

## BECOMING MESSENIAN\*

**Abstract:** The article is an enquiry into the identity of two groups who called themselves Messenians: the Helots and *perioikoi* who revolted against Sparta after the earthquake in the 460s; and the citizens of the independent polity founded by Epameinondas in 370/69 BC in the Spartan territory west of the Taygetos. Based on the history of the Messenians in Pausanias Book 4, some scholars have thought that those two groups were simply the descendants of the free inhabitants of the region, subdued by the Spartans in the Archaic period and reduced to the condition of Helots. According to these scholars, the Helotized Messenians preserved a sense of their identity and a religious tradition of their own, which re-emerged when they regained freedom. One objection to this thesis is that there is no clear archaeological evidence of regional cohesiveness in the area in the late Dark Ages, while the very concept of Messenia as a unified region extending from the river Neda to the Taygetos does not seem to exist prior to the Spartan conquest. Furthermore, evidence from sanctuaries dating to the Archaic and Early Classical periods shows that Messenia was to a significant extent populated by *perioikoi* whose material culture, cults and language were thoroughly indistinguishable from those documented in Lakonia. Even the site where Epameinondas later founded the central settlement of the new Messenian polity was apparently occupied since the late seventh century at the latest by a perioikic settlement. Some of these *perioikoi* participated with the Helots in the revolt after the earthquake, and the suggestion is advanced, based on research on processes of ethnogenesis, that they played a key role in the emergence of the Messenian identity of the rebels. For them, identifying themselves as Messenians was an implicit claim to the land west of the Taygetos; therefore the Spartans consistently refused to consider the rebels Messenians, just as they refused to consider Messenians – that is, descendants of the ‘old Messenians’ – the citizens of Epameinondas’ polity. Interestingly, the Spartan and the Theban-Messenian views on the identity of these people agreed in denying that the ‘old Messenians’ had remained in Messenia as Helots. Messenian ethnicity is explained as the manifestation of the will of *perioikoi* and Helots living west of the Taygetos to be independent from Sparta. The fact that most Messenian cults attested from the fourth century onwards were typical Spartan cults does not encourage the assumption that there was any continuity in a Messenian tradition going back to the period before the Spartan westward expansion.

In the years after Leuktra, the small world of the mainland Greek *poleis* was thrown into turmoil. The striking spectacle of the corpses of 400 Spartiates on the battlefield of Leuktra, in the summer of 371, had been only the beginning. Late in the following summer a Theban army led by Epameinondas marched into the Peloponnese, summoned by a coalition of traditional and new enemies of Sparta, and descended with them into the valley of the Eurotas, where an enemy army had never been seen since the Dorian migration.<sup>1</sup> King Agesilaos could barely save his city from being stormed, and was totally unable to check Epameinondas’ subsequent moves. The Theban army marched south, devastating and plundering everything between Sparta and the sea, and then turned north, marching upstream in the Eurotas valley; it crossed over into the Alpheios basin, then took the road of the Derveni Pass, finally descended into the Stenyklaros plain and reached Mount Ithome. Here, in Spartan territory, Epameinondas inflicted on the Spartans a blow which would prove in the long run to be even more disastrous than the rout of Leuktra: at the foot of the mountain, in a very strong natural position, he founded a new, independent polis, the polis of the Messenians.<sup>2</sup>

\* This paper originates from a talk given in different forms at the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London and at the Department of the Classics of Harvard University in 1999. In both cases the discussion was highly profitable. It is a part of a larger research project on tradition and collective identities in Archaic and Classical Messenia: may the reader forgive me for having made reference to other works of mine more often than a polite author should. Personal observations go back to journeys through the southern Peloponnese in the summers of 1999 and 2001. I wish to thank warmly Petros Themelis, the director of the excavations at Mavromati/Messene, and his team, in particular Wanda Papaefthimiou, Kleantthis Sidiropoulos and

Elizabeth Sioumpara, for their hospitality on the occasion of my visits. Susanne Ebbinghaus, Jonathan Hall, Greg Nagy, Gina Salapata, Eric Robinson and Zeph Stewart have read the manuscript and improved it in many ways, without necessarily agreeing with all of it. The same is true of the referees of *JHS*.

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Ages.* 31.1.

<sup>2</sup> On Epameinondas’ campaign in the Peloponnese, see J. Buckler, *The Theban Hegemony, 371-362 BC* (Cambridge, MA 1980) 70-87, and C.D. Hamilton, *Agesilaos and the Failure of Spartan Hegemony* (Ithaca and London 1991) 215-31. On the foundation of Messene, see C.A. Roebuck, *A History of Messenia from 369 to 146 B.C.* (Chicago 1941) 27-41.

The Spartans had extended their control over the land west of the Taygetos ridge and south of the river Neda, the land we are accustomed to call Messenia, probably during the second half of the eighth century BC,<sup>3</sup> and as a result Sparta had been controlling for about three centuries a territory which was probably larger than that of any other Greek city of the time. A secession attempt in the 460s failed and ended with the transfer of the rebels to Naupaktos under the aegis of the Athenians. Although ancient authors and modern scholars alike seem to be fascinated by the simplistic model of the ‘conquest of Messenia’, armed aggression is unlikely to have been the only way by which the land west of the Taygetos and its inhabitants became part of the Spartan state, as the lay of the land itself should make clear. Portions of this land were owned directly by the Spartiates, the ruling group of the Spartan state. The loss of Messenia in the early fourth century marked the end of Sparta’s role as a hegemonic power in the Greek world. Not surprisingly, the Spartans refused for years to recognize the very existence of the new state in what had been their land west of the Taygetos.<sup>4</sup> For the inhabitants of the new polis, on the other hand, it was vital to convince the other Greeks that they indeed were the Messenians, that is, that their claim on the fertile Pamisos valley was better founded than that of the Spartans.

Given these historical premisses, it hardly comes as a surprise that modern scholars have not been the first to perceive Messenian tradition as a problem. The scanty sources of the fourth century – as we shall see in more detail further on – show clearly that the identity of the citizens of the newly founded Messenian polity was the object of a fierce dispute. Centuries later the greatest admirer of the Messenians among ancient writers, Pausanias, enthusiastically praises their ability to preserve their identity notwithstanding all the catastrophes that befell them. Commenting on their return from exile which followed Epameinondas’ rallying call, he observes that, although the wanderings of the Messenians outside the Peloponnese had lasted almost three hundred years, during that long period they had not departed in any way from their ancestral customs, and had not lost their Doric dialect, so that even in Pausanias’ time they allegedly retained the purest Doric in the Peloponnese.<sup>5</sup> One can hardly refrain from comparing Pausanias’ eulogy of the Messenians’ linguistic purism with Thucydides’ statement, according to which during the Peloponnesian War the Messenians from Naupaktos were able to produce great damage with their incursions from Pylos because they were *homôphonoî* with the Lakedaimonians, and therefore unrecognizable by them.<sup>6</sup>

The juxtaposition of Thucydides’ and Pausanias’ statements epitomizes the central problem of Messenian identity, and also anticipates the ways in which this problem has been treated by

<sup>3</sup> There is no point in addressing here the *vexata quaestio* of the chronology of the Messenian Wars. Suffice it to say that the relevant evidence should be looked for in Archaic poetry and archaeology. Fiddling with Pausanias or other later sources – e.g. V. Parker, ‘The dates of the Messenian Wars’, *Chiron* 21 (1991) 25–47 – is not likely to produce any more convincing result than what the sources themselves say directly. Tyrtaios (*fr.* 5 West<sup>2</sup>) thought that Messene had been conquered and the Messenians chased away from Mount Ithome by the Spartans led by King Theopompos two generations before himself, if his ‘fathers of our fathers’ is to be taken literally, a point on which not all scholars agree. On Messene and Messenians in Homer, see below. The only evidence on the Second Messenian War earlier than the fourth century is the garbled reference to Tyrtaios in Strab. 8.4.10, while fifth-century authors like Herodotus (3.47.1) and Antiochos of Syracuse (555 F13) speak of ‘the Messenian war’ without further qualification, which seems to imply that they knew only one war.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Plut. *Ages.* 35.2–3, but the most impressive document of the Spartans’ attitude is Xenophon’s failure even to mention the foundation of the new polis; see Roebuck (n.2) 41–5.

<sup>5</sup> Paus. 4.27.11. Note that Pausanias’ figure presupposes that the Messenians had been expelled *en masse* at the time of the Spartan conquest, although Pausanias himself elsewhere says that some Messenians had remained in the Peloponnese as Helots, and left their country only in the mid fifth century, as a result of the revolt after the earthquake. See D. Asheri, ‘La diaspora e il ritorno dei Messeni’, in E. Gabba (ed.), *Tria corda. Scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano* (Como 1983) 27–9. On the Messenians’ linguistic archaism and its meaning, see J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997) 180.

<sup>6</sup> Thuc. 4.3.3; 41.2, on which see now T. Figueira, ‘The evolution of the Messenian identity’, in S. Hodkinson and A. Powell (eds), *Sparta: New Perspectives* (London 1999) 213.

modern scholars. The Dorian identity of the Messenians, which could make them indistinguishable from the Spartans, can be seen either as the survival of ancestral traits, going back to a time when Messenians and Lakonians were still little differentiated from each other,<sup>7</sup> or as a result of the uprooting of Messenian culture by the Spartan invaders. Indeed, scholarship on the problem of Messenian tradition can be neatly divided into two parties: the continuists and the discontinuists.<sup>8</sup> The first maintain that in Messenia some sort of continuity in cults and historical memory was kept alive from the time before the Spartan conquest in the eighth–seventh century BC. According to the continuist school, the Spartan occupation was not able to quench every spark of Messenian tradition, so that in fact some continuity existed between the newly founded Messene of the fourth century and the old Messenians who had fought against Sparta centuries before. The second party, the discontinuists, maintains that the Spartan conquest produced a total interruption of the flow of tradition and memory in Messenia, so that on the occasion of the refoundation of Messene it was necessary to more or less invent a past for the new polis, in both a historical and a religious sense.

In order to understand the development of the debate on Messenian tradition, it is important to note that it is in fact a continuation of the discussion on the credibility of the sources of Pausanias' Book 4. In this book, instead of giving a concise historical summary before turning to the monuments of the region, as he usually does, Pausanias has a long historical narrative of the Spartan conquest of Messenia and of the subsequent struggle of the Messenians to recover their freedom. Since this is by far the fullest treatment of the Archaic history of Messenia that has been preserved from antiquity, the question of its sources is obviously crucial. The discontinuist position depends on Jacoby's thorough treatment of this matter. Jacoby argued that Pausanias' narrative of the Messenian Wars is founded on constructs that are no earlier than the fourth century BC. The only certainly genuine materials available to fourth-century historians were some scanty allusions to the Messenian Wars in Tyrtaios' poems.<sup>9</sup> Given these premisses, no serious history of Archaic Messenia could be based on Pausanias' account.

Jacoby's position was clearly very hard to challenge with the instruments of *Quellenkritik*. After him, the case in favour of an Archaic history of Messenia based on the literary sources had to be argued with other instruments: oral tradition, memory connected with cult places or surviving among Messenians of the diaspora and so forth.<sup>10</sup> This development of the continuist position elicited a response from the discontinuist side, but the response was conditioned by the terms in which the continuist case had been argued: both parties continued and continue to argue exclusively on the basis of the literary evidence, and Pausanias' credibility is still very much the focus of the discussion.<sup>11</sup>

The reciprocal conditioning that may be observed between continuists and discontinuists explains the fact that both have failed to question some presuppositions which are in fact far from obvious, like the idea that Messenia as a unity pre-existed the Spartan conquest. Both continuists

<sup>7</sup> In this connection, M.L. Zunino, *Hiera Messeniaka. La storia religiosa della Messenia dall'età micenea all'età ellenistica* (Udine 1997), speaks of an original 'Messenian-Lakonian *koinè*'.

<sup>8</sup> For an introduction to this longstanding debate and its huge bibliography, see S.E. Alcock, 'The pseudo-history of Messenia unplugged', *TAPhA* 129 (1999) 333-5, and *ead.*, 'The peculiar Book IV and the problem of the Messenian past', in S.E. Alcock, J.F. Cherry and J. Elsner (eds), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford 2001) 142-53.

<sup>9</sup> Jacoby's treatment of the problem of Messenian tradition is embedded in his commentary on the fragments of Rhianos' epic poem on the Messenian War; see

F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* IIIa, *Kommentar* (Leiden 1943) 265 Rhianos von Bene (Kreta) 87-200.

<sup>10</sup> The two most substantial post-Jacobian contributions on the continuist side are F. Kiechle, *Messenische Studien. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Messenischen Kriege und zur Auswanderung der Messenier* (Kallmünz 1959), and Zunino (n.7).

<sup>11</sup> See e.g., on the discontinuist side, L. Pearson, 'The pseudo-history of Messenia and its authors', *Historia* 11 (1962) 397-426, and D. Musti, introduction to *Pausania. Guida della Grecia. Libro IV – La Messenia*, ed. with trans. and comm. by D. Musti and M. Torelli (Milan 1991) xii-xxviii.

and discontinuists are rather ready to accept the view that between the eighth and seventh centuries the Spartans conquered this independent and somehow unified land, and threw its free inhabitants into slavery, turning them into Helots. Of course, the continuists think that these Helotized Messenians were able to preserve some knowledge of their shared past as free Messenians, while the discontinuists think that they were not. Neither party doubts that the revolt after the earthquake, in the 460s, was primarily an enterprise of these Helotized Messenians, or that they formed the bulk of the citizen-body of Epameinondas' Messene. In other words, both parties have reduced the problem of Messenian identity to the polarity between Spartiates and Helots, and in so doing have oversimplified it, almost as if Messenia under Sparta could have been a huge slave camp, some sort of Jamaica of Ancient Greece where thousands of Helotized Messenians, controlled – nobody knows how – by the Spartiates, would have tilled the land that once had been theirs.

It is obvious that the debate between continuists and discontinuists runs the risk of becoming a fruitless polemic. A new approach to the problem of Messenian tradition is possible, one that separates this problem from that of the sources and reliability of Pausanias Book 4. In order to do this, it is necessary to question some of the assumptions shared by continuists and discontinuists, and to privilege the pre-fourth-century evidence, literary and archaeological. Furthermore, since the point at stake is a group's construction and transmission of perceptions about its own origins and past history, some methodological points taken from current research about collective memory and ethnicity may be helpful in making sense of the evidence.

## I

The first point to consider is the problem of the origin of Messenia as a regional entity. As noted above, a key assumption shared by continuists and discontinuists is that it makes sense to speak of 'Messenia' before the beginning of the Spartan conquest, that is, that already in the eighth century BC the whole region west of the Taygetos and south of the river Neda somehow formed a coherent whole or at least had some sort of regional identity. Such an assumption does not seem to be particularly well supported by the evidence at our disposal. On the archaeological side, there is no sign that in the early first millennium areas as far apart as the one around Mycenaean Pylos, the Makaria, Stenyklaros or the Soulima valley had more in common with each other than with other regions nearby. The only indicator available – the style of artifacts – shows very little in terms of a distinct regional character. As far as pottery is concerned, Dark Age Messenia belonged to a largely homogeneous cultural area, embracing much of the western Peloponnese and Lakonia, and furthermore Ithaca, Aetolia and Acarnania.<sup>12</sup> Geometric bronze horses from Messenia dated to the second and third quarters of the eighth century show a strong Lakonian influence, and otherwise no clearly characterized regional style.<sup>13</sup> In the Late Geometric period, when local styles were emerging across Greece, pottery from Messenia conspicuously fails to show signs of such a development.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, for Geometric Messenia, apparently a region divided into a small number of settlement clusters only loosely connected with each other and little differentiated from neighbouring areas,<sup>15</sup> the eighth century was a period of decline, particularly obvious in Nichoria, by far the best known Dark Age site in Messenia, which was

<sup>12</sup> See J.N. Coldstream, *Greek Geometric Pottery* (London 1968) 220-32, and W.D.E. Coulson, *The Dark Age Pottery of Messenia* (Göteborg 1986) 55-6 and 68-9.

<sup>13</sup> See J.-L. Zimmermann, *Les chevaux de bronze dans l'art géométrique grec* (Mainz 1989) 114-22.

<sup>14</sup> See J.N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (London 1977) 160-2; for Coldstream's interpretation of the local styles in Late Geometric pottery as signals of emerging

polities, see *id.*, 'The meaning of the regional styles in the eighth century B.C.', in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.: Tradition and Innovation* (Stockholm 1983) 17-25.

<sup>15</sup> See C. Morgan, 'The origins of pan-Hellenism', in N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches* (London and New York 1993) 21.

destroyed by fire in the middle years of the century and not reoccupied. It is an obvious temptation to connect such decline with Spartan expansion, although it should be emphasized that Lakonian influence is observed on artifacts from Messenia already in the ninth century.<sup>16</sup> In short, the scanty evidence from the tenth to the eighth centuries does not speak in favour of the existence of a cohesive regional identity between the Neda and the Taygetos.

If we turn to the literary sources, the earliest clear evidence of the perception of Messenia as a unit is represented by the tradition on the division of the Peloponnese among the Heraklids, which is not attested before the early fifth century.<sup>17</sup> Of the earlier authors, Tyrtaios (*fr.* 5 West<sup>2</sup>) associates Messene with Mount Ithome, while the *Odyssey* (21.13-16) locates Messene in Lakedaimon. Modern scholars have usually interpreted these as references to a region rather than a city,<sup>18</sup> but this interpretation depended upon the assumption that no earlier settlement had existed on the site of Epameinondas' Messene, an assumption that recent excavations have proved wrong. Geometric pottery has been found in soundings conducted in various locations at Mavromati/Messene, and the presence since the ninth–eighth century of a settlement on the site must be considered virtually certain.<sup>19</sup> Tellingly, Messenia is absent from the Catalogue of Ships, while the seven cities that Agamemnon offered to Achilles to convince him to return to the fight were located west of the Taygetos.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the Pylos of the epic tradition seems to have little to do with the region that was later to become Messenia: Nestor's kingdom was apparently – and vaguely – located farther to the north, close to the Alpheios.<sup>21</sup> It is only in the fifth century that Nestor is called – retrospectively – a Messenian by Pindar,<sup>22</sup> and Thucydides (4.3.2 and 4.41.2) says that Pylos, which the Spartans called Koryphasion, belonged to the land which had once been Messenian.

<sup>16</sup> See Coulson (n.12) 36-7 and 69.

<sup>17</sup> The relevant sources are discussed in my 'Die Dreiteilung der Peloponnes. Wandlungen eines Gründungsmythos', in H.-J. Gehrke (ed.), *Geschichtsbilder und Gründungsmythen* (Würzburg 2001) 37-63.

<sup>18</sup> According to *Od.* 21.13-16, Odysseus met Iphitos in Messene, in the house of Ortilochos. Later on, Telemachos and Peisistratos on their way from Pylos to Sparta and back would stop at Diokles' place, in Pherai (3.486-8 = 15.185-8). Since Diokles is called the son of Orsilochos, Strabo (8.5.8) and Pausanias (4.1.4), followed by most modern scholars – e.g. E. Meyer, *RE* Suppl. 15 (1978), s.v. Messene/Messenien, 136 – maintained that in the passage about Odysseus, Messene designated a region, in which Pherai could have been located. However, it is slightly odd that a region should be mentioned as the place where two people meet; conceivably, Messene and Pherai could simply be two different places (by the way, some scholars also prefer to regard Ortilochos and Orsilochos as two different characters). Pherai 'close to the sea' is also one of the cities offered by Agamemnon to Achilles in *Il.* 9.151.

<sup>19</sup> Geometric pottery has been found around the later temple of Asklepios (see P.G. Themelis, 'Ἀνασκαφή Μεσσήνης', *PAAH* 1987 (1991) 87), close to the Klepsydra fountain in the modern village of Mavromati (Themelis, *PAAH* 1988 (1991) 45) and to the naiskos of Artemis Orthia (Themelis, *PAAH* 1991 (1994) 95). To this has to be added the fragment of a leg of a Geometric

bronze tripod, found on Mount Ithome itself (M. Maaß, *Die geometrischen DreifüÙe von Olympia (Olympische Forschungen* 10, Berlin 1978) 33-4 n.57 and pl. 67).

<sup>20</sup> See R. Hope Simpson, 'The seven cities offered by Agamemnon to Achilles', *BSA* 61 (1966) 113-31. Unsurprisingly, the absence of Messenia from the Catalogue has often been connected with Spartan expansion west of the Taygetos at the time of the composition of the Catalogue itself; see A. Giovannini, *Étude historique sur les origines du Catalogue des vaisseaux* (Bern 1969) 28.

<sup>21</sup> I am very grateful to Olga Levaniouk for discussing this point with me. See O. Levaniouk, *Odyssean Usages of Local Traditions* (Diss., Harvard 2000), and the recent and detailed discussion by E. Visser, *Homers Katalog der Schiffe* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1997) 522-30; even if one prefers to keep the identification of Homeric Pylos and the Mycenaean settlement at Ano Englianos, the other places mentioned in the Pylian section of the Catalogue are scattered between Triphyly and the Soulima valley, mostly north of later Messenia. The Pamisos valley, the Messenian heartland, is absent from the Catalogue.

<sup>22</sup> Pindar calls Nestor 'the Messenian elder' in *Pyth.* 6.32-6, composed for Xenokrates of Akragas' victory in the Pythiads of 490 BC. In *Pyth.* 5.69-72 (462 BC, for Arkesilas IV of Kyrene), where the division of the Peloponnese among Herakles' descendants is mentioned for the first time in Greek literature, Messenia appears under the name of 'holy Pylos'.

Put in a provocative way, although the Spartans in the fifth century simply thought of the land west of the Taygetos as a part of the Lakoniké,<sup>23</sup> and although the Messenians at least from the fourth century onwards thought that their *Vaterland* had existed since time immemorial, there is every reason to suspect that the concept of Messenia as a unity, as well as the unification of the land which later became Messenia, was a by-product of the Spartan conquest. On second thoughts, this is precisely what one would expect: even if one adopts the lowest possible chronology for the Spartan conquest, Messenia came under external domination exactly in the period during which polities of a more than strictly local extension were emerging elsewhere in the Greek world.

## II

The problem of Messenian tradition and of its origins can fruitfully be approached from a perspective to which scholars have not paid much attention so far: the perspective of topography and archaeology, the only one that allows a discussion of Archaic and Early Classical Messenia based on contemporary evidence. Messenia is possibly the only region of Greece in which the Bronze Age is much better represented and has attracted much more research than any portion of the first millennium. However, evidence on the Archaic and Classical periods, though admittedly scanty, is by no means completely absent or irrelevant. Some settlements and cult places have been uncovered in various parts of the region, and a scrutiny of their material remains supplemented by information from written sources produces interesting insights. The sanctuaries, archaeologically much better explored than the settlements, offer a good starting-point. In what follows, the best documented cult places of Archaic and fifth-century Messenia will be reviewed: the sanctuaries of Apollo Korythos at Ayios Andreas near Longà, of the river-god Pamisos at Ayios Floros, of Artemis Limnatis at Volimos, of Poseidon at Akovitika, and the Archaic sanctuary at Mavromati/Messene (FIG. 1).<sup>24</sup>

The sanctuary of Apollo Korythos at Longà, on the eastern coast of the Akritas peninsula, between modern Koroni and modern Petalidi (that is, ancient Asine and ancient Korone respectively), is probably the best documented Messenian sanctuary from the time before the refoundation of Messene in the fourth century. The site was excavated in 1915 by Friderikos Versakis in a single campaign lasting little longer than three months. Versakis identified five temples on the site, dating in his opinion from the Dark Ages to Roman times.<sup>25</sup> Although his interpretation of the remains of the buildings is usually regarded with some scepticism, nobody has yet undertaken a thorough reinvestigation of any part of these remains, except for Carl Weickert, who reconstructed the Doric temple as a peripteros with six columns at the front, dating it to the second half of the sixth century BC on the basis of fragments of a capital and of the entablature.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> This is how the Spartans called Messenia and the region we call *Lakonia* (a word that does not exist in Greek); see Figueira (n.6) 217-18, and e.g. Thuc. 5.34.1, 35.7.

<sup>24</sup> These cults are discussed thoroughly in Zunino's recent monograph (n.7); my own discussion differs from hers in emphasizing the topographical distribution of them and in focusing on the archaeological evidence in a diachronic perspective, rather than considering all the evidence on each cult, regardless of its date.

<sup>25</sup> F. Versakis, 'Τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Κορύνθου Ἀπόλλωνος', *AD* 2 (1916) 65-118.

<sup>26</sup> C. Weickert, *Typen der archaischen Architektur in Griechenland und Kleinasien* (Augsburg 1929) 151-3;

see also N. Bookidis, *A Study of the Use and Geographical Distribution of Architectural Sculpture in the Archaic Period (Greece, East Greece and Magna Graecia)* (Diss., Bryn Mawr 1967) 399-403. The southern sector of Versakis' excavation (see his map at p. 71) is currently covered; a large fluted column drum on the side of the road from the coast to Longà might indicate its south-eastern corner. In the northern part of the excavation, only the remains of temple A are still visible. Architectural remains (two bases of Ionic columns, some portions of rather thin column shafts) are also to be seen in the courtyard of the church of Ayios Andreas, further east on the road.

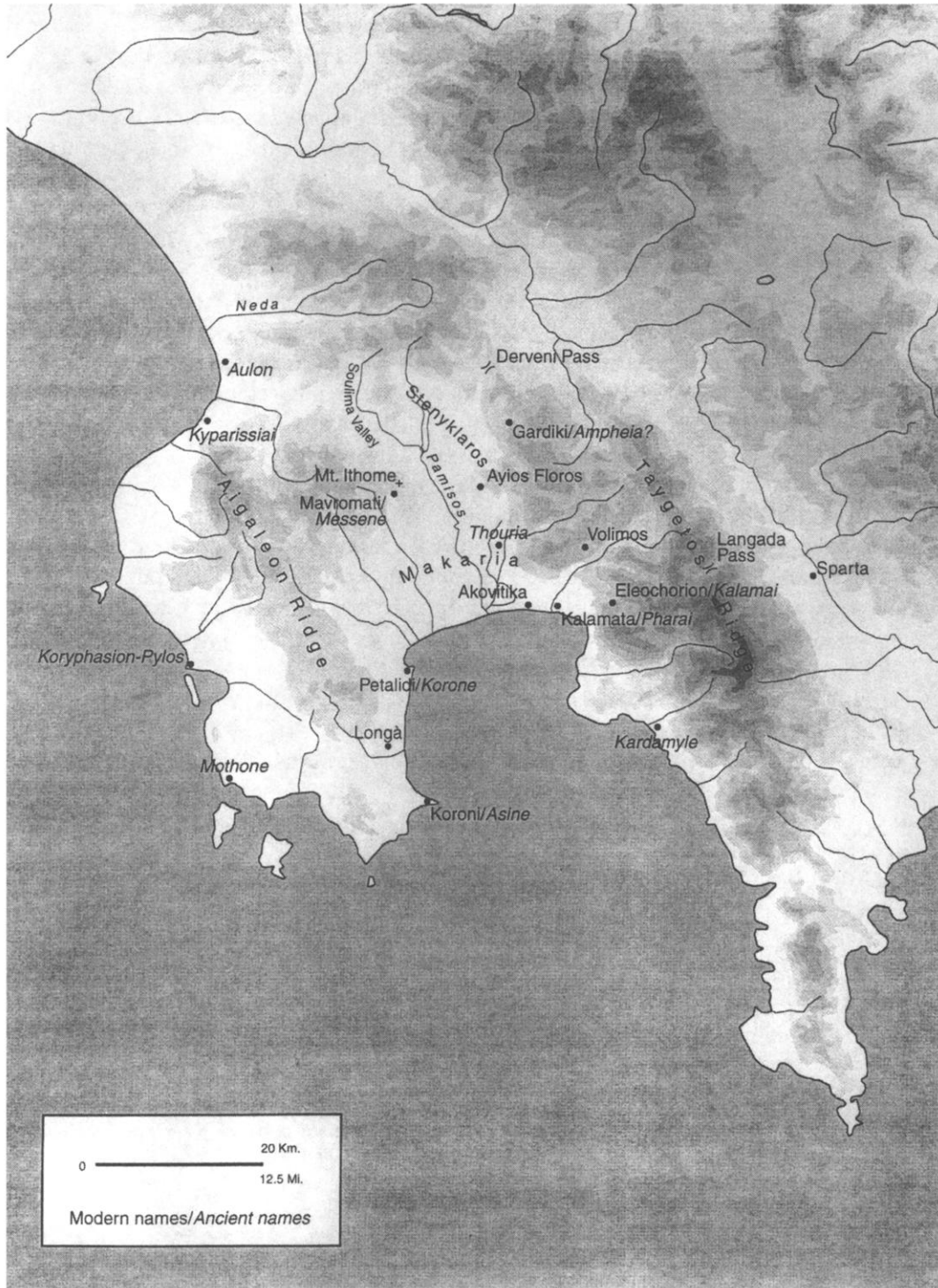


Fig. 1. Messenia

Underneath this temple, Versakis uncovered the foundations of an earlier building, which he also assumed to have been a temple.

In spite of such uncertainties as to the architectural history of the sanctuary, the finds made by Versakis allow some interesting observations on the nature of the cult, which apparently associates a warlike aspect with that of Apollo as a healing god. The epithet is attested, in inscriptions and literary sources, in the forms Korithos, Korythos, and Korynthos.<sup>27</sup> Since some heroes named Korythos are known, one of them connected with Paris and Helen, it has sometimes been thought that Korythos might originally have been an independent deity, to be associated later with Apollo.<sup>28</sup> In any case, the epithet Korythos can hardly fail to be associated with the word *koros*, helmet,<sup>29</sup> putting an emphasis on the warlike aspect of this cult. The fact that weapons were abundantly dedicated in the sanctuary in the Late Archaic and Early Classical periods further underlines the point, and so does the name of Enyalios, which appears to be associated with the god in a poorly published inscription of the late fifth century.<sup>30</sup> The character of Apollo Korythos as a healing deity is documented only by Pausanias (4.34.7), which, considering the rising popularity of healing cults from the Late Classical period onwards, might point to this aspect being a later addition.<sup>31</sup> If one considers only the evidence relevant to the Archaic and Classical periods, Apollo Korythos seems to be a close relative of the warlike Spartan Apollo who stood on the throne at Amyklai.<sup>32</sup>

The connection with Lakonia and Amyklai is reinforced, on a different level, by the nature of the finds from Longà. Versakis recovered a fair number of bronzes from the sixth and early fifth centuries, among them the well-known statuette of a hoplite now in the National Museum in Athens, and an Archaic kouros, both of very high quality and decidedly Lakonian in style.<sup>33</sup> In addition, there is a small bronze bell with feet, of a type that is usually met in Sparta and almost nowhere else.<sup>34</sup> The majority of the few vases and sherds published by Versakis are also recognizably Lakonian.<sup>35</sup> But the most interesting piece on this Lakonian checklist is a large marble capital, certainly votive and datable to the mid sixth century, with a crown of leaves below the echinus and the same motif on the upper border of the abacus.<sup>36</sup> The only close parallels to this very remarkable artifact come from Sparta: the capitals and *geison* of the throne of Amyklai<sup>37</sup>

<sup>27</sup> To the inscription published by Versakis (n.25) 117, add *SEG* 11.994 and 995.

<sup>28</sup> See G. Weicker, *RE* 11.2 (1922), s.v. Korythos, 1466-7.

<sup>29</sup> See Zunino (n.7) 168 and n.75.

<sup>30</sup> The inscription apparently accompanied the dedication of a helmet. See Versakis (n.25) 115, and the hardly legible photograph on pl. 7 fig. 63, and cf. L.H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (revised edition with a supplement by A.W. Johnston, Oxford 1990) 204 and n.2.

<sup>31</sup> A healing could also conceivably be the reason of the dedication *SEG* 11.994, of late Hellenistic date. One might be tempted to see here the traces of a process similar to the one whereby the cult of Apollo Hyperteleatas in southern Lakonia, well documented in inscriptions ranging from the Archaic period to the Early Empire (*IG* v.1 980ff.), had been replaced (or complemented?) by a cult of Asklepios by Pausanias' time (Paus. 3.22.10).

<sup>32</sup> Note also that the association of Apollo Korythos with Enyalios, which can be glimpsed in the dedication mentioned above (n.30), recalls the connection of Phoibos and Enyalios at Sparta; cf. Paus. 3.14.9 and 20.2.

<sup>33</sup> See M. Herfort-Koch, *Archaische Bronzeplastik Lakoniens* (*Boreas* Beiheft 4, Münster 1986) 104, k 78, and 117, k 135. Also from Longà are k 88 and k 90 (106-7).

<sup>34</sup> See Versakis (n.25) 93, ill. 33. The bell, like all the bronzes from Longà, is now in the storerooms of the National Museum at Athens (inv. χ 18845). The Director of the Museum, Ioannis Touratsoglou, kindly allowed me to see it in August 1999. I owe its identification as a typically Spartan object to Alexandra Villing (London), who is preparing the publication of the bronze and terracotta bells from Sparta.

<sup>35</sup> For the aryballoi, Versakis (n.25) 101-3, mentions parallels from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. Furthermore, compare e.g. Versakis' no. 9 in pl. 3, fig.51, with C.M. Stibbe, *Lakonische Vasenmaler des 6. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Amsterdam and London 1972) 18-19; no. 5 of the same plate with C.M. Stibbe, *Lakonian Drinking Vessels and Other Open Shapes* (Amsterdam 1994) 234 no. 10.

<sup>36</sup> The capital is currently in the courtyard of the Benaki Museum in Kalamata. The best published photograph known to me is in K. Herrmann, 'Zum Dekor dorischer Kapitelle', *Architectura* 13 (1983) pl. 5.

<sup>37</sup> See now A. Faustoferri, *Il trono di Amyklai a Sparta. Bathykles al servizio del potere* (Naples 1996) 344-57 and pls. 22-3. Contrary to what Faustoferri says (349), the capital of Longà is by no means a simplified version of those of Amyklai and it does have triangular leaves in the background of the main crown of leaves.



and the capital reused in the church of Ayios Vasilios at Xirokampion, south of Sparta.<sup>38</sup> Although the capital from Longà is larger than its Spartan counterparts, the similarity is sufficiently close to justify considering it a product of the same workshop that produced the entablature of the throne.

As a whole, the warlike character of Apollo Korythos, this small Lakonian inventory of votives, and the fact that all Archaic inscriptions from the sanctuary are in the Lakonian alphabet and dialect, give this sanctuary as strong a Spartan flavour as that of any sanctuary in Lakonia itself.

The cult of Ayios Floros is connected with the springs of the river Pamisos. Matthias Valmin was able to recover the foundations of the small temple dedicated to the river-god, which had been seen still standing by nineteenth-century travellers before it was robbed of its fine poros and limestone blocks.<sup>39</sup> The temple was built over a sacrificial pit, possibly enclosing one of the springs of the river. Offerings found in the excavation begin in the Late Archaic period, perhaps in the mid sixth century BC. The pottery mostly finds parallels among Archaic Lakonian vessels.<sup>40</sup> Having been submerged in wet soil for centuries, the bronzes are much more corroded than those from Longà, and therefore more difficult to date precisely or to attribute to a particular school. A group representing in all probability Herakles dressed in a bell-corselet and fighting against the Hydra appears to date from the late sixth century, and might stem from a Lakonian or Lakonizing workshop.<sup>41</sup> The same is true of the much better preserved statuette of a spear-thrower, bearing a dedication by Pythodoros to the Pamisos, in the Lakonian alphabet.<sup>42</sup> It comes from the antiquities market and is now in the Princeton University Museum, but it can hardly have been found anywhere else than at Ayios Floros, where Valmin had been told that the owner of the field in which the temple lies not only had taken blocks of stone away for reuse, but had also found and sold objects of bronze and terracotta.<sup>43</sup> In her study of Archaic Lakonian bronzes, Merlene Hertfort-Koch calls the statuette a product of a local workshop which replicated in a simplified way the style of contemporary Lakonian bronzes.

The sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis is much better known from literary sources than from its archaeological remains. It was located in the valley of a tributary of the Nedon, in a place called Volimos or Volimnos, not far from the Langada Pass, where the modern road from Sparta to Kalamata runs.<sup>44</sup> The sanctuary played an important role as the setting for the alleged *casus belli* of the First Messenian War, that is, the rape of the Spartan maidens, who had come to take part

<sup>38</sup> Currently on display in the Archaeological Museum at Sparta. First published by P. Steryiannopoulos, *AE* 1936, χρονικά 1-2, where it is shown in its original location. For a better photograph, see D. Mertens, *Der alte Heratempel in Paestum und die archaische Baukunst in Unteritalien* (Mainz 1993) pl. 65,4. Mertens' overview of Doric capitals (pls. 64-5) gives a very clear idea of how similar the capital from Longà is to those from Lakonia and how different from anything else.

<sup>39</sup> M.N. Valmin, *The Swedish Messenia Expedition (Acta reg. societatis litterarum Lundensis 26, Lund 1938)* 420-65.

<sup>40</sup> Valmin (n.39) 454-63.

<sup>41</sup> Valmin (n.39) 440-1 and pl. 33 no. 7; cf. Hertfort-Koch (n.33) 54-9. Unfortunately, the object was badly damaged during restoration, as can be easily seen by comparing the two pictures published by Valmin with each other and with a later one (*LIMC* 5.2, *Herakles*, no. 2827), which shows signs of further deterioration.

<sup>42</sup> Already mentioned by Jeffery (n.30) 202, but first published by D.G. Mitten and S.F. Doeringer, *Master Bronzes from the Classical World* (Mainz 1967) 62-3. Cf. Hertfort-Koch (n.33) 52, and k 118 (113).

<sup>43</sup> Valmin (n.39) 420.

<sup>44</sup> Volimos was located on an ancient itinerary connecting Lakonia and Messenia, obviously not by way of the Langada Pass, whose picturesque cliffs on the Spartan side must have been anything but appealing to ancient travellers. For ancient ways across the Taygetos, see now J. Christien, 'Les liaisons entre Sparte et son territoire malgré l'encadrement montagneux', in J.-F. Bergier (ed.), *Montagnes, fleuves, forêts dans l'histoire. Barrières ou lignes de convergence?* (St. Katharinen 1989) 30-4, and G.A. Pikoulas, 'Ἡ Δευθελιάτις καὶ τὸ ὀδικό της δίκτυο', in *Πρακτικά Γ' Τοπικοῦ Συνεδρίου Μεσσηνιακῶν Σπουδῶν* (Athens 1991) 279-88, both showing, in part against previous opinions, the importance of the direct connections between Sparta and the southern Messenian plain across the Taygetos.

in a sacrifice, and the murder of the Spartan king Teleklos, who had run to their rescue. Of course, Pausanias also has a pro-Messenian version, affirming that the Messenians had in fact been assailed by young unbearded Spartans *en travesti*.<sup>45</sup> Only very scanty architectural remains of the sanctuary have been identified *in situ*, but sufficient finds come from the area of the chapel of the Panayia Volimiotissa to make certain that this was its location. The cult was prominent in Hellenistic and Roman times, as is attested by inscriptions, some of which have been reused in the walls of the chapel together with stones that probably came from the sanctuary.<sup>46</sup> For the earlier periods, only stray finds have been reported, but these are fairly diagnostic. The oldest among the Archaic finds is a bronze siren attached to a fibula, a Lakonian product of the early sixth century BC.<sup>47</sup> A mirror-handle with the engraving of a standing woman in profile has been found in the area; it also stems from a Lakonian workshop and may be dated in the mid sixth century.<sup>48</sup> Another simpler, but complete mirror found in Volimos was given to the Museum of Kalamata in 1973. It has been assigned to the second quarter of the fifth century and bears a dedication to Limnatis, confirming that the sanctuary was already dedicated to this goddess in the Archaic and Classical periods.<sup>49</sup> The alphabet and dialect of the dedication, needless to say, are Lakonian. The cult itself has a strong Lakonian association: Limnai was the name of the Spartan district where the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia was, and since most of the other cults of Artemis Limnatis in the Peloponnese were connected with Sparta in one way or another, it is very probable that the epithet Limnatis simply meant ‘the Artemis of Limnai’, that is, Artemis Orthia. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that a later inscription uses for the Artemis of Volimos the epithet Orthia.<sup>50</sup>

The sanctuary of Poseidon at Akovitika, located not far from the coast west of Kalamata, has not been investigated systematically. After the accidental finding of a hoard of bronze statuettes, a first sounding produced only remains of Hellenistic and Roman buildings.<sup>51</sup> The high level of

<sup>45</sup> Paus. 4.4.2-3.

<sup>46</sup> *IG* v.1 1373-8 and *SEG* 39.388bis. Three of them mention *agonothetai*, showing that at least in the Imperial period games were held in honour of Artemis Limnatis. For the minimal architectural remains, mostly of Roman times, see E. Papakostantinou, *AD* 37 (1982) 2, 136.

<sup>47</sup> See Herfort-Koch (n.33) k 156. For the provenance, see *BCH* 83 (1959) 640.

<sup>48</sup> First published by G.P. Papathanasopoulos, *AD* 17 (1961/2) 2, 96 fig. 4. For the chronology, see P. Oberländer, *Griechische Handspiegel* (Diss. Hamburg 1967) 32-5, and C.M. Stibbe, *Das andere Sparta* (Mainz 1996) 151-2, who favours a slightly higher date, around 570-560.

<sup>49</sup> The mirror is published by L. Parlama, *AD* 29 (1973-4) 2, 315 and pl. 198a. The transcription in *SEG* 29.395 should be slightly corrected: given the presence of ἀνθήκε, Λιμνάτι must be a dative, as in *IG* v.1 226 and 1497, and ο- could be the first part of the dedicant's name. It is extremely tempting to connect some further Archaic bronzes with the sanctuary in Volimos: the cymbals *IG* v.1 225, 226 and 1497, inscribed in the Lakonian alphabet and dialect and dedicated to Limnatis, and a mirror now in Munich, also inscribed Λιμνάτις (see Oberländer (n.48) 44 and Stibbe (n.48) additional pl. 12), all the more so since a bronze cymbal has been found in Volimos and is now (August 2001) on display in the Kalamata Museum (inv. 39, unpublished). Two of the inscribed cymbals were bought in Mistra, the third is unprovenanced, as is also the mirror. Pace Jeffery (n.30)

194 n.3, the three cymbals cannot be interpreted as phialai, cf. e.g. the objects held by the small female figures in Herfort-Koch (n.33) 97 k 56 and 99 k 61, and 37 for their interpretation (an unpublished example was found in Kalamata, 103 k 74).

<sup>50</sup> *IG* v.1 1376. On Artemis Limnatis, see C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham, MD 1997) 142-9, and now Zunino (n.7) 48-55, who shows the fundamental identity of Artemis Limnatis and Artemis Orthia. Further sanctuaries of Artemis Limnatis were at Messene (*IG* v.1 1442, 1458, 1470; *SEG* 39.384; see Zunino (n.7) 61-5), on the Choireios river, not far from Gerenia (*IG* v.1 1431.37-9), at Epidaurus Limeria, in Lakonia (Paus. 3.23.10), in the territory of Tegea on the road to Sparta (Paus. 8.53.11), at Sikyon (Paus. 2.7.6, epithet Limnaia), and at Patrai (7.20.7-8; the cult statue was said to have been stolen from Sparta). A dedication to Artemis Limnatis, in the Lakonian alphabet and dialect, has been found in the sanctuary of Artemis at Kombothekra in Triphylia; see U. Sinn, ‘Das Heiligtum der Artemis Limnatis bei Kombothekra, II’, *MDAIA* 96 (1981) 31-3, and *SEG* 31.356. Strabo's assertion that the Limnaion in Sparta took its name from Limnai on the Taygetos (8.4.9) is an obvious attempt to reverse the relationship between the sanctuary of Volimos and the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta.

<sup>51</sup> Notice in *BCH* 83 (1959) 639-40. The bronzes are listed by C. Leon, ‘Statuette eines Kuros aus Messenien’, *MDAIA* 83 (1968) 175, who publishes one of them; see also Herfort-Koch (n.33) 104 k 80.

the ground water prevented the excavators from going any deeper. Ten years later a rescue excavation was carried out, revealing the remains of a peristyle, dated to the sixth century by the excavator, Petros Themelis, and resting upon a destruction layer from the end of the seventh, which covered the previous phase of the building.<sup>52</sup> The oldest pottery found on the site belongs to the phase DA III, that is, to the first half of the eighth century.<sup>53</sup> The same date is assigned to a Geometric bronze horse also found in connection with the sanctuary.<sup>54</sup> A fifth-century inscribed dedication, in the Lakonian dialect and alphabet, attests that the remains belong to a sanctuary of Poseidon, here called, as in Sparta, Pohoidan.<sup>55</sup> Further evidence relating to this sanctuary may come from the victory-list of Damonon of Sparta, inscribed possibly in the early fourth century, which speaks of chariot races at a festival called Pohoidaia in a place called Theuria that is obviously identical with Thouria in Messenia.<sup>56</sup> If these Pohoidaia were held in Akovitika, then we have interesting evidence about the extension of the territory of Thouria; if not, we have testimony for the existence of a further sanctuary of Pohoidan in Messenia, near Thouria. One is tempted to use Ockham's razor and choose the first option, particularly on account of the name 'Gulf of Thouria', attested by Strabo (8.4.5) and presumably indicating a part of the Messenian Gulf, which should imply that the territory of Thouria in some form and in some period reached the sea.<sup>57</sup>

The Archaic sanctuary in Mavromati/Messene is a comparatively recent discovery, whose interpretation still presents substantial problems. West of the stoai surrounding the Asklepieion excavated by Anastasios Orlandos, Themelis found in 1992 a fairly complicated building, or rather a complex of buildings unified at a later stage, with phases dating to different periods and materials from the seventh century BC onwards.<sup>58</sup> The architectural history of this complex, the so-called sanctuary omega or omega-omega, is difficult to reconstruct, but there seem to be remains of at least one small building dating back to the Archaic period. Themelis has interpreted some fragments of quite large terracotta relief plaques of remarkably high quality as metopes or architectural ornaments of this building, which he tentatively interprets as a small oikos.<sup>59</sup> Whatever their function, the little that remains of the reliefs looks thoroughly Lakonian in style, as is shown by a comparison with Spartan hero-reliefs in general and in particular with two large terracotta plaques from the deposit of Ayia Paraskevi, belonging to the sanctuary of Alexandra and Agamemnon at Amyklai.<sup>60</sup> In the sanctuary an enormous number of smaller terracotta votive plaques and statuettes have been found. A few of them date to the Archaic period and often have parallels in Sparta.<sup>61</sup> Particularly striking is a sixth-century terracotta representing a group of three figures sitting on a bench, two of which, dressed, flank and support a third one, female and naked, who raises her hands to her head in a gesture of mourning. The icono-

<sup>52</sup> P.G. Themelis, 'Ἱερὸν Ποσειδῶνος εἰς Ἀκοβίτικα Καλαμάτας', *AAA* 2 (1969) 352-7.

<sup>53</sup> For the date, see Morgan (n.15) 39 n.18. For the chronology of the DA III phase, Coulson (n.12) 66-7.

<sup>54</sup> Zimmermann (n.13) 117 and n.9.

<sup>55</sup> See Themelis (n.52) 355 (*SEG* 25.431b) and *id.*, 'Ἀρχαϊκὴ ἐπιγραφή ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος εἰς Ἀκοβίτικα', *AD* 24 (1970) 1, 116-18.

<sup>56</sup> *IG* v.1 213, lines 18-23. See Jeffery (n.30) 196-7, and 448 of the supplement.

<sup>57</sup> For the identification of the sanctuary in which the Pohoidaia took place with the one of Akovitika, see Themelis (n.55) 118.

<sup>58</sup> On the three campaigns devoted to this complex, see the preliminary publication by P.G. Themelis, 'Ἀνασκαφὴ Μεσσήνης', *PAAH* 1992 (1995) 74-9, 1993 (1996) 40-55 and 1994 (1997) 81-6. On the terracotta

plaques, see *id.*, 'The sanctuary of Demeter and the Dioscouri at Messene', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Archaeological Evidence* (Stockholm 1998) 157-86.

<sup>59</sup> Themelis (n.58, 1996) 51 and pl. 26, nos 2-3.

<sup>60</sup> Both are included in G. Salapata, *Lakonian Votive Plaques with Particular Reference to the Sanctuary of Alexandra at Amyklai* (Diss., University of Pennsylvania 1992) pls. 38a and 48a. I am very grateful to Gina Salapata for allowing me to make use of her unpublished dissertation. For more accessible reproductions, see G. Salapata, 'The Laconian hero reliefs in the light of the terracotta plaques', in O. Palagia and W. Coulson (eds), *Sculpture from Arcadia and Laconia* (Oxford 1993) 190-1 and fig. 3, and C. Stibbe, 'Dionysos in Sparta', *BABesch* 66 (1991) pls. 28-30.

<sup>61</sup> The parallels are noted by Themelis (n.58, 1998).

graphy is extremely rare: it has very close parallels only in the Lakoniké, at Sparta, Aigiai and Kalamai, and apparently nowhere else.<sup>62</sup> On a more general level, it is interesting to observe that Gina Salapata's survey of terracotta votive plaques in the framework of her study of the plaques from the sanctuary of Agamemnon and Alexandra brought her to the conclusion that this sort of votive offering should be considered typically Spartan.<sup>63</sup>

It is extremely difficult to say, on the bare evidence of the plaques, which gods or heroes were worshipped in the sanctuary at Mavromati/Messene. The offerings on the whole, and in particular the plaques, seem to point rather towards a hero-cult. The only epigraphic evidence is provided by a late fourth-century shield with a votive inscription to Polydeukes; this would suggest that the Dioskouroi were at least among the deities worshipped in the sanctuary omega-omega already at an earlier date.<sup>64</sup> The terracotta group discussed above, with its peculiar iconography, could also point to the identity of one of the deities worshipped in this area, all the more so since the same iconography is also represented by a remarkable group worked in the round, where the central figure is detached from the other two. Combining iconography and provenance of the other examples, the group may be seen as evidence for the worship of a goddess with a kouroutrophic function: perhaps Eileithyia, who had a sanctuary at Messene in Pausanias' time (4.31.9), or perhaps Artemis, whose temple at a later period stood nearby.<sup>65</sup>

The material evidence discussed so far is extremely consistent in its regional flavour. All diagnostic finds point to Lakonia; to those already mentioned some further bronzes, like the Palladion from Nisi, now in Mariémont, and an unpublished statuette of a cymbal-player from Kalamata, now in the local museum, may be added, which contribute to the definition of Archaic Messenian bronze workmanship as a branch of Lakonian bronze workmanship.<sup>66</sup> The deities worshipped in these sanctuaries speak the same language as the materials found in them: an unmistakably Lakonian dialect. The warlike Apollo of Longà hardly needs more comment, and the same is true of Pohoidan at Akovitika. The Artemis Limnatis of Volimos appears to be an alter-ego of the quintessentially Spartan Artemis Orthia. The Dioskouroi, too, were proverbially Spartan. This assemblage of deities immediately recalls what Robert Parker observed about the *perioikoi*: although they had their own sanctuaries and festivals, their religion was dominated by the same gods that were also prominent among the Spartiates. Parker's list includes Artemis, the Dioskouroi, Poseidon and, above all, Apollo.<sup>67</sup> In other words, shrines in Messenia

<sup>62</sup> The terracotta from Messene has been published by Themelis (n.58, 1998) 175 fig. 41. The one from Sparta is shown in Stibbe (n.48) 248 figs. 131-2; it comes from the sanctuary of Agamemnon at Amyklai, but it is not included in Salapata's catalogue because it is not a plaque *stricto sensu*. Three fragmentary examples have been found recently in a sanctuary close to the perioikic town of Aigeiai (on which see G. Shipley, "The other Lakedaimonians": the dependent perioikic poleis of Laconia and Messenia', in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community (Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre 4, Copenhagen 1997)* 251-2), and are published in Z. Bonias, "Ένα ἀγροτικό ἱερό στίς Αἰγιέες Λακωνίας (Athens 1998) 199-200 and pl. 54. By far the best preserved example of this type was found in the Dimiova cave, immediately east of Eleochorion (ancient Kalamai), and is now on display in the Kalamata Museum; see P. Themelis, *AD* 20 (1965) 2, 207, with a scarcely decipherable picture, pl. 217.

<sup>63</sup> See Salapata (n.60) 159-86.

<sup>64</sup> See Themelis (n.58, 1997), 84-5 and *SEG* 45.302.

<sup>65</sup> The plastic group is in Themelis (n.58, 1998) 182.

The connection with Eileithyia has been advanced by Stibbe (n.48), 247-53 for the terracotta from Sparta, and is independently suggested by M. Torelli, 'L'Asklepieion di Messene, lo scultore Damofonte e Pausania', in G. Capocchi (ed.), *In memoria di Enrico Paribeni* (Rome 1998), 468-9, for those found in Messene. According to Bonias (n.62) 109-14, in the sanctuary at Aigeiai Artemis and the previously unknown hero Timagenes were worshipped; the votives present interesting analogies to those from the omega-omega complex. On Artemis and Eileithyia, see S. Pingiatoglou, *Eileithyia* (Würzburg 1981) 98-119. For a discussion of the deities worshipped in the sanctuary omega-omega, see Themelis (n.58, 1998) 182-6 and Torelli, 469-71. On the fourth-century temple of Artemis at Messene, see below and n.105.

<sup>66</sup> Herfort-Koch (n.33) 38 and 91 k 42 (Mariémont Palladion, dated c. 530) and 103 k 74 (cymbal player from Kalamata, c. 550-530). For a characterization of Archaic bronzes from Messenia, see Leon (n.51) 175-85.

<sup>67</sup> R. Parker, 'Spartan religion', in A. Powell (ed.), *Classical Sparta* (London 1989) 142-72; 145 about the religion of the *perioikoi*.

in the Archaic and Early Classical period perfectly mirror the pantheon of the Spartiates, as did also the shrines of Lakonian *perioikoi*. The only local contribution, without counterpart in the pantheon of the Spartiates, is the river-god Pamisos, whose cult was obviously anchored in the Messenian landscape.<sup>68</sup>

The Lakonian look of these sanctuaries should not come as a surprise: Messenia in the sixth and fifth centuries was a part of the Spartan state, or better, of the Lakoniké. The finds from the sanctuaries show that it was to a considerable extent inhabited by people who spoke the same language as the Lakedaimonians east of the Taygetos, employed the same alphabet, used and produced the same kind of pottery and bronzes, worshipped the same gods and offered them the same sort of votives. Such evidence is obviously to be connected to the sources speaking of perioikic settlements in Messenia: whatever one thinks of the status of the Helots, probably not many scholars would be ready to attribute to them major stone buildings like the ones at Longà, Ayios Floros and Akovitika, or dedications on a monumental scale, like the votive column from Longà, or objects of the quality of the terracotta reliefs from Mavromati/Messene or the bronzes from Longà.<sup>69</sup> The presence of *perioikoi* in Messenia has not received much attention in modern research,<sup>70</sup> yet it was anything but negligible: perioikic towns were scattered along the coast of the Messenian Gulf, from Kalamai, the modern Eleochorion (formerly Yiannitza), at the end of an important route crossing the Taygetos, to Pharai, on the site of modern Kalamata, and Thouria, further inland on a ridge dominating the Pamisos valley but probably extending its territory to the coast, then Asine, south along the Akritas peninsula, Mothone on the other side of it, and north of Mothone, Koryphasion<sup>71</sup> and Kyparissiai, on the west coast of Messenia, and finally Aulon, controlling the access to the region from the valley of the Neda. Another important approach from the north-east was guarded by the fortress of Gardiki, most probably ancient Ampheia.<sup>72</sup> As in Lakonia itself, the Spartiate land was surrounded by a belt of perioikic settlements, which in the end must have occupied a significant portion of the region.

<sup>68</sup> On the cult of Pamisos, see M. Breuillot, 'L'eau et les dieux de Messénie', *DHA* 11 (1985) 797-9.

<sup>69</sup> For reasons of space, a detailed treatment of the evidence of cult at Bronze Age tombs from the Geometric to the Hellenistic age, particularly rich in Messenia, cannot be given here. See C. Antonaccio, *An Archaeology of Ancestors* (Lanham, MD 1995) 70-102. By far the most thorough collection of the evidence available to date is to be found in D. Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland von der geometrischen bis zur klassischen Zeit: Attika, Argolis, Messenien* (*Klio Beiheft* 3, Berlin 2001). I am very grateful to David Boehringer for allowing me to use his excellent work before its publication. To his list, add now the Protogeometric and Hellenistic pottery from a Mycenaean chamber tomb on the Ellinikà ridge, just outside the wall circuit of ancient Thouria: G. Chatzi-Spiliopoulou, 'Ὁ βος θαλαμωτός τάφος των Ελληνικών Ανθείας στη Μεσσηνία', in V. Mitsopoulos-Leon (ed.), *Forschungen in der Peloponnes. Akten des Symposions anlässlich der Feier "100 Jahre Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut Athen"*. Athen 5.3-7.3.1998 (Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Sonderchriften 38, Athens 2001) 293-8. For my argument, it is sufficient to point out that the topographical distribution of Archaic and Early Classical evidence for this form of cult shows clearly that it cannot be associated exclusively with the Helots, if at all.

<sup>70</sup> See Roebuck (n.2) 28-31, and J.F. Lazenby and R. Hope Simpson, 'Greco-Roman times: literary tradition and topographical commentary', in W.A. McDonald and G.R. Rapp, Jr. (eds), *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Environment* (Minneapolis 1972) 86. The evidence from literary sources and inscriptions has been recently collected by Shipley (n.62) 226-81; see the index at pp. 190-1.

<sup>71</sup> The Koryphasion that was stormed by the Arkadians in 365/4 (Diod. 15.77.4) must have been a perioikic settlement. Since Thucydides appears to imply that there was no settlement on Koryphasion (i.e. Paliokastro) when Demosthenes landed there (4.3.2), it is possible that a settlement was established after the Athenians finally evacuated their stronghold. Archaeological investigations in the castle by S. Marinatos (report in *Ergon* 1958, 149-50) brought to light pottery from roughly the mid fifth century onwards, and a considerable quantity of pottery from the sixth to the fourth centuries has been collected in the area south of the castle, towards the entrance of the Navarino bay; see W.M. McDonald and R. Hope Simpson, 'Prehistoric habitation in southwestern Peloponnese', *AJA* 65 (1961) 243.

<sup>72</sup> See W.K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* 5 (Berkeley 1985) 39-46 and G.A. Pikoulas, 'Τὸ πόλισμα Ἀμφεία', in *Πρακτικά Β' Τοπικοῦ Συνεδρίου Λακωνικῶν Μελετῶν* (Athens 1988) 479-85.

The topography of Spartiate land and perioikic settlements in Messenia is still a field to explore. Most scholars tend to locate the lots of the Spartiates in the northern plain and perhaps also in the Makaria, the lower plain, west of the Pamisos, and in the Soulima valley.<sup>73</sup> Although not all scholars agree on this, there is some reason to think that some perioikic settlement existed on the coast of the Akritas peninsula north of Asine. Korone, founded (or re-founded) in connection with Messenian independence, may actually have been the successor of a perioikic settlement, which may or may not have had the same name.<sup>74</sup> Yet another settlement must have existed on the site of Mavromati/Messene itself, unless one is prepared to connect the Archaic and Early Classical finds with just an isolated sanctuary, which seems highly improbable, all the more so since the omega-omega building is not the only place in Mavromati/Messene that has produced finds from the period of the Spartan domination. Soundings in the courtyard of the Asklepieion have brought to light the remains of earlier buildings and more terracotta plaques and votives antedating the refoundation of Messene in the early fourth century. Almost certainly this evidence implies the existence of a further shrine built in the Archaic period.<sup>75</sup> Although it is not clear whether or not we can speak of settlement continuity from the Geometric to the Archaic period,<sup>76</sup> on the whole it seems difficult to reject the conclusion that a settlement existed here from the late seventh century onwards, and given its material remains and its position this can hardly have been anything other than a perioikic settlement.<sup>77</sup> A further problem is represented by Aithaia, a settlement of *perioikoi* mentioned by Thucydides in connection with the revolt of the earthquake and rather difficult to locate.<sup>78</sup> Since the name does not recur in any source from the fourth century onwards, except Philochoros, and especially not in topographical surveys like those of Ps.-Skylax, Strabo and Pausanias, one might be inclined to connect it to a settlement that changed its name at some point, most probably at the time of Epameinondas' liberation of Messenia. This could apply to Korone, which according to Pausanias (4.34.5) had been refounded precisely at that time, although Pausanias gives the earlier settlement the name of one of the cities offered to Achilles by Agamemnon, Aipeia.<sup>79</sup> As an alternative, Aithaia could

<sup>73</sup> On the extension and location of Spartiate land in Messenia, see, among others, C.A. Roebuck, 'A note on Messenian economy and population', *CPh* 40 (1945) 151 and 157-8; D. Lotze, 'Zu einigen Aspekten des spartanischen Agrarsystems', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1971(2)) 64-5; T.J. Figueira, 'Mess contributions and subsistence at Sparta', *TAPhA* 114 (1984) 100-4; S. Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* (London 2000) 142-5, who in my opinion overestimates the extension of the land directly controlled by the Spartiates.

<sup>74</sup> R. Hope Simpson, 'Identifying a Mycenaean state', *BSA* 52 (1957) 249, mentioned five Early Classical Doric capitals from the site of Petalidi, but later Lazenby (in Lazenby and Hope Simpson (n.70) 89) based on Paus. 4.34.5 called Korone a new foundation of the 360s. N. Valmin, *Études topographiques sur la Messénie ancienne* (Lund 1930) 177-9, seems to consider the remains of ancient fortifications to antedate the age of Epameinondas and tantalizingly alludes to the richness of ancient remains in Petalidi.

<sup>75</sup> See P.G. Themelis, 'Ἀνασκαφή Μεσσήνης', *PAAH* 1993 (1996) 57-9; 1994 (1997) 86-8; 1995 (1998) 60-3 (soundings in the southern part of the Asklepieion court).

<sup>76</sup> Judging from the notices published to date, there could be some gap between a Geometric settlement and another (smaller?) one, dating from the late seventh century. At least, the late eighth and early seventh centuries are not as clearly represented as the periods before and after, and Geometric and Archaic-Early Classical materials have not yet been found in the same spots.

<sup>77</sup> An additional reason for resisting the association of the Archaic materials from Mavromati/Messene with the Helots is the fact that plaques of the same sort as those found there, and also dating to the Archaic period, have been found on the Tourles hill, near Kalamata, i.e. the perioikic settlement of Pharai. I owe this information to the kindness of Gina Salapata.

<sup>78</sup> The manuscripts of Thuc. 1.101.2 give the ethnonym in the (obviously corrupted) forms αἰθειεῖς or αἰθνεῖς, generally corrected to Αἰθαίης based on Philoch. 328 F32 *ap. Steph. s.v. Αἶθαια*. For earlier attempts to locate Aithaia, see Valmin (n.74) 62-3 and Lazenby and Hope Simpson (n.70) 86 and n.41.

<sup>79</sup> See J. Christien, 'L'étranger à Lacédémone', in R. Lonis (ed.), *L'étranger dans le monde grec 2* (Nancy 1992) 33. For different locations of Homeric Aipeia, see Strab. 8.4.5.

perhaps have been the name of the settlement at the foot of Mount Ithome: Aithaia/Messene could parallel Koryphasion/Pylos, the one being the ‘Spartan’ name, the other the ‘Messenian’ one.<sup>80</sup>

The *perioikoi* occupied significant portions of Messenia. It is impossible to say precisely where they came from, except that the extension of their presence makes it hard to believe that they might all have come from Lakonia, in a sort of internal colonization: to a large extent, perioikic communities in Messenia are very likely to have been the result of the absorption of pre-existing settlements by the expanding Spartan state, in a process not unlike the one that must have taken place in some parts of Lakonia itself. Therefore, it would not be well advised to exclude them from a discussion of Messenian tradition, all the more so if one remembers that some of the places where these *perioikoi* were living or worshipping their gods would later have an enormous importance for the Messenian identity: Mavromati/Messene was the centre of resistance against Sparta in the fifth century, Thouria revolted in the same occasion and became in the fourth century one of the most important centres of free Messenia. The fact that the written sources, especially from the fourth century onwards, have even less to say on *perioikoi* in Messenia than they do on their counterparts in Lakonia should not be given too much weight. From the *a posteriori* perspective of the Messenian vulgata, *perioikoi* rubbing shoulders with the hated Spartiates would have been despicable *collaborateurs*, best forgotten.<sup>81</sup> As we shall see in more detail below, this vulgata maintained that all the ‘ancient Messenians’ had either gone into exile after the Second Messenian War or had been enslaved by the Spartiates, and in this case had left their land after the revolt in the fifth century.

To conclude this section, three interrelated points have to be stressed: on closer observation, perioikic presence in Messenia turns out to be much more relevant than is usually assumed; archaeological evidence from Archaic and Early Classical Messenia looks thoroughly Lakedaimonian and should most probably be connected with such presence; however, the topographic distribution of perioikic settlements and sanctuaries does not recommend excluding them from the problem of Messenian tradition. This last point is reinforced if we consider the two moments at which Messenians suddenly emerged in the thoroughly Lakedaimonian landscape west of the Taygetos: first the earthquake revolt and then the liberation of Messenia by Epameinondas.

### III

As for the revolt in the fifth century, the so-called hard facts scarcely need recalling. Some time around 469 Sparta was hit by a devastating earthquake, and west of the Taygetos a revolt broke out. It took the Spartans ten years’ hard fighting and the help of their allies, including the Athenians, to recover control of the region and to gain the upper hand on the rebels, entrenched on Mount Ithome.<sup>82</sup> What the Spartans could not prevent was the birth of a new polity, the Messenians, formed by the rebels, who left the region under a truce and received Naupaktos from

<sup>80</sup> That the Spartans consistently called Koryphasion the place that the Messenians and the Athenians called Pylos is stated clearly by Thucydides (4.3.2, and *cf.* 4.118.4 and 5.18.7, and Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.18); on the implications, see S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford 1996) 2.154-5. But if Aithaia was the name of the settlement at the foot of Mount Ithome, Thucydides does not seem to have realized it, *cf.* 1.101.2.

<sup>81</sup> The only perioikic settlements mentioned by Pausanias in Messenia – or rather, the only settlements that he seems to consider to have existed during the Spartan occupation – are Asine and Mothone (4.14.3 and 24.5 respectively), both of which he considers inhabited

by refugees from the Argolis settled there by the Spartans after the First and after the Second Messenian War respectively. Although Pausanias does mention, e.g., Thouria in the topographical part of Book 4, he does not say anything about it for the period of the Spartan occupation.

<sup>82</sup> The beginning and duration of the revolt are highly controversial. The position assumed here is defended in ‘Der Erdbebenaufstand und die Entstehung der messenischen Identität’, in V.-M. Strocka (ed.), *Gab es das griechische Wunder? Griechenland zwischen dem Ende des 6. und der Mitte des 5. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Mainz 2001) 280-90.

the Athenians as their provisional dwelling. To investigate the identity of the rebels, the Messenians, we must definitely leave aside the evidence from sources later than the foundation of Messene by Epameinondas, for they are much more part of the construction of the identity of the citizens of this new Messene than evidence about their fifth-century predecessors.<sup>83</sup> Among the earlier sources, the most explicit is Thucydides (1.101.2), who says that the revolt was an enterprise of Helots and of the *perioikoi* of Thouria and Aithaia, but, since the descendants of the old Messenians, who had been enslaved in olden times, happened to form the majority of the Helots who revolted, now all (the rebels) came to be called ‘the Messenians’.<sup>84</sup> Herodotos refers to this revolt twice, very briefly, mentioning that the Iamid seer Teisamenos had foreseen a Spartan victory, or perhaps the final Spartan victory, over the Messenians (9.35.2), and, secondly, that the Spartan Arimnestos, the man who had killed Mardonios at Plataia, had later died in Stenykleros with a contingent of 300 men he commanded, having engaged in battle with the whole of the Messenians (9.64.2). Herodotos’ use of the name ‘Messenians’ for the rebels is the best illustration of Thucydides’ statement. The same terminology appears in the other early sources referring to the revolt: Aristophanes (*Lys.* 1137-44) and the Old Oligarch (*Ath. Pol.* 3.11).

However, the problem of the identity of the rebels is not so straightforward. Thucydides seems to imply that calling all of them ‘the Messenians’ was simply a kind of shorthand, but there is much more to it. The existence of a Messenian land, and of a political community called the Messenians in olden times, was a necessary presupposition for the claim of the rebels to freedom and independence from Sparta. Whoever they were, only by linking themselves to those Messenians – by becoming Messenians, as it were – could they justify their uprising. One could say that it is not so much that they revolted because they were Messenians, as vice versa: Messenian identity and revolt from Sparta can be seen as two sides of one and the same coin.<sup>85</sup> The paramount importance of Messenian identity for the rebels explains why they conspicuously and stubbornly clung to it even after the revolt was over. When they settled in Naupaktos, they did not become Naupaktians, but remained Messenians, as the dedications of the Nike of Paionios in Olympia and of the pillar in Delphi show.<sup>86</sup> They were a kind of polity in exile, sharing the city with the Naupaktians but remaining distinct from them. Furthermore, two spearbutts dedicated at Olympia and Longà recording victories over the Spartans and Athenians by the Methanioi show – according to Bauslaugh’s interpretation of the ethnic – that the rebels called

<sup>83</sup> For a discussion of these sources, see my contribution cited in the preceding footnote, 290-2.

<sup>84</sup> This passage is surprisingly often interpreted as if it meant that in general the majority of the Helots (of Lakonia and Messenia) were of Messenian origin and that for that reason all the Helots were normally called ‘Messenians’. This is the least probable interpretation of the passage, as I try to show in ‘Helots called Messenians? A note on Thuc. 1.101.2’, *CQ* (forthcoming).

<sup>85</sup> See Thomas Figueira’s brilliant formulation (n.6, 224): ‘...instead of reflecting genealogy, feeling “Messenian” or identifying oneself as “Messenian” appears to be inversely correlated with the degree of compliance with the Spartan government and with the Spartiates as a social class’. Figueira, to be sure, is speaking only of Helots, whom he considers to be the only social surface of Messenian tradition.

<sup>86</sup> *IvO* 259 and *SEG* 32.550 respectively. To them, a further, unpublished inscription should be added, in which also Messenians and Naupaktians appear as two separate groups; the inscription, apparently an agreement between Messenians and Naupaktians, was found about forty years ago in Naupaktos and is mentioned by E.

Mastrokostas, *AD* 19 (1964) 2, 295; cf. W.K. Pritchett, *Thucydides’ Pentekontaetia and Other Essays* (Amsterdam 1995) 69-71. The monuments from which the inscriptions in Olympia and Delphi come are discussed by T. Hölscher, ‘Die Nike der Messenier und Naupaktier in Olympia’, *JDAI* 89 (1974) 70-111, and A. Jacquemin and D. Laroche, ‘Notes sur trois piliers delphiques’, *BCH* 106 (1982) 191-207. Both monuments seem to date to the years of the Peloponnesian War. The assertive value of these two dedications, in Panhellenic sanctuaries where the Spartan presence would be very intense, can hardly be overestimated. A further Messenian dedication in Delphi (*SEG* 19.391) should be mentioned, a base c. 8 m by 2.5 m with two inscriptions, one clearly Hellenistic, the other written in archaizing letters but possibly also Hellenistic. It is difficult to say whether we are dealing here with a fifth-century monument, later refurbished, or with an altogether later dedication, executed in an archaizing style; see Jeffery (n.30) 205, and J. Pouilloux, *La région Nord du sanctuaire (FD II, Architecture*, Paris 1960) 142-51, who offers by far the most detailed discussion of this monument.



themselves ‘the Messenians’ already during the revolt, quite probably from its very beginning, for at least the dedication at Olympia seems to fit better an early phase of the war, since in its more advanced stages the rebels seem to have been besieged in their stronghold on Mount Ithome.<sup>87</sup> The relevance of the Messenian identity of the rebels is also illustrated by the persistent refusal of the Spartans to recognize it and to consider the Messenians as members of a polity like any other. In the treaty which allowed the rebels to leave Mount Ithome, the Spartans included a clause to the effect that, ‘if any of them were taken on Peloponnesian soil, he was to be the slave of the captor’ (Thuc. 1.103.1, transl. Jowett).<sup>88</sup>

Precisely in this revolt, when Messenian identity surfaces for the first time in the light of history, the *perioikoi* also played a part – and not on the Spartan side, as one could have expected. Thucydides says explicitly that the *perioikoi* from Aithaia and Thouria also took arms against Sparta, although later sources normally forget this.<sup>89</sup> Modern scholars also downplay the role of the *perioikoi* in the revolt, but there are various reasons to revise this judgement. The *perioikoi*, although they did not receive the intensive military training of the Spartiates, nevertheless gave hoplites to the Lakedaimonian phalanx,<sup>90</sup> and the presence of some of these well-trained hoplites in the ranks of the rebels is the only reasonable explanation for the remarkable military success of the revolt, which would otherwise be very puzzling. One would hardly expect that Helots, without any experience of fighting, could have annihilated Arimnestos and his 300 men.<sup>91</sup> To strengthen this point, one of the spear-butts dedicated by the Messenians comes from a perioikic sanctuary, the sanctuary of Apollo Korythos at Longà, possibly the most Lakedaimonian of all sanctuaries in Messenia. Even more important, the very heart of the revolt, the place where the rebels rallied for their final resistance, was also the place of a perioikic settlement, and it is hardly conceivable that such a settlement did not take part in the revolt. In short, there is no reason to assume that perioikic rebels felt less Messenian than Helotic rebels did.

This conclusion points to a major problem: although the function of the rebels’ Messenian identity is clear, the process whereby they all – including the *perioikoi* – came to think of themselves as Messenians is not. From this point of view, Thucydides’ seemingly precise description of the rebels can hardly be considered completely satisfactory. Obviously, different instruments are necessary to solve this riddle.

#### IV

Epameinondas’ liberation of Messenia poses similar problems. Two central points – the attitudes of Helots and *perioikoi* respectively at the time of Epameinondas’ expedition, and the composition of the citizen-body of the new Messenian state – are the object of controversial statements in the ancient sources. Although some scholars think that, as the Thebans and their allies

<sup>87</sup> R.A. Bauslaugh, ‘Messenian dialect and dedications of the “Methanioi”’, *Hesperia* 59 (1990) 661-8. I am very grateful to Calvert Watkins for advice on this point.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Figueira (n.6) 234-5. Also significant is the fact that Xenophon never mentions the Messenians of Naupaktos in the parts of the *Hellenika* devoted to the final years of the Peloponnesian wars: cf. *Hell.* 1.2.18.

<sup>89</sup> The only exception being Plut. *Cim.* 16.7, who obviously combines Thucydides’ and later accounts of the revolt.

<sup>90</sup> On the military role of the *perioikoi*, see e.g. D. Lotze, ‘Bürger zweiter Klasse: Spartas Periöken. Ihre Stellung und Funktion im Staat der Lakedaimonier’, in *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu*

*Erfurt. Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse* 2 (1993/94) 40, and J. Ducat, ‘La société spartiate et la guerre’, in F. Prost (ed.), *Armées et sociétés de la Grèce classique* (Paris 1999) 41-2.

<sup>91</sup> Note that Herodotos was obviously thinking of a pitched battle, not of some sort of guerrilla warfare. The military role of the Helots has possibly been underestimated, cf. e.g. K.-W. Welwei, *Unfreie im antiken Kriegsdienst 1: Athen und Sparta* (Wiesbaden 1974) 108-81. P. Hunt, ‘Helots at the battle of Plataea’, *Historia* 46 (1997) 129-44, and *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge 1998) 23-78, argues against this reductive view, but seems to fall into the other extreme. For a more balanced view, see Ducat (n.90) 43.

marched into Stenykleros, all Helots revolted against Sparta and all *perioikoi* remained true to their Lakedaimonian identity,<sup>92</sup> neither point is directly supported by ancient evidence. Loyalty to Sparta is attested only for the perioikic settlements on the southern end of the Akritas peninsula, Asine and Mothone, and on the western coast of Messenia, across the Aigaleon ridge. An Arkadian onslaught on Asine, probably in the summer of 369, was repelled by a Lakedaimonian garrison led by a Spartiate.<sup>93</sup> On the western coast, Kyparissiai and Koryphasion were conquered by the Arkadians in 365, and probably on that occasion added to the Messenian territory, so that by the end of the 360s only Asine and Mothone were certainly still Lakedaimonian.<sup>94</sup> There is some disagreement as to whether the plain east of the river Pamisus, with important perioikic settlements such as Thouria and Pharai, joined the new Messenian polity now or later, in 338, by virtue of Philip's intervention in the Peloponnese.<sup>95</sup> On that occasion, though, the sources show clearly that the bone of contention between Spartans and Messenians was portions of land further to the east and south of this area,<sup>96</sup> which strongly suggests that the area itself was a part of the Messenian state from the beginning. This is not necessarily indicative of the attitude of these *perioikoi*, since they may conceivably have been reduced by force by the Thebans and their allies, but in other cases (those of Koryphasion, Kyparissiai and Asine), the sources have preserved memory of fighting with various outcomes, so the silence in the case of Thouria and Pharai should not be considered insignificant.

Lack of loyalty among *perioikoi* in Messenia would be all the less surprising in the light of what had just happened in Lakonia. According to Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.5.25), an embassy of *perioikoi* had approached Epameinondas as he still hesitated to march into the Spartan territory, offering themselves as hostages and assuring Epameinondas that, if he only dared to march further, all the *perioikoi* would revolt against the Spartiates. At least some *perioikoi* really joined the invading army and participated in Epameinondas' campaign (*Hell.* 6.5.32).<sup>97</sup> Incidentally, these Lakonian *perioikoi* must have formed part of the citizen-body of the new city, since they could hardly expect that the Spartans would leave them in peace as soon as the Theban army had left Lakonia. Nor can we really say that the Helots uniformly turned against their masters. During Epameinondas' campaign in Lakonia – the source is again Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.5.29) – as many as 6,000 Helots were ready to fight for Sparta in return for the promise to be liberated if they fought well.<sup>98</sup> All in all, the rifts in the Spartan state which became conspicuous on the

<sup>92</sup> See e.g. P. Cartledge, *Agesilaos and the Crisis of Sparta* (Baltimore and London 1987) 385: 'In Messenia it seems that the Perioikoi had remained uniformly loyal to Sparta. The Helots, it is almost superfluous to record, had revolted to a man, woman and child.' But cf. Hamilton (n.2) 224 and 227.

<sup>93</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.25; see Roebuck (n.2) 38.

<sup>94</sup> Diod. 15.77.4; see Roebuck (n.2) 29 n.9 and 38.

<sup>95</sup> On Philip's anti-Spartan intervention and its relationship with the League of Corinth, see now the detailed discussion by A. Magnetto, 'L'intervento di Filippo II nel Peloponneso e l'iscrizione Syll.<sup>3</sup>, 665', in S. Alessandri (ed.), *Ἰστορίη. Studi offerti dagli allievi a Giuseppe Nenci in occasione del suo settantesimo compleanno* (Galatina 1994) 283-308.

<sup>96</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.43.1 mentions the temple of Diana Limnatis, i.e. Artemis at Volimos; in fact, the controversy involved the whole Dentheliatis, a district in the upper valley of the Nedon, on the Messenian side of the Taygetos (Roebuck (n.2) 118-21); Strabo 8.4.6 knows of a controversy between Messenians and Spartans for an area located south of Kardamyle at the time of Philip;

Theop. 115 F172, where Thalamai is called a Messenian city, probably refers to the same events.

<sup>97</sup> It is tempting to connect these hints with a debate between Agesilaos and Epameinondas referred to by Plutarch (*Ages.* 27.4-28.2), during the peace conference at Sparta in 371. Epameinondas allegedly replied to Agesilaos' request to allow the Boiotians to be autonomous by asking Sparta to do the same with the Lakoniké, i.e. with the *perioikoi*; the same information, in slightly different form, is preserved also by Paus. 9.13.2. See Cartledge (n.92) 379-80, and M. Jehne, *Koine eirene. Untersuchungen zu den Befriedungs- und Stabilisierungsbemühungen in der griechischen Poliswelt des 4. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Stuttgart 1994) 71-4.

<sup>98</sup> Such precise information on the attitudes of Helots and *perioikoi* is to be preferred to Xenophon's generic *a posteriori* allegation (*Hell.* 7.2.2) that during Epameinondas' invasion many *perioikoi* and all the Helots had revolted against the Spartiates, as Hamilton (n.2) 227 and n.38, rightly stresses. As many as 1,000 freed Helots fighting on the Spartan side are mentioned by Diod. 15.65.6.

occasion of Epameinondas' invasion did not simply run between Helots on the one side and Spartiates and *perioikoi* on the other, nor just between Lakonia and Messenia. This is not at all surprising, if we only think of Kinadon's conspiracy a few years before.

Although the struggle around the identity of the new Messenians makes it extremely difficult to recover anything more than the traces of contrary biases, the sources show clearly that the composition of the citizen-body of Messene cannot be subsumed under a dichotomy Helots/*perioikoi*.<sup>99</sup> Unsurprisingly, the two parties involved seem to have held widely diverging opinions on this point. From a Theban-Messenian point of view, the birth of the new Messenian state was apparently described as a *grande rentrée* of the descendants of all the Messenians who had been chased away from their land by the Spartans. This is the depiction found in Diodoros (15.66.6), in Plutarch's lives of Pelopidas (24.5) and of Agesilaos (34.1), and, with fuller detail, in Pausanias (4.26.5), who specifies that Epameinondas summoned the Messenians from Italy, Sicily and Euesperides, where they had fled when the Spartans, after defeating Athens, had expelled them from Naupaktos. The epigram that accompanied the statue of Epameinondas at Thebes, quoted by Pausanias (9.15.6), also spoke of the return of the Messenians. Diodoros also says (15.66.1) that citizenship was accorded to everyone who wanted it, as often occurred in the event of a new foundation; it is not clear whether this just completes the Theban-Messenian version, as one would be inclined to believe, or is intended to modify it. One point should be emphasized: according to the Theban-Messenian version of the liberation of Messenia, there were no old Messenians left in the region itself at the time of Epameinondas' campaign, since all descendants of the 'ancient Messenians' had left the country after the revolt in the fifth century at the latest. This is explicit in Pausanias, but is clearly presupposed by Diodoros and Plutarch as well. None of them speaks of liberation of Messenians living in Messenia.<sup>100</sup>

Direct evidence of the Spartan viewpoint is also lacking, but Isokrates' *Archidamos* offers a version which sounds quite convincingly Spartan.<sup>101</sup> According to this version, the Thebans were not restoring the true Messenians, which – says Archidamos/Isokrates – would still have been an unjust action, but at least a plausible one; rather, they were trying to settle the Helots on the Spartan border, so that the Spartans would see their slaves made masters of their own land (*Archid.* 28). Clearly, Archidamos/Isokrates tries to play on shared attitudes and to win the audience's sympathy by insisting on the subversive nature of the Thebans' action.<sup>102</sup> It is important to stress that this putative Spartan version denies that the Helots living in Messenia were the descendants of the 'ancient Messenians', and in so doing ends up agreeing with the Theban-Messenian version in presupposing that no Messenians were living in the region at the time of Epameinondas' campaign.

<sup>99</sup> See the detailed discussion by G. Dipersia, 'La nuova popolazione di Messene al tempo di Epaminonda', in M. Sordi (ed.), *Propaganda e persuasione occulta nell'antichità* (CISA 2, Milan 1974) 54-61.

<sup>100</sup> If we combine this with Thucydides' description of the rebels at the time of the earthquake, we may come to a very interesting, if somewhat unexpected result: in all probability, neither Thucydides nor the later sources thought that *all* Helots in Messenia at the beginning of the fifth century, before the earthquake, were of Messenian origin, unless of course they also believed that all Helots had left Messenia as a consequence of the revolt – not a very probable assumption.

<sup>101</sup> There is some disagreement among scholars as to whether Isokrates' *Archidamos* should be taken as a mere rhetorical exercise or given a proper political meaning; see e.g. K. Bringmann, *Studien zu den politischen Ideen des Isokrates* (Göttingen 1965) 55-6, and R.A. Moysey, 'Isokrates' *On the peace*: rhetorical exercise or political advice?', *AJAH* 7 (1982) 118-27. However, the speech was composed in the years immediately following the liberation of Messenia, when the Spartans were trying to challenge the recognition of Messene by the other Greeks, and certainly an Athenian audience knew which arguments the Spartans were deploying; see the judicious discussion by Jehne (n.97) 11 n.21, with further bibliography.

<sup>102</sup> See Dipersia (n.99) 58.

It is somewhat puzzling that modern scholars consistently prefer the Spartan version to the Theban-Messenian one and consider the Helots the main component of the citizen-body of Epameinondas' Messenian state. If tested against further, more neutral evidence, both versions are quite suspect. In his speech against Leokrates, Lykourgos quoted two examples of cities that had been deserted by their inhabitants and never recovered from the catastrophe: one is Troy, the other is Messene, which 500 years after its destruction had been repopulated, says Lykourgos, by people assembled randomly (*Leokr.* 62). It is important to note the – somewhat strained – logic of Lykourgos' argument. In order to emphasize the gravity of Leokrates' flight from Athens threatened by the Macedonians, Lykourgos asserts that for a city the utmost catastrophe is to be deserted by its own citizens; from such an occurrence, no city could recover. In other words, Lykourgos implies that the expulsion of the Messenians by the Spartans had represented the end of Messene, and the refoundation by the Thebans could not remedy that; by implication, he denies any continuity between the 'new Messenians' and the 'old Messenians'. In using Troy and Messene as examples to pillory Leokrates, Lykourgos may be pushing his argument a bit far, but obviously he trusts that his audience agrees with his interpretation; otherwise he would have picked different examples.

Furthermore, evidence for the *grande rentrée* is conspicuously lacking at the other end, so to speak. According to Diodoros' narrative, all the Messenians in Cyrenaica fell during a civil war (14.34.3-6). As for those who had sailed to Sicily, the tyrant Dionysios, after having settled them in Messina, moved them away in order not to offend the Spartans. The Messenians founded a new city, Tyndaris, on the northern side of Cape Peloros in 396/5, and, says Diodoros, this new city prospered and soon reached a population of 10,000 citizens (14.78.5). There is no mention here of a return to the Peloponnese. All this does not amount to saying that it is impossible that some descendants of the Messenians of Naupaktos could have formed a part of the citizen-body of the new Messenian state. For one thing, not all of them went to Sicily or North Africa: Konon's bodyguard at Kaunos was formed by Messenians (*Hell. Ox.* 15.3).<sup>103</sup> Also, the group of exiles who went to Euesperides according to Pausanias is not necessarily one and the same as the one that ended up slaughtered in the Cyrenaean *stasis*. Nevertheless, the sources on the whole do suggest some scepticism as to the demographic relevance of the *grande rentrée*.

Archidamos' city of slaves, on the other hand, fails to explain where the *perioikoi* of central and eastern Messenia had gone, not to mention those who had followed Epameinondas from Lakonia. It also clashes with the archaeological evidence showing an increase in the population of the region at the time of the liberation from Sparta.<sup>104</sup> Finally, it does not find any support from less biased sources, either.

<sup>103</sup> See I.A.F. Bruce, *An Historical Commentary on the 'Hellenica Oxyrhynchia'* (Cambridge 1967) 129.

<sup>104</sup> This is at least the record for the only region where archaeological evidence has been collected at all: the area investigated by the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. See J.L. Davis, S.E. Alcock, J. Bennet, Y.G. Lolos, C.W. Shelmerdine, 'The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project. Part I: overview and the archaeological survey', *Hesperia* 66 (1997) 483: the end of the Spartan domination 'is marked by a notable growth in the number and size of settlements'. In this connec-

tion, it is interesting to observe that, while four of the five tribes in which the citizen-body of the new Messenian polity was divided were named after Kresphontes and his three direct ancestors, the fifth was named after the Argive Heraklid Daiphontes; see N.F. Jones, *Public Organization in Ancient Greece: A Documentary Study* (Philadelphia 1987) 146-8. This is normally, and surely correctly, connected with the role of the Argives in the foundation, but it is tempting to think that this new tribe might have been composed of settlers from outside Messenia.

## V

The discussions of the evidence on the fifth-century revolt and on the final foundation of a free Messenian polity in Messenia show some common features. In both cases, 'the Messenians' turn out to be formed by groups of various origins: Helots and *perioikoi* in the first case, probably Helots, *perioikoi* and settlers from other parts of Greece in the other. In both cases, the Messenian identity seems to be built upon a clearly Lakedaimonian substrate. In fact, evidence on cults shows that the new Messenian polity was as deeply Spartan as sixth- and fifth-century Messenia seems to have been. Among the very few cults that can be confidently said to go back to the early fourth century, at least two are typically Spartan. One of them is the cult of the Dioskouroi, harboured in the complex omega-omega, where offerings run uninterrupted through the fourth century; the other, located in a small temple between the sanctuary omega-omega and the complex of the Asklepieion, was the cult of Artemis Orthia,<sup>105</sup> which indeed had an even stronger Spartan association than the Dioskouroi. In both cases, the same pattern can be glimpsed in the sources, consisting in a Messenian claim on a Spartan cult. According to Pausanias (3.26.3 and 4.31.9), the Messenians maintained that the birthplace of the Dioskouroi was part of their land, not of Lakonia.<sup>106</sup> In the same spirit, a board connected with the cult of Artemis Orthia at Messene was called 'the holy elders, descendants of Kresphontes',<sup>107</sup> probably implying the claim that the cult itself went back to the Dorian migration and was therefore at least as old as its Spartan counterpart.

In both cases, it turns out to be almost impossible to pin down elements of a specifically Messenian tradition. Bias in the sources can account to a large extent for their inconsistencies. However, by drawing upon research on ethnicity from other disciplines,<sup>108</sup> it is possible to make sense of the evidence in a much more satisfactory way, and also to get closer to a reasonable solution for the puzzle of Messenian tradition. Or at least, that is what the remaining part of this article will try to show.

The starting-point has to be the understanding of ethnicity as a process of differentiation, in which a group is constructed by the very production of boundaries towards other groups. Such boundaries are the most important factor of the process.<sup>109</sup> Although ethnic difference is normally expressed by customs, patterns of behaviour, including language, or artifacts, the only

<sup>105</sup> See the excavation report by P.G. Themelis, 'Ἀνασκαφή Μεσσηνίας', *PAAH* 1991 (1994) 86-96, whose interpretation of this monument seems to me more convincing than the one proposed by Y. Morizot, 'Le hiéron de Messéné', *BCH* 118 (1994) 399-405. On the cult of Artemis Orthia in Messene, see *id.*, 'Artemis Ortheia at Messene: the epigraphical and archaeological evidence', in R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence* (Stockholm 1994) 101-22.

<sup>106</sup> In this connection it is not superfluous to recall that the new city founded by the Messenians in Sicily in 396/5 was called Tyndaris, and its coins show Helen on one side and the Dioskouroi or their symbols on the other; see S. Consolo Langher, 'Documentazione numismatica e storia di Tyndaris nel sec. IV a.C.', *Helikon* 5 (1965) 66-7.

<sup>107</sup> *SEG* 23.215 and 217 (both Imperial).

<sup>108</sup> For an introduction, see K.-H. Kohl, 'Ethnizität und Tradition aus ethnologischer Sicht', in A. Assmann and H. Friese (eds), *Identitäten* (Frankfurt am Main 1998) 269-87. A great deal of modern research on ethnicity is discussed in Hall (n.5) 17-33.

<sup>109</sup> The importance of the construction of boundaries and the definition of ethnicity as a process of exclusion go back to the Norwegian anthropologist F. Barth; see e.g. his introduction to F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen, Oslo and London 1969) parts 15-16. Barth's approach has been discussed and further refined in later scholarship. For a recent definition of the ethnic boundary as the founding element of ethnicity, see E. Orywal and K. Hackstein, 'Ethnizität: Die Konstruktion ethnischer Wirklichkeit', in T. Schweizer, M. Schweizer and W. Kokot (eds), *Handbuch der Ethnologie* (Berlin 1993) 598-600; see also 593-5 on the reception of Barth's theories. Similar results had been reached by R. Wenksus, in his pioneer research on the origins of early mediaeval *gentes*; see e.g. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln 1961) 81: 'das ethnische Bewußtsein einer Gruppe und ihre Selbstabgrenzung kann allein das Kriterium für ihre jeweilige, vielleicht wechselnde Zugehörigkeit sein.' For an updated version of Wenksus' approach, see now W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (ed.), *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*

requisite an ethnic group invariably needs to exist at all is a notional ethnic kinship, that is, a myth of common descent.<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, the value of patterns of behaviour and artifacts as ethnic icons varies according to a cultural macro-context and a historical micro-context: for example, language is understood as an expression of ethnic difference in some cultures and not in others, while in a specific historical situation an ethnic group can activate or deactivate the potential ethnic significance of language.<sup>111</sup> In spite of their being so crucial to ethnic identity, or perhaps rather because of this, myths of descent are much less conservative than traits that can express ethnicity, like customs or cults. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that ethnic foundation myths do not exist in a vacuum. Whenever one of them is created or modified, this must happen according to the specific rules that regulate plausibility in the given context.<sup>112</sup> These rules are in their turn determined by assumptions on the transmission of knowledge about the past, but also by expectations related to the cultural traits that are understood as expressions of ethnic identity in a given context. In other words, where language is normally taken as an expression of ethnicity, there will be a strong expectation that an ethnic group have its own language, and the absence of this condition will have to be accounted for. Finally, ethnicity is not only a process of exclusion, but also one of inclusion, and most often both at the same time. A strong predominance of the inclusive moment can produce a phenomenon that, to an external observer, looks like the birth of an ethnic group: a phenomenon that can be called ethnogenesis.

The evidence from Archaic and Early Classical Messenia summarized earlier would lead us to expect the inhabitants of that region to understand themselves as ethnically Lakedaimonian. Of course, the fact that the *perioikoi* in Messenia had a material culture that is indistinguishable from that of the *perioikoi* in Lakonia is in a sense simply a function of their political integration in the Spartan state, and does not *a priori* tell anything about their perception of their own ethnic identity.<sup>113</sup> Styles and techniques in the production of artifacts can function as icons of ethnic difference, but it is not easy to say precisely how far this was the case in Late Archaic and Classical Greece.<sup>114</sup> However, even traits that did have this function among the Greeks, like dialect, alphabet and cults, do not show any significant difference between Lakonia and Messenia. Unfortunately, direct evidence about the *perioikoi*'s perception of their ethnic identity is extremely scanty.<sup>115</sup> The only exception is represented by the *perioikoi* of Asine, who according to Herodotos (8.73.2) were originally Dryopes from the Argolis who had been

(Leiden 1998). W. Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: eine Zwischenbilanz', in K. Brunner and B. Merta (eds), *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methode der Frühmittelalterforschung* (Vienna 1994) 9-19, discusses the reception and further development of Wenskus' ideas by later scholars.

<sup>110</sup> On notional kinship as the foundation of an ethnic group, see already M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriß der verstehenden Soziologie* (5th edn, Tübingen 1972) 235-42. The conclusion that a common name and a myth of common descent are the only absolute preconditions for the existence of an ethnic group is probably not shared by all scholars. It is implicit in Weber's definition and has been stated explicitly by scholars developing Wenskus' approach; see e.g. F. Daim, 'Gedanken zum Ethnosbegriff', *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 112 (1982) 63. A similar position in Hall (n.5) 25.

<sup>111</sup> See e.g. W. Pohl, 'Telling the difference: signs of ethnic identity', in Pohl and Reimitz (n.109) 22-7.

<sup>112</sup> On the cultural rules that control manipulation of the past, see A. Appadurai, 'The past as a scarce resource', *Man* 16 (1981) 201-19, and J.D.Y. Peel, 'Making history: the past in the Ijesha present', *Man* 19 (1984) 111-32.

<sup>113</sup> For a correct approach to the problem of local styles in ancient art, see J. Raeder, 'Kunstlandschaft und Landschaftsstil. Begriffe, Anschauungen und deren methodische Grundlagen', in K. Zimmermann (ed.), *Der Stilbegriff in den Altertumswissenschaften* (Rostock 1993) 105-9.

<sup>114</sup> On this point, and in general on the problem of archaeology and ethnicity, see the discussion of Jonathan Hall's book (n.5) in *CAJ* 8 (1998) 265-83, in particular 270 (I. Morris), 271-3 (S. Jones), and 279-80 (Hall's reply). The problem has a long – and not consistently honourable – history among Early Mediaevalists, but Classical archaeologists might learn something from the methodological level of that debate; cf. Daim (n.110) 69-71.

<sup>115</sup> In the age of Trajan the Thourians called Lakedaimon their mother-city (*IG* v.1.1381), but this cannot be taken as a document on the perceptions of their predecessors, more than five centuries earlier.

expelled by the Argives and resettled by the Spartans in Messenia. Although the case of Mothone may be somewhat similar,<sup>116</sup> there is no reason to generalize to the other perioikic settlements. Lakonian *perioikoi* do not seem to have perceived the difference between themselves and the Spartiates in ethnic terms, at least before the fourth century BC, and it seems reasonable to assume, given the indices mentioned above, that the same applies to their Messenian peers. But this does not necessarily mean that the carriers of Messenian tradition have to be sought among the Helots.

A prerequisite for the emergence of Messenian identity in the fifth century is the – almost certainly Argive – tradition on the division of the Peloponnese among the Heraklids.<sup>117</sup> In the framework of this tradition, the name Messene, which in the *Odyssey* and in Tyrtaios probably indicated a place at the foot of Mount Ithome, became a general name for the whole region south of the Neda and west of the Taygetos, whose unity was a result of the Spartan expansion. As is shown by the description of Pylos as a part of the ancestral Messenian land by Thucydides, it was on this new meaning of Messene that fifth-century Messenian identity was predicated; therefore, it cannot be assumed that all the rebels were linked to the ‘ancient Messenians’ by an uninterrupted chain of tradition. Without excluding *a priori* the possibility that, to some extent, a Messenian genealogical memory could have existed before the revolt,<sup>118</sup> the emergence of the group that called itself ‘the Messenians’ is better understood as the construction of an ethnic boundary and as a process of ethnogenesis. In order to envisage such a process, it may be useful to refer to the model which Reinhard Wenskus applied long ago to the formation of the barbaric *gentes* in late antiquity, and which has since been refined and updated. Based on ethnographic research, this model assumes that a smaller group, the original carrier of ethnic consciousness rooted in genealogical myths, can under certain circumstances function as a kernel for the agglomeration of a larger group, which in its turn forms the *gens*.<sup>119</sup> This process can take place when the identity of the smaller group is for some reason attractive: because it incorporates commonly recognized claims or privileges, for instance.

Thucydides’ statement about the rebels would suggest that the Messenian identity spread from the Helots to the *perioikoi* of Thouria and Aithaia, but a closer look at the social organization of *perioikoi* and Helots respectively shows how difficult it is to make of the latter the only, or even the principal, carriers of Messenian genealogical tradition and to assign to them the main role in what we could call the Messenian ethnogenesis. There is no way to know if and how the Helots might have transmitted their own perceptions of their identity and their past. From a sociological perspective, the Helots do not seem to possess the premisses for the emergence of a counter-élite which could lead to the awakening of ethnic consciousness among them and finally guide an anti-Spartan opposition movement.<sup>120</sup> There are no traces of specifically Helotic

<sup>116</sup> See Strab. 8.6.11 (the last sentence also seems to belong to Theop. 115 F383), and Paus. 4.24.4 and 35.2, with J. Hall, ‘How Argive was the “Argive” Heraion: the political and cultic geography of the Argive Plain’, *AJA* 99 (1995) 583–4.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. n.17.

<sup>118</sup> The fact that Mount Ithome kept being identified as a focal point of Messenian identity could conceivably be construed as a sign of continuity with ‘ancient Messene’, although it is as possible to interpret it as a result of Tyrtaios’ associating Messene and Ithome.

<sup>119</sup> See Wenskus (n.109) 54–82; Pohl, ‘Introduction’, in Pohl and Reimitz (n.109); and P.J. Heather, ‘Disappearing and reappearing tribes’, in Pohl and Reimitz (n.109) 95–111.

<sup>120</sup> See P. Cartledge, ‘Rebels and Sambos in Classical Greece: a comparative view’, in P. Cartledge and F.

Harvey (eds), *Crux: Essays in Greek History presented to G.E.M. de Ste. Croix on his 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (London 1985) 45. Cf. J.A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill 1982) 6–7: ‘Emergence of such a countereélite is especially difficult in sedentary agricultural societies where dominant elites monopolize communication by symbols and supervise the socialization of all members of the polity by inculcation of myths legitimizing the elite’s dominance.’ I quote this passage because it so nicely fits what we know about the Spartiates and their treatment of the Helots. Among the factors which could favour the emergence of ethnic consciousness within a lower class, Armstrong lists the presence of very different linguistic patterns between élite and lower class; however, the Helots were apparently indistinguishable from the Spartiates in this respect: Thuc. 4.41.2 and Figueira (n.6) 213.

cults, either in Lakonia or in Messenia, which might have functioned as a focus for the Helots' collective identity.<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, there are reasons to assume that, unlike most slaves in the Greek world, the Helots did have an identity as a group. First of all, the Helots probably had more family continuity than was normally the case with slaves in the Greek world. The fact that the Spartiates tended not to manumit them made of the Helots a self-reproducing slave population. Moreover, the Spartiates themselves in various ways produced a collective identity for the Helots, by social practices like the sort of ritualized contempt that has been studied by Jean Ducat, which had the goal of humiliating the Helots and inspiring in them the sense of their inferiority,<sup>122</sup> or like the yearly declaration of war on the Helots by the ephors, which allowed the Spartiates to kill any Helot they wished without ritual impurity.<sup>123</sup> The construction of the Helots as a group, in a symbolic and material sense, was a function of Spartan domination, but at the same time it conferred upon them a potential for unity of action that was totally absent otherwise among Greek slaves.<sup>124</sup> The revolt in Messenia may be seen as the first documented manifestation of this potential, although it is difficult to believe that the Helots could also have furnished the leadership for this movement. The *perioikoi* are far better candidates. Living in small but autonomous communities, their social structure would have been ideal for the emergence of a counter-élite willing to challenge the Spartiate supremacy. Furthermore, the results of the excavations at Mavromati make it almost certain that a settlement of *perioikoi* existed in the very place where the rebels entrenched to resist the Spartan counter-attack: a place that later sources would consider the cradle of Messenian identity.

The conclusion that the leading role in Messenian ethnogenesis in the fifth century should be assigned to the *perioikoi* of Messenia might cause some surprise, in the light of the evidence about the Lakonian nature of their cults, language, alphabet and material culture. But such evidence does not make of them bad candidates for such a role – it only says something, and something important, about the history and function of Messenian identity, receiving confirmation and at the same time throwing new light on a phenomenon that scholars have often noticed: the prevalence of Spartan myths and cults in post-liberation Messenia. Messenian identity probably emerged out of the aspiration to autonomy and independence of some *perioikoi* who lived quite far from the centre of the Spartan state, across the mountains, in a fertile region with well-marked natural borders. It was conceivably also triggered by the rigid genealogical separation between Spartiates and *perioikoi*, which – it can be argued in the light of comparative research on ethnic processes – was very likely to produce an ethnic consciousness sooner or later. The whole process was certainly helped by the presence of a numerous slave population working the Spartiates' land in Messenia, a closed, self-reproducing group, equipped with the prerequisites for developing a group-identity which in turn would offer an ideal terrain for an ethnic charter myth. The thoroughly Lakedaimonian cultural pattern in Messenia makes it almost certain that Messenian ethnicity emerged as a process of distinction within a larger group that perceived itself as ethnically Lakedaimonian.

<sup>121</sup> J. Ducat, *Les Hilotes* (Athens and Paris 1990) 177-8, discusses cautiously the existence of a specifically Helotic culture, and notices the absence of any traces of it in the sources. D. Placido, 'Los lugares sagrados de los hilotas', in J. Annequin and M. Garrido-Hory (eds), *Religion et anthropologie de l'esclavage et des formes de dépendance* (Paris 1994) 127-35, is mostly a discussion of Helotic presence in Spartan sanctuaries. As mentioned above (n.69), cult at Bronze Age tombs was not specifically linked with the Helots. Needless to say, ethnic consciousness and genealogical tradition among the Helots become more plausible, the more one likens the Helots to

a dependent population with a complex social structure, and the less plausible, the more one likens them to slaves. For my position, see 'Helotic slavery reconsidered', in S. Hodkinson and A. Powell (eds), *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage* (London 2002), forthcoming.

<sup>122</sup> See J. Ducat, 'Le mépris des Hilotes', *Annales (ESC)* 30 (1974) 1451-64, and *id.* (n.121) 105-27, and now Figueira (n.6) 221-5, with further astute observations.

<sup>123</sup> Aristot. *fr.* 538 Rose, *ap.* Plut. *Lyk.* 28.7.

<sup>124</sup> See Cartledge (n.120) 40-6.



At the time of Epameinondas' liberation of Messenia, Messenian tradition had consolidated enough for a pattern to emerge. Apart from its myth of foundation, which connected it to the return of the Heraklids, Messenian identity still consisted predominantly – as it probably did already in the fifth century – in claiming as Messenian a whole series of Spartan cults and myths.<sup>125</sup> This phenomenon was not so much a result of the fact that the Spartans had uprooted Messenian tradition at the time of the conquest of Messenia, but rather of the fact that the carriers of Messenian ethnicity were forging it using as building blocks their own – Lakedaimonian – cults and myths. Messenian tradition was born out of fission inside the Lakedaimonian state, in a process that lasted for centuries and involved the construction of a new past. It took a long time for the Messenians to develop a peculiar set of cults and myths, independent from Sparta. Still, the original Spartan imprinting on Messenian identity remained obvious ever after.

NINO LURAGHI  
*Harvard University*

<sup>125</sup> On the fifth century, see J. Bremmer, 'Myth as propaganda: Athens and Sparta', *ZPE* 117 (1997) 13-16. The predominance of Lakedaimonian cults and myths in the pantheon of the new Messenians has been noted since B. Niese, 'Die ältere Geschichte Messeniens', *Hermes* 26 (1891) 13-14.