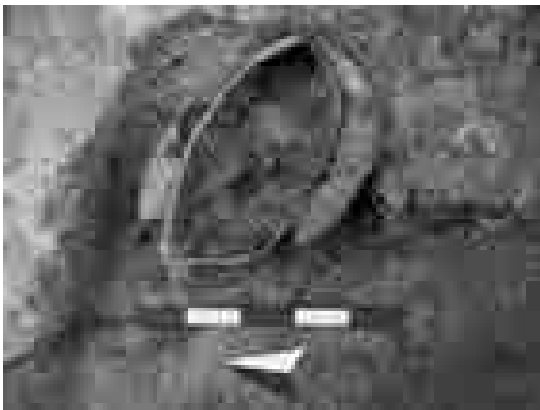


Fig. 28. The bronze
cauldron of Pyre 2,
Fitzgerald & Steven's
plot, Polis
(Photo: Author).

Fig. 29. Beads from the Mycenaean burial, Fitzgerald & Steven's plot, Polis (Photo: Author).



Fig. 30. Juglets from the Mycenaean burial. Fitzgerald & Steven's plot, Polis (Photo: Author).

Fig. 31. Bronze Age pottery sherds from Brosta Aetos (Photo: Author).





Fig. 32. Trench OB in relation to the British excavations of 1937 (After Waterhouse 1952, Fig. 1).



Fig. 33. The bronze cup of the so-called "Panaitios Group" (Photo: Author).



Fig. 34. Parts of the cremation amphora with appliqué decoration, from Stavros (Photo: Author).



Fig. 35. Appliqué decorative element of the cremation amphora showing a turned and tilted head of a youth, from Stavros (Photo: Author).

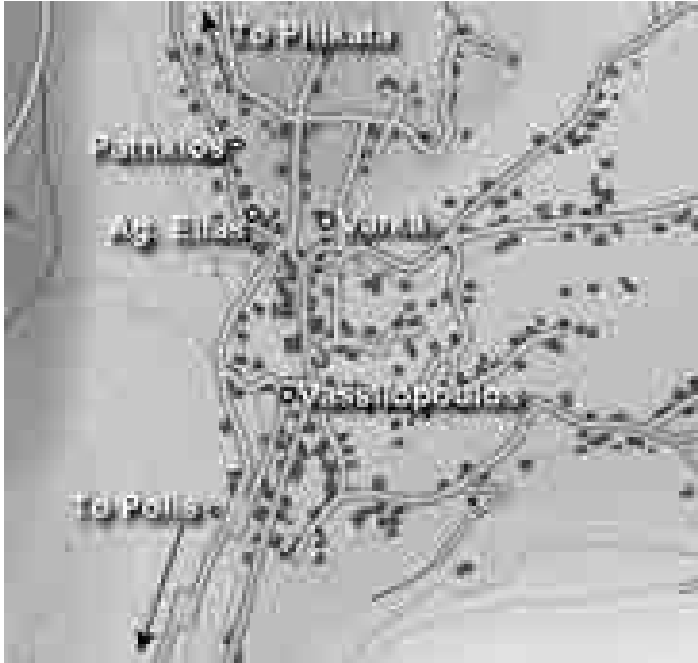


Fig. 36. Map of Stavros village indicating burial sites (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 37. A fragment of ancient tombstone incorporated in a recently built stone fence at Aetos (Photo: Author).



Fig. 38. Plan of burials at Vathy Roman cemetery showing the cremation T. XIV (Graphics: Author).

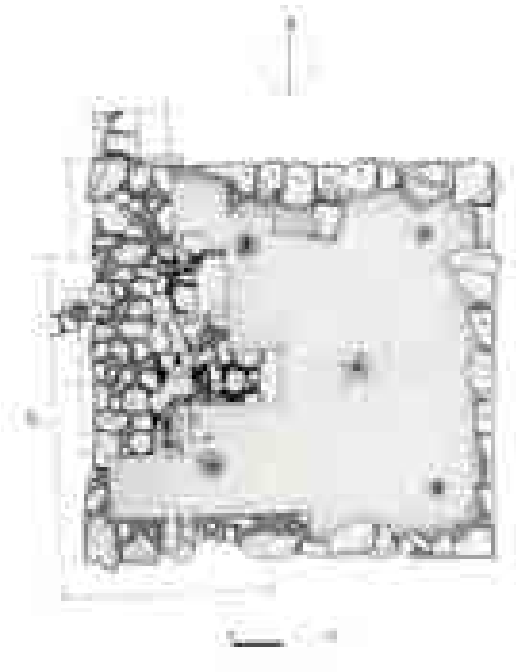


Fig. 39. Plan of the Aetos square tower (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 40. View of the retaining wall at the Raftopoulos family plot at Stavros (Photo: Author).



Fig. 41. Stamped "ΣΩ" amphora handle from the Raftopoulos family plot at Stavros (Photo: Author).

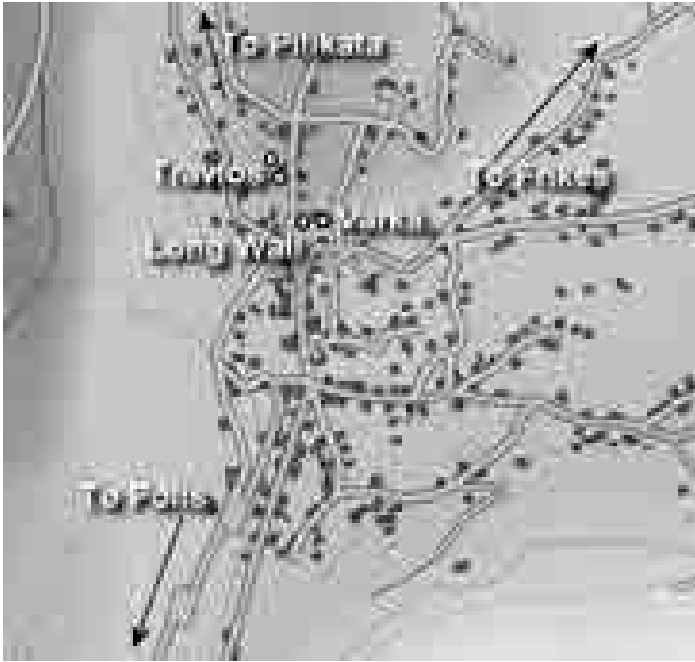


Fig. 42. Map of Stavros village indicating the sites with stretches of ancient retaining walls (Graphics: Author).



Fig. 43. View of the Long Wall at Stavros (Photo: Author).



Fig. 44. View of the retaining wall at Travlos plot (Photo: Author).

Fig. 45. View of another stretch of retaining wall at Travlos plot. An old excavation trench in front of it is evident (Photo: Author).

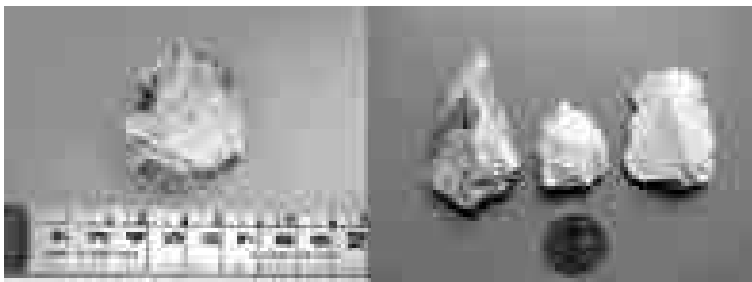
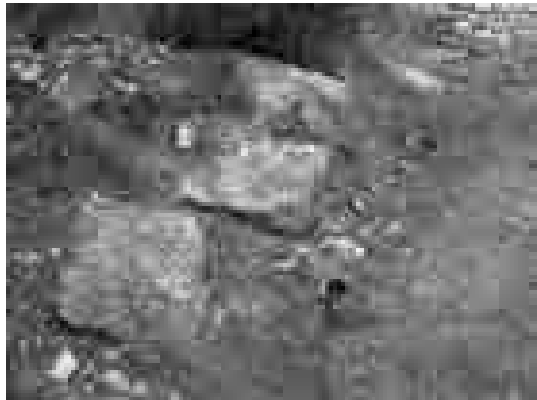


Fig. 46. Middle Palaeolithic Levallois lithic industry from Marathias (Photo: Author).



Fig. 47. Early Upper Palaeolithic lithic industry from Marathias (Photo: Author).

Fig. 48. A stretch of Early Bronze Age wall at the Dimitrios Vlassopoulos plot, Pilikata hilltop (Photo: Author).



Fig. 49. Early Bronze Age pottery sherds from the Dimitrios Vlassopoulos plot, Pilikata hilltop (Photo: Author).

ZACYNTHUS AND THE WESTERN PELOPONNESE: BETWEEN THE ACHAEAN HELLENISTIC *KOINON* AND ROMAN EXPANSION INTO GREECE

After having defeated Antiochus III at Thermopylae in 191 BC, and following the withdrawal of the Seleucid king from Greek territory, there was a series of political rearrangements in the Peloponnese that favored the rapid expansion of the Achaean *koinon* in the western area of the peninsula¹. That same year, the *strategos* Diophanes, who had bought the island of Zacynthus from a lieutenant of Amynder of Athamania, Hierocles of Acragas, attacked the territory of Messene with the Achaean federal army to force its incorporation into the *koinon*, while diplomatically pressing to Elis with the same objective. After guaranteed the safe withdrawal of the Seleucid garrison protecting them, the Eleans were willing to enter into the Achaean *koinon*. Messene, instead, had resorted to armed resistance and, before the Achaean invasion, had responded by sending an embassy to T. Quinctius Flaminius to perform a *deditio*. Ultimately, Flaminius did not accept the surrender and mediated instead Messene's entry into the *koinon*, which meant the long-awaited Achaean Peloponnesian unity (Paus. 8, 30, 5).

This negotiation led the two most important western Peloponnesian cities to enter the *koinon*, but in exchange, the Achaeans had to give up Zacynthus. And though the Achaean *strategos*, Diophanes, initially opposed the request, the Achaeans finally relented, delivering the island to Rome. In the past scholarship, there has not been an in-depth discussion of this particular incident. Although Roman interest in controlling the island is not surprising in itself, only a few authors have tried to understand the Achaean reasons behind the island's purchase, not reaching a single explanation.

G. Niccolini (1914, 142) envisioned an Achaean interest in developing a naval policy in the area, an idea openly questioned by A. Aymard

¹ Unless otherwise stated, from this point onward, all dates are BC.

(1938, 349 n. 4), who, on the contrary, thought that the Achaeans lacked both human and material resources for this naval development. For his part, R. Errington (1969, 122) has understood Zacynthus' purchase as an Achaean move to push Elis more effectively, an interpretation shared by C. Champion (2004, 128). Finally, E. Gruen (1986, 447), who has consistently emphasised the Achaean and Greek agencies during Roman eastern expansion, argues for a sense of continuity in Achaean foreign policy since the Second Macedonian War. He proposes that the Achaeans viewed the Roman intervention as a convenient "sideshow" that they could exploit to their advantage (Gruen 1986, 469). Achaean expansive interests in 191 were to be expected, but what came as a surprise was Flamininus' response to the Zacynthus situation. It is likely that a new senatorial policy was at play, suggesting that the Ionian Sea islands were to remain beyond the reach of any significant Greek power. This policy may have influenced Flamininus' more assertive stance (Gruen 1986, 470). In this regard, Gruen agreed with Aymard (1938, 349) in suggesting that the Romans were increasingly interested in acquiring an island that, when combined with Cephallenia, would ensure their control over navigation in the Ionian Sea. C. Livius Salinator's naval campaign was an important antecedent. On his way from Corcyra to Cape Malea, he had already devastated Same and Zacynthus in 191, forcing Hierokles maybe into hastily selling the island while grounding the future Rome's claim of Zacynthus following Antiochos's withdrawal from Greece (Aymard 1938, 340; Livy 36, 42, 5)². The interpretation that primarily emphasises Roman aims has been influenced by the conciseness and bias present in literary sources. But we only know Flamininus' intervention, whose speech was partially preserved in Livy and Plutarch, likely derived from a lost passage in Polybius, which had served as a source for these events³. The Roman perspective, in this case, is evident. However, the Achaean stance, including that of Diophanes, remains conspicuously absent from historical accounts. Livy briefly mentions Diophanes, highlighting his role in presenting the legal aspects of the case. However, it is worth noting that Diophanes did not manage to secure the support of his fellow citizens at that time⁴. But the causes behind the Achaean division about the integration or not of Zacynthus are passed over in silence by Livy, who heavily focuses on Rome. Flamininus'

² Furthermore, Roman authority and dignity were at stake as the primary belligerent in the war, needing to prevail over ambitious allies (Aymard 1938, 342).

³ Livy 36, 31, 10-32, 9; Plu. *Flam.* 17, 1-2.

⁴ Livy 36, 32, 3-4.

involvement likely acted as a catalyst for political division among the Achaeans, some of which were no doubt then cautious about provoking the Romans and so decided not to oppose Flamininus on this particular matter.

From the Achaean perspective, Zacynthus could be a relatively minor issue compared to the membership of Messene or Elis. However, the Achaeans initially chose to negotiate with Hierokles and purchase the island. This is enough proof of their interest in Zacynthus. It is possible that the motives behind the Achaean actions can be better understood by looking beyond the context of 191 and examining why the *koinon* decided to focus its efforts not only on the western coast of the Peloponnese but also on the central Ionian islands, specifically Zacynthus. To gain a deeper understanding, it would be necessary to explore the historical evidence concerning the island during the Hellenistic era, on its political and economic relevance, with a particular emphasis on recognising its earlier connections to the Peloponnese.

1. An island between Greece and Italy

Zacynthus, the modern Zante, is the third largest island in the Ionian Sea, covering an area of approximately 410 sq. km. Situated in close proximity to the northwestern coast of the Peloponnese, about 16 km west of Elis, the island occupies a remarkable position along the primary sea route that connects Italy and the Adriatic with the Peloponnese and the Aegean Sea. Prior to the destruction of Corinth in 146, the *diolkos*, a roadway system that crossed the isthmus, provided an alternative route for ancient seafarers to reach the Saronic Gulf by passing through Cencreae and Lechaëum. However, the preferred route was often the one that continued southward through Cape Malea, despite its increased risks and length. From the southern approach, ships could navigate along the coast of the Peloponnese to reach the islands of Zacynthus, Cephallenia, and Leucas. They would then continue along the western coast of Greece, circling Corcyra before making the sea crossing towards Iapigia. It is worth noting that this final route had an alternative, frequently emphasised as exceptional and risky in ancient sources whenever mentioned, which involved sailing directly across the open sea from the central Ionian islands to the southern tip of Italy and Sicily⁵.

⁵ The sea route through the central Ionian islands: Wirbelauer 1999, 401-403; Zoumbaki 2012, 78.

Therefore, a strategic location that connects the Aegean, Ionian, and Adriatic Seas and Italy benefited Zacynthus. The relative importance of the island is revealed in ancient historical sources. However, despite offering us interesting insights into interstate policies, the Zacynthian local history is almost absent in ancient literary accounts. Notably, the island appears three times in Linear B tablets found at the Pylos palace. These tablets highlight a distinct group of seven or eight Zacynthians who were prominently identified as members of the Palatine fleet⁶. Being part of the kingdom of Odysseus, it also features in the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships*. Furthermore, in *The Odyssey*, twenty out of a total of one hundred and eight Penelope's suitors came from the island.⁷ Recent Dutch archaeological campaigns have revealed the extensive connectivity of the island dating back to Mycenaean times. The finding of exotic artifacts within the island's archaeological record, coupled with the progressive development of a material culture shared among numerous Mycenaean centers in the western Peloponnese since the mid-2nd millennium, serves as evidence of growing interactions during the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (van Wijngaarden, Pieters 2017, 380).

Unlike Leucas, Zacynthus did not participate in the Persian Wars⁸. The *polis* only aligned itself with Athens during the Peloponnesian War between 431-404, but by 375-371, it became a staunch ally of Sparta instead (Thiry 2001, 134-135). In 375, the victorious oligarchs defeated and expelled the allied democratic citizens' faction from the city, prompting the Athenian Timotheus to establish these exiles in a fortified settlement called Nellos⁹. In 338, the Zacynthians joined the Corinthian League of Philip II (IG II² 236).

Later, the Zacynthians mainly featured in the interstate landscape of Western Greece until sometime after 229, when they allied themselves with the Aetolians. As a result, the island was captured by Philip V at the end of the Social War. After an unsuccessful assault on Pale in

⁶ PY An 610; Wachsmann 1998, 124; van Wijngaarden, Kourtessi-Philippakis, Pieters 2013, 137-138.

⁷ Hom. *Il.* 2, 634; *Od.* 1, 286; 16, 280. Though in Apollod. *Epit.* 7, 29, perhaps from the 1st century, the Zacynthians number 44 out of a total of 138 suitors.

⁸ Leucas in Salamis: Hdt. 8, 45; in Plataea: Hdt. 9, 28 and in the Delphian column to Apollo: Tod, 19.

⁹ Diod. Sic. 15, 45, 2-4, where the fortress is called "Arcadia". These exiles in Nellos could have constituted a new *polis*, since, in Aristotle of Marathon's decree, they appear as Ζακυνθίων ὁ δῆμος ὁ ἐν Νήλλῳι (IG II² 43 B 35-38): Hansen, Nielsen 2004, 28-29, Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6, 2, 2-3; Diod. Sic. 15, 45, 4.

Cephalonia, the Antigonid was able to capture Zacynthus one year later in 217¹⁰. Antigonid control played a crucial role in shaping further naval policies in the Ionian and southern Adriatic Seas (Walbank 1967b, 66), giving to Philip the opportunity to have a presence in both seas, similar to past kings like Pyrrhus, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Cassander, who all had ambitions in the West (Kleu 2015, 42). After the treaty with the Aetolians, a fleet led by M. Valerius Laevinus briefly occupied the island in 211. However, the assault on the Macedonian garrison of the citadel was unsuccessful, leading to a Roman withdrawal¹¹. Zacynthus remained under Philip's control until 207, when it was handed over to Amyntander, the Athamanian king, in exchange for free passage for the Macedonian army through his kingdom to invade Aetolia, which ultimately led to the Aetolians seeking peace¹². Amyntander appointed Philip of Megalopolis as the governor of Zacynthus, and then in 191, the island came under the command of Hierocles of Acragas, who sold it to the Achaeans. Principio del formulario

It has already been indicated that the sale of the island caused the protest of Flamininus and that the Achaeans, despite their *strategos* Diophanes' resistance, finally renounced their purchase. But what was the reason behind Roman and Achaean interest in acquiring the island in 191, even in the middle of the war against Antiochus III and the Aetolians? The question holds significance due to previous suggestions that Zacynthus' alignment towards the Peloponnese and its interactions with peninsular polities had shifted since the late 4th century. In the past, it has been suggested that during the fourth and third centuries, the island underwent a shift in focus, prioritizing its relations with the central Mediterranean Sea over older connections with central and southern Greece (Thiry 2001, 133). Indeed, after featuring among the members of the Corinthian League in 337, Zacynthus disappeared from the Greek mainland's interstate political

¹⁰ Cephalonian links to Aetolians seem clearer (IG IX 1² 1, 2; Polyb. 4, 6, 2; 6.8; 5, 3-5; together with a coin from Crane with the Aetolian *ethnikon*: Gardner 1887, nr 62; Sotiriou 2013, 7. In 218 Philip V had already transported his troops to Cephalonia to unsuccessfully besiege Pale: Polyb. 5, 3, 3-4, 13; Pascual 2021. Zacynthus was conquered by Philip in 217, shortly before the Peace of Naupactus (Polyb. 5, 102, 10).

¹¹ Livy 26, 24, 15; Rich 1984, 163 n. 58, who draws attention to the omission of the island in the speech of Lyciscus of Acarnania (Polyb. 9, 39, 2) and the failure against the Macedonian garrison of the acropolis, which would have made the Roman occupation of the island vain.

¹² Livy 36, 31, 11-12; Walbank 1967b, 98. Although there has been much discussion, Philip's expedition to Aetolia in 207 would be the one mentioned in Polyb. 11, 7, 2-3; Walbank 1967a, 278.

scene for more than a century¹³. However, a closer examination reveals that this historical interpretation can be misleading when literary sources are momentarily set aside. Scant but noteworthy epigraphic and numismatic evidence can be traced, pointing in a different direction.

By contrast, local archaeology has not provided significant insights into this matter. Although two ancient shipwrecks have been found near the island, they span a considerable period of time. One of them has been dated to around 550-450, while the other falls within the period of AD 400-700 (Parker 1992, nrr. 1243, 1244). This scarcity of findings cannot be attributed to favorable local climatic conditions but rather to the significant depth of the waters surrounding Zacynthus, even close to the coast. But the limited knowledge extends also to the overall material reality of the island, primarily due to the lack of interest in excavating Zacynthus during the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. During that time, archaeological focus in the Ionian islands centered around Ithaca and the legendary kingdom of Odysseus. Fortunately, this trend has started to change in the past two decades with the fieldwork of the *Dutch Zakynthos Archaeological Project*, led by Gert Jan van Wijngaarden from 2005 to 2018. These extensive efforts have resulted in several reports and partial publications. However, the geological conditions of the island have posed challenges for the preservation of the archaeological record on land. Furthermore, the old center of Zacynthus, the only *polis* of the island, is under the modern urban center placed just below Kastro Bochali, which houses a later Venetian and British fortress. Archaeological excavations in Bochali have revealed scattered findings from the late classical period onwards, providing a glimmer of insight into the historical development of the area (Van Wijngaarden, Kourtessi-Philippakis, Pieters 2013, 143).

Furthermore, Zacynthian epigraphic record is really limited. The first edition of Wilhelm Dittenberger's *Inscriptiones Graeciae Septentrionalis* included only ten texts, which were generally brief in nature. Although the new edition has seen a slight increase to eighteen texts, only three of them are newly discovered (IG IX, 1² 4, 1730-1747). Nevertheless, other kinds of evidence can offer valuable insights for historians interested in Zacynthus' interactions with the wider world.

Firstly, five inscriptions attest proxenies granted to Zacynthian citizens in *poleis* of mainland Greece. Though the sample size is undoubtedly small compared to the vast universe of over two and a half thousand inscriptions

¹³ Almost completely restored: Ζακύνθος]υ καὶ Κεφαλληνίας (IG II² 236, frag. b, col. II, l. 12).

on proxeny, which document this social institution from the Black Sea to Sicily from the late 7th century to the Roman imperial period, is meaningful in nature (Mack 2015, 2). All known Zacynthian proxenoi lived between the 4th-3rd centuries: Moschio, son of Philonicus, in Delphi (3rd century); Timocrates, son of Agippus, in Thermum (c. 246-236); Menalcus, son of Aristomenes, in Messene/Ithome (late 4th-3rd century); and Aristonicus, son of Diophantus, in Oropus (3rd century)¹⁴. It is worth noting also the existence of Agathon, an individual who left a notable votive inscription in the temple of Zeus at Dodona. In this inscription, Agathon identifies himself as a hereditary Zacynthian proxenos of the Molossians. This inscription provides valuable insight into the potential connections between Zacynthus and the Molossians, suggesting that these ties may have existed as early as the third century¹⁵. As recently stated, these proxenies “reflected and facilitated the full range of different sorts of inter-*polis* interaction, public and private, from diplomatic negotiations to economic transactions and inter-city pilgrimage... *Proxenia* in particular emerges as the characteristically Greek form of inter-*polis* networking...” (Mack 2015, 3-4).

In this regard, though the significance of proxenoi as facilitators of commercial exchanges has been underestimated in the past, there is now a growing recognition that these social networks played a crucial role in handling trade, contracts, and various challenges faced by individuals from a *polis* while traveling abroad. The support provided by proxenoi proved instrumental in effectively navigating these complexities and ensuring smoother interactions in foreign lands (Mack 2015, 63; cf. Marek 1984, 359). Hence, proxenies were closely linked to the movement of people and, consequently, to the interconnectedness between different *poleis*. So, while the number of proxenies granted to Zacynthian individuals abroad may be relatively small, whenever their orientation towards mainland Greece is evident. The Zacynthian networks extended to various locations such as Messene, Delphi, Thermum, Oropus, and Dodona (in Epirus), primarily during the 4th and 3rd centuries. Although we should approach these data cautiously as they provide only limited indications, they do serve to challenge the notion that Zacynthus exclusively focused on the central Mediterranean from the 4th century onwards.

Regarding the hereditary proxeny of Agathon granted by the Molossian *koinon* in Epirus, it has been recently highlighted its isolated nature within

¹⁴ FD. III, 2: 185; IG IX 1² 1, 25d.2; IG V 1, 1425; *I. Oropos* 177.

¹⁵ IG IX 1² 4, 1750. Fraser 2003, dating the inscription to the fourth century, but more recently Meyer 2013, 73-74 suggested early 3rd century.

the context of the dedications found in the sanctuary of Zeus in Dodona during the 5th to 3rd centuries. It appears that the central Ionian islands, including Zacynthus, did not hold significant international influence or exhibit strong connections to the sanctuary during that time (Morgan 2018, 232). Among those islands, “Zacynthus lies so far south that it was socially marginal even for its northern neighbours”, and indeed, an interesting observation has been made from the arrangement of the *poleis* in the list of Delphian *theorodokoi* (c. 235-220), where Zacynthus is positioned at the end of a geographic sequence that extends from the Peloponnese to Cephallenia¹⁶. This ordering suggests a stronger connection and integration of Zacynthus with various communities in the Peloponnese, as well as with central Greece through the Gulf of Corinth, rather than with northern regions. This pattern of connectivity holds true even during the latter part of the 3rd century.

Secondly, there is contemporary evidence from a Zacynthian hoard found in 1904 (IGCH 245), buried around 225 or possibly slightly later. Among its 172 coins, it contains 86 Elean silver triobols, which is the largest known grouping of Elean coins found outside the Elean territory (Nicolet-Pierre Oeconomides 1991, 182-185). This discovery serves as compelling evidence of the economic connections that thrived between Zacynthus and the Peloponnese, particularly with Elis, during the specified timeframe. Additionally, there were 15 Achaean, 4 Arcadian, and 1 Tegeatan silver coins, along with 61 Locrian coins. Furthermore, individual coins from Thessalian Larissa, Rhodes, Euboean Chalcis, and Selge were present, although surprisingly, only one coin from Heraclea in southern Italy was found. Once again, it is evident that Zacynthus not only had significant economic ties to the Peloponnese and central Greece but also that these economic connections were more significant than those established with other economic regions in the late 3rd century.

Thirdly, we get foundation and kinship tales, which should be regarded as more challenging and elusive evidence but pointing to a far-reaching integration of Zacynthus and revealing the island’s extensive contacts along the maritime route it occupied. While both Classical and early Hellenistic accounts usually associate Zacynthus with the Peloponnese, during Roman rule, the emphasis shifted towards establishing a connection with its Trojan heritage. Thucydides had claimed that the Zacynthians were settlers of the Achaeans in the Peloponnese (εἰσὶ δὲ Ἀχαιῶν τῶν ἐκ Πελοποννήσου

¹⁶ Morgan (2018, 233), with reference to Plassart 1921, col. II 145. The high dating of the *theorodokoi*’s list is that of Daux (1949, 23-27).

ἄποικοι) (Thuc. 2, 66, 1). But Diodorus, for his part, mentioned that the fortress of Nellos, in which Timotheus placed the Zacynthian exiles, was also called “Arcadia” (Diod. Sic. 15, 45, 3). The latter is interesting because, according to Pausanias, the citadel of Zacynthus was called Psophis, “because the first man to sail across to the island was Zacynthus, the son of Dardanus, a Psophidian who became its founder” (Paus. 8, 24, 3). Stephanos of Byzantium also alluded to Zacynthus as the son of Dardanus (Steph. Byz., *s. v. Zakynthos*). These local legends, with both Achaean and Arcadian links, led Bernhard Schmidt in his 19th century monograph to imagine a mixed-foundation of the *polis* (Schmidt 1899, 3ss). However, these tales not only connect Zacynthus with the Peloponnese. It is worth noting that Agathon, the Zacynthian proxenos who dedicated an inscription at Dodona, claimed his ancestry traced back to the Trojan princess Cassandra. By doing so, he might have been referencing a local tale that, via Dardanos, an respected ancestor of the Trojans, established a link between Zacynthians and Trojans, ultimately connecting them to the Romans as well. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, it is mentioned that Aeneas, during his journey to Italy, made a stop at Zacynthus. The inhabitants of Zacynthus were believed to be his relatives through their eponymous hero, who was a son of Dardanus (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 50, 3). In addition, he mentions that Aeneas built a temple to Aphrodite, where he carried out a sacrifice that “until today the Zacynthians have officially celebrated”, as well as a competition of ephebes, called “the race of Aeneas and Aphrodite”, with statues erected on the city still standing in Dionysius’ time. Indeed, it is evident that the author was drawing from local accounts that aimed to establish a connection between the distant past and the existing rituals, practices, and buildings. This narrative extended beyond Zacynthus to encompass other regions in the central Ionian Sea, such as Ambracia, Actium, and Leucas. According to the story, Aeneas and his Trojan companions established several temples dedicated to Aphrodite in these regions. The exact antiquity of this tale is uncertain, but it may have been used by the Molossian dynasty under King Pyrrhus. However, its importance likely increased significantly following the Roman annexation at the beginning of the 2nd century (Melfi 2016, 82-105; Walensten 2010). In any case, Zacynthian tales of origin and kinship extended beyond establishing a connection solely with the Romans. These narratives were intricately woven into larger stories that encompassed Peloponnesian eponymous heroes. Once again, the geographical scope of the island’s links was extensive, not only reaching the central Mediterranean but also encompassing southern Greece to a considerable degree. Zacynthus’

connectivity, as acknowledged in current scholarship, primarily relies on its strategic position along a major sea route, as mentioned earlier. Connectivity, however, seems strong in both the east-west and west-east directions. In contrast, due to its location as the southernmost of the central Ionian islands, its significance to the north would have been comparatively marginal (Morgan 2018, 232-233).

2. “Zante, Zante, Fiore di Levante”: A coveted island at the crossroads

As mentioned, Zacynthus occupied a significant position, serving as an important link between the Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea, and further connecting to the Gulf of Patras, the Adriatic, and the Italian peninsula. Its capture by Philip V in 217 cannot be separated from the expanding Antigonid influence in western Greece (Kleu 2015, 42; D’Agostini 2019, 132). Valerius Laevinus’s early attempt against the island in 211, which coincided with the treaty with the Aetolians, indicates that Zacynthus had the potential to serve as a crucial strategic position for Rome in its naval operations against the Hellenic League¹⁷. The final phase of the First Macedonian War remains relatively obscure after 208, but it is likely that there was a notable reduction in military activity leading up to the Peace of Phoenice, which was eventually signed, possibly with some reluctance from Rome, in 206 (Rich 1984). While delving into a deeper discussion on Roman motivations could be worthwhile, here it is just important to highlight that the expanding Italian commercial interests in the Ionian Sea, together with the desire to secure naval communications, prompted Roman intervention in the region. Although these factors did not solely dictate Roman foreign policy, they undoubtedly contributed to the decision to get involved in the area¹⁸.

Zacynthus was strategically located on the most vital sea route connecting Italy to the Eastern Mediterranean. However, the western coast of the Peloponnese lacks notable ports capable of providing adequate shelter to ships (Wirbelauer 1999, 401-402; Zoumbaki 2012, 78). On the Elean coast, there were Cyllene and Pheia, while Cyparissia and Pylos on

¹⁷ Not only against Philip, but also against his Greek allies of the Hellenic League founded by Antigonos Doson in 224: Scherberich 2009.

¹⁸ As it happened before with the Illyrian Wars, preceded by increasing connectivity between Italy, the Adriatic, and the Ionian Seas (Čašule 2012).

the Messenian side. In a late passage of Heliodorus's *Aethiopica*, dating back to the 3rd century, Zacynthus emerges as a crucial intermediate stop for ships that had set sail from the Corinthian Gulf (Heliod. *Aeth.* 5, 17, 1-5). While we need not delve into the specific anecdote of Aratus' escape from Andros in a "Roman" ship sailing towards Syria in 251 (Plut. *Arat.* 12, 4), solid evidence supports the presence of Italian traders increasingly engaged in maritime activities and trade in the southern Ionian Sea region in the early second century¹⁹. The reports concerning the outbreak of the Illyrian Wars from 229, which posed a threat to Italian traders navigating the Adriatic Sea, could lead us to speculate about an augmented movement of Italian traders also through Cape Malea²⁰.

Indeed, the Illyrian pirate raids had extended to the western Peloponnesian coasts by 230. According to Polybius, these raids frequently ravaged both Elis and Messenia, regions that were challenging to effectively police due to their extensive coastlines and the distance from the major cities (Polyb. 2, 5, 1). Subsequently, the Illyrian pirates shifted their attacks towards the coast of Epirus and began targeting merchants sailing from Italy (Polyb. 2, 8, 1-3). In response to the Illyrian threat, the Romans went to war against them. Interestingly, during the same period, an Achaean fleet of ten ships, jointly crewed by Achaeans and Aetolians, set sail to support the Epirotes. However, this Achaean fleet suffered a significant defeat at Paxos at the hands of the Illyrians (Polyb. 2, 10, 1-6). Despite the setback, this Achaean naval campaign, maybe involving the entire federal navy, suggests that the Achaean *koinon* was interested in the events unfolding in the Ionian Sea, including regions as far north as the waters near southern Coreyra²¹. Following their victory over the Illyrians and the establishment of Demetrius of Pharos, the Romans wasted no time and promptly dispatched ambassadors to the Achaeans, Aetolians, Corinth, and Athens (Polyb. 2, 12, 4, 8). The aim of these embassies sent to different southern Greek polities was to reassure them about the intentions of the Roman Republic but also to promote its emerging role in liberating the area from Barbarian pirates' threat. Moreover, they sought to secure naval communications between Italy and the southern Adriatic and Ionian Seas.

Rome again made a military campaign in the Adriatic in 219 against Demetrius, its former ally, who had been supporting various piratical raids in the Adriatic and along the western coast of the Peloponnese, even

¹⁹ Zoumbaki (2012, 210), with earlier scholarship.

²⁰ D'Agostini (2019, 65), with earlier scholarship.

²¹ In Cape Ploča in Croatia, some eighteen identifiable coins have been found, of which significantly two are from the Achaean *koinon* (Čašule 2012, 216).

reaching the Cyclades (D'Agostini 2019, 67-68). Research on complex and fragmented historical evidence has revealed that, in the early 2nd century, Italian traders were engaged in activities along these coastal routes. Consequently, Roman involvement in Western Greece and the Ionian islands rapidly intensified (Zoumbaki 2011, 524-534). After the initial attempt on Zacynthus in 211, Roman ambitions significantly escalated, as evidenced by L. Quinctius Flaminius' attack on Leucas in 196. With the collaboration of Italian exiles residing in the city, Leucas ultimately fell into Roman hands²². Additionally, the initial Roman annihilation of the pirates in Cephallenia was likely motivated by the need to ensure the safety of Italic merchants navigating the central Ionian Sea²³. Subsequently, in 191, C. Livius Salinator raided and plundered both Cephallenia and Zacynthus²⁴. In that same year, the Romans annexed also Zacynthus following Flaminius's assertion of authority over the Achaeans. As for Cephallenia, it was annexed by the Romans in 189 after a contested *deditio* before M. Fulvius Nobilior and a subsequent four-month siege of Same²⁵.

In this regard, it is worth noting that even E. Gruen, who is generally cautious about attributing interventionist interests to the Romans in Greece, has emphasised that Flaminius' stance towards the Achaeans regarding Zacynthus in 191 indicated a shift in the position of the Roman senate: "Achaean expansion in the Peloponnese would not bother the senate; but the islands of the Ionian Sea were off limits to any major Greek power" (Gruen 1986, 471).

Nevertheless, the Romans were not the only ones interested in establishing and consolidating positions in central Ionian islands. The issue of piracy in the region had been a long-term concern for the Achaeans, especially after the downfall of the Epirote dynasty ca. 230, and this concern became more apparent when Pylos was attacked in 219 by the Illyrians²⁶. In this context, it has been highlighted that the Achaeans were interested in gaining control of Zacynthus just as a means to exert pressure on Elis to join the *koïnon* (Errington 1969, 122; Champion 2004,

²² Livy 33,17, 1-15.

²³ Livy 37, 13, 11-12; Souris 1976, 113-117.

²⁴ Livy 36, 42, 5.

²⁵ Livy 38, 28, 5-29, 11; also: 37, 50, 5; 38, 9, 10. Though *Syll.*³ 611 (=Sherk 38), which unequivocally reproduces a letter from M. Livius Salinator, consul of 188, states that the siege of Same was still in progress. Vd.: Briscoe (2008, 104-105).

²⁶ Polyb. 4, 16, 7; Walbank 1957, 463. During the latest raid of Scerdilaedas in 217, although the Achaean territory is not mentioned, it is affirmed that the Illyrians "left Leucas, and sailing to Malea began to plunder and capture merchantmen", surely including the western coast of Peloponnese (Polyb. 5, 95, 4).

128). On the side of Chelonatas Cape, or “Cape of the Turtles”, the Elean coast was indeed near the island (Strabo 8.2.1). Furthermore, it is worth noting that Cyllene, the main port of Elis, is located a little over 35 km from Zacynthus. The potential for a swift and effortless expansion may have motivated Diophanes to take action in 191 to secure control of the island (Moreno Leoni 2013, 123). However, two additional factors should be considered here. On that historical occasion, two primary objectives were at stake: firstly, the Achaean defensive goals, and secondly, the need to maintain a consistent supply of grain.

In his speech before the Achaean assembly in 191, where he defended the Roman right to claim Zacynthus as spoils of war, Flamininus employed the simile of a turtle to highlight the defensive weaknesses of the Achaeans (Livy 36, 32, 6-8; Plut. *Flam.* 17, 2). The effectiveness of the Achaean defense relied on keeping their head and limbs within their shell, symbolizing the Peloponnese. However, once they ventured beyond their territorial boundaries, particularly the islands, their ability to defend those areas weakened. Flamininus’ argument was directed towards the Achaean naval inadequacies during the First Macedonian War when Aegina could not be protected from the Roman navy. Aegina had been eventually lost to the Romans after P. Sulpicius Galba’s assault in 209. It is worth noting that earlier, in 198, the Achaean Aristaenus had already emphasised the vulnerability of the Peloponnese to Roman naval attacks when urging the Achaeans to end their alliance with Philip. Flamininus could have reshaped this argument to counter Diophanes’ attempted defense on “the legal aspects of the event” in 191, but sadly the details are left silent by available historical sources (Livy 36, 32, 3; Aristaenus: Livy 32, 21, 26-29). It is indeed possible that Diophanes argued for the defensive utility of the island in his lost speech, prompting Flamininus to ridicule and undermine that argument in his reply. Zacynthus’ purchase could have initially been made because of defensive needs, rather than as a part of a federal micro-imperialism.

While providing a concise account of the Illyrian raid on the western Peloponnesian coast in 230, Polybius noted that the Elean and Messenian coasts, whose main *poleis* were land-locked, were difficult to defend. Pausanias also mentioned an Illyrian attack on Mothone, located on the southwestern Messenian coast, around the same period, although the details of this incident are scarce²⁷. Indeed, it is possible that the pirates posing a threat to the region did not need to travel from distant

²⁷ Paus. 4, 35, 5; Marasco 1980, 120-21, dating this raid in 230.

locations²⁸. In his geographical lemmas, the lexicographer Harpocration commented on several terms associated with Dynarchus' *Tyrrhenikos logos*. Among these terms, he mentioned the Strophades islands, which are located between Elis and Zacynthus. Positioned 44 km southeast of Zacynthus, these islands lie opposite the Messenian coast. Being wild and devoid of permanent human settlement in Antiquity, though, with freshwater sources, the Strophades **served as** ideal hideouts for pirates who threatened the main shipping route²⁹. A known funerary epigram found in Corcyra commemorated a courageous young man named Alexander, who had displayed remarkable bravery in fighting against pirates at the Strophades, serving as a poignant reminder of the dangers that both travelers and residents of these islands and neighbouring coastal regions could face in Hellenistic times (Robert 1960, 267-272).

But pirates may not have been the only concern for the Achaeans. Despite Roman control over Zacynthus, security along the western coast of the Peloponnese was far from guaranteed. This became evident in 146, in the middle of the Achaean War, when Eleans and Messenians did not mobilise their military forces, alluding to the perceived risk of a Roman naval assault on their coastal territories. This further emphasises the defensive significance that the control of Zacynthus held in ensuring the security of the western border of the Achaean *koinon* (Polyb. 38, 16, 3).

Achaean interest in Zacynthus could be understood as the initial step toward establishing federal control over the western coast of the Peloponnese and securing the peninsular coastline facing the Ionian Sea. While the precise date remains uncertain, it is usually admitted that Pylos joined the Achaean *koinon* at an early stage, most likely before 220, possibly during the war against Demetrius II³⁰. Likewise, Benedikt Niese suggested that Cyparissia had joined the Achaean *koinon* around the same time, but his arguments are debatable and, in any case, remain open to alternative interpretations³¹. Asine, for its part, situated along the western coast of the Gulf of Messenia, it is thought it came under Achaean control before

²⁸ But they could. Demetrius of Pharos, then an ally of Philip, had reached from Illyria as far as the Cyclades islands in his 220 raid: Polyb. 3, 16, 3.

²⁹ Harp. *s.v.* Στροφάδες νῆσοι; Ferone (2004a, 37); Id. 2004b, 336.

³⁰ Luraghi 2008, 258 n. 31 (forced); Marasco 1980, 113-122 (voluntarily delivered by Messenians). Pylos on the Achaean side (Polyb. 4, 25, 4); attack of Demetrius of Pharos and Scerdilaedas against Pylos (Polyb. 4, 16, 6); of Romans and Illyrians (Polyb. 9, 38, 8); Messenian claim to the Romans in 196 (Polyb. 18, 42, 7); the Aetolians ask for the city for the Messenians (Livy 27.30.13).

³¹ Niese 1899, 411, followed by Aymard 1938, 13 n. 6. The discussion in Roebuck 1941, 94 n. 124.

the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War³². Writing in the late second century, Pausanias mentions that the Messenian *polis* of Corone was called the “harbour of the Achaeans (τὸν λιμένα Ἀχαιῶν)”, as it was translated by James Frazer and Nicolaos Papachatzis³³. The reference would not be a “simple mythohistorical fantasy about the Achaeans of the *epos*”, but it would allude to the Achaeans of the Hellenistic *koinon*³⁴. Corone is probably the modern Petalidhi, on the western shore of the Gulf of Messene (Walbank 1979, 239). The discovery of six federal hemidrachmas minted in Corone within the Agrinium hoard in Aitolia indicates the involvement of the Messenian *polis* in the significant minting of Achaean silver coins during the war against Antiochus III. This suggests that the minting likely took place sometime between 195-188 (Thompson 1968, 90, pl. 309-312; Benner 2008, 74). Indeed, during the rebellion of 182, the Messenians made an attempt to retake Corone³⁵. Therefore, only the ports of Abia and Pharae would have remained in Messenian hands in 191³⁶.

A purported law passed by the Achaean nomographers from approximately 191-182 provides evidence that the federal legislative body allocated representation not only to Messene but also to the *poleis* of Cyparissia, Corone, and Asine as members of the Achaean *koinon* (Rizakis 2008, nr 116, ll. 4-9). Messenians had claimed Asine after the Second Macedonian War, but this inscription confirms that Kyparissia, Korone, and Asine were already members of the Achaean *koinon* before or shortly before 191. Instead, Mothone is not mentioned there and its status is unknown, but as Nino Luraghi (2008, 262 n. 50) has suggested: “isolated as it was in the southwestern corner of the Acritas Peninsula, it is not very likely to have remained linked to Messene”.

As Carl Roebuck (1941, 94) has suggested, therefore, “Messene was cut off from the sea on the west and from its best ports on the Messenian Gulf”. The long-term Achaean movement to control the western Peloponnese seaboard proved ultimately successful. In a late comment in Polybius, during his account of the subsequent Messenian rebellion, an Achaean embassy in Rome reportedly asked to the senate “to send a force in virtue

³² Polyb. 18, 42, 7; Walbank 1967a, 607. Maybe during the campaign of 210/209 when the Achaeans invaded Messenia and defeated the Aetolians and Eleans “not far from Messene” (Livy 27.33.5).

³³ Paus. 4, 34, 6; Frazer 1898, 231; Papachatzis 1979, 154.

³⁴ According to Torelli, Musti 1991, 266.

³⁵ Livy 39.49.1; “Kolonis” (Plu. *Phil.* 18, 5).

³⁶ Roebuck (1941, 99), separated from Messene during the rebellion of 182 (Polyb. 23, 17, 2).

of their alliance to help them against the Messenians, or if not to see to it that no one coming from Italy should import arms or grain to Messene” (Polyb. 23, 9, 12). The requested embargo holds significant importance as it exposes the challenges faced by the Achaeans in not having control over Zacynthus or Cephallenia, thereby preventing the rebels from receiving supplies via sea. Messenians lacked appropriate ports then, which makes the Achaean demand at the least puzzly. Anyway, it does underscore how naval dominance over the western seaboard and the adjacent Ionian islands could play a role in the overall security of the Achaean federation.

This leads us to the second potential motive behind Zacynthus’ attempted annexation: the grain supply for the Achaean *koinon* during the late 190s and early 180s. In fact, the *poleis* of the Achaean *koinon* made a collective decision to enforce an embargo on grain exports sometime between 191-188. Evidence can be found in an Elatean decree honoring the Stymphalians in Arcadia, which indirectly refers to a critical grain shortage within the federal territory (*IPArk* 18, ll. 15-16). In the past, these measures were already understood as robust political responses, indicating a significant level of economic intervention by the Achaean *koinon*. However, the reasons behind this intervention had not been thoroughly researched in scholarship until recently (Gauthier 1979, 86; Mackil 2013, 308-309).

It has recently been suggested that the Achaean embargo may have been a direct response to the grain shortage caused by the war against Antiochus III and the Aetolians in Greece. This decision would have also been accompanied by limitations on the traditional alternative sources of grain importation from the Central and Eastern Mediterranean regions. Additionally, there is a possibility that drier weather around 200 could have unevenly impacted the Peloponnese, exacerbating the situation (Post 2022). This aspect carries great significance, as Ruben Post emphasises the contrasting paleoclimatic conditions throughout the peninsula. Specifically, the northeastern region underwent a considerably drier climate, while the southern and southwestern areas experienced a more temperate climate, with rainfall exceeding the average during the period around 200 (Post 2022, 195-200). Under such circumstances, the Achaean *koinon* implemented a grain export embargo that primarily impacted the *poleis* recently integrated into the *koinon*, namely Sparta, Elis, and Messene. Not only were these *poleis* significant grain producers, but their territories were also unaffected by the drought. The Achaeans, therefore, aimed to redirect the established trade connections of these *poleis*, which traditionally extended across the Ionian Sea to Italy and northwestern Greece, where the prices for their commodities could have been higher,

towards the other regions of the peninsula facing a temporary scarcity of grain (Post 2022, 209-211).

Why would this discussion be relevant to understanding the motivations of Diophanes and the Achaeans in 191 to annex the island of Zacynthus? At first glance, the rapid expansion of the Achaean territory between 192 and 191, which led to the incorporation of the three wealthiest agricultural *poleis* in the western and southwestern peninsula, namely Sparta, Elis, and Messene, in that order, does not appear coincidental. By controlling Zacynthus, a strategic location along the main sea route, the Achaeans could exert pressure on Elis but also on Messene. However, even at such a critical juncture, Zacynthus should not be underestimated as a significant economic addition to the *koinon*.

The modern verse “Zante, Zante, Fior di Levante” effectively captures the notion of beauty and fertility associated with the island. This sentiment aligns with the unanimous portrayal of Zacynthus in ancient literature, where it is consistently depicted as a place of beauty, wealth, and fertility. Although its wine was not recommended by Athenaeus (1, 33b), an anonymous poem alluding to the beauty of the island is already remembered in Theocritus (*Id.* 4, 32). Strabo (10, 2, 18), for his part, indicates about the island that: “Although it is covered with forests, it is rich in fruits (εὐκαρπος)”, an idea also emphasised by Pliny the Elder when he indicated that Zacynthus was “magnificent for its population and outstanding for its fertility (*cum oppido magnifica et fertilitate praecipua*)”. Virgil (*Aen.* 3, 270) also mentions the island, but to highlight “the leafy grove”. Finally, Agatharchidas of Cnidus (*FGrHist* 86 F14) wrote:

“And, in his thirty-first book, he says that the Zacynthians were inexperienced in war, because they were accustomed to live in ease and opulence (Ζακυνθίους φησὶν ἀπείρους εἶναι πολέμου διὰ τὸ ἐν εὐπορίᾳ καὶ πλούτῳ τρυφῶντας ἐθίζεσθαι.)”.

Agatharchidas lived approximately between 215-145, being a roughly contemporary of Polybius (Hau 2016, 148). The fragmentary nature of historiography presents a challenge in accurately assessing the extent to which Athenaeus’s attribution of judgment to Agatharchidas faithfully represents the thought of this Hellenistic historian. But recent observations by Lisa Hau indicate that moralizing judgments are prevalent in Agatharchidas’ fragments. In particular, there is a consistent focus on *Tryphe*, which refers to the absence of moderation in luxury. This theme is evident in thirteen out of the twenty-two fragments that have

been transmitted to us by Athenaeus (Hau 2016, 149). And, on fragment 14 in particular, Hau (2016, 150) further suggests that: “F 14 gives Agatharchidas as the authority for the fact that the inexperience of the Zacynthians in war (leading to their capture by Philip V) was due to their prosperity, wealth and luxurious living”. It was Stanley Burstein (2016) who connected Agatharchidas’ moralizing statement on the Zacynthians with Philip’s capture of their island. If both the moralising tone of the fragment and the hypothetical historical situation that motivates the moral judgment appear to refer to the historical circumstances on the island at the end of the 3rd century, then Agatharchidas’ brief fragment is of interest to us. This indicates that the island was perceived as wealthy, or at the very least had a reputation for it, to the extent that ancient readers found Agatharchidas’ moral judgment on the islanders’ luxury and lack of defensive capability plausible. Consequently, Zacynthus could be an attractive prize for the Achaean *koinon* at the onset of the 2nd century. Moreover, taking into account the island’s well-known wealth and fertility in ancient times, the desire to control it would not have been solely motivated by its strategic position³⁷. Indeed, while the agricultural wealth alone may have made Zacynthus an enticing prospect for incorporation, its strategic geographical position controlling trade beyond the Peloponnese, particularly of grain during the late 190s, must have been highly appealing to the Achaeans. At that time, the Achaeans were likely facing internal divisions and grappling with challenges related to territorial expansion and grain shortages. The control of Zacynthus would have presented a valuable opportunity to address these issues and enhance their economic and territorial influence.

3. Conclusion

Despite Achaean efforts to secure control over the island, Rome ultimately annexed Zacynthus in 191. Although its precise status under Roman rule remains unknown, it has been proposed that Zacynthus, as a *praemium belli*, was likely brought under Roman authority, which would be a plausible explanation for the cessation of Zacynthian civic coinage

³⁷ The island’s strategic significance was not only due to its location but also because of its complex defensive system, which included scattered towers throughout the territory. For instance, remains of a quarry-faced and pseudo-isodomic wall found in Doretas, along with a tower discovered near Tragaki on the eastern side of the island, further highlight this defensive network: van Wijngaarden, Sotiriou, Kourtessi-Philippakis, Bogaard, Bloemendaal 2012, 47.

thereafter (Thiry 2001, 142 n. 69). Its strategic geographical position attracted the interest of various powers during the transition from the 3rd to the 2nd century, transitioning from freedom to Macedonian, Athamanian, Achaean, and ultimately Roman rule. As has been duly noted: “the island’s history in the late third and early second centuries reads like that of Greece in miniature” (Erskine 2002, 109). The Achaean action towards Zacynthus has often been interpreted as a tactical measure aimed at pressuring Elis to join the *koinon*. However, reevaluating the historical evidence prompts a different understanding regarding the Achaean expansion into the western Peloponnese and the meaningful integration of Zacynthus. The Achaean movements may have been influenced not only by the opportunity for territorial expansion but also by the imperative to enhance the security of the western federal territory and integrate an economically significant island. As it has been observed, in Hellenistic times, Zacynthus was not solely politically or economically oriented towards the Ionian Sea. On the contrary, it had significant Peloponnesian connections.

In this regard, the Achaean *koinon* is often seen as a political integration phenomenon limited to the peninsula. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that there were instances where federal expansion was motivated by other factors and influences. During the 4th century, and possibly once again in the 2nd century, territorial expansion compelled the Achaean *koinon* to extend its influence beyond the Corinthian Gulf. This expansion resulted in the temporary integration of Calydon and potentially Naupactos before 389. Similar expansion patterns were observed in the 3rd century, including the incorporation of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf and Aratus’ various attempts to gain control over Attica. These instances illustrate that the Achaean *koinon* was not strictly confined to the Peloponnese and had the propensity to expand its reach in pursuit of territorial and strategic goals³⁸.

All these movements should call our attention to the nature of the “tentacular settlement” prevailing in the economic behavior of the

³⁸ Paying attention to the records payment by Delphian *naopoioi* to three individuals, from Cleitor, Ascheium, and Croton, who had provided timber for fourth-century temple building (SEG 27, 108-109), Mackil (2013, 275) underlines the high connectivity between southern and northern coasts and uplands of the Gulf of Corinth. Otherwise, Freitag (1999, 250-256, 268-275, and 309-329), who has studied the connectivity across this gulf. Calydon in the Achaean *koinon*: Xen., *Hell.* 4.6.1. J. Warren (2007, 143, n. 230) comments on an oral suggestion by Peter Derow about a possible Achaean expansionist adventure again in the area between 167 and 150, where they came to control Pleuron and Heraclea Trachinae: Paus. 7.11.3; 14.1; 15.2. On Aegina: Plu. *Arat.* 34.5; its lost: Polyb. 9.42.5-8; 11.5.8; 22.8.9-10. Between 242-229 Aratus’ ambitions to wrest Athens from Antigonid control: Habicht (2006, 182-184).

ancient Mediterranean, in which, contrary to a supposed ideal of autarky dominating the ancient economy, these episodes of territorial expansion “would be revealed as a huge accumulation of very local phenomena... The larger entity was simply a direction, or impetus, given to the previously less formed, less patterned, ecological interaction of several hundred settlements, several thousand microregions” (Horden, Purcell 2000, 121). The direction of expansion for empires or federations, such as the Achaean *koinon*, was intricately linked to preexisting economic connections and integrations. As E. Mackil has examined, Hellenistic *koina* expanded beyond ethnic boundaries to a significant extent in order to “broke down the economic barriers associated with the political fragmentation of the Greek world” (Mackil 2013, 239). Ultimately, while the Achaean attempt to annex Zacynthus failed, we should not dismiss it as simply a circumstantial pressure tool on *poleis* reluctant to enter the *koinon*, much less merely a failed exceptional addition. Controlling Zacynthus would have implied extending a political entity over an already relatively integrated economic space, which also had the advantage of increasing federal collective security, both against threats of attack and against temporary food insecurity.

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DON'T BE SILENT, HOMER: ANTIQUITY FOR LAWRENCE DURRELL IN THE IONIC ISLANDS LANDSCAPE

“He was just viewing her as an object, the way a boat passenger stares at the shape of a passing island. But this was no ordinary passenger. He was trying to see through to everything about the island”. Haruki Murakami, 1Q84. Books 1&2¹.

It is surprising just how much emotion Lawrence Durrell evokes on his journey from Brindisi to Corfu as he awaits the revealing mirage that shows reality has unfolded so that he can observe a different Greece from that of the profane. Like someone trying to tune in to a particular radio station, he endeavours to turn his mental dial, telling himself that he should not be discouraged by the aridity and unattractiveness of the coasts of Corfu (“craggy, penurious”²) at first sight; he will soon find the desired signal. He is aware of the palette of colours, shapes and sounds of the landscape which must emerge to make Homer speak, and not the other way around (“Damn, Homer!”, he berates himself), in order to prove that “rosy old satin dawn, sending its warm pencils of light” is “really and truly blessed with ‘pink fingers’”.

Following this dynamic, the Ionian islands function as an unambiguous gateway to that “Recording Eye”³ (capitalized always) of places, characters and events... which for him is Greece.

“Somewhere between Calabria and Corfu the blue really begins” (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁴.

His goal in crossing that blue is that of a scholar capable of perceiving in nature a constant superposition of historical layers, within which, he

¹ p. 580. Translated by Jay Rubin.

² To avoid excessive repetition of the two books analyzed in this article, the acronyms GI (Greek Islands) and PC (Prospero's cell) will be used. The three references in this first paragraph can be found in GI, 17.

³ PC, 131.

⁴ PC, 11.

feels a great predilection for Antiquity⁵. This erudition is not exempt from subjectivity, whose main mission lies in the constant poetic evocation of stories and legends that make the Greek islands unique (their having their own hierarchy), to the detriment of others that he has visited, which are unable to arouse in him the same feeling⁶. His aim as an author is to prepare the reader to tune into a mythopoetic reality that only classical readings can offer⁷: “Before you can understand me you must first appreciate Greece”⁸.

In a landscape perceived as a Platonic idea, where each object seems to be the prototype or Idea of that object, facing its elements implies a constant, yet satisfying exercise of *anamnesis*, through which they become timeless ideas or emblems.

“Each boat, house, donkey, is *prime* – a Platonic prototype of a sudden invention” (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁹.

In the present article we will examine the two components through which we can make emblems and accordingly tune in to the frequency intended by Durrell: Art and History. Once applied to his Idea of Greek territory in general, we will check their particular use on the Ionian Islands, and how the author’s subjectivity hierarchizes them in turn. For this purpose, we shall analyse the two works where they are most present: “Prospero’s Cell” (1945), written in Egyptian exile, marked by a strong melancholic nostalgia for his Eden-like days in Corfu, and “The Greek Islands” (1978), a rather personal guide, made through the impact of the aforementioned classical emblems.

“A guide, yes, but a very personal one” (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)¹⁰.

⁵ Lillios 1991, 71.

⁶ Further north, “other islands off Dubrovnik are just as beautiful, but they seem to hold nothing” (GI, 42).

⁷ This specific reality is important as a selective filter for his literary treatment of Greek Prehistory, focusing his attention on those sites that have a connection with mythology or poetry. Thus, the Palace of Knossos arouses great admiration, as was the epicentre of the legends related to the Minoan Cycle, while the “frying pans” of Syros are not mentioned in a rather trivial visit to the island, despite their contribution to the study of the Cycladic civilization. This subject has been investigated by I. Tassignon, who writes about the relationship between the magical or marvelous character of certain archaeological objects and their appearance in Durrell’s prose (2013, 199). See the description of Phaistos as a mysterious landscape, which reaches its zenith with the description of its famous disk: “That it has magical powers I am sure” (GI, 84). More examples will appear later in this article.

⁸ Alyn 1972, 125.

⁹ GI, 21.

¹⁰ GI, 8.

1. The Island as a cultural construct

Durrell's days in the Ionian Sea date back to 1935, when on the recommendation of his friend George Parkinson, he travelled with his wife to Corfu (followed by the writer's family a week later), escaping from an oppressive England where he would never end up feeling comfortable. Born in British India, it was his father who had decided that the social future of his first-born would be limited if he did not receive the relevant education in the heart of the Empire¹¹. For a boy accustomed to the sight of the Himalayas, his English parenthesis would make him feel out of place, constrained by various social norms far removed from the freedom that, as a budding poet, he yearned for¹², and that he would once again find in Corfu, an island he described poetically as devoid of "Cyclopean remains; consequently, one looks free from the oppressive blood guilt of Tyrins"¹³.

Unsurprisingly, the islands are an important part of his work, to the point of considering himself an *islomane* in "Reflections on a Marine Venus"¹⁴: a kind of disease that helps him to literally rebuild his biography (so important for someone sentimentally stateless) and his work. With regard to the former, as a Westerner he sees the remains of a culturally forgotten Atlantis on the islands, calling himself a direct descendant by recognizing his cultural cradle in Greece¹⁵. In relation to the latter, he managed to rebuild his own authorial world by recording his presence on the island as a new historical layer, evoking it as part of a whole through his work. It is no coincidence that in "Prospero's Cell", Durrell mentions a supposed academic theory which holds that Corfu might be the island that inspired Shakespeare to write "The Tempest"¹⁶. Thus, Lawrence Durrell is equated to Prospero in his quality of British newcomer.

In viewing of the above, it is understandable why he would later say that self-discovery only happens in Greece, although according to A. Sharon, the true biographical merit should be attributed to the intellectual parents he met upon setting foot on the island¹⁷, and who helped him consolidate an

¹¹ MacNiven 1998, 47.

¹² Delmas 2017, 100.

¹³ PC, 72.

¹⁴ 1960 [1953], 15.

¹⁵ "And it is towards the lost Atlantis that their subconscious yearns throughout their island life..." (Reflections..., 1960 [1953], 15).

¹⁶ PC, 79; GI, 25.

¹⁷ Sharon 2015, 123. In his article, Sharon accentuates the influence of his masters and contrasts it with the absence of Durrell's paternal figure in the main characters of his early works; he had recently died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1928.

early vocation¹⁸: we are referring to the Armenian literary writer Gostan Zarian, to the island scholar Theodore Stephanides (future mentor of his brother Gerald, and the first person Lawrence met), whose Venizelist affiliation would bring Durrell the opportunity to establish contact with the Athenian *intelligentsia*¹⁹, and the literary Count D. (an image of Constantine Palatianos²⁰), in whose white house he spent countless cheerful evenings with a group of (literally said by him) *epicureans*. Discussions under the moonlight, beautifully described in “Prospero’s Cell”, uncountable borrowed books and the shadow of their smart influences would be decisive in determining that stay and that geographical panorama as the core of his first novels.

Be that as it may, the island became decisive as a cultural construct from the Mavrodaphne of “Panic Spring” (1937), his first novel, which can barely mask neither its Corfu-based structure nor his authorial approach as a foreigner in the Greek landscape²¹. Its main character, Christian Marlowe, arrives on a limbo-island full of clichés²², associated from childhood with the idea of Greece, feeling consequently disappointed at not having been able to see neither jumping dolphins “nor solemn dances to the sound of Attic flutes”²³, a revealing fact for someone who still signs his work with the evocative pseudonym of Charles Norden, a Prospero of the twentieth century. This character’s story arc shows his progressive integration on the island, until he finally feels it as his own. The latter is evident with the dolphin he finally gets to see just as he receives an incoming call that forces him back to Britain.

From that desire to be part of the island through the knowledge of its true secrets (trying to see the dolphins jumping, something that an occasional tourist will never have time to discover) comes the importance of acquiring the culture of the country; a culture that has been accessed through its clichés. However, a constant willingness to access its “Atlantean” core will turn the territory into an authentic customized pastiche, the embodiment of the poet’s affectation, of the tourist (Lawrence-Prospero) who would desire to be native (Ulysses).

¹⁸ Initially marked (though scarcely recognized) by the French symbolists. Morrison 2005, 5.

¹⁹ Where he will meet his admired Henry Miller or George Seferis, a great influence in his later work. Delgado Duatis 2015, 22.

²⁰ Among its supporters, Delgado Duatis 2015, 18.

²¹ The same will happen with the *Dark labyrinth’s* Cefalu.

²² As rightly stated by Clawson (2012, 4).

²³ Norden [Durrell] 1937 [2008], 21.

2. Evoking Durrellian reality

The sentimental education received on the island and an ever-growing volume of readings in his intellectual parents' libraries would set the stage for each one of the emblems with which the author would cover the country, from the part (Corfu) to the whole (Greece). The resulting tapestry would constitute the "heraldic reality" for which the author would become famous²⁴.

This reality is described as a state of mind derived from observing the world as if through "a dark crystal" which distorts things, turning them "irregular, refracted. Mirages suddenly swallow islands and, wherever you look, the trembling curtain of the atmosphere deceives"²⁵. This crystal captures the true essence of (his) Greece, built from an artistic and historical perspective, very characteristic of the poet, populating the island with subjective ghosts, which are invisible to the layman, timeless and non-transferable. With light and vision as its pillars, the resulting image inscribes Lawrence Durrell in the list of Greek visualists, whose three main points are classified by Dimakis: first, the essentiality of an Apollonian-type heliocentrism, light being the trigger of his narrative emphasis.

"After your first adventure with the Greek light and your initial rapture at the beauty of the landscape (...)" (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)²⁶.

Second, a clear predominance of Classical thought, which manages to eclipse the rest of the ages; third, and finally, we might mention the iconophilic impulses, which would materialize the bookish references²⁷. It is no wonder that, at the sight of a dreamed (and exercised) landscape, he observes monk seals "where they sunbathed on the flat rocks like nymphets, or emanations from some ancient Greek myth"²⁸, or moves around the islands with the same superstitions that a native would have, avoiding falling asleep under the shade of "certain trees" at noon, for fear

²⁴ Although R. Morrison places its basis in the symbolist philosophy of Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1844), he argues that the influence of the French symbolists has not been considered even by the author himself in his interviews (Morrison 2005, 23).

²⁵ PC, 11.

²⁶ GI, 31.

²⁷ Dimakis 2020, 87.

²⁸ GI, 38. As in Hom. *Od.* 4. 400-405._

of having his wits stolen away by Pan²⁹.

His literary universe detects the classical echoes, placing them in an “empty” landscape, which he understands as being full of possibilities, depending on the imprint they have been able to leave on his unconscious. In the same way, the emblem created will achieve a greater or lesser narrative impact depending on the feeling provoked by where is set the historical evocation. History being clearly superior to art (nature) in how he conceives the Greek panorama, the scenery will be more evocative when the former has bequeathed episodes worthy of mention. However, if the landscape appears hostile, its final evaluation will be notoriously affected. Missolonghi can serve as an example of this last statement, with its “rancid green lakes” and “malarial lagoons”, which “seem to belong to another circle of the Inferno”³⁰, making Durrell reflect on whether the malaria of those lands was truly responsible for the death of the author of *Childe Harold*.

The heraldic reality is perfectly mapped. Each episode and each place have geographical coordinates that the author pursues with scientific zeal. And just as he could not have seen nymphs instead of seals reclining near an Icelandic landscape, Sappho would not have jumped from cliffs other than those of Lefkas, nor could the Phaeacians have left Ulysses in a port other than that of Vathi. Regardless of the distorting power of the dark crystal, it is rigorous. We will go into this aspect in greater detail later, when we discuss the role of Archaeology in his work. For the moment, let us briefly describe the two components that help to form each of the emblems of his heraldic reality.

3. Components of the heraldic reality

(I). Art: as we saw earlier, Greek visualism prioritises light. For the author, Greek light is unique.

“Italy has not such ray, nor Spain” (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)³¹.

Conceiving it as if it were a Neoplatonic divinity, he makes the rest of the artistic components emanate from it. This is the case of colour, giving the exact shade of blue with which the traveler knows he has reached the

²⁹ GI, 41.

³⁰ GI, 37.

³¹ GI, 21.

Ionian Islands. Also the music, which oscillates with light intensity.

"Each day is a brilliant improvisation with full orchestra - the light on the sea", (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)³².

Thus, in the evocation of a legend narrated by Plutarch, the reader imagines the sun setting behind an island landscape, from within which a whispering voice (in the same low tone as the light), announces to the mariner Thamus, stranded on a boat off the coast, to announce in Palodes that Pan has just died³³.

(II). History:

"The ancient world is still there, at their elbows, just out of sight". (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)³⁴.

In the author's obsession with collecting the entire history of the country, the subjectivity with which he chooses his references seems the most important component. As we saw earlier, this is more important than the previous component. If it is strong enough, (artistic) nature becomes secondary or almost nonexistent, as in the case of Ithaca, with its enormous poetic evocation. But it is never the other way around.

Leaving aside a prehistoric corfiot past that is of no interest to him, the historical timeline of the island that he offers at the end of "Prospero's Cell" begins in 734 BC, being colonised by Corinth³⁵. Despite seeing characters such as Richard the Lionheart, Michael the Despot or Edward Lear parading through his pages, it is striking to see the great weight with which Antiquity covers the islands (typical of Greek visualism), and as we saw at the beginning, the unease he feels at not identifying his classical references when he arrives at a certain place:

"[...] you may feel slightly restless. The lack of classical remains will probably be the cause of it" (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)³⁶.

³² GI, 18.

³³ GI, 36. Based on Plut. *De defect.* 17. Palodes was the port of Butrint.

³⁴ GI, 41.

³⁵ Durrell omits the previous presence of Liburni, who were expelled when the Greeks arrive (Strabo 6, 2, 4).

³⁶ GI, 31.

Seizing Greek references means making the landscape his own, so that, in turn, the Prosperos of the future can constantly follow the same pattern as in identifying Mouse Island (Pontikonisi) as the Phaeacian ship that defied the wrath of Poseidon by daring to return Odysseus to his island³⁷. There must be a willingness on the part of the reader, but he guarantees that the experience will be worthwhile. That is why he recommends forgetting your camera when you enter the Ambracian Gulf; otherwise you will not be able to see the feast that Cleopatra and Mark Antony are said to have celebrated on the eve of the Battle of Actium. Unwilling reading does not translate the scenery into spectacle.

We are talking about “ruins” that do not belong only to a forgotten dimension; it is important to know how to make them work in the present. In this sense, even the protection that the awakened traveller can receive will be greater if, in addition to paying his respects to the guardian saints (Saint Spyridon in Corfu or Saint Dionysus in Zante), he includes a visit to the Medusa from the 6th century BC in the custody of the Archaeological Museum of Corfu, which for some reason far precedes the previous ones in its apotropaic function³⁸.

Not everything is so simple; not all the references are perfectly placed spatially, and at this point, it becomes necessary to draw on archaeology, which is sprinkled over numerous pages. For Durrell, however, this science is a double-edged sword: necessary but very cumbersome, and he soon becomes impatient at the little understanding of certain reconstructions. Of Romantic heritage, he prefers the evocation of a Greek landscape wrapped in a nature of centuries to the more “careful and domesticated” Roman archaeology³⁹, and he divides its professionals into those who overwhelm their text with a multitude of cowardly references (with “perhaps”, “surely”) and those who let the landscape speak for itself⁴⁰. In the latter category he

³⁷ Because for him, Corfu is the Homeric Scheria (PC, 63), as Thucydides said in his day (1, 25, 4).

³⁸ “The warden to the chthonic Greek world just as St. Spyridon was the warden of the Byzantine world and the modern” GI, 31. On the influence of the character of Medusa in Durrell’s imaginary, see Alexandre-Garner 2004, 191-200. Focusing specifically in “The Greek Islands”, there seems to be a direct connection (with a strong biographical component) between powerful mothers and helpless children. It is no coincidence that after the description of a wild Medusa, he goes on to describe Pegasus (sprung from her blood) as a sensitive and creative being (“winged fancy of the creative spirit” GI, 34).

³⁹ It is very typical of Durrell’s philhellenic generation to see the Greek landscape as more stimulating than the Italian one, defining it as Dionysian, full of a wild primitivism. See Roessel 2002, 255.

⁴⁰ Tassignon 2013, 201.

places Evans and Schliemann, for having made the landscape a real poem. We are in another phase in the history of archaeology, and the sensation of its findings is still present in the way it is conceived. Another article would be necessary to deal in depth with this consideration.

It is in this quest for constant evocation that the collection of certain debates is inscribed in the attempt to locate mythical realities. Tuning in to Homer involves finding the exact point of each of his locations. Even though he recognises that the poet described the geography very well, where to find the palace of Odysseus? And the pigsties of Eumaeus?

“Does it matter? Yes, in a profound sense it does” (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁴¹.

In this interpretative process he will make several mistakes, as in the identification of the false villa of Tiberius at Kassiope⁴², which, despite being known today as the Temple of Zeus Cassius, Durrell's fame has led to the perpetuation of erroneous data in ill-informed travel guides.

His archaeological quest transcends material reality, finding in language another much more satisfactory tool to place the reader in the desired dimension⁴³. This can be seen in his use of place names. From the very subtitle of “Prospero's Cell”⁴⁴, the author indicates the temporal leap to the dimension he has actually inhabited, Corcyra, the Latin transcription of its original Greek Κορκυρα, and not Corfu, the current name of the island⁴⁵.

Even more curious is the description of the locals, whom he does not refer to as Corcyreans, but as Greeks, parts of a mental whole (the Greek, its Essence), without borders between cities, whose character will respond in the same way on an Ionian Island as in the Thracian mountains⁴⁶. This prototypical citizen responds again to a cultural pastiche of different ages, which the author calls the great secular pantheon, with the Karaghiozis (a caricatured theatrical character of Greek shadow theater, a kind of trickster, in the same vein as the Zanni of the *Commedia dell'arte* or the

⁴¹ GI, 44.

⁴² PC, 65-6. About his false identification: Tassignon 2013, 212.

⁴³ Tassignon writes about his work as translator of newly discovered epigraphy with scholars such as Theodore Burton Brown (2013, 206).

⁴⁴ “A guide to the landscape and manners of the Island of Corcyra”.

⁴⁵ Delgado Duatis 2015, 19.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

Kasperle of Germanic puppet plays⁴⁷) as the last to join in⁴⁸. This pantheon, represented by a host of personalities through which to understand Greek “exoticism”⁴⁹, has its roots in Homer.

Again, Antiquity, and again, Ulysses⁵⁰. Despite the lethargy with which he always reads the *Odyssey* (“poorly constructed and shapeless”), he understands that it “deliciously describes modern Greeks”, with their “loquacity, the shy cunning, the mendacity, the generosity, the cowardice and bravery, the almost comical inability of self-analysis. The unloving humour and the scolding”⁵¹. Again that temporal chasm, regardless of the historical circumstances that separate the 20th century Corfiot from the Ithacan of more than two millennia ago⁵². Ulysses remains a mirror for today’s Greek people.

For this reason, classical education is basic to “remember”. It is not by chance that in “Prospero’s Cell” there is a dialogue with a peasant called Anastasius, who has just read a demotic and shortened version of *The Odyssey*, that he has been ordered to buy for his daughter at school. His reading, Durrell doesn’t doubt at all, has given him a deeper image of himself and his society⁵³.

This “memory” of the classical past is also alive in the language of the street, as Durrell points out, with words that “must have been familiar to Plato or Socrates”⁵⁴, as in the case of *artopoleion* (“bakery” ... however, bread is *psomi* in modern Greek). He will also point out how classical Attic grammar is used to teach modern Greek, whereas it would make little sense to teach an English boy by reading Chaucer.

4. Island hierarchy in the Ionian Sea

The number and impact of the author’s different cultural emblems build up a narrative hierarchy of the Ionian islands throughout his works. It

⁴⁷ PC, 47. See: Konstantakos 2020, 13.

⁴⁸ According to A. Sharon, it would act as a contemporary emblem of the Greek *areté* (2020, 130).

⁴⁹ Clawson 2012, 47.

⁵⁰ It is worth noting that Durrell calls him Odysseus, following his rigorous approach to the past.

⁵¹ PC, 59.

⁵² “The three hundred years of Turkish rule seem to have had only a superficial effect” (GI, 34).

⁵³ PC, 63.

⁵⁴ GI, 25.

is not surprising that the island where he has received his sentimental education is treated with great (quite positive) emphasis, functioning also as a yardstick for the rest. Even in the Venetian past of its façades, the Corfu's architecture has a better, more evocative appearance, thanks to its better geological fortune. In contrast, Kefalonia or Zante (both described as Corfu's little sisters), much more prone to earthquakes, have lost out with the result of their constant rebuilding, which Durrell compares to a woman trying to repair her facial damage with vitriol.

Kefalonia has an idyllic landscape ("wonderful landscapes, spacious bays"⁵⁵), greater political energy than the inhabitants of Corfu, whom he describes as calmer, but is not accompanied by the historical element to form its heraldic reality. As a result, the poet loses interest, barely able to tune in to the intended "Homeric frequency". In his journey, he ends by saying:

"True. There are no sites to visit, and nothing much to do except admire the scenery" (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁵⁶.

The case of Zante is even sadder. In his eyes, it has the same impact as Cephalonia.

"The thrust and colouring of natural beauty is all still there; although for the historian and the lover of the past, the present Zante is sad, exhausted, lacking in echoes" (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁵⁷.

But the author does not seem to give up so quickly, in the certainty that it was "famous for its beauties since Pliny first mentioned them"⁵⁸, and that is something. "One must go to books to recover that past now", he says, as if desperately trying to tune in. However, nothing fulfils him. His description of Zante as a naval base does not end up giving the expected result, recognizing that "it lies just outside the mainstream of events". As the books by two landscape painters, Edward Lear and Joseph Cartwright, do not tell him anything either, the author gives up his search, and ends up defining it as "vague and shoddy"⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ GI, 46.

⁵⁶ GI, 47.

⁵⁷ GI, 50.

⁵⁸ Id.

⁵⁹ Id.

How different Lefkas or Ithaca resonate in Durrell's mind, the former being the subject of a debate as to whether it can be considered an island. Although it appears "sad and small"⁶⁰ to his eyes, he nevertheless finds the characters interesting enough to persevere. Its white cliffs are not as striking as those of Dover, he comments, but the latter do not include in their mythological corpus the poetess Sappho jumping from the top in a legendary leap (*katapontismos*), which, Strabo says, put an end to the lives of certain love-sick people, as well as criminals, according to an apotropaic ritual used by the priests of Apollo⁶¹.

"You can see the leap, however, if you have good glasses.
Could there be a better reference to that "dark crystal"?"
(L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)⁶².

The procedure here is the reverse of that of the aforementioned islands: having an attractive historical reference, it is necessary to tune the *art* to its nature, and having recognized that its landscape was not on a par with that of other Ionian islands, the artistic stimulus has to come by another route. In this case, the auditory one. Let us see how his description gives the island an ideal aspect, even though it could be defining any other:

"But up there on the white cliffs of poetry, the wind blows with a steady cool drumming on the ears, and the asphodels tremble and nod among the barren rocks with their savage thistles (L. Durrell, *The Greek Islands*)"⁶³.

Dover's cliffs may have more impact visually, but they do not have their mythopoetic basis.

As for Ithaca, already explained above, the island is full of archaeological debates, which would be enough to provide us with an island on which to recreate ourselves on a narrative level. Its treatment is that of someone who draws up his own personal treasure map. This is an apt metaphor, since he describes its suitability as a refuge for pirates, recognizing Ulysses as one of them. It is so full of historical references that the landscape is left in the background. And after reciting a *not superfluous homily*⁶⁴ about a thousand and one sites, some of which are still presented with great

⁶⁰ "sad little island" (GI, 38).

⁶¹ Strabo 10, 2, 9.

⁶² GI, 40.

⁶³ Id.

⁶⁴ "I hope not superfluous, homily" (GI, 45).

obscurity, Durrell ends by leaving the island in the hands of archaeologists, who “however exasperating they may seem”, “we still need [them]”⁶⁵.

The rest of the islands are forgotten, as in the case of Cythera, giving even greater emphasis to the fact that his guide is highly personal. After all, we are entering “his” landscape, and we do not know what heraldic component he lacks, in order to include it at the narrative level.

5. Visualistic colophon

It is not surprising to learn that the two works analysed here were written outside Greece; its absence being the driving force behind his writing, and visualism as the desperate attempt to recreate every single (and subjective) emblem that can prove that, for a stateless person, there was once a place to settle and put down roots. Visualism to escape from that threatening “blindness” that comes with the lack of habit of not looking through that dark glass. It is no coincidence that, before starting “Prospero’s cell”, in the midst of his Alexandrian exile, Durrell defines himself mythopoetically as a “blind Pharos”⁶⁶ for being in a city in which to begin again, “featureless, level and sandy”. We are not talking precisely about a place devoid of light, real or poetic, being also the subject of his future *Quartet*, but he misses the Greek light of his Recording Eye to recover his meaning as a person and as an author; his vision being the gift he offers the reader.

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⁶⁵ GI, 45.

⁶⁶ PC, 131.

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ABSTRACTS

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OBSERVING THE IONIAN ISLANDS FROM THE MAINLAND. (*EPEIROS*)

From the Archaic to the Classical period, the territory of Epirus maintained relations with the various islands in the Ionian Sea. Although relations were most intense with the island of Coreyra, as written sources, archaeology and epigraphy show, there is also evidence of contacts of various kinds with Leucas, Cephallenia and Zacynthus. In the latter case, the relationship is even articulated through mythical kinships linking the Molossians to Zacynthus through Cassandra, as shown by an inscription discovered at Dodona.

Key words: Epirus, Dodona, Leucas, Cephallenia, Zacynthus.

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LE ISOLE DELLO IONIO NEL CONFRONTO TRA SPARTA E ATENE. DINAMICHE POLITICHE E STRATEGICHE NELLA METÀ DEL V SEC. A.C.)

In their role as hubs in the routes to and from the West, in their mutual relationships, with the surrounding regions and with the main protagonists of the history of ancient Greece, the Ionian Islands present themselves as a sort of laboratory, a microcosm affected by dynamics and phenomena of great interest.

The paper aims particularly at reconstructing the role played by Leucas, Cephallenia, Ithaca and Zacynthus, on a political and strategic level, in the clashes between Athens, Corinth and Sparta from 460 BC to the final years of the Peloponnesian War.

Key words: Leucas, Cephallenia, Zacynthus, Athens, Sparta, Corinth.

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DIE IONISCHEN INSELN UND DIE GRIECHISCHEN
BUNDESSTAATEN

This paper focusses on the relationship between the Ionian Islands (the “almost island” of Leucas, Cephallenia and Zacynthus) and Greek federal states (*koina* of the Achaeans, Aetolians, Acarnanians) on the mainland developed since classical times. The main subjects of this paper are the methods and strategies that islands of foreign ethnic origin, separated from the mainland by the sea, used, when they were politically and ideologically integrated into the “sphere” of mainland federal states and to what extent the island *poleis* were actively involved in this process. In addition, it is discussed whether on the islands federal structures have been introduced.

Key words: Ionian Islands, Greek federal states, Achaeans, Aetolians, Acarnanians.

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EPIRO LE ISOLE IONICHE. PAESAGGI ELLENISTICI A
CONFRONTO

With the reigns of Alexander the Molossian and especially with Pyrrhus and his son Alexander, Epirus significantly expanded its territory. This expansion is evident from archaeological evidence through numerous fortifications that transformed the landscape, allowing for effective management and control, particularly of the road system and productive areas. This new territorial dimension likely included the Ionian Islands as well. The objective of this paper is to analyze the relationship between the Ionian Islands and the kingdom of Epirus during the Hellenistic age and to determine, archaeologically, whether the new territorial management also involved the Ionian islands.

Key words: Epirus, Hellenistic age, fortifications, Ionian Islands, Landscape management.

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DODONA AND THE IONIAN ARCHIPIELAGO

The aim of this essay is to examine the evidence for the presence of people from the Ionian Islands in the Sanctuary of Dodona. Although the paper considers all the neighbouring islands, it focuses mainly on the southern ones. The different testimonies collected show two levels of interaction, firstly the oracular activity and secondly the function of Dodona as a social arena that contributed to the continuous redefinition and consolidation of the hierarchy of each community.

Key words: Dodona, Ionian Islands, Greek oracles, Greek society, Epirus.

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Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
THE IONIAN ISLANDS AND THE REGION OF
ACARNANIA: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

The geographical location of the Ionian Islands and Acarnania is responsible for the main characteristics that make its landscape unique: a strong geophysical activity derived from the mobility of the tectonic plates that has configured an area of rugged mountains and basins, where seismicity is manifested with great intensity; a Mediterranean bio-climatic scenario and finally, an ancient anthropogenic intervention that destabilized the natural environment through deforestation and soil erosion, promoting river accumulation processes that gave way to the construction of deltas and flagrant changes in the layout of the coasts.

Key words: Ionian Islands, Acarnania, natural environment, geographical uniqueness, deforestation, deltas and coasts.

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**LEUKAS. ZUR ANTIKEN BESIEDLUNG UND ZU
DÖRPFELDS ALTFUNDEN**

One hundred years ago, the systematic archaeological exploration of the island of Leucas under the direction of Wilhelm Dörpfeld focused on finding the palace of Odysseus with its associated settlements and necropolises - under the assumption that Leucas was Ithaca -. Although this exploration completely missed its goal, this very structured and carefully carried out work is nevertheless significant, as it provided rich insights into the prehistoric and ancient settlement of the island. With the help of the excavation diaries from that time and of the samples of finds from these regional studies kept in the collection of the German Archaeological Institute at Athens, complexes of finds can be located, sharpen the rural settlement picture and raise further questions about settlement, not only in the city of Leucas, but in plain of Nidri in the middle part of the island, where Dörpfeld and his team explored the so-called royal tombs of Nidri (from the early and middle Bronze Age), excavated several fortified farmstead, located on the edges of the plain, mostly slightly elevated, at a distance of 100 to 500 meters from each other, and studied the integration of the plain into the island's watch and signal post system.

Key words: Dörpfeld, Leucas, Archaeology, settlements.

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**IL RUOLO COMMERCIALE DI LEUCADE E LA PRESENZA
DI STRANIERI NELL'ISOLA**

The city of Leucas prospered due to its strategic location, serving as a transit point between Greece, the Adriatic coast, Italy, and western ports. Beginning with the foundation of Leucas and the construction of the διόρυκτος by the Corinthians, the paper focuses on the archaeological evidence related to the harbour and buildings associated with the productive activities of the ancient Corinthian colony. Finally, inscriptions attesting to the presence of foreigners on the island are examined, also considering the latest archaeological investigations. The analysis of the epigraphic and archaeological material of Leucas demonstrates how the island was

integrated into the commercial flows extending from Massalia to Miletus, offering a glimpse into a city whose commercial vitality is particularly evident from the Hellenistic period onwards.

Key words: Leucas, Epigraphy, Harbours, Economy, Trades.

Vivian Staikou

EphAAITL - Greek Ministry of Culture

THE FLOURISHING PORT OF ANCIENT LEUCAS.
TOPOGRAPHICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Based on topographical and excavation data, the port of Leucas exemplified a prosperous city. The port, large and safeguarded by an elongated mole within the Leucas channel, included numerous warehouses unearthed in past decades, where amphorae of wine and oil were stored. Recent excavations have uncovered an expansive commercial space with an imposing public stoa and a katagogion with spaces for accommodation, dining, and entertainment. These findings affirm that the port of Leucas was a crucial trade hub, thus enriching our understanding of its significance in antiquity.

Key words: Leucas, ancient ports, katagogion, public stoa, trade hub.

Olimpia Vikatou

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IL TEATRO ANTICO DI LEUCADE.
DALL'IDENTIFICAZIONE DEGLI INIZI DEL XX SECOLO AL
RILIEVO E LA RICERCA UN SECOLO DOPO

Leucas' strategic position in antiquity facilitated strong connections with the surrounding regions, fostering significant economic and cultural prosperity. The island played a crucial role in the exchange of people, ideas, and technologies. Its control over vital maritime routes highlights its importance within the context of Corinthian colonization. This importance was further solidified when it became the second capital of the Acarnanian League.

The only systematic excavation ever conducted in the ancient town of Leucas began six years ago in the city's theatre, which is nearing completion

and has unearthed an impressive monument along with many interesting elements. The theatre is fully integrated into the natural geomorphology on the slopes of Koulmos hill, thus providing a panoramic view of the expansive region.

So far, the research has largely uncovered the *koilon*, the *orchestra*, the *euripus*, the *parodoi*, the retaining walls of the *koilon*, and much of the stage, which remains preserved at foundation level. Fragments of stone thrones, adorned with relief decorations including lion paw motifs at the base, along with depictions of dolphins, animal muzzles, lion skins, backward-facing bird heads, and Lesbian cyma, have been found scattered throughout the Euripus area.

The theatre of Leucas is the first big ancient theatre to have come to light in the Ionian Islands. The dating of the monument is still tentative, as both excavation and architectural study are ongoing. Similar to theatres in Aitolokarnania, which were constructed from the 4th century BC, it is likely that the theatre of Leucas also dates to this period of economic prosperity for the city. Completion of the systematic excavation, along with the study of the monument and artifacts, is expected to provide precise insights into its construction date, phases, architectural design, and its potential functions in relation to the historical trajectory of ancient Leucas.

Key words: Leucas, theatre, fourth century BC.

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**TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WIND, SLOPE AND SHADE.
BIOCLIMATIC ADAPTATION OF LEUCAS CITY PLAN AND
HELLENISTIC HOUSES**

The ancient city of Leucas was located on the eastern coast of the island of the same name, a strategic position that allowed to control the maritime traffic through the Leucas Canal. Its location, on the lower hillside of Koulmos Hill, made it possible to take advantage of the slope to permit the functioning of the drainage pipes that ran through the rear passageways of some excavated blocks of the city. In the warmer months, the island of Leucas endures high temperatures with elevated humidity, resulting in sweltering heat. The orientation of the main streets of the ancient city favoured the action of the prevailing winds in summer, which helped to mitigate the heat. It is likely that, in the Hellenistic construction phases of

some excavated houses, the distribution of the building volumes contributed to the casting of shadows over the courtyards, preventing the interior of the dwellings from overheating.

Key words: Leucas, house, urban planning, bioclimatic architecture.

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THE LEUCADIAN *PERAEA*

This work aims to study the *peraea* of the *polis* of Leucas and its importance regarding Leucas' control of the maritime routes crossing the channel between the island and the western continental coast of Greece, particularly the Plagia Peninsula. In this case, we shall identify the different sites involved, the ancient sources available, and apply some GIS tools, as well as focusing on the viewshed from each point, the territory of the *polis* of Leucas and the different routes that Leucas was able to control.

Key words: Ionian Islands, Leucas, *Peraea*, Acarnania, GIS.

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THE CEPHALLENIAN *TETRAPOLIS*: TERRITORY,
POLEIS AND *ETHNOS*

This chapter analyses the manner in which the Cephallenian *poleis* occupied, exploited and defended their territory, and the development of Cephallenia during the Classical Period. We shall also investigate the aspects that shaped the identity and political organisation of the Cephallenians during this period. In this way, whilst the other islands of the Ionian featured just one *polis*, Cephallenia featured four different *poleis*: Same, Crane, Proni and Pale that were unequal in terms of size, importance and wealth. Cephallenia's identity revolved around the tradition of Cephalus as a shared ancestor and eponymous hero of the Cephallenians, also reinforcing their awareness of their Hellenic origin. We are dealing with an ethnic identity, an *ethnos*, but it did not reach the point of constituting a federal state in the Classical Period.

Key words: Ionian islands, Cephallenia, Classical age, *poleis*, ethnicity.

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**IN THE SHADOW OF ODYSSEUS. A HISTORY OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND CONTRACT
ARCHAEOLOGY IN ITHACA**

This paper offers an account of contract archaeology in Ithaca based on the author's experience over two decades. The first part recounts the history of archaeology in Ithaca, highlighting how the quest for Odysseus has shaped the formation of the published archaeological record. The second part provides an overview of rescue fieldwork undertaken under contract, and discusses the results in their local and regional context.

Key words: Ithaca, archaeology, Odysseus, neglect, landscape.

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**ZACYNTHUS AND THE WESTERN PELOPONNESE:
BETWEEN THE ACHAEAN HELLENISTIC KOINON AND
ROMAN EXPANSION INTO GREECE**

The objective of this paper is to delve into the history of Hellenistic Zacynthus, with a particular focus on the period spanning from the late 3rd century to the early 2nd century BC. Situated strategically between Italy and the Adriatic on one side, and the Peloponnese and the Aegean Sea on the other, the island was disputed among various political entities, *i.e.* Macedonia, Rome, and the Achaean Koinon. Despite limited historical evidence —comprising archaeological findings, epigraphic records, numismatic evidence, and literary texts—this study aims to elucidate Zacynthian ties to the Peloponnese and challenge the prevailing notion that the island's interests were solely directed towards the central Mediterranean from the 4th century onwards.

Key words: Zacynthus, Achaean Koinon, Rome, Hellenistic period, connectivity.

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**DON'T BE SILENT, HOMER: ANTIQUITY FOR LAWRENCE
DURRELL IN THE IONIC ISLANDS LANDSCAPE**

In his literature, Lawrence Durrell approaches the Greek map as if confronting a heraldic reality, replete with emblems that are constructed through a combination of heliocentric visualism and the impact caused by the historical references that have taken place at certain coordinates. In this sense, Antiquity achieves a great predominance to the detriment of later periods. This article examines each of the components of the emblem separately, applying its results to the landscape of the Ionian Islands, focusing especially on two fundamental books by Durrell: "Prospero's Cell" and "The Greek Islands". The aim is to enter into the author's subjectivity with analytical rigour, exploring the consequent hierarchisation of *his* particular geography in this specific area.

Key words: Lawrence Durrell, heraldic reality, heliocentric visualism, Antiquity, Ionian Islands.

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τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ ἄκρας Ἰαπυγίας ἐπὶ τὸν μυχὸν τοῦ Κορινθιακοῦ κόλπου τῶν
μὲν τρισχιλίων ἐστὶν ἔλαττον, τὸ δ' ἀπὸ Ἰαπυγίας εἰς τὴν Λιβύην πλέον
τῶν τετρακισχιλίων ἐστί. νῆσοι δ' εἰσὶν ἐνταῦθα ἥ τε Κόρκυρα καὶ
Σύβοτα πρὸ τῆς Ἠπειρώτιδος, καὶ ἐφεξῆς πρὸ τοῦ Κορινθιακοῦ κόλπου
Κεφαλληνία καὶ Ἰθάκη καὶ Ζάκυνθος καὶ Ἐχινάδες.

*And the stretch from the Iapygian Cape to the head of the Gulf of Corinth
is less than three thousand stadia, while that from Iapygia to Libya is more
than four thousand. The islands of this sea are: Corcyra and the Sybota
off the coast of Epirus; and next to them, off the Gulf of Corinth, Cephallenia,
Ithaca, Zacynthus, and the Echinades.*

[Trad. H. L. Jones, in The Loeb Classical Library]

Strabo, the Ionian Islands and the Mainland

(Strabo, 2, 5, 20)

In copertina:

G. Mercator, *Atlas sive Cosmographicae Meditationes de Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati Figura*.
Denuo auctus Editio Quinta. Henricus Hondius. Amsterdam, 1623.

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