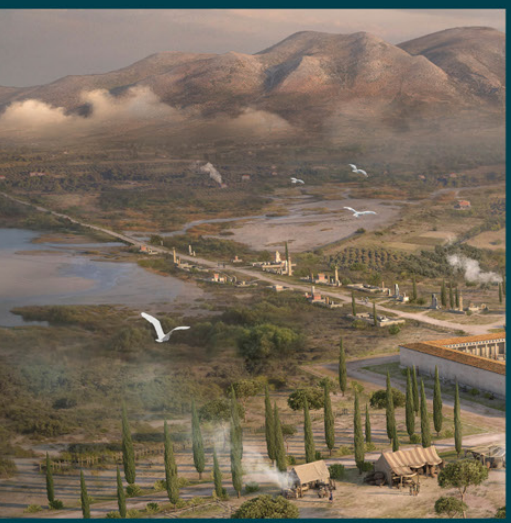


RECONSTRUCTING GREEK SACRED LANDSCAPES

DYNAMICS AND APPROACHES FROM THE FIELD



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In memory of
Dominique Jaillard

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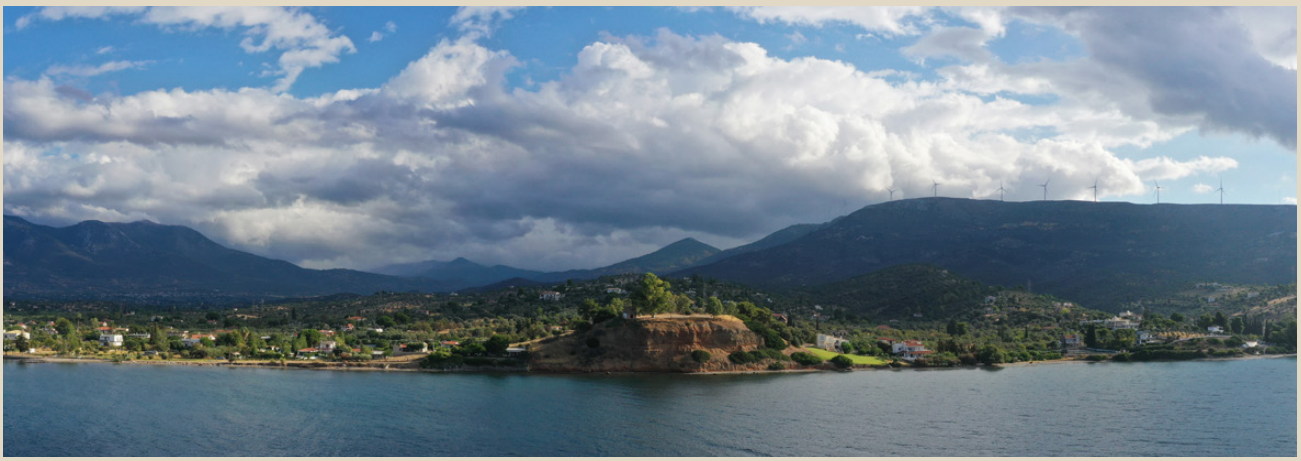

The coastal site of Amarynthos, with Paleoekklisies Hill in the foreground and the Servouni range behind (J. André, ESAG).

INTRODUCTION

Amarynthos: Looking eastward from the foot of Paleoekklisies Hill, where the sanctuary of Artemis Amarysia stretches out, the eye meets the long ridge of Servouni. Along the horizon, nine wind turbines stand out, their blades set in motion by the winds sweeping in from the Aegean. They are impossible to miss. They dominate the landscape. Erected to capture the energy of Aeolus, they encapsulate the needs and convictions of our time. Below the ridge, the eye is drawn to the monastery of Ag. Nikolaos, whose origins date back to the Byzantine period, and further on, the later monastery of Panagia Myrelaiou—two sites connected to a dense network of chapels scattered throughout the surrounding countryside. The Servouni is crowned by rock, and aside from a few cleared areas near the monasteries, the slopes are covered in maquis. In Antiquity, these lands likely belonged to Artemis's domain—spaces for grazing and hunting, perhaps already bearing the name Amarynthos, like the sanctuary itself. One glance captures three interwoven temporal layers—where it is tempting to recognize the enduring traces of successive "sacred" landscapes.

The 2023 roundtable, titled "Reconstructing Greek Sacred Landscapes: Dynamics and Approaches from the Field" (French "Reconstruire un paysage religieux grec: dynamiques et approches de terrain"), held at the *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique* in Vandœuvres (2–4 February 2023), finds its origin in ongoing research on the Artemision of Amarynthos and the portion of territory that surrounds it. From the pioneering work of Denis Knoepfler onward, this research has taken a multiscalar approach—whether through the systematic field survey to locate the sanctuary or through historical analysis aimed at situating Amarynthos within the religious, political, and territorial structure of the Eretrian city-state. The recent identification and excavation of the Artemision, with a particular focus on the temple of the goddess, alongside intensive field survey between Eretria and Amarynthos have followed this same approach. It soon became clear that one way to connect the different scales at play was to consider them through the lens of the "sacred landscape," and to bring together scholars to critically explore this concept.

Clearly, the current focus on landscape—whether sacred or of a different nature—reflects a broader contemporary concern. But this is not just a passing trend. We believe that a cautious use of the concept of landscape is a valuable tool for investigating how the Greeks conceived, structured, and experienced space—perspectives that rarely emerge in the writings of ancient geographers, historians, or philosophers, and which often require sources beyond the textual.

All the scholars gathered for the roundtable committed to applying the framework of "sacred landscape" to their study subjects, yet each did so in their own distinct way. That is hardly surprising, since multiple definitions of both "landscape" and "sacred" coexist. This variety of perspectives can sometimes be a hurdle when trying to put the concept into practice. But it can also fuel fresh momentum in research, provided we clearly define the different viewpoints and make the most of how they complement each other, as argued by François de Polignac in the introduction to his contribution. The first chapter to this volume also takes a step in that direction. Outlining two common approaches to sacred landscape, it offers methodological considerations that the contributors of the other chapters had the opportunity to engage with. It is written in both French and English—not just to make it easier for readers, but to highlight how the idea of sacred landscape is understood and expressed differently across languages and scholarly tradition. While the framework set in the first chapter is quite narrow, the following contributions broaden the perspective with their rich methodological reflections and diverse approaches to the case studies.

The studies collected here focus almost exclusively on the archaeology of ancient Greece. Still, we wanted to start by giving the floor to ethnography, which can observe "living" sacred landscapes—along with the perspectives of those who shape and experience them. This comparative detour is all too brief, and a broader meeting would be needed to foster dialogue among specialists from diverse cultures. But it still offers a refreshing source of inspiration, especially when exploring the often arid terrain of archaeological research. Indeed, the two ethnolographic contributions by Romain Simenel on southwestern Morocco and Raphaël Rousseleau on the

Indian state of Odisha show similarities to Greek past realities: protected spaces, sacred sites placed in border zones, sanctuaries connected to the surrounding world through the movement of divine statues, to name but a few.

Within the contributions focusing on the Greek world, the diversity of approaches is evident in several ways, beginning with the choice of vocabulary, which reflects the methods adopted. The title assigned to the volume (echoing that of the original roundtable) was, of course, in no way prescriptive. It merely opened up a lexical field within which each scholar could define their own position. For some, it seemed more appropriate to avoid combining the terms "landscape" and "sacred," which they considered inadequate to describe the realities under study (see, for example, Bintliff *et al.*, Knoepfler, Fachard *et al.*); others opted to pair "landscape" with different qualifiers, such as "cultic/ritual," emphasizing the space socially shaped by religious practices (Crielaard, Kerschner), or "mythical," highlighting either the spatial grounding of myths or the way narratives shape the landscape (Eder, Kerschner). The use of the concept of a "cultic network" (Baumer), for its part, draws attention to the sociopolitical structures underlying any "religious landscape." These choices are not mere stylistic variation; rather, they signal the specific angles of inquiry each study seeks to foreground (while leaving room for others).

The variety of scales considered, both from one chapter to another and within individual contributions, highlights the multidimensional nature of the sacred landscape. While the geographic unit of analysis is sometimes the territory of a city—particularly when that territory is extensive (as in the cases of Athens and Eretria, see Baumer and Knoepfler)—it becomes clear that analysis must also operate at both narrower and broader scales. Thus, studies range from "micro-topographical" approaches to a sacred site (see Crielaard with Karababa), to monastic sites (Kondyli), the Valley of the Muses (Bintliff *et al.*), or the city of Ephesos (Kerschner), to investigations of supra-regional networks of intervisibility (Polignac), and to detailed surveys of regions such as Elis-Triphylia (Eder), Phokis (Sporn), Karystia (Crielaard), Arcadia (Jost), and northwestern Greece (Morgan). Three chapters devoted to Amarynthos, gathered at the end of the volume (Knoepfler, Fachard *et al.*, and Verdan *et al.*), likewise exemplify this multidimensional approach and offer intersecting perspectives on the sanctuary of Artemis and its integration within a more or less extensive geographical context. All these regional studies reveal specific features arising from both topography and sociopolitical organization, which is hardly surprising in the Greek context. At the same time, they raise an important question: does the shaping of the sacred landscape represent a conscious strategy of identity expression? (On regional identity, see the contributions by Eder, Crielaard, and Morgan.)

Several studies take as their anchor points major sanctuaries well known through written sources and/or archaeology (Olympia, Kalapodi, Amarynthos), while at the same time broadening the focus to situate these sacred places within a much richer context. Nonetheless, a gap remains between these well-documented sites and others whose histories remain unknown and which amount to little more than dots on a map. This can create the impression of a contrast between sites that appear almost immutable and a surrounding landscape in constant flux. Does this reflect gaps in our current knowledge, or does it, in fact, correspond to an ancient reality?

This question brings us to the temporal dimension of the studies. Although not a prerequisite, most analyses focus on a relatively long timespan. The historical periods receive the greatest attention, yet the Bronze Age substratum is alluded to in several contributions (Eder, Crielaard) or serves as the starting point for a diachronic analysis (Polignac, Sporn). One chapter extends into the Late Roman period (Bintliff *et al.*), while another provides a stimulating opening onto the Byzantine world (Kondyli). All contributions underscore the relevance of a long-term perspective on the transformation of sacred landscapes. This approach is not without its challenges, as the nature, quality, and quantity of available data vary significantly from one period to another; nonetheless, it is precisely such transformations and dynamic processes that the volume seeks to bring to light.

Survey, as a fundamental method for reconstructing a consistent picture of ancient landscapes—even idealized ones—proves particularly well suited to this diachronic perspective, as it allows for the recovery of surface-level traces from across all historical periods. In this respect, it is especially effective for grasping the very structure of a landscape, which blends elements from all ages—as layers of a palimpsest or pieces of a patchwork. Several chapters in this volume stem directly from survey projects or draw upon data collected through this method (Bintliff *et al.*, Eder, Sporn, Crielaard, Fachard *et al.*). They demonstrate not only the value of field survey but also the need to combine it with textual analysis. Ultimately, it is only through the comprehensive mobilization of all available sources that one can hope to reconstruct sacred landscapes long vanished from view.

Like any reconstruction, that of a religious landscape involves a considerable degree of uncertainty and conjecture. We are grateful to all the contributors for undertaking this challenging exercise—particularly to Madeleine Jost, for exploring Arcadia without the guidance of Pausanias. The reward is the strongly forward-looking nature of this volume, rich in theoretical models to test, hypotheses to verify in the field, and suggestions for future research.

To conclude this introduction on a deliberately provocative and paradoxical note—given both the title and the contents of this volume—it could be argued that there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as a "sacred landscape." What exist are systems of thought and configurations of ritual practices through which human societies position themselves within the world and engage with it. These systems structure the ways in which people perceive, make sense, and shape the world they live in. The outcome of this interaction—at once tangible and intangible—between the ancients and their environment, as mediated by the sacred, is elusive: how can we name it, observe it, study it, and make it intelligible, despite the distance imposed by time and by our own mindset? For lack of a better term, we tentatively speak of a "sacred landscape"—a field of inquiry still wide open to exploration.

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to extend their warmest thanks, not only to the contributors to this volume, but also to all those who helped ensure the smooth running of the Vandœuvres roundtable, the richness of the discussions, and the successful publication of the proceedings. Our sincere gratitude to the Fondation Hardt, and in particular its director, Jean Terrier, and secretarial team, for their invaluable support in organizing the roundtable, together with Nina Nicole and Alexandre Proveccho, members of the Swiss School. Our thanks also go to Sandrine Huber and Karl Reber for their skillful moderation throughout the event. We are especially grateful to François de Polignac for delivering the keynote lecture, which set the stage for the discussions that followed. We also wish to thank Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge for her active participation in the debates, for her insightful clarifications and contributions to the roundtable conclusions, and for her careful and constructive comments on the first chapter of this volume.

The 2023 roundtable at the *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique* in Vandœuvres, and the subsequent publication, would not have been possible without the steadfast support of the ESAG Foundation and the many institutions that support the activities of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece (ESAG). Special mention should be made, on the Swiss side, of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the *Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique*, and the University of Lausanne, and on the Greek side, of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea, whose support continues to make our research possible.

During the roundtable, a "hybrid" session devoted to ethnographic examples and studies of the Byzantine period was moderated by Dominique Jaillard. With his enthusiasm, deep knowledge of polytheistic systems, and experience in comparative approaches, he was exceptionally well placed to encourage us to shift our perspective and to build bridges between the different fields represented by the contributors. During the sessions and in the informal discussions that followed, he generously contributed to the richness and vitality of the debates. We had intended to invite him to contribute to this volume, to offer his own reflection on the concept of the "sacred landscape." Dominique Jaillard passed away prematurely in June 2024. In recognition of the inspiration he has provided to our work, and will continue to provide, we dedicate this volume to his memory.

1. BETWEEN *PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX* AND SACRED LANDSCAPE: ON THE USE AND MEANING OF TERMS

Samuel Verdan

> *... and to all the other gods, goddesses, and heroes who occupy (κατέχουσιν) our city and our land (πόλιν / χώραν).*
> Oath from Colophon (Versnel 2011, 89)

In polytheistic Greece, the world is filled with divinities or, to phrase it more freely, supra-human powers. These powers manifest themselves in their ways and carry out their actions on the world. In principle, there is no place where they cannot be encountered: from the domestic hearth to the most deserted land, from fields to uncultivated spaces, from the surface to the depth of the sea. In practice, however, there are privileged places where humans interact with them. The choice of these places depends on various factors, but a certain logic prevails. These powers can be approached in environments that fall within their spheres of action or foster communication with them: a spring, a summit, a cove, or a grove. It is also necessary to convene them into built spaces, for example, at critical locations in a town, at a crossroads, or the limits of a territory. Sacred places can take the most diverse forms, depending on the protagonists involved (human and extra-human), the interaction's reasons and aims, the chosen location's topographical characteristics, or their history. In addition, they do not exist in isolation. They are interconnected by pathways, networks of inter-visibility, equivalent or complementary functions, narratives, rituals, or a religious calendar. Therefore, they constitute "sets" within a given geographical area, whether limited or extensive.

For the Greeks, these sacred places, if not always identifiable at first glance, are at least perfectly familiar to local communities—even well beyond in the case of Panhellenic sanctuaries.[1] They are designated by ἱερόν, the term with the most extensive spectrum, ἄλσος, τέμενος, as well as other more specific terms.[2] The same cannot be said for the "sets" they compose within an urban centre, a city's territory, or even on a broader regional scale. They constitute the concrete framework of religious practices and are shaped by them but are not conceptualised and, therefore, not named by those who experience them "from the inside." This does not prevent us from tracing them in the written sources and the archaeological record—the aim of the work collected in the present volume. But we must first define the contours of our study and clarify the vocabulary. Therefore, the ways we use the notion of "sacred or religious landscape" require explanations.[3]

The expression "sacred landscape," seldom used thirty years ago, has now integrated the vocabulary of ancient studies, designating a research topic in its own right. But this does not mean that its usage is self-evident. With no Greek equivalent, sacred landscape is a modern concept. As such, it deserves to be constantly put to the test. What exactly does it mean? Under what conditions can the concept be fruitfully applied to the physical and mental topographies shaped by Greek polytheism? What original avenues is it likely to provide for research? To this date, the answers to these questions are far from unanimous. It is, therefore, worth exploring these issues in the opening chapter of a volume dedicated to sacred Greek landscapes. Because scholars do not perceive the concept in a similar way, clarifying their positions is essential.

The Sacred Landscape in Greek Studies: A Brief Overview

In what will be a non-exhaustive overview, we will start by recalling the development of the concept of sacred landscape in Greek studies, in an evolution that has been constantly enriched by the advances made in other disciplines.

1 Including those that are no longer maintained, are disused or even completely abandoned, as Pausanias shows (examples from Arcadia: Paus. 8.9.6; 12.9; 14.4; 17.1; 26.4; 31.9; 35.5; 36.8; 44.4; 53.11; 54.5).

2 Casevitz 1984; Patera 2010; Pirenne-Delforge 2008.

3 In this introductory chapter, as in the title of the roundtable (*supra* p. 7), we use the expression "sacred landscape" in English and "paysage religieux" in French, following what we believe to be the prevailing usage in both languages. We do this for the sake of convenience and on a provisional basis, leaving aside in the first instance the implications of choosing one or other of these terms. We will then discuss the different hues that the adjectives "sacred" and "religious" can impart to the landscape (*infra* pp. 16–17). Typographical note: as a concept or notion, "sacred landscape" should always appear in quotes. However, for the sake of readability, we only use the latter when referring to the expression "sacred landscape."

As a named and defined concept, the sacred landscape appeared relatively recently in Greek religion studies, and this brief survey must start with F. de Polignac's *La naissance de la cité grecque* (1984). It is widely acknowledged that this publication represents a significant milestone in the spatial analysis of ancient Greek religion. More specifically, it examines phenomena at the intersection of religion and politics, such as the delimitation of poleis territories by sanctuaries conventionally referred to as extra-urban.[4] The promoted characteristics of this space are its structuring, its categorisations (civic vs. sacred, urban vs. extra-urban), and its polarities (centre vs margins). The employing notions are those of "space" and "territory," which are also chosen in the title, one for the original work in French and the other for the English translation.[5] But F. de Polignac had not yet coined the term *paysage religieux*. The Greek landscape, understood as a natural environment, is rarely discussed. When mentioned, it is portrayed as a constraining geographic element that accounts for the configuration of territories and the placement of sanctuaries along their borders.[6] It is not a simple décor, but neither is it fully constituted as the convergence between the natural environment and human activities, which will subsequently correspond to one of the most prevalent meanings of the term.

It is interesting to compare F. de Polignac's study with that of M. Jost, devoted to the sanctuaries and cults of Arcadia, wherein the *paysage religieux* is explicitly mentioned.[7] The latter is not theorised nor suggested as a favoured grid for analysing documents collected on the cult places and pantheons of Arcadian poleis; however, it does occur naturally, so to speak, in its correlation with the "physiognomy" of the territories, which receives much attention.[8] This allows the author to "define several features which define the Arkadian religious landscape," determined primarily by the region's physical, economic, and political geography rather than religious considerations.[9] Implicitly, the concept is already defined.

At the turn of the 1990s, Cambridge scholars promoted the notion of sacred landscape (and landscape tout court) in classical archaeology. Their research, related to developments in landscape archaeology in the English-speaking world, aimed to study the territories of Greek poleis more systematically, emphasising the significance of space outside the urban centre by championing data recorded by new methodologies in archaeological field surveys. The landscape as a subject of analysis is prominently displayed in two landmark monographs with explicit titles: *Classical Landscape with Figures: The Ancient Greek City and its Countryside* (Osborne 1987) and *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Alcock 1993).[10] Osborne lays out the groundwork for a global approach to the rural space of the polis. The landscape is seen as a composite reality, natural at first, with its geomorphology, flora, and fauna, then human, with its agricultural, socio-political, economic, and religious components.[11] The notion, however, is not precisely defined, no more than the concept of sacred landscape, even though a chapter explores the landscape's religious component.[12] The emphasis is primarily on the countryside, which tends to be assimilated with the landscape (although they are not interchangeable). In her monograph, Alcock provides a definition:

> landscape can broadly denote the arrangement and interaction of peoples and places in space and time [...]. Depending on the problems under examination, landscapes can vary in scale and definition, while always stressing the spatial correlates of human behaviour. The term's usage is also bound together by an emphasis on landscape as a social product, resulting from a collective human transformation of the physical environment. Human activity, human involvement forms the key element.[13]

From this broad definition stems that of the sacred landscape, to which an entire chapter is dedicated.[14] As Alcock points out in her introduction, the studied landscapes are diverse in nature; the concept is most often used in relation to the spatiality of social, economic, and political phenomena, but it can also take on a metaphorical meaning ("political landscape," for example).[15] Thus, its usage remains flexible and open.

In 1994, the authors of the two aforementioned works published a collective volume devoted to the spatial

4 On the problematic dichotomy between city and territory associated with the use of this term, see contribution by S. Fachard in this volume.

5 *La naissance de la cité grecque : cultes, espace et société* (1984; 2nd ed. 1995); *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State* (1995).

6 Polignac 1995, 52. In turn, sanctuaries will become "points cardinaux" and temples an "insertion symbolique de l'univers sacré dans le paysage" (*ibid*., 36).

7 Jost 1985.

8 This *physionomie* is outlined in depth for every territory or region considered. A map based on satellite photographs, which anticipates the now ubiquitous Google Earth images in scientific literature, also outlines the Arcadian landscape as an "image authentique et parlante de l'Arcadie" (Jost 1985, 20–21 et pl. A).

9 Jost 1985, 545–551.

10 We can also include two programmatic articles published in the same collective volume dedicated to the Greek polis and published by O. Murray et S. Price (1990): Snodgrass 1990; Rackham 1990.

11 Each of these aspects is covered in a separate chapter.

12 Chapter 8, "The Country of the Gods."

13 Alcock 1993, 6.

14 Alcock 1993, 172–214; in particular 172–173.

15 Alcock 1993, 144.

dimensions of Greek religion.[16] The approach consisted of a critical reading of de Polignac's theses and, above all, of an attempt to broaden the analysis framework, both chronologically and thematically.[17] This opening up of the spectrum is reflected in the repeated use of the concept of sacred landscape in several contributions. However, the concept is not precisely defined, and not all authors refer to it explicitly. The approaches vary, and the terminology fluctuates.[18]

Despite this variability, the publications mentioned above established the sacred landscape as a fertile research topic in the Greek world and traced the contours of the concept, following principles established in human and cultural geography. According to this "totalising" conception, the sacred landscape is an integral part of a human landscape (as opposed to the natural one), conceived as a cultural product, the result of a construction, or the transformation of a physical environment by collective human activity. For the purposes of analysis, this set can be divided into "strata," which theoretically constitute just as many thematic landscapes (agricultural, economic, socio-political, and religious). In reality, they are inextricably linked.

During this phase that sees the sacred landscape occupy a place in the field of vision of classical studies, the concept was not imposed as *passage obligé*: questions about the spatiality of religious phenomena are rich enough without it.

Research then developed in different directions. One approach consists of applying the analytical grid of the sacred landscape to a well-defined geographical entity, following the pioneering work of M. Jost. For example, I. Polinskaya provides a comprehensive study of a local polytheistic configuration, that of Aegina, while emphasising its spatial dimension.[19] Such studies tend to highlight the regional specificities of a sacred landscape, resulting from modes of cohabitation between humans and deities specific to a territory and the community that occupies it.[20] On a much broader scale, P. Horden and N. Purcell seek to define a "geography of religion" in the Mediterranean, characterised by a certain number of constants from one region to another and throughout the ages.[21] Ultimately, there is no such thing as a generic sacred landscape; each case study brings out particular features according to a specific geographical and social context.

In contrast to reconstructions focusing on local specificities, other studies seek to identify categories of landscapes associated with specific deities, rituals, or social groups. Consider, for instance, the topographical configurations favoured by Artemis or the spaces specific to the rites of adolescence.[22]

The diversity of research directions can be observed in the program of two published conferences dedicated explicitly to the sacred landscape: *Die Landschaft und die Religion*;[23] *Qu'est-ce qu'un « paysage religieux » ?*[24] In the latter, J. Scheid and F. de Polignac propose a definition of the concept that places the sacred landscape, a set of *signes* and *repères*, firmly on the side of perception and representation.[25] This approach, derived from a general phenomenology of landscape, is not new in itself. Still, it provides a different orientation to studying ancient sacred landscapes than those traditionally followed by historians and archaeologists (*infra* pp. 15–16).

The latest scholarship confirms this trend towards diversification, as the exploration of sacred landscapes embraces a wide range of approaches, from the most conceptual to the most technical. By way of example, one can mention two recent collective volumes dealing with the ancient and Medieval Mediterranean worlds, in which Greece is well represented: *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes* (Papantoniou *et al*. 2019a) and *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity* (Häussler – Chiai 2020a). The orientation of the former can be summed up by the formula "having no constraints in using all possible methods in order to achieve the best possible holistic approach [of sacred landscape]."[26] The introduction of the second acknowledges the value of different approaches. It focuses on the semiotics of a sacred landscape, seen as the result of a human-nature dialogue, which can be read as a text, aiming to "a 'thick description' of sacred landscapes."[27] This work also affirms the agency of the natural environment on human behaviour.[28] A third collective volume—published even more recently—adopts a more focused perspective, starting from sacred sites to examine their relationship with the natural world and their

16 *Placing the Gods. Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (Alcock – Osborne 1994).

17 F. de Polignac himself contributes to the volume by adapting and renewing his own theses.

18 Note in particular the use of the terms "spatial configuration of belief" and "spatial correlates of religion" (Alcock – Osborne 1994, 37, 42 [J. Wright]), "cultic landscape" (101 [C. Antonaccio]), "sacral 'landscape'" (105 [C. Morgan]), "sacred space" (143 [R. Osborne]), "numinous landscape", "religious landscape" and "religious topography" (216, 228–229 [M. Jost]), "cultic topography" (233 [D. Birge]).

19 Polinskaya 2013 (48: reconstruction of a sacred landscape through "a careful analysis of the relative placement of sanctuaries within a physical and social landscape").

20 Polinskaya 2013, 108–110, 531–533.

21 Horden – Purcell 2000, 403–460.

22 Cole 2004; Calame 2010.

23 2005 conference in Stuttgart: Olshausen – Sauer 2009.

24 2009 conference in Paris: thematic issue of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* published in 2010.

25 Scheid – Polignac 2010; Polignac 2010.

26 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019b, x. In particular, a phenomenology of landscape and a cognitivist approach are proposed.

27 Häussler – Chiai 2020b.

28 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019b, xi; Häussler – Chiai 2020b, 3.

immediate surroundings.[29] As this publication and other studies suggest, the special attention given to nature and its place within Greek polytheism offers an additional and particularly fruitful angle from which to approach the issue of sacred landscape.[30]

A Polysemous Landscape

The brief overview that precedes suffices to illustrate the diversity of approaches resulting from different definitions of the sacred landscape adopted by scholars. The concept is rarely defined precisely. Besides, the trivialisation of the expression "sacred landscape," often used metaphorically, contributes to the dilution of its meaning. Generally, this results in a methodological vagueness that does not enhance the heuristic value of the concept. For clarification, we review a selection of definitions to clarify their principles and implications.

To achieve this, we must first look at the concept of landscape, whose polysemy is at the root of the problem, while the alternative "religious/sacred" will be discussed later. Of course, it is impossible to go into all the details of such a vast subject. The current uses of the landscape concept result from half a millennium in the history of ideas, art and science, and movements that transcend disciplines (geography, history, art history, architecture, archaeology, etc.).[31] We will, therefore, keep things as simple as possible by outlining two paths that, starting from the landscape in general, will lead us back to the Greek sacred landscape.

In Western thought, whether we refer to the usual definitions or those developed by science, "landscape" refers either to an objective physical reality or to the product of a subjective experience. In the first case, it refers to a portion of land or a region characterised by unique features resulting from the interaction between human activity and a natural environment. The second case defines a spatial area perceived or represented by an observer. Geographers, historians, and archaeologists tend to use the first definition, while the second is more common in art history and anthropology. These are only trends, as no clear dividing line between disciplines exists.[32]

Interestingly, these trends vary from one language area to another, a phenomenon that may be partly due to the history of words. Here are some well-known facts. The Renaissance saw the development of a pictorial practice centred on representing a chunk of land, initially limited to a window frame, then extended to a complete set.[33] These new images, which encouraged or accompanied a change in one's view of the world, were accompanied by new lexical uses.[34] Vocabulary development is not uniform across the globe. In French, *paysage* was created from scratch with reference to painting. Its primary meaning is, therefore, that of a portrayal; only later does it come to signify the entity in representation, i.e., "part of the land that nature presents to an observer."[35] The German *Landschaft* developed in a very different way. The term was used in the Middle Ages as the vernacular equivalent of Latin terms such as *regio* and *provincia*, i.e. an inhabited area, first understood in its political, legal, and ethno-social dimensions. The emphasis is on the human collective and its institutions. Second, *Landschaft* refers more specifically to the geographical entity occupied by this collective, a region. Finally, since the 16th c., it has been used more broadly to refer to landscape painting[36] and, later, to the space encompassed by the gaze.[37] In English, *landscape* borrows from the Dutch word *landschap* and referred initially to pictorial representations (also of Flemish origin). However, it was probably superimposed on an older term (*landscipe*) whose original meaning was the same as that of *Landschaft*: an area of land, a region.[38] Note that in a mid-18th-century definition of *landscape*, the meaning of "region" still precedes that of "image," in the opposite order to that used in current dictionaries.[39] The issue is not entirely clear in English. Still, it is important to stress the different origins of the words

29 Lefèvre-Novaro – Voisin 2025 gathers the proceedings of the international conference "Sanctuaries and Landscapes" held in November 2023 at Strasbourg. The volume also foregrounds a historiographical dimension, with several contributions examining the attention paid by 18th- and 19th-c. travellers to the natural environment of sanctuaries. For a discussion of the concepts of "landscape" and "sacred" that intersects with the one developed here, see the introduction to the volume (Husser 2025).

30 It is an approach particularly supported by research in German-speaking countries: Sporn *et al.* 2015; Scheer 2019 (see also Larson 2007).

31 Recent overview in Antrop 2018 (see in particular p. 4, fig. 1.1). More broadly, see Paquot 2016; Howard *et al.* 2018; Kühne *et al.* 2019.

32 In addition, the two general definitions summarised here—often described as "naturalist" and "culturalist" (Husser 2025, 22–23)—then branch out according to the approaches adopted: see, for example "Les cinq portes du paysage" by J.-M. Besse (2009).

33 Roger 1997, 64–82 ("Naissance du paysage en Occident").

34 Franceschi 1997; Franceschi-Zaharia 2016 (*non vidi*).

35 "Partie d'un pays que la nature présente à un observateur." First definition in the current *Robert* dictionary, *s.v.* paysage (https://dictionnaire.lerobert.com/definition/paysage, consulted 14.2.2025). In French, the subjective character of the landscape is never entirely eliminated.

36 In this sense, it still competes with compounds such as *Landschaftbild* and *Landschaftsmalerei*.

37 Haber 1995; Berr – Schenk 2019, 26–30. The geographer K. Olwig (1996) has emphasised the socio-territorial significance of *Landschaft* in the Nordic countries in order to counter what he calls the "disciplinary dematerialization" of landscape (see also Cosgrove 2004, 60–61).

38 Olwig 1996, 645–646, n. 3; Franceschi 1997, 89–92.

39 As in the *Oxford English Dictionnary*.

Landschaft and *paysage*, the former denoting an area defined by its customs, the latter a picture of a selected part of the land. The etymology of the words is also revealing. The suffix *-schaft* has the exact origin of the verbs *schaffen* and *schaben* (*-ship* and *shape* in English): it refers to the act of creating or producing by shaping, in this case, a piece of land.[40] *Paysage*, for its part, could be a contracted form of the association *pays-image* ("land-image").[41]

From the usual definitions to the concepts developed by each discipline or trend, with the inflexions given by the history of words and ideas in different languages, the same principles govern the two approaches to the Greek sacred landscape to which we now return.

Two Ways of Conceiving Greek Sacred Landscapes

The first approach, which takes the landscape as a given objective, falls under landscape archaeology or *Landschaftsarchäologie*. It corresponds to S. Alcock's broad definition of landscape (*supra* p. 12), which she then extends to the religious domain: "The sacred landscape [...] was created through a variety of human actions: building, dedication, dramatization, procession, and ritual all marked space in certain ways."[42] Its principles and implications can be summarised in four points: 1) the sacred landscape is a concrete, objectifiable reality, materially made up of places and installations with a sacred vocation, animated by rites; 2) it is a human construct, resulting from an interaction between society and its natural environment; 3) it is unique, meaning that in a given geographical area and at a given time, there is only one sacred landscape, even if the latter evolves constantly;[43] 4) in principle, there is no such thing as a sacred landscape that is separable from the rest, but rather, among others, a religious component or dimension of a landscape conceived in its totality.

This approach, favoured by archaeologists, is relatively easy to understand. The second one, however, requires further explanation. To do so, we must return to F. de Polignac's proposals, briefly mentioned above. In the 2010 issue of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, devoted to the sacred landscape, F. de Polignac, after the introduction he wrote with J. Scheid, illustrates his views by analysing a specific case. His point of departure is the way in which the region of Eleutherai appears in Euripides' Antiope. According to him, the play indirectly reveals the presence of Dionysus, thus creating a link between the borderlands of Attic territory and the ritual context of theatrical performance in the heart of Athens (the sanctuary of Dionysus on the occasion of the Dionysia). The process integrates Eleutherai "into a religious landscape conceived and performed in Athens."[44] The author concludes:

> Thus the concept of "religious landscape" [...] does not exactly cover the notions of "cultic landscape" (the integration of cultic practices and processes within the constituent components of a landscape), nor of "cultic space" (the configuration of a social space through the distribution and hierarchical organization of worship sites), but rather integrates them in a network of symbolic constructions of space based on a specific performance space. The religious nature of this performance space, whether it be a theater or any other kind of poetic production associated with a ritual, influences the way in which form and coherence are given to these symbolic constructions. The religious landscape is therefore essentially multiple within a single society.[45]

These proposals are developed and enriched in a second study, in which F. de Polignac approaches the landscape from a maritime perspective.[46] The example chosen is that of the *Kynosema* of Chersonese, which is at once a navigational landmark, a monument referring to other *kynosemata* in the Mediterranean, and a place belonging to a regional geographical system structured by the narratives of the Trojan War. In this case, there is a sacred landscape because of the sites' cultic vocation (monuments, sanctuaries), forming a "well-known and coherent system of significations in which the revelation of one of its components suffices to bring the others into conscience", a "horizon of shared knowledge."[47]

To summarise, as with the first approach, in four points: 1) the sacred landscape is first and foremost an idea, a representation developed from a subjective point of view; 2) it is a symbolic construction aimed at combining elements of space in a system of meaning; 3) it is plural, meaning that several sacred landscapes may coexist in the same space; 4) it constitutes an entity, a system in itself, even if it depends on all sorts of "external" factors (socio-political and others).

40 Haber 1995, 597; Olwig 1996, 632–633.

41 Hypothesis proposed by C. Franceschi (1997, 103–105).

42 Alcock 1993, 172.

43 Alcock 1993; 1994, 247.

44 Polignac 2010, XIII. It should be noted that the analysis of this case remains open to question, due to the highly fragmentary nature of the play and the topographical and historical questions raised by Eleutherai (on its political status, see Fachard *et al.* 2020).

45 Polignac 2010, XIV–XV.

46 Polignac 2016a. See also Polignac 2016b, 185–187.

47 Polignac 2016a, 249–250: "système de significations bien connu et cohérent dont il suffisait de voir une des composantes pour rendre les autres présents à la conscience"; "horizon de savoir partagé."

Depending on whether one adopts one perspective or the other, the expression "sacred landscape" refers to objects that share several characteristics but remain very different. The interest of each approach is defensible.

F. de Polignac's proposals have several benefits, particularly that of highlighting the intentions that govern the construction of a sacred landscape, where archaeology usually perceives only effects. They also draw attention to the possible multiplicity of intentionalities and, thus, to the coexistence of several intertwined landscapes resulting from different, complementary, divergent, or even antinomic points of view.[48] It should be noted that these points of view do not correspond to an individual subjectivity that would make the landscape a construction specific to each person. On the contrary, they are shared by communities: a polis or part of its population (inhabitants of a deme, women, slaves); other groups, such as sailors using the same navigation network or all Greeks participating in Panhellenic festivals. Another interesting aspect of this approach implies that a sacred landscape does not necessarily correspond to a well-defined physical or political space. Thus, one avoids the recurrent and restrictive coupling between the territory of a polis and the sacred landscape.

However, the quest for intentionality, i.e. from the subjective point of view from which a sacred landscape is constructed, comes with demands. It requires sources capable of revealing the construction's driving forces. The cases studied by F. de Polignac constitute privileged sets of documents.[49] His approach is by no means applicable to all types of terrain and configurations known from textual and/or archaeological sources.

The landscape archaeology approach finds a much broader field of application because each sacred place is, in theory, part of a sacred landscape that can be reconstructed, even if, in practice, such archaeological reconstructions are often limited to the cartographic display of dots on a map. This approach offers the possibility of a "holistic" analysis, not so much in the sense defined by the editors of *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes*,[50] but by considering all natural and cultural components of the landscape,[51] between which the Ancients did certainly not make the same distinctions as we do. The grounding of the analysis within the concrete realities of the field provides a way of avoiding the risk of reconstructing "off-ground" sacred landscapes.

Religious vs. Sacred

The approaches summarised above depend primarily on the definition of landscape, but what about the qualifiers accompanying the latter? In the bilingual title of our roundtable, we have deliberately chosen two adjectives that do not belong to the same family, in line with trends observed in publications in English and French.[52] This juxtaposition was a way of raising the following question: why "sacred" on the one hand and "religious" on the other? These terms are not synonymous. Can they reflect (or induce) different conceptions of the sacred/religious landscape? Or should vocabulary fluctuations be considered as a form of *variatio sermonis*?

In order to provide a precise answer, one must carry out a double analysis: generally, that of meanings given to "sacred" and "religious" in the languages of interest; more specifically, that of the correlation between the chosen terminology and the type of approach applied to the sacred landscape. This task goes far beyond the scope of this chapter. Moreover, it would be difficult to interpret lexical choices that are seldom made explicit. Ideally, each scholar should justify their choice. We will limit ourselves to considering a few implications of using one or another term in relation to landscape.

In both cases, it is important to remember that there is a gap between the two terms and what would be adequately Greek concepts. As with "landscape," "religion" is a modern concept.[53] Used to qualify a set of ancient realities, it nevertheless remains external to the object of study. The situation is different with "sacred" because the Greeks recognised the sacred quality (ἱερός, ἱερά) of many things. It is even a fundamental aspect of their relationship with the superhuman sphere. Yet this apparent concordance of vocabulary still requires us to specify the meaning of "sacred" because several words express the concept in Greek.[54]

As used in the science of religion, "religious" most often qualifies general concepts (universe, system, culture, context), established structures (customs, traditions, norms, prohibitions, authority), ways of thinking

48 Scheid – Polignac 2010, 432: "spectre d'identités religieuses multiples et négociées."

49 Another case in point, thanks to the wealth of documentation, is that of the Roman sacred landscape (Grandazzi 2010; Häussler-Chiai 2020b, 4).

50 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019a: Use of all possible methods and approaches.

51 Aims already expressed in works such as those of S. Alcock (1993, 6–8).

52 These are general trends rather than strict usage, as the terminology continues to fluctuate considerably, with the use of other adjectives such as cultic, sacral, and numinous. Examples of titles that include "paysage religieux": Scheid – Polignac 2010 and the other articles in the 2010 issue of the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*; Bonnet 2015; Golosetti 2016. Examples of titles with "sacred landscape": Crumley 1999; Nordquist 2013; Käppel – Pothou 2015; Papantoniou *et al.* 2019a; Häussler – Chiai 2020a. Horden – Purcell 2000, on the other hand, refers to "religious landscape." In German, "sakrale Landschaft" (Olshausen – Sauer 2009) is frequently used, also in its compound form *Sakrallandschaft*, but the adjectives *heilig* and *religiös* are also used (Hahn 2002; Scheer 2019).

53 Recent discussion in Pirenne-Delforge 2020, 25–57.

54 Rudhardt 1992, 21–46.

(ideas, conceptions, beliefs), and actions (behaviours, practices, activities, gestures, ceremonies). The application of "sacred" is much more concrete if we disregard the substantive adjective "the sacred," the use of which is open to question.[55] Designated as sacred are things and objects (cult facilities/venues and instruments/devices, offerings, animals, plants, images), places and spaces (territory, estate, area, mountain, forest, spring, path, enclosure, building) and periods (day, month).[56]

Ideas, institutions, and actions on the one hand, and material realities on the other: in essence, we understand why landscape is sometimes described as religious and sometimes as sacred. The first term emphasises the (human) principles and processes that create and structure this landscape, while the second focuses on the construction's material components. These semantic orientations fit relatively well with the two approaches to landscape that we identified earlier.

Describing a landscape as "sacred" may seem logical, given the many places and spaces that the Greeks considered and named as such. The term applied to each element would apply to the sum of these elements; the landscape would be endowed with the same quality as the sacred places that compose it. But the juxtaposition of the modern and ancient concepts carries a risk: it suggests that the Greeks perceived something equivalent to what we name "sacred landscape." For the Ancients, everything was imbued with the divine, and the whole earth could be described as sacred.[57] But if we start from this principle, is there anything left in the landscape that is not sacred?

The adjective "religious" has the advantage of keeping the landscape within the sphere of the modern concept. This does not reflect a quality that the Greeks would have associated with the space we are examining. It deals with human action, organising principles that shape the environment, and the system that the landscape constitutes. It emphasises the eminently social and relational character of the religious landscape as an expression of the spatial anchoring of the relationship between men and gods.

Concluding Remarks

Which position should we adopt given the divergence of views on what a sacred landscape should be, on the one hand, and the ubiquitous use of the expression, on the other? Some recommend abandoning a concept that, given its broad scope, ends up being irrelevant or at least restricting its definition.[58] The criticism is sound, and even if we disagree, it invites us to be more cautious and precise when using this analytical tool.

We do not favour abandoning the concept altogether or seeking a single definition. On the contrary, it seems to us that we can benefit from each approach, from their convergence and complementarity, on the condition that the differences between them are not erased and that the type of sacred landscape in question is always clearly presented.

The validity of the approach must be measured by the results obtained in the study of concrete cases. It is important to weigh whether additional benefits are gained by using sacred landscape rather than sacred geography or simply a collection of shrines and cults.[59] Without pre-empting the arguments put forward by the contributors to this volume, let us take up a few of the points made earlier, which may provide further food for thought.

More than other terms, "landscape" expresses the close interweaving and interaction between social and natural facts. Without going in the direction of geographical determinism, it values the environment as an active partner with which humans are related and a relationship that the Ancients did not conceive without the omnipresence and action of divine powers. In this sense, the notion of sacred landscape is more appropriate to account for the cosmological vision of a Greek than a model of historical geography essentially dominated by socio-political factors. However, suppose we are to speak honestly of a landscape. In that case, the more or less conscious expression of this human-environment-God relationship must be discernible in written sources or specific spatial configurations.[60]

55 For the Greeks did not understand "the sacred" as an abstract category (Rudhardt 2008, 102–103), nor did they understand the (modern) opposition between sacred and profane (*ibid*., 68; see also Borgeaud 1994; Peels 2016, 211).

56 All these uses correspond in part to those of the adjective ἱερός in Greek, which denotes a quality (conferred or acquired) of the thing in question (Rudhardt 1992, 22–30; 2008, 101–154).

57 V. Pirenne-Delforge reminded us of this by quoting lines from Hesiod's *Theogony* (116–133), at the end of our roundtable: "all parts of the world are divine powers, the smallest corner of the cosmos is the product of a divine generation." See also Rudhardt 2008, 118, where the author also emphasises that there are "des degrés dans la sacralité des objets [we could add here "des espaces"] qualifiés de ἱερός."

58 This is in particular the position of D. Rousset (2023, 35–40), for whom the study of historical geography must resort to other concepts. In another direction, A. Dan proposes to go "beyond the study of religious landscapes" in order to explore the "post-landscape" (Dan 2020, 278–279).

59 Title of Jost's (1985) synthesis on Arcadia.

60 See the texts selected in Mehl 2019, which illustrate the centrality of sensory experience in the Greek way of conceiving what we call landscape. On this subject, also Brulé 2012, a work subtitled "A Sensory Analysis of the Sacred Landscape." In several of his writings, the author has engaged closely with Greek sacred landscapes and serves as a valuable guide on the matter.

The approach that considers landscape from the point of view of representation serves precisely to draw attention to this type of conscious construction. It applies particularly to configurations documented in texts,[61] yet it is only a starting point. It also invites us to look for the material transposition of the landscapes identified in the discourse and even for forms of landscape construction different from the descriptions and images to which our cultural references usually point us: for example, places designed and laid out as microcosms reflecting—or summarising—a macrocosm, or devices forcing the observer to adopt a specific point of view on his environment.[62]

Whatever the approach adopted, the primary aim does not seem to be the reconstruction of an "integral" sacred landscape, that of a polis or a region at a given period for example, but rather the identification of circumscribed configurations in space and/or time, arising from organisational principles or intentions locally and occasionally implemented.

If a moderate use of religious landscape is justifiable, it cannot be for the sake of fashion or linguistic convenience. On the contrary, we need to remain aware of the discomfort caused by this object, which is difficult to define, and to take advantage of it: an unstable position that forces us to seek new ways of looking at the relationship that the Greeks had with the natural and divine (or naturally divine?) world while acknowledging the strangeness that this relationship retains for us.

61 See Polignac 2010; 2016a.

62 On this subject, see the proposals made by Ph. Descola in his search for a definition *anthropologiquement productive* of landscape: Series of lectures at the Collège de France from 2012 to 2014, entitled "Les formes du paysage" (summarised in Descola 2013; 2014; 2015).

1. ENTRE PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX ET *SACRED LANDSCAPE* : QUESTIONS DE DÉFINITIONS

Samuel Verdan

… et à tous les autres dieux, déesses et héros
qui occupent (κατέχουσιν) notre cité
et notre terre (πόλιν / χώραν).
Serment de Colophon (Versnel 2011, 89)

En Grèce polythéiste, le monde est empli de divinités ou, pour l'exprimer de manière plus ouverte, de puissances suprahumaines. Selon des modalités qui leur sont propres, ces dernières se manifestent et exercent leur action sur le monde. En principe, il n'existe aucune place où elles ne puissent être rencontrées : du foyer domestique à la contrée la plus déserte, en passant par les champs, les espaces non cultivés, la mer. Pratiquement, il est des lieux privilégiés où les humains entrent en interaction avec elles. Le choix de ces lieux découle de facteurs très variés, mais répond à une certaine logique. Il s'agit d'approcher ces puissances dans les environnements qui relèvent de leurs sphères d'action, ou qui favorisent la communication avec elles : une source, un sommet, un rivage, un bosquet, par exemple. Il s'agit également de les convoquer dans des espaces aménagés de main d'homme : aux points clés d'une ville, à un carrefour, aux limites d'un territoire, etc. Ces lieux sacrés peuvent prendre les formes les plus diverses, selon les protagonistes impliqués (humains et suprahumains), les raisons et les visées de l'interaction, les caractéristiques topographiques de l'emplacement choisi, son histoire. En outre, ils n'existent pas isolément. Ils sont reliés à d'autres par des cheminements, des réseaux d'inter-visibilité, des équivalences ou des complémentarités de fonction, des récits, des rites, un calendrier cultuel. Au sein d'une aire géographique donnée, qu'elle soit restreinte ou étendue, ils constituent donc des « ensembles ».

Pour les Grecs, ces lieux sacrés sont, sinon toujours identifiables au premier coup d'œil, du moins parfaitement connus des communautés locales, voire bien au-delà, dans le cas des sanctuaires panhelléniques notamment[1]. Il existe un vocabulaire pour les désigner : *ἱερόν*, le terme au plus large spectre, *ἄλσος*, *τέμενος*, et d'autres appellations plus spécifiques[2]. Il en va autrement pour les « ensembles » qu'ils composent, au sein d'une agglomération, sur le territoire d'une cité, ou encore à plus large échelle. Constituant le cadre concret des pratiques religieuses, en même temps qu'ils sont façonnés par ces dernières, ils ne sont pas conceptualisés et par conséquent pas nommés par ceux qui les vivent « de l'intérieur ». Cela n'interdit pas d'en chercher la trace dans les sources écrites et dans les données archéologiques de terrain — c'est une visée des travaux collectés dans le présent volume. Mais il faut au préalable définir les contours de ce que l'on étudie et choisir la manière de le nommer. Aussi les usages que nous faisons de la notion de paysage religieux requièrent-ils des explications[3].

Encore peu usitée il y a une trentaine d'année, l'expression « paysage religieux » est désormais bien intégrée dans le vocabulaire des études anciennes et semble désigner un objet de recherche à part entière, pleinement constitué. Son emploi va-t-il de soi pour autant ? Sans équivalent en grec, « paysage religieux » est un concept moderne. Comme tel, il mérite d'être constamment mis à l'épreuve. Que désigne-t-on exactement en ces termes ? À quelles conditions le concept peut-il être appliqué de manière fructueuse aux topographies physiques et mentales modelées par le polythéisme grec ? Quelles voies originales est-il susceptible de fournir à la recherche ? À ce jour, de telles questions sont loin d'avoir reçu des réponses unanimes. Aussi n'est-il pas

1 Y compris ceux qui ne sont plus entretenus, sont désaffectés, voire complètement abandonnés, comme l'indique le témoignage de Pausanias (exemples arcadiens : Paus. VIII 9, 6 ; 12, 9 ; 14, 4 ; 17, 1 ; 26, 4 ; 31, 9 ; 35, 5 ; 36, 8 ; 44, 4 ; 53, 11 ; 54, 5).

2 Casevitz 1984 ; Patera 2010 ; Pirenne-Delforge 2008.

3 Dans ce chapitre introductif, comme dans l'intitulé de la table ronde (*supra* p. 7), nous retenons l'expression « paysage religieux » en français et « sacred landscape » en anglais, suivant en cela les usages qui nous semblent prévaloir dans les deux langues. Nous le faisons par pure commodité et à titre provisoire, en laissant de côté, dans un premier temps, ce qu'implique le choix de l'un ou l'autre des qualificatifs. Dans un second temps, nous discuterons des différentes teintes que les adjectifs « religieux » et « sacré » peuvent conférer au paysage (*infra* pp. 25–26). Note typographique : en tant que concept ou notion, « paysage religieux » devrait toujours figurer entre guillemets. Nous n'employons toutefois ce dernier que lorsque nous parlons de l'expression « paysage religieux », dans un souci de lisibilité du texte.

superflu d'y revenir en ouverture d'un volume réunissant plusieurs études consacrées à des paysages religieux grecs. Le concept n'étant de toute évidence pas compris de la même manière par l'ensemble des chercheurs, il convient que les positions de chacun soient précisées.

Le paysage religieux dans les études grecques : bref tour d'horizon

En un parcours qui se doit d'être sélectif et non exhaustif, commençons par rappeler comment l'usage du concept de paysage religieux s'est développé dans le domaine des études grecques, en une évolution sans cesse fécondée par les avancées dans d'autres disciplines.

Le paysage religieux en tant que tel, c'est-à-dire nommé et défini, est apparu relativement récemment dans les travaux consacrés à la religion grecque. Un rapide survol de la littérature le concernant peut commencer avec *La naissance de la cité grecque* de F. de Polignac (1984). De l'avis général, cette publication marque un tournant dans l'analyse spatiale du religieux en Grèce ancienne, ou plus précisément de phénomènes situés à l'articulation entre le religieux et le politique, notamment le balisage du territoire des cités par des sanctuaires traditionnellement qualifiés d'extra-urbains[4]. Les caractéristiques de l'espace mises en avant sont sa structuration, ses catégorisations (civique/sacré, urbain/extra-urbain), ses polarités (centre/marges). Les notions employées sont celles d'espace et de territoire ; ces termes ont d'ailleurs été retenus en titre, l'un pour l'ouvrage original en français, l'autre pour la traduction anglaise[5]. L'expression « paysage religieux », quant à elle, n'apparaît pas encore sous la plume de F. de Polignac. Le paysage grec, compris comme environnement naturel, est rarement mentionné ; lorsque c'est le cas, il est présenté comme une donnée topographique contraignante, un facteur expliquant la configuration des territoires et le positionnement de sanctuaires situés à leurs frontières[6]. Il n'est pas un simple décor, mais il n'est pas non plus pleinement constitué comme cette rencontre du milieu naturel et des actions humaines qui correspondra par la suite à l'une des acceptions les plus usuelles du terme.

En regard de l'étude de F. de Polignac, il est intéressant de placer celle de M. Jost consacrée aux sanctuaires et cultes d'Arcadie, où le paysage religieux est explicitement mentionné[7]. Il n'est ni théorisé ni proposé comme grille d'analyse privilégiée des documents collectés sur les lieux de cultes et les panthéons des cités arcadiennes. Pourtant, il apparaît pour ainsi dire naturellement dans sa corrélation à la « physionomie » des territoires, qui fait quant à elle l'objet de toutes les attentions[8]. Cela permet à l'auteure de « dégager quelques traits qui définissent le paysage religieux arcadien », déterminés par une géographie physique, économique et politique davantage que par des facteurs religieux[9]. Implicitement, le concept est déjà défini.

Au tournant des années 1980–1990, c'est à des chercheurs de Cambridge que l'on doit la promotion du paysage religieux (et du paysage tout court) dans le domaine de l'archéologie classique. Leurs travaux, liés aux développements de la *landscape archaeology* dans le monde anglo-saxon, entendent étudier le plus largement possible le territoire des cités grecques ; ils mettent en avant l'importance de l'espace situé hors du centre urbain et font la part belle aux données issues de prospections de terrain, une technique d'investigation qui, appuyée sur des méthodes nouvelles, se systématise à l'époque. Le paysage apparaît ainsi dans deux publications qui font date dans la recherche[10]. Les titres sont explicites : *Classical Landscape with Figures: The Ancient Greek City and its Countryside* (Osborne 1987) et *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Alcock 1993). Le premier ouvrage établit le cadre d'une approche globale de l'espace rural de la cité. Le paysage y apparaît comme une réalité composite, naturelle d'abord, avec sa géomorphologie, sa flore et sa faune, humaine ensuite, avec ses différentes composantes : agricole, socio-politique, économique et religieuse[11]. La notion n'y est toutefois pas définie avec précision, non plus que celle du paysage religieux, qui n'est pas mentionné comme tel, quand bien même un chapitre porte sur la composante religieuse du paysage[12]. L'attention se porte en premier lieu sur l'espace rural (*countryside*), auquel le paysage a tendance à être assimilé (sans toutefois que les deux termes ne se

4 Sur la dichotomie problématique entre ville et territoire liée à l'usage de ce terme, voir la contribution de S. Fachard dans le présent volume.

5 *La naissance de la cité grecque : cultes, espace et société* (1984 ; 2ème éd. 1995) ; *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State* (1995).

6 Polignac 1995, 52. À leur tour, les sanctuaires vont constituer des « points cardinaux » et les temples une « insertion symbolique de l'univers sacré dans le paysage » (*ibid.*, 36).

7 Jost 1985.

8 Cette physionomie est décrite avec précision pour chaque territoire ou région passé en revue. Une carte fondée sur des photographies satellites, préfiguration des images *Google Earth* désormais omniprésentes dans la littérature scientifique, propose en outre une vision d'ensemble de la physionomie arcadienne, une « image authentique et parlante de l'Arcadie » (Jost 1985, 20–21 et pl. A).

9 Jost 1985, 545–551.

10 On peut ajouter à cela deux articles programmatiques parus dans le même volume collectif consacré à la cité grecque et publié par O. Murray et S. Price (1990, traduction française parue en 1992) : Snodgrass 1990 ; Rackham 1990.

11 Chacun de ces aspects faisant l'objet d'un chapitre séparé.

12 Chapitre 8, « The Country of the Gods ».

confondent). Dans le second ouvrage, en revanche, une définition est proposée :

> Landscape can broadly denote the arrangement and interaction of peoples and places in space and time [...]. Depending on the problems under examination, landscapes can vary in scale and in definition, while always stressing the spatial correlates of human behavior. Usages of the term are also bound together by an emphasis upon landscape as a social product, the consequence of a collective human transformation of the physical environment. Human activity, human involvement forms the key element[13].

De cette définition générale découle celle du paysage religieux, auquel un chapitre entier de l'ouvrage est consacré[14]. L'expression elle-même est largement utilisée. Comme S. Alcock le précise dès l'introduction, les paysages étudiés sont de natures variées ; le concept est le plus souvent employé en référence à la spatialité des phénomènes sociaux, économiques et politiques, mais il peut également prendre un sens métaphorique (*political landscape*)[15]. Son usage reste donc souple et ouvert.

En 1994, les auteurs des deux ouvrages susmentionnés publient un volume collectif entièrement consacré aux dimensions spatiales de la religion grecque[16]. La démarche consiste à proposer une lecture critique des thèses de F. de Polignac et surtout à étendre le cadre de l'analyse, chronologiquement et thématiquement[17]. De cette ouverture témoigne le recours répété à la notion de paysage religieux, dans plusieurs contributions. Le concept n'est toutefois pas défini avec précision et tous les auteurs ne s'y réfèrent pas explicitement. Les approches varient et la terminologie est fluctuante[18].

En dépit de cette variabilité, les publications susmentionnées contribuent à installer le paysage religieux dans la recherche sur le monde grec et à tracer les contours du concept, suivant des principes établis en géographie humaine et culturelle : selon cette conception « totalisante », le paysage religieux fait partie intégrante d'un paysage humain (par opposition au naturel), conçu comme un produit culturel, le résultat d'une construction, de la transformation d'un milieu physique par une activité humaine collective. Pour les besoins de l'analyse, cet ensemble peut être décomposé en « strates », constituant théoriquement autant de paysages thématiques (agricole, économique, sociopolitique, religieux). Ces derniers étant étroitement entrelacés, ils ne peuvent en réalité être dissociés les uns des autres.

Durant cette phase qui voit le paysage religieux prendre sa place dans le champ de vision des études classiques, le concept n'est pas imposé comme un passage obligé : les questionnements sur la spatialité des phénomènes religieux sont suffisamment riches sans cela.

On voit ensuite les études se développer dans des directions variées. L'une des démarches consiste à appliquer la grille d'analyse du paysage religieux à une entité géographique définie, dans la suite du travail pionnier de M. Jost. À titre d'exemple, on peut citer le travail d'I. Polinskaya qui, tout en se livrant à l'examen complet d'une configuration polythéiste locale, celle d'Égine, insiste sur la dimension spatiale[19]. De telles études tendent à faire ressortir les spécificités régionales d'un paysage religieux, résultant des modes de cohabitation entre humains et divinités propres à un territoire et à la communauté qui l'occupe[20]. À une échelle nettement plus large, P. Horden et N. Purcell cherchent à cerner une « géographie de la religion » en Méditerranée, qui serait marquée par un certain nombre de constantes d'une région à l'autre et à travers les âges[21]. Au fond, le constat relève de l'évidence : il n'est pas de paysage religieux générique ; toute étude de cas fait ressortir des traits particuliers, dépendant d'un contexte géographique et social précis.

À l'inverse des reconstructions mettant l'accent sur des spécificités locales, d'autres travaux cherchent à repérer des catégories de paysages associées à des divinités, à des types de rituels ou à des groupes sociaux en particulier. C'est ainsi qu'émergent notamment des configurations topographiques affectionnées par Artémis, ou des espaces propres aux rites d'adolescence[22].

La diversité des directions prises par la recherche s'observe dans le programme de deux rencontres spécialement dédiées au paysage religieux et dans les publications qui en découlent : *Die Landschaft und die Religion*[23] ; *Qu'est-ce qu'un « paysage religieux » ?*[24]. Dans le cadre de cette seconde publication, J. Scheid et F. de Polignac proposent une définition du concept qui place résolument le paysage religieux, ensemble de

13 Alcock 1993, 6.

14 Alcock 1993, 172–214 ; voir en particulier p. 172–173.

15 Alcock 1993, 144.

16 *Placing the Gods. Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (Alcock – Osborne 1994).

17 F. de Polignac lui-même contribue au volume en ajustant et en renouvelant ses propres thèses.

18 Relevons notamment l'usage des expressions « spatial configuration of belief » et « spatial correlates of religion » (Alcock – Osborne 1994, 37, 42 [J. Wright]), « cultic landscape » (101 [C. Antonaccio]), « sacral 'landscape' » (105 [C. Morgan]), « sacred space » (143 [R. Osborne]), « numinous landscape », « religious landscape » et « religious topography » (216, 228–229 [M. Jost]), « cultic topography » (233 [D. Birge]).

19 Polinskaya 2013 (48 : reconstruction d'un paysage sacré passant par « a careful analysis of the relative placement of sanctuaries within a physical and social landscape »).

20 Polinskaya 2013, 108–110, 531–533.

21 Horden – Purcell 2000, 403–460.

22 Cole 2004 ; Calame 2010.

23 Colloque en 2005 à Stuttgart : Olshausen – Sauer 2009.

24 Colloque en 2009 à Paris : numéro thématique de la *Revue de l'histoire des religions* publié en 2010.

« signes » et de « repères », du côté de la perception et de la représentation[25]. Cette approche, découlant d'une phénoménologie du paysage en général, n'est pas nouvelle en soi, mais elle donne à l'étude des paysages religieux antiques une orientation différente de celle que suivent usuellement les historiens et les archéologues (*infra* pp. 23–24).

Les travaux les plus récents confirment la tendance à la diversification, l'exploration des paysages religieux se voulant ouverte à toutes les méthodes, des plus conceptuelles aux plus techniques. On peut mentionner, à titre d'exemples, deux ouvrages collectifs récents, qui portent sur le monde méditerranéen antique et médiéval en général, mais où la Grèce est bien représentée : *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes* (Papantoniou *et al.* 2019a) et *Sacred Landscapes in Antiquity* (Häussler – Chiai 2020a). L'orientation donnée au premier se résume par la formule « having no constraints in using all possible methods in order to achieve the best possible holistic approach [of sacred landscape] »[26]. L'introduction du second ouvrage reconnaît l'intérêt d'approches diverses et met l'accent sur la sémiotique d'un paysage religieux considéré comme la résultante du dialogue humain-nature et pouvant être lu comme un texte ; avec pour objectif « a 'thick description' of sacred landscapes »[27]. Dans ces travaux est également affirmée l'importance de l'action (*agency*) du milieu naturel sur les comportements humains[28]. Une troisième publication collective, plus récente encore, adopte quant à elle une perspective plus serrée, partant des lieux sacrés pour interroger les rapports qu'ils entretiennent avec le milieu naturel, avec leur environnement direct[29]. Comme il ressort de cette publication et d'autres travaux, l'attention plus spécialement accordée à la nature et à la place qu'elle occupe dans le polythéisme grec offre un angle d'attaque supplémentaire, particulièrement pertinent pour aborder la question du paysage religieux[30].

Polysémique paysage

Le bref tour d'horizon qui précède suffit à illustrer la diversité des approches, découlant des différentes définitions du paysage religieux retenues par les chercheurs. On relève d'ailleurs que la notion est rarement définie avec précision. En outre, la banalisation de l'expression « paysage religieux », souvent employée métaphoriquement, contribue à en diluer le sens. De manière générale, il en résulte un flou méthodologique qui n'est pas en faveur de la valeur heuristique du concept. À des fins de clarification, nous revenons ici sur un choix de définitions, dont nous chercherons à préciser les principes et les implications.

Pour ce faire, il convient de s'arrêter d'abord sur le terme *paysage*, dont la polysémie est à l'origine du problème — le qualificatif *religieux* sera discuté dans un second temps. Il n'est évidemment pas question de faire le tour d'un aussi vaste sujet. Les usages actuels du concept de paysage découlent d'un demi-millénaire d'histoire des idées, de l'art et des sciences, de courants traversant plusieurs disciplines (géographie, histoire, histoire de l'art, architecture, archéologie…)[31]. Nous irons donc au plus simple en dessinant deux voies qui, en partant du paysage en général, permettrons de revenir au paysage religieux grec.

Dans les langues européennes, que l'on se réfère aux définitions usuelles ou à celles élaborées par les sciences, *paysage* renvoie soit à une réalité physique objective, soit au produit d'une expérience subjective. Dans le premier cas, il s'agit d'une portion de terre, ou région, caractérisée par des traits singuliers résultant généralement d'une interaction entre une activité humaine et un milieu naturel. Dans le second cas, il s'agit d'une étendue spatiale perçue ou représentée par un observateur. Les géographes et les historiens, tout comme les archéologues, retiennent plutôt la première définition, tandis que la seconde a davantage cours en histoire de l'art, en anthropologie. Ce ne sont là que des tendances : il n'existe pas de ligne de partage nette entre les disciplines[32].

Il est également intéressant de noter que ces tendances fluctuent d'une aire linguistique à l'autre, phénomène qui pourrait être partiellement attribuable à l'histoire des mots. Rappelons à ce propos quelques faits bien connus. À la Renaissance, on assiste au développement d'une pratique picturale qui met l'accent sur la représentation

25 Scheid – Polignac 2010 ; Polignac 2010.

26 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019b, x. Une phénoménologie du paysage et une approche cognitiviste sont notamment mises en avant.

27 Häussler – Chiai 2020b.

28 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019b, xi ; Häussler – Chiai 2020b, 3.

29 Lefèvre-Novaro – Voisin 2025, actes du colloque international « Sanctuaires et paysages » organisé en novembre 2023. Une dimension historiographique est également mise en avant, plusieurs contributions ayant trait à l'attention portée à l'environnement naturel des sanctuaires par les premiers découvreurs, aux 18ème et 19ème s. Pour une discussion des notions de « paysage » et de « sacré » qui croise celle proposée ici, voir l'introduction du volume (Husser 2025).

30 Approche notamment portée par une recherche germanophone : Sporn *et al.* 2015 ; Scheer 2019 (voir aussi Larson 2007).

31 Récent aperçu dans Antrop 2018 (voir en particulier p. 4, fig. 1.1). Plus largement, voir Paquot 2016 ; Howard *et al.* 2018 ; Kühne *et al.* 2019.

32 En outre, les deux définitions générales résumées ici, qu'on qualifie volontiers de « naturaliste » et de « culturaliste » (Husser 2025, 22–23), se ramifient ensuite en fonction des approches adoptées : voir par exemple les « cinq portes du paysage » de J.-M. Besse (2009).

d'un morceau de territoire, d'abord limitée au cadre d'une fenêtre, puis élargie jusqu'à composer un décor intégral[33]. À ces nouvelles images, encourageant ou accompagnant une modification du regard porté sur le monde, répondent des usages lexicaux nouveaux[34]. L'évolution du vocabulaire n'est pas la même partout. En français, *paysage* est créé de toutes pièces, en référence à la peinture. Son sens premier est donc celui d'une représentation ; ensuite seulement, il en vient à désigner la chose représentée, soit une « partie d'un pays que la nature présente à un observateur »[35]. L'allemand *Landschaft* connaît un développement très différent. Le terme est employé au Moyen-Âge comme équivalent vernaculaire de termes latins comme *regio* et *provincia*, à savoir un espace habité, d'abord compris dans ses dimensions politico-juridiques et ethno-sociales. L'accent porte sur le collectif humain et ses institutions. En second lieu, *Landschaft* désigne plus spécifiquement l'entité géographique occupé par ce collectif, une région. Enfin, c'est par extension qu'il est employé, à partir du 16ème s., pour désigner la peinture de paysage[36] et, plus tard encore, l'espace embrassé par le regard[37]. En anglais, *landscape* est créé par emprunt du mot néerlandais *landschap* et se réfère d'abord aux représentations picturales (elles aussi d'origine flamande). Cependant, il est probablement venu se superposer à un terme plus ancien (*landscipe*), dont le sens originel correspondait à celui de *Landschaft* : une étendue de terre, une région[38]. Relevons que, dans une définition de *landscape* datant du milieu du 18ème, le sens de région vient encore avant celui d'image, ordre inverse de celui que proposent les dictionnaires actuels[39]. Le cas de l'anglais n'est pas parfaitement clair. En revanche, on peut insister sur l'origine différente des termes *Landschaft* et *paysage*, le premier désignant d'abord un espace défini par les coutumes qui y ont cours, le second la représentation d'une portion choisie de pays. L'étymologie des mots est aussi révélatrice. Le suffixe *schaft* a la même origine que les verbes *schaffen* et *schaben* (cf. *-ship* et *shape* en anglais) : il se rapporte à l'action de créer ou de produire en conférant une forme, dans le cas présent à une terre[40]. *Paysage*, quant à lui, pourrait être une forme contractée de l'association *pays-image*[41].

Des définitions usuelles aux concepts élaborés par chaque discipline ou courant, avec les inflexions données par l'histoire des mots et des idées dans différentes langues, ces mêmes principes régissent les deux approches du paysage religieux grec sur lesquelles nous revenons maintenant.

Deux manières de concevoir les paysages religieux grecs

La première approche, qui prend le paysage comme un donné objectif, est celle qui relève de l'archéologie du paysage ou, devrait-on dire, de la *Landschaftsarchäologie*. Elle correspond à la définition que propose S. Alcock pour le paysage en général (*supra* p. 21) et qu'elle étend ensuite au domaine religieux : « The sacred landscape [...] was created through a variety of human actions: building, dedication, dramatization, procession, and ritual all marked space in certain ways »[42]. On peut en résumer les principes et implications en quatre points : 1) le paysage religieux est une réalité concrète, objectivable, matériellement constituée de lieux et d'aménagements à vocation sacrée, animée par des rites ; 2) c'est une construction humaine, mais qui résulte d'une interaction entre une société et son environnement ; 3) il est unique, c'est-à-dire qu'en une aire géographique et un temps donnés, il y a un seul paysage religieux, même s'il est en constante évolution[43] ; 4) il n'existe pas de paysage religieux dissociable du reste, mais plutôt une composante ou une dimension religieuse, parmi d'autres, d'un paysage conçu dans sa totalité.

Cette approche, privilégiée par l'archéologie, est relativement aisée à saisir. La seconde requiert davantage d'explications. Pour cela, il convient de revenir en détail sur les propositions faites par F. de Polignac, dont il a été brièvement question plus haut. Dans le numéro de la *Revue de l'histoire des religions* de 2010 consacré au paysage religieux, après l'introduction qu'il cosigne avec J. Scheid, F. de Polignac illustre ses vues par l'analyse d'un cas concret. Son point de départ est la manière dont le canton d'Éleuthères apparaît dans l'*Antiope* d'Euripide. Selon lui, la tragédie y laisserait notamment voir la présence de Dionysos, créant un lien entre cet espace limitrophe du territoire athénien et le contexte rituel de la représentation théâtrale, au cœur d'Athènes (le sanctuaire de Dionysos, à l'occasion des Dionysies). Le procédé permettrait ainsi « d'intégrer Éleuthères dans

33 Roger 1997, 64–82 (« Naissance du paysage en Occident »).

34 Franceschi 1997 ; Franceschi-Zaharia 2016 (*non vidi*).

35 Première définition dans l'actuel dictionnaire Robert, *s.v.* « paysage » (https://dictionnaire.lerobert.com/definition/paysage, consulté le 14.02.2025) ; la mention de l'observateur subsiste toutefois ; en français, le caractère subjectif du paysage n'est jamais entièrement évacué.

36 Restant toujours concurrencé, pour ce sens, par des composés comme *Landschaftbild* et *Landschaftsmalerei*.

37 Haber 1995 ; Berr – Schenk 2019, 26–30. Le géographe K. Olwig (1996) a mis en avant le sens socio-territorial de *Landschaft* ayant cours dans les pays nordiques pour prendre le contrepied d'une tendance qu'il nomme la « dématérialisation disciplinaire » du paysage (voir aussi Cosgrove 2004, 60–61).

38 Olwig 1996, 645–646, n. 3 ; Franceschi 1997, 89–92.

39 Comme l'*Oxford English Dictionnary*.

40 Haber 1995, 597 ; Olwig 1996, 632–633.

41 Hypothèse avancée par C. Franceschi (1997, 103–105).

42 Alcock 1993, 172.

43 Alcock 1993 ; 1994, 247.

un paysage religieux conçu et représenté à Athènes »[44]. Et l'auteur de conclure :

> La notion de « paysage religieux » [...] ne recouvre donc exactement ni celle de paysage cultuel (l'intégration des pratiques et parcours cultuels dans les éléments constitutifs d'un paysage), ni celle d'espace cultuel (la structuration d'un espace social par la répartition et la hiérarchisation des lieux de culte), mais les intègre dans un réseau de constructions symboliques de l'espace à partir d'un lieu précis de représentation. Le caractère religieux de ce lieu de représentation, qu'il s'agisse du théâtre ou de toute autre forme de production poétique associée à un rite, influence la manière de donner forme et cohérence à ces constructions symboliques. Le paysage religieux est donc par essence multiple au sein d'une seule et même société[45].

Ces propositions sont développées et enrichies dans une seconde étude, où F. de Polignac aborde le paysage dans une perspective maritime[46]. L'exemple retenu est celui du *Kynosèma* de Chersonèse, à la fois repère ponctuel pour la navigation, monument renvoyant à d'autres *kynosèmata* de Méditerranée et lieu appartenant à un système géographique régional structuré par les récits de la guerre de Troie. Dans ce cas, il y a paysage religieux du fait de la vocation cultuelle de lieux (monuments, sanctuaires) formant un « horizon de savoir partagé », un « système de significations bien connu et cohérent dont il suffisait de voir une des composantes pour rendre les autres présents à la conscience »[47].

Pour résumer, comme pour la première approche, en quatre points : 1) le paysage religieux est d'abord une idée, une représentation élaborée à partir d'un point de vue subjectif ; 2) il est une construction symbolique, visant à combiner des éléments de l'espace dans un système de sens ; 3) il est pluriel, c'est-à-dire que plusieurs paysages religieux peuvent coexister dans un même espace ; 4) il constitue une entité, un système en soi, même s'il dépend de toutes sortes de facteurs « externes » (sociopolitiques et autres).

De toute évidence, selon que l'on adopte l'une des perspectives ou l'autre, l'expression « paysage religieux » concerne des objets qui, tout en partageant un certain nombre de traits, restent fort différents l'un de l'autre. L'intérêt de chaque approche peut être défendu.

Les propositions de F. de Polignac ont plusieurs mérites, notamment celui de mettre l'accent sur les intentions qui président à la construction d'un paysage religieux, là où l'archéologie ne perçoit le plus souvent que des effets. Elles rendent également attentif à la possible multiplicité des intentionnalités et donc à la coexistence de plusieurs paysages entremêlés, découlant de points de vue différents, complémentaires ou divergents, voire antinomiques[48]. Ces points de vue, il faut le préciser, ne correspondent pas à une subjectivité individuelle, qui ferait du paysage une construction propre à chaque personne. Ils sont au contraire partagés par des collectivités : une cité ou une partie de sa population (habitants d'un dème, femmes, esclaves) ; d'autres regroupements, comme les marins fréquentant un même réseau de navigation ou l'ensemble des Grecs en tant que participants aux fêtes panhelléniques. Cela implique — autre intérêt de cette approche — qu'un paysage religieux ne correspond pas nécessairement à un espace physiquement ou politiquement bien délimité. On échappe ainsi au couplage récurrent — et restrictif — entre le territoire d'une cité et le paysage religieux.

Cependant, la quête de l'intentionnalité, c'est-à-dire du point de vue subjectif à partir duquel s'élabore un paysage religieux, a ses exigences. Elle requiert l'existence de sources propres à révéler les ressorts de la construction. Les cas étudiés par F. de Polignac constituent des ensembles documentaires privilégiés[49]. Son approche n'est de loin pas applicable à tous les terrains, à n'importe quelle configuration connue par des sources textuelles et/ou archéologiques.

L'approche relevant de l'archéologie du paysage, trouve un champ d'application autrement plus large, puisqu'en théorie, tout lieu sacré fait partie d'un paysage religieux susceptible d'être reconstruit ; même si, dans la pratique, cette reconstruction se limite souvent à une accumulation de points sur une carte. Elle offre la possibilité d'une analyse « holistique », non pas tant dans le sens où l'entendent les éditeurs de *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes*[50], mais par une prise en compte de l'intégralité des composantes naturelles et culturelles du paysage[51], entre lesquelles les Anciens n'établissaient d'ailleurs pas les mêmes distinctions que nous. Cet ancrage de l'analyse dans les réalités concrètes du terrain est une manière d'échapper au risque d'une reconstruction de paysages religieux « hors sol ».

44 Polignac 2010, 493. Notons que l'analyse de ce cas reste complexe, en raison du caractère très fragmentaire de la pièce et des questions topographiques et historiques que soulève Éleuthères (sur son statut politique, voir Fachard *et al.* 2020).

45 Polignac 2010, 494–495.

46 Polignac 2016a. Voir aussi Polignac 2016b, 185–187.

47 Polignac 2016a, 249–250.

48 Scheid – Polignac 2010, 432 : « spectre d'identités religieuses multiples et négociées ».

49 Autre cas privilégié, grâce à la richesse de la documentation, celui du paysage religieux romain (Grandazzi 2010 ; Häussler – Chiai 2020b, 4).

50 Papantoniou *et al.* 2019a : recours à toutes les méthodes et approches possibles.

51 Visées déjà exprimées dans des travaux comme celui de S. Alcock (1993, 6–8).

Religieux ou *sacred* ?

Si les approches résumées ci-dessus dépendent en premier lieu de la définition retenue pour le terme *paysage*, qu'en est-il des qualificatifs qui accompagnent ce dernier ? Dans le titre bilingue de notre table ronde, nous avons délibérément retenu deux adjectifs n'appartenant pas à la même famille, suivant en cela des tendances observables dans les publications en français et en anglais[52]. Cette juxtaposition était une manière de soulever la question : pourquoi *religieux* d'un côté et *sacred* de l'autre ? De toute évidence, ces termes ne sont pas des synonymes. Peuvent-ils refléter (ou induire) des conceptions différentes du paysage religieux/sacré ? Ou les fluctuations du vocabulaire doivent-elles être considérées comme une forme de *variatio sermonis* ?

Pour pouvoir répondre précisément à cette interrogation, il faudrait conduire une double analyse : en général, celle des sens conférés à *religieux* et *sacré* dans les langues qui nous intéressent ; plus spécifiquement, celle de la corrélation entre la terminologie retenue et le type d'approche appliquée au paysage religieux. Cette tâche dépasse largement le cadre du présent chapitre. Par ailleurs, la difficulté serait d'interpréter des choix lexicaux qui ne sont souvent pas explicités. Dans l'idéal, il faudrait que chaque chercheur justifie lui-même son choix. Ici, nous nous contentons donc d'envisager quelques implications de l'usage d'un terme ou de l'autre, appliqué au paysage.

Dans les deux cas, rappelons au préalable le décalage existant par rapport à des notions qui seraient proprement grecques. Comme celui de « paysage », le concept de « religion » est moderne[53]. Employé pour qualifier un ensemble de faits antiques, il n'en reste pas moins extérieur à l'objet étudié. Il en va différemment avec *sacré*, puisque les Grecs reconnaissent la qualité sacrée (*ἱερός*, *ἱερά*) de nombreuses choses. Il s'agit même d'un aspect fondamental de leur rapport à la sphère suprahumaine. Cette apparente concordance du vocabulaire ne dispense toutefois pas de préciser le sens que l'on donne à *sacré*, dans la mesure où la notion est exprimée par plusieurs mots en grec[54].

Employé en science des religions, *religieux* qualifie le plus souvent des concepts généraux (univers, système, culture, contexte), des structures instituées (usages, coutumes, traditions, normes, interdits, autorité), des modes de pensée (idée, conception, croyance) et d'action (comportement, pratiques, activités, gestes, cérémonies). L'application de *sacré* est beaucoup plus concrète, si l'on fait abstraction de l'adjectif substantivé « le sacré », dont l'usage est sujet à caution[55]. Sont désignés comme sacrés des choses et objets (aménagements et instruments cultuels, offrandes, animaux, plantes, images), des lieux et espaces (territoire, domaine, aire, montagne, bois, source, voie, enceinte, édifice) ainsi que des portions de temps (jour, mois)[56].

Notions, institutions et actions d'un côté, réalités matérielles de l'autre : au fond, l'on comprend pourquoi le paysage est tantôt qualifié de religieux, tantôt de sacré. Le premier terme met l'accent sur les principes et processus (humains) générant et structurant ce paysage, le second sur les composantes tangibles de la construction. Ces orientations sémantiques s'accordent relativement bien aux deux approches du paysage que nous avons distinguées précédemment.

Qualifier un paysage de sacré peut sembler logique, au vu de l'existence d'une multitude de lieux et d'espaces considérés et nommés comme tels par les Grecs : le terme appliqué à chaque élément singulier serait valable pour la somme de ces éléments ; le paysage serait doté de la même qualité que les lieux sacrés qui le composent. La juxtaposition du concept moderne et de la notion ancienne comporte toutefois un risque, celui de laisser entendre que les Grecs percevaient véritablement quelque chose d'équivalent à ce que nous nommons « paysage sacré ». Il est vrai que, pour les Anciens, tout est infusé de divin et que la terre dans son entier peut être qualifiée de sacrée[57]. Mais si l'on part de ce principe, reste-t-il quoi que ce soit de non sacré dans le paysage ?

L'adjectif « religieux » présente l'avantage de maintenir sans ambiguïté le paysage du côté du concept

52 Il s'agit de tendances générales et non d'usages stricts, les fluctuations de la terminologie restant importantes, avec l'emploi d'autres adjectifs encore, comme *cultuel*/*cultic*, *sacral*, *numinous*. Exemples de titres de travaux où figure « paysage religieux » : Scheid – Polignac 2010 et les autres articles du numéro de la *Revue de l'histoire des religions* de 2010 ; Bonnet 2015 ; Golosetti 2016. Exemples de titres avec « sacred landscape » : Crumley 1999 ; Nordquist 2013 ; Käppel – Pothou 2015 ; Papantoniou *et al.* 2019a ; Häussler – Chiai 2020a. Dans Horden – Purcell 2000, en revanche, il est question de « religious landscape ». En allemand, on relève l'usage fréquent de « sakrale Landschaft » (Olshausen – Sauer 2009), également dans sa forme composée *Sakrallandschaft*, mais les adjectifs *heilig* et *religiös* sont aussi employés (Hahn 2002 ; Scheer 2019).

53 Récente discussion dans Pirenne-Delforge 2020, 25–57.

54 Rudhardt 1992, 21–46.

55 Car les Grecs n'appréhendent pas « le sacré » comme une catégorie abstraite (Rudhardt 2008, 102–103), non plus que l'opposition (moderne) entre sacré et profane (*ibid.*, 68 ; voir aussi Borgeaud 1994 ; Peels 2016, 211).

56 Autant d'usages qui correspondent partiellement à ceux de l'adjectif *ἱερός* en grec, désignant une qualité (conférée ou acquise) de la chose concernée (Rudhardt 1992, 22–30 ; 2008, 101–154).

57 V. Pirenne-Delforge l'a rappelé en citant des vers de la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode (116–133), en conclusion de notre table ronde : « toutes les parties du monde sont des puissances divines, le moindre recoin du cosmos est le produit d'un engendrement divin ». Voir aussi Rudhardt 2008, 118, où l'auteur souligne par ailleurs qu'il existe « des degrés dans la sacralité des objets [on pourrait ajouter ici des espaces] qualifiés de *ἱερός* ».

moderne. Il ne laisse pas présumer d'une qualité que les Grecs eux-mêmes auraient attribuée à l'espace que nous étudions. Il concerne des actions humaines, des principes organisateurs qui modèlent l'environnement, le système que le paysage constitue. Il souligne en outre le caractère éminemment social, relationnel du paysage religieux, expression de l'ancrage spatial des rapports hommes-dieux.

Remarques conclusives

Face aux divergences de vues sur ce que doit être un paysage religieux, d'une part, et à l'usage banalisé de l'expression, d'autre part, quelle position adopter ? D'aucuns préconisent de se passer d'un concept qui, doté d'un champ d'application trop large, finit par ne plus être pertinent, ou au moins d'en restreindre la définition[58] : saine critique qui, même si l'on n'y adhère pas, invite à être plus circonspect et précis dans l'emploi de cet outil d'analyse.

Nous ne saurions ici nous prononcer en faveur d'un abandon complet du concept, ni de la quête d'une définition unique. Il nous semble au contraire qu'il est possible de tirer profit de chaque approche, de leurs convergences et de leur complémentarité, à condition que les écarts entre elles ne soient pas gommés et que soit toujours exprimé clairement de quel type de paysage religieux il est question.

En définitive, la validité de la démarche doit se mesurer aux résultats obtenus dans l'étude de cas concrets : à chaque fois, il convient de se demander quel bénéfice supplémentaire on obtient en parlant de paysage plutôt que de géographie religieuse, ou simplement d'un ensemble de sanctuaires et de cultes[59]. Sans vouloir anticiper sur les arguments fournis par les contributions réunies dans ce volume, reprenons quelques éléments précédemment évoqués et susceptibles d'alimenter le débat.

Mieux que d'autres termes, *paysage* exprime l'étroite imbrication et l'interaction entre faits sociaux et faits naturels. Sans aller dans le sens d'un déterminisme géographique, il valorise le milieu comme partenaire actif avec lequel les humains sont en relation ; une relation que les Anciens ne concevaient d'ailleurs pas sans l'omniprésence et l'action des puissances divines : dans ce sens, on pourrait dire que la notion de paysage religieux est plus appropriée pour rendre compte de la vision cosmologique d'un Grec qu'un modèle de géographie historique où les facteurs socio-politiques seraient seuls à compter. Encore faut-il, pour qu'on puisse véritablement parler de paysage, que l'expression plus ou moins consciente de cette relation humains-milieu-dieux soit repérable, dans des sources écrites ou des configurations spatiales particulières[60].

L'approche qui considère le paysage sous l'angle de la représentation sert précisément à attirer l'attention sur ce type de constructions conscientes. Elle s'applique en particulier à des configurations documentées par des textes[61], mais ce n'est là qu'un point de départ. Elle invite également à rechercher la transposition matérielle des paysages repérés dans le discours, voire des formes de constructions paysagères différentes des descriptions et des images auxquelles nos références culturelles nous renvoient usuellement : par exemple des lieux conçus et aménagés comme des microcosmes reflétant — ou résumant — un macrocosme, ou des dispositifs contraignant l'observateur à adopter un point de vue spécifique sur son environnement[62].

Quelle que soit l'approche adoptée, la visée première ne nous paraît pas être la reconstruction d'un paysage religieux « intégral », celui d'une cité ou d'une région à une période donnée par exemple, mais plutôt le repérage de configurations circonscrites, dans l'espace et/ou dans le temps, relevant de principes d'organisation ou d'intentions ponctuellement mis en œuvre.

Si un usage — modéré — du concept de paysage religieux est défendable, cela ne peut être ni par effet de mode, ni par commodité langagière. Il faut au contraire demeurer dans l'inconfort suscité par cet objet difficile à définir et en tirer parti : posture instable qui oblige à chercher de nouvelles manières d'envisager les rapports que les Grecs entretenaient avec le monde naturel et divin (ou naturellement divin ?), tout en reconnaissant l'étrangeté que ces rapports gardent à nos yeux.

58 C'est notamment la position de D. Rousset (2023, 35–40), pour lequel les études de géographie historique doivent recourir à d'autres notions. Dans une autre direction, A. Dan propose d'aller « au-delà de l'étude des paysages religieux » pour explorer le « post-landscape » (Dan 2020, 278–279).

59 Titre de la synthèse de M. Jost (1985) sur l'Arcadie.

60 Voir les textes retenus dans Mehl 2019, qui illustrent la centralité de l'expérience sensorielle dans la manière grecque d'envisager ce que nous qualifions de paysage. À ce sujet, voir aussi Brulé 2012, un ouvrage dont le sous-titre est « Une analyse sensorielle du paysage sacré ». Dans plusieurs de ses écrits, l'auteur s'est fait arpenteur de paysages religieux grecs ; il est un guide précieux en la matière.

61 Voir les travaux déjà mentionnés de Polignac 2010 ; 2016a.

62 À ce propos, voir les propositions faites par Ph. Descola, dans sa recherche d'une définition « anthropologiquement productive » du paysage : série de cours du Collège de France de 2012 à 2014, intitulés « Les formes du paysage » (résumés dans Descola 2013 ; 2014 ; 2015).

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Abstract

This chapter traces the main stages and directions of research that make use of the concept of the "sacred landscape" as applied to ancient Greece. Following a brief historical overview, it addresses the complex issue of defining "landscape," a term that encompasses both objective dimensions (a portion of land) and subjective ones (a space perceived and/or represented by an observer). Since the history of the terms and concepts varies across languages, different interpretive paths emerge depending on whether one is dealing with Landschaft, landscape, or paysage. One approach to landscape (and by extension, to the religious landscape) emphasizes its concrete, material dimension—examining how a society interacts with and shapes its environment. Another approach focuses more on identifying signs of subjectivity, exploring how a society views and interprets its surroundings. Rather than opposing each other, these perspectives offer complementary insights. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the various nuances introduced by the terms "sacred" and "religious" when applied to landscape.

2. LANDSCAPES OF *BARAKA*: MAUSOLEUMS, RUINS AND BOUNDARY MARKERS IN MOROCCO

Romain Simenel

This article does not intend to impose a definition of landscape the way it may be expressed in Morocco or in the Amazigh, or Berber, world. On the contrary, its purpose is to discuss the protected forests, collective pastures, and the associated aesthetic and historical values, with reference to cultural and religious landscape features such as mausoleums, ruins, and boundary markers. Furthermore, the paper considers the non-human creatures that inhabit these diverse environments and seeks to integrate forms of orientation, perspective, point of view, and, finally, projections of mental landscapes in graphic form. Only then will it be appropriate to assess whether it is possible to identify a particular way of defining landscape in the Amazigh world of Morocco. First, we will examine the ways in which the landscape is perceived in relation to specific forms of space, territory, and resource management. Then, we will identify the nature of this landscape (formed by the latter), following a subjective and integrative perspective on the landscape while emphasizing on the way of looking. Therefore, the intention of this article is not to limit the landscape to its religious dimension, but rather to show how its various dimensions are arranged through religious elements.

The geographical setting of this study is Morocco, and the initial point of reference will be my ethnographic experience among the Aït Ba'amran, a tribal confederation of predominantly Berber-speaking individuals situated in southwest Morocco, specifically in the Sidi Ifni region. This region is characterised by a moderate mountainous topography situated at the periphery of the Sahara, adjacent to the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean. This article is primarily based on the observations of extensive ethnographic research conducted from 2002 to 2017, among the Aït Ba'amran.[1] Additionally, it incorporates data from other regions of Morocco, gathered during ethnographic visits conducted during the same period or drawn from ethnographic studies directed by other scholars.

The ultimate objective of this article is to contextualise the various dimensions of the landscape, from how its resources are managed to its symbolic and historical representation through the incorporation of elements of religious nature or associated with a sense of otherness. Additionally, it considers the diverse modes of perception and expression that are employed through a set of practices that direct the human gaze and orient it according to specific aesthetic values. This approach aims to elucidate how a landscape may be regarded as an embodiment of a way of life and a mode of being in the world, contingent on the manner of its construction and contemplation.

The *agdal*: A Resource Management System Based on Sanctuarization

The *agdal* is an environmental management system that employs prohibition of space to preserve resources.[2] Prohibition of space is the act of closing off an area to humans and their herds to regulate access to a resource, whether fruit, fodder, wood, stone, or soil. The term *agdal* is of ancient origin, deriving from a root in Amazigh or Berber languages that is associated with meadow or pasture in much of the Maghreb and Sahara. It derives from the word *igdl*, which translates literally as "defence." As a form of community management based on the protection of resources in tribal societies with diffuse power, the *agdal* is probably a very ancient practice, common to all Berber-speaking regions of the Maghreb and Sahara, from the Moroccan Atlas to the Siwa oases in Egypt. In Algeria, the terms *agdal* or *gdel* refer to areas that have been enclosed, appropriated, and temporarily cultivated in steppe environments. In Tunisia, the terms *gdel* and *tagdielt* refer to pastoral set-asides in the Jeffara and Kroumiria regions.[3] Among the Tuaregs, the land that has been set aside is called *amadal itiwagdalen*, which literally translates as "land that is forbidden."

The concept of *agdal* in south-west Morocco denotes a form of prohibition and is analogous to the Arabic term *haram*, which serves a similar function. It is a method of managing plant resources that is frequently employed in

1 Simenel 2010.

2 Simenel 2012.

3 Nasr 1993; Böhm 1994.

mountain agro-sylvo-pastoral systems. It refers to a state of protection applied to a particular area, plot, or ecosystem on a seasonal or continuous basis, depending on the critical moments in the ecosystem's biological cycle. Furthermore, the *agdal* represents a community-based management practice whereby specific resources within a defined area are protected. It can, therefore, be described as a reserved space appropriated by a social group that imposes its own management rules.

There are two types of *agdal* in Morocco. The most prevalent type is the seasonal *agdal*, which involves the temporary closure of an area for a portion of the year to allow for the regeneration of resources. This is followed by the reopening of the area when fodder is required. In Morocco, the term *agdal* encompasses a vast array of resources and ecological environments. The type of *agdal* depends on the nature of the resources it protects. There are pastoral *agdal*, reserved for the herds that are driven up to the summer pastures in June, July and August to take advantage of the good grazing. There are also forest *agdal*, comprising wood or fruit parks, such as those of the argan tree (*Argania spinosa*) or, less frequently, *agdal* with melliferous plants. The second type of *agdal* is distinguished by the fact that it is continuously protected. The objective remains the same, namely to regulate access to the resource and ensure regeneration of the plant cover, but over the long term, as required by certain slow regeneration processes. In most cases, these are forests.

In both cases, the *agdal* is inextricably linked to the presence of water, either directly, through traditional wells or dams, or indirectly, due to its geographical configuration, which often manifests as water-retaining meadows. In the High Atlas, for example, on the Yagour plateau, "the *agdal* is used to describe the high-altitude meadows and mountain pastures that collect water from melting snow. These pastures are considered to be the most suitable for grazing during the summer months when drought has affected the plains."[4]

The protected status of the *agdal* is linked to a set of values, representations, and beliefs that refer to different entities and concepts, including God, saints (often Muslim), genies (*djinn*), and, more prosaically, customary law and the honour of the community. In essence, the concept of the *agdal* conveys two fundamental notions: first, the abundance of vegetal resources and, second, the fact that they are protected by being enclosed in a sacred and inaccessible area. Notably, *agdal* are frequently situated in border regions that delineate tribal territories. Morocco has traditionally been constituted by tribes, which are segmented into territories that fit together.[5] Consequently, the *agdal* are located at the borders of these tribal territories, which leads to a form of controlled sharing of space and resources. In this context, the term "border" is used to refer to a "frontier zone," which is never simply defined by a line demarcating two territories. Instead, it encompasses a strip of collective land. Furthermore, these "borders" possess a cultural dimension, by the presence of ritual representations and practices.

Fig. 1. A cemetery in the Aït Ba'amran land in June 2015 (R. Simenel).

The Different Scales of the *agdal* and the Role of Sanctity in the Landscape

To better understand the representation of the *agdal* model and the manner in which it structures the landscape, it is essential to briefly examine the diverse spatial categories that contribute to its formation. These include the cemetery, the mausoleum, and the "resource space." The *agdal*, as an enclosed and protected territory, where resources are preserved, is derived from the cemetery model. In the majority of cases, there is a striking contrast in plant cover between a cemetery's interior and exterior (**Fig. 1**). The plant cover is so pervasive and abundant in these cemeteries that Morocco's

4 Auclair – Alifriqui 2005.

5 Gellner 2003; Jamous 2002.

most esteemed botanists have surveyed them to identify and eventually find plant species that were supposedly extinct. These cemeteries are home to a wide variety of plants. In many cases, a low wall, typically between 20 and 30cm in height, encloses the cemetery. However, the site's protection is also linked to the curse of the deads, which has led to people's reluctance to enter the cemetery or allow their livestock to graze there.

Alongside the cemetery, which serves as the reference model for the sanctuary space, the saint's mausoleum represents the model of dissemination, given its greater visibility. A mausoleum is a frequently whitewashed building that houses a Muslim saint's tomb. Such mausoleums can be observed in many Moroccan landscapes, exhibiting a wide array of architectural styles. They are frequently situated in the middle of the cemetery, though they may also stand isolated. Saints are historical figures frequently referenced in Morocco when discussing the past. In the oral tradition of these regions of south-west Morocco, the saint is omnipresent, as he lies at the origin of the community's history, of the relationship with the environment, and of the relations between humans and other existing beings. Furthermore, the saint is a "maker of landscape."

Saints are predominantly men, more rarely women, described as religious figures, bearers of *baraka*, a term that signifies a divine blessing bestowed upon them both during their lifetime and posthumously. In addition to these attributes, they also assume the role of intercessors between God and humans within the community. For the Aït Ba'amran and most Amazigh tribes in the region, the *baraka* of the saint is believed to bestow fertility upon the land, fecundity upon women, protection upon newborns, healing upon the afflicted, and wealth upon the impoverished. Remarkably, saints do not originate from the region. Instead, they are figures whose roots lie elsewhere. Saints are never natives of the place they protect; rather, they originate from outside the region, sometimes even from a great distance. According to the Aït Ba'amran, these travellers embark on a wandering path and ultimately settle in a specific territory. They are said to have traversed Morocco in search of a land imbued with providence, where they eventually established a permanent residence. The saint's final settlement is often attributed to miraculous circumstances. In one instance, a saint is said to have arrived in the region, dead, on a camel, which stopped in one place and suddenly kicked a rock from which water emerged, enabling the development of an oasis. A mausoleum was constructed near the spring in honour of the saint, and the entire oasis subsequently became an *agdal*. A plethora of similar narratives exist, exemplifying that the saint's arrival was divinely ordained, occurring spontaneously and without calculation. These stories illustrate that the saint bestows a blessing, or *baraka*, upon the land, enabling the creation of a new landscape and a novel approach to managing natural resources.

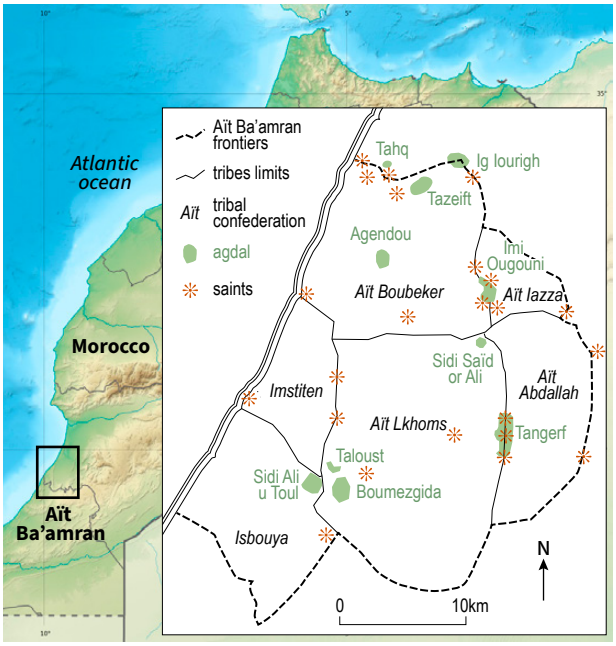

Fig. 2. Distribution of *agdal* and saints' mausoleums in the Aït Ba'amran land (R. Simenel).

In Aït Ba'amran land, the itinerary of the saints who originated from outside the region delineates the tribal boundaries along which they would have established the *agdal* (**Fig. 2**). The most renowned saints, those who are celebrated at the tribal or confederation level, have all their tombs along the borders (*lhoudoud* in Arabic, *aouttou* in Tachelhit, an Amazigh dialect of southern Morocco) of the segmental units of the territory, in *agdal*. The segmental boundaries often comprise the names of the saints, which function as clearly localised toponyms. The whitewashed mausoleums of the saints represent the most visible markers in the landscape of the *agdal*, and therefore of the territorial boundaries of the confederation, the tribes and the fractions that comprise it.

Schematically, some of these saints are grouped into families, with each family exhibiting a distinct geographical specificity and a particular position in the landscape. In the Aït Ba'amran region, as in the territories of the other confederations in the area, the mausoleums or stone circles of the saints Ida ou Simelel are situated on the highest peaks, which demarcate the boundaries of the region, or at the edge of the passageways; the mausoleums of the saints Ouled bou Sbah or Rrgraga, on the other hand, are located along the coast at the mouths of the most important border wadis (river beds). This geographical and topological distribution of the families of saints gives rise to a form of animation of the relief, shaped by the specific features that define the territory.

Fig. 3. Sacred argan tree in Aït Ba'amran land, (R. Simenel, 2003).

Fig. 4. *Agdal* of juniper trees in the High Atlas (D. Genin, 2011).

We shall now revert to the protection of the tree cover provided by the saint's mausoleum, as illustrated in **Fig. 3**. This photograph, taken in the Aït Ba'amran region, depicts a massive argan tree, situated within a structure that also houses the tomb of a saint, even if the latter lacks a dome (*kouba*, as it is usually the case). The argan tree is, therefore, totally protected: its fruits cannot be harvested except during rituals.

The third type of space that shapes the *agdal* is the "resources space," which may be a forest or a pasture. **Fig. 4** illustrates an example of a forest *agdal* in the High Atlas, situated on the periphery of the Aït Bougemmez tribe's territory. The boundaries of the *agdal* are delineated by the forest's edge. The forest, located above the terraced fields, is entirely preserved and is accessible for a mere two months annually. The *agdal* is composed of juniper trees and serves as a source of firewood, a vital resource at an altitude of two thousand metres. As with other *agdal* in Morocco, it is affiliated with a saint. Following a ten-month closure, the forest is opened to different families, who share the wood following precise rules. **Fig. 5** depicts an *agdal* of argan forests. The saint's mausoleum is situated in the middle of the valley, and the small green patches represent stands of argan trees. This mausoleum dedicated to a saint is situated on the border between two distinct tribal sub-fractions. The map (**Fig. 2**) shows the locations of saints and *agdal* on the boundaries of the Aït Ba'amran fractions and tribes. This illustrates how these *agdal* are distributed along tribal boundaries. In a different manner, **Fig. 6** depicts the *agdal* on the Yagour plateau, the largest pastoral *agdal* in the High Atlas. The area is exploited by five tribes, that pasture there and collect fodder that benefited from the melting of the snow. It is strictly forbidden to pasture there during the closed season. In addition to the curse of the saint regulating access, strict customary laws also govern the sharing of resources. If the *agdal* agreement is violated, the ties of collaboration between the tribes are broken.

The Mystical Protection of Space by the Saint in the Construction of the Landscape

The closed and forbidden nature of the *agdal* is guaranteed above all by the curse of the saint that "sanctuarizes" the space. The curse is known as the *tagat*, a word

Fig. 5. Mausoleum in the heart of an argan *agdal* in Aït Ba'amran land (R. Simenel, 2003).

that is inextricably linked to the *agdal* and which constitutes the other side of the *baraka*. The *tagat* is very important in that it obliges communities to respect this space and, therefore, helps to regulate access to the resource. This curse protects the space associated with the saint and strikes anyone who tries to enter it with malicious intent.

In the Aït Ba'amran worldview, the *agdal* is an empty space, a *khalwa*, a spiritual retreat for both saints and humans. Numerous oral accounts describe the various ascetic and ritual behaviours of the saints in their retreats. Of particular note are the accounts of successive prayer vigils accompanied by long periods of fasting. The *agdal* is also called the *tachelhit tighmert*, with its Arabic equivalent *zaouiya*, meaning "corner." All things considered, the representation of space associated with the *agdal* refers to a space of reclusion and entrenchment, a place of prayer on the fringes of territories, and above all, an angle, a corner through which life is perceived differently. The relationship between the mystical dimension of sanctuary spaces and their enclosed aspect is expressed above all through references to *djinn*. In Islamic tradition, the latter are invisible beings whose universe is believed to be twice as large as that of humans. It is thought that they outlive humans and can manifest themselves and appear in the *agdal*, a space conducive to their manifestation and appearance. It is within sanctuary spaces that the proximity between humans and *djinn* is most intimate and that collaboration is possible.

However, the *djinn* who populate the *agdal* are of a distinct nature: they are genies who have been converted to Islam by the saints. This act of conversion is considered an essential element in establishing an *agdal*. A recurrent theme in these narratives is the arrival of a saint from outside the community, endowed with a wealth of religious knowledge. The saint settles in and begins to fast, to retreat, and then devotes himself to converting the local *djinn*, who are referred to as *djinn kafir* or pagan. Conversion to Islam is achieved through learning surahs of the Qur'an. The process of converting the *djinn* to Islam is analogous to the act of domestication, as it allows the saint to assign them specific locations within the *agdal* and to bestow upon them the responsibility of safeguarding these sacred spaces. A significant number of oral accounts emphasise the role of Muslim

djinn as guardians of sanctuary spaces. One such account details the experiences of Sidi Mohammed u Tahq, a saint *fqih* (religious scholar) and master of the five readings of the Qur'an. During his retreat, he is said to have taught 60 men by day and 60 *djinn* by night. The latter became the guardians of his retreat space. Their role includes protecting the area from intruders who seek to cut branches in the sacred forests, those who bring their herds into the pastures during the closed season, or those who seek to take soil from the forest *agdal*. A whole series of ecological prescriptions are observed out of fear of the actions of these Muslim *djinn*.

The *djinn* supposedly possess extraordinary powers. For example, they are believed to be able to conjure up a pack of hyenas if someone attempts to steal the crops from the *agdal*. They may also disorientate a thief in order to prevent him from leaving the *agdal*. There are accounts of individuals who have walked for hours under the assumption that they were miles from the *agdal* where they had committed a theft, only to discover in the morning that they had been walking in circles within the *agdal*. This example provides an effective illustration of the concept of a closed space, from which individuals are unable to leave or enter without the permission of genies who were converted to Islam by saints. These genies seal the boundaries of the sanctuary and disorientate unwelcome visitors. In this manner, Muslim *djinn* guarantee the perpetuation of the *tagat*, the curse of the saints who converted them in the past. This ensures the preservation of the inviolable (*haram*) dimension of the sanctuary spaces. Muslim *djinn* are believed to live for much longer than humans and are therefore contemporaries of both past and present generations (including saints). Despite the death of the saints, *djinn* are thought to continue working on their behalf, primarily to maintain the inviolability of border sanctuaries.

The Ruins of Historicising Otherness

In the vicinity of *agdal* and mausoleums, one frequently encounters a multitude of ruined infrastructures, including granaries, matamores, water tanks, and sheepfolds, of local construction that back no more than a few centuries. In the region of Aït Ba'amran, the local population attributes these ruins to Christians, including the *Bortugiz*, *Sbbanoun*, *Franciss* and *Ingliz*. The term *Bortugiz* is derived from the Arabic word for Portugal, *Bortugal*, although it rarely consciously refers to the inhabitants of the Portuguese state. A similar situation occurs with the term *Ingliz*, which can be translated as English. The names *Sbbanoun* and *Franciss*, however, are more clearly indicative of Spanish and French origins, respectively. The *Bortugiz*, *Sbbanoun*, *Ingliz* and *Franciss* are perceived by the Aït Ba'amran as tribes that are analogous to their own, the only difference being that they are Christians, *iroumin* (sing. *aroumi*). From the 15th c. onwards, the Portuguese, the Spanish and even a few adventurous English shipowners have visited the Aït Ba'amran coasts for commercial purposes.[6] However, neither can be held responsible for the ruins attributed to them. Archaeological research in the region has yielded no evidence of Portuguese activity along the Aït Ba'amran coastline or inland.[7] On the contrary, the ruins believed to be Christian are of an indigenous construction. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the case of the ruins of fortified granaries (*agadir*), stone forts that imitate the mineral bases on which they rest. Such structures are particularly prevalent in south-west Morocco (**Fig. 7**). It is not uncommon for these ruined granaries to be situated close to ruined fortified dwellings. A similar situation pertains to matamores (*tiserfin*), which are silos dug into the earth and used for the storage and concealment of barley and wheat harvests (**Fig. 8**). The walls of the matamores were strengthened and covered with a mortar composed of small limestone stones, earth, and lime. Lime was produced on site, as evidenced by the kilns (*ifourna ljir*) located near the matamores. These kilns are pits dug into the ground in which limestone was burnt using euphorbia and argan wood as fuel. Finally, the ruins of sheepfolds, shelters or enclosures for herds of goats, widespread in the region, are also indigenous constructions and bear witness to intense past pastoral activity.[8]

The ruins attributed to the Christians all share the characteristic of being concentrated around sanctuary spaces and along the boundaries of confederations, tribes, or fractions. The granaries, matamores, water channels, sheepfolds and fortified dwellings collectively form localised sites that are camouflaged in the border relief, following the curve of the mountain passes. The complementarity of all these infrastructures suggests a totally autarkic way of life, cut off from the world and self-sufficient thanks to the hydraulic, pastoral and agricultural infrastructures on site.

The recurrent presence of fortified and collective sites on the heights of the borders is linked to the tribes's ancient occupation pattern, characterised by two times of habitation: a time of peace and a time of war, known as *siba*, marked by inter-tribal raids.[9] In times of peace, dwellings are constructed in the plains, situated in the centre of arable land. Conversely, during times of war, settlements are established on the summits of the highest massifs, where are found the grain stores and village strongholds, which were camouflaged to serve as refuges during attacks.

6 For more historical information on the Portuguese presence on the Moroccan coast, see Rosenberger 1987; Jacques-Meunié 1982; Ricard 1955.

7 Source: interview with archaeologists from the Tiznit region cultural heritage delegation (2002).

8 Simenel 2010.

9 It is important to note that only the lay population (*ia'min*, those who are neither professionals nor descendants of saints) was directly involved in these tribal conflicts.

Fig. 6. Pastoral *agdal* on the Yagour plateau in the High Atlas (R. Simenel, 2012).

Fig. 7. Ruined granary, described as a *Bortugiz* prison. Iferda, Tiznit region (R. Simenel, 2003).

Fig. 8. Matamore in Tighratin considered to be a *Bortugiz* weapons cache (R. Simenel, 2003).

In contrast to the *agdal*, the sites allocated to Christians are used as collective grazing areas. There is no fencing; the space is open to all those living on either side of the border. As a result, the plant cover is often degraded. The spirits occupying these areas are non-Muslim *kafir djinn*, which are distinct from those who guard the *agdal*.

The Aït Ba'amran perceive the numerous ruins that are scattered along the borders as remnants of the raid periods and of the military infrastructures of the "Christian colonisers." The matamores are likened to arms caches, the granaries to prisons, the ruins of sheepfolds to old trenches and the water channels to strategic tunnels.[10] In the case of a humble shepherd's hut, it is simply stated that a Christian soldier once established a presence there to monitor the surrounding area, a sort of checkpoint known as *tigemmi ou aroumi* ("Christian's house") or *tahanout ou aroumi* ("Christian's Room"). As a result, the tribes' territories are surrounded by the perception of the traces associated with a former Christian military presence.

The Aït Ba'amran have a clear and consistent understanding of the border ruins as Christian military infrastructures. When they ascribe a Christian designation to a particular site, they do it instantaneously. As Merleau-Ponty (1945) observed, there is no distance between the moment of perception and the moment of judgement. This is neither a genuine recollection of the past, because the identification of the ruin does not require any memorial effort on the part of the subject that perceives it, nor is it a lie in the order of a fabricated discourse imagined *a posteriori*; rather, it is an immediate recognition. There is frequently a semantic antagonism between the toponym of the ruined site and the ontological nature attributed to it by local people. Thus, even if a border ruin is designated as *tagadirt*, or "little granary," this does not preclude the Aït Ba'amran from regarding it as the vestiges of an ancient Christian prison. In their perception, there is a clear discrepancy between the conceptual and semantic fields of the ruin.[11] By contrast, a similar type of ruin, situated not on the borders but in the interior, will be identified as an ancient granary, given that its name and shape are consistent with this designation. In order to be immediately perceived as former Christian military infrastructures, the ruins must, therefore, be located on a border. It is not the ruins themselves but the Aït Ba'amran's perception of them that defines the space in terms of references to the past.

While the ruins ascribed to the Christians function as spatial markers, delineating the segmental borders of the confederacy's territory, they are also indicators of historical events. These ruins form the basis of a historical discourse which posits that the Amazigh tribes arrived after driving out the Christians, guided in this by the holy Muslim conquerors. Sites recognised as Christian are consistently associated with jihad-related events, with a tendency to depict heroic sieges led by Muslims against enemy strongholds. For the Aït Ba'amran, the ruins of matamores, sheepfolds and water channels on the borders are the remains of Christian military sites which they once destroyed.

It is widely acknowledged that in Morocco, and particularly within the Amazigh community, elements of the country's pre-Islamic heritage are often disguised as part of the broader Christian heritage.[12] Rock engravings and paintings, megaliths, and other buildings associated with "Berber paganism" are frequently attributed by local communities to ancient Christians, the *Rumi*, who are regarded as the region's first inhabitants. Furthermore, this inclination to ascribe the provenance of an ancient heritage to external sources is not exclusive to Morocco. It can also be observed in Portugal, Spain, and even France, where the terms "Mauro" or "Maure" are found in the names of certain ruins or ancient settlements. However, the specificity of this phenomenon lies in the location of this alterity at the borders. From the lived space of the Aït Ba'amran, the assimilation of the ruins of collective and defensive buildings to Christian military infrastructure signifies the conceptualisation of tribal and sectional boundaries as former zones of contention with the Christian Other, rather than with neighbouring tribes.

At the segmented borders of the confederation's territory, the contiguity and complementarity between the holy and Christian sites, between an elsewhere bearing the values of Islam and an enemy stigmatised by the figure of the Christian, set the scene for the memory of a jihad that floods the historical memory of the Aït Ba'amran. The association, on the borders, of the marks of saints and the traces of Christians supersedes the historical memory of tribal conflicts with that of a jihad against Christians. Among the Aït Ba'amran, the foundation is primarily associated with notions of sanctity and exteriority. In contrast, the notion of autochthony is absent or even negated or erased by the reference to an omnipresent category of alterity, namely that of the Christian. Correlatively, and in contrast to numerous other societies where the foundation is conceptualised and commemorated at the territory's core, the Aït Ba'amran country is perceived by its inhabitants as having been established at the borders.

10 Simenel 2006.

11 This phenomenon can be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that, in Berber-speaking societies in Morocco, place names are largely unchanging. This is particularly due to their role in systems for orienting pastoral grazing lands and in systems for locating plots of land used in land registration.

12 Aderghal – Simenel 2012.

The Aït Ba'amran women imbue these Christian sites with a distinctive quality through their ritual activities. In this instance, these rituals aim to facilitate the search for a husband. The women engage in a ritual meal with the *kafir djinn*, who are believed to occupy these places, and eventually possess them. Such rituals frequently are sexually connotated, with simulated coitus and other related activities. In the landscape, Christians thus represent the expression of sexual desire and the will to find a husband. This raises the question of whether we can still see these places as commonly defined "ruins." This was the observation made by Jean-Pierre Vernant when I delivered a paper at a conference in Tangiers in 2004. He reminded me that the term "ruin" was defined in relation to its disused character. However, in this case, not only do the women visit these places, but they also perceive the presence of *kafir djinn*. Consequently, we cannot categorize these locations as disused and, therefore, as ruins in the strict sense of the term. These places are, in fact, very much alive.

The Belvederes and the Perception of the *baraka* Landscape

We shall now return to the ethnographic experience and examine the manner in which the Berber-speaking populations of Morocco contemplate and idealise the landscape. In addition to mausoleums, belvederes represent a significant aspect of the Moroccan landscape, particularly within rural Amazigh communities. Typically situated at the summit of elevated terrain or at the confluence of wadis, these belvederes are most frequently marked by cairns (*takerkourt* in Tachelhit), pyramidal stone mounds reaching heights of up to two meters, though isolated trees of exceptional stature are also observed. The term "belvedere" describes a specific type of viewpoint, a location from which one can observe the surrounding area from a considerable distance, allowing for a comprehensive view of the landscape.

In Aït Ba'amran country, as in the rest of the Berber-speaking world of Morocco, belvedere cairns are most often associated with the saints whose names they bear, in a manner analogous to that of mausoleums. It is postulated that the saints constructed these cairns along the route traversed to reach their final resting place, namely the mausoleum. As previously stated, the general rule is that the saint arrives from outside on his mount and takes a border route before arriving at the place where his mausoleum will be built, in a providential manner. The belvedere cairns reproduce the route followed by the saint and are, therefore, considered to be holy spaces. From a ritual perspective, belvedere cairns are regarded as embassies of the mausoleums of the saints whose names they bear. Consequently, they are places that are frequently visited, particularly by women who organise *ma'arouf*, ritual meals, where people come to recite votive prayers (*do'a*) or to perform healing rituals. These

Fig. 9. A saint's cairn in the Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa region (R. Simenel, 2007).

rituals entail the addition of a stone to a cairn previously rubbed over the spot of the ailment, accompanied by an offering to the local *djinn,* most often fresh blood from a chicken, sheep or goat, and pre-cooked semolina. The physical ailments treated during these rituals are primarily muscle strain (*tigharssi n tfié* in Tachelhit) and warts. Consequently, the belvederes are continually being refurbished for these rituals. **Fig. 9** illustrates a ritualised cairn with a bouquet of dried flowers on top, indicative of an ancient offering.

These saints' cairns, referred to as *takerkourt n cheikh* in local dialect, possess a distinctive quality of offering vistas of other saints' cairns or even mausoleums. A belvedere cairn is not a standalone structure; rather, it is always visually associated with a second cairn, which in turn is associated with a series of other cairns and mausoleums. The belvedere cairns and mausoleums are spatially arranged to allow for a play of visual perspective between them. In this manner, it is feasible to follow the route of a series of ten belvedere cairns before ultimately sighting the mausoleum of the saint with whom they are associated. The precision of their alignment is attributed to the *baraka* of the saints. This play on perspective reaches its full significance in healing rituals, as the therapeutic efficacy of the site derives, in part, from the visual perspec-

Fig. 10. Belvedere cairn in the Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa region (R. Simenel, 2009).

tive offered by the belvedere cairn. It is believed that the unobstructed views of the mausoleum will cancel out the distance to it, allowing the saint's *baraka* to be captured from the belvedere cairn. **Fig. 10** illustrates the presence of two cairns near one another, both of which are associated with the prominent saint of southern Morocco, Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa. The view from the belvedere in the foreground leads directly to the saint's mausoleum. However, there are villages just a few kilometres away that have no view of the mausoleum. Nevertheless, they do have a viewpoint nearby, such as the one in the photograph's background, from which the viewpoint in the foreground can be seen, offering an uninterrupted view of the mausoleum of Sidi Ahmed ou Moussa. In these regions of south-west Morocco, the belvedere serves the function of a visual relay, enabling visitors to approach a holy place without direct visual contact. This implies that elderly or disabled women are not required to attend the *moussem* physically, the significant annual ritual in honour of the saint, in order to experience a degree of his *baraka*. On the day of the saint's *moussem*, these women can simply arrange a *ma'arouf* near a vantage point in their vicinity and use their imagination to gaze along the series of vantage points that are connected to theirs and ultimately lead to the mausoleum, thereby honouring the saint as if they were physically present.

While this kind of ritual perception of the landscape is most fully realised on the day of the saint's *moussem*, it is also a feature of everyday life. Indeed, any individual may organise an impromptu ritual meal and engage in therapy or prayer through visual contact. Praying in the vicinity of a saint's cairn while gazing into the distance at another cairn of the same saint, situated at a considerable elevation and offering a comprehensive view of the mausoleum in question, is tantamount to a physical visitation of the mausoleum itself. The saint's cairns serve as beacons, enabling visitors to direct their gaze towards the mausoleum, which represents the central focus of the *baraka*. In a sense, they can be considered visual anaphors of the mausoleums. This ritual device for perceiving the landscape is based on an impressive effect of scale reduction, which brings the mausoleum into the foreground of the belvedere. In this manner, a belvedere cairn is never perceived in isolation; rather, it implies that one's gaze reaches all the cairns of the same saint along the route. These belvederes collectively constitute a visual network along the saint's itinerary, through which the visitor's gaze ricochets to the mausoleum in search of *baraka*. The system becomes increasingly complex with the ritual similarity of belvedere cairns associated with brother saints. In this instance, the cairns of one saint may be substituted for those of

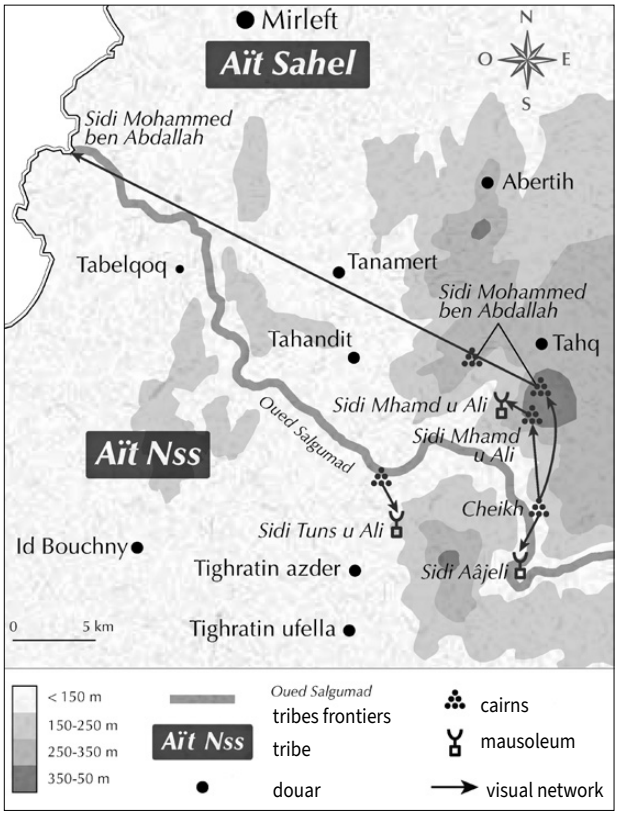

Fig. 11. Visual network of saints' marks in Aït Ba'amran (R. Simenel, 2010).

another, allowing the pilgrim's gaze to travel along intersecting networks of belvederes to reach the mausoleum of the saint to whom they wish to offer their prayers. **Fig. 11** illustrates a visual network comprising multiple belvederes dedicated to saints, including brothers, and a saint's tree, situated along a deep wadi valley leading to a cove housing the mausoleum of the region's principal saint, Sidi Mohammed ben Abdallah. During the *moussem* of the latter, the belvedere cairns of the holy brothers enable the women situated upstream from the valley, who cannot access the mausoleum and lack a visual perspective of it, to direct their gaze and prayers towards the holy site.

Last, it is noteworthy that some elements of this ritual landscape-viewing system appear to be very ancient. Indeed, archaeological research conducted on the belvederes indicates that some of them date back to over 3'000 years, which serves to illustrate the enduring nature of these observation sites, even though the mausoleum itself appeared in these regions no more than a thousand years ago.[13]

13 Source: interview with archaeologists from the Tiznit region cultural heritage delegation (February 2003).

Projecting the *baraka* Landscape

The entire system of visual perception through the belvedere cairns is oriented towards a singular objective: the capture of an image of the mausoleum and the *baraka* it embodies. However, what image could this divine blessing correspond to, if not the whiteness of the mausoleum? Could it possess a landscape dimension?

In order to provide an answer to these questions, we shall now consider alternative means of representing the *baraka*. In Muslim Morocco, the representation of living beings is prohibited, except in the form of calligraphy. However, in addition to calligraphy, there are pictorial representations of the *baraka* inside mausoleums, and even reproductions of fertile landscapes covering the dome's vault. Some fifteen years ago, I had access to a series of photographs of landscape paintings which have since been lost. Consequently, I requested that a colleague in the south visit two mausoleums I was familiar with and take photographs of the strikingly figurative, minimalist paintings of fields with trees and rain. After visiting the first mausoleum, my colleague informed me that the interior had been whitewashed and that no evidence of landscape painting remained. I requested that he proceed to the second mausoleum but discovered that it, too, had been subject to the same treatment. My initial assumption was that the radical movements active in these regions were responsible for the repainting of the mausoleums. These movements are known for condemning any deviation from rigorist Islam, which effectively condemns any representation of God's creation. However, my assumption was wrong. In reality, during prolonged periods of drought, as had been the case for the previous six years in these regions of southern Morocco, it is customary to erase the paintings in the mausoleums and impose the simplicity of whiteness. It is only when rainfall returns that the landscapes are painted again. Nevertheless, certain decorations are linked to these landscape paintings, often as flowers, which are never erased. **Fig. 12** illustrates a hexafoil painted in multiple hues. These floral motifs symbolise the saint's *baraka*: these are, therefore, real pictorial representations of the

Fig. 12. Hexafoil inside a mausoleum (R. Simenel, 2014).

baraka. In essence, these modest decorations, coupled with the fresco and the Arabic inscription of the prophet Mohammed's name, constitute the epitome of the *baraka* landscape, a mental landscape we endeavour to evoke through visual representation (**Fig. 13**).

Annoyed at not having visual examples of these productions of fertile territories in the mausoleums, I decided to return there myself. Because my Aït Ba'amran companions were aware of my disappointment at not finding any landscape frescoes, they invited me to take photos of landscape paintings on the walls of the houses. Although I was initially surprised at this suggestion, as I had not yet identified the direct correlation between the two types of production, I accepted it without hesitation.

During every wedding ceremony, one or more walls of the bride and groom's home are covered with whitewashed drawings. The latter represent the elements that compose the Garden of Paradise, the garden of *baraka*. These include palm trees, fields, pomegranate trees, rain, and other symbols associated with fertility. My companions were correct in their observation that these murals resemble those found in mausoleums, except that they are not coloured. In addition to the traditional, recurring symbols, some of the drawings are original and subjective in nature: a heart, a flower, and even a horse ploughing a field adorn the mural decoration (**Fig. 14**). The drawings are accompanied by inscriptions, typically in Arabic and inspired by the Qur'an, which are painted in whitewash. In addition to the systematic "Marhaba bikoum," which translates as "Welcome" and is a sign of hospitality, there are the beginnings of suras such as the classic "Bismillah er rahman er Rahim," which translates as "In the name of God the all-powerful and merciful." Other, rarer inscriptions are innovative, such as "I love you," or the Arabic word for "perfume" (*itr*), which is yet another symbol of the *baraka*. The wall of the bride and groom's home thus serves as the setting for a pictorial and hand painted projection of the mental representation of the garden of *baraka*. This image is believed to bestow *baraka* upon the bride and groom, their families, neighbours and all those involved in the wedding. The white drawings and writings on the walls of the houses evoke the whiteness of the *baraka* of the saint's mausoleum, as if the saint had distributed this divine blessing at the time of the weddings. In return, while the paintings on the saints' mausoleums are washed away in the prolonged absence of rain, the walls of the houses continue to be painted during weddings. The paintings on the walls of the bride and groom resonate like echoes of the saint's *baraka*, perpetuating it even in times of drought. Thus, it can be postulated that the wedding reinvigorates the *baraka* of the saint.

These drawings and inscriptions on the walls are not only regarded as a manifestation of the *baraka*; they are also believed to attract the attention of passers-by, holding it captive and preventing it from resting elsewhere, namely on details of a more intimate nature that are deemed unsuitable for public display, namely behind-the-scenes household intimacy. The motivation behind this visual lure can be attributed to the desire to safeguard against and exert control over the potential dangers posed by the envious gaze of others. This concept is commonly called "the evil eye" (*ay'n*) in Morocco. The "evil eye" expresses the envy aroused by beauty, which is believed to bring misfortune to those who expose it. In this regard, the graphic and hand-painted productions on the walls serve a similar function to that of the mausoleums in cemeteries, whose whiteness diverts the attention of passers-by from the tombs. Over time, these murals gradually fade until they are replaced by new ones painted by a different generation on the occasion of a wedding in the same house.

It is not only walls that can be used as a medium for the mental projection of the landscape of the *baraka*; the surrounding landscape can also be used on certain occasions. During the *ma'arouf*, the meals prepared and consumed between women in holy places, mausoleums, cairns, and trees, these same women sit on large stones after the meal and engage in contemplative song, utilizing the local dialect of Tachelhit while directing their gaze towards a specific portion of the surrounding landscape. These songs enumerate the aesthetic qualities of the *baraka* landscape, including verdant fields, flowering trees, luxuriant palm groves, and obviously, rain. Following their departure, the orientation of the stones will serve as a testament to the portion of the landscape imbued with the women's gaze and song (**Figs 15–16**). The following is an excerpt from one of these songs:

> Oh my saint, the lantern, we place it in your hand
> You illuminate the world and reveal its bounty Gardens,
> pomegranate trees, fields, palm trees in the rain
> Oh my saint, we are the oleanders that nobody waters

The song poses an illuminating contrast between the little oleanders that nobody waters, and the gardens, pomegranate trees, fields and palm trees that the saint illuminates with his lantern. This contrast suggests that we are not dealing with the same landscape, but rather with the fusion of two initially distinct landscapes: the portion of landscape seen serves as a projection medium for the landscape of the sung *baraka*. The visualized space and the image of a mental landscape are thus superimposed in the same perspective, linking the foreground to the background. This allows us to better understand the purpose of the perceptual device set up by the belvedere. When the women sing and describe the landscapes they perceive at the belvedere, they are not singing about the panorama in front of them but about the ideal landscape of the *baraka*. The belvedere not only brings the mausoleum to the foreground but also enhances what is painted inside the mausoleum, projecting it onto the landscape. The pictorial representations of the *baraka* landscape are thus projected onto panoramas, unfolding along the horizon as the eye wanders over it. The reality of mausoleum paintings is augmented by an analog

Fig. 13. Interior decoration of a mausoleum in Aït Ba'amran land (R. Simenel, 2014).

Fig. 14. Wall decorations made during wedding ceremonies (R. Simenel, 2014).

Figs. 15–16. The women's point of view: stones in a hemicycle in a holy place (left), and the landscape contemplated by the women (right), Ifrane region (A. Gheysens, 2015).

process of rear projection onto panoramas. We now understand the importance of the paintings on the walls of bridal homes, which cultivate the permanence of the mental landscape of the *baraka*, repeating but without color the motifs of the landscapes painted on the inside of domes after periods of rain.

Conclusion

It is now possible to combine the different aspects of the lived landscape, from the management of its resources to the way it is contemplated, based on its historical and religious staging.

The *agdal* cannot be summed up as a spatial category defined by a single type of environmental management practice, namely prohibition of grazing and wood cutting. The latter is accompanied by a whole set of representations mobilising the saints, their *baraka*, their curse and finally the *djinn* who are the guardians of the *agdal*. The *agdal* act as a matrix for these representations, thickening the border zones. The ruins attributed to Christians and located on the borders constitute the opposite pole of the *agdal*, both from a practical point of view (they are open grazing areas) and from the point of view of representations and values, since they are populated by *kafir djinn*. These two poles shape the landscape framework of the tale of land liberation through a mythical jihad, as told by the Aït Ba'amran and many other Moroccan groups. However, this history is not only rooted in the past, it is also experienced in how the landscape is perceived. As shown in this article, the mausoleums, ruins and saints' markers in Morocco are the founding elements of a landscape dynamic. This is indeed a landscape perspective in the sense in which Panofsky (1975) defined it, i.e. a representation from a position that is fully external to the figurative world. In this case, we could speak of analogical landscape perspective since it combines so many of the qualities of visual play: depth of scene, visual relay, ability to link foreground and background, all in a homogeneous totality. Moreover, the analogical perspective operates a process of augmented reality. Indeed, it is an analogical process of back-projection of pictographic representations, painted or engraved, onto points of view.

These marks thus arrange the landscape in such a way as to give it a visual depth animated by a historicizing perspective thanks to religious elements. Animated in this way, the landscape becomes an image of thought, reflecting the projection of an ideal in perpetual evolution and constantly contemporizing the project imagined by the ancients concerning the best way to manage the resources of the surrounding environment. The religious dimension of the landscape thus creates the link that harmonizes the practical exploitation of its resources with the way in which it is contemplated to tell a story that corresponds to how individuals situate themselves in space and time.

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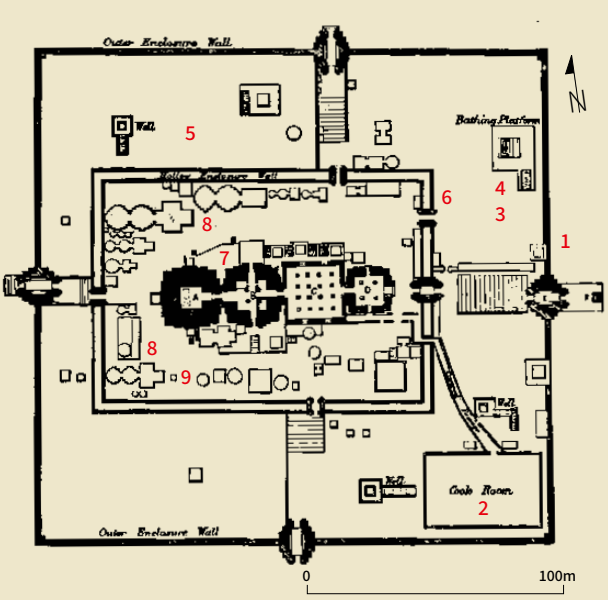
Abstract

Based on several years of ethnographic research among the Aït Ba'amran, a predominantly Berber-speaking tribal confederation of southwestern Morocco, this chapter examines the historical and aesthetic values associated with protected forests and communal pastures, mediated by cultural and religious features of the landscape such as mausoleums, ruins, and boundary markers. It also considers non-human beings inhabiting these spaces and seeks to integrate orientations, perspectives, points of view, and mental landscape projections reproduced on graphic supports, from different regions of Morocco. The aim is to bring into relation the multiple dimensions of landscape: from practices of resource management to their symbolic and historical staging, shaped by religious elements and forms of otherness, as well as by perceptual and expressive modes structured through devices that guide and orient human vision according to aesthetic values. Ultimately, it argues that landscape, when constructed and contemplated in particular ways, can embody an ideal of life that is at once practical and symbolic.

3. ENTRE LA FORÊT ET L'OCÉAN, LE TEMPLE. LE PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX À PURI (ODISHA, INDE)

Raphaël Rousseleau

La notion de « paysage religieux » revêt bien sûr un sens un peu différent selon les disciplines. En tant qu'ethnologue, ma contribution à ce volume ne vise qu'à apporter des pistes comparatives issues du monde indien contemporain (le temple de Jagannath, à Puri, Est de l'Inde) aux problématiques archéologiques et antiquisantes autour des sanctuaires, de leur cartographie et de leurs interrelations (centre-périphérie, inter-visibilité, etc.)[1]. L'anthropologie a l'avantage de pouvoir approfondir les représentations et usages actuels d'un tel paysage, en tant que construction et perception culturelle des espaces et des lieux rituels, qu'ils soient monumentaux — dans le cas abordé, le temple d'un lieu régional, Jagannath — ou « naturels » — ici la forêt et l'océan. L'article situe d'abord le temple central dans un réseau d'autres sanctuaires, avant de le mettre en relation avec les éléments de l'environnement choisis comme référents « mythiques », c'est-à-dire fondateurs et pérennes. L'enquête de terrain révèlera enfin que ces références sont à la fois partagées et soumises à variations, selon le bagage des pèlerins interrogés. L'examen d'un rituel montrera, pour finir, que la référence à la forêt reste présente dans l'abattage périodique d'un arbre de la région (selon diverses modalités de choix) pour recréer la statue du dieu. En ce sens, dans les sources ethnographiques, la notion de « paysage religieux » peut être entendue à de multiples niveaux.



1. Enceinte extérieure ; 2. Cuisine ; 3. Anand bazar ; 4. Bassin de purification de serviteurs du temple ; 5. Champ d'enterrement des statues et jardin du temple ; 6. Enceinte intérieure ; 7. Temple de Jagannath ; 8. Temples secondaires ; 9. Bassin de Rohini.

Fig. 1. Plan schématique du temple de Jagannath à Puri (d'après Fergusson 1910, vol. 2, 108).

Approche cartographique

Pour donner une première idée du site concerné, la cité de Puri se situe dans l'État actuel de l'Odisha (Est de l'union indienne), entre la plaine rizicole du fleuve Mahanadi et le lac Chilika. C'est une zone agricole riche et ancienne, historiquement au cœur de la région antique du Kalinga, connue pour son passé bouddhiste, jain et pour avoir été conquise violemment par le grand empereur Ashoka (dynastie Maurya), au 3ème s. avant notre ère. Une multiplicité de royaumes se sont succédé autour du bassin de la Mahanadi et sur la côte de l'océan Indien.

Dans ce cadre, Puri apparaît aujourd'hui comme une petite ville balnéaire, mais au long passé comme centre d'un pèlerinage attesté depuis le 13ème s. J'y reviendrai. En termes spatiaux, parmi les architectures marquantes de la ville, on peut noter de nombreux temples, au plan reconnaissable, de grands réservoirs d'eau, deux églises du 20ème s. et bien sûr une diversité de bâtiments : des hôtels pour pèlerins, de grands « monastères » avec une cour intérieure (*matha*), un petit palais du « roi de Puri », etc.

Dans cet enchevêtrement de bâtiments et de rues, un espace nodal se singularise : une grande enceinte de pierre entourant le temple de Jagannath (**Fig. 1**), complétée de la grande et large rue qui part du parvis du temple en direction d'un temple bien plus petit, dit de Gundicha, à l'extrémité nord-est de la rue. La grande rue est le lieu de la « fête du char » (*Rath Yatra*), c'est-à-dire la procession

1 Scheid – Polignac 2010. Pour une synthèse récente plus générale sur les notions de paysage et de nature en Inde, je me permets de renvoyer à Rousseleau 2019.

de la statue du dieu, suivie de celles de son frère et de sa sœur, sur trois grands chars en bois reconstruits à l'identique tous les ans et tirés par la foule des dévots d'un bout à l'autre de la rue. À l'exception de cette occasion, les statues ne quittent jamais l'enceinte du sanctuaire.

L'enceinte de pierre (1) enclot la cuisine du temple (2) et un petit marché d'offrandes (3), un petit bassin de purification des serviteurs (4) et un champ d'enterrement des anciennes statues de bois (*Koily Vaikuntha*) près du jardin du temple (5), puis une seconde enceinte interne (6), protégeant le temple principal (7), formé de quatre bâtiments en enfilade, suivant l'architecture régionale des temples, ainsi que de nombreux templions ou simples images secondaires, dédiées à des divinités proches ou complémentaires (8)[2].

Sur le parvis se situe un appentis et une petite fontaine, où les pèlerins peuvent retirer leurs chaussures et se purifier brièvement avant de passer le porche du temple : entrer pieds nus est une marque élémentaire de respect pour une maison ordinaire, à plus forte raison pour le palais d'une divinité. Malgré le caractère dit universel du temple, les non-hindous ne sont pas autorisés à franchir l'enceinte, si bien qu'un ou plusieurs serviteurs du temple effectuent un contrôle sommaire des visiteurs. Jusqu'en 1948, les gardiens refusaient également les dévots qu'ils reconnaissaient comme intouchables.

Vient ensuite un escalier, pour atteindre l'enceinte interne du temple. Les marches sont dites bénéfiques, voire curatives, mises en relation avec les efforts du dévot vers la divinité. À sa gauche, le pèlerin peut ensuite jeter un coup d'œil aux cuisines du temple, qui sont célèbres pour leur préparation quotidienne des fastueux repas du dieu. Les visiteurs poursuivent généralement leur parcours par une circumambulation (*pradakshina*, en gardant le lieu consacré à sa droite) des sanctuaires de divinités subsidiaires entourant le temple central. Les habitants de Puri ou de l'Odisha, les Oriya, habitués du temple, y viennent souvent solliciter une divinité secondaire plus que le grand dieu lui-même.

Approche culturelle/symbolique de la cartographie

Aux yeux des pèlerins, Puri est l'une des quatre résidences (*char-dham*) du dieu Vishnu, où l'on dit que le dieu prend ses repas, tandis qu'il médite à Badrinath au nord de l'Inde, se repose à Dvaraka à l'ouest et se baigne à Ramesvaram au sud. De ce point de vue, la ville est idéalisée sous forme de « carte-image » (selon l'expression de Niels Gutschow[3]) comme « domaine de la conque » (*Shankha-kshetra*), coquillage qui est un attribut du dieu, incluant un diagramme centré sur le temple, palais du dieu (**Fig. 2**).

Selon la tradition régionale, ce domaine symbolique est protégé aux quatre points cardinaux et quatre directions intermédiaires de l'espace par autant de « puissances » féminines (*Shakti*). La référence à ces puissances s'inscrit dans une tradition tantrique, associée à la représentation du temple au centre d'un diagramme (*mandala*) concentrant les pouvoirs dans un espace délimité. La version la plus ancienne de la légende de fondation du temple complète cette géographie par huit sanctuaires de Shiva, localisés à Puri, mais dont certains sont très petits ou ont même disparu[4]. Les listes des sanctuaires et monastères locaux à visiter varient selon les textes et l'époque. De tous ces sanctuaires, les actuels pèlerins — et surtout les pèlerines — de l'Odisha ne retiennent souvent que le temple de la déesse Bata Mangala (littéralement « Faste »), au bord de la route principale menant à Puri, où ils et elles s'arrêtent pour faire une offrande en passant, car cette déesse garantit la prospérité.

Les pèlerins venus de l'extérieur ignorent ces références, mais la plupart s'orientent à l'aide de livrets fournis par l'administration du temple, des indications transmises par des voisins ou des proches ayant déjà fait le voyage, ou encore par les hôteliers locaux, ou par des prêtres de bas rang appelés Pandas. Ceux-ci tentent souvent de prendre en main les nouveaux arrivants pour leur faire visiter les sites importants, raconter les légendes locales, tout en gagnant de l'argent en effectuant autant que possible de brefs rituels.

Approche textuelle : la tradition hindoue du pèlerinage et des temples

Contrairement à ce qu'on pourrait imaginer en référence à la Grèce antique, en Inde, les sanctuaires de pierre et la tradition du pèlerinage ne se sont développés qu'aux époques médiévales. Les textes de l'Inde antique font surtout état, en effet, d'autels de sacrifice temporaires, même si l'archéologie suggère des pratiques plus variées et complexes. Du mot qui désignera plus tard le « pèlerinage » (*tirthayatra*), les textes ne mentionnent alors que le premier terme *tirtha*, pour un passage à gué, facilitant l'accès au pouvoir purificateur des rivières. Les rares références suggèrent que des ascètes s'y installaient périodiquement, probablement aussi pour honorer des divinités locales[5]. Comme la *peregrinatio* latine, *tirthayatra* désigne un long voyage avant de dénoter la visite à un lieu saint,

2 Pour le détail, voir Banerjee-Dube 2007, 41–42. L'administration actuelle du temple recense jusqu'à 76 divinités incluses dans l'enceinte, allant des grands temples des déesses Lakshmi (épouse de Vishnu-Jagannath) et Vimala jusqu'à de simples statues ou images peintes.

3 Gutschow 2006, 18, au sujet de Varanasi.

4 Voir le *Purushottama Mahatmya* IV, sl. 39–44 ; Mohapatra 1979, 243.

5 Jacobsen 2013, 48–49.

Fig. 2. Illustration contemporaine de la cartographie symbolique du « domaine de la conque » centré sur le sanctuaire représenté par un *mandala* – diagramme (site officiel de l'administration du temple : www.shreejagannatha.in/shreekhetra).

en même temps que l'ascète errant devient le modèle du pèlerin (*yatri*). Ces sites acquièrent progressivement la réputation de laver les fautes, de faire gagner du mérite et des « fruits » terrestres (*punya*, *phala*), puis d'apporter la libération (*mukti*, *moksha*) du cycle des renaissances[6]. Hormis les reliquaires bouddhistes (*stupa*), des sanctuaires rupestres (taillés dans la roche) ne se développent qu'aux premiers siècles de notre ère, avant que des temples de pierre ne soient construits au 6ème s. Cet ancrage spatial des rituels s'accompagne de la production de textes, les *Purana* ou « Antiquités », inscrivant l'origine du sanctuaire dans une cosmogonie plus vaste, présentant aussi l'histoire du dieu honoré. Dès les premiers textes promoteurs de pèlerinages (tel le *Tirthayatraparvan*, du 3ème s. environ, intégré à l'épopée du *Mahabharata*), les sites sont associés aux jonctions des eaux fluviales, concentrant leurs vertus purificatrices et salvatrices[7]. Ces conceptions restent actuelles, mais à l'abri des temples, le cœur des pèlerinages s'est déplacé vers la « vision » (*darshan*) des statues des dieux et les offrandes des dévots à ces personnages considérés comme des souverains suprêmes.

Lieux à visiter et modèle du site de Bénarès transposé à Puri

Les livrets de pèlerinage et guides locaux actuels mentionnent des visites incontournables pour acquérir mérite et délivrance, dont les sites clés sont issus du texte le plus ancien relatant la légende de fondation du temple, le *Purushottama Mahatmya* (daté d'environ 1300[8]). Ces visites sont pourtant très variables, selon l'appartenance sectaire et le degré de dévotion des personnes, et nous verrons surtout que les réponses des pèlerins sont plus riches et ambivalentes que les textes. Quoi qu'il en soit, le récit de fondation du temple s'inspire de la rhétorique du sanctuaire de Bénares/Varanasi/Kashi (dédié au dieu Shiva), célébré pour ses « cinq gués » (*panchatirtha*) ou confluences (*sangam*) du Gange[9]. De même, le texte et les guides de pèlerinage recommandent la visite de « cinq gués » qui, à Puri, sont en réalité quatre réservoirs (*kunda*) et la « Grande mer » (*Mahodadhi*), c'est-à-dire l'océan Indien. Les réservoirs ou bassins artificiels sont de tailles et d'époques différentes :

6 Jacobsen 2013, 46, 54–55.
7 Jacobsen 2013, 56.
8 Cf. Kulke 1993, 24.
9 Eck 1983.

— le bassin de Rohini est un petit bassin, situé à l'intérieur de l'enceinte du temple. Il attire de fait moins l'attention qu'un arbre banyan (*ficus benghalensis*) qui se dresse non loin de lui, réputé millénaire et offrant son ombre bienvenue. Les femmes en particulier suspendent de petites pierres à ses branches après avoir formulé des vœux, pour obtenir santé et prospérité familiale[10]. Le thème de l'arbre à vœux est très commun en Inde, de même que celui du « banyan immortel » (*akshaya vata*), attribué tantôt à Shiva, tantôt à Vishnu. Le thème de l'arbre (ou d'un bosquet) et d'un point d'eau à l'origine d'un sanctuaire est une autre « scène primitive » très commune en Inde[11] ;
— le bassin de la Svetaganga (« le Gange blanc » au féminin) est situé au sud du temple de Jagannath, au bord de la route menant vers la plage. Il est fréquenté essentiellement par des femmes, à l'occasion de jeûnes et rituels votifs (*vrata*), au moment des fêtes de Jagannath, visant à attirer la prospérité et le bon augure (*mangal*) sur leur famille[12] ;
— au nord-est de la ville, le bassin d'Indradyumna porte le nom du roi fondateur du temple selon la légende, mais n'attire plus de pèlerin ;
— le bassin de Markandeya est situé près d'un sanctuaire de Shiva Markandeshvara, fondé au 11ème s. sur une colline au nord de Puri. Sa visite est également recommandée dans les textes, mais il est éloigné des parcours des pèlerins.

Les textes présentent tous ces sites comme ayant recueilli une part des eaux du déluge, lesquelles apporteraient la libération du cycle des renaissances. À ces sites s'ajoute le champ de crémation sur la plage (Swargadwar, lui aussi sur le modèle du champ de crémation du quai de Manikarnika à Bénarès).

A contrario, l'écrasante majorité des pèlerins au sanctuaire ignore ces sites et se concentre sur l'océan, qui s'étend à 1,5km depuis le parvis du temple, point d'orgue des voyages des pèlerins venus de l'Inde intérieure.

Les références textuelles au paysage « naturel » : la forêt, l'océan, l'arbre

Il existe trois grandes versions écrites du récit de fondation du temple qui divergent sur le rôle des différents acteurs du récit[13], mais s'accordent sur les grands traits de l'histoire, que la majorité des dévots connaît de la façon schématique suivante.

1. Il y a des millénaires, le dieu suprême réside dans un bois localisé vers Puri, sous la forme d'une statue de pierre bleue. Un chasseur/forestier (*sabara*) la découvre et lui rend un culte rustique mais sincère. Cet épisode initial affirme l'origine locale et dévotionnelle du culte.
2. Dans sa capitale en Inde centrale, le grand roi Indradyumna se languit, quant à lui, d'honorer la forme la plus parfaite du dieu et envoie un brahmane de confiance la découvrir. Le brahmane finit par rencontrer le chasseur et le convainc de lui montrer la statue. Tous deux prient la statue, mais elle disparaît avant l'arrivée du roi, car elle demande désormais la construction d'un temple. Cet épisode marque l'officialisation textuelle et l'institutionnalisation du culte.
3. Le dieu indique son retour en rêve, cette fois sous la forme d'un tronc d'arbre (*daru*[14]) échoué sur la plage. Dans le texte le plus ancien, ce tronc est comparé à un arbre banyan flottant sur les eaux cosmiques originelles.
4. L'artisan divin Vishvakarma se change en charpentier, pour sculpter une statue dans le tronc, à condition de travailler en secret. Le roi ne peut toutefois retenir sa curiosité, si bien que l'artisan abandonne la statue inachevée, sous sa forme actuelle.
5. Le roi Indradyumna fait alors bâtir le premier temple, lequel aurait été ensuite englouti sous les dunes de la plage. Le temple actuel serait le troisième, la succession des refondations témoignant de l'antiquité du site, suivant la théorie des créations et destructions successives lors des Âges cosmiques (*yuga*).

Un dieu local à l'identité changeante

Pour offrir quelques éléments de cadrage historique, l'actuel temple de Puri a été édifié à partir de 1136 environ, par Anantavarman Codaganga, un roi de la puissante dynastie régionale des Ganga de l'Est. Le temple était alors consacré au dieu Vishnu « Être suprême » (*Purushottama*), d'où le nom initial du sanctuaire : le « domaine de l'Être suprême » (*Purushottama Kshetra*). Le titre de « Seigneur du monde » (*Jagannath*) ne fut privilégié que bien plus

10 Cinq types d'arbres tendent à faire l'objet de rituels féminins pour garantir la paix et le bien-être familial, voir Haberman 2013. Les textes médiévaux paraissent localiser le banyan près du bassin ; ce n'est pas exactement le cas aujourd'hui.

11 Tarabout 1989.

12 Sur ces rites en général, voir Pearson 1996.

13 Les trois grandes sources écrites sont les suivantes : le *Purushottamakshetra Mahatmya* (partie du *Skanda Purana*, 13ème s. [?], mal daté), un chapitre du *Mahabharata oriya de Sarala Das* (Musali Parva, 15ème s.) et le *Deula tola* (16ème s., mais plusieurs versions). Dans le premier texte, les Sabara ne participent pas directement à la découverte de la statue et leur vieux chef Vishvavasu y apparaît comme un dévot vishnouïte, dont les descendants (non précisés) sont dits se charger des rites autour du corps/statue du dieu. Le deuxième texte est bien plus favorable aux Sabara, nomment les Daita, mais les relient non pas à Vishvavasu mais à Jara, un chasseur à la fois fils et meurtrier involontaire de Krishna (Hardenberg 2011, 20, 23, résumant les travaux de R. Geib, publiés en allemand en 1975 ; Rousseleau 2022).

14 Un nom de Jagannath est « l'Être absolu - tronc » (*Daru Brahma*).

Fig. 3. Une des plus anciennes représentations de la statue de Jagannath, temple de Konarak (13ème s.), conservée au *State Museum* de Bhubaneswar, Odisha (F. Mobio).

Fig. 4. Statue de Chaitanya à l'entrée de la plage de Puri, 2015 (F. Mobio).

tard, à partir du 15ème s., sous le fondateur d'une nouvelle dynastie, celle des Suryavamsi[15]. Au 16ème s., Jagannath est aussi identifié à un avatar ou une incarnation particulière de Vishnu : Krishna. Le seigneur du sanctuaire est donc identifié à plusieurs dieux, ce dont témoignent encore les dévots actuels.

Par ailleurs, l'apparence partiellement anthropomorphe du dieu a fait beaucoup spéculer sur ses origines : relique bouddhique, poteau sacrificiel « tribal », figure shivaïte à un pied (*Ekapada Bhairava*)[16] ? L'iconographie la plus ancienne (temple de Konarak, 13ème s., **Fig. 3**) le représente aux côtés de Shiva et Durga, deux divinités de royaumes voisins qui ont été remplacées ensuite par le frère et la sœur de Krishna (Balabhadra et Subhadra)...

Approche ethnographique : le « paysage » tel qu'il est vécu et exprimé aujourd'hui. Que voit-on face à l'Océan ?

L'approche ethnographique complète l'apport de la cartographie et des textes par l'enquête directe (dite « d'observation participante ») auprès des personnes fréquentant le lieu étudié[17]. À Puri, l'environnement « naturel » n'est plus visible qu'au bord de l'océan Indien. La plage est un lieu de repos, de fraîcheur et de divertissement, vis-à-vis de la ville bondée. À l'entrée de la plage de Puri lorsqu'on vient de la rue partant du temple se dresse une statue de Chaitanya, un saint mystique dévot de Krishna[18], ou son incarnation pour certains (**Fig. 4**). Les dévots de Krishna/Chaitanya comprennent la présence de la statue à cet endroit précis, car son hagiographie tisse des parallèles entre des épisodes de la vie du saint à Puri et des moments célèbres de la vie de Krishna dans le paysage de sa jeunesse, le Braj. Le mystique se serait enthousiasmé dans les dunes de la côte en les identifiant au mont Govardhana, lieu d'un exploit de Krishna, et se serait presque noyé dans la mer qu'il assimilait au fleuve Yamuna, un autre lieu emblématique de la vie de Krishna. À l'inverse, les autres pèlerins ne remarqueront même pas la statue à cet endroit.

L'Océan voit aussi de brefs gestes d'hommage et de purification, allant de quelques gouttes d'eau versées sur la tête des pèlerins à des immersions rapides dans les vagues. Pour la majorité des pèlerins, en effet, comme tout cours d'eau en Inde sur le modèle du Gange, la « Grande mer » (*Mahodadhi*) est purificatrice. Elle concentre d'autant plus cette vertu qu'elle collecte toutes les eaux fluviales, ce qui lui vaut le qualificatif de « roi des sites sacrés/confluents » (*tirtharaja*).

15 Kulke 1993.

16 Eschmann *et al.* 1978.

17 Le terrain pour cet article a été effectué à l'occasion de deux fêtes en 2014 et 2015, avec Francis Mobio (Unil, IHAR, FTSR), auteur de plusieurs photos reproduites ici. Le temple est interdit aux non-hindous ou étrangers reconnaissables (apparence, langue) et toute photo y est interdite.

18 Voir par exemple Lutjeharms 2014, sur les parallèles développés par ce courant entre sentiment mystique et émotion esthétique.

Fig. 5. Vishnu au visage de Jagannath, sur l'océan cosmique. Des photos encadrées montrent les troncs des arbres portant des marques interprétées comme le disque et la conque du dieu. Mur de restaurant, Puri, 2015 (F. Mobio).

D'autres dévots, plutôt locaux, disent recueillir la bénédiction de l'Océan en tant que beau-père de Jagannath. Lakshmi, la déesse épouse de Vishnu/Jagannath, est en effet fille de l'Océan. C'est aussi l'avis de trois vieux dévots népalais de Vishnou, interrogés sur place, qui ajoutent des références érudites. Selon eux, « l'Océan (*Samudra*) est la base/source (*adhan*) des joyaux/richesses (*ratna*, etc.), mais aussi de la vie (*jiban*) et de la création (*shrusti*) ». Lakshmi est aussi déesse de la fortune et célèbre pour être née, parmi d'autres « joyaux », du barattage de la mer de lait, un épisode mythologique célèbre. Ainsi, malgré ses dangers, l'Océan est-il célébré comme vaste et généreux, pourvoyeur de merveilles et de petites pierres précieuses, ou simplement colorées, charriées et polies par les fleuves, que les pêcheurs locaux proposent à la vente.

Une troupe d'ascètes Ramanandi ou dévots de Rama, venus d'Uttar Pradesh et croisés sur la plage, détaille encore ces réponses. Selon eux, les pèlerins doivent venir voir l'Océan, car ce dernier est père et réalité suprême (*paramapita*), présent à la création comme lors de la destruction (*pralaya*) cyclique du monde. Sa présence immuable témoignerait de son éternité. L'Océan conserverait ainsi les eaux des déluges, préludes aux créations successives et forme visible du néant sur lequel Vishnu sommeille entre deux créations, reposant sur le cobra cosmique (**Figs 5–6**). Situé au bord de l'Océan, le sanctuaire de Puri est jugé inatteignable par les ravages du temps, suivant le mythe de fondation du temple, ce qui l'ancre à la « racine » même du monde.

Enfin, l'immensité (*bishalata*) de l'Océan contribuerait à élargir l'esprit (*manas*). Cette réflexion peut paraître bien abstraite, mais j'ai pu observer un homme qui semblait prier face à l'Océan (**Fig. 7**). Interrogé, il me dit être simplement en vacances, mais n'avoir pu que déclamer quelques vers face à l'étendue marine : « Ô Seigneur, tu es si vaste, sans limites, je ne suis rien comparé à toi ! ». La poésie dévotionnelle oriya est riche et diffusée. Par ailleurs, Jagannath y est aussi célébré comme vaisseau salvateur du cycle des renaissances (*samsara*) sur « l'océan du monde ».

La présence du dieu dans l'arbre

Les statues du dieu Jagannath, de son frère et de sa sœur, faites de bois de margousier (*neem, Azadirachta indica*), sont périodiquement renouvelées en même temps, lors d'une série de rituels appelée *Navakalebara*, « renouvellement du corps ». Cet événement prend place lors d'une année où un mois supplémentaire s'intercale dans le calendrier luni-solaire du temple. La totalité des cérémonies durent 65 jours, de la quête de l'arbre qui fournira le bois des nouvelles statues, en forêt, jusqu'à leur sculpture et leur consécration au temple.

Tout commence le dixième jour de la quinzaine claire du mois de Chaitra (mars–avril). Ce jour-là, une équipe de prêtres brahmanes et divers serviteurs du temple choisis pour l'événement partent à pied vers un temple de la déesse Mangala situé à 65 km de Puri (Kakatpur), qu'ils atteignent en cinq jours. Le groupe s'installe dans un monastère proche, mais vient rendre hommage à la

Fig. 6. Portail d'un monastère figurant l'image de Vishnu-Jagannath reposant sur le serpent cosmique. Puri, 2014 (R. Rousseleau).

Fig. 7. Le vacancier priant devant l'immensité de l'océan Indien. Puri, 2014 (F. Mobio).

déesse afin d'obtenir des signes et des rêves divinatoires qui pourront orienter leur quête « en forêt » (*vanajaga jatra*).

L'arbre qui incarnera Jagannath, en particulier, doit être localisé dans les alentours d'une rivière, d'un monastère, d'un champ de crémation et d'une termitière et témoigner également de la présence d'un serpent. Il doit en outre posséder quatre branches principales (comme les quatre bras des anciennes statues de Vishnu) et montrer des marques en forme de disque et de conque (**Fig. 5**). D'autres signes sont évoqués, mais paraissent moins importants dans la détermination. Lorsque le choix est fait, le groupe s'installe à proximité de l'arbre, sous un pavillon sacrificiel (*yagnasala*) en bois et chaume. Le choix de l'arbre entre plusieurs candidats potentiels vaut reconnaissance de la présence du dieu, si bien que le tronc de l'arbre reçoit un hommage rituel (*darupuja*), une onction et est revêtu d'un tissu. Le second jour, les brahmanes védiques dirigent une série de rites, culminant avec un feu sacrificiel et l'invocation d'autres divinités (Narasimha, Kali). L'arbre est aspergé d'eau, de cendre sacrificielle et de beurre clarifié, puis concilié en étant prié d'excuser l'abattage qui va suivre. Un officiant (*Pati Mahapatra*) touche l'arbre avec une hache d'or miniature, puis un second avec une hache d'argent et enfin l'aîné des charpentiers frappe le tronc avec une véritable hache de fer. Il abandonne toutefois l'abattage à ses aides et aux villageois. Les branches sont coupées et enterrées sur place. Le tronc (*daru*) est revêtu de tissus de soie et chargé sur un chariot, qui est tiré à mains nues jusqu'à Puri. La même procédure est globalement effectuée pour les trois divinités.

Les troncs sont accueillis dans la liesse par la population, puis par le roi et tous les serviteurs du temple, avant d'entrer dans l'enceinte du sanctuaire en musique. Ils sont lavés, puis un nouveau sacrifice védique est réalisé. À partir du lendemain, dans un pavillon spécialisé, les charpentiers (*Badhei Maharana*) commencent à sculpter puis à assembler les squelettes de bois. Une fois cette phase achevée, le rituel le plus secret (*gupta niti* ou *gupta seva*) est le transfert de « l'âme/essence » (*Brahman*, *Brahmapadartha*) de l'ancienne statue de Jagannath vers la nouvelle. Il s'agit d'un paquet contenant un objet secret, qui est transféré la nuit, dans l'obscurité, par un serviteur dont on a bandé les yeux et les mains.

Les corps des dieux sont parachevés par les charpentiers, puis par des serviteurs du temple (*Daita*) qui ajoutent sept enveloppes aux squelettes de bois : la moelle (huile de camphre, noire), les vaisseaux sanguins (lanières de coton rouge), la chair (résine d'arbre Sal mêlée de camphre, musc et pâte de santal, jaune) la peau (tissu de coton clair), recouverte de pâte de santal et d'une fine couche de chaux. Les corps sont revêtus de tissus de soie. Enfin, un peintre peint le visage puis la pupille des yeux, tandis que des brahmanes récitent des mantras, lors de la « cérémonie des yeux » (*netrotsava*). Ce rituel ouvre les fenêtres de l'âme divine au monde extérieur et lui permet d'y répandre sa grâce. Aussi les statues sont-elles offertes à la vue de la foule, marquant la fin des cérémonies de *Navakalebara*.

Conclusion

Dans la restitution du « paysage religieux » dans sa complexité, l'anthropologie a l'avantage de pouvoir approfondir directement auprès des dévots actuels leurs représentations et perceptions culturelles des espaces et des lieux rituels, qu'ils soient monumentaux — dans le cas abordé le temple d'un lieu régional, Jagannath — ou « naturels » — ici la forêt et l'océan. L'article a d'abord situé le temple central dans une cartographie spatiale et symbolique, dans un réseau d'autres sanctuaires, avant de le mettre en relation avec les éléments de l'environnement choisis comme référents fondateurs et pérennes, dans les textes ainsi que dans l'iconographie. À cette complémentarité des sources, commune en archéologie, s'ajoute ici l'apport de l'enquête de terrain. Celle-ci révèle que les références textuelles sont à la fois partagées et soumises à variations, selon le bagage des pèlerins interrogés. Nous avons vu ainsi que le « désir de rivage », ou imaginaire du bord de mer[19], évoque diverses associations, en Inde comme ailleurs. Enfin, la référence à une forêt originelle reste présente dans l'abattage périodique d'un arbre de la région pour recréer la statue du dieu. Les photomontages qui servent de souvenirs de pèlerinage synthétisent ces références plurielles : certains représentent Jagannath sous la forme d'un simple tronc (*daru*), d'autres sous les traits de Krishna, d'autres encore représentent Jagannath, son frère et sa sœur devant une tour du temple, sur fond des vagues de l'océan surmontées de Vishnu, accompagné de Lakshmi sur le cobra cosmique Ananta (**Fig. 8**). Paysages naturel et monumental sont ici clairement amalgamés autour de références fondatrices et rituelles.

Fig. 8. Photomontage représentant Jagannath, son frère et sa sœur devant une tour du temple, l'océan et Vishnu accompagné de Lakshmi, sur le cobra cosmique Ananta. Puri, 2014 (R. Rousseleau).

19 Corbin 1988.

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Abstract

This chapter offers a counterpoint to the notion of "sacred landscape" by approaching it through the lens of contemporary Indian ethnology. Rather than focusing solely on archaeological questions of sanctuaries, their mapping, and their interrelations (such as center and periphery),

it examines the temple of the regional god Jagannath in Puri (Odisha, eastern India) as part of a wider network of sanctuaries. Ethnographic inquiry, much like textual analysis in Classical studies, provides access not only to the spatial organization of cult sites but also to the cultural representations and uses of space, whether expressed in the temple's foundation myths or embodied in ritual practices. The Jagannath temple, in particular, stands in direct relationship with natural features such as the forest and the ocean—elements that in India are perceived in culturally distinctive ways, though not without aesthetic appreciation. One ritual is especially revealing: the periodic felling of a regional tree to carve a new image of the god, a practice in which the enduring reference to the forest becomes materially and symbolically manifest.

4. PERCEPTIONS ET CONSTRUCTIONS DU PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX EN GRÈCE ANCIENNE : FORMES ET FONCTIONS DE LA CENTRALITÉ

François de Polignac

Comme Samuel Verdan le montre clairement dans le premier chapitre de ce volume, la notion de « paysage religieux » est susceptible d'être comprise de plusieurs façons. Tout en partant des mêmes objets, elle peut recouvrir des ensembles de signification assez variés où on distingue deux orientations principales. L'une privilégie une forme d'archéologie du paysage où, avec d'autres traces de l'interaction entre l'homme et son milieu, la composante religieuse est décrite comme une réalité objective, constituée de lieux et de parcours repérables, cartographiables et analysables de l'extérieur, pour ainsi dire en surplomb. L'autre met plutôt l'accent sur la façon dont ces lieux et pratiques cultuels pouvaient être perçus dans des contextes différents et cherche à identifier de l'intérieur les systèmes de représentation qui leur donnaient sens en les intégrant dans des constructions symboliques variables[1]. Mes propres travaux s'étant d'abord inscrits dans la première tendance, avant de contribuer à penser la seconde, je considère que cette ambivalence, loin de justifier l'abandon de la notion de paysage, est une invitation à maintenir une sorte de dialectique constante entre deux approches qui ne peuvent ni se superposer, ni s'exclure mutuellement. Une marge d'incertitude peut être propice à l'émergence de nouvelles questions hors des catégories toute faites. La volonté taxonomique et l'obligation pour tout objet de répondre à une définition et une seule sont des contraintes de la logique moderne qui ne correspondent pas au fonctionnement profondément dialectique de la pensée grecque où la mise en relation, voire la mise en opposition, plutôt qu'une donnée ontologique, est une construction nécessaire au mouvement et à la création. Vouloir à tout prix mettre chaque objet dans une case peut sembler un réquisit de la pensée scientifique mais nous enferme dans une impasse du point de vue anthropologique.

Assurément, la présente contribution entend prolonger la réflexion sur le paysage en tant que représentation. Je distingue volontiers « l'espace », concept caractérisé par une forme d'objectivation du monde, mesurable et par conséquent réductible à des formes abstraites de représentation, du « paysage » qui suppose un observateur, un regard, donc une perception bien évidemment déterminée par la culture de cet observateur et susceptible de l'influencer en retour. Cette dimension culturelle mobilise des savoirs et croyances communs et fait de la perception une expérience construite et partagée par un groupe. Le paysage est donc défini comme une construction culturelle dont l'étude, dans une société donnée, ne peut faire l'économie d'une phénoménologie de la perception selon laquelle le monde extérieur n'est pas une donnée objective qui s'impose à nous mais une expérience faite par le corps et à travers les catégories mentales.

Le paysage, en conséquence, englobe l'espace qu'il appréhende, mais ne se réduit pas à lui. L'espace peut être considéré comme une donnée stable et relativement constante, même s'il connaît des évolutions — ainsi l'espace religieux est-il marqué par l'histoire des cultes et les changements qu'elle suscite pour les lieux, les pratiques, les parcours. Mais la perception, elle, dépend du contexte de l'observation et des facteurs qui peuvent l'influencer : elle est donc fluide, variable, et génère différents niveaux d'expérience. C'est pourquoi le paysage est pluridimensionnel, multiple — selon les contextes, un même objet peut se voir attribuer des significations qui ne sont pas totalement étrangères l'une à l'autre, mais mettent en avant plutôt une facette ou une autre de cet objet. Dans le domaine religieux, un même lieu de culte peut être affecté de valeurs proches mais néanmoins distinctes selon le profil des communautés cultuelles qui le fréquentent. De ce fait, la perception peut associer, selon les circonstances, des ensembles d'objets, des réseaux de périmètre variable. À rebours de « l'aplatissement » que produit l'espace (dont la représentation cartographique est une des traductions), le paysage affecte, selon le contexte, selon l'intention de l'observateur, une valeur différenciée (on aimerait pouvoir utiliser ici le terme anglais de *salience*) aux objets visibles dans cet espace. En outre, la perception peut aussi associer certains de ces objets à d'autres qui ne sont pas immédiatement visibles mais leur font néanmoins écho et sont donc présents à l'esprit. Le paysage est une forme de conscience de l'espace qui peut articuler du visible et du non-visible[2].

1 Voir chapitre 1 dans le présent volume.

2 Voir par exemple Grandazzi 2010, ainsi que Polignac 2010 et 2016.

Toute enquête sur le paysage passe donc par la mise au jour des paramètres de compréhension d'un espace. Mais cet espace n'est pas nécessairement défini à l'avance par des critères extérieurs — par exemple quand on se réfère à un territoire, pour ne prendre que cet exemple classique, ou encore à un certain type d'environnement. Enquêter sur le paysage ne se réduit pas à prendre un espace prédéfini pour y introduire des dynamiques de perception : la perception elle-même est susceptible de dessiner un espace où certaines significations sont en jeu ; elle devient donc élément de construction d'un espace religieux. C'est sans doute là que joue l'interaction, le va-et-vient entre les deux conceptions et les deux courants d'analyse évoqués plus haut, et c'est cette articulation que je souhaite explorer ici.

J'ai choisi pour cela d'examiner diverses formes de « centralité » religieuse. La fonction de certains sanctuaires comme « lieu central » dans la genèse et l'histoire de différentes formations sociales et politiques est maintenant largement reconnue. Le rôle des modalités et degrés de participation aux rites, aux rassemblements et partages rituels dans les processus de construction d'une communauté, de quelque nature qu'elle soit, est bien identifié. Cette centralité est donc définie par rapport à un espace où se dessine clairement l'articulation entre le cultuel et le politique. Peut-on cependant déplacer l'analyse et penser la centralité comme objet de perception et facteur de construction du paysage religieux en dehors de cadres sociaux et politiques constitués ? La centralité est-elle une donnée stable ou bien, pour un même lieu, peut-elle être affectée de significations qui évoluent selon le contexte historique ? Un même lieu peut-il être considéré à la fois comme central et marginal ? Il s'agit là de questions qui concernent bien la perception que l'on peut avoir du caractère central d'un lieu, plus que sa position dans l'espace. Et puisque cette rencontre est organisée par l'École suisse d'archéologie en Grèce, dont les travaux tiennent depuis cinquante ans une place importante dans mes propres recherches[3], j'ai plaisir à rendre ici hommage à cette institution et à ses chercheurs en appuyant mes réflexions sur des fouilles actuellement pratiquées par ses équipes.

Zeus, du haut de ses sommets

Les fouilles entreprises depuis 2021 au sommet du mont Oros ou Hellanion Oros à Égine[4], siège du culte de Zeus Hellanios, dans le cadre d'une collaboration entre l'Éphorie du Pirée et des îles et l'École suisse d'archéologie[5], m'ont amené à rouvrir le dossier des « cultes de sommet » de Zeus (voire Zeus et Héra) auquel je m'étais déjà intéressé à quelques reprises[6]. Je laisse de côté le débat théorique sur l'appellation même de « culte de sommet » ou « sanctuaire de sommet » qui, en Grèce continentale et égéenne, n'a pas fait l'objet d'une définition aussi précise que dans l'archéologie de la Crète minoenne. En Crète, la qualification de culte de sommet (*peak sanctuary*) est réservée à une catégorie de sanctuaires combinant un certain nombre de facteurs topographiques à une typologie particulière du mobilier et des traits architecturaux[7]. En Grèce même, son usage est plus lâche et elle désigne parfois des réalités très différentes les unes des autres[8]. Sans aller jusqu'à plaquer sur le monde grec l'ensemble des paramètres énoncés pour le monde minoen, il peut être utile de prendre en considération quelques-uns des critères topographiques identifiés en Crète, tout en gardant l'enquête centrée sur les cultes de Zeus afin de bien circonscrire la question : localisation du culte sur un sommet d'altitude moyenne, ce qui permet un accès relativement aisé ; montagne bien détachée et identifiée dans le paysage ; relative proximité avec des habitats et des aires d'activité humaine ; bonne visibilité réciproque entre les centres d'habitat et les sommets ; intervisibilité avec d'autres sommets où des cultes sont attestés, intervisibilité dont l'étendue semble délimiter des groupements cultuels régionaux.

L'Hellanion Oros correspond bien à tous ces paramètres. Sans être très élevé (531m), il se détache parfaitement au sud de l'île d'Égine, immédiatement reconnaissable grâce à sa forme conique (**Figs 1** et **2**). Le sommet où se trouvait l'autel de Zeus est accessible sans difficulté excessive, et offre une relation visuelle

3 Depuis que, grâce à la regrettée Claude Mossé qui dirigeait ma maîtrise, je découvrais avec enthousiasme les travaux de Claude Bérard sur Érétrie.

4 Dans les publications, la montagne est diversement appelée mont Oros, mont Hellanion, ou Hellanion Oros : je suis ce dernier parti, adopté dans les publications récentes de l'ESAG.

5 Les résultats des premières campagnes sont présentés et discutés dans Krapf *et al.* 2022 ; 2023 ; 2024 ; 2025 (avec un historique de la découverte du sanctuaire et des fouilles antérieures) ; et dans Vokotopoulos *et al.*, à paraître. Je remercie Stella Chryssoulaki, alors éphore des Antiquités de l'Attique occidentale, du Pirée et des îles, de m'avoir associé à ce programme de fouille en qualité de collaborateur scientifique, en écho à une conversation que nous avions eue quelques années auparavant sur le promontoire d'Artémis Munichia au Pirée, bien en vue d'Égine et du mont Oros. Je remercie également Leonidas Vokotopoulos pour sa relecture attentive de mon texte et pour ses suggestions, ainsi que Thierry Theurillat qui a retravaillé les figures et élaboré les figures 12–13.

6 En particulier Polignac 1995 ; 2002. Les analyses présentées ici résultent d'observations effectuées dans les régions concernées en 2017, 2021 et 2022 : quel que soit l'apport des SIG, l'autopsie demeure indispensable pour faire la part entre ce qui *peut* être *vu* et ce qui *doit* être *regardé*.

7 Peatfield 2009, 253–255. L'auteur attire cependant l'attention sur les risques d'une classification trop statique masquant les changements de dynamique d'une époque à une autre.

8 En premier lieu dans l'étude fondatrice d'A. B. Cook, dont la typologie a évidemment vieilli : Cook 1914, 117–186. L'ample travail de Belis 2015, quelles qu'en soient les qualités, mêle des types de sanctuaire très différents les uns des autres.

Fig. 1. Égine et l'Hellanion Oros vus du Pirée (F. de Polignac).

Fig. 2. Égine et l'Hellanion Oros vus de Calaurie (F. de Polignac).

aussi bien avec les habitats antiques du territoire le plus proche qu'avec la ville d'Égine au nord-ouest et le sanctuaire d'Aphaia au nord/nord-est, un peu plus éloignés. Mais c'est surtout le critère de l'intervisibilité avec d'autres cultes de sommet qui va retenir notre attention[9]. L'Hellanion Oros occupe en effet une position tout à fait particulière au centre du golfe Saronique, où il est visible et reconnaissable de pratiquement tout l'arc de cercle formé par les côtes de l'Attique (depuis le cap Sounion), de la Mégaride, de la Corinthie et de l'Argolide (jusqu'à Hydra) (seul fait exception le secteur côtier de l'Attique et de la Mégaride où l'île de Salamine fait écran (**Figs 1** et **2**). Pour les marins parcourant le golfe comme pour les populations des régions avoisinantes, il s'agissait d'un point de repère familier qui attirait d'autant plus les regards qu'il était, avec l'Hymette et le Parnès, une des montagnes de la région où l'apparition de nuages annonçait l'arrivée de la pluie et des tempêtes[10]. À l'inverse, c'est aussi un lieu d'observation panoramique idéal. De là-haut, la vue embrasse toute l'étendue du Saronique (seul y échappe le bras de mer entre Salamine et le continent) jusqu'à l'îlot d'Hagios Georgios, à l'entrée du golfe, par temps clair, voire même parfois jusqu'aux premières Cyclades[11].

Puis, sur le continent, par-delà la ligne du littoral et des plaines côtières, apparaît toute une couronne de reliefs et de montagnes où se détachent très clairement plusieurs sommets sur lesquels l'existence d'un culte de Zeus est attestée d'une manière ou d'une autre à l'époque historique. Au nord-est, l'Hymette et le Parnès sont immédiatement visibles en Attique (**Fig. 3**)[12] ; par temps très clair, le mont Ochi qui domine le sud de l'Eubée apparaît au nord-est par-delà l'Attique, dans l'échancrure de la Mésogée entre l'Hymette à l'ouest et les monts Merenda et Panion à l'est (**Fig. 4**). Le sommet du Cithéron, aux confins de l'Attique, de la Béotie et de la Mégaride, apparaît au nord/nord-ouest en arrière de Mégare, par-dessus les crêtes de Mégaride. À l'ouest/sud-ouest, en Argolide, le mont Arachnaion surplombe le vallon qui relie Épidaure à la plaine d'Argos (**Fig. 5**)[13]. Tous ces sommets répondent aux critères topographiques énoncés plus haut. En particulier,

9 La contribution de R. Simenel dans le présent volume montre l'intérêt d'une étude de l'intervisibilité dans un tout autre contexte.

10 Théophraste, *Les signes du temps* I 20 ; 24 ; III 43 ; 47 (éd. CUF). Il est bien connu que, dans presque tous les cultes de sommet dont il est question ici (à l'exception du Cithéron pour lequel cet aspect n'est pas mentionné dans nos sources), Zeus était honoré en tant que maître du temps météorologique et dispensateur de pluie, même si ce n'était pas là son seul aspect, comme on le verra : Cook 1940, 525–569 et récemment Voyatzis *et al.* 2024.

11 Je remercie Tobias Krapf de m'avoir communiqué une photographie, prise par temps très clair à la mi-septembre 2024, où on voit pointer, à l'horizon, Kythnos, Sériphos, Siphnos et Milos. Je le remercie également de m'avoir autorisé à utiliser les vues qu'il a prises le même jour vers l'Argolide et l'Eubée.

12 On identifie aussi très bien les collines de la Mésogée (Merenda, Panion et Keratovouni) qui, d'après les traces découvertes sur leurs sommets lors de prospections, sont parfois considérées comme de possibles lieux de culte : Langdon 1976, 102–104 ; Polignac 1995, 94–98 ; D'Onofrio 1997, 85 ; Van den Eijnde 2010, 201, 227, 234. Les données sont cependant limitées et, en dépit de ressemblances avec les cultes de l'Hymette et du Parnès (restes de cendres et d'ossements sur les monts Merenda et Panion, tessons à graffiti sur le Panion), le ou les destinataire(s) de ces cultes éventuels ne sont pas explicitement connus. Je les laisse donc au second plan, sans exclure pour autant qu'ils puissent entrer dans le tableau dressé ici.

13 Au nord-ouest, on aperçoit aussi le mont Loutraki qui, en Corinthie, se détache à l'extrémité occidentale des monts Géraniens et surplombe l'isthme de Corinthe. Cette montagne compléterait bien l'arc de cercle décrit ici et l'hypothèse a été émise de l'existence d'un culte à son sommet, mais les données sont trop maigres et confuses pour l'inclure dans la discussion : Langdon 1976, 108 ; Belis 2015, cat. no 49, 180–181.

Fig. 3. L'Hymette (à droite) et le Parnès (à gauche) vus de l'Hellanion Oros. Dans l'ovale : le sanctuaire d'Aphaia (F. de Polignac).

ils sont tous d'une altitude inférieure à 1500 m[14] et sont néanmoins en grande partie visibles entre eux (de l'Arachnaion au sud, par exemple, on identifie sans mal l'Hellanion Oros, l'Hymette, le Parnès et même le Cithéron, par-delà les crêtes de Mégaride) : deux d'entre eux, le Cithéron et l'Arachnaion, font partie de la chaîne des sommets où des signaux de feu, dans l'*Agamemnon* d'Eschyle, forment relais depuis la Troade jusqu'à Argos pour transmettre la nouvelle de la chute de Troie[15]. Ils constituent ainsi un réseau dense de relations visuelles croisées où l'Hellanion Oros occupe une position relativement centrale, valorisée par la configuration du golfe Saronique (**Fig. 6**). Cette centralité est d'autant plus sensible que le maillage serré de ce réseau ne semble pas s'étendre au-delà. Il se prolonge par quelques « échappées » limitées, par exemple vers le mont Hélicon, plus à l'ouest en Béotie, discernable depuis l'Arachnaion (mais pas depuis l'Hellanion Oros). Mais, au vu des données disponibles, on ne remarque pas de connexion visuelle avec d'autres cultes de sommet de Zeus plus lointains, ni vers l'Égée, ni du côté de la Béotie, ni du côté de l'Argolide[16]. L'ensemble semble donc bien former un groupe régional, un réseau cultuel délimité, semblable aux groupements identifiés en Crète, et centré sur Égine et son culte.

À cette cohérence topographique correspond une cohérence chronologique. Pour s'en tenir aux données d'époque historique — nous nous intéresserons à l'âge du Bronze plus loin —, et en dépit des incertitudes qui entourent certaines datations faute de publications suffisantes, les cultes pour lesquels nous disposons de données archéologiques semblent débuter au plus tôt à la fin du Protogéométrique (Parnès, Hymette, Hellanion Oros ?), et au plus tard au Géométrique récent (Arachnaion). Tous connaissent une phase d'activité particulièrement intensive, sous forme de pratiques de sacrifice et de banquet rituel attestées par des restes abondants de cendres et de céramique, dans le courant du 8ème s. et pendant une grande partie de l'époque archaïque[17]. Un déclin de ces pratiques s'amorce cependant dès le 6ème s. dans la plupart des cas et les formes de fréquentation pour les époques classique et hellénistique sont souvent très évanescentes[18] : à défaut d'une interruption complète du culte, celui-ci ne semble plus

14 Hymette : 1026 m ; Arachnaion : 1199 m ; Ochi : 1372 m ; Cithéron : 1404 m ; Parnès : 1412 m. Les collines attiques mentionnées *supra* n. 12 sont comprises entre 615 et 650 m d'altitude.

15 Eschyle, *Agamemnon* 296–309.

16 Le plus proche sommet associé à un culte attesté de Zeus, celui du mont Apesas en Corinthie occidentale (Belis 2015, cat. no 8, 22–31), n'est visible ni de l'Hellanion Oros ni de l'Arachnaion ; le relais visuel ne pourrait se faire que par le mont Loutraki en Corinthie.

17 Parnès : Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa – Vivliodetis 2015, 157–162 ; Hymette : Langdon 1976, 53–74 ; Ochi : Belis 2015, cat. no 60, 226–228 ; Hellanion Oros : Vokotopoulos *et al.* à paraître, note la présence de céramique protogéométrique mais reste prudent sur la datation des débuts du culte à l'époque géométrique ; Arachnaion : Rupp 1976. La période du haut archaïsme est également celle de la plus forte fréquentation des collines de la Mésogée attique et du mont Apesas en Corinthie : Langdon 1976, 100–103, 107–112 ; Zolotkinova 2013, 113–115. Les données très limitées dont on dispose pour le mont Hélicon montrent une fréquentation du sommet à l'époque archaïque (y compris avec des tessons porteurs de graffiti comme sur l'Hymette), mais la topographie et la chronologie du culte restent assez vagues : Aravantinos 1996.

18 Outre l'Hellanion Oros, seul le mont Ochi semble fréquenté de nouveau à l'époque hellénistique, en relation avec la *drakospita*

Fig. 4. Le mont Ochi en Eubée vu de l'Hellanion Oros, par-delà l'Attique (T. Krapf – ESAG).

Fig. 5. Le mont Arachnaion vu de l'Hellanion Oros (T. Krapf – ESAG).

fonctionner comme un lieu de grand concours de fidèles. Ce n'est que sur l'Hellanion Oros qu'une continuité est manifeste, mais avec un déplacement d'une partie du rituel vers l'aire cultuelle aménagée au 6ème s. sur la pente nord de la montagne, de façon à pouvoir y accueillir des rassemblements de peuple et des collections d'offrandes que le sommet, trop exigu, ne pouvait recevoir. Comme dans le cas du Lycée en Arcadie, une instance publique, en l'occurrence la cité d'Égine qui a fait du culte de Zeus Hellanios, en tant que père d'Éaque, un de ses marqueurs d'identité civique, procède à des aménagements spatiaux et architecturaux qui dénotent le statut public et officiel du culte (néanmoins sans y édifier de véritable temple)[19]. Il faut, ensuite, attendre l'époque romaine tardive pour que ces cultes connaissent un regain de fréquentation : la découverte récurrente de lampes (parfois approximativement datées autour du 4ème s. ap. J.-C.) sur plusieurs de ces mêmes sommets dénote à nouveau des formes de culte partagées — un fait souvent négligé, dont l'articulation avec les pratiques antérieures reste à déterminer[20].

Ces cultes traduisent donc une expérience religieuse qui, à certaines époques, est partagée dans toute une aire transcendant les frontières régionales et politiques des époques historiques. À quoi correspond cette forme de communauté cultuelle ? Le culte de Zeus, qui transcendait les divisions politiques par les rassemblements dans ses grands sanctuaires panhelléniques, paraît les dépasser également en étant pratiqué de manière conjointe à un tout autre niveau, non pas en un lieu central unique mais dans des lieux qui faisaient réseau par leur caractéristiques communes et leur intervisibilité. Comment celle-ci fonctionnait-elle ? Bien entendu, on pense à la visibilité partagée des feux, voire des fumées, lors des rites pratiqués sur ces sommets, ce qui pose la question de l'existence d'un calendrier commun pour les célébrations du culte[21]. Mais comment expliquer que les rythmes qui scandent l'histoire de ces cultes soient les mêmes, toutes régions confondues, à une exception majeure près ? Comment penser la formation et l'évolution d'un type de communauté cultuelle qui ne se constitue pas en un lieu central partagé[22], mais dans une interaction visuelle entre plusieurs lieux séparés ? Comment s'effectuait l'articulation entre les réalités et particularités locales et une dynamique suprarégionale ? Constater l'existence d'un réseau d'intervisibilité ne suffit pas à comprendre quelles intentions il traduit. Pour

proche du sommet (Langdon 1976, 110 ; Belis 2015, cat. no 60, 226–229).

19 Polinskaya 2013, 327–336. Un petit temple fut peut-être érigé, vers la fin de l'époque archaïque, sur le sommet où les sacrifices proprement dits continuèrent d'être pratiqués : Vokotopoulos *et al.* à paraître.

20 Hymette : Langdon 1976, 76–78 ; Parnès : Langdon 1976, 100 ; Belis 2015, cat. no 70, 264 ; Hellanion Oros : Krapf *et al.* 2025, 272 ; Arachnaion : Rupp 1976 note la présence de tessons d'époque romaine, mais sans en préciser la typologie ou la chronologie.

21 Voir aussi les observations de Wiznura – Williamson 2018–2020 sur l'étendue des aires de visibilité autour de montagnes comme le Lycée et le Pélion et sur le rôle de cette visibilité dans la construction d'une mémoire sociale partagée.

22 En dépit de ce qu'affirment certains auteurs comme Isocrate (9, *Evagoras*, 14–15), le culte éginète de Zeus Hellanios n'a jamais été un culte partagé, même si sa légende de fondation lui donne parfois une dimension panhellénique : Polinskaya 2013, 336–343.

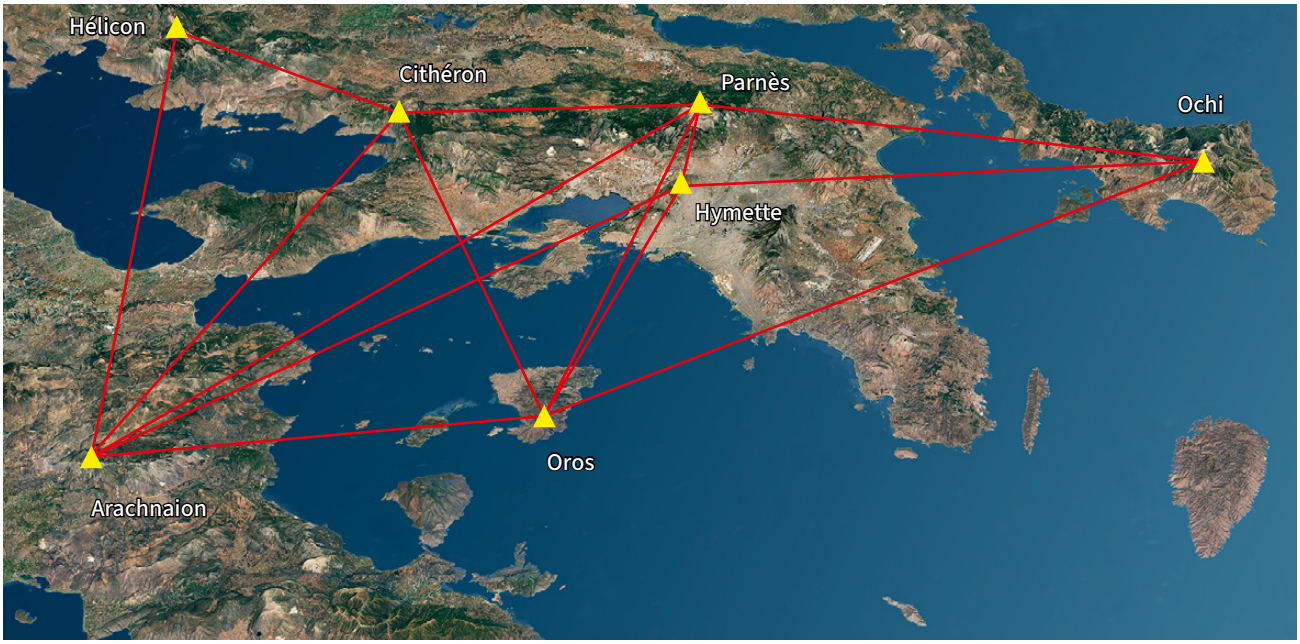

Fig. 6. Le réseau d'intervisibilités autour du golfe Saronique (d'après Google Earth).

aller au-delà, il faut dépasser l'observation statique et replacer ces cultes dans une perspective historique[23].

On sait maintenant que plusieurs de ces cultes de sommet ont été pratiqués dès l'âge du Bronze. Sur l'Hellanion Oros, l'existence d'une phase d'activité rituelle remontant à l'Helladique récent, et plus particulièrement à l'époque palatiale (HR IIIA2–IIIB, v. 1370–1200), avait été postulée à partir des découvertes des fouilles anciennes et semble confirmée par les dernières recherches[24]. Les fouilles menées au sommet de l'Arachnaion ont également mis au jour les vestiges d'un culte pratiqué de manière intensive à l'époque palatiale[25]. Par contrecoup, ces découvertes redonnent un certain intérêt à l'hypothèse d'une fréquentation cultuelle de l'Hymette durant la même période : la dizaine de tessons de l'HR IIIA2–IIIB publiés par M. Langdon ne constituent certes pas une preuve, mais sont un indice qui ne peut pas être totalement négligé[26]. Cependant, l'Hellanion Oros se distingue de ces derniers sites par l'existence d'une phase de fréquentation cultuelle encore plus ancienne, dès la première moitié du deuxième millénaire av. J.-C. : l'hypothèse émise par W. Gauss en 2007 paraît confirmée par la découverte en plusieurs endroits du sommet de tessons datés de l'Helladique moyen, associés à des cendres et ossements d'animaux brûlés[27].

À la centralité topographique correspondrait donc une antériorité chronologique. L'apparition et la diffusion des cultes de sommet de Zeus s'inscrivent dès lors dans une temporalité longue, sont associées à des contextes différents, et peuvent ainsi obéir à des logiques variables. La naissance du culte de l'Hellanion Oros à l'Helladique moyen paraît coïncider avec l'apogée du site de Colonna à Égine qui, au cœur d'un réseau dense de relations maritimes, joue un rôle central de redistribution et de contrôle des échanges entre la Crète et l'espace égéen d'un côté, la Grèce continentale de l'autre[28]. L'apparition d'un culte sur la montagne qui domine le golfe Saronique, peut-être sous l'influence des pratiques minoennes[29], ferait de ce sommet ce que

23 Peatfield 2009, 257–259, parle ainsi de « dynamic visibility » pour les cultes crétois : la mise à profit – ou non – de la visibilité peut varier selon les contextes. L'utilisation de certaines des montagnes étudiées ici comme postes d'observation et relais de signaux lumineux aux époques classique et hellénistique montre la diversité des usages qui pouvaient coexister ou se succéder.

24 Pilafidis-Williams 1995 ; Gauss 2007a ; Salavoura 2018, 75–80 ; Krapf *et al.* 2021, 140 ; Vokotopoulos *et al.* à paraître.

25 Psychoyos – Karatzikos 2015.

26 Langdon 1976, 53–55. Rappelons qu'une partie de la céramique trouvée dans les fouilles anciennes de l'Hymette a été perdue (Langdon 1976, 52 n. 2), ce qui rend difficile toute conclusion. Placer l'origine du culte à l'Helladique ancien sur la foi d'un seul tesson, aussi significatif soit-il (Ruppenstein 2011), paraît néanmoins hasardeux.

27 Gauss 2007a, 135 ; Krapf *et al.* 2022, 140 ; 2024, 106 ; Vokotopoulos *et al.* à paraître. La chronologie de l'établissement du culte serait ainsi comparable à celle du mont Lycée.

28 Gauss – Smetana 2010 ; Gauss 2023 ; Tartaron 2013, 213–271.

29 L'hypothèse crétoise (Gauss 2007a, 135) est évidemment tentante en raison des liens de Colonna avec la Crète et de la composante crétoise de certains mythes éginètes, comme celui des origines du culte d'Aphaia/Britomartis, voire la version

j'ai appelé ailleurs un « monument signalétique » créateur d'un savoir et d'une mémoire partagés dans un large horizon incluant non seulement les habitants d'Égine, mais aussi toutes les communautés du pourtour du golfe et tous les navigateurs y faisant route[30]. Tel un phare rayonnant sur le golfe, le culte serait la marque symbolique de la suprématie régionale éginète. La centralité que la légende de fondation attribue au sanctuaire, selon laquelle c'est à la demande « des Grecs » affectés par la sécheresse qui sont venus le trouver à Égine qu'Éaque prie son père Zeus et lui sacrifie au sommet de la plus haute montagne de l'île, ne serait donc pas seulement métaphorique, mais bien concrète. C'est par rapport à ce site premier qu'il conviendrait d'interpréter l'apparition du culte sur d'autres sommets voisins à l'Helladique récent, et plus précisément à l'époque palatiale. À cette époque, tout le golfe Saronique connaît un ensemble de transformations en lien avec la montée en puissance des palais dans les régions voisines — Tirynthe, Mycènes, Thèbes —, qui entraîne une relative perte d'influence régionale de Colonna devenu, peut-être, un relais de l'influence des palais d'Argolide. Le site garde néanmoins une certaine importance, et c'est peut-être un recentrement sur le contrôle et l'exploitation de l'île elle-même que traduisent l'apparition ou l'essor de sites d'habitat de l'intérieur qui deviennent particulièrement florissants à cette époque, ainsi que le changement d'échelle de certains lieux de culte, en particulier celui d'Aphaia qui connaît un développement spectaculaire au même moment[31].

Il est possible que cela, en premier lieu, ait infléchi la signification du culte de l'Hellanion Oros qui, de manifestation d'une centralité régionale désormais affaiblie, serait devenu avec Aphaia un marqueur de la souveraineté territoriale de Colonna[32]. Et c'est peut-être dans la même perspective qu'on peut interpréter l'apparition du culte au sommet du mont Arachnaion. Celui-ci offre d'un côté une vue étendue sur Égine et le golfe Saronique et de l'autre domine toute l'Argolide, faisant ainsi parfaitement relais entre ces deux mondes. Au vu de la typologie des offrandes, le culte ne peut être vu comme un simple sanctuaire rural fréquenté par les habitants des environs immédiats. En traduisant l'appropriation d'une forme religieuse ancienne, il pourrait même relever de la sphère d'action des palais de la région, peut-être comme affirmation d'autonomie religieuse par rapport au culte éginète, certainement comme création d'un lieu de rassemblement et d'identification régionale (sans qu'il soit aisé de préciser jusqu'où s'étendait cette fonction unificatrice), et comme marqueur central de l'organisation territoriale que les palais mettaient en place dans toute la région, jusqu'au golfe Saronique[33]. En revanche, l'apparition du culte sur le mont Hymette en Attique, si elle venait à être confirmée, pose d'autres questions. Elle ne pourrait en effet être expliquée de la même manière que si on admet l'existence d'un centre palatial à Athènes. Or il s'agit là d'un point très débattu et plusieurs études récentes sur l'Attique mycénienne tendent à défaire l'idée d'une région unifiée et centrée sur un palais local, pour lui substituer l'image d'un espace hétérogène, traversé par des influences extérieures multiples, et de façon générale plus tourné vers différentes périphéries que centré sur un site dominant[34]. Or, Égine semble avoir joué un rôle actif en Attique en prenant part à la diffusion du plomb du Laurion, en particulier vers le Péloponnèse, pendant une bonne partie de l'époque mycénienne, tout en relayant l'influence des palais d'Argolide[35]. Ce sont donc peut-être d'autres mouvements entre le Péloponnèse, Égine et l'Attique, d'autres enjeux régionaux à préciser, que la naissance d'un éventuel culte sur l'Hymette reflèterait.

Les cultes de sommet semblent donc se trouver à l'intersection de dynamiques interrégionales et locales. Ils constituent un modèle transmissible et partagé, créent un réseau de pratiques qui renvoient l'une à l'autre mais en s'adaptant à des contextes particuliers. Cette caractéristique doit être prise en compte pour comprendre leur histoire et leur diffusion. Pour autant qu'on puisse en juger à partir de données archéologiques souvent imprécises ou lacunaires, après une phase où les sites de l'époque mycénienne « disparaissent » — que cette disparition, dans le courant ou vers la fin de l'époque post-palatiale (HR IIIC), corresponde à une cessation réelle du culte ou au passage à des formes de fréquentation qui n'auraient pas laissé de traces reconnaissables —, des cultes réapparaissent à l'époque géométrique, entre la fin du 10ème et le 8ème s., aussi bien sur les sommets déjà fréquentés à l'âge du Bronze (Hellanion Oros, Arachnaion, Hymette ?) que sur des sites pour lesquels on ne connaît pas de fréquentation antérieure (Parnès,

de la légende de fondation du culte de Zeus qui rend Minos responsable de la sécheresse qui affecte les Grecs (Diodore de Sicile IV 61, 1–3). Elle ne pourrait cependant être confortée que par une comparaison des pratiques rituelles ce qui, en l'état des connaissances, n'est pas possible.

30 Sur les « monuments signalétiques », je me permets de renvoyer à Polignac 2016. Bien que partant de prémisses différentes, mes analyses sont assez proches sur ce point de celles de Wiznura – Williamson 2018–2020.

31 Transformations du golfe Saronique : Tartaron 2013, 232–251. Colonna et Égine à l'époque mycénienne : Gauss 2007b ; 2010, 746–747 ; Salavoura 2014 ; 2020. Aphaia : Pilafidis-Williams 1998. Les traces de fréquentation du site d'Aphaia à l'Helladique moyen sont infimes (Pilafidis-Williams 1998, 157–158), comparées au mobilier extrêmement abondant d'époque mycénienne.

32 Vokotopoulos – Michalopoulou 2018, 168.

33 Voir l'analyse détaillée de Psychoyos – Karatzikos 2015, 269–271.

34 Papadimitriou – Cosmopoulos 2020 ; Papadimitriou 2021 ; 2024 ; Kalogeropoulos 2019 ; 2024.

35 Papadimitriou 2024, 46.

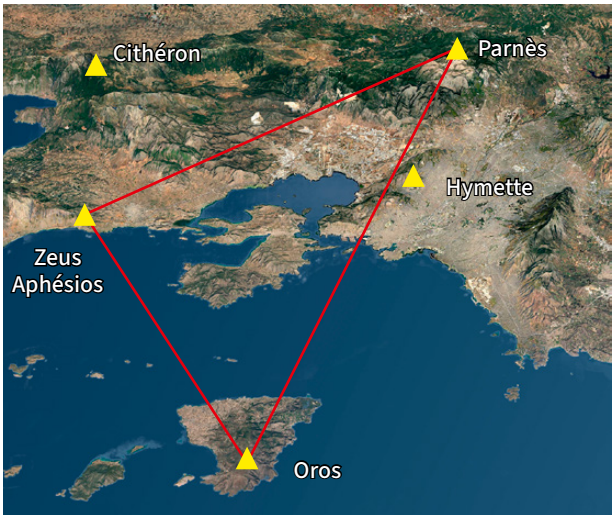

Fig. 7. La triangulation Hellanion Oros/Parnès/Zeus Aphésios (d'après Google Earth).

Fig. 8. L'Arachnaion vu depuis la terrasse supérieure de l'Héraion de Prosymna (F. de Polignac).

Ochi, Hélicon ?)[36]. Plusieurs facteurs ont pu jouer, impliquant plusieurs « horizons » d'action et pouvant se combiner de différentes manières selon les cas : initiatives locales impliquant prioritairement les habitants des environs immédiats ; renaissance de « petits mondes » de relations régionales où s'intensifient les échanges terrestres et maritimes, par exemple autour du golfe Saronique[37] ; émergence de cités commençant à structurer leur espace religieux. Les deux premiers facteurs pourraient ainsi expliquer les particularités du culte du Parnès, où la céramique est essentiellement de production attique dans un premier temps, de la fin du 10ème à la fin du 8ème s., mais fait ensuite place, jusque vers le milieu du 6ème s., à une large présence de céramique protocorinthienne, parfois considérée comme d'origine béotienne. Simultanément, les graffiti inscrits sur certains vases montrent l'emploi des écritures attique, béotienne et eubéenne, plaçant le culte au centre d'un réseau unissant les populations de tous les environs[38]. Mais, comme on l'a vu plus haut, à la différence de ce qu'il advient à Égine, le déclin de cette fréquentation à la fin de l'époque archaïque montre que le culte, même s'il reste présent dans le « paysage religieux », n'intègre pas l'espace cultuel mis en place par les cités voisines, Athènes en premier lieu.

Cependant, par-delà les variations locales, il est un rôle que l'ensemble des cultes de sommet semble jouer à l'époque historique dans la création globale du paysage religieux, de nouveau en fonction de critères d'intervisibilité : celui de point de repère pour le choix des sites d'implantation de nouveaux sanctuaires. Plusieurs exemples paraissent significatifs. En Mégaride, le sanctuaire de Zeus Aphésios (« qui libère ») est fondé à la fin du 8ème s. au sud de la cité, sur un haut plateau surplombant le secteur des Roches Scironiennes[39]. Pausanias, dans un passage malheureusement corrompu, met le culte en relation avec Éaque et la légende de fondation du culte de Zeus Hellanios[40]. Il ne s'agit pourtant pas d'un culte de sommet à proprement parler : le sanctuaire se trouve sur un replat au pied du mont Kavallari qui le domine de sa silhouette triangulaire reconnaissable de loin[41]. Néanmoins, le sanctuaire est placé à l'endroit précis d'où on peut voir à la fois le mont Parnès au nord-est et, grâce à une échancrure bien marquée dans la ligne de crête des falaises qui crée un aperçu vers la mer au sud-est, l'île d'Égine avec l'Hellanion Oros. Est-il fortuit que ce sanctuaire ait été implanté à l'emplacement exact qui permet de créer une triangulation visuelle entre trois cultes de Zeus (**Fig. 7**) ?

D'autres exemples viennent corroborer cette observation. J'ai montré ailleurs que c'est également une triangulation visuelle avec deux montagnes consacrées à Zeus qui détermine l'implantation du sanctuaire d'Apollon à Vassai en Arcadie. Le culte en effet a été fondé, à la fin du 8ème s., au pied du mont Kotilion, au

36 Langdon 1976, 100–110.
37 Houby-Nielsen 2009, 197–200. Sur les liens d'Égine avec l'Attique et le Péloponnèse pendant le premier âge du Fer, voir Polinskaya 2013, 400–404.
38 Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa – Vivliodetis 2015, 157–162.
39 Muller 1983.
40 Paus. I 44, 9.
41 On a pu penser que le sanctuaire, comme l'Hellanion d'Égine, était un aménagement associé à un culte pratiqué d'abord au sommet de la montagne, mais les prospections effectuées sur ce sommet n'ont donné aucun résultat : Müller 1983, 167.

Fig. 9. La colline de Profitis Ilias (F. de Polignac).

Fig. 10. Les acropoles d'Asinè vues depuis la colline de Profitis Ilias : Kastraki à gauche et Barbouna à droite (F. de Polignac).

seul endroit qui permet de voir à la fois le mont Lycée au nord-est et le mont Ithomè au sud, et ce double axe visuel se lit également dans l'architecture des temples archaïque et classique : leur axe longitudinal coïncide avec l'axe de visée vers l'Ithomè, leur ouverture latérale est orientée vers le Lycée[42]. Mais c'est parfois une montagne dominante qui paraît organiser tout un dispositif cultuel autour d'elle. En Argolide, le mont Arachnaion est évidemment visible de bien des endroits en raison de sa position en surplomb de la plaine. Mais il est plus particulièrement au centre d'un ensemble de triangulations visuelles reliant plusieurs sanctuaires de la région à ses pieds : le grand Héraion de Prosymna au nord de la plaine (**Fig. 8**), le sanctuaire au sommet de la colline escarpée de Profitis Ilias qui se dresse plus au sud (à l'est du village d'Hagios Andrianos) (**Fig. 9**), et le temple au sommet de la colline de Barbouna à Asinè, au bord de la mer. Ces trois sites, qui correspondent tous à d'anciens habitats mycéniens, semblent disposés le long d'une chaîne visuelle qui relie directement le nord de la plaine (et peut-être indirectement Mycènes) à l'entrée du golfe d'Argolide, en contournant Tirynthe et Nauplie[43] : une relation visuelle existe entre le site de Prosymna et le sommet du Profitis Ilias grâce à une trouée dans la ligne de collines qui les sépare, et de Profitis Ilias on voit au sud les sommets des acropoles d'Asinè (**Fig. 10**)[44]. On peut se demander si ces connexions visuelles n'ont pas joué un rôle d'abord dans l'installation des habitats de l'âge du Bronze puis, parfois après une phase d'abandon, dans l'implantation de sanctuaires à la fin de l'époque géométrique. C'est en effet au cours du Géométrique récent que le culte réapparaît au sommet de l'Arachnaion, que la première terrasse monumentale est construite à l'Héraion[45], et qu'un premier temple est édifié sur la colline de Barbouna ; le culte apparaît sur l'acropole de Profitis Ilias au tournant des 8ème et 7ème s. Tous ces cultes dessinent ainsi, autour de l'axe médian Arachnaion/Profitis Ilias, deux triangulations visuelles dont l'Arachnaion est la pointe, l'une vers le nord (avec l'Héraion) et l'autre vers le sud (avec Asinè) (**Fig. 11**).

Ces connexions sont-elles fortuites ? On peut en douter en constatant qu'elles ne jouent plus dès qu'on déplace, même de peu, le point d'observation : les accidents topographiques (sommets, trouées, échancrures…) qu'elles mettent à profit ne permettent d'établir un axe de visée qu'en un endroit et un seul. De plus, on remarque qu'une de ces triangulations relie un sanctuaire consacré à Zeus, ou peut-être Zeus et Héra (l'Arachnaion)[46], au grand sanctuaire régional d'Héra à Prosymna, et au sanctuaire de Profitis Ilias pour lequel l'hypothèse d'un culte

42 Polignac 2025.

43 Pour l'âge du Bronze, on peut intégrer dans cette chaîne l'acropole de Midea, pleinement visible depuis Prosymna et dont le sommet est visible depuis Profitis Ilias. Tirynthe au contraire n'est visible ni depuis Profitis Ilias ni, évidemment, depuis Asinè.

44 L'acropole de Kastraki se détache bien dans une échancrure du relief, celle de Barbouna dépasse légèrement d'une ligne de crête.

45 C'est d'ailleurs dans le prolongement de la face principale de cette terrasse, en direction du sud-est, qu'on voit se détacher le mont Arachnaion (**Fig. 8**). Sur ces cultes : Hägg 1992, 14–16, 18–19 (Héraion, Arachnaion, Asinè) ; *ArchDelt* 18 (1963), B1, 65–66 ; 60 (2005) [2013], B1, 261–262 (Profitis Ilias).

46 Pausanias (II 25, 10) mentionne un autel de Zeus et un autel d'Héra au sommet de la montagne, mais cela ne prouve évidemment pas que les deux divinités étaient honorées conjointement dès les débuts du culte.

Fig. 11. Les triangulations visuelles au pied du Mt Arachnaion (d'après Google Earth).

d'Héra a été avancée[47]. Il y a là, pour le moins, matière à réflexion sur le rôle de point de repère que le sommet de l'Arachnaion, héritier d'un culte de l'âge du Bronze, a pu jouer dans la construction, autour de lui, d'un paysage religieux dépassant, une fois encore, les limites des différentes communautés et mettant en réseau un ensemble de cultes dont certains adressés aux mêmes divinités.

Les cultes de sommet de Zeus semblent donc bien jouer un rôle central dans la construction du paysage religieux autour d'eux, qu'il s'agisse de créer un réseau avec d'autres sommets ou d'orienter l'implantation d'autres types de sanctuaire dans leurs environs, toujours en fonction de relations d'intervisibilité. Ce rôle, dont les premières manifestations sont perceptibles dès l'âge du Bronze, invite à s'interroger sur le Zeus honoré en ces hauts lieux. La tradition représentée par des légendes de fondation, par les épithètes conférées au dieu, par la fonction d'observatoire météorologique souvent conférée à ces montagnes, met en avant le Zeus maître du ciel, du temps, des nuées, dispensateur de pluie. Son culte a, de ce fait, parfois été présenté comme une pratique de simples populations rurales. Mais cette hypothèse est trop réductrice pour rendre compte de l'histoire d'un culte qui, comme dans la Crète minoenne, apparaît souvent en lien avec l'histoire des centres de pouvoir. La dimension souveraine du dieu est parfois clairement mise en avant. C'est avant tout en tant que père d'Éaque, souverain d'Égine, et ancêtre de tous les Éginètes que le Zeus de l'Hellanion Oros devient divinité emblématique de la cité[48]. La relation entre le Zeus de l'Arachnaion et l'Héra de Prosymna revêt une signification singulière si on tient compte de tout ce qui, dans l'Héraion de l'époque classique, exaltait la déesse en tant qu'épouse de Zeus et souveraine. De même, c'est l'union de Zeus et Héra comme couple souverain qui était mise en scène dans les rites des Daidala pratiqués sur le Cithéron, et ceux-ci, malgré leur caractère tardif, maintenaient une dimension originelle du culte dont on a d'autres traces[49]. Il semble effectivement logique que, du haut de ses sommets, ce soit Zeus souverain qui, en orientant la mise en place d'autres cultes autour de ses sanctuaires, manifeste son règne sur les dieux et sur les hommes.

Amarynthos et l'Artémis « du milieu »

Les fouilles entreprises depuis une douzaine d'années au pied de la colline de Paléoekklisies, à l'est de la plaine d'Érétrie, n'ont pas seulement confirmé les intuitions et déductions formulées de longue date par Denis Knoepfler sur la localisation d'Amarynthos et du culte d'Artémis Amarysia[50]. Elles ont également mis au jour un sanctuaire de première importance dont l'histoire éclaire des pans entiers de l'évolution de la société, des pratiques religieuses et des institutions non seulement de la cité d'Érétrie, mais de l'Eubée tout entière. De façon plus large encore, elle apporte de nouveaux éléments pour comprendre le rôle des sanctuaires à différents moments de l'histoire du monde grec, et nourrit en particulier la réflexion sur les modalités d'implantation des lieux de culte entre la fin de l'âge du Bronze et l'époque archaïque.

Le sanctuaire d'Amarynthos est, aux époques historiques, clairement érétrien ; l'articulation entre son histoire et celle d'Érétrie se met en place dès la fin de l'époque géométrique. L'essor du culte au 8ème s., attesté par l'abondance de la céramique, est concomitant de l'émergence de la cité ; la construction d'un premier hécatompédon de forme absidale vers la fin du siècle suit de peu celle du temple de même forme d'Apollon Daphnéphoros à Érétrie ; les petits édifices absidaux du 8ème s. mis à jour à l'est du temple ne sont pas sans rappeler ceux qui entourent la zone du temple d'Apollon[51]. À l'époque archaïque, le mobilier votif d'Amarynthos

47 Hall 1995, 597, compare le mobilier trouvé dans ce sanctuaire avec celui de l'Héraion. Cela ne suffit pas à prouver que la même divinité était honorée dans les deux sanctuaires, mais la découverte à Profitis Ilias d'une plaque de fibule en plomb représentant un couple (divin ?), tout à fait identique à une plaque trouvée à Prosymna et à une autre trouvée à l'Héraion de Pérachora, constitue un indice non négligeable. De son côté, le temple au sommet de la colline de Barbouna à Asinè est traditionnellement attribué au culte d'Apollon Pythéen, mais il faut rappeler que cette attribution n'est pas du tout prouvée.

48 Polinskaya 2013, 327–328.

49 Sur l'union d'Héra et Zeus et l'expression de la souveraineté dans les Daidala et à l'Héraion d'Argolide, voir Pirenne-Delforge – Pironti 2016, 109–141.

50 Knoepfler 1988.

51 Amarynthos : Fachard *et al.* 2023, 95–97 ; 2024a, 96–100. Apollon Daphnéphoros : Verdan 2013, 42–62, 178–187.

Fig. 12. La plaine érétrienne (d'après Google Earth).

présente de nombreuses analogies avec celui des sanctuaires d'Érétrie[52]. Situé au bord de la mer, non loin des reliefs qui ferment la plaine érétrienne à l'est, le lieu de culte, selon les catégories auxquelles je me référais autrefois, pourrait faire figure de « sanctuaire de confins » établi par la cité à la limite de son premier territoire (**Figs. 12–13**). Ce jalon de souveraineté, avec le temps, aurait revêtu tous les traits caractéristiques d'un grand sanctuaire territorial. Relié à la ville par une procession solennelle lors de la célébration des fêtes de la déesse, à l'occasion desquelles la cité organisait de grands concours, le sanctuaire était aussi un lieu institutionnel où la cité, comme dans tant d'autres cas similaires, affichait des décrets dont la publication était également effectuée en ville, en particulier dans le sanctuaire d'Apollon. Certains de ces décrets concernaient les rapports d'Érétrie avec d'autres cités, ce qui confirme l'importance de ce type de sanctuaire dans la gestion des relations diplomatiques et de toutes les formes de contact avec l'extérieur, comme le montre aussi le droit accordé à d'autres cités eubéennes, au moins à l'époque hellénistique, de participer à la célébration des Artémisia[53]. Bref, s'il avait été découvert dans les années soixante-dix du siècle dernier, l'Artémision d'Amarynthos aurait pu me servir de modèle pour élaborer la catégorie du « sanctuaire extra-urbain ».

Dans cette optique, l'épithète de *metaxu*, « du milieu », donnée à la déesse (conjointement à celle de *phylakei*, « gardienne ») dans une inscription du 4ème s. relative à l'organisation de la fête des Artémisia, peut être comprise de plusieurs manières. À un premier niveau de perception, elle pourrait correspondre à la réalité

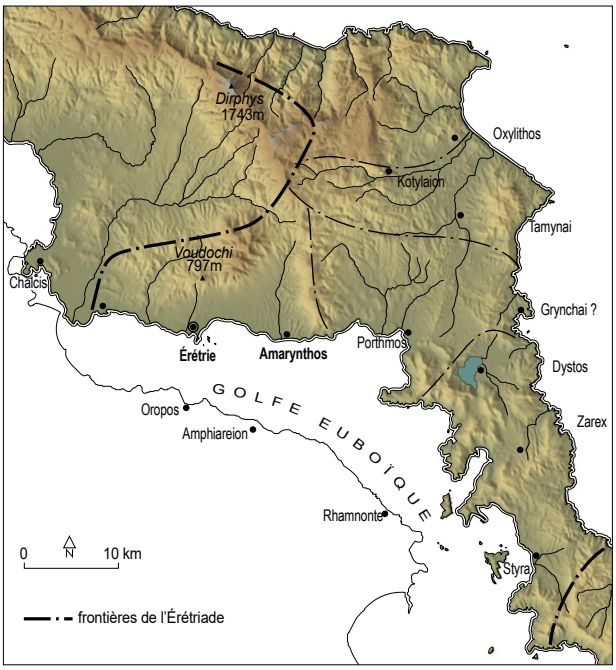

Fig. 13. Le territoire d'Érétrie (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

environnementale des premiers temps du culte, quand celui-ci est établi, comme souvent pour Artémis, dans un espace « d'entre deux » entre terre et mer, à proximité d'une zone encore marécageuse où se mêlent eau douce et eau de mer[54]. À un niveau plus général, et à l'époque de l'inscription, elle pourrait traduire aussi le passage du sanctuaire de sa position liminale d'origine à une position centrale dans le territoire de la cité, du fait de l'expansion d'Érétrie vers l'est et le sud-est selon un processus d'agrandissements successifs dont la dernière étape aurait été, vers 400, l'intégration à la cité du canton

52 Knoepfler *et al.* 2016, 99 et n. 69 ; Reber *et al.* 2021, 150.

53 Traité entre Érétrie et Histiée (v. 400) : *IG* XII 9, 188 ; Del Barrio Vega 2015, 53–58, EUB 09. Participation des Carystiens aux Amarysia : Knoepfler 1972.

54 Trait que l'Artémis d'Amarynthos partage, dans la région, avec celles d'Aulis, de Halai et de Brauron.

de Styra, aux confins du territoire de Carystos[55]. Dans ce sens, autant la déesse aurait été « gardienne » dès le début, autant sa position « au milieu » serait un caractère secondaire acquis au fil du temps. Cette reconstitution laisse cependant de côté deux questions. La première est soulevée par les indices de plus en plus nets d'une activité dans l'aire du sanctuaire dès avant le 8ème s. La seconde est celle que pose la notion même de territoire comme espace continu, homogène et bien délimité de la souveraineté d'une cité, selon le modèle de l'époque classique.

Les fouilles récentes ont confirmé la présence dans l'aire du sanctuaire de vestiges du premier âge du Fer et de la fin de l'âge du Bronze. Plusieurs structures de fonction incertaine qui se succèdent de la fin de l'époque mycénienne au 8ème s. ont été trouvées à l'est du temple et de l'autel classique, sous l'entrée monumentale archaïque[56]. Sous l'hécatompédon lui-même, est apparue une construction rectangulaire plus ancienne (« édifice 15 »), de même orientation, plus petite mais semblant présenter trois pièces comme l'hécatompédon, et maintenant datée de l'HR IIIC. Elle semble avoir elle-même succédé à une construction plus ancienne (« édifice 18 »)[57]. Le mobilier trouvé dans ce secteur associe des figurines animales de bronze d'époque géométrique à des objets mycéniens (tête de taureau en terre-cuite, fragment de kylix)[58]. Dans l'état actuel des connaissances, il est difficile de déterminer si les fragments mycéniens constituent un dépôt primaire correspondant à une activité rituelle à cet endroit dès cette époque, ou s'ils ont été rapportés ultérieurement à titre de « reliques », lors de la fondation du culte à une époque ultérieure. Quoi qu'il en soit, tous ces éléments constituent des indices d'une fréquentation ancienne du site du sanctuaire, fréquentation dont la dimension cultuelle se concrétise dans le secteur du temple à un moment qui reste à définir entre la fin de l'âge du Bronze et le 8ème s.

Ce constat ouvre deux pistes de réflexion : l'une, sur la relation de ces éléments avec l'habitat helladique installé sur la colline de Paléoekklisies, dont on sait maintenant qu'il a été important dès l'Helladique ancien et moyen et qui disparaît à la fin de l'âge du Bronze[59] ; l'autre, sur la signification de la possible existence d'un culte à Amarynthos avant l'émergence d'Érétrie, sur laquelle je vais m'attarder ici. En effet, dans l'hypothèse où le sanctuaire apparaîtrait bien avant le 8ème s., sa naissance serait à interpréter non plus en fonction de la formation d'un centre de pouvoir qui affirme son contrôle du territoire, mais dans le contexte des réseaux qui ont fait du golfe euboïque, dès l'époque post-palatiale et pendant le premier âge du Fer, un « petit monde » de relations maritimes denses — le « monde de Lefkandi » auquel Amarynthos appartient pleinement[60]. Doté d'un des principaux ancrages de la région, le site pouvait jouer un rôle à plusieurs niveaux : comme escale sur la route maritime menant vers l'Égée, comme « nœud » relationnel entre des communautés maritimes implantées sur les deux rives du golfe — et on pense évidemment ici à l'installation eubéenne qui apparaît à Oropos dès le 10ème s.[61] — mais aussi comme interface entre des sites de l'Eubée intérieure et le monde maritime du golfe[62]. Ce ne sont là que des hypothèses, mais elles confèreraient toutes au culte un rôle central dans les relations régionales.

Le processus de formation d'entités territoriales élargies qui accompagne le déclin du « monde de Lefkandi » et l'émergence des principales cités comme Chalcis et Érétrie a-t-il introduit une rupture par rapport à cette situation et modifié le rôle du culte ? Ce serait le cas si on pense la territorialisation comme la délimitation d'un espace concentrique, homogène et continu sur lequel un centre prédominant exerce une autorité complète ; le sanctuaire, comme on l'a vu, serait alors le premier jalon de l'expansion érétrienne. Mais il n'est pas sûr que cette conception du territoire, qui d'une part reflète le modèle d'organisation de l'espace des fondations nouvelles par distribution des terres, et qui d'autre part correspond, en Grèce, à des situations que l'on peut saisir à partir du 6ème s., puisse être appliquée telle quelle aux réalités plus fluides et plus mouvantes de la fin de l'époque géométrique et du Haut archaïsme. Il semble nécessaire d'introduire une transition entre l'univers des relations en réseaux faiblement centrés et hiérarchisés, et le monde des territoires homogènes et bien circonscrits autour d'un centre, qui n'a pu succéder au premier de manière instantanée. En particulier, la vision de l'agrandissement territorial par conquête ou intégration progressive

55 Artémisia : *IG* XII 9, 189 (v. 340–330), l. 6 ; Del Barrio Vega 2015, 75–84, EUB 13. Incorporation de Styra : Moggi 1976, no 35, 227–232. Position centrale d'Amarynthos sur la route reliant Chalcis, Érétrie, Styra et Carystos : Fachard *et al.* 2023, 100.

56 Le grand mur M21, qui serait en usage de la seconde moitié du 12ème s. à la fin du 10ème s. ; un mur et un pavement associé, datés du 9ème s. ; les petits édifices à abside du 8ème s. : Reber *et al.* 2019, 146–147. Fachard *et al.* 2023, 96–97 ; 2024a, 100.

57 La datation de « l'édifice 15 » (vers 1200–1050), découvert en 2023, a été déterminée lors de la campagne de fouilles de 2024 : Fachard *et al.* 2024b, 10. Celle de « l'édifice 18 », identifié en 2024, reste à préciser.

58 Fachard *et al.* 2024a, 98–99.

59 Fachard *et al.* 2023, 93–94 ; 2024a, 95–96.

60 Knodell 2013, 200–202.

61 Mazarakis Ainian 1998 ; 2007.

62 En dehors de quelques traces d'habitat dans le secteur de la future Érétrie et à Amarynthos même, le peuplement de la région du sanctuaire au premier âge du Fer reste mal connu, mais on doit penser aussi à des sites plus éloignés à l'est et au nord-est, comme Avlonari et l'important habitat de Viglatouri, peut-être l'ancienne Oichalia, en existence depuis l'âge du Bronze : Fachard 2012, no 77, 313 ; no 107, 321–322 ; no 119, 324–325. Viglatouri : Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1998.

de « blocs » compacts, comme c'est le cas pour l'incorporation du canton de Styra dans la cité d'Érétrie vers 400, ne peut rendre compte de la diversité des rapports et des hiérarchies possibles entres communautés. Les « guerres » supposées du Haut archaïsme — « guerre lélantine », « guerres de Messénie » — nous sont présentées par nos sources tardives comme des affrontements bloc contre bloc — Chalcis contre Érétrie, Sparte contre les Messéniens — aboutissant à la conquête du territoire des vaincus par les vainqueurs. Mais il s'est agi sans doute de phénomènes plus complexes où le conflit armé n'est qu'un outil parmi d'autres dans un processus de définition et de hiérarchisation des rapports — politiques et économiques, mais aussi culturels et religieux — entre un centre de pouvoir en expansion et les communautés des régions confrontées, même de loin, à cette expansion. Ce processus mobilisait tout un éventail de politiques allant de l'intégration complète à la soumission par la force en passant par diverses formes d'alliance partielle ou de subordination négociée, dont le résultat était la mise en place de statuts différenciés. Le « territoire » ainsi créé était donc nécessairement, au moins dans un premier temps, un espace qui pouvait englober une aire assez vaste, mais qui était discontinu, hétérogène, où coexistaient des groupes aux positions et aux statuts variés, où des liens étroits pouvaient être noués avec des communautés assez éloignées du centre de pouvoir tout en laissant subsister à proximité des communautés peu ou pas du tout intégrées : un territoire en « peau de léopard » dont les disparités n'ont été effacées que dans les cités qui ont mené une politique d'homogénéisation des statuts, généralement au 6ème s. Dans ces espaces, c'est par la médiation cultuelle de certains sanctuaires qu'étaient sanctionnés et stabilisés les rapports d'entente et de hiérarchisation entre les différentes communautés[63].

On peut dès lors poser l'hypothèse que l'Artémis d'Amarynthos a été « *metaxu* » dès le début en jouant un rôle central dans les processus de mise en relation et de négociation entre la cité émergente d'Érétrie et des communautés qui, au-delà même de la plaine érétrienne, dans toute l'Eubée centrale, pouvaient être amenées à se positionner face à cette montée en puissance. On voit bien que les choses bougent à la fin de l'époque géométrique dans l'Eubée centrale et orientale : des centres importants, comme celui de Viglatouri, disparaissent ; des sanctuaires apparaissent, comme celui d'Apollon près de Zarakès, aux confins des cantons antiques de Zarex et de Styra[64]. Ce sont là quelques indices d'une mutation qu'il est difficile de définir mais qui touche l'ensemble de la région. La formation de la cité érétrienne s'est donc peut-être faite moins par annexions systématiques et progressives des cantons à l'est du centre urbain, que par un ensemble de processus d'alliance, d'intégration complète ou de rattachement à un niveau subordonné, voire d'exclusion ou de conquête, de communautés dans toute l'Eubée centrale et même sur l'autre rive du golfe, processus pour lesquels la participation au culte d'Amarynthos a pu jouer un rôle discriminant et central. Si l'on reprend l'exemple de l'habitat d'Oropos, on sait que celui-ci a un caractère nettement plus érétrien lorsqu'il réapparaît au Géométrique récent ; il est cependant difficile de déterminer si, selon le schéma classique de l'opposition dehors/dedans, il faisait pleinement partie de la cité d'Érétrie ou non. Mais bien des statuts intermédiaires sont envisageables si on suppose que, par le biais de la participation au culte d'Artémis Amarysia, les élites d'Oropos pouvaient manifester leur appartenance à une forme de communauté érétrienne[65], sans pour autant être dans la même position que les véritables *astoi* d'Érétrie qui se reconnaissaient, eux, dans la participation au culte d'Apollon Daphnéphoros. Comme à Athènes et dans bien d'autres cités, l'unification et l'homogénéisation complètes des statuts, dont le corollaire est la détermination précise de qui est dedans et qui reste dehors, ne seront achevées qu'au 6ème s. lors de la création des tribus de la cité, qui repose sur des procédés de brassage et de nouvelle répartition des habitants dans les structures civiques[66].

S'il se confirmait que son existence remonte loin à l'époque géométrique, voire même avant, le sanctuaire d'Amarynthos a pu revêtir une forme de centralité dans différents contextes historiques, mais avec une inflexion de sa signification : de la centralité comme lieu de rassemblement dans le monde des réseaux « éclatés » et faiblement hiérarchisés du premier âge du Fer, voire de l'époque post-palatiale, à la centralité comme lieu de médiation entre un centre émergent et un ensemble de communautés définissant leur position par rapport à ce centre à partir du 8ème s., enfin comme grand sanctuaire territorial de la cité au terme des processus d'intégration. Ce ne sont là, évidemment, que des hypothèses dont la validité dépend d'une détermination plus précise

63 Voir par exemple, en Laconie comme en Messénie, les sanctuaires dépendant de cités périèques mais fréquentés aussi par les Spartiates, comme celui de Poséidon à Akovitika en Messénie, ou ceux d'Apollon Maleatas et Apollon Tyritas en Laconie : Kiderlen – Themelis 2010, 13–36 ; Pavlides 2018.

64 Viglatouri : *supra* n. 60. Apollon de Zarakès : Fachard 2012, no 158, 332–333.

65 À une époque ultérieure, le lien entre Oropos, Érétrie et Amarynthos transparaît dans les traditions relatives à Narcisse, fils d'Amarynthos selon certaines sources, héros éponyme d'une tribu érétrienne, dont on montrait le tombeau en Oropie : Knoepfler 2010.

66 Knoepfler 1997 ; 2010, 101–126. Voir aussi Ismard – Macé 2024, 101–142, en particulier 128–134 pour Érétrie, qui apportent un nouvel éclairage sur ces procédés.

du moment où le culte débute. De cette détermination dépend aussi la signification que l'on peut donner du « vis-à-vis » entre Apollon, divinité éminemment politique des *astoi* érétriens, et Artémis, autour de laquelle se nouent les rapports entre ces Érétriens et les autres communautés eubéennes, mais cette question dépasse le cadre de cette étude.

En conclusion, la centralité d'un lieu de culte n'est pas un caractère principalement topographique. Elle peut parfois coïncider avec une position « au milieu », comme dans les cas de l'Hellanion Oros au milieu du golfe Saronique ou d'Amarynthos dans le territoire d'Érétrie à l'époque classique. Mais elle reflète avant tout la construction d'un paysage religieux qui, selon le point de vue et l'horizon où on se place, peut donner un caractère central à tout lieu dans un contexte donné : ainsi le mont Arachnaion, qui appartient à la couronne des sommets formant cercle autour de l'Hellanion Oros, est-il à son tour central dans le paysage religieux qui se met en place dans la partie orientale de la plaine d'Argolide d'abord à l'époque des palais mycéniens, puis de nouveau à la fin de l'époque géométrique. Enfin, la centralité peut revêtir des significations différentes pour un même sanctuaire, selon le contexte où elle est construite : s'il s'inscrit bien dans une très longue durée, le sanctuaire d'Artémis Amarysia a pu rester « au milieu » dans des situations historiques très différentes, mais avec des inflexions dans le sens de cette centralité. L'implantation d'un sanctuaire est fixe — nous sommes là dans la réalité objective de l'espace cultuel, constituée de lieux et de parcours repérables, dont il a été question au début de ce texte —, mais la perception qu'on en a peut changer et crée des systèmes de représentation qui l'intègrent dans des constructions symboliques variables — le paysage religieux.

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Abstract

The role of certain sanctuaries as 'central places' in the genesis and history of various social and political entities is now widely recognized. Nevertheless, the very notion of centrality—which, from the perspective of cultic/sacred space studies, might appear to be a clearly defined concept—actually takes on multiple forms and functions. Recent excavations at the summit of the Hellanion Oros on Aegina and at the sanctuary of Artemis at Amarynthos provide an opportunity to analyse different dynamics in the construction of the sacred landscape around certain cults, from the end of the Bronze Age to the Archaic period.

5. QUEL PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX EN ARCADIE SANS PAUSANIAS ?

Madeleine Jost

« Quel paysage religieux en Arcadie sans Pausanias ? ». Tel était le thème de réflexion que m'avaient proposé les organisateurs du Colloque. C'est *a priori* une gageure : écarter le texte des *Arkadika* revient à se priver de 149 sanctuaires mentionnés au cours de son voyage par le Périégète, avec le nom de la divinité honorée, son épiclèse, les rites particuliers accomplis en son honneur et les légendes qui la concernent — du moins lorsque le Périégète les juge « dignes de mémoire ». Pourtant seule une douzaine de ces sanctuaires est identifiée avec certitude. Dès lors, ne risque-t-on pas de construire avec les *Arkadika* un paysage religieux largement soumis à la subjectivité de Pausanias ? On dispose de données plus concrètes : les vestiges de sanctuaires dégagés puis interprétés par les archéologues — on en compte 21 (**Fig. 1**) —, les inscriptions, les objets et ex-voto recueillis lors des fouilles, les monnaies des cités, en particulier celles qui furent autorisées à frapper monnaie sous les Sévères[1]. Le paysage religieux sera forcément lacunaire — certains secteurs ont été peu explorés, mais il pourra s'enrichir, outre des données sur les lieux de culte construits par les hommes pour les dieux, de leur évolution dans le temps.

L'Arcadie (**Fig. 1**), notait déjà le géographe Strabon, dans sa courte notice sur cette région, est un « territoire en très grande partie montagneux »[2]. De fait, la partie orientale du territoire est constituée de massives montagnes, entre lesquelles les vallées fluviales se fraient un chemin vers la mer (la Néda, l'Alphée et ses affluents, Ladon et Érymanthe). Dans la partie orientale en revanche, les montagnes enserrent de hautes plaines fermées. Sur un sol karstique, les rivières, au lieu de se frayer un chemin à ciel ouvert jusqu'à la mer, disparaissent sous terre dans des gouffres ou *katavothres*. L'obstruction de ces derniers entraîne l'inondation des plaines, comme le décrivait encore Strabon[3]. Les implantations humaines et religieuses retrouvées, différentes dans les deux cas, ont en commun d'être en hauteur.

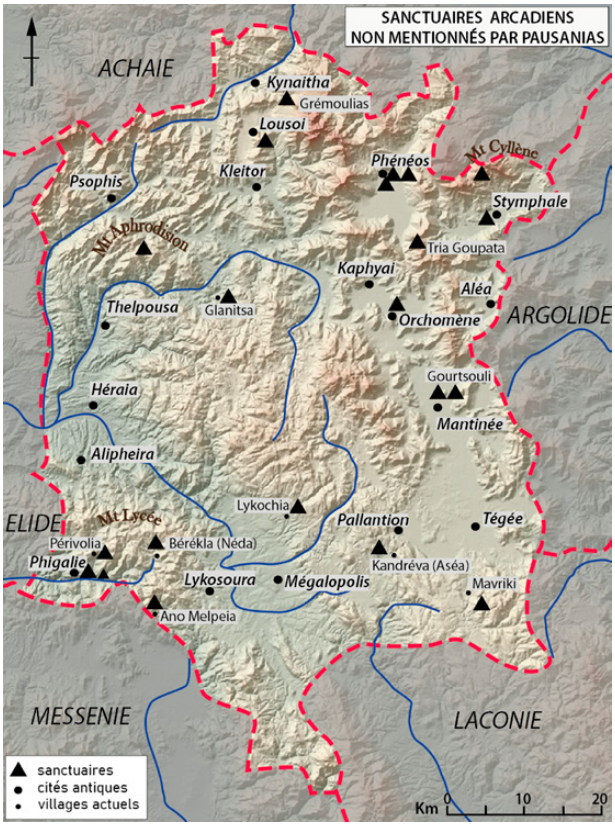

Fig. 1. Carte des sanctuaires arcadiens non mentionnés par Pausanias (J.-F. Marcadé).

Un premier ensemble se trouve sur les basses pentes des montagnes occidentales et sur les collines situées à leurs pieds. Là s'installent de petits sanctuaires rustiques situés à l'écart des cités. Dans ces endroits, on vit de l'élevage des brebis, moutons et chèvres et de la chasse. Les divinités honorées sont liées à ces ressources : ce sont Pan et Artémis. Les sanctuaires de Bérékla, Glanitsa et Lychochia, dispersés sur le territoire, sont caractéristiques de l'économie pastorale de ces régions.

Le sanctuaire de Bérékla, se trouve en Arcadie du Sud-Ouest, au-dessus du village de ce nom (act. Néda), sur un des contreforts méridionaux du mont Lycée. Il appartient à Pan : sur une petite base en pierre trouvée

1 Jost 2010.
2 Strab. VIII 8, 1.
3 Strab. VIII 8, 4–5.

lors de la fouille, on lit ΠΑΝΟΣ[4] et, sur un fragment de vase daté du 6ème s., ΤΟ ΠΑΟΝΙ[5]. Le site n'a été que partiellement fouillé en 1910 par K. Kourouniotis, qui semble avoir découvert un temple[6]. Le plus intéressant réside dans le nombre exceptionnel de statuettes provenant du petit sanctuaire. Les unes ont été exhumées lors de la fouille. D'autres ont été trouvées dans des sanctuaires voisins (Lykosoura, mont Lycée, mont Ithome) où elles avaient été offertes par des pèlerins dans l'Antiquité[7]. D'autres enfin ont été acquises dans le commerce, avant la fouille, et sont dispersées dans les musées européens ou américains[8].

Pour l'essentiel, il s'agit de figurines en bronze, hautes d'une dizaine de centimètres et représentant des bergers. Les uns sont drapés dans de longs manteaux de grosse laine, avec parfois une longue épingle sous le menton (**Fig. 2**) ; ils sont coiffés d'un bonnet conique en cuir ou en feutre, le *pilos*, coiffure chaude convenant au climat rude de la montagne en hiver. D'autres, barbus, coiffés du *pilos*, ne sont vêtus que d'un vêtement mi-long, voire d'une courte tunique ; souvent ils portent un animal (agneau ou veau et même un renard mort), qu'ils viennent offrir au dieu. On a voulu, à propos de ces statuettes, opposer les simples bergers qui gardent les troupeaux au propriétaire plus luxueusement habillé qui vit en ville[9]. Il est vrai que l'homme qui porte un veau est de statut plus élevé que le berger qui vient les mains vides. Mais on notera que les personnages les mieux vêtus sont généralement les plus récents, ce qui peut aussi suggérer une évolution dans la production de l'atelier[10].

Fig. 2. Figurine en bronze d'un berger (MNA 13057) (© Hellenic Ministry of Culture).

Quoi qu'il en soit, il s'agit d'offrandes à Pan, qui visent à réjouir le dieu des bergers, et aussi à lui demander de faire prospérer les bêtes et de les tenir à l'abri des animaux prédateurs comme le renard. On pense au texte de l'*Anthologie Palatine* (VI 154) dans lequel le vieil Arcadien Biton a consacré « un chevreau nouveau-né qui jouait avec sa mère » ; en échange, il demande à Pan que le lait ne manque pas. Ces statuettes montrent aussi, outre la rude vie quotidienne des bergers, qu'ils sont assez riches pour offrir des ex-voto en bronze à Pan. C'est qu'ils occupent une position centrale dans ces secteurs d'économie essentiellement pastorale.

Hermès était-il *sunnaos* de Pan dans le sanctuaire ? Deux figurines en bronze du dieu, provenant sans doute du site, le représentent avec ses bottines ailées et un agneau sous le bras. Plutôt qu'à l'existence d'un culte, comme le suppose Hübinger[11], je penserais, en l'absence de preuve écrite, à la présence d'un « dieu-visiteur », selon la formule de B. Alroth[12] pour rendre compte de la présence, dans un sanctuaire, de figurines représentant une autre divinité, dont la sphère d'activité est proche, comme c'est le cas d'Hermès, père de Pan dans certaines traditions arcadiennes[13]. La souveraineté d'Hermès s'étend à l'ensemble des animaux (sauvages et domestiques. Hübinger y ajoute Apollon, dont les images sont moins sûres.

Toutes ces figurines proviennent sûrement d'un atelier local ou régional. Elles sont produites aux 6ème et 5ème s. Le sanctuaire semble avoir été abandonné après le 5ème s. Éloigné de Mégalopolis, il n'a apparemment pas survécu au synécisme de la cité qui n'a pas pris en charge ses processions religieuses.

Une configuration des lieux analogue et deux objets trouvés en fouille invitent à rapprocher le sanctuaire de Glanitsa, en Arcadie du Nord-Ouest, aux limites de la Mégalopolitide. Il se trouve au bas d'une crête montagneuse sur le versant occidental d'une colline qui domine le village de Glanitsa (act. Amygdalia) au nord-est et la vallée du Ladon au sud. Fouillé en 1914 par H. Metzger et J. Roger[14], ce petit sanctuaire est sur une terrasse bordée de murs du 4ème s. À l'intérieur du *téménos*, un rectangle allongé (env. 50 × 17 m), il n'y avait pas de temple, seul un autel bas de grandes dimensions (7,06 × 2,70 m), daté du milieu du 4ème s., servait à assurer le contact entre hommes et dieux. D'après le matériel retrouvé, on pense que le sanctuaire remonterait au début du 7ème, voire jusqu'au 8ème s.

Trouvée près de l'autel, une feuille de bronze découpée et percée d'un trou de fixation (**Fig. 3**) représente un chasseur coiffé du *pilos* avec son chien, courant vers

4 *IG* V 2, 557.
5 *IG* V 2, 556. À ces inscriptions, il faut sans doute ajouter celles des statuettes de Phauléas et de Mnaséas (Hübinger 1992, 185 et n. 13).
6 *Prakt* 1902, 72–75 [Kourouniotis]. Voir Roy 2010, 55–58.
7 Jost 1975, 340–345 ; Roy 2010.
8 Catalogue raisonné des statuettes rattachées au sanctuaire dans Hübinger 1992, 208–212.
9 Voir Roy 1999, 345–346, pour un bilan de diverses hypothèses, mais il faudrait désormais raisonner sur l'ensemble du matériel (*supra* n. 8).
10 Hübinger 1992, 203–206.
11 Hübinger 1992, 201–203.
12 Alroth 1989, Second Part.
13 Jost 2009.
14 Metzger 1940.

la droite ; il doit chasser le lièvre, comme le suggère le bâton noueux qu'il tient dans sa main droite, le *lagobolon* — le lièvre est le gibier préféré de Pan[15]. Metzger date l'objet de la fin du 6ème ou du début du 5ème s. De plus, un petit buste en terre cuite d'époque hellénistique figure un berger barbu, coiffé du *pilos*, et jouant de la syrinx. Il fait aussi penser à une offrande à Pan, l'inventeur de cet instrument au son duquel le berger mène ses bêtes[16]. Il est donc fort possible que le sanctuaire de Glanitsa ait honoré Pan, qui protège aussi bien le chasseur des collines boisées que le berger. Est-ce un hasard si la cité de Psophis, et peut-être celle de Thelpousa, les deux cités les moins éloignées du sanctuaire à l'ouest et au sud, sont les seules à porter une représentation de Pan au revers de leurs frappes monétaires d'époque sévérienne[17] ?

De manière plus assurée, Pan et Artémis ont, séparément, leur nom inscrit dans un sanctuaire situé au nord-est de Mégalopolis, près du village de Lykochia. Il se trouve sur une colline au bas des contreforts du mont Rapouni, à côté de l'église du Prophète Élie. Le sanctuaire a été fouillé en 1972 et 1976 par G. Steinhauer[18]. Il est constitué d'un ensemble de constructions très ruinées. On remarque sur une base de statue une dédicace à Pan du 5ème s.[19] et une nouvelle venue, Artémis, dont le nom est inscrit, ARTAMI[20], sur la lèvre d'un *périrranthérion* daté du 5ème s., trouvé en contrebas du « temple ». Sur une terrasse au-dessous, un bâtiment auquel était accolée une citerne comportait deux pièces, dont l'une avait un banc le long du mur et abritait deux vasques de *périrrhantérion* (dont celle qui porte l'inscription). Peut-être s'agissait-il d'un local destiné aux purifications[21]. Ce serait une rare trace d'un rituel dans l'Arcadie sans Pausanias. Pan et Artémis ont ici cohabité comme divinités chasseresses dans ce lieu sauvage et boisé. Le matériel retrouvé, pour le 5ème, puis pour le 3ème s., comporte des statuettes en terre cuite féminines et atteste du caractère dominant de la déesse. En même temps protecteurs des animaux et divinités chasseresses, Pan et Artémis sont apparentés, mais comme le note Ph. Borgeaud[22], Pan représente un état plus modeste de la chasse avec le *lagobolon* ; Artémis est la « patronne des bêtes sauvages ».

Fig. 3. Plaque en bronze découpé (10×10cm) représentant un chasseur (EFA 46719).

Ajoutons à ces sanctuaires de basse montagne deux temples anonymes situés en Arcadie du Sud-Ouest. De l'un, qui est installé sur colline de Pétraki au nord d'Ano Melpeia[23], on a les fondations (22,70×1,70m) ; il daterait de la fin du 6ème ou du début du 5ème s. Des blocs épars indiquent que le temple aurait subi une réfection au 4ème s. Le matériel (pointes de lances et céramique, dont un fragment de phiale portant l'inscription ANEΘEKE, figurine de guerrier en bronze avec une lance, bracelet, etc.) suggérerait-il une divinité guerrière ? Le second, le temple de Périvolia, situé sur les basses pentes du Kôtilion, entre Bassai et Phigalie, comporte *cella* et *pronaos* distyle *in antis* (10×6m)[24]. Il est de l'époque classique tardive ou de la première période hellénistique. La base d'une statue de culte a été retrouvée, ainsi qu'un autel, mais le matériel n'est pas connu.

Ces deux sanctuaires permettent d'accroître le nombre des sanctuaires de basses pentes et de noter leur importante présence en Arcadie du Sud-Ouest.

Les sanctuaires de haute montagne sont installés, non pas au point le plus élevé comme le dit souvent Pausanias[25], trop venteux et inhospitalier, mais un peu au-dessous, sur une terrasse naturelle ou aplanie. C'est le cas de deux sanctuaires, l'un en Tégéatide et l'autre à Aséa, aux marges de la Mégalopolitide.

Près du village de Mavriki, au sud-est de Tégée, sur l'échine désolée du mont Psili Korphi (alt. 1530m),

15 Borgeaud 1979, 101.
16 Jost 1985, 469.
17 Walker 2006, 192, no 1692 (Psophis). Le cas de Thelpousa n'est pas assuré.
18 *ArchDelt* 28 (1973) [1977], 178–180 ; *ArchDelt* 30 (1975) [1983], 77–79 [Steinhauer].
19 *SEG* 28 417.
20 *SEG* 28 427.
21 Jost 1985, 105.
22 Borgeaud 1979, 100. Pan Sinoeis et Artémis du Kôtilion apparaissent ensemble, avec des épiclèses toponymiques, dans un acte d'affranchissement (*IG* V 2, 421), dont les problèmes complexes ne peuvent entrer dans le cadre de notre étude.
23 Arapoghianni 2010.
24 *ArchEph* 2004 [2007], 41–51 et 258 [Arapoghianni].
25 Jost 1996.

à 300m sous le sommet, se dressait un temple dont on ne voit actuellement presque plus rien (**Fig. 4**). Il a été fouillé par A. K. Rhomaios en 1907 et publié en 1952[26].

E. Østby en a plus récemment donné une étude architecturale précise, en corrigeant d'après les sources disponibles plusieurs des propositions de Rhomaios[27]. Entièrement en marbre des carrières voisines de Doliana, l'édifice était de dimensions modestes (13,92 × 6,63m). D'ordre dorique, il comportait un *pronaos* prostyle tétrastyle et une *cella*. Østby le date autour de 570 ou 560–550. Avant la construction du temple, l'existence d'un sanctuaire en plein air est attestée par la céramique et les objets de bronze à partir du 8ème s.[28].

À vrai dire, l'identification par Rhomaios du sanctuaire comme un *artémision* repose sur peu de choses. Un fragment en marbre de chiton (env. 60cm) appartenant à une statue colossale, conservé au musée de Tégée, proviendrait de la statue de la *cella*. On y voit une trace de nébride. Rhomaios restitue, par des rapprochements avec l'Artémis du musée de Tégée, une statue de la déesse courant vers la droite ; elle daterait de l'époque hellénistique. Le matériel trouvé en fouille est décevant. Il s'agit, outre un chien en marbre du 6ème s., de figurines en terre cuite humaines et animales, de plaques de bronze découpées et de pointes de flèches. Rhomaios signalait en outre des fragments de statuettes au type d'Artémis. Mais la vitrine consacrée au sanctuaire dans le musée de Tégée ne montre que des visages féminins hellénistiques et des femmes dédicantes drapées ; il n'y a pas trace d'Artémis. Retenons néanmoins l'idée d'un *artémision*, avec une Artémis chasseresse, symbolisée par la peau de faon[29].

C'est une implantation de temple similaire qu'on trouve à côté de la ville d'Aséa, pour un sanctuaire sous le sommet (**Fig. 5**) du mont Saint-Élie de Kandréva (act. Aséa). Cette hauteur boisée, qui culmine à 1200m, se détache au sud de la chaîne centrale d'Arcadie (Ménale traditionnel) ; ce serait, selon B. Forsén, le vrai Ménale[30].

Sur la face nord de la montagne, on voit sur la pente la chapelle Saint-Élie, puis une terrasse naturelle qui porte les ruines d'un temple de l'archaïsme récent, construit en marbre de Doliana. Fouillé par E. Holmberg[31], puis réétudié par E. Østby[32], c'est l'un des plus grands temples en Arcadie à cette époque (après celui de Tégée) ; il mesurait 12,04 × 29,51m et comportait 6 × 13 colonnes autour d'un *pronaos* distyle *in antis* et une *cella.* Il daterait d'environ 500–490. Un temple plus ancien l'a précédé, dans les dernières décades du 7ème ou les premières années du 6ème s. Auparavant, un sanctuaire à ciel ouvert se serait trouvé au même endroit, comme en témoignent la céramique et les objets votifs des 8ème–7ème s.[33] ; certains objets pourraient même remonter jusqu'au 10ème s.[34]. Les études menées à partir de 1997 sous les auspices de l'Institut suédois d'Athènes — dans les années où se déroulait le *survey* de la plaine d'Asea[35] — démontrent ainsi que l'histoire des sanctuaires arcadiens n'accuse aucun retard, comme on l'a cru jadis, sur le reste du monde grec. Au 14ème s. ap. J.-C., une église fut construite sur les restes du temple, utilisant largement les blocs de pierre de celui-ci. Elle est décrite, avant sa destruction, par E. Holmberg à l'occasion de sa fouille du temple.

Ces études ne disent rien en revanche de la divinité honorée, mais on approche, grâce à l'analyse des ossements animaux recueillis au sol ou lors de sondages, du rite essentiel qui l'honorait : la *thusia.* Entre les restes animaux trouvés à l'est du temple et les ossements des banquets dispersés sur le site, on a relevé à côté de 136 ovins, deux bovins seulement[36]. À défaut de désigner une divinité, cela désigne un sacrifice ordinaire consenti à partir de l'élevage le plus courant dans le bassin d'Aséa et les sacrifices pratiqués sur l'autel par les habitants de la région. Quant à la divinité du sanctuaire, il faut lui laisser son anonymat. Il ne s'agit pas, comme l'écrit B. Forsén[37], des « traces » du temple d'Athéna de la cité en ruine de Mainalon voisine (Paus. VIII 36, 5). J. Forsén pense à Apollon[38], en s'appuyant sur certaines similitudes architecturales avec le temple de Delphes et sur un tesson dédié à un dieu dont le nom se termine en ON, mais elle reconnaît que, sans une inscription, on ne peut ici rien dire.

Les dimensions exceptionnelles du temple, l'évaluation des difficultés, le prix du transport du marbre depuis la carrière de Doliana et le financement nécessaire à la construction du temple ne pouvaient guère être assumés par la seule cité d'Aséa ; il est vraisemblable, comme l'ont suggéré J. et B. Forsén, qu'il s'agit d'un sanctuaire régional ménalien et inter-cités[39].

Fig. 4. Mont Psili Korphi et restes du sanctuaire (M. Jost).

26 *Prakt* 1907, 120–122 ; *ArchEph* 1952, 1–31 [Rhomaios].
27 Østby 1995, 305–323.
28 Karapanaghiotou 2017, 36–37.
29 Il ne s'agit pas du sanctuaire d'Artémis Knakéatis de Pausanias : Jost 1985, 160–161.
30 Forsén 2023, à partir du difficile passage de Paus. VIII 38, 7.
31 Holmberg 1941.
32 Forsén *et al.* 1999, 170–177.
33 Voyatzis 1990, 28–32.
34 Forsén 2023,14.
35 Forsén – Forsén 2003.
36 Vila 2021.
37 Forsén 2023, 71, et dans ses publications antérieures.
38 Forsén 2021, 162–163.
39 Forsén *et al.* 1999, 182–187.

Fig. 5. Mont Saint-Élie, avec la terrasse du temple (M. Jost).

Fig. 6. Temple d'Athéna Polias à Phigalie (M. Jost).

Parmi les sanctuaires montagnards enfin, il faut compter les grottes aux flancs de montagnes cantonnées en Arcadie du Nord-Est. Dans la partie occidentale du mont Cyllène, la grotte dite « d'Hermès » a été explorée par une équipe autrichienne[40]. À une altitude de 1614m, une ouverture donne accès à une série de salles qui s'enfoncent jusqu'à 74m de profondeur ; on y a retrouvé de la céramique, des figurines féminines du début du 6ème à la fin du 4ème s. et des os calcinés. Sur le territoire de Stymphale, la grotte du lieu-dit Tria Goupata, sur le mont Messiano (anc. Oligyrte), une grotte de 60m sur 30m fouillée par Ch. Pitéros a également livré de la céramique archaïque et classique, des fragments de figurines féminines archaïques et des os d'animaux[41]. Il s'agit donc dans les deux cas de grottes cultuelles où l'on honorait sans doute plusieurs divinités de la montagne, impossibles à préciser.

Des sanctuaires isolés dans la montagne, passons à ceux des villes, souvent munies d'une acropole fortifiée à valeur défensive et dont les murs permettent aussi, dans les hautes plaines fermées orientales, de dominer la zone inondable. Athéna Polias y apparaît au moins une fois, à Phigalie. La ville est aux confins sud-ouest de l'Arcadie, installée sur un plateau rocheux escarpé, limité au sud par le cours encaissé de la Néda et entourée de montagnes. Une vaste enceinte fortifiée enclot le site. Dans le secteur méridional, au lieu-dit « Kourdoubouli », à 200m de l'escarpement qui borde le site au sud au-dessus de la Néda, un temple d'Athéna Polias et Zeus Sôter (**Fig. 6**) a été fouillé par X. Arapoghianni entre 1996 et 1998[42].

L'attribution de l'édifice à ces divinités repose sur une dédicace à « Athéna et Zeus Sôter »[43], gravée sur la base d'une statue trouvée dans la *cella*. Le nom de la déesse est précisé grâce à un décret de proxénie trouvé sur le site, qui nomme Ἀθηνᾶ Πολία [44]. Les dimensions du temple sont modestes (15,70 × 7,70m). Il est en calcaire, conservé sur trois assises, et comporte un *pronaos* et une *cella* avec une base de pierre carrée pour la statue de culte (**Fig. 6**). Devant la base se trouvait une table à offrandes, dont on a les deux plaques verticales ornées de pattes de lion. L'édifice est daté du 4ème s. Deux segments de murs parallèles aux longs côtés, visibles à l'intérieur du temple, et des fragments architecturaux retrouvés sur le site ont sans doute appartenu à un temple qui a précédé[45].

Un important matériel a été recueilli à l'intérieur et autour du temple. Parmi les objets en bronze (vaisselle, anneaux, épingles, pointes de flèche), des feuilles découpées représentent Athéna Polias de manière traditionnelle : en guerrière, debout, casquée et tenant la lance et parfois le bouclier[46]. Les monnaies frappées sous les Sévères la figurent de la même façon, de face ou de profil, avec une lance et parfois une phiale (**Fig. 7**)[47]. Il s'agit de la déesse de la guerre, dans son rôle de protectrice de la cité et de son territoire. Athéna Polias assure aussi une vie civique harmonieuse dans la cité et dans ses relations

Fig. 7. Athéna au revers d'une monnaie de Julia Domna (*BCD* 1653).

40 Voir Tausend 1999, 253–261 [Kusch].
41 *ArchDelt* 49 (1994) [1999], B'1, 161 ; *ArchDelt* 52 (1997) [2002], B'1, 153–154 [Pitéros].
42 Présentations d'ensemble : Arapoghianni 2001 ; 2002. Liste des rapports préliminaires dans Jost 2018, 112, n. 118.
43 *SEG* 47 441.
44 *SEG* 51 212 et *IG* V 2, 421, qui porte l'appellation Πολιά[δι.
45 Une grande épingle inscrite τάθαναια ἄρδι doit provenir de ce premier temple (*SEG* 47 440).
46 *Ergon* 1996, fig. 26 ; *Ergon* 1997, 47, fig. 42 [Arapoghianni].
47 Walker 2006, 392 no 1653 ; Jost 2014, 150.

Fig. 8. Vue d'ensemble du sanctuaire dit d'Athéna Polias à Stymphale (Google Earth).

Fig. 9. Le temple de Stymphale vu du nord-ouest (M. Jost).

avec d'autres cités. De nombreux fragments d'inscriptions datées du 5ème au 2ème s. portent des textes officiels qui étaient affichés dans le temple, l'*épiphanestatos topos* de la ville. On y trouve plusieurs décrets de proxénie[48], qui témoignent d'un réseau de relations très étendu, et sept listes de noms. L'une d'elles est un acte d'affranchissement d'une femme-esclave[49]. A. Matthaiou a voulu reconnaître dans Αθηνᾶ δὲ κορρα une Athéna Koria en lien avec Koré (l. 6), une « Athéna chthonienne », mais, outre qu'une telle Athéna est inattendue, Sophie Minon m'assure que le passage de Korra à Koria est philologiquement impossible (κορρα serait plutôt le début d'un mot)[50].

Les objets en terre cuite comportent, outre des tuiles estampées au nom de la cité, des protomés féminines, des figurines (sphinx, animaux), des bobines et des pesons qui sont liés au travail féminin de la laine, régulièrement associé à Athéna, ce qui semble banal. Cependant, un grand nombre de barques miniature retrouvées lors de la fouille du temple demandent une explication. Elles doivent symboliser, d'une manière ou d'une autre, la Néda, toute proche du sanctuaire d'Athéna Polias, en partie navigable et elle-même divinisée[51]. Ce rapprochement entre le fleuve et la déesse tutélaire évoque la fameuse Tyché d'Antioche sculptée au 3ème s. par Eutychidès : elle associe l'allégorie de la cité et le fleuve Oronte personnifié, comma Athéna Polias est liée à la Néda[52].

Le sanctuaire dit d'Athéna Polias à Stymphale est d'interprétation plus incertaine[53]. Fouillé entre 1994 et 2001 par une équipe canadienne, il se trouve sur une terrasse reléguée à l'extrémité sud-ouest de l'acropole fortifiée. Il avait fait l'objet de fouilles superficielles par A. K. Orlandos[54], qui avait trouvé, au Sud d'un temple, une pierre inscrite ΠΟΛΙΑΔΟΣ, aujourd'hui perdue, mais dessinée par lui dans ses carnets[55]. Il ne pouvait s'agir que d'Athéna Polias. On peut *a priori* penser soit à une borne du sanctuaire (mais la gravure verticale étonne), soit à une dédicace.

Le sanctuaire (**Fig. 8**) comporte un petit temple (6,5 × 11,5 m), un édifice annexe (« édifice A »), un autel et une structure B, en contrebas de l'autel (sans doute en relation avec lui). Édifié dans le deuxième quart du 4ème s. — son *acmè* se situe entre 340 et 270, il fut détruit brutalement vers le milieu du 2ème s.[56]. Quelques objets votifs plus anciens ont été trouvés sur le site, qui renverraient à un sanctuaire antérieur[57].

Le temple, avec une *cella* sans division interne et un *pronaos* sans colonne (**Fig. 9**) comme à Phigalie, avait un soubassement et des orthostates en calcaire portant un mur en briques crues. À l'intérieur, sur un sol en terre et sans ordre apparent, a été trouvée une « base » en

48 Voir leurs mentions regroupées dans *SEG* 47 438, et *SEG* 51 511–512. Cinq textes sont édités dans Themos – Zavvou 2019.

49 Arapoghianni – Matthaiou 2010–2013.

50 S. Minon, courrier du 6 mars 2024.

51 *AAA* 1972, 359–362 [Cooper] ; Jost 2014, 154–157.

52 Ajoutons, en lien avec Phigalie, un sanctuaire péri-urbain, daté d'après le matériel de la fin du 6ème au début du 4ème s., au lieu-dit Kato Vryssi, à l'extérieur du rempart oriental de Phigalie. D'après le bref rapport de Chr. Schoinas, il s'agit d'une cavité rocheuse servant d'antre cultuel pour des cérémonies nocturnes : on y a retrouvé plus de 150 lampes intactes. Le fouilleur mentionne la présence de nombreux os de porcs soigneusement disposés à côté des lampes et peut-être liés au rituel. Le matériel comporte aussi des masques féminins, des couronnes votives en plomb, un petit miroir en bronze. On pense à un sanctuaire de Déméter et aux traces de son culte, ce qui serait la seule occurrence de cette déesse dans l'Arcadie sans Pausanias : *ArchDelt* 1989 [1995], B'1, 107 [Schoinas].

53 Williams – Schaus 2001 et Schaus 2015.

54 *Prakt* 1924 à 1926 [Orlandos]. Voir Schaus 2015, 11 et fig. 7.

55 Schaus 2015, 371.

56 Schaus 2015, 15–35.

57 Schaus 2015, 422 et n. 27.

calcaire, décentrée vers le nord, à côté de laquelle se trouvait un pilier rectangulaire dont la tête manque (statue de culte ?), comparable à des piliers « aniconiques » découverts entre le temple et l'édifice A. Deux statues en marbre étaient dans le fond du temple. Une *koré* archaïque (*ca* 490–480), qui tient un animal, peut-être un lièvre, fait penser à Artémis ou Aphrodite plutôt qu'à Athéna. Il peut s'agir d'un souvenir de la Stymphale archaïque ou d'une importation d'Athènes (offrande ou statue cultuelle ?)[58]. Dans la moitié sud du temple, un *Temple Boy* (milieu-fin du 4ème s.) renvoie à une divinité concernée par l'enfance (Eileithya ?), ce à quoi s'ajoutent des figurines d'enfants en terre cuite éparses dans le sanctuaire. Dans l'angle nord-est du temple, une masse de bijoux, principalement en bronze, boucles d'oreille et anneaux pour les doigts du 4ème s. surtout signalent un culte féminin. Dans l'ensemble du sanctuaire, on compte 325 pièces, ce qui est énorme pour un petit sanctuaire.

L'édifice A mesurait originellement 10,7 × 8,8 m ; il comportait deux pièces en façade et une pièce allongée. Une annexe nord y fut ajoutée, ainsi qu'une annexe ouest. De la céramique abondante, en relation avec la cuisine, a été trouvée dans cet édifice. De plus, 89 pesons viennent de la même pièce ouest ; ce seraient des objets utilitaires plutôt que des offrandes, liés à un métier à tisser pour un vêtement de culte, ce qui renvoie soit à Athéna soit à Eilithyia, tisseuse selon un hymne d'Olen[59]. Le nom incomplet de cette déesse est sûrement attesté à trois reprises dans le sanctuaire[60] : sur un fragment de bronze, sur une monnaie d'argent et sur un fragment de vase corinthien à figures rouges. Enfin, l'analyse de la faune recueillie dans tout le sanctuaire indique la fréquence des os de chiens qui renverraient à la meute d'Artémis ou à Eileithyia[61]. Ne peut-on penser à une Artémis Eileithyia liée au temple et pour l'inscription *poliados* à une dédicace à Athéna Polias, disposée dans le sanctuaire horizontalement, sans que cette déesse soit la propriétaire des lieux ?

Les sanctuaires urbains des bassins orientaux sont tous en hauteur pour se garder des inondations hivernales. Le territoire de Lousoi, qui possède une rivière, l'Aroanios, n'en est pas moins sujette à de spectaculaires inondations. Ainsi s'explique la position du grand temple hellénistique fouillé par l'École autrichienne, dont l'implantation dans la ville a fait l'objet de recherches récentes. Se servant à la fois des méthodes de la prospection architecturale, des photos par satellite ou aériennes et de la prospection géophysique à faible profondeur, elles ont permis de donner la restitution du plan de la ville[62] : ville haute à l'ouest avec les habitats et ville basse construite au-dessus du niveau des inondations.

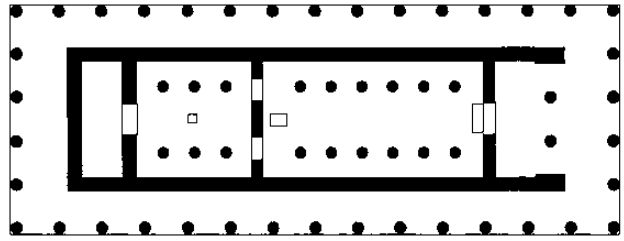

Fig. 10. Plan du temple hellénistique de Lousoi (G. Ladstätter).

Le temple est dans la ville basse, sur une terrasse en amont du portique fouillé précédemment. Les recherches ont montré qu'en dépit de l'alluvionnement et des travaux agricoles plus récents, la terrasse du temple hellénistique est bien ancienne. Au-dessus de l'agora et de son portique se dressait une terrasse, située 12 m au-dessus de la *stoa*. Elle portait un vaste sanctuaire, avec, à l'entrée, un petit édifice à plusieurs pièces ainsi qu'un petit édifice à orthostates de fonction cultuelle.

Le temple est de grandes dimensions et très allongé (15,80 × 42,35 m)[63]. J'ai ailleurs décrit le plan ci-dessus (**Fig. 10**)[64]. Il est à dater de la première moitié du 3ème s. Des vestiges antérieurs au monument hellénistique ont été mis au jour sous les fondations de celui-ci : un important matériel votif archaïque et classique, la présence de nombreux fragments d'un toit d'argile archaïque et des fondations repérées au sud de cet édifice sont sans doute à mettre en relation avec un temple archaïque précédent. Sous le temple, les fondations en pierre de deux structures à abside accompagnées d'une cruche d'époque géométrique attestent l'usage des lieux dès cette période. Enfin, des tablettes en bronze portant des décrets de proxénie du 5ème s., trouvées dans le temple[65], montrent que le sanctuaire avait été au centre de la vie civique. La situation du grand temple en fait ainsi un temple de la divinité tutélaire de la cité.

Les plaines qui s'enchaînent au sud de Stymphale ont, comme elle, des sanctuaires situés sur les hauteurs. C'est le cas à Phénéos. Sur ce territoire, les *katavothres* sont dans le secteur sud. C'est donc au nord-est que se trouvent la ville, près de l'actuel Kalyvia, et l'acropole fortifiée. Sur la pente sud, à l'intérieur du rempart et près de lui, un sanctuaire d'Asklépios (**Fig. 11**) disposé

58 Schaus 2015, 32–34 [Surgeon].
59 Paus. VIII 21, 3.
60 Schaus 2015, 321, n. 273.
61 Schaus 2015, 266–267 [Ruscillo].
62 Baier *et al.* 2021.
63 Voir les chroniques de Mitsopoulou-Leon et Ladstätter dans *ÖJh* entre 2006 et 2009. Voir aussi Mitsopoulou-Leon 2010.
64 Jost 2018, 106–107.
65 Mention dans *SEG* 53 411 ; Taeuber 2024.

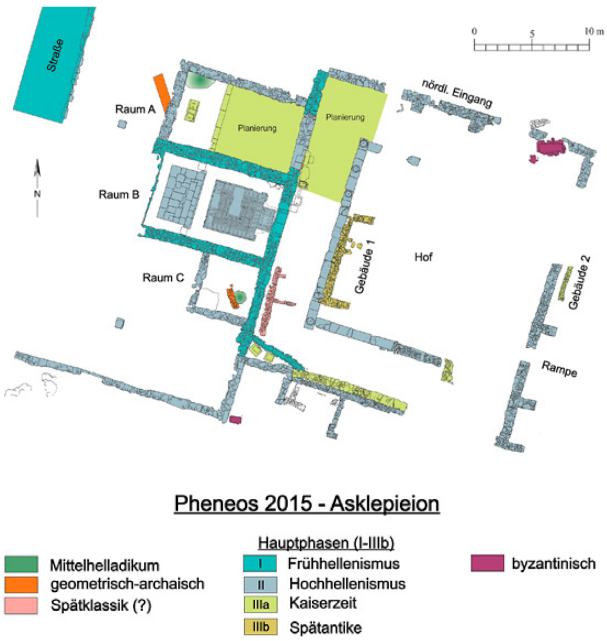

Fig. 11. Phénéos, plan du sanctuaire d'Asklépios, 2015 (Kissas – Mattern 2016, 57, fig. 4).

Fig. 12. Phénéos, tête d'Hygie (h. 80cm) (F. Queyrel, *La sculpture hellénistique* I, Paris, 2016, 138; commons.wikimedia.org, File:Goddess Hygeia, Phénéos).

en terrasses et de vastes dimensions (60×45m environ) a commencé à être fouillé par E. Protonotariou-Deilaki en 1958 et 1960–1961[66]. Elle avait découvert les pièces les plus importantes pour la compréhension du culte, les salles A, B et C. L'identification du sanctuaire comme *asklépieion* a été suggérée d'emblée. Au fond de la salle B, adossée à la pente, se trouve en effet la base haute d'un mètre, mesurant 4,8×2,9m, d'un groupe cultuel portant la signature du sculpteur Attalos, qui a travaillé à Athènes et dans le Péloponnèse dans la seconde moitié du 2ème s. (Ἐπὶ ερέως τοῦ Ἀσκλαπιοῦ Θηριλάου τοῦ Ἡρώιδα κατεσκευώθη τὰ ἀγάλματ Ἄτταλος Λαχάρου Ἀθηναῖος ἐποίησε)[67]. On a généralement admis que, comme souvent, le prêtre qui figure dans le texte est l'officiant du monument désigné. Devant la base ont été trouvés des fragments de deux statues colossales en marbre, probablement acrolithes, deux paires de pieds (les uns chaussés, les autres nus[68]) et une tête féminine, sans doute la déesse Hygie, avec des yeux en verre et agate et les cils en bronze (**Fig. 12**). Le groupe serait du dernier tiers du 2ème s. Devant ce groupe cultuel, mis en valeur par la polychromie des murs, un sol mosaïqué coloré et historié portait un autel près duquel ont été trouvés divers objets votifs (dont peut-être des instruments de médecine)[69].

Cette pièce B présente le seul cas en « Arcadie sans Pausanias » d'une offrande cultuelle aussi monumentale et le recours de la cité de Phénéos à un artiste athénien témoigne d'une certaine richesse et d'autres ambitions que les sanctuaires de montagne vus précédemment[70].

La fouille a repris en 2009 par les soins de K. Kissas, puis par une équipe gréco-autrichienne qui a achevé le dégagement de l'ensemble du sanctuaire. On sait désormais qu'il s'étend sur trois terrasses. Au-dessous de la rue, les trois pièces A, B, C constituent le cœur du sanctuaire. À l'est, au niveau inférieur, les fouilleurs ont mis au jour une terrasse rectangulaire de 23×25m, bordée sur trois côtés de portiques à colonnes ioniques (à l'est, au nord et au sud), à laquelle on accède par un *propylon* au nord et une rampe à l'est[71].

K. Kissas et T. Mattern ont étudié de manière particulièrement minutieuse l'évolution et les remaniements pierre à pierre de cet ensemble, ce qui permet de dégager dix phases, des origines aux 5ème–6ème s. ap. J.-C. Les débuts du sanctuaire, sans doute précédé du culte d'un héros guérisseur, se situent dans la seconde moitié

66 *ArchDelt* 1961–1962, 57–61; *ArchDelt* 1965, 8–59 [Protonotariou-Deilaki].

67 *SEG* 19 328.

68 Ce qui permet d'écarter un groupe à trois personnages: Jost 1985, 104.

69 Jost 1985, 32.

70 Seul le temple de Mavriki peut avoir abrité une statue monumentale (*supra*).

71 Kissas *et al.* 2017; Kissas – Mattern 2016; 2017.

du 4ème et la première moitié du 3ème s. av. J.-C., avec la pièce B qui est le point de départ du premier *asclépieion*, dont nous avons décrit la « phase 2 ». L'ensemble fut détruit par un tremblement de terre au 2ème s. ap. J.-C. et la reconstruction n'eut lieu qu'au 3ème s. Il existait encore après le 9ème s.

L'ampleur du sanctuaire et son agencement en terrasses, qui évoquent les sanctuaires de Cos, Lindos ou de Pergame, avec un groupe cultuel monumental, ont étonné au regard de la petite taille de la cité de Phénéos. En fait, la conquête romaine n'avait pas diminué ses capacités et elle avait un assez grand territoire de plaine qui — épisodes d'inondation mis à part — était fertile et favorable à l'élevage et à l'agriculture, qui lui assuraient une certaine richesse.

Dans l'enceinte, sur la pente est de l'acropole, les fouilleurs ont dégagé à partir de 2013 un sanctuaire dédié à une divinité féminine : il comprend une structure rectangulaire d'approximativement 15 × 5 m, avec deux phases de construction, à l'époque archaïque puis classique[72]. De la seconde phase date une base en pierre monolithe pour une statue de culte. Le matériel votif est nombreux pour les deux périodes : céramique de qualité, figurines féminines en terre cuite et protomés, phiales en bronze, épingles, fibules, ornements de vêtements qui indiquent un culte féminin encore anonyme. Juste sous la chapelle se trouve un deuxième sanctuaire[73].

Située au sud de Phénéos et Stymphale, la grande plaine d'Orchomène est dominée au sud par une colline isolée fortifiée. Dans le secteur méridional de celle-ci, sur une terrasse située au-dessous de l'agora, se trouve le sanctuaire d'Artémis Mésopolitis, dont l'identification est assurée par un décret de proxénie trouvé dans le temple[74]. L'épiclèse désigne Artémis « établie au milieu de la cité », sans nuance politique. Le temple et l'autel avaient été fouillés par Plassart et Blum en 1913[75]. E. Østby en a repris l'étude en 1995 et a corrigé l'article des fouilleurs sur plusieurs points[76]. Le *sèkos* de l'édifice comporte un *pronaos* (sans doute distyle *in antis*) et une *cella* avec le socle de la statue de culte. Autour, une colonnade dorique (6 × 13) avec des entraxes standardisés enveloppe le *sèkos*. L'édifice mesure 19,80 × 6 m[77] et date de 560–540 ou du 3ème quart du 6ème s. C'est le premier périptère dorique en Grèce propre. Grâce aux travaux de l'Éphorie entre 2011 et 2014[78], le temple a été totalement mis au jour : on voit désormais deux rangées de quatre colonnes dans la *cella* et des parastades au

Fig. 13. Sanctuaire du mont Aphrodision et chapelle d'Hagios Pétros (M. Jost).

pronaos. À l'est du temple se trouve l'autel, tout en longueur (17,60 × 3,52 m). Dans la *cella*, Blum et Plassart avaient retrouvé des restes d'ex-voto, en particulier des pointes de flèches, un support de miroir et des fragments d'une figurine en terre cuite qui donnent d'Artémis l'image de la chasseresse avec ses bottes.

Artémis chasseresse est apparue plusieurs fois dans l'Arcadie « sans Pausanias » et on sait qu'elle a été de loin la divinité la plus honorée en Arcadie, en accord avec le paysage de cette région. En dehors des textes, on peut en voir une illustration avec le monnayage de bronze frappé par les cités à l'époque de Septime Sévère[79]. Ces monnaies avec Artémis au revers comme emblème de la cité proviennent de Phénéos, Kleitor, Psophis, Thelpousa, Phigalie, Orchomène, Kaphyai, Mantinée, Tégée et Mégalopolis, soit 11 cités — sans compter les quatre qui n'ont pas frappé monnaie. Cela nous conduit — en dépit de réticences méthodologiques — à examiner les cas où la présence de la déesse est seulement « possible ».

Selon la formule de P. Ellinger, « les sanctuaires de marge, en particulier ceux des cols » appartiennent souvent à Artémis[80]. Qu'en est-il pour l'Arcadie ? Entre le territoire de Psophis et celui de Thelpousa, dans l'Arcadie occidentale, le sommet d'un col (alt. 1155 m) du mont Aphrodision porte un sanctuaire, dominé par la chapelle d'Hagios Pétros (**Fig. 13**). Il a été fouillé par Ch. Kardara à partir de 1968[81]. La situation du sanctuaire est à la limite de partage des eaux

72 *ÖJh* 83 (2014), 141–144 [Kissas *et al.*] ; *ÖJh* 86 (2017), 161–168 [Kissas *et al.*].
73 Conférence ÖAI du 19 avril 2023.
74 Plassart – Blum 1914b, 464–466, no 8.
75 Plassart – Blum, 1914a.
76 Østby 1995, 327–388.
77 Karapanaghiotou – Fritzilas 2014, 88–91.
78 Karapanaghiotou – Fritzilas 2014, 72, fig. 110.
79 Jost 2010, 229–232.
80 Ellinger 2009, 21.
81 Kardara 1988. Réfutation d'après les rapports préliminaires dans Jost 1985, 58–60.

Fig. 14. Colline de Gortsouli, vue du sud (M. Jost).

entre Psophis et Thelpousa et peut faire hésiter entre les deux cités comme propriétaires du sanctuaire, à moins qu'il se soit agi d'un *no man's land* ou d'une gestion commune. Ch. Kardara a interprété les vestiges successivement comme un *télestérion*, un *manteion* ou le temple d'Aphrodite Érycine, situé sur le territoire de Psophis par Pausanias. Depuis sa publication, le site a été révisé par Y. Pikoulas[82], qui reconnaît d'ouest en est une stoa, un temple qui se poursuivait sous la chapelle d'Hagios Pétros et des édifices annexes. Le matériel recueilli comporte surtout des figurines en terre cuite de femmes, classiques et hellénistiques, ce qui oriente vers une divinité féminine. L'une d'elles, dont seul le corps est conservé[83], tient un arc contre sa poitrine de la main gauche et peut-être un animal sur le bras droit. Cette unique statuette d'Artémis à l'arc, mise en avant par Pikoulas, ne suffit pas pour attribuer le sanctuaire à la déesse, comme il le suggère. Un autre sanctuaire de col se trouve au lieu-dit Grémoulias, dans le mont Chelmos, à 1200m d'altitude, sans doute près de la frontière entre Lousoi et Kynaitha, sur le territoire de cette dernière. Sur une large terrasse, les substructions d'un grand temple dorique, long et étroit (plus de 40m de long) ont été mises au jour par une équipe gréco-autrichienne[84]. Il est d'époque classique tardive, mais il a été précédé par un temple archaïque dont on a plusieurs pierres ; divers objets, trouvés près de l'autel, indiquent que le culte remonte à l'époque géométrique récente. Comme déesse tutélaire, les archéologues proposent Artémis, qui serait à sa place dans le cadre du site. La découverte dans les cendres de l'autels situé à l'est de pointes de flèches et de restes de sanglier peut aller dans le même sens. L'appartenance de ces sanctuaires à Artémis est donc « possible ». Pourtant, on n'oubliera pas que tout sanctuaire de col et de confins n'appartient pas nécessairement à cette déesse. Dans le sud-est de l'Arcadie, le temple de Vigla, retrouvé dans la passe du mont Boreion à la frontière entre Mégalopolis et Pallantion, appartenait à Athéna Sôteira et Poséidon[85].

C'est à Artémis encore que la notice du ministère grec de la Culture attribue le sanctuaire de la colline de Gortsouli, l'ancienne Ptolis de Pausanias[86]. Située à 1km au nord du rempart de Mantinée, haute de 112m, cette butte-témoin aux pentes douces (**Fig. 14**) domine toute la surface cultivable de la partie centrale de la plaine mantinéenne. Sur sa pente occidentale, un sanctuaire a été fouillé par Th. Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou en 1962, puis en 1989–1990[87]. La céramique retrouvée sur le site remonte au 8ème s., mais le premier édifice construit, l'« *oikos* A », est daté du milieu du 7ème s. Il comporterait un *prodomos*, une *cella* et un *adyton* (env. 14,60 × 4,65m). Il aurait été remplacé, à la suite d'un effondrement de

82 Pikoulas 2000–2003.

83 Kardara 1988, pl. 29a.

84 Voir les chroniques de l'*Ὄjh* à partir de 2004 [Ladstätter] ; Alexopoulou 2009, 484–485 ; Jost 2018, 101–105. En dernier lieu, Alexopoulou – Ladstätter 2024.

85 Paus. VIII 44, 4 ; *ArchEph* 1957, 150–155 [Rhomaios].

86 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 1992–1993.

87 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 1989. Au sommet de la colline, Th. Spyropoulos a dégagé un temple archaïque conservé jusqu'à 1m de hauteur, avec un *pronaos* et un *naos* profond. Des éléments de métal, des figurines en terre cuite et de la céramique archaïques ont été trouvés lors de la fouille : *ArchDelt* 37 (1982) [1989], 119–120.

terrain, par un « édifice B » de même plan, au milieu ou dans la seconde moité du 7ème s. A. Mazarakis-Ainian donne une interprétation différente de la fouille : il pense à un seul édifice construit à partir du 8ème s., en deux phases, avec *pronaos* et *cella*, sans *adyton*[88].

Le riche matériel est publié avec de nombreuses illustrations dans deux articles[89]. Ce sont une centaine d'épingles, 100 anneaux de bronze, quelques sceaux, un miroir en bronze, une statuette féminine en bronze, des boucles d'oreilles, etc., mais on remarque surtout près de 200 statuettes féminines en terre cuite (**Fig. 15**). Ces figurines, propres à ce site, peuvent atteindre 20 cm de haut. Elles sont debout en position frontale, les bras le long du corps, habillées d'un péplos et coiffées d'un *polos* et d'une couronne. Leur production s'échelonne entre le 7ème et le 5ème s. (avec une prédominance dans la seconde moitié du 6ème s.).

Fig. 15. Figurine en terre cuite du temple de Gortsouli, musée de Tripoli (Vlachopoulos 2012, 48 fig. 67).

L'attribution du sanctuaire, qui n'a livré aucune inscription, a varié chez Th. Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou elle-même. Elle a d'abord parlé d'une Artémis courotrophe[90], en raison sans doute des très nombreuses statuettes de jeunes dédicantes. On penserait aussi bien à une chasseresse, à une protectrice des marais qui se formaient dans la plaine, ou à une protectrice de la fertilité des prairies et pacages, etc. Ensuite, à l'occasion de la publication d'un fascicule avec une sélection de statuettes dont elle trace l'évolution[91], elle a préféré Déméter, en raison de la présence sur certaines des statuettes de couronnes de fruits, grenades ou feuillages sur la tête, qui lui évoquait la Déméter Karpophoroi de Tégée ; elle suggère alors une déesse locale, « version d'une primitive Déméter arcadienne ». Dans son dernier article, elle ne prend pas position, ce qui est sans doute le plus sage[92].

Le paysage religieux en Arcadie sans Pausanias est très différent de celui des *Arkadika.* Il est tout en hauteur et ne comporte que peu de divinités (Pan, Artémis, Athéna Polias et Zeus Sôter, Asklépios), parmi lesquelles Pan et Artémis dominent — quelle que soit l'opinion que l'on a des *artémisia* « possibles ». Certes, une douzaine des sanctuaires localisés n'ont pas livré de document permettant un lien avec telle ou telle divinité, mais il est douteux qu'ils retrouvent un jour des propriétaires nouveaux. L'absence quasi totale de Déméter[93] et de son comparse Poséidon Hippios est la plus étonnante, tant on sait l'intérêt marqué de Pausanias pour cette déesse. Il est vrai que les monnaies émises sous les Sévères montrent aussi que la déesse était moins populaire que ne le ferait croire Pausanias : seules Mégalopolis, Thelpousa et Phigalie (?) la choisissent comme emblème de la cité[94].

L'implantation des sanctuaires est un premier élément neuf, avec la mise en lumière des lieux de culte et de leurs divinités sur les basses pentes des montagnes et leurs collines. Ils témoignent, dans leur simplicité rustique (tous n'ont pas de temple) de la vie des bergers, chasseurs et paysans sous la protection d'Artémis et Pan. Cet aspect est totalement négligé par le Périégète. La position de temples sous le sommet des montagnes apporte aussi une précision inconnue de Pausanias, qui abuse certainement de la formule « au sommet de »[95]. Les acropoles urbaines accueillent Athéna Polias, une déesse très négligée par le Périégète, associée à Zeus Sôter, inconnu autrement à Phigalie et qui semble bien effacé. Asklépios, qui était très populaire, occupe un seul sanctuaire (détruit à l'époque du Périégète). En revanche, les sanctuaires des vallées — mis à part celui de Gortys connu de Pausanias —, des bassins fluviaux, des plaines fermées orientales sont totalement absents sur le terrain. L'érosion, favorisée par le déboisement — on sait l'importance des forêts dans l'Arcadie antique, la circulation des hommes et des bêtes peuvent expliquer cette invisibilité. Dans les plaines de l'est, l'alluvionnement, scientifiquement étudié pour Lousoi (cf. *supra*), causé par les fréquentes inondations, a dû jouer un rôle essentiel.

Pour cerner la personnalité des divinités, l'examen des objets de fouille, qui sont souvent de nature banale, s'avère rarement parlant, sauf pour distinguer féminin et masculin[96]. L'absence des épiclèses locales rapportées par Pausanias nous expose à simplifier ce qui était complexe. Ainsi pour Artémis, les représentations monétaires voient surtout en elle la déesse de la chasse. Les analyses fauniques menées à Stymphale renforcent cette image en suggérant une meute de chiens pour la déesse. On pense alors à l'exemple de Scillonte, toute proche, où, pour la fête d'Artémis du domaine de Xénophon, des

88 Mazarakis-Ainian 1997, 167–169.
89 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 2001 ; 2008.
90 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 1992–1993, 106.
91 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 2001.
92 Karaghiorga-Stathakopoulou 2008.
93 Pour Déméter, *supra* n. 57.
94 Jost 2010.
95 *Supra* n. 27.
96 Voir en ce sens la conclusion de V. Pirenne-Delforge 2009, 331.

chasses au sanglier, au chevreuil et au cerf étaient organisées dans le mont Pholoé[97].

Quant à l'évocation des rites religieux, autre sujet de prédilection de Pausanias, il est clair que les sacrifices offerts dans les sanctuaires observés devaient être d'une grande banalité, comme le montrent les analyses fauniques du sanctuaire du mont Saint-Élie. Enfin, en lieu et place des récits mythiques de Pausanias sur l'histoire des sanctuaires (par exemple pour la grotte de Déméter Mélaina), on étudie désormais l'histoire véridique des sanctuaires et leur place dans l'évolution de ces structures en Grèce. C'est ainsi pour le sanctuaire du mont Saint-Élie de Kandréva, dont on suit l'histoire du 10ème s. av. J.-C. au 14ème ap. J.-C., tandis qu'à Lousoi, des bâtiments de l'époque géométrique sont conservés (G. Ladstätter retrace cinq phases dans l'évolution du site[98]). À cela s'ajoutent les diversités régionales du plan des temples, qui apportent plus pour l'histoire de l'architecture que pour celle des cultes.

Au total, sans Pausanias, on a une idée plutôt juste du paysage religieux dans les montagnes et sur les hauteurs dressées dans les plaines orientales, avec un nombre de divinités limité, mais qui correspondent aux fonctions essentielles que sont la protection de la vie rurale, de la vie civique et de la santé des humains. Il reste à élargir ce paysage religieux, par la prospection archéologique et grâce aux découvertes fortuites.

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Abstract

This chapter provides an inventory of Arcadian sanctuaries grounded exclusively in archaeological evidence, supplemented by epigraphic and numismatic sources. Depending on their location—dictated by the specific geographical features of Arcadia—the sites can be classified into several categories: small rural shrines on the lower mountain slopes and hills; hilltop cult places located just below the summits; caves; urban sanctuaries strategically placed to avoid flood risks; and sanctuaries situated at mountain passes or other border zones between city-territories. The rustic character of many sacred sites reflects the pastoral economy that defines Arcadia. Pan and Artemis are the most commonly attested deities. The archaeological evidence reveals a religious landscape that differs significantly from the one described by Pausanias.

6. THE SANCTUARY OF THE MUSES IN CONTEXT: THE CONTRIBUTION OF LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY

John Bintliff – Anthony Snodgrass – Phil Howard – Christel Müller

The Valley of the Muses in Boeotia (**Fig. 1**) is one of the most beautiful landscapes in Greece, famed in ancient and later literature for its close associations between an idyllic rural world and the demigods of the Arts, the Muses, supposed since Hesiod to dwell on the enclosing folds of Mount Helicon which embrace the Valley on three sides. Hesiod himself dwelt in a village within the Valley called Askra around 700 BCE, and in his *Theogony* (1–23) he describes how, when pasturing his sheep on Helicon's foothills, he encountered the Muses, who inspired him to write poetry. He dedicated a tripod in thanks to the Muses at the spot of this epiphany (*Op.* 654–659), and this was anciently believed to mark the first offering-place where the later Sanctuary of the Muses was to be built.

In this contribution, we shall seek to describe the "sacred landscape" of the Sanctuary of the Muses in terms of its geology, topography and reconstructed vegetation, then set this locality into the wider Valley of the Muses in terms of its very different landscape and its settlement history as uncovered by our Boeotia regional survey project.[1]

A French team led by Paul Jamot from 1888 to 1891 uncovered the only known monuments of the Sanctuary: a large altar, a stoa (**Fig. 2**) and the theatre. Jamot left only brief notes.[2] All of this was difficult to evaluate for such a major sacred complex and indeed what had become by Late Hellenistic times a major international festival site given stephanitic status, till Georges Roux leapt to the rescue in 1954. He gathered up all the meagre information from the earlier French work and published an authoritative reconstruction of the Sanctuary and its history (**Fig. 3**), offering a reconstruction drawing.[3]

No further field research occurred until our own Boeotia Survey Project undertook a pedestrian archaeological survey of the entire Valley up to the limits of cultivation in the early 1980s.[4] It had not been difficult to locate Askra as a large 10ha ancient settlement (**Figs 1** and **4**). **Fig. 4** shows Jamot's excavation at the Episkopi church, which he was unaware lay in the core of ancient Askra. We discovered over 50 other settlements in the Valley ranging in date from the Neolithic up to the Ottoman era, and representing both large and small villages, as well as large villas, down to small family farms and seasonally-occupied estate centres.

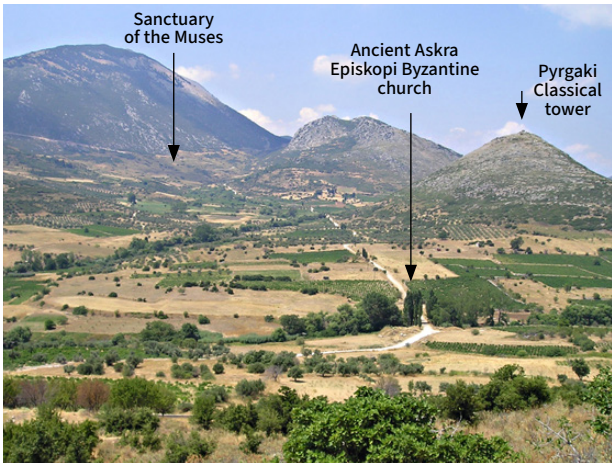

Fig. 1. View of the Valley of the Muses, Askra and the Sanctuary of the Muses, Boeotia.

Several authors have summarized the ancient sources for the history of the Sanctuary, most recently Albert Schachter and Christel Müller.[5] Hesiod's supposed thank-offering at the spot of his divine inspiration agrees archaeologically with an early Archaic inception of cult. The ancient sources, however, give only vague references to cult activity from Archaic through Classical times, and it is primarily the early dedications found by Jamot that indicate the Sanctuary's existence then.[6] This suggests that the cult centre was small-scale and localized throughout these centuries.

Our first reliable evidence points to a dramatic change in the scale of the Sanctuary during the Hellenistic

1 Bintliff – Howard – Snodgrass in prep.
2 *BCH* 46 (1922), 217–218.
3 Roux 1954.
4 Bintliff 1996.
5 Schachter 2016 [2011]; Müller in prep.
6 Jamot 1902; Schachter 1986.

Fig. 2. Jamot's excavations at the Sanctuary of the Muses. In the lower right foreground the stoa and beyond it the great altar —the focus of worship (Photothèque, EFA).

later 3rd c. BCE. The city of Thespiai, whose *chora* included the Valley, undertook international contacts to establish the Sanctuary as a focus for four-yearly festivals and literary competitions. This activity fits into the well-known pattern during this era, for historic city-states to enhance their international profiles through advertising their ancient traditions and attracting pilgrims and visitors to their cultural events, with added advantages for income-generation. Such initiatives were to culminate in the Panhellenion, established by the emperor Hadrian in the 2nd c. CE, when cities throughout the wider Greek world deployed genuine and spurious links to an heroic antiquity to cultivate tourism and investment.[7] Epigraphy informs us of major investments in the Sanctuary of the Muses from the Attalids and the Ptolemies, alongside lesser investments from Boeotian elite families. Apart from statue dedications and precious gifts, there was considerable investment in the purchase of estates to support the running costs of the Muses festivals, especially now the literary contests were attracting competitors and other visitors from all over the Greek world.

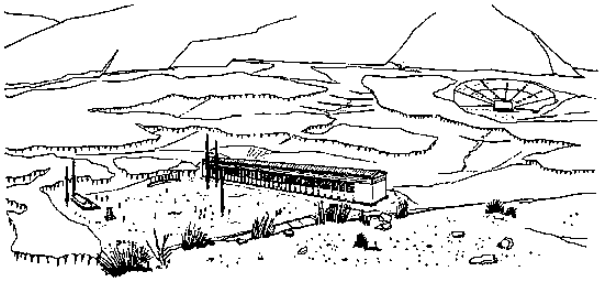

Fig. 3. Reconstruction of the Hellenistic Sanctuary of the Muses (Roux 1954, Fig. 3).

Jamot's excavations lacked artefactual associations for the three monuments he uncovered: these were the great altar—the focus of cult as there was no Muses temple in the Sanctuary, the great 96m stoa and the large theatre some distance above the central cult focus. However, architectural comparisons suggest that the construction of these stone monuments only occurred in the late 3rd c. BCE, when the sudden burst of international investment manifested itself.[8] It is important to note that the

7 Spawforth – Walker 1985; 1986.

8 Roux 1954.

Fig. 4. Jamot's team excavating the ruined church at Episkopi for inscriptions. This actually lay in the centre of ancient Askra village (Photothèque, EFA).

Sanctuary and associated festivals were clearly run by and to the advantage of the city of Thespiai some 10km away.

There is a decline in Muses festival inscriptions in the Late Hellenistic era, a period of general crisis in Boeotia, including the city-state of Thespiai.[9] In a patronizing statement Strabo (*Geography* 9.2.25) records that all the Boeotian cities are in a bad state, with the exception of Thespiai and Tanagra—but we know from our urban surveys that these are only moderately prosperous. Our archaeological survey of the immediate hinterland of Thespiai and of the city itself shows a dramatic urban shrinkage and largescale abandonment of its countryside.[10]

Things pick up at the Sanctuary with the Julio-Claudian emperors, and this new burst of activity continues through the 2nd c. CE. With the 3rd c. however the sources indicate renewed decline. Nonetheless the last list of victors runs into the 3rd c. CE, and dedicatory statues continue to a final example from 362–364 CE.[11]

Probably in the 5th or 6th c. CE, the end of the Muses cult and its replacement by Christianity is marked by a basilica church built onto the former Great Altar.[12]

The Landscape Context

Hesiod's tale of his encounter with the Muses was believed in Antiquity to take place in the uppermost inner reaches of the Valley, where the main river the Permessos (modern Archontitsa) leaves Helicon to flow down through the centre of the Valley and beyond, passing close to ancient Askra. Geologically and geomorphologically (**Fig. 5**) the Valley has three main subdivisions: in the lower reaches of its west to east flowing central Permessos stream, the Valley below the uncultivated limestone mountain ridges is made up of soft Tertiary sandstones and marls (in yellow), a narrower band on the north side than on the south, with river and slope-wash deposits along the river and notably north of Askra in a very fertile peneplain called Christos. In the middle Permessos reaches, the geology shifts to soft Flysch mudstone deposits in the cultivated land (in orange) below

9 Bintliff *et al.* 2017.
10 Bintliff *et al.* 2007; 2017.
11 *IThesp* 418; *PLRE* I, *s.v.* Praextextatus [e].
12 Kalliontzis 2020.

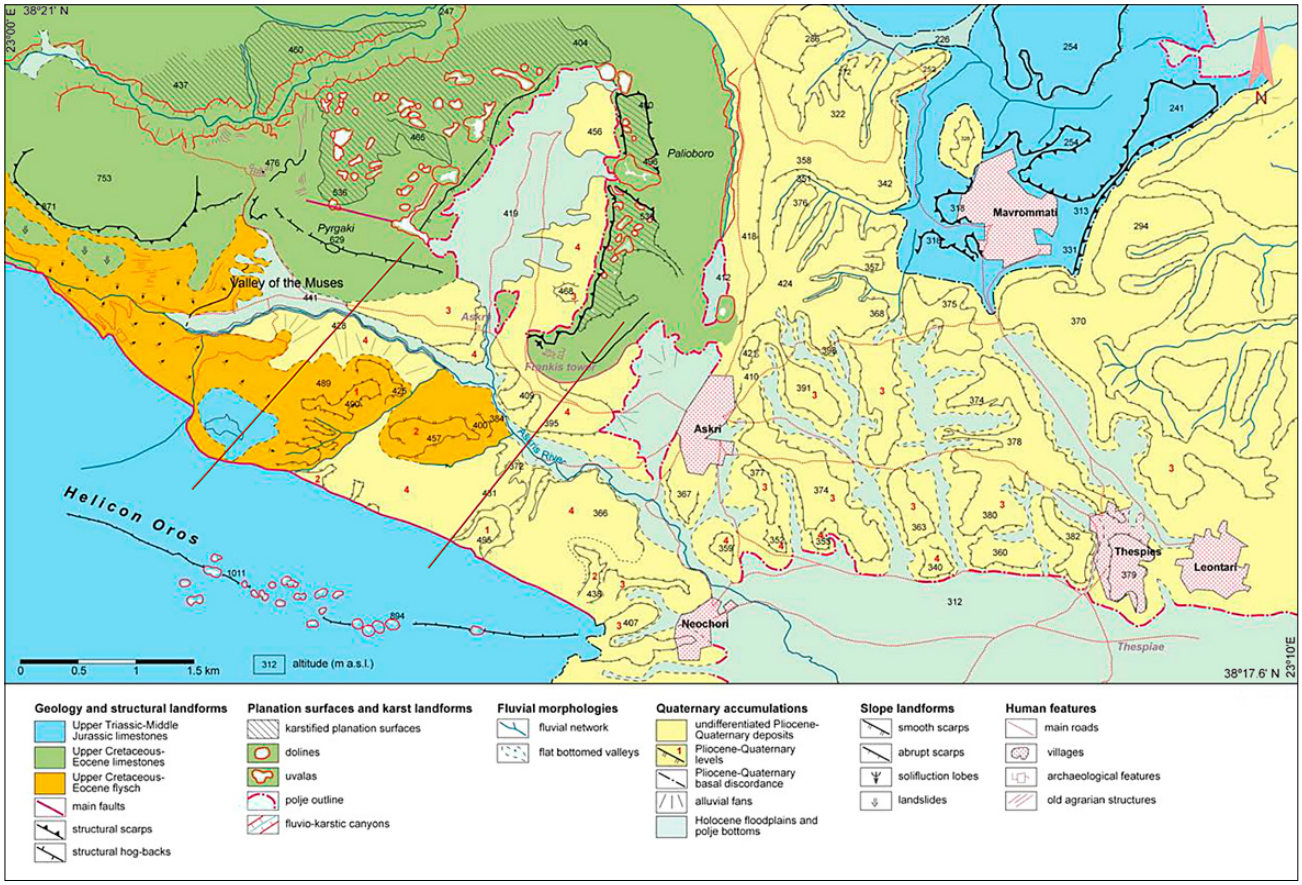

Fig. 5. Geology of S.W. Boeotia, The red bars identify between them the lower and middle fertile Valley of the Muses, to their left the infertile upper Valley with the location of the Muses Sanctuary (modified from Peña-Monné – Sampietro-Vattuone 2023, with permission).

the hard limestone mountain (in blue and green). These two divisions of the Valley are well-drained and crossed by springs and small streams feeding into the Permessos. Especially on the very wide slopes below the limit of cultivation on the south side of the river, immense forests of olive trees flourish, while in the land nearest the river, vines and cereals take over. The Christos peneplain behind Askra supports the largest vineyard in Boeotia. No wonder then that these zones of the landscape were filled with numerous estate centres and small nucleated settlements in the prosperous Classical Greek and Middle to Late Roman centuries, when also the central nucleation at Askra flourished.

In the upper western reaches of the Permessos however, the geology changes dramatically: the infertile mountain limestone encroaches on both sides, hemming in any cultivable land to narrower and narrower strips (**Figs 5** and **6**). At the same time the flysch of the lower elevations here alters to a harder, often impermeable facies poorly suited to farming, but encouraging much surface water. This is land which the ancient Greeks termed the *eschatia*, the territorial borderlands—not without value: a place for beehives, hunting, quarrying, and especially for pastoralism. In the photographs of Jamot's team in the 1880s we can see that the upper Valley is unwooded but also largely uncultivated, kept open through intensive grazing (**Fig. 2**). This is of course exactly where Hesiod was believed to have grazed his sheep, and founded a cult to worship the Muses. These demigods dwelt amongst the dense woodland of the mountain above, or perhaps this was as till recently scrubby maquis prickly oak woods kept from full tree growth to pasture goats.

Today if one visits the Sanctuary, it is an arduous scramble to climb from the Theatre down to the Altar and the Stoa, since any route involves navigating around hard flysch boulders and marshy ponds. Access directly to the Altar and stoa from the lower Valley was easier: surely as today, a bridge from the north across the Permessos linked the main road up the Valley directly to the Altar area.

This upper Valley is a distinctly wild landscape set apart from those marks of civilization—the groves of olive and fig, vineyards and the open fields of grain. It was best suited to pastoralism and hunting wild game, or as we hear from local historian Plutarch—an ideal place to camp in rustic peace and enjoy nature (*Moralia* 748e–749c). What better place for a cult of demigoddesses residing on the mountain?

Fig. 6. View of the upper Valley of the Muses.

Fig. 7. The theatre at the Sanctuary of the Muses with the view east down the middle and lower Valley.

Fig. 8. The revised view by the author of the central monuments of the Sanctuary, with the River Permessos and the new second, North, Stoa added.

The layout of the centre of the mature Sanctuary, once its main buildings in stone had been erected in the late 3rd c. BCE, was consciously landscaped to appear as a mystic clearing, since the cult-place as a whole is described anciently as an *alsos* or sacred wood. So at least around the temenos zone, woodland was encouraged to create a suitable atmosphere for regular invocations to summon the spirits of the woodland Muses living above on the mountain. Higher up, the theatre space would have provided its tiered audience with a wide and deep vision of the wilder stretches of the upper Valley with its woods and pastures (**Fig. 7**), appropriate to a festival dedicated to the spirits of the outer and mystical borderlands of civilized life. Much further down in the middle and lower valley the audience could also make out the regular lines of the spaces of well-managed human

endeavour in the patterns of vineyards, cereal fields and olive plantations.

However, our recent research has led to a new vision of how visitors experienced the Sanctuary. In the reconstruction published by Roux (**Fig. 3**) we see the great central altar and to its west slightly elevated above it and facing it, a long open stoa, a theatrical space for observing the sacrifices and other ceremonies at the Altar. To the north side lay the Permessos ravine. How much more might be discovered if excavations were undertaken around these three known monuments? We commissioned a Lidar (ground-penetrating radar) flight to probe below the bushes which now cover the upper Valley.[13] Quite a few new structures were indicated and perhaps traces of a temenos wall. However like Olympia perhaps, and just like Plutarch and his wife, pilgrims and contestants probably camped out in the uncultivated land around the sacred wood and the temenos enclosure.

But this scenario is missing one more important element. Roux discovered in Jamot's notes another structure: on the opposing north bank of the Permessos Jamot partially excavated an elongated building at least 48 m long. Roux suggested a second, North Stoa, delimiting the sacred core of the Sanctuary. In 2021 we remembered how careless Jamot had been with his excavation debris, and wondered if there might still be material lying on field edges. We were looking for a large terrace opposite the Altar but across the river, and since the north slopes here are steep, an artificially levelled space suitable for a stoa-like building. To our surprise we found exactly what we were looking for: a field suspiciously flat, and on the stone terrace walls a whole series of large architectural blocks and two long pillar fragments. A further visit by Guy Sandars located one stone geison or piece of roof architecture.

Clearly the North Stoa alters the whole setting of the Sanctuary core (**Fig. 8**): now we have the Altar with two viewing platforms, one immediately to its west, the other across a ravine to its north, with the main stream of the Valley coursing in mid temenos. To the sacred wood surrounding the Altar and the two stoas we can now add that other atmospheric component of the natural world, a steep valley with a strong stream.

The Sanctuary in the Context of Settlement History in the Valley

Askra grows rapidly from a small Early Iron Age hamlet to a larger community over the Archaic period, but then suddenly blossoms in Classical times into a very large village. In parallel we have just a few rural occupation sites from protohistoric through Archaic times, then in agreement with the growth of the focal Askra village we witness (**Fig. 9**) a veritable explosion of rural settlements throughout the Valley during Classical and Early Hellenistic times. Already perhaps in the Middle Hellenistic later 3rd to mid-2nd c. BCE we see evidence for significant shrinkage in the extent of Askra and a definite decline in Valley rural site numbers. By Late Hellenistic into Early Roman times (**Fig. 10**), from the mid-2nd c. BCE on to the 2nd c. CE, activity at Askra is minimal (ancient sources claim it is abandoned) and the same goes for the rest of the Valley rural sites. Things do pick up very noticeably for the Middle Roman 3rd to 4th c. CE (**Fig. 11**), with a clear revival of life at Askra, and in the wider Valley rural settlement recovers, though much is focused on what appear to be large estate centres. The final era of Antiquity, Late Roman (**Fig. 12**), the 5th to mid-7th c. CE, remains prosperous, again dominated by major rural estate centres and the revived large village at Askra, and this is when we can place the Christianisation of the Sanctuary.

What is clearly striking is the disjunction between the apparent prosperity at the Sanctuary and the evidence from the main settlement in the Valley and its very numerous rural communities. The great investment in sacred estates from the late 3rd c. BCE onwards into Hadrianic times postdates and hence cannot account for the explosion of Askra and its countryside in the 5th to 4th c. BCE, indeed our survey suggests that that later Hellenistic period on through the Early Roman Empire witnesses dramatic settlement shrinkage and abandonment. When the Festival record begins to weaken from the 3rd c. CE, this is precisely the time when Askra and the Valley settlements show significant recovery, which is largely sustained into the 6th c. CE.

How do we explain such contradictions? Firstly we can note that the 5th–4th c. BCE were the apogee of town and countryside within Boeotia as a whole.[14] No extra stimulus from the nascent Sanctuary cult is required to enliven Askra and the Valley, indeed it seems likely that the cult centre remained low-key and locally-focussed, lacking so far as we can see any major stone constructions. Likewise the general decline of Boeotia over the 3rd to 1st c. BCE and prolonged till about 200 CE is matched exactly by our record for the Askra village and the Valley rural sites. This seems to be the product of land exhaustion, military devastation, a suspected decline in Greek rainfall over Southern Greece and a general process of proto-capitalist transformations within the mature Hellenistic and Late Republican economy. This all severely disadvantaged peasant farmers and city finances but boosted the power and wealth of local elites and incoming Italian entrepreneurs or *negotiatores*.[15]

13 Lucas – García Sánchez 2022.

14 Bintliff – Snodgrass 1985.

15 Müller 2002.

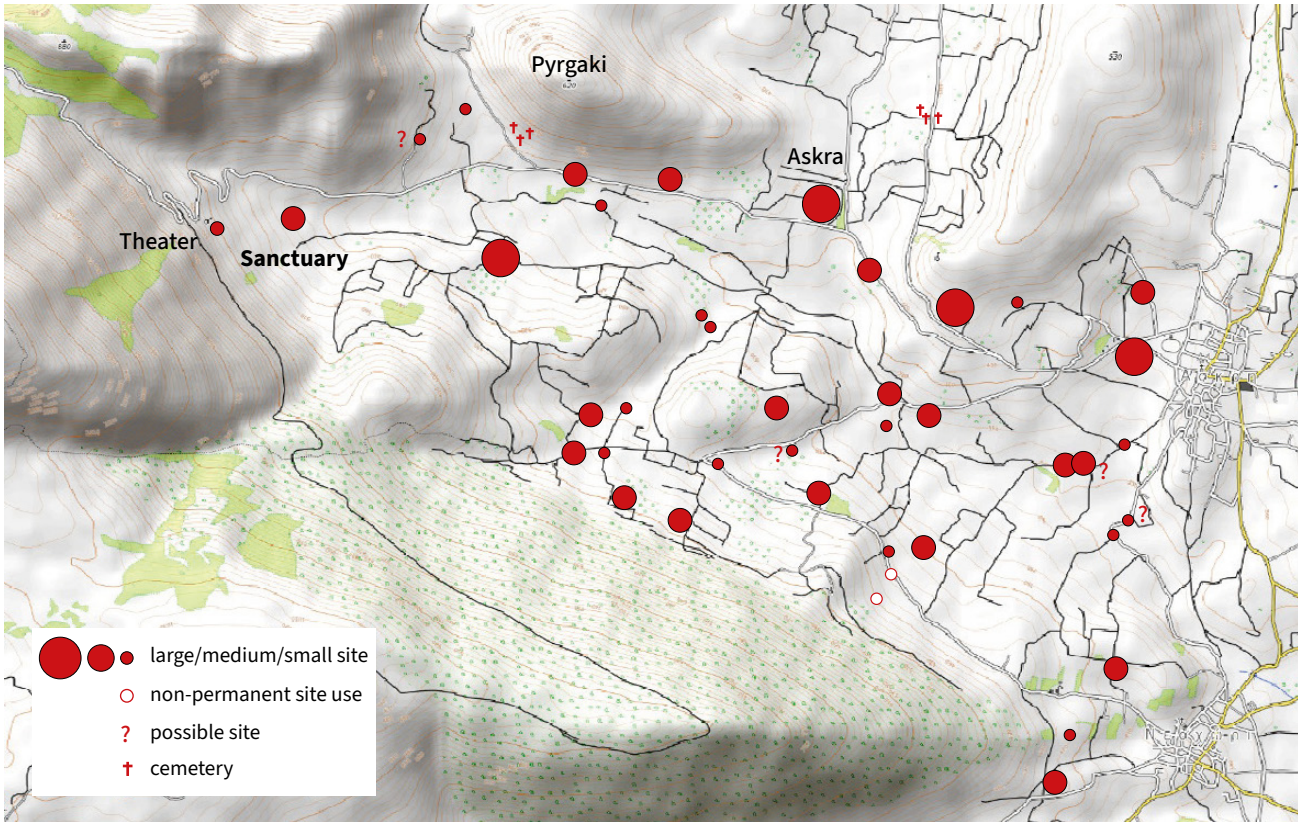

Fig. 9. Provisional map of the Classical to Early Hellenistic sites in the Valley of the Muses (ca. 500–150 BCE).

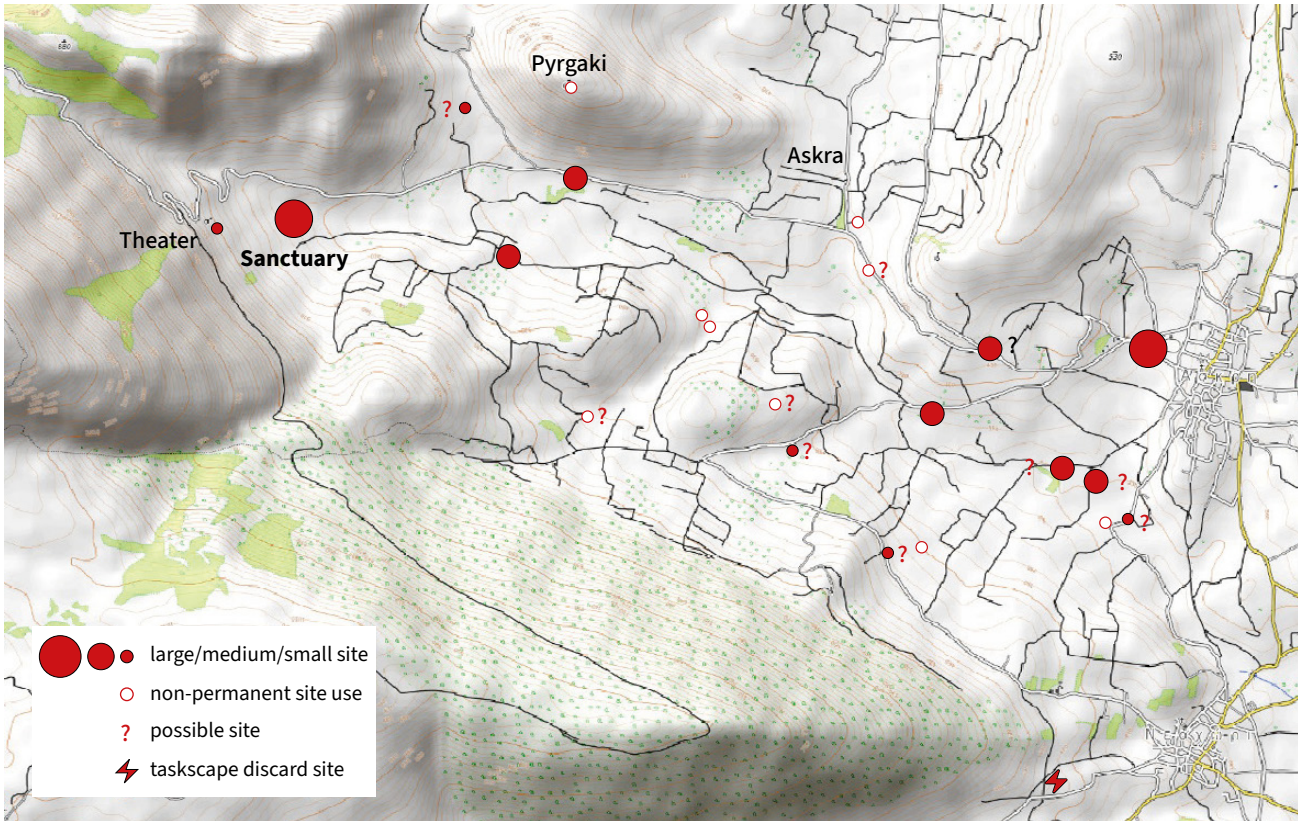

Fig. 10. Provisional map of the Late Hellenistic to Early Roman sites in the Valley of the Muses (ca. 150 BCE to 200 CE).

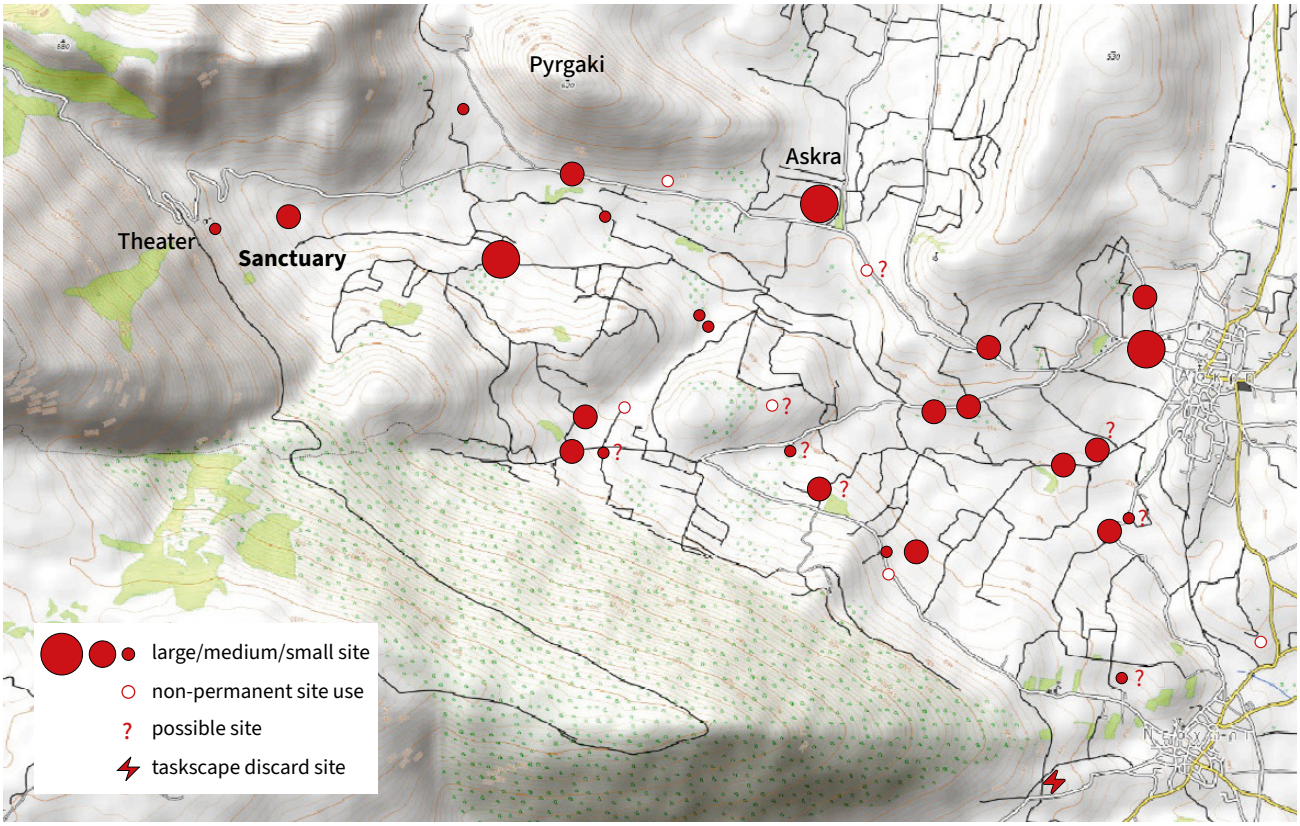

Fig. 11. Provisional map of the Middle Roman sites in the Valley of the Muses (ca. 200 CE to 400 CE).

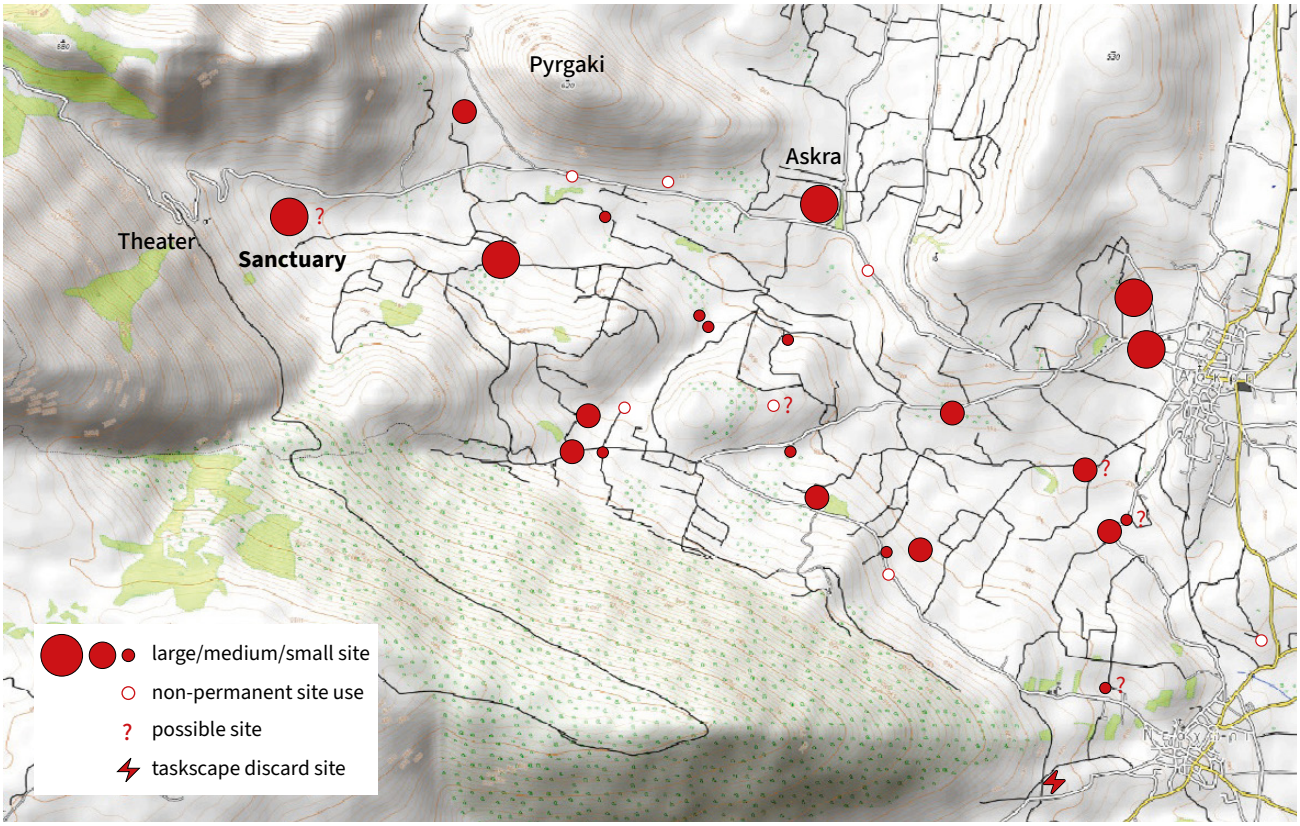

Fig. 12. Provisional map of the Late Roman sites in the Valley of the Muses (ca. 400 CE to 650 CE).

It now seems very possible that the Thespian initiative to bring a new and considerable income to its city, through elaborating its smallscale cult centre into an Hellenic global pilgrim and competition centre during the later 3rd c. BCE, may have been a deliberate response to its internal crisis. The dramatic decline of urban, village and rural farm populations from this period on into the 2nd c. CE indicates largescale abandonment of the land. Income from pilgrims and competitors could flow directly into the Thespian urban funds, while the gift of sacred land offered a stimulus to promote at least localized cultivation to support the costs of the international festivals of the Muses and of Eros at Thespiai city itself.

Can we see any life in the Valley that could mark cultivation of the sacred estates, since after all the busy Muses festival posed great demands for sacrifices and subsistence needs?

If we look more closely at our still incomplete site maps of the Valley, during the crucial peak era of the Sanctuary's florescence—the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, Askra apart, we see two large settlements, and a medium sized settlement—we believe these are all commercial villas (**Fig. 10**). We also see six sites (open circles) where we argue for non-residential activity at former estate centres. Robin Osborne has argued that the inscriptions which include the leasing of sacred Muses land point to a limited number of wealthier landowners, although there are occasional small plot owners.[16] Askra village, much shrunken though it is in later Hellenistic times, and all but empty in the Early Roman era, could still have seen some of its surviving inhabitants farming the land, but these more distant occupied villas and non-residential farm locations might well document the sacred estates supporting the Muses festival. One might even speculate that the unusual number of Italian businessmen documented by our epigraphic and historic sources at Thespiae in the Late Republic and Early Roman Empire, predating the rise of commercial villas in the region,[17] might suggest their involvement in the lucrative Muses festival, to the disadvantage of the inhabitants of the Valley itself.

The revival of Boeotia and Greece in general from ca. 200–600 CE sees the positive economic benefits of incorporation into a globalizing Imperial economy, even if it seems especially associated with the widespread disappearance of the family farm and its replacement by wealthier villa-owners and larger settlements as pools for dependent labour. As this coincides with continuity but at a reduced scale for the Muses cult centre and festivals, it is more likely that this revival—lasting into the Christian Late Roman centuries—reflects the recovery of the Valley lands and their produce being successfully exported into the wider Roman world, rather than a by-product of the demands for oil, cattle and bread at the Sanctuary site. Of course no doubt some of the products from the new spread of villas and farms did find their way into supplying the cult of the Muses. But a recovery of life at Askra and in its Valley hinterland (**Figs 11–12**), which commences at a time the festival was entering a long decline, is surely due to the impact of much wider economic changes across the Roman world, especially in the Late Roman 5th–6th c., when the Eastern Empire shows a remarkable degree of flourishing following the Fall of Rome. Unsurprisingly the suppression of the Muses cult and its physical replacement by a Christian basilica is midway through this phase of florescence of Valley settlement and of the Askra village, underlining the ultimate irrelevance of the Sanctuary to the general waves of agricultural and demographic expansion and contraction in Central Greece across Antiquity.

16 Osborne 1985.

17 Bintliff *et al.* 2007; 2017; Müller 2002.

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Abbreviations

IThesp = *Les Inscriptions de Thespies*, Lyon, 2007–2009 (digital edition https://www.hisoma.mom.fr/production-scientifique/les-inscriptions-de-thespies).

PLRE = *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 1971–1992.

Abstract

The Sanctuary of the Muses in Boeotia, Greece, grew to be one of the major festival and pilgrimage centres in the classical world. This contribution presents a new interpretation of its major monuments, while contextualizing the Sanctuary into its natural environment within the Valley of the Muses. Comparison of the settlement history of the Valley which has been revealed through archaeological survey, reveals an unexpected divergence between the flourishing of the Sanctuary and that of its surrounding settled landscape.

7. BETWEEN ZEUS AND POSEIDON: SACRED LANDSCAPES AROUND OLYMPIA AND SAMIKON

Birgitta Eder

Two current projects that are carried out in the region of Elis in the western Peloponnese are concerned with sacred space in the surroundings of two important sanctuaries (**Fig. 1**). The first one deals with the environs of the Panhellenic sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia, which not only fulfilled the functions of a supra-regional festival and competition venue, but also those of a central place in the southern part of the region. In addition to the city of Elis, it formed the second centre within the political region of Elis. The other project is dedicated to the exploration of a sanctuary that was previously known only from written sources: the sanctuary of Poseidon at Samikon was the crystallisation point for the identity of the Triphylians, who had come under the rule of the Eleians in the 5th c. BCE and were able to regain their independence with the beginning of the 4th c. BCE. The rather recent discovery of this important sanctuary adds a new fixed point to the sacred topography of the wider region of Elis, which should be considered alongside Olympia. These two most important sanctuaries in the region, as places of communication and interaction, also created a field of tension with political dimensions.[1]

Fig. 1. Map of Elis and Triphylia with sites mentioned in the text (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder/M. Börner).

Olympia Area Survey

Since 2015, the interdisciplinary project dedicated to the investigation of the environs of Olympia has been taking place as a collaboration between Franziska Lang (TU Darmstadt), Andreas Vött (University of Mainz), Hans-Joachim Gehrke (University of Freiburg), Erofili-Iris Kolia (Ephorate of Antiquities of Elis) and myself. This project has consciously adopted an interdisciplinary approach combining methods of archaeology, historical studies and geoscience. The "Olympia Area Survey" offers the opportunity to contextualise the site of Olympia for the first time systematically (geo)archaeologically and historically in its regional environment. In the following I shall summarise and highlight the first results of our project under the perspective of a sacred landscape.[2]

I would like to thank the organisers for the invitation to an exciting roundtable and for the great hospitality at the Fondation Hardt in Vandœuvres. I am very grateful to H.-J. Gehrke and F. Lang for many discussions and the exchange of fruitful ideas on the findings of the Olympia Area Survey and all matters Eleian. I thank Erofili-Iris Kolia, Georg Ladstätter and Federica Iannone for the continuous exchange of ideas about the Poseidon sanctuary at Kleidi-Samikon. Research was carried out as part of the research projects "Der multidimensionale Raum Olympia (Griechenland) – landschaftsarchäologische Untersuchungen zu Struktur, Interdependenzen und Wandel räumlicher Vernetzungen" funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and "Das Heiligtum des Poseidon von Samikon: Archäologische Forschungen an den 'Thermopylen der Peloponnes'" funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation.

1 For the history of Elis, see also Roy 1999; Bourke 2017 with further references, in addition to the references quoted in this contribution. For Triphylia see Nielsen 1997; Ruggeri 2009.

2 First report: Eder *et al.* 2023.

Major survey projects have never systematically covered the region around the sanctuary of Olympia, and for many decades research has focused on the Panhellenic sanctuary itself. Archaeological projects have also taken place at other sites in the region, but have always been limited in time and dimension, and this applies in particular to the numerous rescue excavations carried out by the Greek Archaeological Service. However, this information, albeit often on a small scale, is particularly valuable for gaining a picture of the ancient settlement and land use in a regional perspective. Apart from Olympia, long-term systematic excavations have mainly taken place in Ancient Elis, the capital of the homonymous region.[3]

Historical Perspectives

In fact, we obtain most of our information about the regional integration of Olympia from written sources. Oliver Pilz has recently compiled a systematic and wealthy study of the cults and sanctuaries in Elis and Triphylia and attempted to relate them to the archaeological evidence.[4] However, he deliberately excludes the Panhellenic sanctuary from his considerations and thus refrains from elaborating in detail on the regional entanglement of the cults represented at Olympia.

As Panhellenic sanctuary, Olympia was frequented to varying degrees at different times. Apart from the Olympic Games, which attracted a particularly large number of visitors from the entire Greek world in a penteteric cycle, numerous smaller and larger festivals took place in honour of various deities in Olympia that guaranteed the continuous operation of the sanctuary. The Panhellenic significance should not obscure the fact that Olympia was an Eleian sanctuary, at least from the 6th c. BCE: Elis was the organiser and host of the Olympic Games, and Eleians were present in the sanctuary as officials.[5] The coinage was Eleian,[6] as were the units of measurement used in the profitable markets.[7] Inscriptions recording treaties or decrees demonstrate that Olympia was a place for the publication of public affairs of the Eleian state. In fact, as James Roy has phrased it "Elis used the sanctuary to strengthen its control over its subordinate allies."[8] The Eleian festive calendar, which also included a month called Alphioios, divided the year according to religious festivals that involved the whole region.[9] Two major roads connected Elis and Olympia, one through the plain and the other through the mountains. The "sacred road" or "processional road" led over a distance of 300 stades (approximately 55.8km) from Elis through the plains into the lower Alpheios Valley and via Ledrinoi (probably at the site of the modern town of Pyrgos) to Olympia.[10] On the occasion of festivals, in particular the Heraia and the Olympic Games, the two centres of the region were directly connected by processions on the "sacred road."

These processions naturally also passed through the territory of dependent poleis such as Ledrinoi, which were included in these festivals. As the work of Henri Lefebvre has taught us, human agency creates social space because it takes place in space: spatial practices shape and transform physical, social and mental space.[11] Processions organised by the Eleian state thus not only served as ostentatious display of power, but also promoted social cohesion in the country by creating and maintaining a religiously charged space in the interest of the central political power of Elis.[12]

Several cults and institutions were duplicated either in Elis or in Olympia and illustrate the tight integration of the sanctuary of Olympia into the Eleian state.[13] Similar processes were apparently also underway in other places, as evidenced by the merging of the cult of Artemis Alpheiaia of Ledrinoi, who was also worshipped as Artemis Alpheionia, or Alpheiousa in Olympia, with the Eleian Artemis Elaphiaia. Artemis and Alpheios also shared a common altar at Olympia.[14] This also reflects a reshaping of the religious and mythical landscape that was in line with the political interests of the city of Elis.[15] It may thus be argued that Elis was largely responsible for creating and (re)defining a sacred landscape that not only featured Olympia as key site, but also incorporated dependent poleis into the network.

The written sources can reveal also some aspects of the numinous and sacred dimension of the landscape, "the soul and atmosphere" in the words of

3 Ancient Elis: cf. Yalouris 1996; Eder – Baier 2023 with further references.

4 Pilz 2020.

5 Cf. Baitinger – Eder 2001, 188–196; Kyrieleis 2011, 105–114; Roy 2013; 2015a, 174–176; 2015b, 281; Pirenne-Delforge 2019.

6 Cf. Pilz 2020, 74–76 with references.

7 Cf. Kyrieleis 2011, 111–114 with further references.

8 Roy 2015a, 175. Cf. Siewert 2002; Roy 2009, 39; 2015b, 274–275, 281; Eder *et al.* 2023, 109 with n. 72. A new bronze tablet from the first half of the 5th c. BCE, found in the Eileithyia sanctuary at Olympia, records the decision of three judges from Achaean Pellene in an internal conflict in the small Eleian polis of Ledrinoi, who act in the interests of the polis of Elis. See Hallof 2021; Gehrke 2023b.

9 Pilz 2020, 30–41; Eder *et al.* 2023, 172.

10 Pilz 2020, 14, 394–395; Eder *et al.* 2023, 106–107.

11 Lefebvre 1991.

12 Mohr 2013, especially 102–105 on the "sacred road" between Elis and Olympia; Lang 2019, 135.

13 Cf. the important observations by Pirenne-Delforge 2019; Pilz 2020, 388–395.

14 Artemis Alpheiaia at Ledrinoi and at the estuary of the Alpheios: Pilz 2020, 98, 172–175, 178, 229–236; Eder *et al.* 2023, 170–172; Gehrke 2023a, 196; 2023b.

15 Cf. Scheid – Polignac 2010, 427.

Axel Michaels.[16] A sacred landscape is always a cultural landscape, thus shaped by humans and their mythical/religious ideas and cultic practices in space.[17] Thus, in ancient perception, the entire landscape was teeming with nymphs, mythical creatures and gods, who are imagined as anthropomorphic or hybrid beings.[18] Narratives localise mythical events in specific places, which in turn gives them a credible and tangible character, because they can be fixed to certain localities.[19] In the myth-enshrouded landscape of Elis, there are numerous topographical points of reference if one thinks of Pelops, Oinomaos and Hippodameia and the associated stories surrounding the founding of the Olympic Games. Heracles is another illustrious protagonist, who cleaned the proverbial stables of Augeias. The impious Salmoneus, who was punished by Zeus for imitating him, and his daughter Tyro, who became pregnant by Poseidon and gave birth to Neleus and Peleus, or the Centaurs and Lapiths, who were all equally at home in Thessaly, are all tied to specific locations in the land of Elis.[20]

In our project, Hans-Joachim Gehrke examined the sacred-memorial topography of the Alpheios Valley from a phenomenological point of view and highlighted the ritual and mythic-religious role the River Alpheios played in the sanctuary of Olympia and in the surrounding region.[21] The cult of Artemis Alpheiousa in Ledrinoi (and/or at the estuary) points to the important role played by this river in the mythical-sacred beliefs of the inhabitants of the countryside. Alpheios was a real god, who already received a bull sacrifice from Nestor in the 11th book of the *Iliad*, and at Olympia he was associated with the power of divination.[22]

The whole country is full of sanctuaries dedicated to Artemis, and Aphrodite, and the nymphs, which are situated amidst flowery groves, and generally where there is abundance of water (Strab. 8.3.12). The Alpheios flows through this country, and so the story goes that he pursued Artemis with his love and desire.[23] The goddess fled and managed to escape the god in Ledrinoi by means of a cunning trick. Pausanias reports (6.22.9) that the lustful Alpheios tried to surprise the virgin goddess at a nocturnal festival with her nymphs near the river estuary. Artemis, however, anticipated this and disguised herself among her companions by smearing all their faces with clay, and Alpheios had to leave without having achieved his aim. The Ledrinians therefore called the goddess Artemis Alpheiaia. Apart from the aetiology for the nocturnal cult of Artemis Alpheieia, which was probably an initiation ritual for young, unmarried girls, the myth illustrates an ancient perspective on the perception of the landscape inhabited by gods and nymphs.

A sacred landscape is formed only through the connection between sacred places and sites,[24] basically through social practices in the sense of Henri Lefebvre,[25] and these connections can, as S. Verdan also emphasises in the first chapter of the present volume, take different and often quite complimentary forms such as "pathways, networks of inter-visibility, equivalent or complementary functions, narratives, rituals, or a religious calendar."[26] The specific perception of the landscape by individuals is shaped by the ideas of their society, in which cult and religion and mythical narratives are tied to places, objects and features of the local topography. However, it is important to stress that these ideas are shared by a community and also bind it as such (through processions, common festivities, rituals, myths, etc.). Alpheios and Artemis—the two deities, who were so important for the entire region—through their special relationship, contributed to the creation of a sacred landscape between Olympia, Ledrinoi (and Elis), sites that were all located along the "sacred road."

Another place that was also connected to the Alpheios was the sanctuary of the Ionidian nymphs.[27] It was located near Herakleia, 40 or 50 stades away from Olympia, and located on the so-called mountain road linking Elis and Olympia, near the River Kytherios (Strab. 8.3.32; Paus. 6.22.7), a tributary of the Alpheios. At the spring that flowed into the river, there was the sanctuary of the four nymphs, who were believed to cure all sorts of aches and diseases, just like the Anigriad nymphs at Samikon.[28] They were said to have offered violet wreaths to their namesake Ion, after he had taken a bath in the Alpheios. Ion may have been originally the name of the river, the river god, from which the name of the nymphs is derived. Ion also had a sacred grove near the sanctuary of Poseidon at Samikon in Triphylia,

16 Michaels 2006, 277: "Aber bei ‚Landschaft' kommt noch etwas hinzu, was weniger real und objektiv ist: nämlich Seele und Atmosphäre."

17 Cultural landscape: cf. S. Verdan's introductory chapter to the present volume; Scheid – Polignac 2010; Häussler – Chiai 2020.

18 Schlesier 2000, 130; Larson 2007.

19 Mythical-religious interpretation of the landscape: Gehrke 2019, 250–252; forthcoming a; Eder *et al.* 2023, 163, 166–167.

20 Cf. Ulf 1997; Gehrke 2005; Kyrieleis 2012–2023; H.-J. Gehrke in Eder *et al.* 2023, 162–184.

21 Gehrke 2019, 243–253; forthcoming a; Eder *et al.* 2023, 162–184; 166–174 on the Alpheios River in particular.

22 Cults of Alpheios: Gehrke 2019, 251–252; Pilz 2020, 139–142; Eder *et al.* 2023, 169–170.

23 See Gehrke 2019, 243–246; forthcoming a; Eder *et al.* 2023, 170–171 with further references.

24 Cf. Michaels 2006, 278: "We do not speak of sacred landscapes when we are referring to a single place, temple, mountain, forest or river, but we do when we are talking about the connections between these places." (Own translation from German).

25 Lefebvre 1991.

26 Cf. S. Verdan's introductory chapter to the present volume.

27 Ionidian nymphs: Gehrke 2019, 249–250; Pilz 2020, 205–212; Eder *et al.* 2023, 156–157.

28 *Infra*.

Fig. 2. Sulphurous springs at Herakleia-Pournari (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder).

which was close to the Cave of the Anigriad nymphs with its equally healing springs. For reasons of topography, the sanctuary of the Ionidian nymphs has been linked to the sulphur springs of Loutra near the small village of Pournari (**Fig. 2**).[29]

From an Eleian cemetery (near Staphidokampo in the Peneios Valley) comes a bronze case-mirror with a relief decoration dating to the late 4th c. BCE, which is considered as a product of a local toreutic workshop. It shows four naked young women within a rocky cave, who bathe beneath a waterspout in the form of a bearded male head. As Xeni Arapogianni pointed out in her publication, the scene may well refer to the cult of the four Ioniades at Eleian Herakleia.[30] If we follow her interpretation, it speaks to the dissemination of the stories of the Ionidian nymphs within the region Elis. However, it cannot be ruled out that the mirror illustrates the more prominent Anigridian nymphs, even if nothing is known about their number. Even if they were completely anonymous, the mirror nonetheless reveals how the mythical creatures of a spring were imagined.

Archaeological Survey

Every society creates its own sacred landscape with its own places, be they large or small, urban or extra-urban sanctuaries, shrines, groves or simple places of worship at springs or rocks. Sanctuaries are always part of societies in whose settlement structures they are embodied and integrated. Understanding the ancient settlement pattern with the help of archaeological data contributes to unlocking the sacred landscape, although we will probably never fully understand it in its entirety. In this respect, the Olympia Area Survey can contribute an element of understanding by documenting the settlement structures in the vicinity of Olympia, by understanding the local-regional routes, which connect Olympia to the wider region, and by identifying potential sacred sites.

Due to the lack of systematic archaeological surveys in the area around Olympia during the second half of the 20th c., it was all the more important, at least at the beginning of the 21st c., to obtain an overview of the archaeological information that was still available. There can be no doubt that due to the development and expansion of infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, soil cultivation and erosion, many archaeological sites and finds have disappeared in recent decades and the available picture is now more fragmentary than ever. As is to be expected from a survey, information on settlement patterns at different times have emerged that help us to understand the development and function of the Panhellenic sanctuary of Olympia. The final interpretation of the data is not available yet, but I can offer an idea of some first results and possibile conclusions. It is also important to understand that due to the spatial dimensions, the survey could not cover the entire lower Alpheios Valley. We therefore chose three subareas between the coast and the sanctuary of Olympia in order to also address questions of communication and sea connections.[31]

The core areas of investigation consist of three zones in the lower Alpheios Valley, especially north of the river: They are located (1) in the area around the sanctuary of Olympia, (2) on the area southwest of the modern village of Salmoni and north of the river, and (3) around the modern settlement of Epitalio close to the mouth of the Alpheios River on its southern banks, near its estuary in the Ionian Sea (**Fig. 3**).

(1) In the first area, research concentrated on the immediate environs of Olympia, i.e. on the valley of the Kladeos River (the well-known tributary of the Alpheios) and east of it, extending towards the area of Miraka,

29 Cf. Pilz 2020, 205–206; Eder *et al.* 2023, 156–157 with references.

30 Arapogianni 2000, 201–203; for the art historical interpretation, see Stewart 2010, 21–23, who is mistaken in believing that the mirror was actually found in Herakleia ; see now Stewart – Liston 2019.

31 First report: Eder *et al.* 2023; cf. Lang 2019. The archaeological survey was carried out under the direction of Franziska Lang (Darmstadt), who also authored the relevant section.

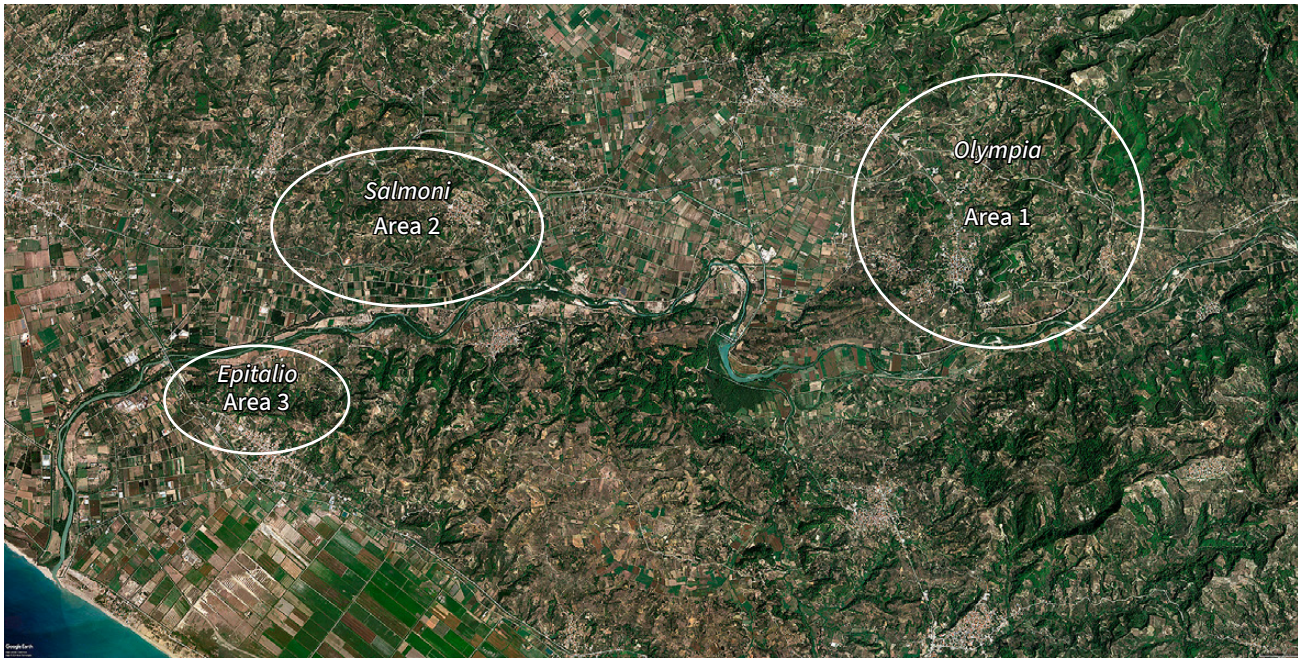

Fig. 3. Olympia Area Survey: location of survey areas at Olympia (1), Salmoni (2), and Epitalio (3) (adapted from Google Earth).

today also known as Archaia Pisa (**Fig. 4**).[32] An irregular rolling country characterises the countryside, where the streams of the Kladeos and its tributary Pilalistra flow through the western part of the survey area. In its lower reaches, the Kladeos is confined east and west by ridges before it joins the Alpheios River west of the sanctuary. The sanctuary of Olympia is located near the confluence of these two rivers, south of the distinctive pyramidal outline of the Kronos Hill.

The northern area of the Kladeos Valley, within the triangle of the villages of Koskinas, Mageiras and Platanos, proved particularly rich in finds. There is a concentration of sites from the Classical and Hellenistic periods, including also earlier and later material. Among the sites in the wider area of Mageiras lies Kioupia Hill, where an exceptionally large and rich cemetery of Mycenaean chamber tombs with valuable burial gifts was discovered and subsequently excavated.[33] In its closer and wider surroundings, the survey team documented Archaic as well as Classical pithoi or tiles that may belong to tombs.

Essentially, the archaeological finds indicate intensive use and relatively dense settlement, but on an extremely small scale. The evidence seems to reflect the settlement structure relatively consistently. A large number of small-scale sites, without remarkable architectural traces, are often only attested by graves. Thus, the impression of very small and tiny settlements emerges, i.e. individual farmsteads, hamlets and villages surrounding the sanctuary of Olympia. In other words, the picture is one of a cluster of small settlements rather than a larger concentration of habitation at one site.

Fig. 4. The Kladeos Valley and sites within survey area 1 (adapted from Google Earth).

32 Eder *et al.* 2023, 116–129 with maps and illustration of finds.

33 For the Mycenaean cemetery at Mageiras see most recently Vikatou 2019; cf. references in Eder *et al.* 2023, 119 n. 97.

Fig. 5. View from Kafkania into the Kladeos Valley and towards Olympia, the Triphylian Mountain range of Lapithos in the background (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder).

In place of a central settlement, the sanctuary stands out as the centre within this particular settlement pattern.[34]

This small-scale settlement structure is entirely in keeping with the tradition of Early Iron Age and Late Bronze Age settlement patterns that can be traced in the area around Olympia.[35] Numerous Mycenaean chamber tomb cemeteries were located in the hinterland of Olympia, in the Kladeos Valley in Mageiras and Kladeos-Trypes or further inland in Kafkania and Persaina. They continued to be used as cemeteries throughout the final decades of the Late Bronze Age, i.e. the entire 12th c. BCE until shortly before the middle of the 11th c. BCE. Towards the end of the Bronze Age, around 1070 BCE, the use of most of these chamber tomb cemeteries came to an end and the age-old burial sites were replaced by individual tombs at new sites that probably corresponded to scattered settlements. However, at this time in the Alpheios Valley at the confluence with the Kladeos, the sanctuary at Olympia emerged, which served as a central point of communication for the dispersed population of the region.

Our archaeological survey has not produced any finds from the Early Iron Age, a period that is generally difficult to identify in survey material. However, we noted that Archaic artefacts are mainly concentrated in the vicinity of Bronze Age sites.[36] Therefore, we probably do have to assume local-regional strands of continuity, which went hand in hand with limited population mobility in the mid-11th c. BCE. In addition, we recognised that the course of the Kladeos stream and some of its tributaries mark communication routes into the northern hinterland of Olympia, where numerous of the Late Bronze Age sites were located (**Fig. 5**). The early visitors to the sanctuary must have come from this catchment area, and that explains the strong Mycenaean background in the early cult practices at Olympia.[37]

(2) The second prospection zone is located west of Olympia, just north of the lower reaches of the Alpheios River, which connects this area with Olympia, close to the modern village of Salmoni. Particularly prominent is the hill immediately south of Salmoni with the church of

34 Eder *et al.* 2023, 112, 146; Gehrke 2020, 264–266; forthcoming a.
35 See Eder forthcoming with further bibliography.
36 Eder *et al.* 2023, 120, 127.
37 Eder forthcoming.

Fig. 6. Hill of Profitis Ilias at modern Salmoni with Paliopyrgos ridge to the right, from southwest (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder).

Prophitis Ilias at its summit. South of this hill, the more than 1km long plateau of Palaiopyrgos extends in an east-west direction **(Fig. 6)**.[38]

On the conspicuous hill with the church of Prophitis Ilias W. Dörpfeld assumed a temple of the Classical period. Even today, surface finds include, in addition to ancient pottery, ancient blocks of shelly limestone as well as Corinthian and Laconian roof tiles.[39] However, the geophysical investigation could not provide a clear confirmation of this assumption.

The ridge of Palaiopyrgos to the south of the Prophitis Ilias Hill was particularly rich in finds. The plateau of the hill is ideal for settlement, with the partially rugged slopes offering a degree of natural protection. The total area of the plateau covers a total area of about 17 hectares. Despite intensive looting, many finds were still visible on the surface. Their chronological range covers the Middle Bronze Age to the Byzantine era, with a concentration on prehistoric, Classical, Hellenistic and Byzantine times. Palaiopyrgos, perhaps with Prophitis Ilias as its acropolis, is a larger settlement site with compact evidence of ancient habitation. It is probably one of the smaller poleis that belonged to the communities subordinate to Elis (usually referred to in the literature as *perioikoi*, but were addressed in Eleian terms as *symmachoi*).[40] We have identified the site with the place known from ancient texts as Marganai, which is mentioned by Xenophon (*Hell.* 3.2.25; 7.4.14), among others.[41]

(3) The third survey zone is located near modern Epitalio (former Agoulenitsa), at the mouth of the River Alpheios. Epitalio forms an important hub where roads lead to the north, south and east.[42] Just like until 60 years ago, before the coastal national road was built, the ford across the Alpheios River may have been located at the north side of the site in antiquity. The river also provided an important link between Olympia and the coast. The survey has focused on the ridge just north-east of

38 Eder *et al.* 2023, 129–136.

39 Pilz 2020, 203 ; Eder *et al.* 2023, 129, 130 fig. 30, 132 fig. 31.

40 On the *perioikoi*, i.e. *symmachoi* of Elis: cf. Roy 1997; 2015a, 174; Eder *et al.* 2023, 109 with 72.

41 Roy 2002, 229–232; Eder *et al.* 2023, 158–160; Gehrke forthcoming a.

42 Eder *et al.* 2023, 137–145.

Fig. 7. Chains of hills at Epitalio from southwest (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder).

the modern village of Epitalio (Agoulenitsa). Five different locations around Epitalio produced particularly remarkable results, from west to east: Ag. Georghios (Agiorgitika), Hill A, Barkeika, the so-called East Area and Dartisa (**Fig. 7**). Previous research in the area has revealed, for the most part, Bronze Age material, for example the remains of a Mycenaean settlement and Mycenaean tombs in the western area around Ag. Giorgios and Barkeika, but including also later finds.

On Dartisa Hill lies one of the largest sites of the project. Material was collected from an area of about 15 hectares. The chronology of the finds ranges from prehistoric to Ottoman times, but with a preponderance of materials from the Archaic to Classical periods. This site dominates both the view across the Alpheios Valley to the north and the coastal area and the sea to the south. The prominent place of Dartisa can be identified quite confidentially with ancient Epitalion, which is well attested in Xenophon (*Hell.* 3.2.29–30).[43] If the other sites around Dartisa do not constitute separate settlements, they could belong to this place as suburban districts or cemeteries.

To summarise, it can be said that, in contrast to the fragmented settlement structure in the area surrounding Olympia, where no larger settlement concentrations can be observed in one place, the two ancient sites of Epitalion and Marganai can be characterised as substantial settlements. They were *poleis* of the Eleian *perioikoi*, officially called *symmachoi*, i.e. allies, who entertained nevertheless an asymmetric relationship with the dominant political power of Elis. The area of Olympia with its specific small-scale character of settlement must be identified with the ancient Pisatis that was Eleian territory inhabited by Eleian citizens.

These differences also seem to be reflected in the distribution of sanctuaries, even if one has to consider the uneven state of archaeological research and the gaps in the tradition.[44] In the core territory of Elis, i.e. the Peneios Valley and Pisatis, few significant cult sites have been identified outside of Olympia, while the area of the dependent poleis of the *symmachoi* has revealed some quite prominent sanctuaries. "It is therefore tempting to suppose that Elis and Olympia together so dominated the religious life of the polis Elis that major cult was rare elsewhere in Eleian territory of the polis."[45] However, in the dependant *poleis* that did not belong to Eleian territory proper the situation was different: In the already mentioned Ledrinoi there was a temple of Artemis, possible identical with the one near the mouth of the Alpheios,[46] in Marganai (modern Salmoni) we have encountered traces of a possible temple. Especially in Triphylia, south of the Alpheios, where there were only non-Eleian *poleis*, i.e. *symmachoi* or places that, like Lepreon, had freed themselves from Eleian domination, there are numerous examples of large temples and sanctuaries (Makistos, Prasidaki, Samikon, Lepreon, etc.) highlighting the individual identity of the respective cities.[47] This is also the ideal transition to the second project, which takes us to Triphylia.

43 Eder *et al.* 2023, 155–156.

44 Basic observations by Roy 2015a.

45 Roy 2015a, 183.

46 Pilz 2020, 171–174; Eder *et al.* 2023, 170–171; *supra* n. 14.

47 Cf. Roy 2015a, 178–180; Johr 2020; Pilz 2020, 227–385.

Poseidon and the Sacred Landscape at Samikon

With the recent discovery of the Poseidon sanctuary of Samikon, the sacred topography of the region around Olympia gains a new dimension. In addition to a comparatively rich literary tradition, archaeological data now provide historical depth and confirm the localisation of the significant regional sanctuary.

According to Strabo, the sanctuary of Poseidon at Samikon formed one of the main topographical reference points along the coast of Triphylia (8.3.16). Distances to the north (presumably to the Alpheios) and to the south (to Lepreon) are given as 100 stades (ca. 18.5 km) each. The importance of the sanctuary beyond its function as a landmark is underlined by the indication that it was a central sanctuary of the Triphylians, administered by the city of Makistos further inland. Strabo (8.3.13) says: τὸ μάλιστα τιμώμενον τοῦ Σαμίου Ποσειδῶνος ἱερόν: the most honoured sanctuary of the Samian Poseidon. He describes it essentially as a grove full of wild olive trees. The Makistians used to oversee this religious centre of the region, and also proclaimed the Samian truce named after the place. All Triphylians contributed to the sanctuary. This is usually seen as indicating that the Poseidon sanctuary at Samikon was the religious centre of the amphictyony of the Triphylian cities.[48]

The Mythical Topography of Samikon

Near the coast of the western Peloponnese, the three small hills of Kleidi lie below the late Classical fortress of Samikon on the western foothills of the Lapithos Mountains. The prominent fortifications of the late 4th c. that are looking onto the site have always been known and have impressed the bypassing travellers.[49] The group of small hills is known as the site of a Mycenaean settlement and associated burial ground of the 2nd millennium BCE. An Ottoman watchtower on the southern end of the hills monitored the strategic route until the early 19th c.[50]

The wider area offers the topographical reference points that allow the correlation with the ancient tradition (cf. **Fig. 8**): Strabo's description of the region of Elis and, to a lesser extent, Pausanias' text (5.6.1–3) provide sufficiently characteristic and topographically verifiable information. Strabo (8.3.18) gives the location of the sanctuary of Poseidon in reference to the Lapithos Mountains, which descend to the sea near the Samian sanctuary of Poseidon. Strabo compiled different information on this area (Strab. 8.3.13–20): At the base of these mountains, on the seaboard, are two caves. One is the Cave of the nymphs called Anigriades; the other is the scene of the stories of the daughters of Atlas and

48 Amphictyony: cf. Ruggeri 2004, 96–97; 2009, 54–55; Mylonopoulos 2006, 137–140; Pilz 2020, 317.

49 Cf. the most recent publication on the fortifications by Richter 2024, 107–136, who dates their construction ca. 300 BCE.

50 For a discussion of the ancient sources, archival materials and the topography of the area of the Kleidi Hills at Samikon before the start of the excavations in 2022, see Eder *et al.* 2025. Cf. Ruggeri 2004, 96–108; Pilz 2020, 312–319; Eder *et al.* 2020.

Fig. 8. Panorama of the Lapithos Mountains with the location of the caves, Samikon and Kleidi (T. Willershäuser).

Fig. 9. Cave of the Anigriad nymphs at Kaiafa, with the bath infrastructure of the early 20th c. (OeAW/OeAI, B. Eder).

of the birth of Dardanos. Near the Cave of the Anigriad nymphs is a spring, which makes the area below swampy and marshy. Most of the water is taken up by the Anigros, a river so deep and so sluggish that it forms a swamp; the water has a disgusting smell and makes fish inedible.

The caves on the edge of the Lapithos Mountains, from which the smelly sulphur springs still rise today, form an important point of identification with the caves of the Anigriad nymphs and the daughters of Atlas (**Fig. 9**). In this context, Strabo refers to the fortress of Samikon, where he also located a city called Samos situated on the Lapithos Mountains. The steep rock face that forms a prominent section of the south-western flank of the Lapithos Mountains can fairly be identified with the abrupt cliffs named Achaiai that are also mentioned by Strabo.

Near the caves of the Anigriads, the famous seer Melampous, who was mythologically closely connected with the area of Triphylia and the Alpheios Valley, is said to have purified the daughters of Proitos with the water and thus cured them of their madness; this should explain the stench in the area of the sulphurous springs. Other myths tell of the Centaurs who washed the poison of Heracles' arrows from their wounds in the Anigros, which in turn explained the foul-smelling odour in the area (Strab. 8.3.19; Paus. 5.5.10). The still perceptible odour of sulphur and the healing properties of the sulphurous water almost reify these stories.[51]

In ancient times, the Anigros River, from whom the nymphs took their name and whose water had both healing and foul-smelling properties, must have flowed very close to the caves. The healing qualities of the water were obviously well known and highly appreciated, as the mythical tales also illustrate. It was said to cure white rashes, eczema, lichen and scabies. According to the healing ritual reported by Pausanias (5.5.11), one had to pray to the nymphs and apply the spring water before swimming across the river.

With the Anigros and the caves of the Anigriad nymphs we are beginning to grasp a sacred, mythically charged landscape. According to Strabo (8.3.19) other sacred groves and minor cult places, the Ionaion and the Eurykydaion, were also located nearby, furthermore (3.20) the tomb of Iardanos.

The Ionaion recalls Ion and the Ionidian nymphs, who were venerated north of the Alpheios near the sulphurous springs of Herakleia (now Pournari).[52] At Samikon, the spatial proximity established a link between the Ionidian nymphs and the Anigriad nymphs, who equally governed the healing and purifying powers of sulphurous waters.

The precinct of the Erykydaion, on the other hand, highlighted a mythical connection between Poseidon and his lover, the Eleian mythical figure of Erykyda, mother of the eponymous Eleios. Eurykyda is not only the lover of Poseidon, but also the daughter of Endymion, who plays a central role in Eleian mythology and who was buried in the stadium of Olympia. Through Poseidon she became the mother of Eleios, king of the Epeians. She was therefore a very important figure in the mythic genealogy of the Eleians and at the same time closely connected to Poseidon and the region around his sanctuary at Samikon.[53]

This cult place was probably meant to illustrate the close connection between the earthshaker and the eponym of the Eleians. The tradition of this genealogical descent of Eleios from Poseidon, whose sanctuary played a central religious role for the Triphylian cities, was possibly intended to lend additional legitimacy to the Eleian domination of Triphylia. This line of reasoning probably only makes sense from the time when the Eleians gained control over Triphylia in the 5th c. BCE.[54]

Apart from the grottos of the nymphs, these smaller groves and places of worship have not yet been archaeologically identified. The reason why this area became a centre of major and minor cults is explained by the regional significance of the nearby sanctuary of Poseidon.

The regional significance of the Poseidon sanctuary at Samikon perhaps also explains the eventual intervention of the Eleians, which probably had the destruction of the religious centre of the region as its goal: the cult statue of the god Poseidon was transported from Samikon to the agora of Elis, where it was described by Pausanias (6.25.5–6). The date of this relocation must postdate the recovery of Triphylia by the Eleians in the 3rd or 2nd c. BCE in order to counteract the regional sense of identity.[55] It cannot be dated more precisely at the moment, but perhaps archaeological data on the abandonment of the sanctuary will provide new insights in the future.

Recent Excavations in the Sanctuary of Poseidon

Based on Strabo's description, it has always been assumed that the sanctuary of Poseidon was located in the plain below the Classical-Hellenistic fortress in the area of the Kleidi hills, but it had never been discovered until recently. If it had not been for the strong literary tradi-

51 Cave of the Anigriad nymphs: Pilz 2020, 319–324; Eder *et al.* 2023, 168–169.

52 Ionidian nymphs: *supra* n. 27.

53 Eurykyda and Eurykydaion: Gehrke 2005, 28–29; Pilz 2020, 325–326.

54 *Supra* n. 52

55 The first recovery of Triphylia by the Eleians dates around 245 BCE (lost again in Philip V's winter campaign 218 BCE), the second after the Roman victory in the Achaean War in 146 BCE: Gehrke forthcoming b. Cf. Pilz 2020, 88–91, 396, who favours the 3rd c. BCE.

Fig. 10. The temple in the Poseidon sanctuary below the fortifications of Samikon, from southwest (OeAW/OeAI, M. Kräker).

tion that provides us with a more or less restricted area where to look for this sanctuary, we would not have known what to expect and what to look for. Next to the Mycenaean settlement of Kleidi there is hardly any surface scatter of pottery fragments or roof tiles that would offer a clue to the location. Wilhelm Dörpfeld had already noticed painted roof tiles during his investigations on the eastern slope of the highest hill at Kleidi at the beginning of the 20th c. and had hypothetically linked them to a building in the sanctuary of Poseidon.[56] Only a systematic geophysical survey revealed the first traces of what we recognised as the ground plan of a temple.

The excavations, which take place as a joint project between the Greek Ephorate of Antiquities of Elis and the Austrian Archaeological Institute at Athens, exposed in the past years (2022–2024) the whole length of the foundations of a large building (9.44 × 27.88m) with carefully set walls of 0.80m width. Thick layers of roof tiles fill the space between the walls. The long rectangular building comprises two large central halls divided by a solid transverse wall. The southeastern hall (71m²) is slightly larger than the northwestern one (66m²). Each hall is adjoined by a vestibule to the southeast and northwest respectively. The building has two equally monumental facades with two columns *in antis* and a gabled roof with Laconian tiles. The construction shows that the representative or constructively demanding elements (stylobate, door design, bases of the interior supports) are made of shelly limestone that must have been brought to the site from elsewhere.

The size of the two halls requires two axially arranged internal supports. This specific architectural solution reflects the need to create two halls that were as large as possible yet separate, and which could have fulfilled

56 Dörpfeld 1908, 321–322.

different functions. It is tempting to think of various gatherings in connection with the amphictyony of the Triphylian cities. The dimensions of the entrance halls with the columns *in antis* are derived from these halls and give the building the character of a temple in its external appearance. The elongated large foundations together with the Laconian roof should represent nothing else than an Archaic temple that was abandoned in the decades after 300 BCE. Pottery dates accordingly from the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic periods. Finds from the latest excavation season confirm that we have succeeded in locating the long-sought Poseidon sanctuary of Samikon, and that the Archaic temple was perhaps even dedicated to the god himself.

This discovery allows new perspectives on the political and economic importance of the amphictyony of the Triphylian cities in the 6th c. BCE, for whom the sanctuary of Poseidon at Samikon formed the centre of their religious and ethnic identity. The sanctuary was certainly the focal point of a sacred space, where written sources reveal evidence of a series of minor cult sites and places populated by nymphs.

In any case, the dimensions of the temple show that it was an important sanctuary within the region of Triphylia and not just a small, insignificant roadside shrine (**Fig. 10**). The large building that we are currently researching was erected in the 6th c. BCE and could already be the result of a joint project by the cities of Triphylia. This would at least be an indication of the existence and economic power of the amphictyony in the Archaic period, whose importance before the 4th c. BCE and before the liberation from Eleian hegemony has so far been underestimated because of the lack of relevant sources. In this sense, archaeology can also help to supplement the historical perspective.

Conclusions

These two brief glimpses into two current projects may illustrate that archaeology and written tradition ideally complement each other. If one component is absent, we are certainly missing an important dimension of information. The totality of the symbolic, mythical, religious and ritual information as well as archaeological traceable cultic reference points forms what we can call a religious or sacred landscape, which is understood both in its material and metaphorical forms.[57]

57 Scheid – Polignac 2010, 430–431.

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Abstract

The sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia and the sanctuary of Poseidon at Samikon were two cultic nodes within the political landscape of Elis after the integration of the southern region of Triphylia in the 5th c. BCE. The sanctuary of Olympia played a central role in the politics of the Eleians, who skilfully employed cults and festivals to assert their rule, while the sanctuary of Poseidon was the focal point of the religious and ethnic identity of the Triphylians. The mythical-religious ideas were inscribed in the topography of the region.

The fragmented settlement structure around Olympia reflects the central functions of the sanctuary for the area, while the poleis of the so-called perioikoi manifest themselves in concentrated settlements with their own sanctuaries. With the recent discovery of the Poseidon sanctuary of Samikon, the sacred topography of the region around Olympia gains a new dimension. Archaeology and written tradition ideally complement each other, because a religious or sacred landscape is understood in its both material and metaphorical forms.

8. KALAPODI AND THE EVOLUTION OF A SACRED LANDSCAPE IN ANCIENT PHOKIS

Katja Sporn

In central Greece, 1.5 km east of the modern village of Kalapodi, lies a sanctuary that was one of the most revered and important of ancient Phokis (**Fig. 1**). Kalapodi was probably the site of an oracle of Apollo, that of Abae. The sanctuary was located in the same broader region as the famous oracle of Apollo at Delphi, though the two oracles lay at almost opposite ends of the area: While Delphi is situated close to the western border with Western Lokris, Kalapodi is at the east where in Antiquity Phokis bordered Eastern Lokris and Boeotia. The site has been systematically excavated for over 50 years by the German Archaeological Institute at Athens (**Fig. 2**).[1] The following contribution places the development of the sanctuary of Kalapodi within the wider context of the evolution of a sacred landscape in the area of ancient Phokis.

Let me start with a few remarks on the notion of a "sacred landscape." I would describe this notion as the full spectrum of the characteristics and distribution of sacred spaces within a defined region. It thus follows the landscape archaeological/topographical approach of "sacred landscape" as described by Samuel Verdan in the first chapter of this volume.[2] The present study centres on the landscape of Phokis, an ancient region of Greece whose political unity had been guaranteed since at least the late Archaic period by the establishment of a *koinon*.[3] By this time at the latest, ancient Phokis covered a large area on both sides of Mount Parnassos. Since 2018, a transect of around 150 km^2 in the middle part of the Phokian Kephissos Valley on the north-eastern side of the Parnassos has been the focus of a Greek-German research collaboration investigating the evolution of settlements in relation to their changing physical surroundings.[4]

The Special Importance of Kalapodi

Before addressing the role of the sanctuary and its importance in the context of Phokis, I would like to emphasize two key points that underscore the significance of the sanctuary.

First, the remarkable *longue durée* of the sanctuary, as evidenced by at least 13 architectural phases, from the LH IIIA1 (1420–1370 BCE) down to the Roman imperial period. Individual finds go back even further—to the 19th/18th c. BCE—and there are also some Neolithic "heirlooms." Recent studies have identified additional architectural phases at the site, including those marking the sanctuary's decline and its transformation into a settlement, in the second half of the 4th c. CE at least. Finds from alluvial layers suggest continued activity at the site into the 5th/6th c. CE, and possibly as late as the 7th c. CE.[5] Kalapodi is the only known sanctuary in the area of (later) ancient Phokis that originated in the Mycenaean times and enjoyed such a long lifetime.

Second, substantial—and relatively large-scale—architecture associated with a sacred space is attested in Kalapodi during the Mycenaean period, at a time when cult practices usually took the form of small palace sanctuaries, worship in caves, or open-air rites centred on ash altars on hilltops.[6] Here, however, Mycenaean architecture features a room built of limestone measuring at least 9 by 4.5 m; it is further connected to the east with various successive cult installations, first an altar and an offering platform, and in a second phase a bench for libations. The finds attest to exchanges among elite groups: considerable amounts of banqueting pottery have been found, mainly skyphoi, but also craters. The distinctive character of the site is evidenced by the discovery of some thirty Mycenaean seals made of steatite and glass, a category of objects typically found in significant numbers only in tombs, palaces or shrines in Mycenaean Greece. Some of them can be attributed to a workshop at Medeon on the Gulf of Corinth, whereas others belong

1 On the history of the research and the excavations, see Felsch 2007a; Niemeier 2016a; Sporn 2016–2017a and b; Sporn 2017; Sporn *et al.* 2018–2019; Sporn 2020; Sporn – Grigoropoulos 2024.

2 In this volume, p. 15.

3 On ancient Phokis, its history and the development of a sense of Phokian identity, see Beck 1997, 106–118; Oulhen 2004, 399; Daverio Rocchi 2011; McInerney 2013; McInerney 2015; Franchi 2016; Rousset 2024.

4 See Sporn 2019; Sporn 2022; Sporn 2023; Sporn *et al.* forthcoming.

5 On the Roman phases, see Grigoropoulos 2024.

6 On Mycenaean rituals at Kalapodi, see esp. Niemeier 2016b. On types of Mycenaean sanctuaries, see Eder 2019.

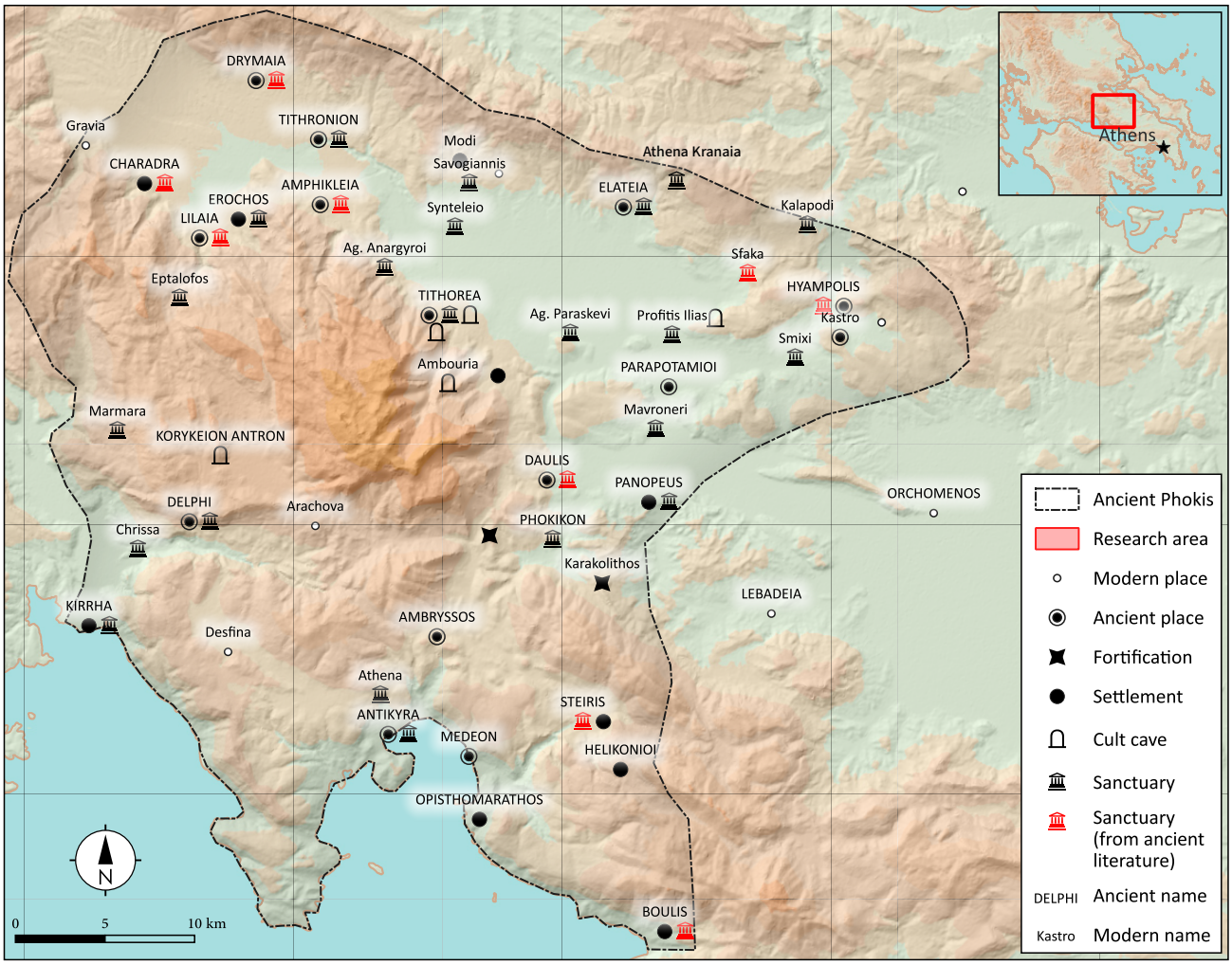

Fig. 1. Map of Phokis with sanctuaries (DAI Athens, K. Sporn, map by S. Biernath).

to types that were widespread as far as Thessaly. A certain amount (roughly one-sixth) of the Mycenaean cooking pottery comes from Aigina.[7] Altogether, these data indicate an extensive network of contacts across central Greece. The cultic nature of the installation during the Mycenaean period is evidenced by the presence of wheeled clay figurines depicting female figures (LH IIIB) and animals (LH IIIC), which—unlike the small, handmade Mycenaean figurines—are exclusively found in sanctuaries. The above evidence is further reinforced by the discovery in 2018 of a fragment of a kernos in a dump associated with the Mycenaean temple.[8] Such ritual vases featuring attachments of different shapes—one resembling a bird—has already been identified at the site. They originated in the Near East, where they are found in large numbers, while in central Greece they were hitherto largely unknown.

The Evolution of a Sacred Landscape in Phokis

The importance of the sanctuary at Kalapodi becomes even clearer when considered in the context of the evolution of a sacred landscape in the area later defined as Phokis.[9] We will first describe the development of the sanctuaries primarily as they can be reconstructed from the archaeological record, but also in conjunction with written sources. Then we will try to define some characteristics of the sacred landscape, focusing on preferred settings related to the environment (spring, summit, cave, grove), the settlement patterns (urban, extra-urban, limits of territory, crossroads), and the architectural types and

7 According to Kelly Christodoulou, who is writing her PhD thesis on coarse ware from Kalapodi from Mycenaean to Geometric times at the University of Athens; see a brief summary in Grigoropoulos *et al.* 2024.

8 Sporn – Grigoropoulos 2024, 71 fig. 81.

9 More generally on the "regional cult systems" of the area in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, see Livieratou 2011.

Fig. 2. Sanctuary of Kalapodi, aerial view 2024 from south-east (K. Sporn).

votives. The relationship between the evolution of *poleis* and the evolution of sanctuaries will also be discussed. Finally, we will attempt to identify both continuities and transformations in the sacred landscape over time.

Although the earliest evidence for human occupation in the area dates back to the Neolithic period[10]—and continued occupation is indicated by finds from various *magoulae* and other sites from the Early to the Middle Helladic periods—[11] more substantial information about the region emerges from the Late Helladic. The earliest evidence for religious activity dates to the LH IIIA. The only sanctuary site in ancient Phokis with definite architectural remains of the Late Bronze Age is Kalapodi. The LBA remains at Delphi with cultic character are one or two shrines of uncertain type: one is related to the settlement at the site of the later sanctuary, whereas the other might be a roadside open-air shrine at the location of the later sanctuary of Athena at Marmaria, attested until LH IIIC.[12] The LH II sherds from the sanctuary of Athena Kranaia above Elateia are not yet studied and thus unspecified.[13] Even after the establishment of the new sanctuary at Delphi around 800 BCE, it remained, in topographical terms, a suburban sanctuary closely related to the settlement of Delphi. In contrast, Kalapodi was then and for the most part of its existence an extra-urban sanctuary.[14] Four Mycenean shaft graves from the 15th/14th c. BCE have been discovered in the village of Kalapodi, around 1.5km

10 Katsarou *et al.* 2024, 311, 315–316 (Late Neolithic finds in various caves above Tithorea, probably used as living spaces). For the first results of the Kephissos Valley Project on that issue, see Sporn – Kounouklas forthcoming.

11 In the course of our Kephissos Valley Project with our partners Salvatore Ortisi from the University of Munich and Petros Kounouklas, in-situ remains of a MH settlement were detected on the acropolis hill of Elateia, see Sporn *et al.* forthcoming.

12 The beginning of the cult in LH III at Delphi has been proposed by Müller 1992, 475–486: in the area of the sanctuary of Apollo, she dated the beginning to LH IIIA2 or B, at the latest C; in the area of Marmaria, she discussed the possibility of a later collection of material from tombs. For the interpretation of Marmaria as on open-air roadside shrine, see Eder 2016, 181–182; Eder 2019, 37. The beginning of a cult place at Delphi in LH IIIA was accepted by Livieratou 2009, 64; Livieratou 2015, 97; Niemeier 2016a; Knodell 2021, 91; Huber *et al.* 2024, 138 dates the beginning of the cult at the Marmaria sanctuary to the Geometric/Archaic times.

13 Zachos – Dimaki 2006, 875.

14 On the setting of the Geometric sanctuary of Delphi, see Luce 2008. On the setting of Kalapodi through time, see Sporn 2020.

east of the sanctuary. Three of them yielded precious grave offerings—indeed the richest yet known in the entire area of Phokis/Eastern Lokris—yet no associated settlement has been identified at Kalapodi.[15] Kastro Souvalas, 1km to the south of the village and 2.5km away from the sanctuary across the valley, has been identified as the related settlement. Survey and mapping by Rainer Felsch revealed four or five plots, each dominated by an apsidal building.[16] Although it has not yet been excavated, it is assumed to date from MH or Early Mycenaean, thus predating the sanctuary at Kalapodi.

Kalapodi and Delphi, the two later oracular shrines of Apollo situated at opposite ends of Phokis, thus differ fundamentally in their genesis. Kalapodi was already by the Late Bronze Age a meeting place for an elite with connections throughout Central Greece, not only in the southeastern part of Phokis, but also in Boeotia, Thessaly and Eastern Lokris, although much of the ceramics were locally produced. This highlights the key role of Kalapodi in the region already at that time, a status that continued in the following periods.

Protogeometric and Geometric

From the Protogeometric and Geometric periods, finds are so far known only from the sanctuaries of Delphi, the Corycian Cave, Antikyra, Erochos, Kalapodi, the Athena Kranaia sanctuary of Elateia and most recently Synteleio.[17] However, as the finds from the Athena Kranaia sanctuary—apparently limited to pottery—have not yet been studied, we do not know whether the predecessor of the later sanctuary was already a cult site or a settlement, as at Delphi. At Delphi, the suburban sanctuary of Apollo emerged around 800 BCE and soon developed a broader significance, reflected in ceramic imports from the Peloponnese, Corinth and Italy.[18] In this context, the sporadic finds from the Geometric period discovered in the Corycian Cave should also be interpreted in light of its proximity to Delphi, to which it was later connected by a sacred path.[19]

The finds from Kalapodi place the sanctuary—much like in the Bronze Age—within the broader regional context of Central Greece, whereas a single North Syrian bronze bowl stands out as an exceptional object.[20] Kalapodi was thus in the Early Iron Age a major though regional sanctuary, strategically located on an important communication network connecting much of Central Greece.[21] It continued to operate as a meeting place and exchange hub for the local elites.[22] The large number of bronze tripods—20 to 30 occurrences were published from Felsch excavation, and the total now certainly exceeds 30—, found primarily beneath the later northern temple are *per se* typical offerings made by male members of the elite.[23] According to the analysis of the copper used in the tripods from Kalapodi, some similarities with examples from Olympia can be observed, indicating that visitors to the Phokian sanctuary were part of wider networks of interaction across Greece.[24] According to the ongoing study of Kelly Christodoulou in her PhD thesis on the Mycenaean-Geometric coarse ware found in the southern temple of Kalapodi, the ratio between fine ware and coarse ware found in the southern temple is 55/45% with coarse ware represented by approximately 42,000 sherds.[25] In general, the percentage of coarse ware increases during the Geometric period. Interestingly enough, around one-tenth of the coarse ware consists of pithoi sherds, suggesting that pithoi were stored inside the temple and in the area in front of it. The finds show that the primary activities remained consistent with those of the earlier period, namely storage, food preparation, and consumption, as reflected by the dominance of closed shapes, mainly amphorae and hydriai. However, after the beginning of the 8th c. BCE, weapons and jewellery (mainly dress fasteners and pins, but also finger rings, bracelets, pendants, tweezers) make up the largest share of the votive offerings. At this time, the temple—the southern temple—was a rectangular building, later superseded by an apsidal building, both modest in scale (12 × 4.5m).[26] A significant architectural development occurred at the turn to the 7th c. BCE, when a small building in the south and a hearth altar in the north were replaced by two architecturally ambitious temples constructed more or less contemporaneously, though with

15 Livieratou 2015, 95 with n. 95; Niemeier 2016a, n. 85.

16 Felsch 2018.

17 On Delphi, the Corycian Cave and Kalapodi, *infra*. On Antikyra (one spiral brooch of the 8th c. BCE and plain rings), see Sideris 2021; Sideris 2024, 169–171. On Erochos, see Partida – Tsaroucha 2024, esp. 221 (Geometric rings, metal spits, a spherical aryballos). The finds from the recent excavations at the temple of Synteleio in 2024 and 2025, a Greek-German collaborative project, comprise Late Geometric bronzes (Sporn et *al.* forthcoming; on the architectural members from the temple, Hellner – Scahill 2024). On Athena Kranaia, see Zachos – Dimaki 2006, 875 (yet unspecified findings).

18 Morgan 2003, 123–124; Franchi 2016, 80–97; Luce 2024 with further references.

19 Amandry 1984, 395: five Geometric bronzes (horse, bird, rings) are rather exceptional finds at Delphi.

20 For a general assessment of the bronzes, see now Klebinder-Gauß 2024.

21 Polignac 1994, 6 gives it as an example of a sanctuary not only situated at a route-network, but also [?] situated at the *eschatia*; McInerney 2015, 188–192 with fig. 2–4; Niemeier 2017; Knodell 2021, 123 map 15.

22 McInerney 2011, 99–101; McInerney 2013, 188–200; Sporn 2020; Knodell 2021, 91, 134; Sporn forthcoming.

23 Felsch 1998 and 2007b.

24 Kiderlen *et al.* 2017.

25 See for now the brief report in Grigoropoulos *et al.* 2024.

26 The southern temple complex is in the course of publication by Klaus Müller; on the development of the early architectural phases, see for now Niemeier 2016; Hellner 2020.

differing orientations. The southern building now measured 24.7 × 7.40m and featured the earliest known prostasis in Greek temple architecture, whereas the newly built northern temple measured at least 29 × 10m. Inside the southern temple were the famous warrior paintings and a Π-shaped enclosure (3.25 × 1.65m), which can be paralleled—if not in size, then in location—within the temples of Delphi and Didyma, both likewise oracular shrines of Apollo.[27] As a hypothesis, this enclosure could be connected with the site's oracular activity, although nothing is known of the kind of oracular procedure conducted onsite. It seems that, at least initially, the southern temple was associated with Artemis, while the northern temple, established only in Protogeometric times (mid-9th c. BCE) and enlarged during the Archaic period, was dedicated to Apollo. Most of the tripods were discovered in the northern temple area.

On a social level, this period appears to mark the emergence of a shared Phokian identity, with regional claims on both sides of the Parnassos. The Ship Catalog in the *Iliad* mentions nine Phokian cities spread all around the later region of Phokis, with the notable exception of the southeast.[28] Against this backdrop of burgeoning Phokian identity, the rising sanctuary at Kalapodi developed impressive and ambitious architecture, unparalleled—based on current knowledge—within contemporary Phokis. The question naturally arises whether this apparent exceptionalism is due to a lack of research or genuinely reflects the sanctuary's unique status. The evidence from subsequent periods suggests that the latter is true.

Archaic Times

In Archaic times, as before, our most comprehensive knowledge comes from Delphi and Kalapodi. Aside from these two sites, the 7th c. BCE remains poorly documented. Other active cult sites include the Corycian Cave (from the early 6th c. BCE), the sanctuary at Kirrha (from the 2nd half of the 6th c. BCE),[29] and the so-called sanctuary of Demeter at Erochos, a modest sanctuary located on the outskirts of the settlement (probably 2nd half of the 6th c. BCE).[30] In the 1st half of the 6th c. BCE, the temple of Athena at Antikyra was built—a small oikos measuring 5.08 × 10.5m and featuring a base for a cult image.[31]

Overall, there seems to have been significant temple construction in Phokis during the 6th c. BCE. At Delphi, the temple of the 7th/early 6th c. BCE—which had burned down in 548/547 BCE—was replaced by the so-called Alkmaionid temple (514/3–506/5 BCE). In Kalapodi, a concerted building program around the mid-6th c. BCE saw the construction of both the large northern and southern temples.[32] After the Thessalian wars (510–500 BCE), part of the spoils—some 2,000 shields—were dedicated at Abae, the other half given to Delphi. This reflects the sanctuary's broad regional significance across Phokis at the time—it was *the* religious center of the Phokians—in contrast to the Amphictyonic and Panhellenic character of Delphi.[33] Herodotus records rich dedications at the sanctuary of Abae, including a visit and offering by Croesus.[34] No other sanctuary held such a pan-Phokian significance at that time. All the other sanctuaries mentioned above were primarily of local importance.

Classical Period

After the Persian destruction, which affected both cities and sanctuaries throughout the Kephissos Valley—though not Delphi—, new temples were built across the region. Similar to the well-known situation in Athens, this rebuilding did not occur immediately, but only a generation later. At Kalapodi, after provisional worship in the northern temple, a new temple was completed there shortly before 450 BCE. Damaged by the earthquake of 426 BCE, it was rebuilt at the end of the 5th c. BCE with a slightly modified ground plan. In contrast, the southern temple was not reconstructed over the next centuries; instead, a small cult building—the so-called "Adyton"—was erected over the original cult centre of Geometric times.[35]

At the Athena Kranaia sanctuary, according to the initial investigation and reconstruction by Pierre Paris in 1883 and 1884, the temple, measuring 27.50 × 13.50m with a peripteral plan of 13 × 6 columns was likely constructed during this period. Paris based his reconstruction on two capitals, a triglyph and a geison, according to the model of the Hephaisteion in Athens, whose construction began in 449 BCE and was completed in 430 BCE.[36] The architecture of the Athena Kranaia temple is currently being re-examined in our Kephissos Valley Project by Elea Koenigsaecker as part of her dissertation.[37]

Based on the preserved Doric capitals from the Athena Kranaia sanctuary, we may infer the existence of a temple dating to roughly the same period as the first Classical northern temple at Kalapodi (around 460/450 BCE).

27 Niemeier 2016a, 38 ("War dieser Einbau möglicherweise der Sitz des Orakels?"); Niemeier 2017, 329 ("either the interrogators waited there during the oracle session or it was the seat of the oracle"); on the warrior frieze: Niemeier *et al.* 2013.

28 Hom. *Il.* 517–526; Hope Simpson – Lazenby 1970, 40–46.

29 Luce 1992; Huysecom-Haxhi 2016.

30 The finds are yet to be fully published, but among the known objects, the Archaic pieces seem rather few and likely date to the 6th c. BCE; among them are two black-figure kylikes from the latter part of the century, see Partida – Tsaroucha 2024, 222–223 figs 2–3.

31 Sideris 2014; Sideris 2024.

32 Müller 2022.

33 Further reading: Sporn 2020; Sporn forthcoming.

34 Literary sources are gathered by Franchi 2016.

35 Niemeier 2016a, 21–23. On the provisional cult places in the sanctuary of Kalapodi, see Niemeier 2024.

36 Paris 1892.

37 Koenigsaecker 2024; Koenigsaecker in Sporn *et al.* forthcoming.

The temple at Synteleio was built somewhat later, between 460 and 410 BCE—thus falling between the Athena Kranaia temple and the second Classical phase of the northern temple at Kalapodi. Notably, it shares similar dimensions with the temple at Kalapodi (45 × 18 m). The measurements were established thanks to the 2018 and 2019 geophysical prospections carried out by our partner IMS-FORTH. Part of a stylobate was also uncovered in recent rescue excavations. Given its size and dimensions, this temple located very close to the river Kephissos in the valley must have belong to a major sanctuary. Clearly, it was extra-urban since no settlement has been found nearby; whether it belonged to one of the settlements of the area known today either at Modi, Vourlia or at Paliophiva remains uncertain. Due to its size and strategic position, it surely must have held at least regional importance within the valley, if not even over a broader area.[38] To date, the excavations have yielded no evidence regarding the deity worshipped there. However, among the cults attested in the region through written sources, such as Pausanias in particular (see **Appendices**),[39] one plausible candidate is the sanctuary of Asklepios Archegatas. By his time, the sanctuary was situated in the territory of Tithorea, but equally revered by all Phocians.

We cannot describe in detail here the developments of the 4th c. BCE, the Hellenistic and the Roman periods, though these are addressed in the conclusion. I just stress that there are fluid changes in the importance and role of the sanctuaries, which are sometimes connected to political developments. In Hellenistic times, with Elateia becoming the seat of the Phokian *koinon*, the extra-urban sanctuary of Athena Kranaia at Elateia served as the archive of the *koinon*, where official legal texts and manumission inscriptions were deposited. In contrast, the sanctuary at Kalapodi experienced a period of decline during the 4th and much of the 3rd c. BCE. A renewed interest in the site is visible in the late 3rd c. BCE, with the construction of a new building in the northeast, likely of cultic nature, as a ritual deposit was found below the floor, including loomweights, one of which bearing the retrograde inscription ARTEMIS, the first direct epigraphic attestation of the goddess' name at Kalapodi.[40]

Towards a Sacred Landscape of Ancient Phokis

The application of the term "sacred landscape" to a region raises the question of whether there is something specific about this region that sets it apart from its neighbours. To explore this, we must take a closer look at some of the themes outlined at the beginning.

38 See Sporn forthcoming.

39 For an earlier discussion on Eastern Phokis, see Fossey 1986, 142–154.

40 Sporn – Grigoropoulos 2024, 60 fig. 63.

Setting of sanctuaries in relation to their environment

Many types of relationships with the environment existed in Phokis, with no single one being more popular or prevalent. The natural environment was clearly significant: rocks, caves and water courses became focal points of cultic activities. Rituals connected to water were a common feature in the mountainous area. For instance, there was an extensive architectural complex at the source of the river Kephissos close to Erochos, where among other remains a large ancient retaining wall is still preserved, on which later a church was built.[41] Dedications for children at running waters were widespread in Antiquity.[42] At the site of the later church of Prophitis Ilias, on a plateau overlooking Tithorea, excavations recently uncovered a possible open-air shrine within an enclosure built over a water course channelled through natural rock. The related finds date to Hellenistic times.[43] More broadly, small-scale open-air shrines, rock-cut features, and cult caves with little or no human modification were quite common, underlining the largely rural and unsophisticated character of the *poleis*.[44] Suitable building-stone was generally available in ancient Phokis, and it was used for all kinds of architecture such as buildings and fortifications walls.[45] Most of these shrines date from the Classical/Hellenistic period at the earliest.

Settings of Sanctuaries in Relation to Human Occupation

A striking observation about the sanctuaries in ancient Phokis is that the most important of them seem to be extra-urban.[46] The sanctuaries of Kalapodi/Abae, the sanctuary of Athena Kranaia at Elateia, and the temple of Synteleio all lie at some distance from the nearest urban centre of a polis. All seem to have ancient foundations—no later than the Geometric period—as a place of worship. As a hypothesis, they first served local or regional demands, before the *poleis* were established in the Late Archaic period. A generation after the

41 The source is mentioned in Paus. 10.33.5, though he does not describe a sanctuary there. Frazer 1898, 18 gives the most in-depth description to date of the remains at the source. A Hellenistic marble sculpture of a child was found there (Bobou 2015, 49, 149 with fig.), along with an inscription with the dedication of a statue probably set up by parents for their child (*IG* IX 1, 232).

42 On cults related to water and adolescence in ancient Greece, see Pilz 2019.

43 E. Laufer in Sporn *et al.* forthcoming.

44 On caves in the area, see Katsarou 2013; Katsarou *et al.* 2024. The Corycian Cave (Amandry 1984) is of course anything but humble, yet it is closely connected to Delphi, notably by a sacred way. There are especially at Panopeus a number of rock-cut features, including niches (Camp *et al.* 1997; Rousset *et al.* 2015; Kountouri *et al.* 2024).

45 See e.g. on the fortification of Tithorea, Kounouklas – Laufer 2024.

46 I have also dealt with that topic elsewhere: Sporn 2020; Sporn forthcoming.

destruction of the Persian Wars, Doric peripteral temples were built at all three sites. To date, there is little evidence of large-scale peripteral temple inside the walls of any *poleis*.[47] Instead, the temples known from archaeological remains and ancient sources (mainly Pausanias) are situated outside the *poleis*. Some sanctuaries were located at strategic positions close to the limits of territories. We have already discussed the temple of Kalapodi in this regard, but there also seems to have been a temple close to the border of Phokian Panopeus/Phanoteus with Chaironeia, maybe to be identified with a small temple with a statue of Pentelic marble, which Pausanias was uncertain whether it depicted Asklepios or Prometheus[48]. Near the ruined church of Ag. Sotira, halfway between Panopeus and Chaironeia, scattered remains have been found, including an arbitration decree about border disputes between Panopeus and Steiris, as well as a Doric column drum measuring 0.43m in diameter.[49]

In most parts of the Greek mainland, large extra-urban sanctuaries were established alongside urbanization, whereas on Crete the opposite occurred: there, large extra-urban sanctuaries declined after urbanization in Archaic times, regaining some influence only during the Hellenistic period.[50] Regarding Phokis, the monumentalization of sanctuaries took place in the period of prosperity after the Persian wars, about 2–3 generations after the establishment of *poleis*, thus not directly related to urban inception. Since public architecture of Phokian *poleis* in Archaic and Classical times remains unknown, it is unclear where personal wealth was most displayed. Since most known fortifications/city walls in Phokis seem to date from Late Classical-Hellenistic times and postdate the monumentalization of the extra-urban sanctuaries, it is possible that both communal efforts and personal displays of wealth continued primarily through the extra-urban sanctuaries.

Most Venerated Deities and Votive Patterns

If any deity deserves the title of the most venerated in Phokis, it is Apollo. He is the most often attested god in the region, worshipped not only at the major oracular shrines of Delphi and Kalapodi, but also in many other cities (see **Appendices**), sometimes together with his mother Leto and his sister Artemis. The cult places associated with the divine triad are often extra-urban. Dionysos is connected particularly with the wilderness of Parnassos and a dream oracle (*oneiromantike*) of him existed at Amphikleia, known only through Pausanias.[51] The overall number of oracles is noteworthy, probably related to the vicinity of Boeotia, where oracles were widespread. In contrast, the cults of Zeus[52] and Athena are rare. In Hellenistic and especially Roman times, the cults of the Egyptian deities became common, again probably related to neighbouring Boeotia, as many soldiers from the region served in Egypt.[53]

Votives and offerings closely reflected the nature of the cults practiced; therefore, no definitive conclusion can yet be drawn regarding patterns of preference. Final publications of the finds from sanctuaries will be essential for a more comprehensive understanding.

Conclusions

The sacred landscape of Phokis is largely dominated by major extra-urban sanctuaries, while the urban sanctuaries—much less well known and mainly attested through literary sources—seem to have been smaller in scale and significance. From Pausanias, we mainly learn of sacred groves (*alse*), statues, altars, etc. When he describes larger sanctuaries, they are always extra-urban. One hypothesis, yet to be fully tested, is that this reflects the evolution of the settlements and the pattern of urbanization. When the *poleis* were established, probably in the 6th c. BCE, sanctuaries remained where they were before, out in the countryside; the urban space was not in need of large-scale sacred sites, because communities were still connected to the long-standing external sanctuaries. Some of these, such as Kalapodi and Athena Kranaia, would eventually grow in scale and importance. Why did Kalapodi serve as a meeting place of the elite for so many centuries, as the archaeological finds suggest? One reason, as I have argued, might be that, as a sanctuary of long-standing Phokian importance, it served as the first seat of the Phokian *koinon* in Archaic times, before the seat was transferred to Elateia in the Hellenistic period. Sanctuaries were often the meeting point for *koina*, and Kalapodi is so far the only site in Phokis to have served for so many centuries—almost continuously—as both a local and regional gathering place. Over time, however, the importance of even long-established sanctuaries could wane, as happened at Kalapodi. It experienced periods of prominence and decline, and was eventually overtaken by a settlement that developed around and over it. Kalapodi thus provides an interesting test case for the evolving role of a sanctuary over the centuries.

47 One possible exception is the foundations of a temple on top of the hill of Panopeus, see Kountouri *et al.* 2024.

48 Paus. 10.4.4.

49 K. Hallof in Gose – Schober 2016–2017, 365–367 no. 21.

50 On Crete: Papasavvas 2019.

51 See Paus. 10.33.11 and more generally on Dionysos, McInerney 1997.

52 See the references collected in Sporn 2020, 121 n. 14.

53 Schachter 2016.

Appendix 1
Cults attested in ancient Phokis

Location	Zeus/Athena	Apollo/Artemis	Poseidon	Dionysus	Demeter/ Core	Hermes/Pan/ nymphs	Serapis/Isis/ Anubis/ Bubastis	Asclepius	more
Hyampolis		Artemis Elaphebolos (*manumissio*, 1st c. BCE)/ *Megala Laphria* Apollo		Dionysus Temple (1st c. BCE)					Festival *Megala Kaisareia*
*Kalapodi/ Abai		Apollo (oracle) and Artemis?							
*Exarchos		Artemis Soteira (dedication, male dedicator, late 3rd/2nd c. BCE)							Sanctuary with stoa, statue bases, not identified Aphrodite (dedications, female dedicator, 1st c. CE)
*Smixi							Statue donation Serapis, Isis, Anubis (2nd/1st c. BCE) and renovation of the *propylon*, the *stoai* and the *oikoi* (Traian)		Festival *Boubastia*, *Megala Kaisereia*
Elateia	Old statue of Athena at the end of the city (Paus.) *Athena Kranaia (*manumissio*) Zeus (apotropaic, dedication)	Apollo (consecration, male dedicator) (god of oaths) Pythios	Poseidon (dedication of statues of the *hemitheoi soteres* by the city, 4th c. BCE), god of oaths			Hermes (god of oaths)	Serapis sanctuary (*manumissiones*)	Asclepius (2nd c. BCE, *manumissiones*, dedication to Asclepius and Hygieia)	Stele of Elatos in the agora (function unclear) Charites (oath) Eleuthyia (male dedicator)
Drymaia					Demeter, Thesmophoreia (Paus.)			Asclepius (consecration)	
*Eptalophos/ Ellinika?									
Charadra									Altars of the heroes on the Agora (Paus.: Dioscuri or local)
Lilaia		Apollo (sanctuary, Paus.) Artemis (sanctuary, Paus., inscription)							Kephissos
Erochos					Damatri en Erochoi				*Kephissos sanctuary (foundation of a statue by parents for their son)
Amphikleia				Dionysus (oneiromancy, healing cult, priest, Paus.)					
Tithorea	Athena, grove (Paus.)					Pan Cave within the city at the upper tower	Serapis (sanctuary, *manumissiones*, beginning of 2nd c. CE), near Ag. Ioannis Theologos? Extraurban: Isis, Paus.: most sacred sanctuary among Greeks	Asclepius Archegetas	

Location	Zeus/Athena	Apollo/Artemis	Poseidon	Dionysus	Demeter/ Core	Hermes/Pan/ nymphs	Serapis/Isis/ Anubis/ Bubastis	Asclepius	more
Tithronion		Apollo: grove, altars, temple (Paus.)							
Daulis	Athena Polias (*manumissio*, 2nd c. BCE)	Artemis Soteira					Sarapis (copy of *manumissio*, priest, 2nd c. BCE)		
Troneia (near Daulis)									Heros Archegetes (Paus.)
*Phokikon (altar)									
Panopeus				*Dionysus (*manumissio*, male, dedicator, 3rd c. BCE)				In the direction of Chaironeia: Asclepius or Prometheus?	*Heracles (statuette), *Heros Phanoteus (shield) *Temple foundation (?) on the Acropolis
Parnassos		Apollo Lykeios		Dionysus (Thyai)		Pan/nymphs (cave near Ag. Marina, 6th–4th c. BCE)			Altar to the winds, sanctuary of Thyia, daughter of Kephissos
Corycian Grotto		Apollo Nymphagetes and Artemis?		Dionysus?		Pan and nymphs			
*Ta Marmara									*Statue bases
*Delphi	Athena Pronaia Zeus (in the temple of Apollo)	Apollo Pythios (priest, *manumissio*) Lykeios?	Altar in the temple of Apollo	Dionysus Liknites		Nymphs		Asclepius (in the sanctuary of Apollo)	Ge Cult of Neoptolemus Sibylline Rock
*Kirrha		Apollo, Artemis, Leto (temple, Paus.)							
Antikyra	*Athena	Sanctuary (Paus. 2 stadia from the city) Artem. Diktynna (priestess), from 1st c. BCE *Artemis Eileithyia (consecration)	Poseidon (sanctuary in the harbour, Paus.)						
Ambryssos	Athena (consecration, female dedicator, 3rd c. BCE)	Apollo (consecration, female dedicator)			Demeter and Kore (consecration. female dedicator, 2nd c. BCE)		Serapis, Isis, Anubis: Foundation/ restoration of *pastas* and *propylon* (two male dedicators)		Soteira, Prometheus (dedication, 3rd c. BCE)
Stiris	Athena (treaty with Medeon, 2nd c. BCE, erected in sanctuary, damaged)				Sanctuary Demeter Stiritis (Paus.)			Asclepius (*manumissio*, dedication stonemason, priest, all 2nd c. BCE)	Aphrodite (dedication)
Boulis	(Zeus) Megistos (cult, Paus.)	Artemis (sanctuary, Paus.)		Dionysus (sanctuary, pause)					
unknown									Heracles Misogynos (Plutarch)

Urban

Extra-urban

* Archaeologically attested

Appendix 2
Sanctuaries and cults of Phokis in Pausanias

(Panopeus)

Paus. 10.4.1: There is nothing in the place and you can hardly call it a town.

Daulis

Paus. 10.4.9–10: In Daulis there is a sanctuary of Athena and an ancient statue. The even older Xoanon is said to have been brought by Prokne from Athens.

Daulis (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.4.10: In the region of Daulis there is a place called Tronis. There is a heroon there for a certain **Heros Archegetes**. It is said that this hero was the famous warrior Xanthippos, according to others it was Phokos, the son of Orytion, son of Sisyphus. This hero can be honoured every day. The Phocians bring sacrificial animals here and pour their blood through a hole into the grave. According to custom, the sacrificial meat is eaten directly at the site.

Phokikon

Paus. 10.5.2: The building is large and has pillars along its length. Steps extend from the columns on both sides, on which the members of the Phocian League sit. At its end there are no columns or steps, but **statues of Zeus, Athena and Hera**. Zeus is depicted seated on a throne, Hera standing to his right and Athena to his left.

Delphi, incerto loco *(Ta Marmara?)*

Paus. 10.32.2: If you go from Delphi to the summit of Parnassos, there is a **bronze statue** about 60 stadia from Delphi.

Corycian Cave (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.32.2–7: The Corycian Cave is larger than any of the aforementioned caves and you can walk far into it even without a torch. The ceiling is quite high above the floor and water comes out of the springs, even more dripping from the ceiling, so that traces of the stalagmites can be seen on the floor all over the cave. The inhabitants of the area around Parnassos consider this cave to be sacred, especially for the **Corycian nymphs and the god Pan**.

Summit of Parnassos

Paus. 10.32.7: The summit lies above the clouds and the Thyiads fall into madness for **Dionysus and Apollo**.

Tithorea

Paus. 10.32.10: The main sights of the city are a grove of Athena with a temple and a statue of her. There is also the tomb of Antiope and Phokos... There is nothing else worth seeing in the small town.

Tithorea (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.32.12: 70 stadia from Tithorea lies a sanctuary of **Asclepius Archegetes**, who is worshipped by both the Tithoreans and the other Phocians. In the peribolos of the sanctuary are houses, both for those seeking protection and for those who serve the god. In the centre of the peribolos is also the temple and a stone statue of the god with a beard, over two feet high. To the right of the statue is a *kline*. They sacrifice everything to the god except goats.

Tithorea (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.32.13: 40 stadia from the sanctuary of Asclepius lies the Peribolos and the sacred Adyton of **Isis**, the holiest of the Greeks for the Egyptian goddess...

(Ledon)

(Paus. 10.32.1: Only 70 inhabitants left, he does not describe the place in detail).

Lilaia

Paus. 10.33.4: In Lilaia there is a theatre, an agora and baths, as well as **a sanctuary of Apollo and one of Artemis**, with upright statues of Attic art and made of Pentelic marble.

Lilaia (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.33.5: Here also are the springs of the river **(Kephissos)**. It emerges from the earth, not always silently, but usually, especially at midday, a sound comes out as it gushes, which can be compared to the roar of a bull.

Charadra

Paus. 10.33.6: On the agora of the Charadreans are **altars to the so-called heroes**, which some believe to be altars to the Dioscuri, others to local heroes.

Amphikleia

Paus. 10.33.11: There are also *celebrations* in honour of **Dionysus** that are particularly worth seeing. There is no entrance to the Adyton and no statue of the god to be seen. The inhabitants of Amphikleia say that the god also gives them oracles and helps them with illnesses. He cures the illnesses of the Amphikleians and their neighbours with dreams. The priest is a prophet and prophesies inspired by the god.

Tithronion (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.33.12: At the place where the road from Tithronion to Drymaia meets the road that leads directly from Amphikleia to Drymaia, at Kephissos, the Tithronians have a **grove dedicated to Apollo** and altars. There is also a temple here, but no statue.

Drymaia

Paus. 10.33.12: The Drymaians have **an ancient sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros** and a stone statue

depicting the goddess standing, and celebrate the Thesmophoreia in her honour every year.

Elateia

Paus. 10.34.6: The agora itself is worth seeing, as is the relief stele of Elatos standing there. I'm not sure whether it was made to honour **Elatos** as a founder or to place it on his grave. A temple was built for **Asklepios**, where there is also a statue of him with a beard; the statue is the work of Timokles and Timarchides, who came from Attica. Where the city ends, on the right, there is a theatre and an **old bronze statue of Athena.** It is said that this goddess helped them against the barbarians of Taxilos.

Elateia (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.34.7: At a distance of about 20 stadia from Elateia lies the **sanctuary of Athena Kranaia**. The path to the sanctuary climbs so gently that it is not tiring at all, and you even forget the climb. The path ends at a hill that is steep almost everywhere, but neither particularly wide nor high. On this hill is a sanctuary, and there are stoas and living quarters accessible through the stoas, where those who serve the goddess live, especially the priest. They choose the priest from among the children who have not yet reached the age of ephebia and make sure that his term of office lasts before he reaches the age of ephebia. The term of office lasts five years, during which he lives with the goddess and takes his bath in a tub (*asaminthos*) in the old way. This statue is also the work of the sons of Polycles and depicts the goddess ready for battle. Her shield is decorated with a relief depicting the shield of the goddess called Parthenos by the Athenians.

Abai

Paus. 10.35.1–4: From ancient times Abai was regarded as a city sacred to Apollo and there was also an **oracle of Apollo** there. The Romans did not hold the god of the Abaeans in the same esteem as the Persians: The Romans allowed the Abaeans their independence out of reverence for the god, while the army of Xerxes also burnt the sanctuary of Abai... (in many places in Greece the sanctuaries were not rebuilt, but remained half-burnt until my time)... Apparently the sanctuary of Abai also looked like this until, during the Phocian War, some Phocians who had been defeated in a battle fled there seeking shelter, and the Thebans set them and the sanctuary ablaze, the second time after the Persians. So the temple stood to this day as the weakest of all the buildings destroyed by the flames, since the catastrophe that the Persian fire began had completed the Boeotian one. Near the large temple stands a smaller one, which Emperor Hadrian erected for Apollo. However, the statues are gifts from the Abaeans themselves, they are older (than the temple), made of bronze and depict Apollo, Leto and Artemis standing.

Hyampolis

Paus. 10.35.7: They especially worship **Artemis** and have a temple for her. I cannot say anything about the nature of the cult image, as they are in the habit of opening the sanctuary only twice a year and not more often. They say that all the animals consecrated to the goddess do not contract diseases and grow fatter than the others.

Stiris

Paus. 10.35.10: In Stiris there is a sanctuary of Demeter, surnamed Stiritis. The sanctuary is built with unbaked mud bricks, but the statue is made of Pentelic marble and depicts the goddess with torches in her hand. Next to her stands another statue wrapped in taenia, one of the oldest statues of Demeter.

(Ambryssos)

Paus. 10.38.1–4: Writes to Ambrossos more about agriculture (grapes, shrubs, insects for hair colouring), mentions an agora, not large, on which marble statues stood, most of which were broken.

Antikyra

Paus. 10.37.1: There is a small sanctuary of **Poseidon** in the harbour, the walls of which are made of quarrystone but mortared over on the inside. The statue is made of bronze and depicts Poseidon with one leg resting on a dolphin. The arm on this side is on his thigh, the other hand holds a trident.

Antikyra (extra-urban)

Paus. 10.37.1: A sanctuary of **Artemis** lies two stadia above Antikyra to Ambryssos; there on the right is a large rock on which the sanctuary of Artemis lies. The picture is by Praxiteles and shows the goddess with a torch in her right hand and a quiver over her shoulder; next to her is a dog. The statue is taller than the tallest woman.

Boulis

Paus. 10.37.3: There is not much worth seeing in Boulis, but there is a sanctuary of **Artemis** and one of **Dionysos**. The statues are made of wood by unknown sculptors. They also worship a **Megistos**, who is probably **Zeus**.

Kirrha

Paus. 10.37.8: Worth seeing in Kirrha is a temple of **Apollo**, **Artemis** and **Leto**, with larger-than-life statues of Attic art. There is also a statue of Adrasteia with them, but it is smaller than the others.

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Abstract

In light of the development of the sanctuary at Kalapodi—most probably the renowned shrine of Apollo at Abae—this paper examines the changing setting and role of the sanctuary within its topographical, historical, and political context. The results of excavations and fieldwork conducted in and around the sanctuary over the past decades are discussed alongside written sources and archaeological evidence from the wider region. Considering the evolution of sacred space in ancient Phokis, it becomes clear that the sanctuary of Kalapodi held outstanding significance in central Greece, and particularly in Phokis, for the greater part of its existence.

9. TOWARDS A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE CULTIC LANDSCAPE OF ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL KARYSTIA

Jan Paul Crielaard

When in ancient times Zeus took his position on the top of Mount Olympus or Mount Ida, he was able to see and smell the burning altars down on the earth. He even noted which mortals made burnt sacrifices to him more frequently than others.[1] When Homer envisioned the landscape around Troy, the Muses revealed landmarks associated with mythical beings of a deep past, which were not recognized as such by people of the present,[2] acknowledging what we refer to today as the palimpsest-like character of the landscape. Every time that Hesiod crossed a river, he washed his hands in "the sweet-flowing water" and said a prayer, aiming to avoid unleashing the anger of the omnipresent gods.[3] When Alkaios was in his rustic exile in the wooded inland of Lesbos, he heard "the women's wondrous annual cry, the holy *eleleu*," signaling the beauty contest of Lesbos' long-robed girls which likely took place in the central island-sanctuary of Hera.[4] When Sappho imagined a sanctuary of Aphrodite, it typically contained a flowery meadow, a cool brook, an apple grove, and a rose garden.[5] Lastly, when participants in a cult procession like the one described in the Molpoi inscription found in the Sanctuary of Apollo Delphinios at Miletos, traversed the land, they stopped at each minute topographical feature to experience the sanctity of these places, honouring the deity or demon by prayer and song and sensorily experiencing rituals to celebrate them.[6]

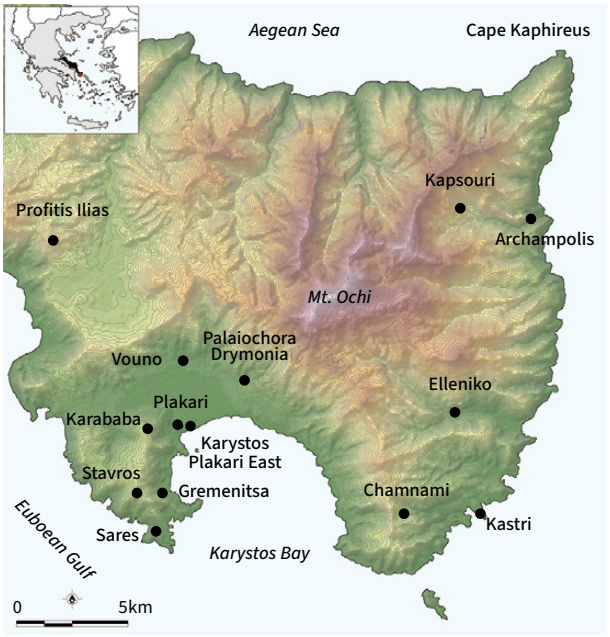

Fig. 1. Map of southern Euboia with locations mentioned in the text (J. Fokkema/Plakari Project).

This is merely a random selection of literary passages pertaining to the Archaic period, and numerous others could be quoted. What these passages exemplify is that for the ancient Greeks the "religious landscape" was multi-layered—being both tangible and intangible, visible and invisible—, and required a multimodal and multisensory registration. Before we divert our attention to southern Euboia (**Fig. 1**), let us heed Samuel Verdan's admonition in the introductory chapter of this volume to be explicit in our use of terminology and conceptualization regarding the religious, cultic or sacred landscape.[7]

I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to join the Round Table at the Foundation Hardt in Vandœuvres, and for sharing their inspirational thoughts with us, both during the Round Table and throughout the process leading to the publication of the proceedings. I also thank Stefan Kooi for discussing with me some of the cult sites that were discovered and/or described during the surveys that were part of the Southern Euboian Sea and Land Routes (SESLR) project; for SESLR, see also *infra* n. 20.

1 E.g. *Il.* 4.44–49 (about Troy).

2 E.g. *Il.* 2.811–814: named "Bramble Hill," but is actually the burial mound of "bounding Myrinē"; see also 23.331.

3 Hes. *Op.* 737–742.

4 Alkaios, fr. 130*b* P, 17–20, with fr. 129 P and Hutchinson 2001, 192–193, on Hera's sanctuary.

5 Sappho, fr. 2 P.

6 This inscription describes in detail the cult procession from Miletos across the Akron hills to Didyma together with the different stations where rituals had to be performed along the way; Slawisch – Wilkinson 2018, with further references. For the *epichōrioi theoi*, the gods, demigods, demons, and nymphs who were believed to be present in specific topographical features in the countryside, see Beck 2018, 28.

7 See Chapter 1 by S. Verdan in this volume. As will become clear, this article's point of departure is different, but it arrives at rather similar observations.

To start with, the term "religious landscape" is unsatisfactory for several reasons: at the term's root, a *landscape* is a large expanse of land observed as a whole.[8] The term *religious* landscape implies that it can be distinguished from, or juxtaposed to other types of landscapes (human, agricultural, political, etc.). These types of landscape and their related activities are inseparable, just as religion cannot be considered a separate field of social practice: harvesting grains and grapes, and making wine were more than merely subsistence activities, simply due to their connectedness with deities. Grapes and wine were gifts from Dionysos, and grain the gift from Demeter. This goddess was for that reason sometimes addressed as *aglaodōre*, "bringer of good gifts."[9] In Hesiod's words, a successful harvest meant that "richly crowned Demeter loves you and fills your barn with food."[10] What the term religious landscape also fails to capture is that other-than-human powers were everywhere: "goddess-nymphs inhabited the mountains cut by deep ravines,"[11] while the ancient race of *hypochthonioi makares*, "the blessed beneath the earth," were underground.[12] Some deities were associated with particular elements of the physical landscape, as illustrated in the *Homeric hymn to Apollo*, which mentions that "all peaks and headlands of steep hills and rivers flowing out to the deep, and beaches sloping seawards, and heavens of the sea are dear to you."[13] Thus, we may say that the "religious landscape" (in the absence of a more fitting term) was omnipresent and all-encompassing. This religious space existed even when humans were absent and included areas that humans did not inhabit (sea, sky, and subsurface), making it larger and more encompassing than the human world. However, these worlds converged at some points in space and time. For the totality of such places or contact zones we may reserve the terms "ritual" or "cultic landscape," i.e. iteratively created and recreated experienced geographies where humans, gods, heroes, spirits, and the like interacted. Edward Swenson has dubbed these "evocative places." He stresses that these places—whether understood as sacred, dangerous, timeless, polluting, socially domesticated or organically animate—were not necessarily a passive sign vehicle of social processes, but could possess agency by provoking emotions, memories, and somatic, sensory and material experiences. These spaces were both activating and were activated through (ritual) practices.[14]

In accordance with this, we can see a manifestation of the "religious landscape" (or "religious space") in the example above, where Hesiod washes his hands in a stream, feeling the eyes of the gods upon his back. Similarly, we could consider the localities that were more private in nature or had a more personal meaning. We find this exemplified in Dio Chrysostom's *Euboian Oration* when the I-figure encounters a hunter who nails oar blades from a shipwreck "to the sacred oak that grows by the sea" in the remote region of Cape Kaphireus in southern Euboia.[15] Important elements that are missing in these examples from Hesiod and Dio Chrysostom, but which do define the "cultic" or "ritual" landscape (terms that I will use interchangeably), are repetition and collectivity—in other words rituals and ritual behaviour.

Regarding the role of rituals, Swenson points out that rituals qualitatively mark and distinguish actions and their performers by means of distinctive frames of practice, thought, performance, and emotion, all of which are defined by their own conventions. They entail focusing attention on the interconnectedness and relationships between other-than-human powers, people, places, and things. The social actions and events taking place at these localities may resemble those happening in everyday life, but it is often the material marking and reframing of action that sets apart recognized events (festivals, initiations, processions, pilgrimages, etc.) from the stream of everyday practice. The intensified material, sensual, and emotional experiences involving aesthetic media, marked speeches, song, music, and other performances, as well as specialized manipulations of the body, afforded alternate experiences of time, place, and being.[16] Sanctuaries, which delineate sacred from profane space, demarcate performative arenas of intense, alternative experience. These act as foci around which the social and spiritual worlds are ordered. Sanctuaries are places where things are juxtaposed in such a way as to prompt reflection on the nature of other places, and where identity, personhood, and one's place in the world (including the relationship between self and community) fall under intensified scrutiny.[17]

As a final note, I prefer to use the terms "cultic" or "ritual" landscape over "sacred landscape," as the latter is a modern concept that conflicts with emic notions in several ways. In ancient Greek culture, or at least that of the Archaic period, cities were considered sacred (in our sources they are variably called *hieros*, *ēgatheos*, *zatheos*, and *dios*), whereas more ambivalent attitudes prevailed

8 Cf. Schama 1995, 10.
9 *Hom. Hymn to Dem.* 54.
10 Hes. *Op.* 300–301.
11 Hes. *Theog.* 129–130
12 Cf. e.g. Hes. *Op.* 141.
13 *Hom. Hymn to Ap.* 22–24; more or less repeated in 143–145. Transl. H. G. Evelyn-White.
14 Swenson 2015a; 2015b, 478.
15 Dio Chr. *Eub.* 7.52.
16 Swenson 2015b, 333–334; also 2015a, 484.
17 Swenson 2015a, 483–484, referring to Samuels 2010, 68.

towards the environment outside cities.[18] Individual places and spaces were considered sacred and were sometimes marked as *hieros* with the help of marker stones and/or inscriptions. *Hieros* comprised everything that belonged to the gods or other supranatural entities, and defined the sacredness of the sanctuary, the temple, the altar, the land that could not be cultivated, as well as the sacrifice, the sacrificial animals, and votive gifts.[19] This, again, underlines that the cultic landscape is strongly connected with human action or interaction with religiously, mythologically, or symbolically charged points in the landscape that evoke sensorial, spiritual, and emotional reactions. They encompassed a dynamic system that was linked by motion and movement, interconnections and intervisibility. What was linked and how this was linked varied according to the occasion and evolved over time.

The Physical Landscape of Southern Euboia

Taking these points into consideration, we will discuss the cultic landscape of ancient Karystia. The territory of the Archaic and Classical polis likely covered a large part of the southern tip of the island of Euboia. Over the last 50 years, several small-scale excavations and archaeological surface surveys have been conducted which have allowed us to reconstruct a relatively detailed picture of settlement patterns and land-use from the Neolithic to modern periods. My own involvement regards excavations of the Early Iron Age to late Classical sanctuary at Karystos-Plakari, and a five-year research project on terrestrial and overseas interconnectivity that included several targeted surveys.[20] One of these surveys, carried out together with Stefan Kooi and Ruben Brugge, focused on the area between the Plakari sanctuary and Karababa, a late Archaic to late Classical cult site in Plakari's hilly hinterland.

The Karystia has been often characterized as an island within an island.[21] It forms a micro-region that is naturally defined by the steep mountain range of Mount Ochi, making land-based communication with the rest of Euboia difficult. The natural orientation of the Karystia is towards the sea and the nearest Cycladic islands, and to a lesser extent, the east coast of Attica. The geology, landscape, weather, climate, and natural vegetation link the region to the islands. Geologically speaking, southern Euboia belongs to the Attic-Cycladic massif of chrystalline metamorphic deposits (mainly consisting of various schists, gneiss, and cipollino marble) that lie in folds that are oriented northeast-southwest. From the main central peak of Mount Ochi (1400m asl), high mountain ranges are cut by deep gorges and valleys that radiate to the north and east. These ranges drop precipitously down to the sea, creating a steep and rugged coastline, with only a few embayments or sheltered beaches. The southern part of the Karystia is considerably more hospitable for habitation, agriculture, and terrestrial and seaborne communication. It consists of hilly terrain with two large plains: the upland Katsaroni plain and the alluvial Kambos plain to the west of modern Karystos. The region's most distinctive feature is the semicircular Bay of Karystos, which is bordered on two sides by low hill ranges (with max. elevations of 300m) that extend southwards from Mount Ochi. The slopes of the hills or spurs are generally steep with schist formations, rocky protrusions, and some small pockets of alluvial or colluvial deposits forming small coastal plains. The well-watered Mount Ochi foothills and Kambos plain provide fertile areas for agriculture and horticulture.[22]

Excavations and surveys indicate that the southern part of Euboia was inhabited during the Neolithic period and the Early and Middle Bronze Age, but became largely deserted after the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The inland hilltop site of Aghios Nikolaos Mylon was probably a local centre flourishing during the Middle Bronze Age. The latest datable material from the site includes five late LH IIA to LH IIIA painted fine ware fragments. Despite intensive surveys this is the only recognizable Mycenaean material in the entire region. Monumental architecture or typically Mycenaean tomb types are also absent. Habitation was resumed at the very end of the Bronze Age with people occupying the hill of Plakari on the northwest coast of the Bay of Karystos. The earliest finds from the sanctuary on its top include a dozen bronze dress pins and fibulae dating to the Sub-Mycenaean period, as well as Early to Middle Protogeometric pottery, suggesting a considerable gap in the occupation of southern Euboia lasting several generations.[23]

18 Crielaard 2009a. It should be stressed that the sacredness of the city was not part of a binary opposition, supposing that the extra-urban environment and the activities taking place there were considered profane. If some kind of opposition existed, this entailed spaces without human presence. According to *Od.* 5.99–102, gods were not happy to travel through landscapes where there were no people to offer hekatombs and perform sacrifices. On built space and the homologous correspondence with cultural constructions of society and cosmos in pre-capitalist societies, see Choay 1986.

19 Burkert 1991, 358; Blok 2014, 30.

20 Southern Euboian Sea and Land Routes (SESLR) project, funded by the Dutch Research Foundation (doss. no. 360–61–050).

21 Cullen *et al.* 2013, 109.

22 Keller 1985, 44–63; Cullen *et al.* 2013, 15–20; Wickens *et al.* 2018, 8–13.

23 Crielaard 2020, 119–120, with further references.

The Sanctuaries of Plakari and Karababa

Plakari is a craggy schist-stone spur that jutted into the sea in antiquity (**Fig. 2**). It was protected to the west by a rather steep cliff and to the south and east by the sea and wetlands. The hilltop offered an excellent view over much of the surrounding area and the Bay of Karystos.[24] What is now a small coastal valley to the southwest of Plakari was likely an inlet that was sheltered by the Ag. Pelagia and Plakari headlands, forming a secluded harbour. A perennial stream (today's Righias) flowed to the east/northeast of Plakari, presumably debouching into the sea at the foot of the hill as it does today.[25]

Immediately to the west of Plakari's summit, a cult place was established on a small, natural platform that was later extended with the help of retaining and temenos walls (**Fig. 3**). During the Archaic period a semicircular altar was constructed, while during the Classical period the sanctuary was enlarged, and a monumental entrance gate (**Fig. 4**) and a small, roofed building serving amongst others as a pantry, were added. However, throughout its entire use it remained hypaethral. According to later epigraphic evidence, Apollo and possibly Artemis were venerated at Plakari.[26]

During the Archaic period, a sanctuary was established on the Karababa Hill opposite of Plakari, above the terraced hillslopes that may have belonged to Plakari's agricultural catchment area (**Fig. 5**). The sanctuary is situated somewhat below the summit of the Karababa Hill. It is oriented towards the east and looks down on the valley below, with the Plakari hilltop in the distance. The area is defined in the east and south by a large terrace wall (**Fig. 5**: no. 25) and in the west and southeast by two rock outcroppings that are inscribed with the letter combination "IE" and "OP" (**Fig. 6**), most likely an abbreviation of *horos hierou*, "boundary of the holy place." Dispersed throughout the enclosed area are several elements including a large, semicircular feature made from well-cut schist blocks, most probably an altar, a threshing floor with a rectangular rubble heap at its center, two platforms built of massive schist stones (Platforms A and B), and part of a road. The raised platform B was constructed around a 3m wide boulder that exemplifies evidence that it was worked. The threshing floor is an integral part of the sanctuary. It is partially supported by a long wall (**Fig. 5**: no. 24) that runs north, approaching the semicircular altar. The rectangular feature at its centre may also be the remains of an altar. Note that threshing floors are sometimes called "holy" and are not an uncommon feature in the cultic domain, especially in relation to the cult of Demeter.[27] The surface pottery that was recovered from the sanctuary area belonged to cooking and storage vessels, and fine and medium wares were used for the consumption of food and drink.[28]

Fig. 2. Aerial photo showing Plakari Hill in centre with Rhigias River and part of Kampos on the left and Paximadhi peninsula in the background (A. Stoker/SESLR).

The Road to Karababa: Motion, Movement, and Intervisibility

In 2015, 2016, and 2019 we investigated a road system between Plakari and Karababa which we hypothesize was a part of a procession route. The road system leads from the foot of the Karababa Hill to the sanctuary near its top, connecting the Plakari and Karababa sanctuaries. By means of a combined pedestrian and drone survey, we identified road fragments that were scattered throughout the landscape. Road fragments were in some places marked by rows of stones positioned horizontally in the ground, but in other they consisted of leveled rock or step-paved ascents. We systematically mapped the target area using low-altitude aerial photography (LAAP) that was generated with the help of a drone. Features identified on the ortho-photos and confirmed through ground-truthing in the field included terrace walls, boundary walls, road segments, and various features that belonged to the Karababa sanctuary that were either new or already identified by previous researchers. After piecing together the various road fragments, we walked this route several times to test our reconstructions and explain the route's trajectory (**Fig. 7**). Our logic was that

24 Crielaard 2020, 122–123.
25 Crielaard 2020, 119–123, with further references.
26 Crielaard 2017, 134–135; Chidiroglou 2017, 324–325.
27 See e.g. *Il.* 5.499: *hieras alōas*; Paus. 1.38.6: procession from Athens to Eleusis passing Triptolemos' sacred threshing floor in the Rharian plain; *IG* II 2, 1672; l, 233, with Vanderpool 1982, 173; see further Mazarakis Ainian 1997, 147–149: sacred threshing floor within the sanctuary's precinct at Eleusis.
28 Kooi *et al.* 2020, 36–39.

Fig. 3. Elevation map of Plakari with location of trenches and monumental entrance gate (J. Fokkema/Plakari Project).

Fig. 4. Plan of the Plakari sanctuary on upper terrace; colours indicate different phases of development (J. Fokkema, J. P. Crielaard/Plakari Project).

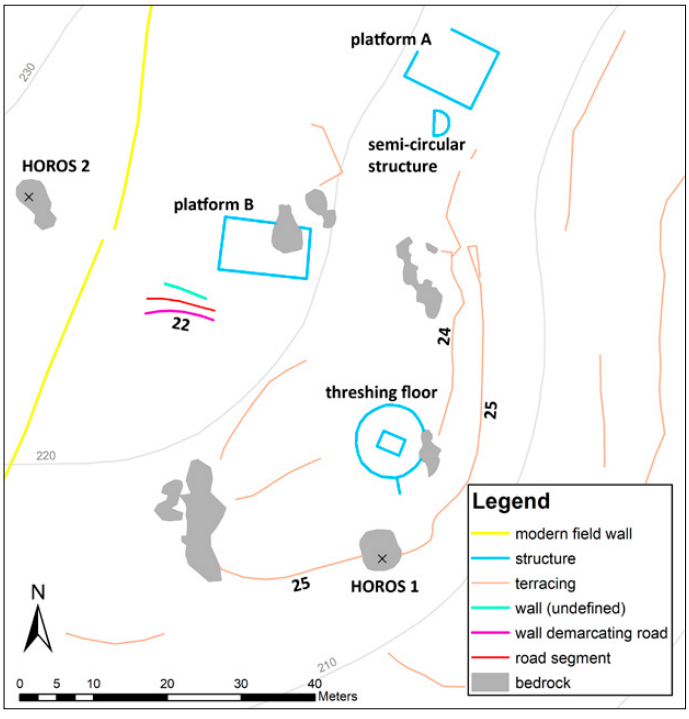

Fig. 5. Plan of Karababa sanctuary (S. Kooi/SESLR).

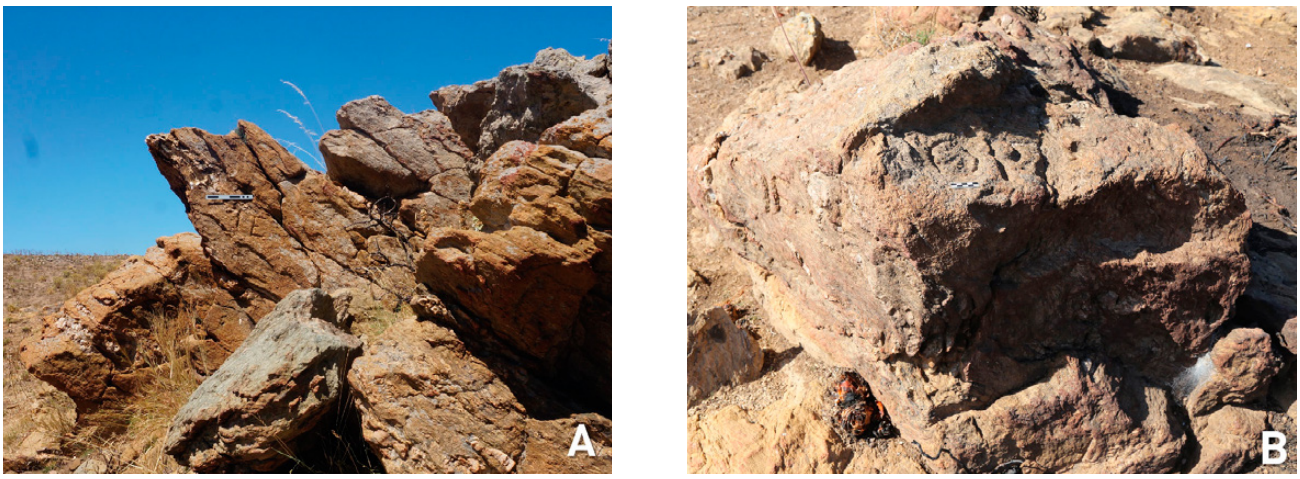

Fig. 6. Two rock outcroppings at Karababa, inscribed with the letter combination "IE" and "OP", probably an abbreviation of *horos hierou*, "boundary of the holy place" (J. P. Crielaard/SESLR).

while roads were often laid out in accordance with the natural relief, procession roads did not necessarily take the easiest or quickest route to a sanctuary. These roads often traversed specific landscapes and passed by landmarks of symbolic importance,[29] while maintaining the sight of their sanctuaries wherever possible.[30]

As already mentioned, the heavily terraced landscape between Plakari and Karababa was likely to constitute the agricultural catchment area of the Plakari settlement. To the northeast, east, and southeast, the terraced area is enclosed by a long wall built of large, roughly-hewn blocks of local stone. Some of the better-preserved parts still stand almost 1m high. In the northwest this boundary wall connects to the sanctuary area. There are several arguments to assume that this boundary wall demarcated the land that was owned by the Karababa sanctuary, corresponding to the so-called "sacred land" that is mentioned especially in epigraphic sources. These *tēmene* could be leased out, usually to the highest bidder, to raise funds for festivals and sacrifices.[31]

The procession road connected the terraced area, the sacred land, and the Karababa sanctuary. Several areas, some with small, stone-built facilities, could be identified where the people participating in processions likely stopped to perform cultic activities or to recuperate—an interpretation that is further supported by the small concentrations of fine drinking wares and storage vessels identified at these locations. By following our reconstructed route several times, we experienced that the road's trajectory directed our gaze—and likely that of past processionists'—in meaningful directions and toward eye-catching natural phenomena.[32] Vistas of land and sea exposed the participants to various elements that formed the religious and cultic landscape, such as the Plakari and Karababa precincts, Mount Ochi, or the boundary wall that delineated the sacred land. Simultaneously as well as rather indirectly or implicitly, the processionists were confronted with more abstract concepts related to fertility, fecundity, and the earth. The latter aspects may have been connected to the agricultural fields and the conspicuous bedrock outcroppings that were incorporated into the road's course, and likely had a religious significance (see **Fig. 7**: e.g., at 12 and from 13 to 15). Sometimes, the bedrock outcrops partially blocked the view, for instance at road segment no. 11 where one's eye was directed to the terraced slopes and the Karababa sanctuary, while the Plakari sanctuary remained in sight.[33] Rocks, boulders, and rocky outcrops were conspicuously present in the final part of the route to the Karababa sanctuary. After a steep ascent among bedrock outcrops represented by road segments nos 13 and 15, the road crossed generally level ground over a broad ridge where a large portion of road segment no. 18 is located. At this point, the processionists could focus on a solemn approach to the sanctuary, although the cult site itself was still hidden from sight. Different elements of the rural and cultic landscape alternately became visible, including part of the Karababa sanctuary, the Plakari sanctuary, and the Kampos and Karystos plains to the north and the northeast. However, what characterized this part of the road is not so much the vistas of the surrounding landscape, but the presence

29 Schneider 1987.
30 Greaves 2010, 184–188.
31 Kooi *et al.* 2020, 320–335.
32 Kooi *et al.* 2020, 25–27.
33 This interplay of humans, roads, and rocks we may call with Yannis Hamilakis (2014, 125–127) "sensorial assemblages."

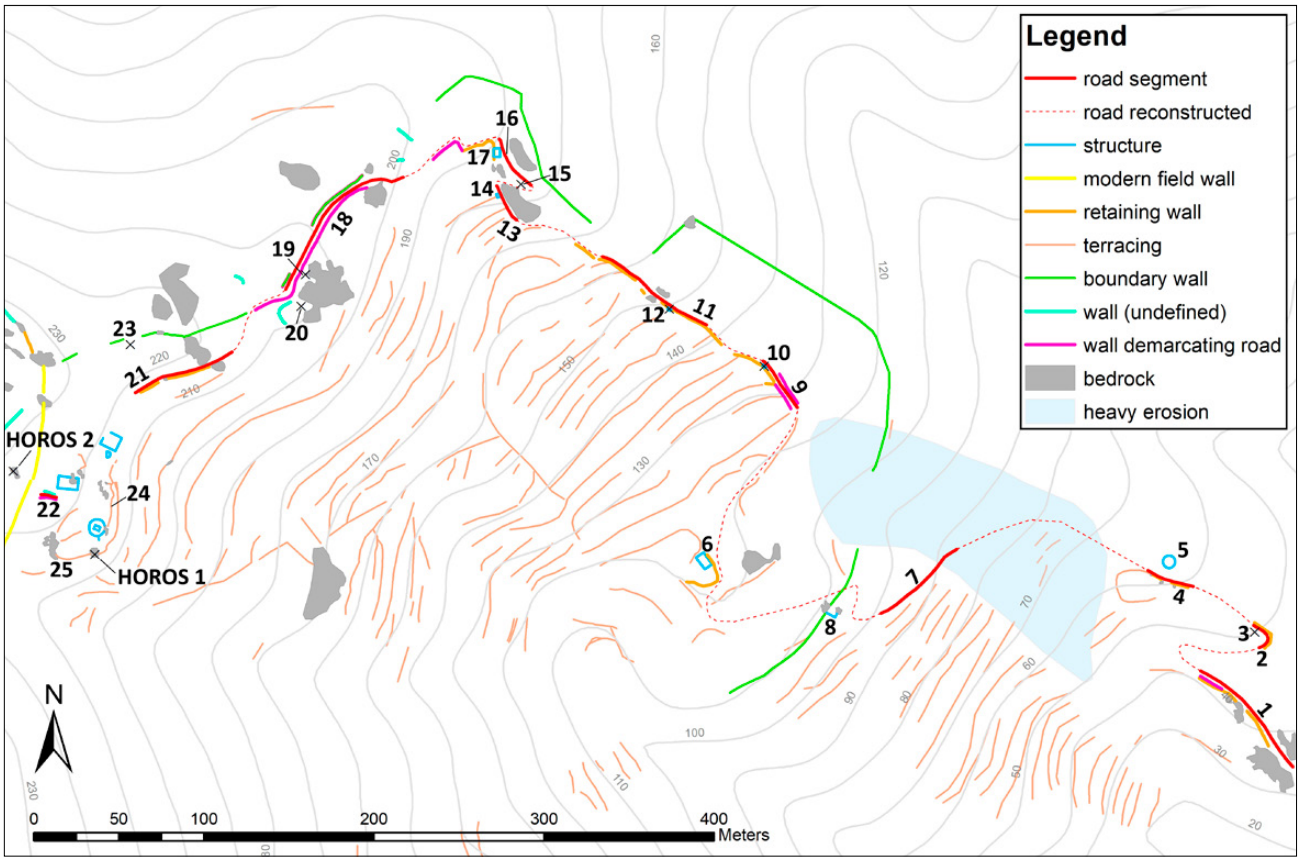

Fig. 7. Plan of the eastern slopes of Karababa Hill with road segments, the large boundary wall, and various rock outcrops; the Karababa sanctuary is on the left side of the plan (S. Kooi/SESLR).

of large bedrock outcrops. The road sometimes curved around or passed through these rock formations. A large part of road segment no. 18 is delineated on both sides by relatively long walls. The one on the east (indicated in purple on the map of **Fig. 7**) more or less touched a massive bedrock outcrop and then a terrace wall (**Fig. 7**: no. 19), likely creating a low platform that included parts of the rock outcrop—a situation that is reminiscent of Platform B in the Karababa sanctuary and the possible rock-centred sanctuaries on the Paximadi peninsula that are discussed in the following section. It resembled a partly constructed and natural balcony that provided a perfect view of the entire south-eastern Karababa Valley and Karystos Bay with the wider seascape beyond this, including some of the Cycladic islands, as well as large parts of the procession road, the Plakari sanctuary, and a substantial portion of the temenos of Karababa. At this point, the processionists could enjoy an almost panoptical view of much of the cultic landscape between Plakari, Karababa, and beyond, sensing the religious space they were part of.[34]

Other Sanctuaries

After Plakari was the main habitation center during the Early Iron Age and much of the Archaic period, a gradual infill of the landscape took place during the later Archaic and especially Classical periods. The inland site of Palaiochora simultaneously grew in importance, eventually becoming the main civic centre during the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. Unfortunately, we know very little about the sanctuaries and temples that the Classical and Hellenistic polis of Karystos must have housed.[35]

It seems that the expansion of the area that was used for habitation, agriculture, and other activities went hand in hand with the layout of the cultic landscape. The late Archaic period saw in addition to the Karababa sanctuary the establishment of a cult site on a low hill named Vounou in the fertile Kambos, which was in this period also brought under cultivation.[36] Near the eastern end of the Plakari ridge, a small roofed cult building

34 Kooi *et al.* 2020, 20–23.

35 Chidiroglou 2017.

36 Keller 1985, 114; Chidiroglou 2012, 177.

Fig. 8. Archaic-Classical cult site on Plakari, east ridge: the temenos wall made of heavy schist blocks, exposed after the 2016 wildfire (J.P. Crielaard/Plakari Project).

Fig. 9. Hill top site of Paximadhi – Gremenitsa: Poles indicate a road segment leading towards a dome-shaped rock outcrop with a large, two-chambered cave at its base (left corner photo) (S. Kooi/SESLR).

was constructed using marble and sandstone elements. It was apparently built during the Archaic period but remained in use until the Classical period. Despite extensive damage, it appears to have been a rectangular structure located inside a temenos wall.[37] For years, the site was obscured by heavy vegetation. However, after a wildfire in the summer of 2016, the temenos wall made of heavy schist blocks became visible again (**Fig. 8**).

Several small, rural sanctuaries were identified in regional surveys, especially on the Paximadi peninsula on the west side of the Bay of Karystos in the localities of Gremenitsa, Stavros, and Ag. Paraskevi-Sares (**Fig. 9**). They are centered on conspicuous, rocky outcrops, with terraces (both natural and built), steps, cavities, niches, and platforms cut from the natural rock, and structures built with large roughly-cut schist blocks. Gremenitsa, for one, is located on the east side of the Paximadhi peninsula. It includes a dome-shaped rock outcrop with a large, two-chambered cave at its base. Steps lead from this cave to a man-made terrace positioned above the outcrop. On the west side of this flat area of earth and rock, an apse-shaped niche is present which was cut into the face of a large boulder. This niche, which faces eastward, has a basin and run-off channel cut into its floor. A boulder enclosure or terrace (6 × 6.5 m) is in front of it, which is retained by three walls. At Gremenitsa and Stavros, surface finds of coarse wares, fine drinking wares (including a miniature bowl), and a possible lamp form the types of assemblages that are typically found at other cult sites in the area, indicating that communal drinking practices took place at these locations. The earliest material identified dates to the Classical period.[38]

About 3.5 km northeast of the modern town of Karystos, as the crow flies, a potentially cult site is situated above a knoll in the Kylindroi Valley. It was discovered by Stefan Kooi and Ruben Brugge during their surveys of the nearby cipollino quaries that were likely operated from the Archaic period onwards. The presence of a cult place is indicated by the remains of a stone-built structure and surface finds, including many burnt black gloss fine wares, lamp fragments, lekanes, and cooking ware. These findings provide the grounds to assume that its history dates to the Late Archaic period.[39]

Overlooking most of Karystia (and a substantial portion of the Aegean) is Mount Ochi's summit, where a cult to Hera was likely established during the Early Classical period, as evidenced by a pottery sherd with a dedicatory graffito. The famous Drakospito ("Dragon house"; **Fig. 10**), datable to the 4th c. BCE, is "set in a cleft of the peak and nestles against the rocks."[40] It may have been associated with the cult of Hera and possibly Zeus.[41] Reaching the summit involves a 3.5 hours climb from

37 Keller 1985, 104–105, 271–272, with figs 36–39; Keller – Hom 2010, 3–4; Chidiroglou 2012, 155–156.

38 Gremenitsa: Keller 1985, 88, 207; Keller – Hom 2010, 5; Chidiroglou 2012, 139–140. Stavros: databases SEEP FS 86D04; SESLR FS 331/site 15. Ag. Paraskevi-Sares: Keller 1985, 81–82; Chidiroglou 2012, 133–134.

39 SESLR Site 317.

40 Carpenter – Boyd 1977, 197.

41 There is an ancient tradition suggesting that the name of the mountain refers to copulation, and that the peak is associated with the union of *hieros gamos* of Zeus and Hera, see Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Κάρυστος, with Cook 1940, 1041.

Fig. 10. The *Drakospito* ("Dragon house") on Mt Ochi, probably 4th-c. building devoted to Hera (J. P. Crielaard).

Fig. 11. Air photo of headland at Geraistos (present-day Kastri) and possible location of Poseidon sanctuary (A. Stoker/SESLR).

Fig. 12. Paved road (of the Classical period?) that likely connected Geraistos and Karystos (S. Kooi, R. Brugge/ SESLR).

Karystos, following a route that offers spectacular views and traverses a variety of landscapes.[42]

In addition to these sanctuaries located in the core area of the polis territory, several peripheral cult places should be mentioned. First of all, there is the famous sanctuary of Poseidon at Geraistos in present-day Kastri on the east coast (**Fig. 11**). It is referred to in Homer's *Odyssey* and known through several, later literary sources and scattered archaeological and epigraphic remains.[43] The sandy embayment at Kastri constitutes the only protected port on this part of the coast of Euboia. It was situated on a main sea route towards the northeastern Aegean. This port is otherwise relatively isolated, which may be one of the reasons why a part of the sanctuary was later designated as an asylum.[44] It commanded two small alluvial valleys behind it, Livadhi and Kalamos. Our surveys show that during the late Classical period, Geraistos developed into a bustling harbour town that had a mix of an industrial and agricultural economy.

A paved road (**Fig. 12**) that can be provisionally dated to the Classical period based on find spots within its proximity, likely connected Geraistos and Karystos.[45] Geraistos can be considered a sanctuary that marked Karystos' terrestrial and maritime territory, while also performing supra-local functions.

42 Description in Carpenter – Boyd 1976.

43 *Od.* 3.174–179; Chidiroglou 2009, 1085–1105; 2012, 213–229, 291–292, 360; Wickens *et al.* 2018, 55, 206.

44 Schumacher 1993, 61–63.

45 Wickens *et al.* 2018, 11, 208–209, cautiously call this road paved with large schist slabs "Pre-Turkish," but Stefan Kooi argues that it is likely to be Classical.

Fig. 13. Elliniko-Platanistou: monumental platform made of local schist stone, and local and Parian marble (S. Kooi, R. Brugge/SESLR).

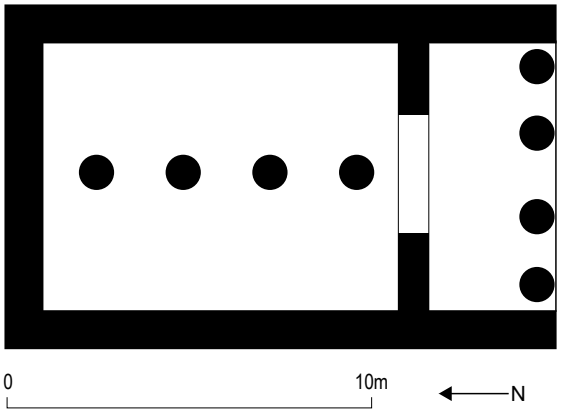

Fig. 14. Delos, Treasury 5: "Oikos of the Karystians" (Perseus Digital Library, image:1990.33.0124n).

The hilltop sanctuary at Profitis Ilias, located north of modern Marmari, may mark the extension of Karystos' chora in the west.[46] Somewhat enigmatic remains the sanctuary at Elliniko-Platanistou. It is situated in a spot well-watered by both a nearby river and an adjacent spring, at the lower end of the Potami Valley, which is formed by a relatively large area of fertile alluvium.[47] The sanctuary consists of a monumental, well-built platform that is made of local schist stone, and local and Parian marble (**Fig. 13**). This platform was potentially constructed during two building phases (ca. 500 and 325 BCE, respectively). Six unfinished Ionian capitals and a part of a pediment sculpture depicting a lion killing a stag (ca. 525–450 BCE) testify to the presence of a complex building (entrance or gateway building?) made of Parian marble. Additionally, two parts of a door frame, roof tiles, and terracotta lion-headed gutter spouts dating to the late 5th c. have been attributed to a propylon. H. R. Goette has identified about 40 inscriptions that were carved on the retaining wall that forms the south side of the platform. One that dates to the 5th c. BCE mentions a cult of Aphrodite, while another inscription that belongs to the Late Classical-Early Hellenistic periods refers to the goddess Athena.[48] It is open to speculation why such a monumental cult place that uses both local and Parian materials—both of which are unusual for the Karystia—is situated at this specific location. In this context, the inscriptions carved into the platform walls are of particular interest. They seem to have been left by individuals who informally commemorated the ritual activities that were staged within this sanctuary. We may take these inscriptions as the result of lived spatial practices and perceptions, somewhat contrasting with the more "official" representation of space of sanctuaries as high places.

Further north along the east coast of the Karystia and even more isolated is the small town of Archampolis, which contains a small temple that likely dates to the Archaic period. Archampolis' existence appears to be associated with the melting and mining activities in the area, and may be excluded from our discussion of the cultic landscape in the Karystia.[49]

Karystians at Delos

As discussed at the beginning of this contribution, religious space was all-encompassing, and for this reason alone, we should also include its maritime dimension. This aspect is evident in the hilltop sanctuary at Profitis Ilias, which must have been visible to seamen traveling through the Euboian Gulf, and in the Poseidon sanctuary at Geraistos, which was intimately connected to the sea and maritime travel. But it is also particularly evident in the Karystos' connections with Delos, the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis—deities that were most probably also venerated at Plakari. Archaeological evidence suggests that Delos achieved broader, supra-regional importance during the second half of the 8th c., while the first monumental architecture identified at Delos dates to the 7th c.[50] The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* associates "rocky Delos" especially with the Ionians, mentioning that "Ionians with their trailing

46 Chidiroglou 2012, 254.

47 Wickens *et al.* 2018, 59.

48 Goette 2007; Chidiroglou 2012, 25–35, 243–246, 290–291, 358–359; Wickens *et al.* 2018, 24–25, 51, 59, 235–237. Sculpture: Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1995, 71 with fig. 40; Chidiroglou 2012, 540–542 with fig. IV.40; 2017, 327.

49 Keller 1985, 264–265; Panagopoulou 1995, 31–37; Reber 2001, 451–453; Chidiroglou 2012, 250–252, 292.

50 Crielaard 2009b, 41–42, 68–69, with further references.

Fig. 15. Semi-circular structures, probably altars (S. Kooi, J.P. Crielaard/SESLR, Plakari Project).

garments" gather there, together with their children and modest wives, for their religious celebrations and contests, including boxing matches, dance and song. The men and well-girded women, together with their swift ships and many riches, are said to be the epitome of grace (*charis*).[51] However, the archaeological finds from the Archaic period underscore the sanctuary's intimate connections with Naxos, Paros, and other islands. Thucydides mentions that Delos in the past was the location of a "great assemblage (*megalē ksynodos*) of the Ionians and neighbouring islanders." Based on these findings, Christy Constantakopoulou draws the conclusion that Delos was the centre of a nesiotic rather than Ionian cult network.[52]

However this may be, Karystos had a strong connection with Delos that took shape through stories and legends, but also through motion and movement, which are elements that the sacred seascape shares with its terrestrial counterpart. Karystos was included in the story of the Hyperboreans sending sacred gifts wrapped in wheat-straw to Delos. These gifts reached the sanctuary after being passed on, as part of the final lap of their voyage, by cities along the Euboean Gulf as far as Karystos. The Karystians were taking them to Tenos (bypassing Andros) and the Tenians to Delos.[53] The Karystians also possessed an *oikos* or treasury on the island, probably dating to the Late Archaic period. Treasuries provided services for visiting members of the dedicatory community, and were intended for the storage of votive offerings, while simultaneously serving as pious dedications in their own right. Treasury 5 has been identified as the "Oikos of the Karystians" (**Fig. 14**). It consists of a *prodomos* with four columns in antis and a cella containing a middle colonnade of five columns, built on granite and gneiss foundations. The building suggests a significant presence of visitors from Karystos on the island.[54] Apparently, religious travel by ship to Delos, the place most intimately associated with Apollo, was an important element in the cultic cycle of the Karystians, functioning as an advanced outpost and place of connection in the Karystian cultic landscape.

Recurring Features of the Karystian Cultic Landscape

After this overview of Archaic and Classical cult places, a next question would be if we can discern recurring features of the Karystian cultic landscape, in order to better understand how the connections between identity, landscape, people, and the supranatural were formed. To begin, several sanctuaries in southern Euboia have altars of a semicircular shape (**Fig. 15**), linking them to

51 *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 146–155.
52 Thuc. 3.104; Constantakopoulou 2007, 53–58.
53 Hdt. 4.33.
54 Rups 1986, 186; McCutcheon 2018, 62, 76.

Fig. 16. Worked rock outcrops at Plakari. a: two niches and a ledge in front of it; b: shallow, square basin (B. Brouwenstijn/Plakari Project).

similar altars in Amarynthos and Despotiko.[55] Moreover, there seems to be a certain predilection for hypaethral cult sites, often located at high places. I think the above discussion of cult sites has clarified that boulders, rock outcrops, and worked stone surfaces form a recurring element in the cult places of southern Euboia. To substantiate this further, we may describe some of these features in more detail. When the earliest Iron Age inhabitants of the Karystia settled at Plakari, they built their first sanctuary on the summit of the hill that they had chosen for their settlement. A conspicuous feature that forms the highest point of the hill consists of a bolder-like, rectangular rocky outcrop in which two niches and a ledge in front of it were hewn out, possibly for the placement of one or more stone or terracotta statuettes or reliefs (**Fig. 16a**).[56] In a more or less horizontal nearby block, a shallow, square basin was carved (**Fig. 16b**). This suggests that rocky outcrops and living rock held special meanings and were the focus of ritual actions and perhaps veneration. This impression is also provided by a number of special places, likely "cult places," on the Paximadi Peninsula, which were briefly discussed earlier. Not only do rocky outcrops represent an important feature to the cultic landscape, but these places are also conspicuous landmarks that can be seen from afar.

Finally, we will return one more time to Platform B that was part of the Karababa sanctuary. This raised platform is constructed around a 3m wide boulder that has a natural niche facing east (**Fig. 17**). Through this bolder runs a crack that also shows traces of being partially worked. When orienting our gaze from west to east, Plakari is visible through this crack. The crack is large enough to let a person pass through, who would then find themselves on the other side of the platform facing east.[57] It seems likely that because of this view and the crack's orientation that the platform was constructed around the boulder. As previously mentioned, the road towards Karababa leads through and along rock outcrops, some of which were worked.

Sara Karatas points out that rocky outcrops play a prominent role in the mythography, cult, and rituals associated with Demeter. Rocky outcrops have been attested, sometimes in combination with cavities, rock-cut pits, and channels, for several (open-air) sanctuaries of Demeter. Karatas, however, acknowledges that rocky sanctuaries with rock-cut niches, stairs, and terraces are also known for other Greek deities.[58] Indeed, it may be noted that raised platforms and rocky high places were not restricted to one particular deity: Plakari was probably linked to Apollo (and Artemis?),[59] Karababa was perhaps associated with Demeter,[60] Mount Ochi with Hera (and Zeus?), and Elleniko with Athena and Aphrodite. These specific locations played a key role in how and where divine presence was experienced in the Karystia and how people could connect to their gods. In the cases of Plakari, Karababa and the above-mentioned rural sanctuaries, rocks, boulders, and rocky outcrops played a role in the cultic rituals, while in the cases of Karababa, Geraistos and especially Mount Ochi, procession and pilgrimage to these high places was an inherent aspect of the location of the cult.

55 Amarynthos: Saggini *et al.* 2021, 11. Despotiko: Ohnesorg – Papajanni 2023, 37–38; the authors point out that the Keraton, the altar of Apollo on Delos made of goat horns, had the form of a podium with an apse to the East.

56 Crielaard *et al.* 2012, 93 with fig. 11; Kooi *et al.* 2020, 5 with fig. 6.

57 Kooi *et al.* 2020, 8, 12.

58 Karatas 2019.

59 Note that in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the deity is frequently associated with high and rocky places, see in addition to the references *supra* n. 15, esp. ll. 16–17, 26–27, 139, 141 ("rocky Delos" and "the massive hill of Kynthos").

60 Cf. *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 272.

Identity, Landscape, and the Supranatural

As Swenson emphasizes, ritual performances orchestrated within evocative places—whether these were natural or built environments—engendered a critical consciousness of place and social identity.[61] In the Karystia, rocky sanctuaries, rock-cut niches, terraces and related features seem to have been of critical importance in this connection. It is true that such features that were often modified or manipulated are found in many places in the Greek world, and can be associated with various Greek deities. However, the situation in Archaic and Classical Karystia with its strong preference for rocky outcrops, high places, and hypaethral cult sites, seems markedly different and deserves a more specific explanation. In attempt to do so, I will firstly highlight the importance of the natural landscape and landscape features for early Greek, local identity. Following this, I will return to the earliest phase of Iron Age presence in the region.

A rich but often overlooked source of information on local identities are the short-hand descriptions in the shape of *epitheta* that refer to elements of the landscape. Epithets of gods tend to be epichoric (e.g., Delian, Delphic, or Lycian Apollo), underpinning the important links between divinity and locality. In the names of river gods, we even find a complete overlap between the two. Here, however, I would like to draw attention to the *epitheta* used in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, lyric poetry, and the Homeric hymns for groups of people. These foster the idea that a connection existed between landscape and landscape features, on the one hand, and the identity and uniqueness or autochthony of the inhabitants, on the other. The inhabitants of Chalkis are referred to in what was presumably an ancient oracle, as "men who drink the waters of fair Arethousa."[62] A parallel or prototype is found in the *Iliad* where a branch of the Trojans is characterized as those "who drank the dark water of Aisepos" (*Il.* 2.824–825). The Homeric "Catalogue of Ships" and the "Catalogue of Trojan Allies" are very rich in epithets and descriptions that mention the qualities or attributes of the settlements and territories of the contingents of the Greek and Trojan armies. The strong link between people and landscape is highlighted by such qualifications as those "who were born of Lake Gyge" (864–865) or "born in the folds of Mt. Ida" (819–821).[63]

Now for the earliest phase of Iron Age presence in the Karystia. The re-occupation of the Karystia probably during the Syb-Mycenaean period means that the new inhabitants of the region encountered *terra nullius*, a landscape devoid of preexisting associations with particular deities or known ancestors. Additionally, there were next to no remains referring to an earlier heroic or otherwise distant past. One of the few exceptions to this was the Final Neolithic terrace or fortification walls found at Plakari, which in some places reached a height of 3m. These may indeed have been one of the drawing attractions to settle in this specific location.

However, in this pristine, primordial situation without pre-existing traditions and without clear points of reference in the "cultured" landscape, the physical landscape likely became a natural way to identify evocative places and contact zones where the religious and cultic landscapes converged. Earlier we discussed that places could possess agency by provoking associations, emotions, and various other experiences. It may or may not be incidental, but if we examine the landscape elements that were dear to Apollo according to the *Homeric hymn* (see "Introduction" of the present contribution), we can note that Plakari, where the earliest Iron Age inhabitants settled, checks all the boxes: it comprises a "peak" (*skopia*, literally a place from which one can freely look around), a "headland of lofty hills," a "steep-sloped shore," a "river flowing out to the sea," and a "haven of the sea."[64] Plakari, as the oldest cult site in the region, may have become a template for later cult sites, given the recurrent semicircular altars and the importance of high places and rock formations in many cult sites that were established during later periods.

As a final note, I wish to comment on the persistent occurrence of hypaethral cult places in southern Euboia. It must be pointed out that the Karystians possessed the know-how to construct large-scale or even monumental architecture. Examples of this include the terrace at Elleniko and, outside the period discussed here, the so-called Dragon House on Mount Ochi. In this connection, defensive architecture from both the Archaic[65] and Classical periods[66] may also be mentioned. Finally, the "Oikos of the Karystians" at Delos shows that outside their own territory, the Karystians constructed "canonical" religious architecture. The conclusion may be that they were familiar with building monumental architecture but did not practice it as much for their

61 Swenson 2015a, 478.

62 Parke – Wormell 1956, 82.

63 The close relationship between landscape and identity is also exemplified in the fact that Homeric heroes are sometimes named after local rivers (*Il.* 5.49ff.: Skamandrios; *Il.* 4.473ff.: Simoeisios) or mountains (*Il.* 3.248; 7.381ff.: Idaios), or take vows to local rivers (*Il.* 23.144–151: Peleus and Achilles to the Sperchios River).

64 *Hom. Hymn to Ap.* 22–24. "Haven of the sea": alternatively, "haven of refuge from the sea," cf. *Od.* 5.418.

65 Archaic city wall of Karystos: Crielaard *et al.* 2012, 94; fortification wall at Kokkaloi: Chatzidimitriou – Chidiroglou 2014, 312; Cape Philagra fortress: Chidiroglou 2012, 260–263, 640–641, with Reber 2002, 40–52; Fachard 2012, 237–240, 337.

66 Defensive wall at Plakota north of Karystos: Chidiroglou 2012, 189–190.

cult sites during the Early Iron Age and the Archaic and early Classical periods. We may speculate that the natural landscape was considered "sufficiently evocative" to experience the vicinity of deities and to connect with the supernatural. Perhaps we may even conclude that this aspect of the cultic landscape was integral part of the Karystians' local identity.

Conclusions

In this contribution, the ritual or cultic landscape is understood as an assemblage of contact zones with the omnipresent supernatural. Religiously, mythologically or symbolically charged points in the landscape evoked sensorial, spiritual and emotional reactions. These evocative natural or built environments materialized in a physical form through, for instance, installations and dedications, and in a more transient manner through music, song, dance, dramatizations and other performances, processions, and pilgrimages. They encompassed a dynamic system of points in the landscapes that were linked by motion and movement, interconnections and intervisibility.

The development of the cultic landscape of the Karystia was closely linked to the initial habitation in the Sub-Mycenaean period at Plakari, and the further infill of the landscape during the Archaic and Classical periods. Changes in land use went hand in hand with the construction, experience, and modifications of religious geographies. Semicircular altars, often in a hypaethral setting, and high places and rock formations are recurring features of places or contact zones where humans, gods, heroes, spirits, and the like interacted. A procession road between the Archaic and Classical sanctuaries of Plakari and Karabaka illustrates the interconnectivity of the cultic landscape. Explorations of this route with the assistance of modern technology but also by experiencing the landscape underline the importance of movement, physical effort, and sight, including the sensation and observation of the diverse vistas of sanctuaries and holy places that together form the cultic landscape of the Karystia. We may assume that regular processions —to Karababa, Mount Ochi, the hilltops on Paximadi, and perhaps Geraistos—helped to establish and re-establish social values and territorial claims by imbuing with social memory the space that was traversed and experienced, in this way maintaining and cementing the identity and social coherence of the local community, and tightly linking locality, divinity, identity and population.

Fig. 17. Karababa sanctuary: platform B, constructed around a 3m wide boulder that has a natural niche facing east and crack, showing Plakari at a distance (J. P. Crielaard/SESLR).

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Abstract

This contribution discusses the cultic landscape of southern Euboia during the Archaic and Classical periods. The cultic or ritual landscape is understood as an assemblage of evocative places that entail focusing attention on the interconnectedness and relationships between other-than-human powers, people, places, and things. Ritual performances orchestrated within these evocative places engendered a critical consciousness of place and social identity. It is shown that semicircular altars, often in a hypaethral setting, along with "high places" and rocky sanctuaries, are recurring features in the cultic landscape of the Karystia. Plakari, as the oldest cult site in the region, may have served as a template for later cult sites. It is argued that rocks, boulders, and rock-cut niches, often modified and incorporated within the sacred built environment, were of critical importance for connecting with various deities. These localities formed a dynamic system of points in the landscape that were linked by motion and movement, interconnections, and intervisibility. The ritual actions and performances, and the social events taking place at these localities, imbued the space with social memory as it was traversed and experienced, thus maintaining and cementing the identity and social coherence of the local community, and tightly linking locality, divinity, identity, and population.

10. BETWEEN POLITICAL COMMUNITY AND SACRED LANDSCAPE IN ARCHAIC NORTHWEST GREECE (CA. 850–470 BCE)

Catherine Morgan

In his introductory review of the diverse approaches taken to Greek sacred landscapes and the semantic complexities entailed in them, Samuel Verdan delineates two basic trends in current scholarship (see Chapter 1, this volume). One, rooted in the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic "Landschaft" tradition, treats a sacred landscape as an objectifiable human construct resulting from interaction between a society and the natural environment, with the "sacred" materially expressed in places and installations with a sacred vocation. The other conceives a "religious landscape" as a network of symbolic constructions of space enacted in a specific location. In this case, landscape is a subjective construct which combines different elements of the space via a coherent system of meaning, so that revelation of one component calls others into consciousness.

In this chapter, I evaluate these two lines of approach from the perspective of an archaeologist working in a period and a region of Greece—the northwest (i.e. modern Epirus, Aitoloakarnania, and the central Ionian archipelago, **Fig. 1**)—where reconstruction of sacred landscapes relies almost entirely on the material record. The key question is the potential of the different approaches to inform the development of research agendas which foreground material culture. As Verdan succinctly puts it, the second approach, exemplified in the work of François de Polignac,[1] highlights the intentions that govern the construction of a sacred landscape, while archaeology usually reveals its effects. Capturing subjective intent requires the right kinds of source, so it is no surprise, Verdan suggests, that archaeologists gravitate towards the "Landschaft" approach as more broadly applicable to what he terms "the concrete realities of the field."

We may debate whether the realities of the field are indeed concrete, and whether we are sufficiently open to diversity of expression and alternative readings. Here I merely note two points of distinction between these approaches that are of particular relevance to the study of northwest Greece. The first is the role of different actor perceptions. According to the first approach, a sacred landscape is unique in place and time. According to the second, sacred landscapes are first and foremost ideas, so multiple versions may co-exist within a single place or society. This plurality does not limit us to working at the level of the individual. The sacred landscapes constituted and shared by different groups—from poleis, demes, or ethne to gender, status, or professional interest groups, travelling communities, or temporary communities constituted around festivals—[2] operated on scales liable to be captured in the material and textual records.

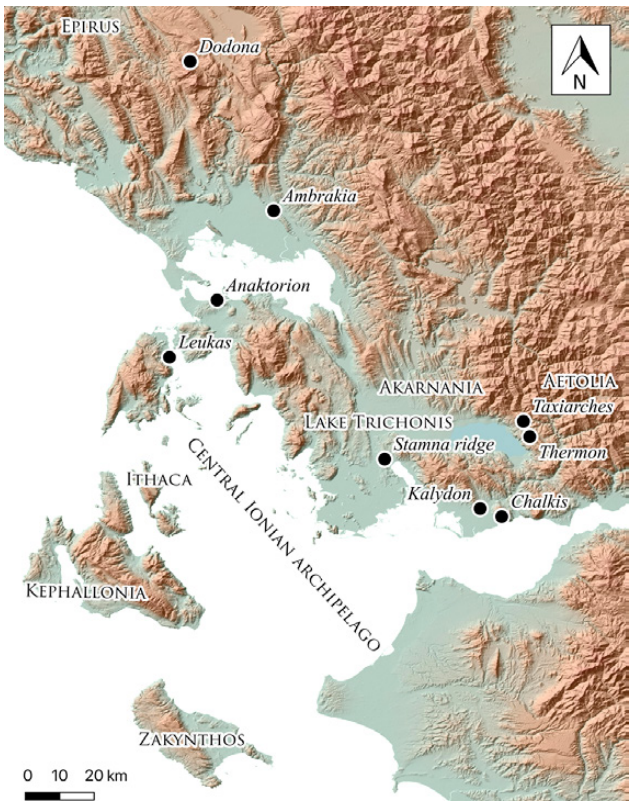

Fig. 1. Northwest Greece: principal sites mentioned in the text (Gian Piero Milani).

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1 Polignac 2010; 2016.

2 Williamson 2021, 7–12.

The second point concerns the functioning of sacred landscapes. Were they systems in themselves (as the second approach would hold) or just the religious dimension of larger social, political, and/or economic landscape(s)? A religious landscape *sensu* de Polignac can certainly be isolated as an object of study without implying that it is in practice disembedded from any larger context, as Verdan acknowledges with reference to dependence on "external" factors. A question for both approaches is therefore the nature of interaction with, and/or dependence on, other aspects of community life.

Writing History in Northwest Greece

Until recently, the history of most parts of the northwest was written in institutional terms and shaped around "contingent moments," i.e. the kind of processes and events liable to be captured in the epigraphic and literary record, with archaeological evidence then fitted into the frame. In so far as they have been considered at all,[3] the Archaic and early Classical periods appear as preludes to the diverse federations formed in Late Classical and Hellenistic times; these range from Akarnanian military alliances to the institutions that sustained Aitolian expansion beyond its ethnic base from the late fourth or early third century on.[4] One reason for this is the shortage of contemporary literary sources. The earliest non-epic references to northwestern communities come in outsider accounts (notably that of Thucydides) which refer selectively to local circumstances within larger narratives, often concerning the Peloponnesian war and its aftermath. Writing local histories from these observations risks skewing our understanding of socio-political development.

Moving beyond this to reconstruct longer term trajectories—changes in wealth distribution, the location and scope of formal and informal decision making, path dependency in power relations, the role of internal and external change agents, or the creation of instruments and institutions—demands an approach which fully implicates the material record. Indeed, if we accept that current understanding of political transformation in the northwest is to a significant extent an artefact of historiography, the possibility emerges that development was not unidirectional and that the potential for poleis and other associations of various scales and qualities was always present, if sometimes visible only in the material record. I have addressed these historiographical and methodological issues in further work on the region, latterly for *The Oxford History of the Archaic Greek World* (on which the following account draws heavily),[5] with the intention that this serve as a step towards a more nuanced picture of long-term development.[6] The effect is to expose a richer and more complex set of possible factors affecting the salience of particular sacred landscapes and the symbols and ideas on which they drew.

Two factors permit us to treat these 6,500 square miles of territory as a geographical region. First, the area is characterised by interconnecting terrestrial and maritime communications. Large topographical features—the Pindus mountains and associated ranges, long, navigable rivers, and an extensive coastline—defined resource locations and major channels of long distance traffic (**Fig. 2**). Second, there is strong co-dependency between ecozones (uplands and lowlands, arable, pasture and woodland), whether characterized by close vertical separation, as evident in the Epirote mountains, or longer ties between coast and interior as in Aitoloakarnania and the islands. Trade and exchange on multiple interlocking scales, linked to ever larger Adriatic and southern Italian networks, was sustained by strong cross-regional relationships.

Within this framework, communities ranged in form from Molossian villages in the Pindus mountains, essentially unchanged from the Late Bronze Age to the fourth century; to late 7th-c. Corinthian colonies at Leukas, Ambrakia, and Anaktorion, with conspicuously large territories and grid-planned urban centres; and poleis on the north coast of the Corinthian Gulf, re-founded or expanded in the mid-8th c. A key question, therefore, is what a long-term *regional* narrative might look like beyond simple economics, and how it might appear in religious terms. A fresh look both at individual communities and at the scale and nature of relations between them helps us to think about where and how the divine might be encountered or need to be evoked.

Debates around the long-term development of statehood through the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods across the Greek world, and the comparability of scholarly approaches focused on different periods, are live and complex. In some parts of the northwest the political entities with which sanctuaries are associated remain poorly understood. This is a challenging background against which to explore notions of sacred landscape. J.K. Davies' analysis of the operative forces liable to shape a citizen-state offers a potential way forward.[7] Davies sets the supernatural (theologies, modes and locations of worship), alongside the exceptional individual, population size and cohesion, environment (terrain, subsistence, and demography), convertible resources (their

3 Exceptions largely concern Aitolia: Antonetti 1990, 45–68; Mackil 2013, 52–57. On Akarnania, Damigos 2017 and Lang – Sieverling 2017 review material data from an archaeological perspective.

4 For summary overviews, see Funke 2015 (on Aitolia); Freitag 2015 (Akarnania); Davies 2000; Meyer 2015 (Epirus).

5 Morgan 2003, chapter 4; Morgan forthcoming a.

6 For similar approaches to the Classical period, see Handberg forthcoming; Morgan forthcoming c.

7 Davies 2018.

Fig. 2. The many faces of Northwest Greece: Above, the foothills of Mt Tymphe near Papingo, Epirus (Chris Hayward); Below, the coastal lagoon outside Missolonghi (Catherine Morgan).

acquisition, manufacture, and circulation), and memory, imagination, and a sense of identity. He describes his approach as an experiment in modelling process, identifying the sources of the energy which must flow rather than the form of the channels which contained it. Its attraction is its scalability: it can describe the rise and decline of entities of varying kinds and help to track the consequences of particular choices. The placing of sanctuaries as institutions and as socio-economic actors in the same frame as religious belief and practice is particularly relevant to the present discussion.

Returning to the two conceptions of sacred landscape presented in the introduction, approach two has the obvious advantage of not being confined to a well-defined political or social space, so moving us beyond the polis while not losing sight of it. It allows for a plurality of viewpoints and intersecting landscapes in any one place or time and offers the possibility of understanding the relationship between them, whether in terms of systems of meaning, translation, or code switching. Because the Archaic record in the northwest is almost entirely archaeological, focus on this period also offers an opportunity to explore questions about the material record which take us beyond the apparent certainties of approach one. The result may be the opening of conceptual spaces that cannot yet be populated. The absence of an insider voice is indeed a limitation. Therefore, in what follows I will speak of "sacred" rather than "religious" landscapes because our starting point is objects, behaviours, practices, and the decisions and relationships implicated in them,[8] rather than the concepts or modes of thought attested in ancient text.

When considering the importance of connections with other forms of landscape (primarily socio-economic and political), the difference between approaches may be less significant than it first seems. Approach one treats the sacred as integral to a larger holistic sense of landscape, yet the nature of the connections have rarely been interrogated with any degree of sophistication. Approach two opens the way for closer readings of particular sacred landscapes, their relationships, and the larger symbolic syntax on which they drew. Yet aspirations to a thick understanding demand that we include the complex moving parts of the socio-economic context and their potential impact on the salience of ideas and meanings.

Studying Religion in Northwest Greece

Discussion so far has suggested that the exercise of reconstructing religious landscapes in the northwest speaks to key questions about both approaches and has the potential to muddy the waters in useful ways. To explore this further, I will examine four case studies from different parts of the region, articulated round discussion points in the introduction. Beginning with the salience of polis boundaries (at Chalkis and Kalydon), we move to consider the decision making implicit in material remains (at Thermon), and the challenges of recognising intangible or differently expressed interests or presences in the material record (at Dodona). This incremental sequence of arguments draws on methods and scales of analysis which are then tied together in the final case of sacred landscapes in the central Ionian archipelago.

Sacred Landscapes and Polis Boundaries: Reading Privileged Places of Contact

The first case examines the question of how reliably civic sacred landscapes can be assumed to be defined by polis boundaries, and considers the significance of local choices in balancing identity and (in)dependence. In principle gods could be encountered anywhere, but in practice local communities privileged certain places of communication.[9] The resulting diversity in the location and form of sanctuaries across the Greek world is widely noted. One might expect to recognise a sanctuary within a settlement not least by visual differentiation from its surroundings.[10] By the Archaic period there is a tendency to assume that the favoured form of investment in Greek sanctuaries involved the addition of buildings (generally a temple) to a temenos, with architecture and decoration potential marks of prestige. Yet gods did not always reside in architectural boxes. There are no cult buildings in Epirus (outside Ambrakia) until the 4th c., for example.[11] Portable images, installations such as altars, and the deployment of objects for "stage setting" merit fuller consideration than they have so far been given. They speak to personal as well as collective interests, identities, and experiences, and may evoke the invisible not only via their iconography and symbolism but also the agency involved in their creation, procurement, and use.[12]

Along the Aitolian coast, urban centres were founded or greatly expanded from the mid-8th c. on.[13] By the 5th c. all are described as poleis and so treated in the Copenhagen Inventory.[14] Kalydon and Chalkis, the two neighbouring poleis where cult practice is attested in the Archaic material record, demonstrate striking differences which cannot be explained as artefacts of exploration (**Fig. 3**). Both sites have been systematically

8 In the inclusive sense of Haysom 2019.

9 Brulé 2012, 29–31, 66–69.

10 Brulé 2012, 45–47.

11 Mancini 2021.

12 Indicatively (with bibliography): Morgan 2024; Osborne 2004; Rask 2020; 2023.

13 Evidence for urban development in coastal Aitolia is summarised in Morgan forthcoming a, chapter 4.1.1.

14 Freitag *et al.* 2004, cat. 145 (Chalkis), 148 (Kalydon), 149 (Makyneia), noting also 153 (Pleuron) to the northwest.

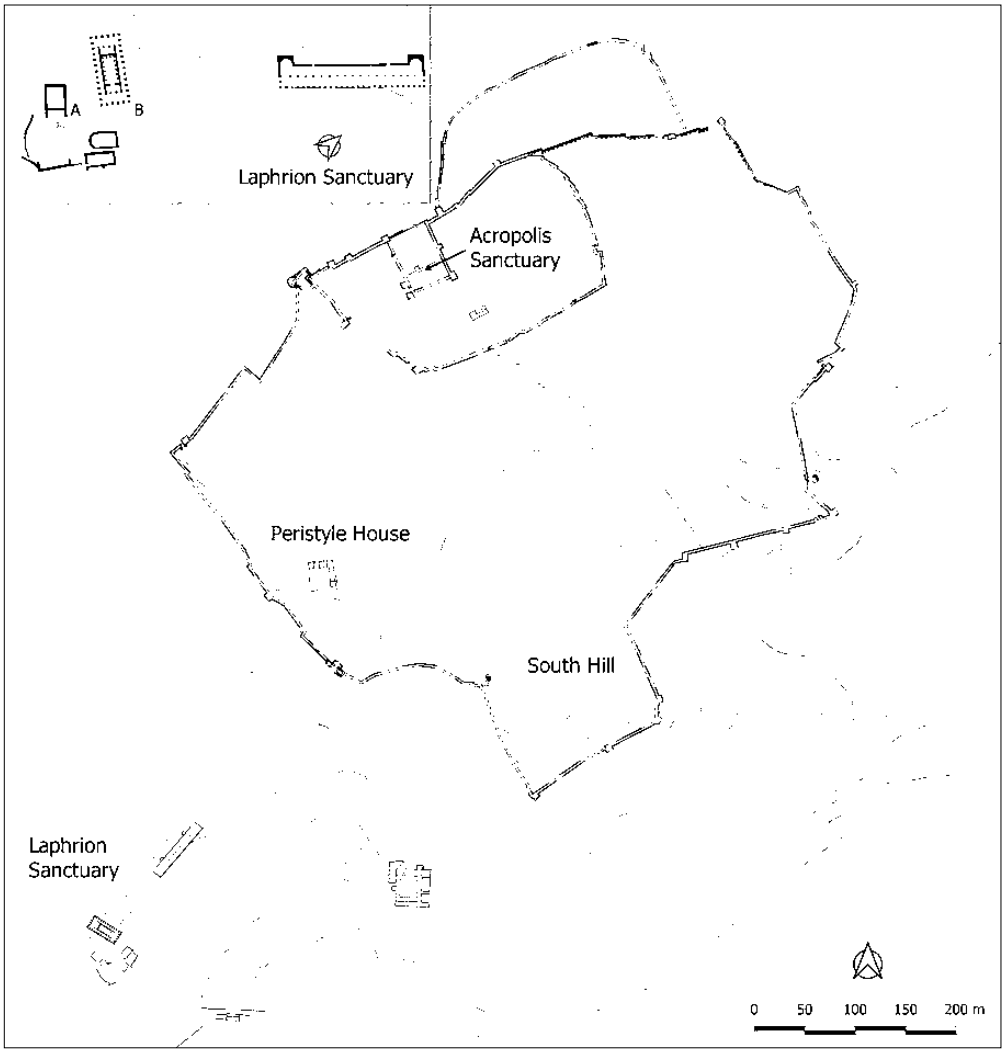

Fig. 3a. Topography of ancient Kalydon (Kalydon Archaeological Project, S. Handberg, N. Michaelides & S. Müth © Danish Institute at Athens).

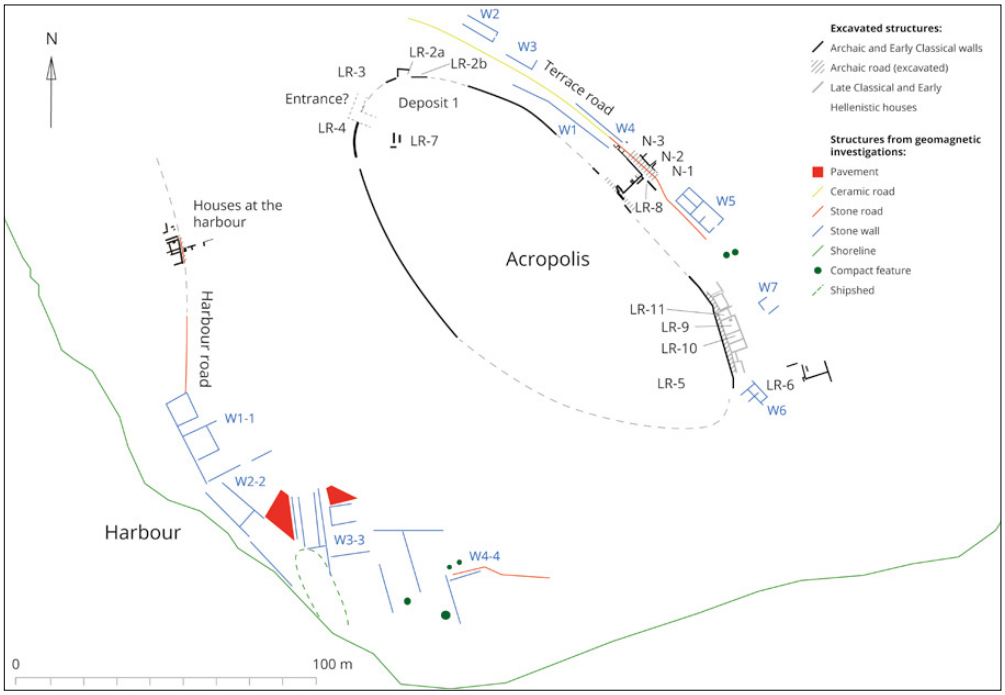

Fig. 3b. Chalkis: excavated remains of the Archaic houses at the harbour, at the terrace road and on various locations on the hill of Ag. Triada in relation to features revealed in geomagnetic studies made in 2014 (Sanne Houby-Nielsen © Danish Institute at Athens).

investigated by the Danish Institute at Athens. The sanctuary of Artemis Laphria outside the later city wall of Kalydon was excavated between 1926 and 1935, with new research ongoing, and the settlement at Chalkis was excavated from 1995–2001.[15] Survey and geophysical prospection at both sites used similar methodology.

In the sanctuary of Apollo and Artemis Laphrios at Kalydon, two large richly decorated temples were built in the late 7th and early 6th c. respectively, and rebuilt in the mid-6th. A further temple on the acropolis dates to the late 6th or early 5th c.[16] Yet at Chalkis, there is no evidence of Archaic building for any form of communal ceremony, despite investment in other kinds of public infrastructure including the late 6th-c. acropolis fortification and a probable shipshed.[17] It is always tempting to assume that an absent feature remains to be found. An Early Christian basilica on the acropolis may obscure evidence, but although domestic activity is attested nearby, no spolia or architectural terracottas from a public monument have been found (indeed there are no Archaic rooftiles anywhere in the settlement). The case for a shrine rests on tentative interpretation of a few redeposited portable finds,[18] so if one existed it would look very different from those at Kalydon. But what if the current picture is accurate—could this just be a case of difference between neighbours?

Archaic Chalkis was a small settlement. The available area on the Ag. Triada promontory was at most 4ha, and the estimated maximum population (ca. 600) just over a tenth of that of Kalydon.[19] Archaic occupation spanned the period from the end of the 8th c. to the second quarter of the 5th, but was intermittent, with three phases each lasting ca. 50–60 years interrupted by similar periods of apparently complete abandonment. There is no evidence that abandonment was forced by violence or destruction; rather, houses were left with tools and domestic equipment *in situ*. As Sanne Houby Nielsen emphasizes, this regular pattern implies deliberate choice.[20]

Acceptance of Chalkis as a polis in the urban and the political sense in the Copenhagen Inventory rests primarily on Thucydides 1.108.5, who describes it as a Corinthian dependency ("Χαλκίδα Κορινθίων πόλιν").[21] There is no other sign of close connection with Corinth, and in the context of mid-5th c. hostilities (specifically the *periplous* of Tolmides in 456/5, when Chalkis was taken by the Athenians) we should surely read this claim in terms of strategic interest.[22] That being said, Chalkis' punctuated settlement history raises the question of the origin (and destination) of its residents. Kalydon is a strong candidate, not least as the ceramic repertoires of the two cities are nearly identical. Whether this relationship extended to formal or informal dependency is unknown. If Alkman's use of the city ethnic Χαλκιδεῖς (fr. 24.20–24) applies to Aitolian as well as Euboian Chalkis, there clearly was a political identity at stake in the 7th c. Indeed, the fact that the community was (re-)constituted multiple times within living memory, with abandoned houses reoccupied and improved, shows that membership was a sustained or revivable idea and that property rights could be retained. The city cemetery has not been located, so we cannot yet compare the settlement and burial record or address questions of attitudes to the dead and/or ancestors when the settlement was abandoned.

The material record suggests that the performance of citizenship differed in significant ways between Chalkis and Kalydon. In the absence of buildings dedicated to communal ceremony, rituals at Chalkis must have taken place inside houses or in the open air. Two houses contained built altars (the House at the Harbour[23] and the House with an Altar),[24] with portable ones found beside the Terrace Road and in House LR-5 on the acropolis.[25] The House at the Harbour and the House with the Altar were both large, with ample space for substantial gatherings. But the assemblages within them were not qualitatively different from those in smaller homes across the settlement, so they are more likely to be elite residences than, for example, club houses.[26] As Sanne Houby-Nielsen demonstrates, textile production was central to the local economy, with the courtyard houses typical of the settlement planned and re-planned to accommodate developments in technology.[27] Whether or not local

15 Kalydon: Dyggve 1948; Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2011; Methenitis 2011; Smekalova 2011; Vikatou *et al.* 2019. Chalkis: Houby-Nielsen 2020; Smekalova – Bevan 2016.

16 Dyggve 1948; Dietz 2011a.

17 Dietz 2016b, 63; Houby-Nielsen 2020, 474–477; Smekalova – Bevan 2016, 42–43.

18 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 265–287 (271–274 on cult).

19 Dietz 2016a, 50–51. Kalydon has an intramural area of ca. 30–35ha and a maximum population of ca. 5,000: Dietz 2011b, 79. Morgan forthcoming a, chapter 9.1.1, for similar population figures based on Hansen 2006, 35–76.

20 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 471–477 (noting abandonment at intervals of three to four generations). Occupation Phase 1: late 8th c. ca. 650; Phase 2: early–ca. mid-6th c.; Phase 3: early 5th c. ca. 475.

21 Freitag *et al.* 2004, cat. 145 (Chalkis) suggest a Corinthian dependency.

22 Freitag 2000, 53–55; Mackil 2013, 52, n. 149. On terminology: Fragoulaki 2013, 40 (noting 35–37 on ἀποικία and cognates); Graham 1962, 250–251.

23 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 97–99, 106–107, 112, 149 in room 6a (phases K-II/6a and K-III/6a–b) and the adjacent courtyard K-II/7a.

24 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 293–307, figs 167–168, 170, in courtyard LR-9.

25 Houby Nielsen 2020, 221, 232, cat. 606 and 788.

26 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 390, tables 35a–b, illustrates the range of equipment by function.

27 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 383–401, 452–457. Weaving equipment was present in all houses excavated.

products included fine luxury textiles as she suggests,[28] we may note the ritual connotations of weaving. One might weave "for" shrines and deities, and weaving provided occasions for storytelling or depicting stories in textile decoration.[29] A Palladion-like figure (perhaps Athena Ergane) on a loomweight from House LR-7 on the acropolis suggests divine protection of weaving if not production linked to cult.[30] The association between weaving kits, vessels for wine consumption (sometimes elaborately decorated), and domestic pottery raises questions about spatial distinctions within the household, and how this palimpsest of domestic, productive, and sympotic activities may be read in ritual terms.[31] Outdoor processions or gatherings may also have been part of the equation, but these left little or no trace.

The ritual activity represented at Chalkis foregrounds household status and economic activity (notably that performed by women) rather than polis origins and identity. This is not unparalleled in a Greek polis: at Classical Olynthos, for example, there is no secure evidence for a communal sanctuary but many instances of built and portable altars in houses.[32] For want of comparably preserved Archaic housing we cannot know whether domestic rituals at Kalydon complemented those at the city sanctuaries. But the absence of such sanctuaries at Chalkis suggests marked variation in the lived experience of religion in neighbouring communities. To trace this required us to set aside preconceived ideas about the role of cult buildings and to take a holistic view of activity in the settlement, analogous to the approaches of, for example, Matthew Haysom to Bronze Age Crete, Merixtell Ferrer to Archaic Sicily, or Nicholas Cahill to Classical Olynthos.[33]

As a polis, one might expect Chalkis to have its own religious organization: the question is whether it was truly self-contained. Regardless of whether the city was a formal dependency, large-scale household mobility on a regular cycle raises questions about the management of religious rights. In other cases where Archaic laws governed the religious rights of settlers, provisions tend to flow from changes in citizenship at an individual level and in an open-ended way. Compare, for example, the decree (*IG* IX 1^2 3, 718) governing the religious rights of East Lokrians who settled in Naupaktos at some point before the Athenian capture of the city (in ca. 460 BCE). These settlers were required to worship in Naupaktos as Naupaktians but retained the right to participate as *xenoi* in their former cities and communities.[34] In the case of Chalkis, however, we are dealing with wholesale movements which were perhaps foreseeable (at least by the second or third occasion). So even though this case concerns a polis with its own territory, it is doubtful that Verdan's approach one (in the Landschaft tradition) can fully describe it. The second approach at least allows the possibility that the sacred landscape(s) of a polis could have different physical and conceptual boundaries from those of the polis itself.

Decision-making, Agency, and Affordance

The second case, the sanctuary of Apollo and Artemis at Thermon in central Aitolia, addresses the contention that archaeology perceives effects but not intentions. It draws on the implications or affordances of developments otherwise visible in plain sight, inviting us to look back at decision making and forward to what the outcome then afforded. By contrast with the poleis on the coast, inland Aitolia is poorly understood. As a result, the sanctuary itself has become key to reconstructing the very society that shaped the sacred landscape(s) to which it belonged. Moving beyond such circular argument is an important aim.

Sanctuaries featuring temples with richly painted terracotta ornament were conspicuous features in the central Aitolian landscape during the Archaic period. Thermon attracted the greatest architectural and artistic investment, but it was not unique. At Taxiarches, 7km to the northeast, two temples were built in the late 6th c. at a well-established shrine. While these differ from Thermon in their architecture, the larger at least had closely similar terracotta ornament.[35] By contrast with the urban shrines at Kalydon, Thermon, and Taxiarches were primarily landmarks and gathering points. The location of Thermon, at a junction of major roads with no evidence of an associated settlement yet found, suggests that it was a focal point for a wider region.[36] Taxiarches is on a small hilltop surrounded by deep gorges, and commands a 360° view into the mountains, to the coast, and to Thermon. It too had no closely associated settlement.

In later Classical-Hellenistic times, the religious identity of the Aitolian federation was expressed in the sanctuary, festival, and agora of Thermon.[37] But it is an argument from silence to retroject this into the

28 Houby-Nielsen 2018; 2020, 436–452; *contra* Margarita Gleba and Bela Dimova *pers. comm.* The high proportion of *Hexaplex trunculus* and *Pinna nobilis* in the shell assemblage may indicate food consumption or sea silk production: beds are locally attested, and their fragile ecology may help to explain the settlement cycle.

29 Rask 2023, 37–39.

30 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 292, 412–415, cat. 795, fig. 162a.

31 Houby-Nielsen 2020, 452–453.

32 Cahill 2002, 32–33 (lack of sanctuaries), for built and portable altars in houses, see e.g. 87–88 (House of Many Colours), 128–129 (House A10), 137–138 (House of the Comedian), 142–147 (House of the Tiled Prothyron), 248–250 (baker's establishment, Aviii8).

33 Haysom 2007; 2019; Ferrer 2021.

34 Peels 2017, noting extensive earlier literature.

35 Rhomaios 1926.

36 Mackil 2013, 178–180; Papapostolou 2012, 171–173.

37 Funke 2013; Mackil 2013, 202–204.

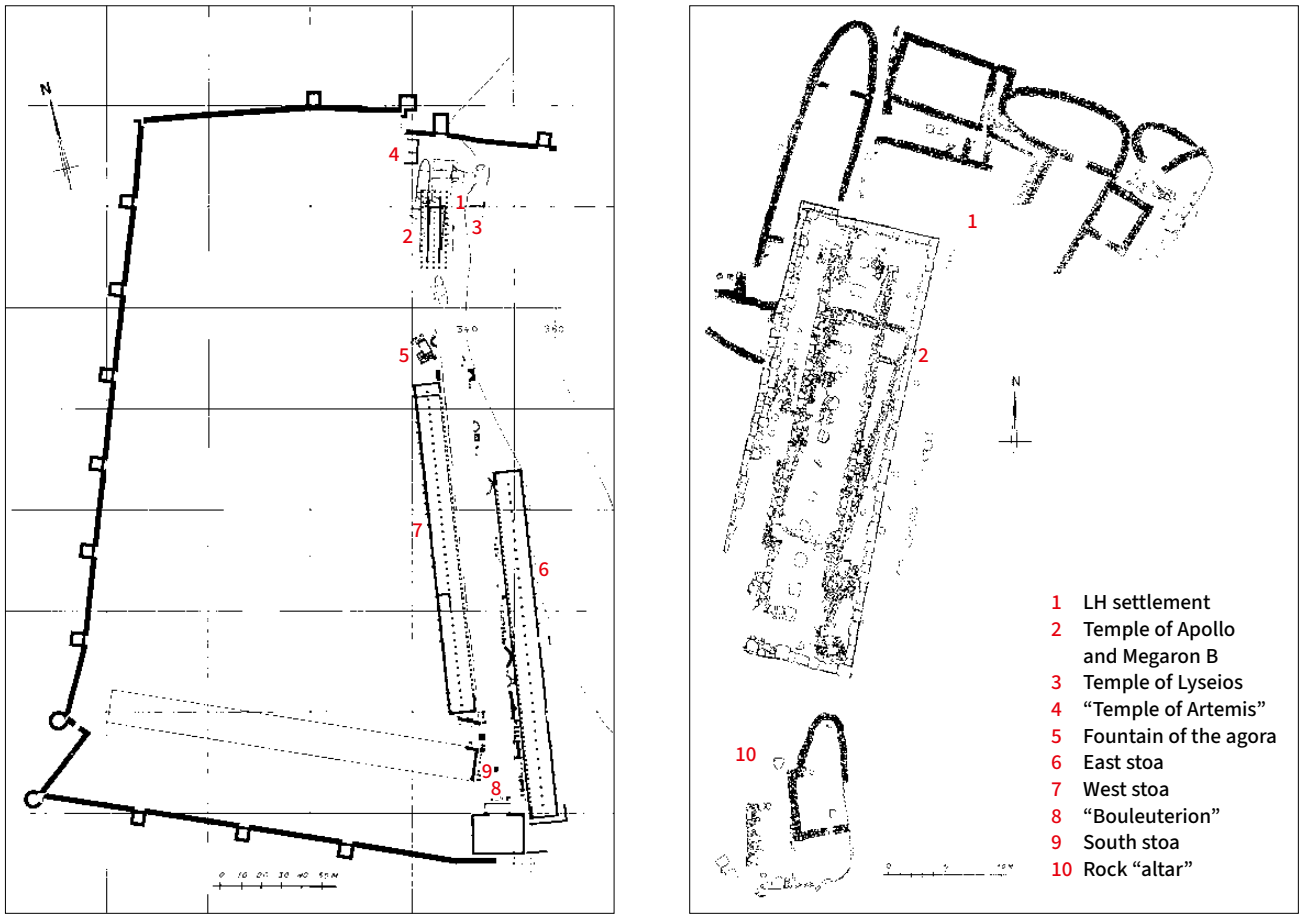

Fig. 4. The sanctuary of Apollo at Thermon, with detail of the temple area (© Archaeological Society of Athens).

Early Iron Age and Archaic period, let alone to suggest (with François de Polignac) that Thermon operated as a proto-federal gathering place and that because no dominant aristocracy had succeeded in imposing its political authority, relative equality prevailed between participant communities.[38] We do not yet have the evidence to correlate religious authority, socio-political organisation, and residence patterns during this period. By contrast with the coast, in the Aitolian interior only traces of (probably small, scattered) settlements and smaller, more local shrines[39] can be dated to the period between the abandonment of Early Iron Age cemeteries near Agrinion, Lake Trichonis, and Stamna in the ninth century and the emergence of urban sites from the late fifth on.[40] A local ethnic, Thremios (i.e. Thermios), is attested in the late sixth century (*IG* IX 1^2 1, 91)[41] but its significance is unclear. In short, rather than building assumptions about the nature of society into our reading of the sanctuary, it is methodologically sounder to hold the question open and focus directly on what the sanctuary record itself can tell us.

Radical changes in the use of the central cult area at Thermon in the 8th and 7th c. speak to the exercise of agency and authority (**Fig. 4**). When an elite residence and feasting hall (Megaron B) went out of use in the late 9th or early 8th c., its rear room was repaired, and the remaining footprint occupied by an ash altar and pits holding dedications (weapons, personal ornament, and male figurines) plus the debris of holocaust sacrifices. Around 630 BCE the altar and pits were closed by the construction of the first temple (C).[42] This building was

38 Polignac 1994, 14–15.

39 Summarized in Morgan forthcoming a, chapter 4.1.2. Shrines: Chrysovitsa: open-air shrine perhaps related to a late Archaic-Classical settlement: *IG* IX 1^2 1, 93; Bommeljé 1987, 89, *s.v.* Khrysovitsa, Kato (A). Kryo Nero: 6th-c. phase (including a public building) at an otherwise later sanctuary: Bommeljé 1987, 91, *s.v.* Kryon-Neron.

40 Indicatively, Christakopoulou-Somakou 2009; Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2011.

41 Papapostolou 2012, 165 n. 426, fig. 52.

42 Papapostolou 2012, 106–116, 132–152; Wardle – Wardle 2021.

decorated with a non-structural frieze of terracotta triglyphs and figurative plaques, the meaning of which is much debated. Interpretations of the iconography range from mythical themes and zoomorphic figures from a primordial past,[43] to the life and character of Apollo as the dominant deity,[44] or myths chosen to convey the importance of maintaining social values and to reinforce the consequences of violation.[45] Soon afterwards, in the late 7th or early 6th c., two further small temples (assigned to Artemis and Apollo Lyseios) were added nearby.

Many decisions, tasks, and opportunities are implicit in these developments. To the provisioning required to maintain normal sacrifice and feasting, we may add the right to determine the use of space; to plan and finance construction and organise labour; to choose the message to be conveyed by the temple frieze and to design and commission it; and to arrange ongoing maintenance of the new structures. We cannot yet determine who had the authority and agency to deliver this and with what investment and gain in financial and/or social capital. But the question must be posed, not least to prevent the sanctuary being treated as an anodyne collective rather than a community in which people invested in practical and religious terms, with all that this implies for rivalry and collaboration. A valuable next step would be to estimate the real costs of these building works by the application of architectural energetics, in order to understand the scale of investment and what it might have meant for individuals.[46]

It has been argued that the sanctuaries at Thermon and Kalydon served the same communities and were developed by the same people.[47] This highlights the potential pitfalls in using the material record to reconstruct site catchments. Similarities in votive offerings and temple decoration reflect technological and artistic choices, access to markets, and potentially craft mobility, but not necessarily the same commissioners or cult interests. Apollo and Artemis were worshipped at both sanctuaries, but at Kalydon Apollo bears the unique epiklesis Laphrios (*IG* IX 1^2 1, 149). And while the terracotta friezes are stylistically similar, that from Kalydon is too poorly preserved to read its iconography.[48] In short, there is good evidence for economic connections between the coast and interior, but the material record does not provide evidence for a common religious community.

From Habitus to Sacred Landscape: Entangled Landscapes and Intangible Presences

The third case, the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, explores the notion of transregional sanctuaries as palimpsests of the concerns and worship traditions of different participant communities.[49] Attracting diverse interests may enhance a sanctuary's place in the sacred landscapes of its constituent groups as well as its overall capacity as an actor. But what happens when one or more participant groups do not appear to observe the same religious practices in their home communities? We may term this religious code-switching, but to understand what it meant in practice and how it might inform engagement with others at a sanctuary like Dodona requires us to find ways to observe worship and approaches to the supernatural (broadly conceived) in the material record at home. In this case study, I examine both sides of the problem, beginning with the internalisation of Dodona as part of the Hellenic religious world, before moving to consider possible approaches to reading the ritual practices of two participating groups, Molossians and Thesprotians.

François Quantin is a rare scholar to have posed the question of whether religious life in Epirus should be read in terms of Hellenisation or Epirote readings of Hellenic divine personalities and ritual practices.[50] I agree with him in preferring the latter, not least because it resonates with work undertaken in other parts of the ancient world from an essentially post-colonial theoretical perspective[51] and opens the way for thicker readings of the record. But Quantin's discussion ranges widely in time, and isolating Archaic horizons requires sensitivity to diachronic development.

Textual sources from Homer on present Archaic Dodona through Greek eyes. At *Iliad* 16.233–235, Achilles' address to Zeus Dodonaios combines mention of the place, the oracle, and the distinctive diviners, the Selloi,[52] while at *Odyssey* 14.327–331 (as 19.296–299), one of the disguised Odysseus' lying tales includes the claim that "Odysseus" had travelled to Dodona "to hear the will of Zeus from the high-crested oak of the god."[53] Beginning in the 6th c., textual traditions locate Dodona and its oracle within the Greek cultic *oikoumene*. In perhaps the fullest such account, Herodotos (2.54–57) records two versions of the oracle's foundation which variously link Dodona to Libya and to Egyptian Thebes. In practice, at least by the Classical and Hellenistic periods when we have a substantial record of oracular tablets, those consulting the oracle mostly came from northwest Greece

43 Antonetti 1990, 173–185.
44 Papapostolou 2012, 133–136.
45 Colpo 2002.
46 While Greek archaeology has been relatively slow to adopt this, recent work includes: Fachard *et al.* 2020; Fitzsimons 2017; Pakkanen 2021; Sapirstein 2021.
47 Mackil 2013, 180–184.
48 Dyggve 1948, group 1, 152–160.
49 Following Funke 2023.
50 Quantin 1999; cf. Mancini 2021, 43–44.
51 E.g. Urquhart 2017 on Sicily.
52 Dieterle 2007, Q1, 27–29, 276–280.
53 Dieterle 2007, Q3–4, 35–36.

and Magna Grecia.[54] However, epichoric traditions variously involving myth-histories, dedications, hymns, and rituals, at least some Archaic in origin, linked Dodona to a more extensive range of cities and *koina*, from Corcyra to Sparta, Euboia, Boiotia, and Thessaly.[55] Inscriptions suggest that Greek was the formal language of consultation and of practices such as dedication (to judge by the few late 6th–to early 5th c. votive inscriptions),[56] and it may also have been the sanctuary's lingua franca.

From the late 5th c., Dodona was effectively under Molossian control.[57] In earlier times, the situation is unclear: Archaic and 5th-c. authors variously describe the sanctuary as Thesprotian, Molossian, or in "marginal" territory, and Zeus himself as Pelasgian or Thesprotian.[58] It is hardly surprising that a gathering place readily accessible by land and sea attracted competing claims (**Fig. 5**). Dodona lies to the west of the Ioannina basin from where roads ran south to the Gulf of Ambrakia, west to the Ionian coast and the Kalamas and Acheron deltas, east via Metsovo into Thessaly and western Macedonia, and north via the Drin Valley to the Adriatic.[59] However the nature of the sources in which these claims appear makes it safest to assume that they reflect a coincidence of different perspectives. To understand why Molossians and Thesprotians would value a stake in the sanctuary we need to begin earlier in the Early Iron Age.

The Late Bronze and Early Iron Age settlement that occupied much of the area of the later sanctuary at Dodona was a node in long-distance exchange networks.[60] A feature of the early record is the volume of metalwork—weapons, axes, and tools—probably intended for trade or recycling (similar material appears in smaller quantities in hoards across Epirus).[61] In the 8th c., the appearance of monumental bronze tripods and smaller types of votive (notably figurines) marks a qualitative and quantitative change in the record which is generally taken as evidence of cult activity recognizable in wider Greek terms. A series of bronze offerings, including symposium equipment, arms and armour, jewellery, personal ornament, and figurines (both animals and warriors with shield and spear), followed through

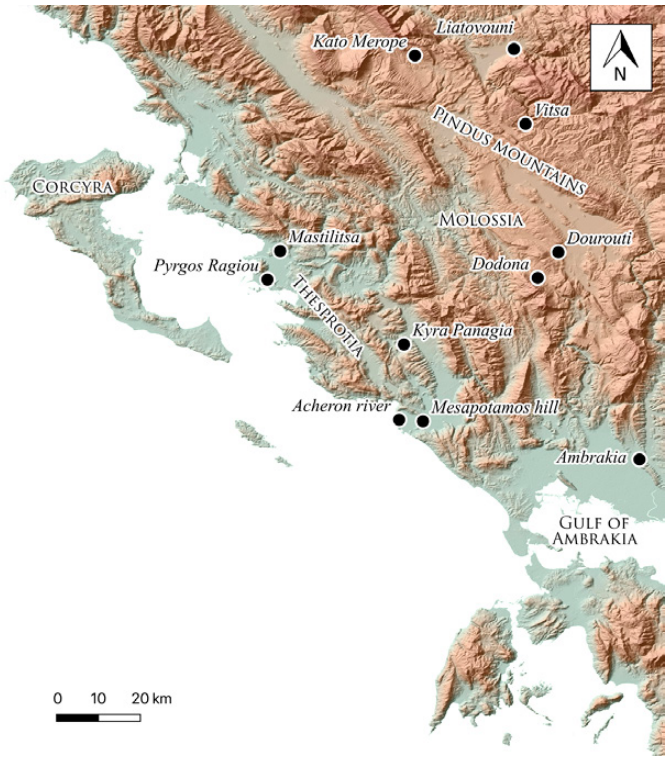

Fig. 5. Epirus: principal sites mentioned in the text (Gian Piero Milani).

the Archaic period.[62] Gatherings were probably occasions for sacrifices and ritual meals, although the evidence which might confirm this is largely unpublished.

To date, there have been two main lines of approach to pre-8th c. ritual activity at Dodona. The first seeks to push back the presence of Greek gods either by arguing that Zeus and Dione are primordial beings who can be linked directly to the earliest material evidence on site regardless of its nature,[63] or by taking a literal view of claims of antiquity made in later Greek sources regardless of their cultural context.[64] The second focuses on the material record and, in the absence of religious buildings, seeks to identify offerings and cult equipment based on subjective assessment of their form, quality, and/or decoration.[65] Both present methodological problems.

The alternative advocated here, informed by the concept of Lived Ancient Religion, begins with a reappraisal of how communities in Epirus articulated their relationships with the supernatural (broadly understood).

54 Funke 2023, 370.
55 Piccinini 2017, reviewing extensive scholarship.
56 Dakaris *et al.* 2013, no. 968; Cabanes 2020, nos 1–3, 5–7.
57 Davies 2000; Meyer 2013, 115–116.
58 Perrhaiboi living around Dodona: Hom. *Il.* 2.749–751. Zeus as Pelasgian (Hom. *Il.* 16.233) or Thesprotian (Aesch. *PV.* 829–832). Dodona in marginal territory (ἐπ' ἐσχατιῇ, Pseudo-Hesiod *Ehoiai* F115.5 Hirschberger = 240 MW), in Thesprotia (Pi. F63 Bowra; Eur. *Phoen.* 982), or Molossia (Aesch. *PV.* 829–832).
59 Chapinal-Heras 2021, 134–144.
60 Vasileiou 2020.
61 Kleitsas 2017, 405–406; 2021, 67–159; Vasileiou 2018, 158–159.
62 Chapinal-Heras 2021, 24–28, 30–34; Dieterle 2007, 169–234; Graells i Fabregat 2019; Piccinini 2017, 40–44.
63 Dakaris 1971, 2–7, a view which continues essentially unchanged in his later work.
64 E.g. Kleitsas 2017, 401–402; 2021, 21–29.
65 Kleitsas 2017.

Drawn from work on lived religion in the modern world, Lived Ancient Religion was initially shaped by historians of imperial Rome to decentre the state and ensure that understanding of religious practice took full account of all forms of engagement with the supernatural however attested. It is now increasingly applied to earlier, essentially prehistoric, situations especially in cases where dominant or normative models fall short, as Camilla Norman's work on Archaic Daunia well illustrates.[66] Lived Ancient Religion is neither a methodology nor a general theory: rather, it is a spur to identify practices within a community at all levels from the individual up, using the widest range of sources. Its emphasis on contingency and on the capacity to adapt material culture from any source to meet local needs further recalls recent work on the materiality of religious practice, which foregrounds objects as the medium via which beliefs are given shape.[67]

Molossia is a promising test case for this approach. Substantial villages and associated cemeteries in the Ioannina basin and the Pindos mountains were continuously occupied from the Late Bronze or Early Iron Age until the late 5th or 4th c., with little change in architecture or mortuary practices.[68] The overall picture is of long-term stability and shared basic values, with relatively minor local differences in form and diachronic development. However, there is scant evidence for associated cult places.[69] The strongest candidate, at Dourouti, consists of a spatially discrete deposit of ash, bone, Late Geometric-Classical pottery, and portable objects found beneath a 4th-c. structure identified by the excavator as a Thesmophorion.[70] Both the identification and the cult function of that building have been questioned. Ritual continuity cannot, therefore, be assumed, and the earlier remains must be understood in their own terms. Late Bronze and Early Iron Age burials and settlement traces indicate that the community was well-established long before the activity represented in the deposit.[71] The deposit contained local pottery for food storage, preparation, and serving consistent with domestic use or with some kind of gathering,[72] while "offerings" are largely raw (e.g. loomweights, metal tools, and stone rubbers) again with domestic functions, with fewer converted pieces such as figurines. What marks the deposit out is its confined nature and the association of ash and bone. By contrast, costly items of the kind dedicated at Archaic Dodona (armour, a griffin head cauldron attachment, and a shield) appear only in the cemetery. Against the suggestion that they are votives in secondary use, I note the contrast with the "ritual" deposit, and the close fit between the choice of object, the social values expressed in burial assemblages, and specific funerary needs (an Illyrian helmet was used to hold displaced bones, for example).[73]

Dourouti is situated by the road from the Ioannina basin due west to the coast, and was particularly exposed to influence from (and markets at) Dodona. But the preference for making prestige offerings in cemeteries is widely paralleled. Molossian cemeteries were favoured places of encounter with what, for want of closer understanding, may generally be termed the supernatural (encompassing gods, spirits, ancestors, or other transcendent beings). The presence of forefathers may have been significant: most cemeteries contained one or more ancestral graves, often marked by cairns or tumuli. Single inhumation dominated for all ages and genders. Where Early Iron Age and Archaic burials are well preserved (as at Vitsa), it is clear that the supine body articulated the disposition of portable items, i.e. drinking equipment, jewellery and clothing fasteners, knives, and spearheads (for men).[74] The term "offering" may be misleading because it implies reverence for the deceased, whereas these items were used to stage the body to represent personhood.

The community at Vitsa was one of the earliest in Molossia to deploy southern imports within this established ritual practice. Drinking sets came to include Corinthian(izing) alongside local pottery, and then metal vessels like those used at Dodona, indicating both access to markets and the rise of northwestern production (notably at Ambrakia). From the 7th c., the addition of perfume and unguent containers again speaks to the presentation of the body. By the end of the Archaic period, the male burial in Tomb 66 exemplifies elite masculinity, with two bronze prochoes at his left hand, two spearheads at his right side, a knife by the left thigh and a bronze aulos mouthpiece at his side.[75]

Proper representation of the persona of the deceased within the grave prepared them for the afterlife, and potentially for encounters with the supernatural.[76] Other

66 On the history and scope of the approach as applied to antiquity, see Albrecht *et al.* 2018; Norman 2024.

67 Morgan 2021; 2022.

68 Examples include Vitsa: Vokotopoulou 1986; 1987. Liatovouni: Douzougli – Papadopoulos 2010; Vasileiou 2018, 149–151. Kato Merope (Glava): Andreou 2000; Andreou – Andreou 1999. Dourouti: Andreou 2018; 2000; Andreou – Gravani 1997. For an overview, see Papadopoulos 2016.

69 For an overview, see Mancini 2021, 43–47; I follow his scepticism about claims of a cult place at Ampelia in the Gormos Valley, which is in any case significantly earlier.

70 Andreou 2018; *contra* Chapinal-Heras 2019, 153–155; Mancini 2021, 48–49.

71 Andreou – Gravani 1997, 588–589, 593.

72 Andreou – Gravani 1997, 587, 591–596.

73 Andreou 2018, 101–105.

74 Vokotopoulou 1986, 335–339.

75 Vokotopoulou 1986, 24–29; aulos, Papadopoulos 2017.

76 See Felton 2007 for an overview of conceptions of the afterlife across the Greek world, and the role of chthonic gods and other

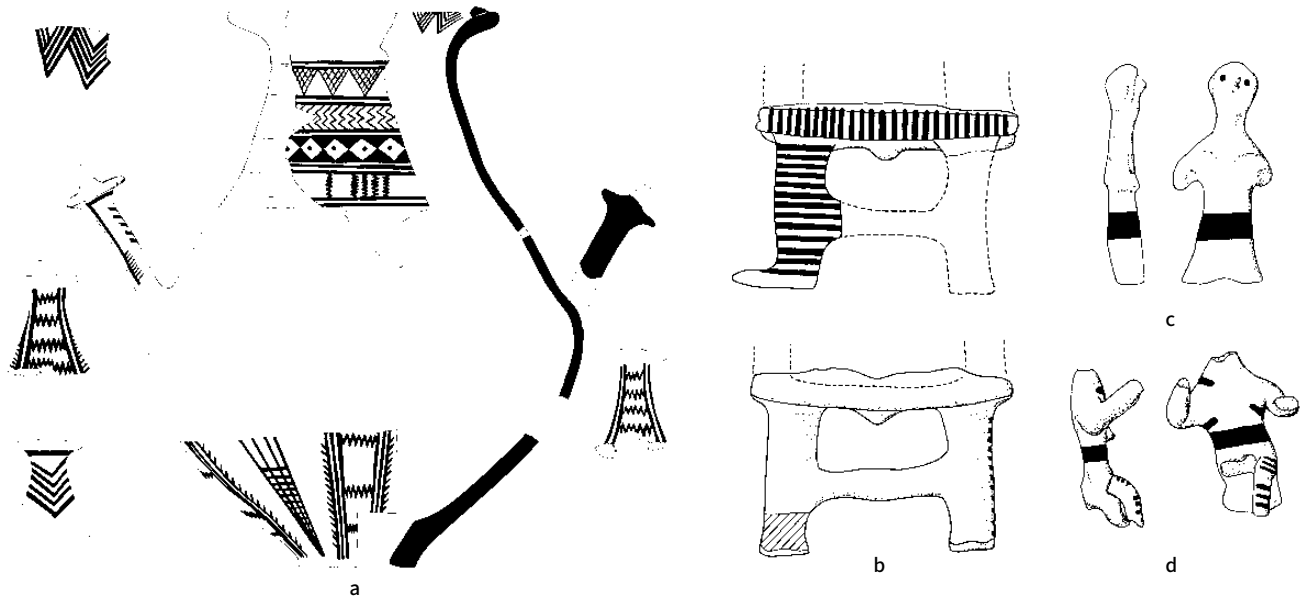

Fig. 6. Vitsa. Left: ritual vessel, Ioannina Museum a. 2033a. Right: terracotta figurines from the south cemetery deposit Ioannina Museum b. 2028; c. 2338; d. 2339 (Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, Diana Wardle, © Hellenic Ministry of Culture/HOCRED).

forms of offering may reflect a desire on the part of the living to engage with the dead in their new state. At Vitsa, the practice of placing objects outside the grave began in the 9th c.[77] and took more varied forms from the 8th, although individual experiments were usually short-lived and small in scale. Animal bones (mostly isolated pieces) might be trophies or represent meals,[78] and the addition of a stone bench to one tomb implies ritual use.[79] In the second half of the 8th c., large, idiosyncratic ritual vessels (amphorae with multiple necks and/or pierced bases in a range of fabrics and decoration) were placed over some graves,[80] and terracotta figurines were deposited in a small part of the south cemetery (**Fig. 6**).[81] Most of these figurines reference status and status-related activities attested in grave assemblages—enthroned figures (some male but most not clearly gendered), hands extended, sometimes hold objects (an aulos and perhaps a cake). Made in a fabric macroscopically similar to "Corinthian" vessels in the cemetery, they show generic similarity with figurines from other areas of Greece but without exact parallels.

Figurines could present personal narratives in various ways—by signifying (or cueing) participation in a rite or act of offering; representing the identity and interests of the individual, a deity or other being; or invoking the unseen or ephemeral (such as music or food).[82] The Vitsa figurines may commemorate the collective dead or an individual "ancestor", or address them as mediators with the supernatural. Personal intent is key, and without direct evidence we can only set out possibilities. The central question is where sacrality was perceived to be lodged and the supernatural invoked, directly or via mediators. In Camilla Norman's words, while "we do not always have the luxury of using the concept of 'place' as an explanatory power for understanding ritual practice [...] we are [...] at liberty to examine ritual as a mode of 'emplacement'."[83] Observing that in pre-fourth-century Epirus (Dodona apart), evidence for offerings is largely confined to cemeteries, François Quantin made a conceptual link with oracles, the underworld, and ancestor cult.[84] Perhaps so, but it is not clear that the perspectives of Molossians at home and at Dodona can so conveniently be read in terms of practices in other parts of the Greek world. At Vitsa at least, the fact that experiments in incorporating foreign objects and ideas into local practice were generally short-lived underscores the importance of the ideas underlying these choices, and

supernatural beings within them.

77 Vokotopoulou 1986, 208, a deposit of matt-painted pottery related to the early 9th-c. Tombs 169 and 170.

78 Vokotopoulou 1986, 83–85 (Tomb 34), 111–112 (Tomb 104). The antler above the 4th-c. Tomb 164 may be a hunting trophy.

79 Vokotopoulou 1986, 90–91 (Tomb 39).

80 Vokotopoulou 1986, 109–111, 220–223.

81 Dispersed between Tombs 13, 28, 29, and 31: Vokotopoulou 1986, 217–220, pl. 330–331, figs 61–64.

82 Kopestonsky 2018.

83 Norman 2024, 108.

84 Quantin 1999, 85.

the agency of human need in determining how and why imports could be read in local terms.[85]

Attempting to trace Molossian religious practices within their own communities as a step towards understanding how Dodona fitted within their sacred landscapes raises many as yet unanswerable questions. It is nonetheless reshapes the debate. Similar questions can be asked in Thesprotia, where the role of Greek deities and of the underworld has long been a focus of attention. As Lorenzo Mancini has argued, the "infernal tradition" surrounding the Acheron and the nekyomanteion was essentially created in the 4th c., when the Thesprotian ethnos joined the Epirote symmachy and an intentional history was formed to define it.[86] The only candidate for an Archaic religious building in Thesprotia is a late 7th- or 6th-c. courtyard structure with an altar or pyre outside on the hill of Mastilitsa, north of the Kalamos delta.[87] The form and contents of graves in the nearby cemetery support the suggestion that it served a group of resident Corcyraeans. But if it was intended as a vector of colonial soft power, there are few signs that it succeeded. Elsewhere we find just selective use of imported figurines that raises similar questions about local ritual practices.

Archaic figurines have been found at three sites in Thesprotia: on the slope of the Mesopotamos Hill by the Acheron,[88] at Pyrgos Ragiou near the Kalamos delta,[89] and at Kyra Panagia in the mid Kokytos Valley.[90] All are located on routes between the coast and the interior, with Kyra Panagia perhaps also a focal point for the valley as a whole. The figurine types copy Corinthian and Corcyraean prototypes, but at Kyra Panagia at least they are locally made. Initial publications focused on identifying deities which were thus assumed to have been worshipped (an argument which is methodologically flawed).[91] Instead, as at Vitsa, we should consider these items as technologically and iconographically "different" objects which could be read within local belief systems. The better preserved early examples feature images of human action such as draped female offering bearers or a male banquetter. In ritual contexts, figurines could serve as cuing devices, mementos of ritual action, prayer tokens, or souvenirs of contact. How they were perceived, what was read into them, and (since they could be carried about the person) what the act of deposition meant are all fundamental questions.[92] The sites themselves show no other trace of ritual activity, which raises the question of why figurines were deposited there and what ideas they may have conveyed derived from other contexts.[93]

Returning to Dodona, the question of how different participant groups perceived and approached the divine is fundamental to understanding the sacred landscape centred on the sanctuary. While we have done no more than trace directions for research, it is already clear that close reading of the material record cautions against the idea of a religious monoculture. How Epirote tribes and their subgroups differed in their beliefs and ritual practices is an open question. The ever larger and more extensive circulation of southern-style pottery and metal vessels speaks to the creation of markets and convergence of tastes over a wide area. Yet the ways in which objects and ritual practices were internalized sustained and had the potential to express difference. The multiple registers in which objects could function are particularly clear among the Molossians, where the same kinds of import were deployed in social practices (i.e. burial rituals) which sustained local hierarchies, and at Dodona to equip ritual gatherings in which Molossian elites participated and which spoke to widely shared Hellenic social values. This in turn raises questions about agency in the provision, management, and safeguarding of costly offerings at an open air shrine.

There is one footnote. The distinctive material profiles of Dodona and Olympia, the major ritual gathering sites which attracted northwestern participation, could themselves be points of reference at local sanctuaries. On Ithaca, a coastal shrine in Polis bay was among the longest lived in the central Ionian archipelago: feasting and ritual consumption began here around 1000 BCE and continued for almost a millennium. Over time, the range of votives grew to reflect increasingly diverse local, regional, and transient interests. In the first major phase of dedication (from the late 9th or early 8th c. to the 6th), vessels for food and drink were complemented by a sequence of tripods, arms and armour, and bronze symposium vessels which represents in microcosm the record at Dodona.[94] This is unique in the archipelago. It is surely no coincidence that allusion to larger prestigious gatherings coincided with a peak of wealth among the widely-connected elite in the main settlement at Aetos,[95] and was made at a shrine where encounters reached widely beyond the island.

85 Morgan 2015, 17.

86 Mancini 2017. The identification of an Archaic nekyomanteion is now largely rejected: for an overview of the arguments, see Morgan forthcoming a, section 11.4.2.

87 Tzortzatou – Fatsiou 2009, 46–50.

88 Dakaris 1958, 97–98, figs 102–103 (beginning in the late 7th c.).

89 Tzortzatou – Fatsiou 2009, 45–46 (beginning in the early 6th c.).

90 Svana 2009 (beginning ca. 500 BCE).

91 Svana 2009, 92–93.

92 Boivin 2008, 30–46. Further questions surround the ontological assumptions behind our approaches to material, technologies, and objects: Gosden 2012.

93 Barrett 2024 explores the mutable qualities of figurines, linking domestic and ritual contexts.

94 Benton 1934–1935, 56–73 (unpublished finds studied by the author); Morgan – Hayward 2021, 82–87.

95 Morgan 2011.

The Polysemy of the Central Ionian Ritual Landscape

Our fourth case, the central Ionian archipelago, addresses links between sanctuaries within superimposed ritual landscapes. Patterns of linkage achieved in diverse ways, from physical paths to intervisibility, function, cult narratives, and religious calendars, tend to be seen through the lens of political entities, whether poleis or *koina*. The central Ionian archipelago, stretching from Zakynthos to Leukas and including the smaller Echinades and Taphian islands, presents different challenges.

The archipelago is a world of poleis within larger networks of (primarily economic) interdependence, short of political federation.[96] The juxtaposition of insular, maritime, and coastal environments, combined with differences in island size, resources, and carrying capacity, sustained connections on diverse scales. Forms of mobility affecting goods and people range from seasonal labour to long distance commerce. Absences of varying duration from single voyages to periods of mercenary service, marriage, or investment elsewhere had to be managed and internalised as part of island life. Resulting profits, rewards, and changes in sustainable permanent and seasonal populations can be traced in many aspects of the material record of the larger islands, from expansion in settlement and rural infrastructure to coinage and wealth inequalities. The period from the early 6th to the late 1st c. BCE (i.e. from the foundation of Leukas to the battle of Actium) was a distinctive phase of development, with Leukas acting as a catalyst for economic transformation felt through the archipelago. The sanctuary record of this period is similarly distinctive. By the end of the 6th c., cult places had been established along sea routes, in town centres, and at convenient sites of engagement for groups of different form and scale, with precise patterns of expansion and decline thereafter reflecting local polis history.

A key question is how to make place in a sea of mobility —be it the place of permanent residence (which could be a second order site within a polis with an additional local identity), social position (including that reasserted by returnees), belonging perceived from afar, or places of safe encounter, haven, or opportunity. Considering perceptions of territory, land ownership appears as a criterion for political participation as one would expect (e.g. Arist. *Pol.* 1266b 21–24 on Leukas). Yet the sea was also essential to life both directly (in terms of marine resources and transport) and indirectly, given the facilities and services required and sustained by maritime activity. The resulting convergence of interests on the coast, best expressed in Christer Westerdahl's concept of "maritime cultural environment," collapses distinctions between the terrestrial and the maritime and adds new dimensions to perceptions of social boundaries, seasonality, and expectations of access.[97]

As **Figs 7** and **8** show, sanctuaries in and around the archipelago are numerous and varied in form. With no calendars and few inscriptions, it is generally hard to identify the deities worshipped. But insight into the interests behind cult activities and the ways in which shrines were linked can be gained from sanctuary locations and physical development, plus close reading of assemblages to reconstruct ritual practice and logistics. My ongoing work on island sanctuaries takes as its starting point the economic and political development of the archipelago, including the role of mobility and migration, and considers how the interests of key groups might map onto the forms of ritual action evident in the material record.[98] A general outline might look as in table 1, emphasizing that individuals may move between categories depending on their state of being at any particular time.

The ritual landscapes of individual island poleis combined sanctuaries very different in form, setting, and artefact assemblages. For example, the three shrines currently attested in the polis of Pronnoi on Kephallonia are: i) a rock-cut altar on the Palaiokastro acropolis;[99] ii) a temenos and temple at Skala Gradou, where the road south from the acropolis reaches the coast;[100] and iii) Drakaina Cave, high above the road from the acropolis to the harbour at modern Poros, with clear sight of the sea.[101] Drakaina Cave housed an altar, offerings (miniature vessels and figurines), and equipment for food preparation and consumption, and was curated as any major city sanctuary. The location was the chief attraction rather than the nature of the space and thus the potential for construction.

Across the archipelago and neighbouring coasts, caves and open-air sites dominate the Archaic-Hellenistic record.[102] This makes investment in monumental temples less an expectation than a matter for investigation. There is no sense of poverty or marginality in the preserved record of Archaic temples: 6th-c. spolia, notably from Skala Gradou and Minies in neighbouring Krane, reflect the latest Ionian Sea fashion, with close parallels at Corcyra.[103] Rather, the distinctive qualities of monumentality were strategically deployed. Urban centres

96 Morgan forthcoming c.

97 Westerdahl 2011 is the most recent iteration; see also Feuser 2021 on perceptions of seasonality.

98 For a full account, see Morgan forthcoming b.

99 Randsborg 2002, vol. 1, 16 site 70:1, 86, pl. XXVIII.2

100 Vikatou – Papafloratou 2021, with previous bibliography.

101 Karadima 2020; 2021.

102 On the mapping of northwestern caves: Katsarou – Darlas 2016–2017; I thank Stella Katsarou for information from the archives of the Ephorate of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology.

103 Skala Gradou: Barletta 1990, 46–48. Minies: Kalligas 1973, 83–84; Kyparissis 1912, 105–107; Winter 1993, 301–302.

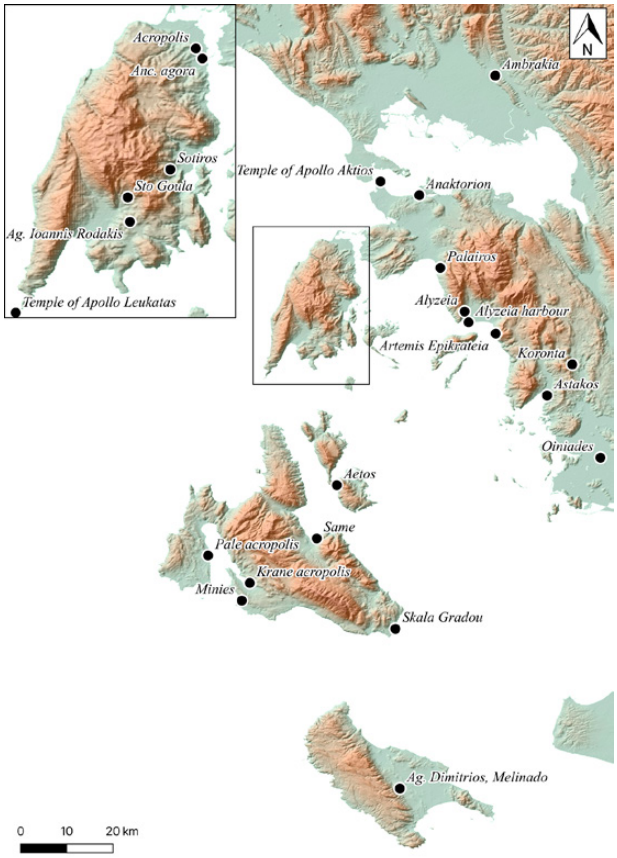

Fig. 7. The central Ionian archipelago: sanctuaries with extant temples or spolia from cult-related buildings (Gian Piero Milani).

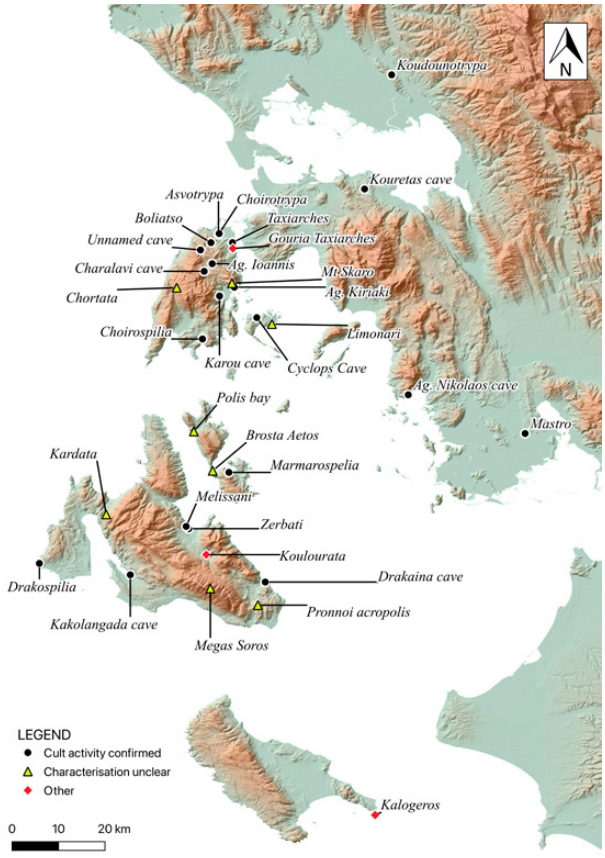

Fig. 8. The central Ionian archipelago: cave shrines and other open-air cult locations (Gian Piero Milani).

EVENT	RESIDENT	MIGRANT	TRAVELLER
Sacrifice, ritual meal, or offering in a city shrine	Community solidarity Personal integration Status expression Prosperity and security Recollection of "absent presence"	Reintegration and reaffirmation of local status Recollection of home from abroad Expression of success overseas	Diplomacy Xenia Recognizing connections
Offering at a seaside shrine	Safety at sea Personal prayer Celebration of maritime resources Seaward extension of community	Safety at sea Safe return Recollection of travel experiences Personal prayer	Security Navigation Recollection of family or social relationships Encountering locals, securing resources
Sub-regional or regional festival	Community status Status group encounters Regional diplomacy and security	Reintegration Recollection of home Recollection of peer group Expression of success overseas	Diplomacy Forming or confirming ties of xenia Security
Oracular consultation Pilgrimage	Prayer Evaluation of risk Diplomacy and encounters with other peer groups	Prayer Evaluation of risk Diplomacy and encounters with other peer groups	Prayer Evaluation of risk Diplomacy and encounters with other peer groups
Adoption of new cult epithet, iconography, or myth development	Community Identity Relationships Cross-cultural encounters	Community status Relationships Cross-cultural encounters Affirmation of migrant experience	Familiarity

Table 1. Group interests and ritual actions: a preliminary map.

aside, temples (as that at Aghios Ioannis Rodakis, Leukas) could focus traffic on particular routes and viewpoints[104] or contribute to the shaping of coastscapes from a maritime and terrestrial perspective.[105] The late Archaic-early Classical sanctuary of Apollo Leukatas on Cape Doucato is a famous such case, on a promontory known as a hazard to shipping and a place of suicide (Anakreon F31 Page).[106] By contrast shrines which protected resources like water, marked harbours, and were places of shelter, prayer, and encounter were often placed in parts of the coast more accessible from the sea and less suitable for building. Hence the combination of very different spaces in a quasi-fasciated ritual landscape.

Collective rituals such as feasts bound together communities of all kinds. Evidence from a range of shrines, caves included, consists of pottery for the storage, preparation, and consumption of food and drink on too large a scale for sporadic visits. Close reading of each assemblage is necessary to address questions about the geographical and social reach of the participant group(s), the logistics of organisation, the costs and benefits of providing for an event, site maintenance, and the significance of what was left behind.

One such feasting site is Boliatso Cave on Leukas, by the road from the north central highlands to the city's inner *chora*. Pottery and figurines dating from the late 8th c. BCE to the 2nd CE commemorated events held probably on the surrounding slopes.[107] There is no evidence that the cave was used for storage between events, so equipment and supplies must have been transported each time (which may explain a preference for small transport vessels and multifunctional shapes). The variety of fineware shapes suggests provision from different households rather than centralised procurement. Full scale transport amphorae are rare, although since the capacity of the Corinthian/Adriatic A, A' and B types in the assemblage was probably too great for a single event, they may represent exceptional contributions.[108] Care for the environment is also evident. There is good evidence that food was cooked *in situ*, yet bones were not deposited (perhaps to deter scavengers) and the lack of burning suggests a preference for safer and more efficient braziers (valuable items likely returned to their owners). The absence of cult-related features, and the need to set up each event and clean up afterwards, raises the question of the extent to which Boliatso was marked out as a sacred place by definition. Was a physical cave transformed by experience of ritual actions contingent on the moment when events were held?[109] If so, this may contrast with those caves (especially on the coast) which were more commonly frequented and/or evidently recognizable as shrines.

How feasts at Boliatso assembled communities in the interior and/or linked them with city residents is unknown; no survey has been made of the densely wooded highlands. But feasting was not confined to inland areas. One coastal site is Drakospilia on the westernmost point of Kephallonia, facing the open sea. This spacious cave is ca. 70m above sea level, accessed via a steep cliff. Its position, poised between terrestrial cultivation and maritime traffic, raises the possibility that very different interests, from worshippers to providers, may have been involved in rituals here. Ongoing study of the assemblage by Stavroula Sarmatzidou-Orkopoulou[110] may in future enable us to track them in the material record.

Aspects of the shared knowledge which defined ritual landscapes and the place of individual sites within them can also be read from material evidence. Focusing on the Archaic period, I highlight three. First, while we rely on textual sources to understand when and how specific locations (such as Cape Doucato) became storied, the physical form of monuments may evoke places and/or characters. Temples were not the only monuments to define coastal vistas. On Meganisi, a series of 15 transitional Late Bronze/Early Iron Age burial tumuli, some containing warrior graves, extended along the precipitous foot of the island.[111] As long as these remained standing (and one modern name, Tourkomnima, implies a visible structure), they would have been prominent on the skyline. In his discussion of the Kynosema, François de Polignac explores the distinctive role of burial monuments within a rich complex of stories. Whether or not specific stories were attached to the Meganisi tumuli, they may have evoked a general sense of the heroic past.[112]

Second, journeys by land or sea involved foreknowledge of what might be acceptable to a particular deity in a particular place—and where to obtain it. Across the archipelago a network of shrines marking terrestrial or maritime passage or landing points expanded through the 6th c. as traffic increased and the port network was reshaped after the foundation of Leukas. Beach deposits and coastal caves feature prominently among new sites: examples include Ag. Kyriaki at the entrance to Vlicho bay on Leukas, and the Cave of the Cyclops on Meganisi.[113] At these shrines individual offerings (figurines, small con-

104 Dörpfeld 1927, 263–265, 325.
105 Semple 1927.
106 Dörpfeld 1927, 271–274, 325, 330.
107 Morgan *et al.* forthcoming.
108 On capacity (but not origin), see https://amphoras.artsci.utoronto.ca/corab92.htm (consulted 29.05.2024): type A = 18–70l. (most over 40l.), A' = 18–50l., B = ca. 19–27l.
109 Graham 2021, 44–48.
110 Sarmatzidou-Orkopoulou 2015; S. Samartzidou-Orkopoulou, unpublished lecture, Lixouri 30.8.2021.
111 Vikatou 2017.
112 Polignac 2016; Morton 2001, 193–197.
113 Dörpfeld 1927, 323. Meganisi: *ArchDelt* 56–59 (2001–2004) B6, 485–487, pottery studied by the author.

tainers, and miniature vessels) are more common than group activities at least in Archaic and Classical times. In some instances, the distinctive form and/or iconography of preferred offerings demonstrates specific and often long-lived links between sites. To give one example, the distribution of locally made and imported terracotta bells (of types best documented at Sparta) defines a circuit connecting Pronnoi, Astakos (the port at the end of a main land route into Akarnania) and the western Peloponnese.[114] These bells may symbolize the functions of bronze prototypes to warn or summon people, attract the attention of gods, or as sounding weights for navigation in environments like that of the Inner Ionian Sea.[115] But they exemplify the kind of offerings, identifiable with specific locations, which served as mnemonic devices for those travelling along a particular route.

Third, the personal mobility attested across the region opens the question of how absence and return were experienced, the affect attached to locations implicated in recollection and reintegration, and the sense of "absent presence" among travellers as well as their home communities who lived with the expectation and uncertainty of their return.[116] Sanctuaries mediated encounters with others as well as transitions in personal status, and as locations embodying community identity and history could also be powerfully evocative "immaterial presences" for those away from home.[117]

A long tradition of work on framing by visual anthropologists encourages us to explore how objects were selected and juxtaposed to evoke a particular reality.[118] One aspect of this, beyond the straightforward *skenothesia* to which we have already alluded, is the use of old or biographical objects to create temporal depth and/or anchor stories. This is not always easy to recognise when deposits are mixed, but one clear example is found at the shrine in Polis bay on Ithaca. As previously noted, eighth century and Archaic bronze dedications at Polis reflected fashions attested on a larger scale at Dodona. The bronze tripods which mark the beginning of this sequence belong within a western Greek tradition of monumental bronze offerings in elite tombs and at sanctuaries which dates back to the Late Bronze Age. But the Polis tripods clearly remained visible throughout the Archaic and Classical period until the shrine was reconfigured and redisplayed in the 4th c., when they were prominently displayed. These tripods are commonly associated with a cult of Odysseus which may be an innovation of that later period, noting that the *polis* of the Ithacesians made extensive use of his name and image at around this time (notably on its coinage). But even without this association, they were a powerful image to carry away from home, marrying as they did object biography, place, island identity, and a story culture extending out from the Adriatic to Sicily.[119]

Conclusion

Exploration of the two lines of approach to sacred landscapes set out by Samuel Verdan in the introductory chapter to this volume suggests that while neither currently exploits the full potential of material evidence, both in different ways can open new avenues for discussion. Our four case studies raise questions of evidence and method not all of which can be answered yet, although the exercise of posing them is a crucial step. Reconstructing sacred landscapes in northwest Greece during the Archaic period is an integral part of the larger challenge of understanding an extensive and diverse region in what is effectively the final phase of its prehistory. Assessing the respective value of the two approaches thus focuses attention not only on the place currently accorded to material evidence but also on the need for more ambitious research agendas.

The first, "Landschaft," approach has the obvious advantage of foregrounding the physical landscape central to our understanding of settlement and connectivity across the northwest. Yet as is clear from all four cases discussed, its focus on defined territories and on poleis tells only part of the story and presents a risk of fragmented narratives, given a failure to consider the mechanisms by which landscapes interact.[120] As Verdan notes, the archaeological record has been prominent in this approach, but the questions asked of it seem conservative in comparison with other prehistoric and European traditions, and there is ample scope to draw on a range of theoretical perspectives now emerging. The cases of Thermon and Dodona confirm that archaeological enquiry can address the intangible as well as the tangible, even if the result sometimes takes the form of delineating conceptual space rather than precise articles of belief. In short, in so far as the material considered in this chapter constitutes a stress test, it reveals clear limitations to the "Landschaft" approach although value in its emphasis on social context and physical environment.

114 Villing 2002; Karadima 2020, 115–117, cat. 219–222 (catalogued as lids).

115 Oleson 2008; Villing 2002, 277–295.

116 For a comparative perspective from social anthropology, see e.g. Elliot 2021.

117 Cf. Papadopoulou 2016 on the notion of phantom place.

118 Griffiths 2009; Hoffmann 2023, 173–178; Platt – Squire 2017. There are conceptual links with assemblage theory, on which see the overview in Graham 2021, 33–39.

119 Morgan 2018; forthcoming a; forthcoming b, with an extensive review of previous scholarship.

120 As evident even in recent work, e.g. papers in Häussler – Chiai 2020.

The second, "religious landscape," approach avoids many of these difficulties because it presupposes differences in the scale and construction of landscapes and accommodates overlaps and intersections between them. But so far it has paid less attention to material evidence. There is an irony in this since our picture of Greek sanctuaries is to a significant extent an artefact of archaeological research and priorities, as Pierre Brulé points out.[121] But this is a one-dimensional, romantic engagement with the material world. Many of the theoretical and conceptual perspectives noted above would enrich this approach too, and indeed seem more closely aligned with it. More could be done to explore questions of materiality—the agency of matter, and its capacity to affect and shape human lives—as an integral part of any sacred landscape.[122]

Archaeology can also play an important role in nuancing the ostensible timelessness of religious narratives by affording essential control of socio-political and chronological context. In the northwest, for example, a marked increase in literary sources in late Classical and Hellenistic times coincides with a closening of relations with Macedon and Rome. Convergence in cults was integral to this, whether achieved via epithets (such as Aphrodite *Aineias*)[123] or the reshaping of civic religious history, and is fully represented in the sources. For example, the surviving fragment of the 3rd-c. Ambraciot historian Athanadas' *Ambrakika* (*FGrHist* 303) is effectively an *aition* for the cults of Artemis, Apollo, and Herakles in the city. We cannot assume that these cults were always prominent; and since Ambrakia had only just become the royal capital of Pyrrhus of Epirus, it is plausible to suggest that the positioning of Artemis and Herakles alongside Apollo at the heart of the polis represents a re-alignment to suit the new regime. Ultimately, understanding of the scale and nature of any change in religious life depends on material evidence.[124]

In this chapter, I have sought to tie together sacred landscapes and other spheres of social action, from mobility and migration to political communities and economics broadly construed. My approach combines consideration of how and when groups might encounter the divine with close readings of individual sites and assemblages in context. The challenge of understanding differences in the scale and complexity of sacred landscapes is not unique to the northwest. Indeed, while the diversity of religious beliefs and practices across the Greek world is often remarked upon, it is unremarkable in the sense that it is a base condition which any conceptual framework must accommodate. I have avoided the language of "horizons"—be they panhellenic, local, or anything in between—because language alone cannot bear such conceptual weight (the work required to tease out the senses of "local" as an operational frame reinforces this point).[125] Instead, I prefer to balance more dynamic concepts of distance (physical, social, or temporal)[126] with the notion of distal and proximal religious knowledge, thus encouraging us to consider how knowledge is internalised, i.e. how deeply, closely, and/or personally it may be felt.[127] This has the merit of recognising the multiple ways in which established categories combine or collide according to context. Along a spectrum of associations, public rituals at a nearby sanctuary might be shallowly internalised while personal offerings at a physically distant shrine could be deeply meaningful —something which may change at different life stages and in different personal roles.

In sum, the approaches to sacred landscapes set out in the introductory chapter to this volume serve as powerful springboards for broader and more creative consideration of material objects alongside the familiar aspects of location, environment, built form, and physical connections. The Archaic northwest may be a relatively under-studied region, but nothing in the evidence discussed in this chapter should be seen as unusually difficult or exceptional.

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Abstract

In the context of the essentially archaeological environment of Archaic northwest Greece, this chapter explores the strengths and limitations of the two approaches to sacred landscapes set out in the first chapter of this volume. Four case studies address the salience of political boundaries, scales of analysis, the capacity of the material record to reveal agency and decision-making, and the challenges of recognising intangible or differently expressed interests and presences. While neither approach exploits the full potential of the material record, together they can serve as powerful springboards for broader and more creative consideration of material objects alongside the more familiar aspects of location, environment, built form, and physical connections.

11. CULTIC SPACE, CULTIC LANDSCAPE AND MYTHICAL LANDSCAPE IN EPHESOS FROM THE EARLY IRON AGE TO THE EARLY HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Michael Kerschner

This paper is a first attempt to reconstruct and analyse the "cultic landscape" of Ephesos from the 10th to the 3rd c. CE. It has two aspects of general relevance for studies on this topic. First, we will explore the challenges and possibilities of reconstructing a "cultic landscape" when written sources are scarce and archaeological evidence is uneven. Secondly, we will trace the development of the "cultic landscape" and its dynamic relationship with the city over time.

A well-known problem in the study of Greek religion is the uneven distribution of literary and epigraphic evidence. By far the largest number of written sources comes from Athens, followed by a few large cities and sanctuaries.[1] This fact has shaped our current understanding of the cults and beliefs of the ancient Greeks. However, religious practices varied regionally.[2] To better understand the diversity of Greek religion, we should also examine the other 1,500 or so poleis.[3] This, however, means that we must address the problem of incomplete evidence.

This study deals with the sanctuaries and shrines in the urban and peri-urban areas of Ephesos. Due to space limitations, sanctuaries in the chora are not considered here.

Terminology

Theoretical discussion in recent decades has defined different types of religious spaces in a given landscape. Some of these can only be understood through written testimony, some through material evidence, and some through a combination of the two.

François de Polignac proposed a conceptual distinction between "cultic space" and "cultic landscape" that is well suited for the limited data situation in Ephesos.[4] "Cultic space" is defined as "the configuration of a social space through the distribution and hierarchical organization of worship sites" and can be understood on the basis of the archaeological evidence and of brief written references. "Cultic landscape," in contrast, is conceptualized by de Polignac as a performative space by "the integration of cultic practices and processes within the constituent components of a landscape." In the following we will focus on the "cultic space," the basic features of which can be discerned in the evidence available from Ephesos. Where written sources allow it, we will also attempt to outline the "cultic landscape."

In addition, I use the term "mythical landscape" to refer to all those places that have been associated with supernatural beings in mythical narratives, including those for which there is no evidence of cult worship.[5] Ada Cohen, referring to ancient Greek literature, defined this as the space in which the deities and heroes operate.[6] This is the space, in which human beings also live and are aware of the divine presence.

I wish to express my gratitude first and foremost to the organisers of the conference for initiating this thought-provoking event. It has sparked the first examination of the "cultic landscape" of pre-Roman Ephesos. I would like to thank my colleagues Vera Hofmann, Georg Plattner, Walter Prochaska, Andreas Pülz, Christoph Samitz, Martin Steskal and Lilli Zabrana in Vienna as well as Michael Blömer (Münster), François Kirbihler (Nancy), Sylvain Lebreton (Toulouse), Dieter Salzmann (Münster) and Daniel Tober (Hamilton, NY) for information and discussing individual aspects of the paper.

1 Parker 2005, 1.

2 On the importance of the local aspects and forces of Greek religion: Price 1999, esp. IX (to be read with Pirenne-Delforge 2024, 93–94); Polinskaya 2013, 87–115; Beck 2020, 121–160; Beck – Kindt 2023. An overview of scholarship on this topic: Kindt 2023.

3 Figure based on Hansen 2006, 31. Cf. Hansen – Nielsen 2004. The research of Mogens Herman Hansen (1940–2024) and his team at the Copenhagen Polis Centre laid the foundations for a new understanding of the ancient Greek city-state culture and its diversity.

4 Polignac 2010, XIV–XV. A third notion, "religious landscape," is defined as "performance space, whether it be a theater or any other kind of poetic production associated with a ritual." It cannot be reconstructed in Ephesos, as the relevant literary texts have not survived.

5 On the role of landscape in myths: Buxton 1994, 80–113. On the interrelation between cults and local nature: Polinskaya 2013, 47–49, 108–110; Beck 2023, 37.

6 Cohen 2007, 310: "Literary descriptions refer equally to the human landscape, the Olympian realm, and the landscape of the Underworld. The mythical landscape is a combination of all three realms, which are united by the occasional hero but primarily by the gods, who move freely back and forth."

Challenges of the Archaeological, Literary and Epigraphic Evidence

Ephesos is one of the most excavated and studied cities of the ancient Mediterranean world. However, our current knowledge is very unevenly distributed over time. While the Roman, Late Antique and Early Medieval periods of the city have been extensively researched, only limited information is known about the earlier phases of the urban development. This paucity of evidence is due not only to the history of research, but also to the difficult accessibility and poor preservation of the pre-Hellenistic structures and layers.[7]

The Late Archaic and Classical buildings and occupation horizons on the alluvial plain northeast of the Hellenistic-Roman city are buried under alluvia up to 6m deep and were partially built over in the Middle Ages and modern times. Prehistoric, Greek and Roman structures on Ayasoluk Hill were severely destroyed by massive building and terracing in the Byzantine, Seljuk and early Ottoman periods. The rapid growth of the modern town of Selçuk has made some areas difficult to investigate.

So far, only three sanctuaries from the pre-Roman periods have been systematically excavated: the Artemision, the rock sanctuary of the Theoi Patrooi Zeus, Meter and Apollo and the so-called "Rock-Crevice Temple." A handful of other sanctuaries can be traced archaeologically, but it is uncertain whether they date back to the pre-Hellenistic period.

Other cults and sanctuaries are documented in literary and epigraphic sources, but the information they provide is often limited to certain aspects. Some sources mention a cult without the place of worship, while others briefly touch upon a sanctuary in passing, leaving its location and origin open to inference.

Written sources on early Ephesos present a patchy picture. The vast majority of them date from the Roman Imperial period. With around 7,000 inscriptions on stone, Ephesos has one of the largest collections of any ancient city. However, only about 3% are pre-Hellenistic, contemporary with our focus period.[8] A similar chronological imbalance can be found when examining the ancient authors. Information on pre-Hellenistic times from more recent sources should not be taken literally without further analysis. Even quotations from older authors are placed in new contexts that require careful consideration.[9]

In order to get as complete a picture as possible of the cultic space of early Ephesos, I will discuss all the cults and sanctuaries that can be proven with certainty or reasonable probability to have existed before or in the 3rd c. BCE, combining archaeological, literary and epigraphic evidence (**Fig. 1**).

Sanctuaries Investigated through Systematic Archaeological Research

Artemis Ephesia

Artemis Ephesia was the chief and tutelary goddess of Ephesos from at least the second half of the 7th c. BCE.[10] Her sanctuary was the only one in the city of supra-regional importance.[11] The Ephesian Artemision began as a small open-air shrine at the end of the 11th c. BCE. The cult at the site may date back even further.[12] From the middle of the 7th c. BCE, the Artemision grew in importance and popularity. The participation of the elite of neighbouring Lydia played a decisive role in this rise.[13]

The first temple of Artemis Ephesia was built in the middle of the 7th c. BCE.[14] Surrounded by wooden columns, Naos 1 was one of the earliest peripteral temples in Greek architecture. It was followed by six other temples, which increased considerably in size in two stages. The fifth temple of Artemis—the Late Archaic Dipteros 1—was one of the largest temples in the Greek world.[15] Its successor—the Dipteros 2—built on the same plan in the second half of the 4th c. BCE, ranked among the Seven Wonders of the World.[16]

In all six successive temples, the base of the wooden cult image remained in the same place.[17] The location of the venerable xoanon was determined by the founding myth described by Kallimachos.[18] According to this myth, Amazons had placed the image under an oak tree and worshipped it with dances. Bound to this sacred site, the sanctuary could not be moved, even when the Diadoch Lysimachos re-founded and re-located the city in 294 BCE.[19]

At that time, the Artemision, which had been located within the city in the Classical period, became an extramural sanctuary.[20] There was a need to establish

7 Kerschner 2017b, 488–490.

8 I thank Vera Hofmann (Vienna) for this information (Email from January 23, 2023).

9 Schepens 1997, 166–167; Pelling 2000, 177, 180, 188–190; Lenfant 2007b, 48–49, 68, 70; Baron 2011, 87–89, 110; Olson 2018.

10 Kerschner 2017a, 3–7.

11 Recent overviews with a comprehensive bibliography: Kerschner – Prochaska 2011; Kerschner 2015; Kerschner 2017a; Kerschner 2022; Kerschner in press a.

12 On the beginnings of the Artemision: Kerschner 2017a, 8–30; Kerschner 2022, 378–388.

13 Kerschner 2017a, 52–56; Kerschner 2022, 388–391.

14 On the early Archaic temples in the Artemision: Kerschner – Prochaska 2011; Kerschner 2017a, 33–38, 56–58; Kerschner 2022, 391–393; Kerschner in press a, all with bibliography.

15 Ohnesorg 2007.

16 For a recent summary: Ohnesorg 2012 (with bibliography).

17 Kerschner 2015, 215–234.

18 Callim. *Dian*. 237–250. Cf. Kerschner 2015, 202–210.

19 On the re-foundation of Ephesos: Rogers 2001; Walser 2008, 81–87; Ladstätter 2016, 234–235.

20 Kerschner 2015, 226; Kerschner 2017b, 490–491.

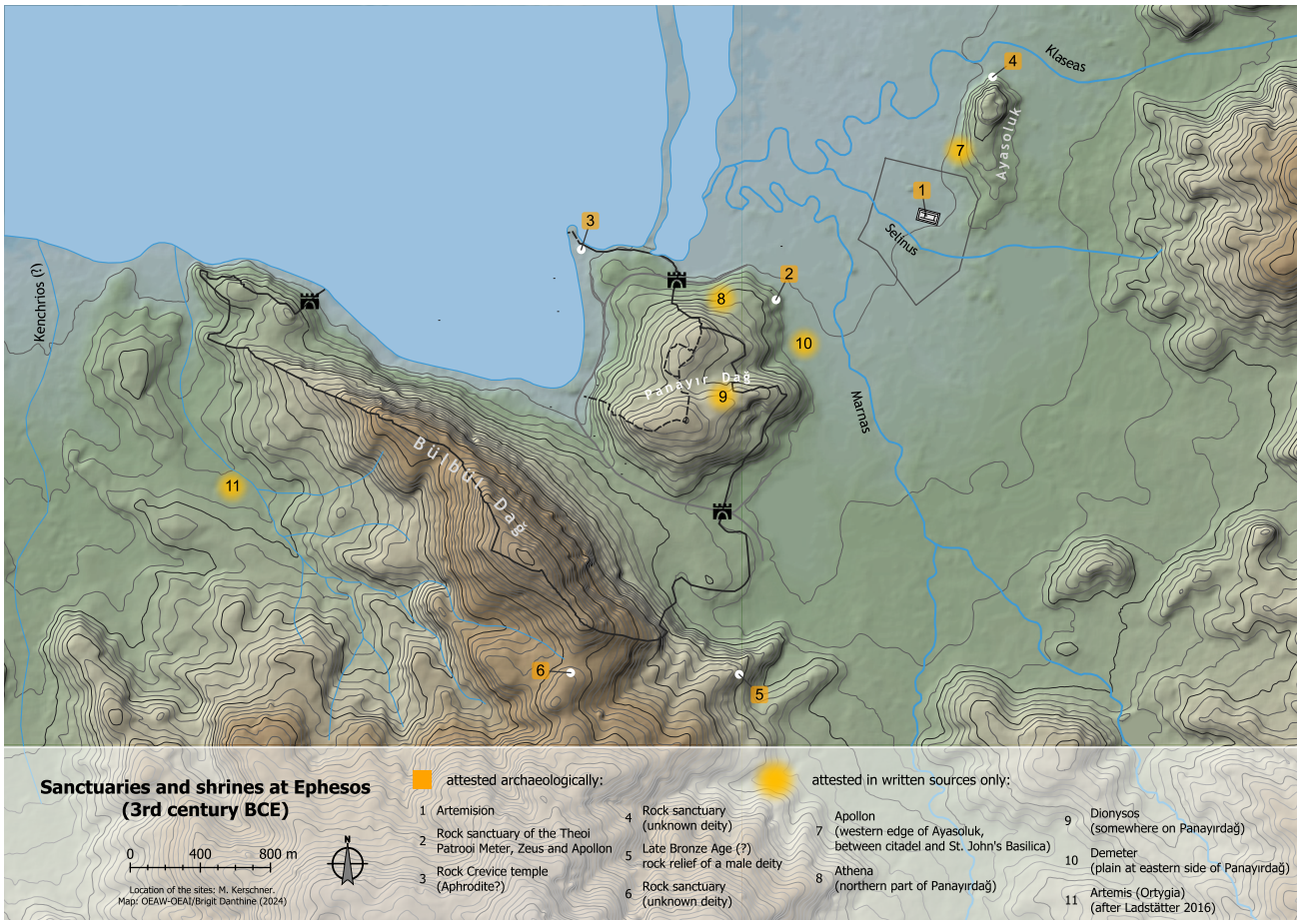

Fig. 1. Sanctuaries and shrines in Ephesos in the 3rd c. BCE (ÖAI-ÖAW, map by B. Danthine, site locations by M. Kerschner).

a physical and ritual link with the new city through a Sacred Way and processions.[21]

The temenos of the Artemision was extended in several stages from the late 7th c. BCE.[22] During the Hellenistic (**Fig. 1**) and Imperial periods it reached considerable dimensions and included, among other things, an asylum, an odeon, stoas, accommodation for priests and venues for athletic competitions.[23]

Rock Sanctuary of the Theoi Patrooi Meter, Zeus and Apollo at Panayırdağ

This sanctuary is an extensive sacred zone with several spatially separated cult places for at least four different gods and goddesses.[24] It extends over approximately 300m along the north-eastern side of Panayırdağ (**Fig. 1**, no. 2). There are no temples or other architectural structures on the steep slope. Characteristic elements are clusters of small dedicatory reliefs, set in niches in the rock walls or free-standing on the rocky ground. Dedicatory inscriptions were carved into the rock or written on the marble reliefs. The rugged surface of the rocks was deliberately preserved, lending a distinctive atmosphere to the rituals performed in the open air.

In the sanctuary at Panayırdağ, the Ephesians especially worshipped their πατρῷοι θεοί, "the gods one acquires by inheritance on the father's side."[25] In Ephesos, these included the mother goddess Meter alongside Zeus and Apollo, who are more frequently found in this

21 On the dating of the Sacred Way to the Early Hellenistic Period: Ladstätter 2016, 256–257, and Sokolicek 2016, 101, *contra* Mohr 2013, 49–59, and the majority of previous research.

22 On the extensions in the Archaic period: Kerschner 2017, 13–15, 30, 37–38, 57–58, 61; Kerschner in press a.

23 On the temenos in Hellenistic and Roman times: Kirbihler – Zabrana 2014; Zabrana 2019a; Zabrana 2019b.

24 Kerschner in press b. Earlier research on the site and the votive reliefs: Keil 1926, 256–261 figs 48–51; Naumann 1983, 214–216, 218–229 pl. 32–38; Roller 1999, 200–202 fig. 53; Vikela 2001, 108–111 fig. 20,3; Soykal-Alanyalı 2002; Parker 2008, 202–203.

25 Parker 2008, 201.

role.[26] In dedicatory inscriptions, the mother goddess is invoked several times as Πατρῴη.[27] This epithet is only attested once for Meter outside Ephesos.[28] A single inscription addresses Hekate Basileia.[29] On dedicatory reliefs, Hermes is depicted together with Meter and Zeus. It is likely that this god was also worshipped here, although he is not mentioned in the inscriptions.[30]

Situated on the western periphery of the rock sanctuary is the temenos of Zeus Μαινάλ(ι)ος, which was the property of the otherwise unidentified Heromandrids, a possible phratry (**Fig. 2**; **Fig. 9**).[31] Judging by the style of the letters, this rock inscription dates from the second half of the 5th c. BCE. It is the earliest certain evidence of a cult at the rock sanctuary of Panayırdağ. Inscriptions for Zeus Patroos, Apollo Patroos and Meter appear shortly after.[32] A marble statuette proves that the mother goddess was worshipped in Ephesos as early as the first half of the 5th c. BCE, but its exact findspot is unknown.[33]

The sanctuary flourished in the late 4th and 3rd c. BCE, a period to which almost all dedicatory reliefs for Meter are dated.[34] The cult in the rock sanctuary came to an end as early as the 2nd c. BCE.[35] After that, the goddess Meter no longer played a significant role, setting Ephesos apart from most of Anatolia.

At the beginning of the cult activities, the rock sanctuary was located in a natural border strip between two city districts (**Fig. 9**). Particularly in the East Aegean, open-air sanctuaries of Meter and other deities are often found in such undeveloped peripheral zones of cities.[36] After the city was relocated in the early 3rd c. BCE, the rock sanctuary was outside the city walls, but still in the peri-urban area.

The rock sanctuary was not far from the Artemision (**Fig. 1**). There was visual contact between them, but no evidence of direct reference to each other. There is no inscription or iconographic reference to Artemis on the Panayırdağ. The niches containing dedicatory reliefs are oriented according to the rock formations, but are not aligned with the temple of Artemis.[37]

Fig. 2. Rock sanctuary at Panayırdağ. Rock shrine of Zeus Mainal(i)os with Classical inscription (ÖAI-ÖAW, M. Kerschner).

The "Rock-Crevice Temple" – A sanctuary of Aphrodite?

In his account of a battle in the harbour of Ephesos in the mid-3rd c. BCE, Polyainos mentions a "temenos of Aphrodite" (τὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τέμενος) situated on the coast.[38]

Sabine Ladstätter recently argued that this sanctuary should be identified as the so-called "Rock-Crevice Temple" (**Fig. 1**, no. 3; **Fig. 3**).[39] This temple was built in the early 3rd c. BCE, shortly after the city had been re-founded by Lysimachos. It is the sole cult building from this period to have been excavated in Ephesos. Only the foundations remain. A deep crevice in the rock running through the northern part of the cella has led to the provisional naming of the prostyle temple. No inscriptions have been found to indicate the name of the deity worshipped here. The finds and topographical considerations have led to various gods and goddesses being suggested.[40] The dedicated terracotta figurines point to a female deity.[41]

26 Parker 2008, 205–207.
27 Keil 1926, 260; Parker 2008, 202–203; Samitz in press.
28 Samitz in press.
29 *IEphesos* 1223; Samitz in press.
30 Kerschner in press b.
31 Samitz in press. Cf. Scherrer 1999a, Trinkl 2001, 114; Scherrer – Trinkl 2006, 264 with n. 14.
32 Samitz in press.
33 Rathmayr in press. Cf. Naumann 1983, 136, 303 no. 64.
34 Rathmayr in press.
35 Kerschner in press b.
36 Kerschner in press b. Cf. Schimpf 2019; Filges 2020.
37 Kerschner in press b.
38 *Strat*. 5.18. This battle in the harbour of Ephesos between Ptolemaic and Rhodian troops took place between 261 and 246 BCE, cf. Ladstätter 2016, 259 (with bibliography). On the cult of Aphrodite in Ephesos: Knibbe 1978, 493; Oster 1990, 1667–1668; Aurenhammer 1995, 260–262; Ladstätter 2016, 259–260.
39 Ladstätter 2016, 257–260. On the Rock-Crevice Tempel ("Felsspalttempel"): Keil 1929, 48–49 figs 32–33; Karwiese 1985, 215–216 pl. 10–11; Scherrer 2001, 64–66; Groh 2006, 65–66 fig. 24; Scherrer 2007, 329.
40 Ladstätter 2016, 257, 259 with discussion of older identification proposals as the temple of Apollo (Keil 1929, 49; Karwiese 1995, 54), Athena (Scherrer – Trinkl 2006, 264) or Demeter and Kore (Soykal-Alanyalı 2005, 322, 325–326; Groh 2006, 65–66; Rogers 2012, 293–295; Schipporeit 2013, 27 n. 102).
41 Soykal-Alanyalı 2005.

Fig. 3. So-called "Rock-Crevice Temple." View from the north. Excavation 1978 (ÖAI-ÖAW, S. Karwiese).

The "Rock-Crevice Temple" was visible from afar on a headland and faced south towards the harbour (**Fig. 1**). As the protector of sailors, Aphrodite is a plausible patroness of this sanctuary.[42] Ladstätter also highlights the link with Arsinoë II, the wife of Lysimachos who named his new foundation after her.[43]

The use of the sanctuary continued until the late 2nd c. BCE, as evidenced by specific cult pottery.[44] It is unclear whether the cult was relocated afterwards.[45]

Sanctuaries and Cults Known only from Written Sources

The Founding Myth of Ephesos and its Significance in Understanding the Cultic Space

The Ephesian polis historian Kreophylos mentions three sanctuaries—for Athena, for Apollo Pythios and for "Artemis in the agora."[46] Kreophylos wrote his Ἐφεσίων ὧροι ("Annals of the Ephesians") probably in the 4th c. BCE.[47] This book is almost entirely lost. Only one fragment remains, preserved in Athenaios, which narrates the story of the founding of Ephesos.[48]

> Kreophylos says in the Annals of the Ephesians: "Those who were founding Ephesos and undergoing many difficulties due to uncertainty about a (suitable) site, finally sent to the oracle of the god and asked where they should establish the town. He gave them an oracle that they should build the city where a fish showed them and a wild boar guided them. So the story goes that, where the so-called Hypelaios ('Oily') spring now is and the Hieros Limēn ('Sacred Harbour'), the fishermen took a meal and one of the fish leapt off with some coal and fell into the rubbish. It set fire to a lair in which there happened to be a wild boar. He was startled by the fire and ran over a large part of the mountain called Trēcheia ('Rough'), until he was speared and fell where the temple of Athena now is. So the Ephesians, crossing over from the island where they had lived for 20 years, at this second stage settled Trēcheia and the parts toward Koressos, and dedicated the shrine of Artemis in the agora and of Apollo Pythios in the harbour."[49]

It is unclear whether Athenaios knew the original book by Kreophylos or if he could only rely on an intermediate source.[50] Furthermore, it is an open question whether he provides a verbatim excerpt of the original text or a paraphrase.

While poetry is usually quoted verbatim in order to preserve the verse, prose literature is often abridged,

42 Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 433–434.
43 Ladstätter 2016, 259.
44 Gassner 2007.
45 Ladstätter 2016, 260.
46 *FGrHist* 417 F 1 = Fowler Creophylus fr. 1. On the term "polis historian": Thomas 2019, 17.
47 On Kreophylos: Jacoby 1954, 237–240; Brodersen 1999; Fowler 2013, 701–702; Mac Sweeney 2013, 144–146; Thomas 2019, 201–202. *Terminus ante quem* is an inscription from Priene, dating ca. 196 BCE (*IPriene* 37), in which Kreophylos is mentioned. The recent proposal by Rudolf – Scherrer 2024, 129, to date the "Annals of the Ephesians" after the refoundation of Ephesos by Lysimachos is based solely on their interpretation of the topographical details in the founding myth. This interpretation is only possible if Kreophylos wrote his work after 294 BCE.
48 Ath. 8.361C–E = *FGrHist* 417 F 1 = Fowler Creophylus fr. 1.
49 Translation: Dowden 2019.
50 Cf. Paulas 2012, 407 n. 7.

paraphrased or even partially altered.[51] There might be "large gaps in the text, but we do not know their exact placement, their length, nor even whether the text that does survive is completely faithful to the original."[52] Changes are difficult to detect because most "Fragmente griechischer Historiker"[53] have survived in only a single later source. There are exceptions, however, such as Herodotos, Xenophon or Plato. Comparisons with their independently transmitted original texts have made it possible to analyse Athenaios' treatment of his sources.[54]

Based on such comparisons, Dominique Lenfant makes a fundamental distinction between verbatim quotations and paraphrases, the former accurately reproducing the quoted text with only minor changes, while the latter may significantly alter it.[55] She developed criteria, such as certain introductory words, which can be used to identify direct quotations.[56] In a further comparative study, Douglas Olson has shown that although Lenfant's criteria are essentially valid, there are some minor variations in quotations that can change the meaning of the original text, at times even deliberately.[57] Christopher Pelling demonstrated that Athenaios occasionally embedded summaries or even independent material in verbatim quotations.[58] Sometimes, Athenaios' method can be so complex that it is difficult or even impossible to trace.

What does this mean for fragment 1 of Kreophylos, which plays a key role in understanding the pre-Hellenistic cultic space and also the cultic landscape of Ephesos?[59]

There are two strong arguments in favour of Athenaios using the original words of Kreophylos: the introductory formula Κρεώφυλος δ' ἐν τοῖς Ἐφεσίων Ὥροις·οἱ τὴν Ἔφεσον, φησί ..., and the Ionic dialect of the Ephesian historian, which Athenaios retains here.[60] However, this does not necessarily mean that it is an unaltered quotation.[61] The text provides evidence that suggests abridgements and summarising insertions are likely.

Kreophylos' historical work was entitled Ἐφεσίων Ὧροι. Although *horoi* literally means "chronicle," this does not imply that these history books were written in the style of annual lists.[62] Structuring by year is rare. *Horoi* could contain long narratives. This would also be expected in the case of Kreophylos' fragment 1. Founding myths were of crucial importance for the identity of a polis.[63] They often provide aetiologies for location-specific characteristics, particularly those relating to the "cultic landscape."[64]

Given the prominence of the founding myth in a polis history, it is all the more surprising that fragment 1 covers it in just 129 words. After all, the events described span more than 20 years and include two settlements: first on the coastal island of Syrie, and then on the mainland. It is also surprising that neither the origin of the settlers nor the oikist nor the oracle they consulted nor the hunter who killed the boar are mentioned by name. While key information is missing from the narrative, the curious anecdote about the fish jumping out of the fire and startling the boar is recounted in great detail.

This odd emphasis is no coincidence when we take a closer look at how the quotation is embedded within the *Deipnosophists'* conversations. By analysing this "cover text," in which the passages are embedded, it is possible to better understand why the later author quotes them.[65] Kreophylos' foundation myth of Ephesos is embedded in "fish-stories from beautiful Rhodes,"[66] and this is the actual reason why Athenaios is quoting it. Immediately preceding it is a curious legend about the expulsion of the Phoenicians from Lindos, which was predicted by an oracle. The plot structure connects the Lindian and Ephesian myths, as a fish plays a key role in both oracles' prophecies, which come true despite being highly unlikely. In the context of the *Deipnosophists'* conversation, this part is therefore described in great detail, while other elements of the Ephesian foundation narrative are only briefly mentioned or omitted altogether.

51 Schepens 1997, esp. 166–167; Pelling 2000, esp. 177, 180, 188–190; Lenfant 2007b, 48–49, 68, 70; Baron 2011, esp. 87–89, 110; Olson 2018, esp. 424–425, 447–448.

52 Baron 2011, 88.

53 Jacoby 1954, regularly updated in Jacoby online 2009-.

54 Pelling 2000, 181–189; Lenfant 2007b; Olson 2018, 427–448.

55 Lenfant 2007b, 46–53, 68–70. "Type 4: le résumé ou l'allusion, reformulation et condensation" involves even stronger changes and is therefore subsumed here under paraphrase for the sake of simplicity. Cf. Olson 2018, 429 n. 9.

56 Lenfant 2007b, 50–53.

57 Pelling 2000, 184; Baron 2011, 105; Olson 2018, 432–434, 447–448.

58 Pelling 2000, 175–180. Cf. Baron 2011, 89.

59 Fowler 2013, 701 and Tober 2017, 461, 466, consider the fragment to be a verbatim quotation, whereas Thomas 2019, 202, does not. I would like to thank Daniel Tober for a detailed discussion of this fragment by Kreophylos.

60 For an analysis of the introductory formulae: Lenfant 2007b, 50–53; cf. Tober 2017, 461 n. 4. On the Ionic dialect of Kreophylos: Fowler 2013, 701–702. In some cases, Athenaios converts Ionic texts into Attic Greek: Olson 2018, 429–430. I thank Daniel Tober (Hamilton, NY) for discussing these aspects.

61 Cf. Pelling 2000, 175, 177, 180, 184.

62 For a discussion of the Greek term "horoi": Thomas 2019, 36–38 (with bibliography).

63 Mac Sweeney 2013, 201–202; Gehrke 2017, 55–56; Thomas 2019, 177–179.

64 Local myths and local historians address a mostly local audience: Gehrke 2014, 9–36; Gehrke 2017, 55; Tober 2017, 474–479; Thomas 2019, 29–73. Tober 2017 explains the remarkable fact that the texts are written from an etic perspective, with the adoption of "the etic template as the standard mode for writing about all communities" from geographical and ethnographic prose, the result being a sort of "self-ethnography."

65 Schepens 1997, 166–167 with n. 66; Lenfant 2007b, 68; Baron 2011, 89, 108, 110; Thomas 2019, 14.

66 Ath. 8.360d (translation D. Olson).

The brevity with which Athenaios recounts this complex story suggests that some parts of the original text have been deliberately left out.[67] These presumed cuts made the plot and topographical details harder to understand. This sparked a controversial discussion about the early topography of Ephesos, including the cultic space.[68]

Previous research has generally supplemented information such as the name of the *ktistes* and the boar hunter as well as other details from two other surviving accounts of the founding myth, namely those of Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F 155, transmitted by Strabo 14.1.3 [633] = F 26 Dolcetti) and Pausanias (7.2.7–8).[69] However, these differ in some important aspects from the account of Kreophylos. Pherekydes and Pausanias refer to the Athenian prince Androklos as the *ktistes* of Ephesos and as the leader of the migration of the Ionians to Asia Minor. Pherekydes was probably responsible for the overarching narrative of an organised Ἰώνων ἀποικία ("Ionian Colonisation") under Athenian leadership.[70]

Pausanias also describes battles with the indigenous Carians and Leleges of the area. This information is conspicuously absent from Kreophylos's account, unless it was originally there but was omitted by Athenaios. A fourth version of the founding story differs significantly from the others. According to Malakos in his "Siphnian Horoi," Ephesos was founded by rebellious slaves from Samos.[71]

The differences between these four versions of the Ephesian founding myth point to different intentions behind these narratives.[72] This diversity and inconsistency are often observed in the founding myths of the Ionian poleis. As Rosalind Thomas and Naoíse Mac Sweeney have demonstrated, it is precisely in the multifaceted nature of these variants that their potential lies to decipher the different perspectives and underlying intentions of their creators.[73] In contrast, "a rationalizing approach collapses different mythic traditions into a single, overarching narrative, seeking not so much to explain the divergent traditions as to explain them away [...] Myths were understood differently by different audiences."[74] Homogenising the individual traditions is problematic from a methodological perspective because they are not different versions of the same original tradition, but rather competing mythical variants that depict the foundation differently.[75] The homogenising approach, on the other hand, considers the contradictions to be corrupted traditions. However, this is not the case for most of the preserved foundation myths of the Ionian poleis.[76]

Despite the brevity of the narrative, it is striking that fragment 1 of Kreophylos mentions three sanctuaries—those of Athena, Apollo Pythios, and "Artemis in the agora"—as well as the Hypelaios spring, which may have been associated with a cult.[77] In this way, Kreophylos connects the mythical landscape with the cultic space of his own lifetime, presumably the 4th c. BCE. All three were probably important sanctuaries at his time, and Kreophylos sought to link their origins to the founding of the city. However, whether or not the claimed age is historically accurate cannot be deduced from the text. In any case, the date of composition of the Ἐφεσίων Ὅροι provides a *terminus ante quem* for the origin of the sanctuaries mentioned.

Athena

Kreophylos mentions a "temple of Athena" in his version of the founding myth.[78] It therefore existed during his lifetime (νῦν), although the cult place was most likely older. However, the local historian does not list it among the sanctuaries founded by the first settlers.[79] In Kreophylos' narrative, it is the end point of the boar hunt, which marks the extension of the settlement site designated by the oracle. Thus, the cultic space is once again interwoven with the mythical landscape. However, the brief account as rendered by Athenaios does not establish a connection between the killing of the boar and the goddess Athena.

Kreophylos provides a valuable clue as to the location of the temple of Athena. The boar runs across the Mountain Trecheia before being killed with a spear. This implies that the Trecheia was located near the later district of Koressos,[80] which has been identified on the north

67 Cf. Thomas 2019, 14.

68 Steskal 2008, 11–19, provides an overview of the extensive discussion (with bibliography).

69 E.g. Oster 1990, 1684; Karwiese 1995, 19–23; Scherrer 2014, 114–116. More recent scholarship discusses the individual versions of the foundation myth: Fowler 2013, 580–583; Mac Sweeney 2013, 137–156; Thomas 2014, 250–253; Mac Sweeney 2017, 404–405, 409, 415; Dowden 2019; Thomas 2019, 201–207.

70 Morison 2023 (commentary on F 155). Cf. Mac Sweeney 2017, 414, on possible, no longer extant precursors in the 6th – early 5th c. BCE.

71 *FGrHist* III 552 F 1 = Ath. 6.92 p. 267 A-B. On Malakos: Stronk 2019. Cf. Thomas 2014, 252; Mac Sweeney 2017, 415. This narrative suggests that Samian claims to Ephesos were to be justified on mythical grounds. Stronk 2019 suspects that Malakos took it from a Samian chronicle.

72 Thomas 2014, 250–253.

73 Thomas 2014, 252–253; Mac Sweeney 2017, 411–412; Thomas 2019, 179–183. Cf. already Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906, 65–66, for a discussion of the different versions of the Ephesian founding myth.

74 Mac Sweeney 2017, 411.

75 Cf. Thomas 2014, 252; Gehrke 2017, 55.

76 Cf. Mac Sweeney 2017, 401–412.

77 Cf. Thomas 2014, 251. On cults at springs: Buxton 1994, 110.

78 Cf. Benndorf 1906, 54; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906, 65 n. 2 (assumed Athena πολιοῦχος); Knibbe 1978, 492; Oster 1990, 1671; Aurenhammer 1995, 262.

79 Thomas 2019, 202.

80 Cf. Strab. 14.1.4.

side of Panayırdağ.[81] The toponym Trecheia (Τρηχεῖα = "rough mountain") fits well with the rugged rock cliffs in this area. This location aligns with Strabo's remark that "the city was in ancient times round the Athenaion which is now outside the city near the Hypelaios, as it is called."[82] During the time of Strabo, the north-eastern terrace of Panayırdağ was located outside the city walls, immediately to the east of the Koressian Gate. The sanctuary of Athena was probably built on this plateau (**Fig. 1**, no. 8).

(Athena) Malis

A cult of Athena bearing a rare epithet is recorded in a short fragment by the iambic poet Hipponax as early as the 6th c. BCE. The author or a speaker invokes the goddess Athena Μαλίς.[83] It is likely that this cult was located in the poet's hometown, Ephesos, a place that features in many of his poems.

Myths, place names and personal names suggest that Μαλίς was a Western Anatolian goddess whom the Greeks later identified and merged with Athena. The mythical connection with Herakles mentioned by Hellanikos may refer to a pair of gods, Heracles/Sandas and Malis, in the Lydian pantheon.[84] In Lycia the goddess was called Maliya and equated with Athena.[85] A goddess Maliya is already attested in Luwian and Hittite texts,[86] but her character seems to be different from that of the Maliya/Malis in western Anatolia in the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, according to the available sources.[87]

The short fragment by Hipponax does not provide any further details about the cult. It is possible that the goddess Malis was initially worshipped by Ephesians of Lydian/Western Anatolian origin, before being incorporated into the local pantheon. We do not know whether Athena Μαλίς was worshipped at the above-mentioned Athenaion at Panayırdağ, or if she had a separate cult place.

Apollo Pythios

According to Kreophylos, "the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios in the harbour" was one of the cult places established by the first settlers.[88] The Ephesian historian links the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios to the mythical landscape of the founding narrative to emphasize the great age of the cult.[89] A priest of Apollo Pythios is mentioned in an inscription from the 1st c. BCE.[90] The precise location of the sanctuary is still unknown.

Kreophylos locates the sanctuary of Apollo in the harbour (ἐπὶ τῶι λιμένι). He previously referred to this harbour as the "Sacred Harbour" (ὁ ἱερὸς λιμὴν). Its name suggests that it was located near the city's main sanctuary, the Artemision,[91] which received income from a harbour in Archaic times.[92] Paleogeographic research has demonstrated that a cove existed just northeast of the sanctuary at the foot of Ayasoluk Hill in the first half of the 1st millennium BCE.[93] This cove provided a suitable anchorage for both the Artemision and the early town which was situated on Ayasoluk Hill in the Early Iron Age.[94] This cove can probably be identified with the "Sacred Harbour."[95]

This area has not yet been systematically excavated. Nevertheless, a group of terracotta figurines found by Mustafa Büyükkolancı on the uppermost part of the western slope of Ayasoluk Hill potentially offers a clue (**Fig. 1**, no. 7).[96] The statuettes date from the first half of the 5th c. BCE. Three of them depict Apollo with a lyre, while a fourth shows a seated woman, probably a goddess enthroned. The exact context of the find is not

81 Steskal 2008 (with bibliography); Steskal 2024, 87–88 fig. 6 (on the newly discovered Koressian Gate of the Hellenistic city wall).

82 Strab. 14.1.4; cf. Strab. 14.1.21.

83 Degani 1991, 71 fr. 49, 2; Hsch. *s.v.* Μαλίς ᾽Αθηνᾶ: ᾽Αθηναίη Μαλὶς † κονισκε † καί με δεσπότεω βεβροῦ. Cf. Masson 1962, 128–129; Watkins 2007, 122–124; Hawkins 2013, 127–129; Bremmer 2015, 609.

84 *FGrHist* 4 F 112; cf. Steph. Byz. *s.v.* ᾽Ακέλης. Interpretation: Masson 1962, 128–129; Hawkins 2013, 127.

85 Testimonies from the 4th c. BCE onwards: Laroche 1967, 53–54; Melchert 2004, 36 ("the native equivalent of Athena"); Watkins 2007, 122–123; Hawkins 2013, 127–128.

86 Lebrun 1982; Hutter 2003, 231; Hawkins 2013, 128–129; Bremmer 2015, 609.

87 Watkins 2007, 123: "These facts would suggest that the link between second-millennium Hittite-Luvian Maliya and first millennium Lycian Maliya is rather tenuous, and rests largely just on homophony." Cf. Hawkins 2013, 128–129, on the unclear etymology.

88 Cf. Thomas 2019, 202. On the cults of Apollo in Ephesos: Knibbe 1978, 493–494; Oster 1990, 1668–1669; Aurenhammer 1995, 265–266.

89 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1906, 65 n. 2, and Knibbe 1978, 493–494, believed that although the cult of Apollo is ancient, the epithet is not: "Apollon [...] sicherlich erst später unter dem Einfluss Delphis zum Πύθιος geworden ist."

90 Oster 1990, 1669 with n. 47.

91 Benndorf 1906, 23.

92 Kroll 2020, 56.

93 Stock *et al.* 2014, 46–47 figs 1, 7–8.

94 Kerschner 2017b, 490, 493 figs 3–4 (with bibliography).

95 Stock *et al.* 2014, 49–54 figs 1, 7–8. Cf. Bammer 1961–1963, 139, 142; Karwiese 1995, 22 plan 1; Steskal 2014, 330 fig. 6; Kerschner 2017b, 491, 505 figs 3–4. Scherrer 2007, 347, proposed two alternative locations which, however, are not corroborated by literary sources or archaeological evidence, cf. Stock *et al.* 2014, 53, 56–57. Rudolf – Scherrer 2024, 129, suggested that the "Sacred Harbour" was located on the site of the Hellenistic harbour west of Panayırdağ. This was probably the site of a landing place for the settlement that had existed there since the 7th c. BCE, beneath the later Tetragonos Agora. However, it was too far from the old main settlement to be an important harbour. Interpreting ἱερὸς λιμὴν as "military harbour" seems far-fetched, as it disregards the fact that Artemision already received income from the harbour in Archaic times.

96 Büyükkolancı – Doğan 2007.

described.[97] The very good condition of the terracotta figurines suggests that they were deliberately deposited. Büyükkolancı supposed that they were moved here from another location during the construction of the Byzantine fortification wall.[98] Alternatively, the hypothetical temenos of Apollo may have extended from the harbour up the slope, with the terracotta figurines deposited at its fringe.

Büyükkolancı assumed that a temple of Apollo was located beneath either the Byzantine Basilica of St. John or the Seljuk İsa Bey Mosque, proposing that the sacred site had continued to be used across successive religious traditions.[99] However, excavations beneath the two monuments have so far yielded no archaeological evidence of a temple.[100]

Apollo had his own sanctuary in Ephesos. In contrast, there is little evidence of his worship in the extensive sanctuary of his twin sister, Artemis.[101] The situation is quite different at the neighbouring sanctuary of Apollo at Klaros, where Artemis had her own cult since the beginning, with a temple and altar next to her twin brother's since Archaic times.[102]

Artemis in the Agora

Kreophylos mentions the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios and "the sanctuary of Artemis in the Agora" (ἱερὸν Ἀρτέμιδος ἐπὶ τῆι ἀγορῆι) as the two cult sites that the Greek settlers established when they founded the city. He is the only literary or epigraphic source to mention a sanctuary in the agora of Ephesos.

While Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf and Robert Fowler assumed that there were two separate sanctuaries of Artemis,[103] Rosalind Thomas believed that Kreophylos meant "surely the famous one."[104] But if so, would Kreophylos have added "in the agora" to the name of the sanctuary?

We do not know the location of the agora of Ephesos during Kreophylos' lifetime. There was probably already a public space in the old town on Ayasoluk Hill.[105] It is possible that a new agora was established when, according to Strabo (14.1.21), a new residential district was laid out in the plain surrounding the Artemision in the second half of the 6th c. BCE.[106] If this was the case, it is possible that the Artemision was located nearby, but certainly not "in the agora." In the Late Classical period, the Temple of Artemis Ephesia was surrounded by an extensive temenos which was separated from the residential areas and the presumed agora.[107] Therefore, Kreophylos' location marker does not match the main sanctuary of the polis.

Another argument in favour of the existence of a second sanctuary of Artemis in Ephesos can be inferred from Kreophylos' account. He says that it was "the Ephesians" who "dedicated a sanctuary of Artemis in the agora." This does not fit in with the Artemision, which had its own founding myth.[108] According to this narrative, it was the legendary Amazons who placed and worshipped the wooden cult image of Artemis at the site of the later sanctuary.[109] This myth was well established by the 5th c. BCE, as evidenced by Pindar's testimony.[110] In the Classical period, the Amazons played an important role in the self-representation of the Artemision, as can be seen from the famous competition to create a statue of a wounded Amazon, which attracted the most renowned sculptors of the time.[111] Kreophylos could not ignore the myth of the Amazons, nor could he replace the heroic founders of the sanctuary with human ones.

Taken together, these considerations suggest that Kreophylos' wording distinguishes the sanctuary of Artemis "in the Agora" from the main sanctuary of the city, the Artemision.

97 Büyükkolancı 2002, 238–239 plan 1; Büyükkolancı – Doğan 2007, 124–126, 130 fig. 1, only specify the 10-metre square (labelled 32D) in which the figurines were found.

98 Büyükkolancı – Doğan 2007, 124.

99 Büyükkolancı 2002, 238.

100 Krinzinger 2002, 313, on the results of an excavation in the interior of the İsa Bey mosque.

101 An ivory figurine of Apollo with the lyre (inv. ART 80 A3) is from the late 7th c. BCE. The inscription APOL incised into a black-glazed bowl (British Museum inv. 1874-0205-175) is most likely a dedicatory inscription to Apollo dating from the second half of the 4th c. BCE (https:/www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1874-0205-175?selectedImageId=446338001; consulted 5.7.2025). The find spot of this object from J. T. Wood's excavation is unclear. The head of the marble statue of Apollo (Benndorf 1906, 208–209; Mendel 1914, 587 f. no. 1376 [2457]) originates from the post-ancient layers and may have been transferred from another location. I thank Georg Plattner and Lilli Zabrana for this information.

102 Aurigny – Durvye 2021 (with bibliography).

103 Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1906, 65 n. 2, postulated a "Filiale des Artemisions in der Stadt am Koressos," a hypothesis that cannot be verified. Fowler 2013, 582.

104 Thomas 2019, 202.

105 *Infra* pp. 177–179. On Early Archaic public spaces, sometimes without monumental buildings: Kenzler 1999, 66–105.

106 Strab. 14.1.21. Cf. Benndorf 1906, 31; Kerschner – Steskal 2008, 123–124; Kerschner 2016, 344.

107 Kirbihler – Zabrana 2014, 102–109 figs 2–5, on the temenos of the Artemision, from which mainly Roman Imperial structures are known.

108 Mac Sweeney 2013, 137–156; Kerschner 2015, 202–210; Thomas 2019, 205–206 (all with bibliography). *Supra* pp. 162–163.

109 Callim. *Dian.* 237–250; Pompon. 1, 88; Dionys. Per. 826–829; Eust. *ad Dion.* 823.33–41. Pausanias 7.2.7 is the only source to offer a different version, naming the eponymous heroes Koressos and Ephesos as founders. This is obviously a scholarly construction and not an ancient myth.

110 Related by Paus. 7.2.7.

111 Plin. *HN* 34.53. On the connection between the statues and the role of the Amazons as founders of the Artemision: Fleischer 2002, 197–198; Walter-Karydi 2016–2017, 189.

Why were there two sanctuaries dedicated to Artemis in Ephesos? It may have been to worship the goddess in different forms, although no specific epithet is mentioned for the sanctuary "in the agora." Another possible reason may have been to bring Artemis Ephesia, the patron goddess of the city whose sanctuary was a large precinct in its own right, closer to the everyday lives of the citizens. If this interpretation is correct, it parallels the situation during the Roman Imperial period, when Artemis had her own place of worship in the prytaneion.[112]

Zeus

The oldest surviving written evidence for the worship of a deity in Ephesos is a fragment of an elegy by Kallinos from the mid-7th c. BCE. Faced with imminent danger, possibly from the approaching army of the Kimmerians,[113] the poet or a speaker implores Zeus on behalf of his countrymen, whom he calls Smyrnaeans:

> Σμυρναίους δ ᾽ἐλέησον [...]
> μνῆσαι δ ᾽, εἴ κοτέ τοι μηρία καλὰ βοῶν
> <Σμυρναῖοι κατέκηαν>.
>
> Have mercy on us Smyrnaeans [...]
> Think of the times Smyrnaeans have
> for thee burned fine ox-tighbones.[114]

Strabon, quoting this short passage from Kallinos' elegy, names Zeus as the divine recipient of the animal sacrifice.[115] He also explains that Smyrnaeans was an alternative name used in ancient times for the Ephesians.[116] This gives the context of the short fragment: the Ephesians are asking Zeus for divine protection in return for the animal sacrifices he had received. Kallinos adopts this form of prayer, which is typical of the Homeric epics.[117]

The sacrifice of oxen implies a large altar in a temenos. Zeus therefore had a sanctuary in Ephesos by the middle of the 7th c. BCE. Its location is not known. It was probably located in the settlement area of the time, i.e. on Ayasoluk Hill or on the northern or western slopes of Panayırdağ.[118]

It is worth noting that the Ephesians did not (yet) invoke Artemis in times of need, but Zeus. Just a few decades later, in the first half of the 6th c. BCE, they instead turned to Artemis for protection during times of military threat. Herodotus relates that, when the Lydian king Kroisos attacked Ephesos, its inhabitants "dedicated their city to Artemis; this they did by attaching a rope to the city wall from the temple of the goddess, standing seven furlongs away from the ancient city, which was then besieged."[119] Although the historicity of the anecdote about the rope has been rightly questioned,[120] there is no reason to doubt the name of the deity invoked.[121]

Both the archaeological evidence from the Artemision and the written sources show a marked increase in the importance of the cult of Artemis Ephesia in the 2nd half of the 7th c. BCE.[122] This may be due to the fact that the danger of the Kimmerians sacking the Artemision was averted, which was attributed to the power of the local goddess and greatly enhanced her prestige.[123] The fragment of Kallinos suggests that Zeus had a more important role in the *polis* pantheon until the middle of the 7th c. BCE. Afterwards he stood in the shadow of Artemis.[124]

Zeus was also worshipped under individual epithets. The small open-air sanctuary of Zeus Μαινάλ(ι)ος on the northern side of Panayırdağ (**Fig. 2**) has already been discussed. From the name of the month Maimakter, which is documented in Roman Imperial Ephesos, it is highly probable that there was a festival Maimakteria for Zeus Μαιμάκτης.[125] Neither the festival nor the epithet is explicitly recorded in Ephesos, but they are in Thasos, Andros and Athens.[126] There are several indications that this was a

112 Knibbe 1981, 102; Steskal 2010, 221–222, 236.

113 Kimmerian raids were a major threat in Western Anatolia in the mid-7th c. BCE, cf. Kallinos frgs 3 and 5 West.

114 Frg. 2.2a West. Translation M. L. West.

115 Strab. 14.1.4.

116 Strab. 14.1.4. Smyrna was also the name of a periurban settlement in the Archaic period, as Hipponax, fr. 50 West (quoted by Strab. 14.1.4) attests. Its location has been the subject of controversial debate among scholars: Keil 1922–1924a, 107–108; Keil 1939; Engelmann 1991, 275–282; Langmann 1993; Karwiese 1995, 41; Knibbe 1998, 77; Scherrer 2001, 59; P. Scherrer in Scherrer – Trinkl 2006, 60–61; Scherrer 2007, 331; Miller 2019, 19.

117 Schwabl 1978, 1268–1269.

118 Kerschner *et al.* 2008, 116–118, 120–122 pl. 49; Kerschner 2017b, 493–494 figs 3–5.

119 Hdt. 1.26 (translation W. Heinemann). This story is also reported by Polyaenus 6.50.

120 Karwiese 1995, 32–33; Libero 1996, 370 with n. 25; Fischer 2013, 52–54; Kerschner 2016, 341–343 (with bibliography).

121 On the role of Artemis as patron goddess of Ephesos: Kerschner 2017a, 3–7 (with bibliography).

122 Kerschner 2017a, 52–56; Kerschner 2022, 388–391.

123 Kerschner 2017a, 39–43 (based on Callim. *Dian.* 3.248–258, discussing also the contradictory Late Antique and Byzantine sources). For an extensive discussion of the Greek and Latin sources on the Kimmerians: Ivantchik 2005, 42–43, 113–116, 121–126, 169–189.

124 Cf. Cook 1925, 962 no. 2. A contrary opinion is expressed by Knibbe 1978, 491, who, however, does not discuss Kallinos frg. 2.2a. Trinkl 2001, 116, proposed that an Early Classical oath inscription invoking Zeus, which was incorporated into a Late Antique wall, suggested a Zeus sanctuary in the nearby Archaic settlement below the Tetragonos Agora, but this is not supported by any evidence. On the later cults of Zeus in Ephesos: Knibbe 1978, 491–492; Oster 1990, 1691–1695; Aurenhammer 1995, 264–265; Trinkl 2001. In Roman Imperial times, there was a large temple to the Olympian Zeus in the city: Paus. 7.2.9, cf. Oster 1990, 1694–1695; Scherrer 2007, 337 (with bibliography).

125 On the calendar of Ephesos: Trümpy 1997, 96–99 (with bibliography). On the calendar of the Roman Imperial period: Merkelbach 1979a. On Zeus Μαιμάκτης: Schwabl 1978, 332. Depending on the location, the name of the month occurs in the variants Maimakter and Maimakterion.

126 Zeus Μαιμάκτης: Bonnet 2017–2023 (https://base-map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/attestation/21529, consulted 29.7.2024); *IG* XII 5

pre-Hellenistic cult: Zeus Maimaktes, lord of the (winter) storms, is an aspect of Zeus as the weather god.[127] This function goes back to early Greek times and even takes on features of ancient Anatolian and Near Eastern deities.[128] In some places the cult of Zeus Μαιμάκτης seems to have lost importance in later times.[129] In Ephesos, the month Maimakter takes the place of Apatourion, which appears instead in the calendars of most other Ionian poleis and is associated with the festival of the Apatouria.[130] According to Herodotos, the Ephesians and the Colophonians were the only Ionians who did not celebrate the Apatouria.[131] This suggests that either the month of Apatourion was never part of the Ephesian calendar, or that it had been replaced by Maimakter by the mid-5th c. BCE at the latest. Therefore, it is probable that a festival and cult honouring Zeus Maimaktes existed in Ephesos during the Archaic period.[132]

It is unknown where the Ephesians worshipped Zeus Μαιμάκτης. It may have been in the unlocated sanctuary of Zeus, the existence of which can be inferred from Kallinos' fragment. Alternatively, given that he was a god of (winter) storms, an open-air sanctuary on one of the surrounding mountains is also plausible.

Demeter Thesmophoros

Herodotos mentions an extra-urban sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros in an episode from the Ionian revolt.[133] After the naval battle off the island of Lade, in which the allied Ionians were decisively defeated by the Persian fleet in 494 BCE, some of the Chian troops fled northwards overland via Mt Mykale:

> But when the Chians entered the lands of Ephesus on their march, it chanced that they came by night and the women were keeping their Thesmophoria; and the Ephesians thereupon, never having heard the story of the Chians and seeing an army invading their country, were fully persuaded that these were robbers come after their women; so they mustered all their force and slew the Chians.[134]

According to this account, the Thesmophorion was located outside the city in Late Archaic times. This location in the peri-urban area of a city (πρὸ πόλεως) is typical of Demeter sanctuaries, particularly in the eastern Aegean and Sicily.[135] The temenos was probably situated to the south or south-west of Ephesos. This was the direction from which the fleeing Chians would have arrived.[136]

Two archaeological finds confirm and narrow down the area identified from Herodotos' description. A marble altar from the 2nd c. CE bears a dedicatory inscription to "Pluton, Kore and Demeter Karpophoros."[137] The relief decoration also refers to Demeter: a kalathos and a bundle of grain ears and a poppy capsule. The cult of Demeter Thesmophoros and Demeter Karpophoros was closely linked in Ephesos at least by the Flavian period, as was also the case in Pergamon.[138] Sven Schipporeit therefore assumed that this altar stood in a sanctuary that combined both cults, together with those of Pluto and Kore.[139] The altar was found in a field near the south-eastern slope of Panayırdağ. Since the marble block was not reused in any structure, it is likely that it was not transported far from its original location. If this assumption is correct, the Thesmophorion was located in this fertile alluvial plain with several streams (**Fig. 1**, no. 10). Further upstream in the same river plain, Günther Schörner found during a survey a ceramic fragment with the incised inscription ΚΟΡΗ[Σ.[140] This could be a dedication to Kore, but it could also be the first part of a name.[141]

According to Herodotos (6.16), only women participated in the Thesmophoria in Ephesos, which included night-time rites. Both of these aspects are also known from other places.[142] We have no information about the layout and facilities of the sanctuary. In the 1st c. CE, female priests are attested[143] and they had certainly existed since much earlier times.

(Naxos, 2nd c. BCE); *SEG* 60 911 (Andros, 1st c. BCE with priesthood). Athens: Plut. *De cohibenda ira* 9.458b-c. Festival Maimakteria: Salviat 1958, 196, 224–225 (Thasos, late 4th c. BCE).

127 Deubner 1932, 176; Schwabl 1978, 1014–1018, 1045. On the phenomenon of different aspects of a deity: Pirenne-Delforge – Pironti 2015, 40–42; Pirenne-Delforge 2024.

128 Schwabl 1993, 329–330; Bremmer 2015, 687–689; López-Ruiz 2015, 376–377.

129 Deubner 1932, 176; Graf 1985, 407. For an alternative explanation: Foxhall 1995, 103–104; Parker 2005, 207.

130 Trümpy 1997, 12, 64, 71, 77, 89, 93, 96, 102, 107: Apatourion at Samos, Milet, Priene, Erythrai and Smyrna. The calendar of Phokaia probably had both Maimakter and Apatourion. On the Apatouria: Deubner 1932, 232–234; Parke 1977, 88–92; Parker 2005, 42, 168, 371.

131 Hdt. 1.147.2.

132 For a detailed argument: Kerschner in press b.

133 Hdt. 6.16. On the role of Demeter in Herodotos' account on the Ionian Revolt: Steinhauer 2025, 213–219. On the cult of Demeter in Ephesos: Knibbe 1978, 496–497; Oster 1990, 1671–1673; Suys 1996; Steskal 2010, 217 n. 798; 220–221; Schipporeit 2013, 28–56; Clinton 2014, 121–127; Steinhauer 2025, 219–223, 230.

134 Hdt. 6.16.2–3 (translation A. D. Godley).

135 Cole 1994, 211 with examples.

136 Cf. Benndorf 1906, 51–52; Schipporeit 2013, 29.

137 *IEphesos* 1228 ([Πλούτω]νι καὶ Κόρῃ καὶ Δή[μητρι] καρποφόρῳ); Schipporeit 2013, 31, 36 pl. 1, 1–2; Bonnet 2017–2023, no. 18824 (https://base-map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/attestation/18824, consulted 9.4.2025).

138 Schipporeit 2013, 431–437; Steinhauer 2025, 222.

139 Schipporeit 2013, 30–31.

140 Ladstätter 2015, 25 lower figure (fragment in the centre).

141 I thank François Kirbihler and Christoph Samitz for this information.

142 Parker 2005, 270–289 (with bibliography). On aspects of the Ephesian Thesmophoria in the Roman period: Schipporeit 2013, 36–37.

143 Schipporeit 2013, 34.

Demeter Eleusinia

Like the Thesmophoria, the cult of the Eleusinian Demeter dates back at least to the late Archaic period.[144] Pherekydes of Athens reports in the first half of the 5th c. BCE that the Basilides—an aristocratic family who traced their origins back to the mythical founder of the city, Androklos—counted among their privileges an important role in the mysteries of the Eleusinian Demeter (τὰ ἱερὰ τῆς Ἐλευσινίας Δήμητρος).[145] The exact role of the Basilides in the cult remains obscure,[146] but it is evident that it was a prestigious honorary office. Antisthenes of Rhodes states that the philosopher Herakleitos, who descended from the Basilidae family, renounced his honours in favour of his brother.[147] This suggests that the cult of Demeter Eleusinia already existed in the Late Archaic period, although the privileges of kingship are not specified in detail. The fact that the Basilides enjoyed privileges within the cult implies that it dates back to their reign, which came to an end in the 7th c. BCE.[148] The site of her cult is not known.

Dionysos

A *horos* inscription from the 4th or early 3rd c. BCE marked the boundary of a sanctuary of Dionysos. It reads ἱερὸν Διονύσου ὀρειογυάδων καὶ ἐνέδρα[ς] εἶναι.[149]

Despite its clear legibility, the inscription has sparked debate about its meaning, as ὀρειογυάδων is a *hapax legomenon* and its connection to the word ἐνέδρα is difficult to explain. In the first edition of the inscription, Dieter Knibbe suggested that ὀρειογυάδων was a uniquely attested epithet of Dionysos and that Ἐνέδρα (= ambush) was an otherwise unknown goddess who was his *paredros*.[150] Both interpretations have been questioned.[151] Recently, Shane Hawkins proposed an alternative reading:[152] Dionysos is mentioned without an epithet, and both ὀρειογυάδων (= hill-roaming [maenads]) and ἐνέδρα (= men laid in ambush) were two groups of cult participants who gathered in the sanctuary for a ritual. While the exact sequence of the ritual cannot be reconstructed, it appears to have involved a group of men opposing the Maenads during their ὀρειβασία, an ecstatic dance ritual performed in the mountains.

The inscription suggests that the sanctuary was situated in a pristine mountainous landscape, presumably close to the city. The *horos* stone was found in the rubble fill of Terrace House II.[153] Its original location remains unknown.[154]

From Hellenistic times onwards Dionysos was the most important male god in the Ephesian pantheon.[155] The festival of the Dionysia is attested since ca. 300 BCE.[156] Several Roman Imperial inscriptions attest to the significance of the mountains in the peri-urban zone for the cults and rites of Dionysos. We have epigraphic evidence for Διόνυσος Ὄρειος Βάκχιος πρὸ πόλεως[157] and Διονύσος Φλεὺς (Ποιμάντριος), "the lush Dionysos" who was worshipped together with Demeter πρὸ πόλεως.[158] The locations of the cult sites mentioned are not known. It is also unclear how far back these cults date.

An inscription from the late 2nd c. CE attests to a sanctuary of Dionysos in the quarter of the Koressites.[159] As Koressos was one of the settlement nuclei of Ephesos that originated in the Early Archaic period, this sanctuary may be much older than this inscription.[160] However, this question must remain open. The same applies to whether it was located within or just outside the Hellenistic city walls.

144 On the cult of Demeter Euleusinia: Schipporeit 2013, 38–43.

145 *FGrHist* III F 155 = Strab. 14.1.3. Cf. Fischer 2010, 24; Fowler 2013, 726; Schipporeit 2013, 38–43; Morison 2023; Steinhauer 2025, 217–219. On Pherekydes: Fowler 2013, 706–727; Morison 2023.

146 Fowler 2013, 726. Cf. Schipporeit 2013, 38.

147 *FGrHist* 508 F 10 = Diog. Laert. 9.6: σημεῖον δ' αὐτοῦ τῆς μεγαλοφροσύνης Ἀντισθένης φησὶν ἐν Διαδοχαῖς· ἐκχωρῆσαι γὰρ τἀδελφῶι τῆς βασιλείας.

148 Schipporeit 2013, 40. Cf. Clinton 2014, 124, who considered the cult to be "very old." For a discussion of the proposed datings: Steinhauer 2025, 218. On the Basilides and their reign: Baton of Sinope *FGrHist* 268 F 3; Pherekydes of Athens *FGrHist* 3 F 155; Libero 1996, 367; Fischer 2010, 23–24; 2011, 34; Mac Sweeney 2013, 151.

149 *IEphesos* 106; Bonnet 2017–2023, no. 22187 (https://base-map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/attestation/27207; consulted 24.6.2025).

150 Knibbe 1972–1975, 21–26 fig. 9; Knibbe 1978, 495–496.

151 Engelmann 1985, 252 with n. 6; Graf 1985, 294; Jaccottet 2003, vol. 2 no. 133.

152 Hawkins 2007. I thank Sylvain Lebreton (Toulouse) for discussing this inscription.

153 Knibbe 1972–1975, 1–2 with n. 4 (inv. no. 3674 is the *horos* stone *IEphesos* 106).

154 Knibbe 1978, 495–496, assumed that the sanctuary was located on the slope of Bülbüldağ behind the building, but the stone was reused and may have been moved several times.

155 Knibbe 1978, 495–496; Oster 1990, 1673–1676; Aurenhammer 1995, 267–269.

156 Heberdey *et al.* 1912, 99 no. 3. Cf. Knibbe 1972–1975, 22; Knibbe 1978, 495; Aurenhammer 1995, 267.

157 *IEphesos* 1267; Bonnet 2017–2023, https://base-map-polytheisms.huma-num.fr/attestation/18873 (second half of the 2nd c. CE). Cf. Jaccottet 2003, vol. 2 no. 134; Schipporeit 2013, 51; Rathmayr 2016, 150.

158 *IEphesos* 902; 1270; 1595 (τῶν πρὸ πόλεως Δημητριαστῶν καὶ Διονύσου Φλέω μυστῶν). Cf. Knibbe 1978, Merkelbach 1979b; Merkelbach 1988, 19–20 with n. 16–17; Oster 1990, 1674; Aurenhammer 1995, 267; Schipporeit 2013, 48–53.

159 *IEphesos* 293. The inscription mentions a cult association: οἱ τοῦ προπάτορος θεοῦ Διονύσου Κορησείτου σακηφόροι μύσται: Keil 1926, 265. Cf. Knibbe 1972–1975, 72–73; Knibbe 1978, 495; Oster 1990, 1675; Aurenhammer 1995, 267. "The word σακηφόροι [...] refers to those wearing garments made of 'goats' hair' and which were 'worn by the mystae of Dionysos'." (Oster 1990, 1675).

160 As assumed by Knibbe 1972–1975, 22.

Asklepios

An Ἀσκληπιῶ ἱερόν is first mentioned in an early Hellenistic inscription.[161] This sanctuary has not yet been found. Several inscriptions of physicians, which were reused as spolia in the late antique church of St. Mary, led Josef Keil to assume that it could have been located in this area of the Hellenistic-Roman city.[162]

Founding Hero Androklos

Androklos, the mythical founder of Ephesos, was an important figure for the city during the Roman Imperial period. His image was present in public spaces in the form of statues and reliefs and he was depicted on the reverse of coins.[163] The Ephesians called themselves "Androclids" in inscriptions and dedicated a special festival day to their *heros ktistes.*[164] A *chiliastys* bore his name.[165] The Late Hellenistic epigram writer Antipater of Sidon calls Ephesos the "city of Androklos," which suggests veneration of the *ktistes* in the early 1st c. BCE at the latest.[166] Pausanias (7.2.9) refers to the tomb of the founding hero as a landmark.[167] In the great procession of Artemis from the sanctuary through the city, which G. Vibius Salutaris founded in 104 CE, the staging of the founding myth played an important role.[168] A portable statue of Androklos was an essential element of the procession.

When did the veneration of Androklos first begin? Elisabeth Rathmayr demonstrated that various Classical statue types were used as models for the Roman iconography of the founding hero. She hence concluded that "there was no late Classical or Hellenistic statue of Androklos."[169] Yet pictorial representations are not a prerequisite for hero worship.

Androklos is first mentioned in surviving texts by Pherekydes of Athens in the early 5th c. BCE.[170] By contrast, the oldest surviving local account, that of Kreophylos, makes no mention of Androklos or any other *ktistes* by name.[171] This omission is striking and requires an explanation.[172] One possible reason is that Kreophylos rejected the key role of Athens in the founding of Ephesos and therefore chose not to emphasise the role of an Athenian prince.[173] Yet, it is possible that Kreophylos did mention the name of the *ktistes*, but Athenaios omitted the name because it was not significant for his cover text.[174]

This second possibility seems the most likely to me. According to this scenario, Androklos was probably already revered as *ktistes* in Ephesos before Pherekydes. This would also explain the privileges enjoyed by his (alleged) descendants, the so-called Βασιλεῖς, which continued into the Roman Imperial period.[175] In other Ionian poleis, myths of individual founders can be traced back to the 7th c. BCE.[176] One may plausibly suggest that, in the Archaic local tradition, Androklos was originally believed to have a different lineage. To incorporate Ephesos into his overarching narrative, Pherekydes then made Androklos a son of Kodros, claiming that Athens organised the entire migration.[177]

It is difficult to determine when the real and mythical *ktistes* began to receive cultic veneration.[178] Irad Malkin assumed that the cult of the historical founders of the *apoikiai* in the Central and Western Mediterranean impacted the mother cities and the entire Aegean region, leading to the invention of mythical *ktistai* who were eventually worshipped as heroes.[179] According to Herodotos (6.38.1), the inhabitants of the Thracian Chersonesos offered sacrifices to the elder Miltiades "according to custom, as the founder of the colony" in the second half of the 6th c. BCE.[180] At Miletos, there is evidence for a cult dedicated to the mythical founder Neileos from the second quarter of the 6th c. BCE, when a priest was presumably appointed to it.[181] This example from a nearby city in southern Ionia suggests that there was also a cult dedicated to the *heros ktistes* in Archaic Ephesos.

161 Keil 1926, 263–264; Knibbe 1978, 493; Oster 1990, 1669–1670; Aurenhammer 1995, 266–267.

162 Keil 1905; 1926, 263–264.

163 Rathmayr 2010, 23, 25–37 (with bibliography).

164 Rathmayr 2010, 22–23, 39–40.

165 Engelmann 1996, 99; Rathmayr 2010, 24 no. 6; 39. Zu den ephesischen Chiliastyen: Engelmann 1996 (mit Lit.).

166 *Anthologia Graeca* 9.790.

167 It is not clear whether the Androkloneion mentioned in a Roman Imperial inscription was a "club building of the Paraphylakes," who were responsible for the hero cult, "or the Androklos tomb mentioned by Pausanias": Knibbe – Engelmann 1984, 143–144 no. 4371.

168 Rogers 1991, 109, 114–115.

169 Rathmayr 2010, 36.

170 *FGrHist* 3 F 155 in Strab. 14.1.3. On Pherekydes: Fowler 2013, 706–727; Morison 2023. *Supra* pp. 165–167.

171 Ath. 8.361c–e (62) = *FGrHist* III 417 F 1. *Supra* pp. 165–167.

172 The cult of heros ktistes was very rarely anonymous, as Callim. *Aet.* 2 fr. 47 (Asper = fr. 43 Pfister/Clayman) lines 54–55 at least for Sicily establishes. A rare exception, which therefore requires a special mythistorical explanation, is Zankle: cf. Greco 2021, 300.

173 In rare cases, there are reports of a change of oikist: Hdt. 5.6.7 (Sikyon); Thuc. 5.11.1 (Amphipolis). Cf. Greco 2021, 313. In Ephesos, however, this case is unlikely, especially since no other name has been handed down except that of Androklos.

174 Thus Thomas 2019, 202. Against this: Tober 2017, 461 n. 4 (on the original text), 466. *Supra* pp. 165–167.

175 Strab. 14.1.3. Cf. Oster 1990, 1683; Libero 1996, 367; Fischer 2010, 23–24; 2011, 34; Mac Sweeney 2013, 151; Schipporeit 2013, 38–42.

176 Mac Sweeney 2017, 401–415.

177 Cf. Scherrer 2014, 114–115.

178 On the gradual development of hero worship: Parker 1996, 39; Ekroth 2015, 386, 393.

179 Malkin 1987, 261–266. Cf. Leschhorn 1984, 6–117, esp. 98–117; Ekroth 2002, 18; Herda 2013, 87–90.

180 Cf. Leschhorn 1984, 75–83, 99.

181 Herda 1998, 10–22 figs 1–2, esp. 20.

Fig. 4. Rock shrine of an unknown deity on the southern slope of Bülbüldağ. Photo taken ca. 1900 (ÖAI-ÖAW, archives).

Pausanias mentions the tomb of the city's founder. He describes its location, stating that a statue of an armed man—likely Androklos himself—stands on the tomb.[182] Over the past 150 years, scholarly debate has focused primarily on the location of Androklos' tomb, which has not yet been found.[183] Most researchers assume that it was located outside the Hellenistic-Roman city, either to the north or east side of Panayırdağ.

Peri-urban Rock Shrines of Uncertain Date and Identification

Three rock shrines in the peri-urban area of Ephesos can only be mentioned briefly here. The dates of their construction and the deities worshipped there remain unclear, as no inscriptions or artefacts referring to the recipient of the cult have been found.

At the northern foot of Ayasoluk Hill, a rock shrine with four niches was established in an abandoned quarry (**Fig. 1**, no. 4).[184] The shape of the niches and the overall layout resemble the cult places in the rock sanctuary on the north-eastern side of Panayırdağ.[185] This may suggest that it also dates from the Classical or Early Hellenistic period.[186]

On the southern slope of Bülbüldağ, a monument was carved into the steep rock face of a hilltop (**Fig. 1**, no. 6; **Fig. 4**).[187] Its key elements are a 1m-wide platform framed by two side walls and a cylindrical cavity at the top of the 1.17m-high rear wall. Anton Bammer and

182 Paus. 7.2.9. Cf. Rathmayr 2010, 33.

183 Wood 1877, 126–127; Benndorf 1906, 26; Keil 1922–1924a, 101; Karwiese 1985, 221; Rogers 1991, 104; Thür 1995; Engelmann 1996, 131–133; Herda 1998, 6 with n. 31; Scherrer 1999b, 141–144; Rathmayr 2010, 33–34; Herda 2013, 93.

184 It was first described by Büyükkolancı in 1999, 363 fig. 3. Further details can be found in Bammer – Muss 2007, although insufficient evidence exists to confirm its use as a spring sanctuary or to date it to the Late Bronze Age. See also: Kerschner in press b. On the quarry: Benndorf 1906, 33 fig. 8; Büyükkolancı 1998, 362–363, 369 figs 3–4. Bammer – Muss 2007, 95, doubt the existence of the quarry, but do not provide convincing reasons. Clear traces of quarrying can be seen in the rock faces.

185 *Supra* pp. 163–164.

186 Meter, Pan or the nymphs would be plausible candidates for the cult. A "Quellheiligtum" (spring sanctuary), as suggested by Bammer – Muss 2007, can be ruled out. The sinter deposits on the steep cliffs are the result of temporary water seepage following periods of heavy rainfall. Ayasoluk is too small to have formed a hydrological reservoir that could have fed a permanently flowing spring. I thank Walter Prochaska (Vienna) for this information. Cf. Kerschner in press b.

187 Benndorf 1906, 56–57 figs 19–20; Cook 1925, 962 no. 2; Oster 1990, 1694; Bammer – Muss 2006; Ladstätter – Weißl 2011; Schimpf 2018, 211, 213. The location is marked on the map produced by A. Schindler in Benndorf 1906 as a "Felsaltar" to the south of the Lysimachian city wall, between elevations 257 and 265.

Fig. 5. Hellenistic votive relief with two friezes depicting deities and heroes worshipped in Ephesos. Efes Müzesi, Selçuk (ÖAI-ÖAW, N. Gail).

Ulrike Muss have pointed out the similarity of the site to the so-called step monuments of the Phrygian highlands.[188] This typological resemblance suggests a date in the Archaic period.[189] Yet there are also clear differences: The step monuments in Phrygia are often inaccessible and crowned by semi-circular discs, presumably stylised idols.[190] Their top surfaces show no cavities. On the other hand, the rock shrine on Bülbüldağ has a platform for a celebrant who stood directly in front of a cylindrical cavity, the main feature of the monument. Otto Benndorf thought this cavity and another one to the left were used for "offering sacrifices."[191] However, the precise workmanship and axial position of the central cavity rather suggest that a cult object, possibly a portable statue, was temporarily placed there during a ritual.

A rock relief in the eastern wall of the Sarıkaya ridge, a north-eastern spur of Mt Bülbüldağ, overlooks the small, summer-dry gorge of the Balıkboğazı stream (**Fig. 1**, no. 5).[192] The relief shows a large, presumably male figure framed by a stag on the left and an unidentified quadruped on the right. The antithetical arrangement and larger size of the human figure indicate that it was probably a god. The low quality of the relief, its poor state of preservation and the lack of direct stylistic comparisons caused the relief from Sarıkaya to be assigned to different cultural contexts. Dates from the Late Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age, and the Roman Imperial period have been suggested.[193]

Cult Sites in the Pristine Natural Environment of the Peri-urban Area

A number of cult sites were situated within the peri-urban zone, which was an important area in the cultic landscape of Ephesos. Deities connected to the wilderness were worshipped there: Meter Oreie and Dionysos in rocky outcrops, Demeter Thesmophoros in a fertile plain. The natural peri-urban zone was also a place of veneration for other deities with less obvious connections to it, as Zeus Patroos, Apollo Patroos, Hekate Basileia and Zeus Mainal(i)os. We can also assume that other deities, typically associated with pristine nature such as Pan and the nymphs, were worshipped in pre-Hellenistic Ephesos.

Pan, originally an Arkadian herdsman god, is a late arrival in Ionia.[194] A mid-4th c. terracotta from Ephesos, probably a votive offering, is one of the earliest known examples.[195] As a god of wilderness, Pan is worshipped in caves or rock shrines, often alongside other deities, particularly nymphs.[196] On a Hellenistic relief depicting numerous deities worshipped in Ephesos, three nymphs in a grotto are identified by an inscription (**Fig. 5**, top left).[197]

188 Bammer – Muss 2006, 65, 67.

189 The step monuments in Phrygia are considered to have been built between approximately 800 and 500 BCE, cf. Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 89–142, 208.

190 Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 40–49.

191 Benndorf 1906, 57 ("gewiß für Darbringungen von Opfern bestimmt"). Bammer – Muss 2006, 67, argued similarly ("Wir können vermuten, dass es sich dabei um Behälter für Trankopfer handelt").

192 Preliminary report by İçten – Krinzinger 2004.

193 İçten – Krinzinger 2004, 163 ("die besten Vergleiche in anatolischen Felsreliefs der Spätbronzezeit"); Işık *et al.* 2011, 11, considered the Sarıkaya rock relief to be an example of "Arzawian art" a concept which is difficult to grasp due to the limited number of known examples. Bacharaova 2024, 784 n. 15, assumed an Early Iron Age depiction of the god Kuruntiya or Runtiya. D. Salzmann and M. Blömer (personal communication) have suggested a Roman Imperial origin on the basis of significant differences from the Bronze Age reliefs of Central Anatolia (the god is depicted standing next to an animal rather than on top of it, and his face is shown frontally rather than in profile).

194 Tuchelt 1969–1970, 228–232; Borgeaud 1979, 262. On the spread of the cult of Pan in the Aegean from the early 5th c. BCE onwards: Borgeaud 1979, 74–76; 195–202; 259–263; Anderson 2015, 312–313.

195 Higgins 1954, no. 560 pl. 73; Tuchelt 1969–70, 225, 230, 233 no. 6. The figurine was found by J. T. Wood in the area of the Hellenistic-Roman city.

196 Borgeaud 1979, 75–81.

197 Atalay 1985, 196–197 figs 4–5; Larson 2001, 199. On the cult of the nymphs: Larson 2001.

The Mythical Landscape of Ephesos

The mythical landscape comprises more than the sanctuaries of a polis. In particular, it includes characteristic topographical elements that are mythically charged. The ancient world was much more permeated with religious notions and rituals than we might imagine today.[198] Natural features such as mountains, rivers and springs were associated with supernatural beings and their legends. Even if these minor deities and heroes did not always have their own cults and shrines, they were firmly embedded in local consciousness.

Personifications of rivers were worshipped throughout the Greek world.[199] On the one hand, rivers guaranteed fertility, but on the other, they could pose a serious threat through flooding. Both aspects were crucial for an agriculture-based community and required cultic intervention. Important river gods had altars, shrines and priests that could be shared with other deities.[200] Sacrifices and votive offerings were sometimes deposited in riverbeds.[201]

In Ephesos, the river gods Kaystros, Kenchrios, Klaseas and Marnas were depicted in sculptures and on coins from the Roman Imperial period.[202] The Kaystros is the region's main river, which opened up the hinterland of the polis. The other rivers are smaller tributaries from the mountains to the east and south, which, in pre-Hellenistic times, still flowed directly into the sea (**Fig. 1**).[203] So far, there is no literary or epigraphic evidence for a specific cult of any of these Ephesian river gods.[204] Robert Parker argued convincingly that "a river is so appropriate as a marker of a city's identity that the postulate of cult is not needed in order to explain its appearance on a coin."[205] Nevertheless, river gods were part of the mythical landscape and the local pantheon. As the smaller rivers were important to the locals living near them, it is likely that they made private dedications to "their river god" outside any official cult.[206]

Like the river gods of Ephesos, the personification of Mount Pion appears on Roman coins.[207] Pion can probably be identified with (parts of) Panayırdağ.[208] The word means "the drinker" and fits the karst mountain that absorbs water without releasing it in springs.[209] In contrast to Hittite concepts, there is no clear evidence that the Greeks ritually worshipped mountains as such.[210] However, hills and mountains were often the abode of deities, as in the rock sanctuary of the Theoi Patrooi at the north-east slope of Panayırdağ. There, Meter is invoked in several inscriptions with the epithet Ὀρείη as "Mother of the Mountain."[211] This aspect of the mother goddess is visually expressed in the layout of the cult sites, where great importance was attached to preserving the natural ruggedness of the rocks. It is significant that in this sanctuary there is no dedication to a mountain god.

For the ancient people, caves and striking rock outcrops were often places where they felt the presence of divine powers.[212] Up to now, the caves in and around Ephesos have remained largely unexplored. Two of them were used as pilgrimage sites in the early Christian and Byzantine periods: the Grotto of St. Paul on the steep northern slope of Bülbüldağ and the Sütlü Panaya high above the Klaseas (Şirince) Valley.[213] Whether the Christian cult replaced an older pagan one is not known.

The mythical landscape also includes characteristic landscape features that play an important role in local mythical narratives. In the case of Ephesos, only a few local myths have survived, the most important of

198 On the "embeddedness" of Greek religion in social and private life: Parker 1986, 265; Kindt 2012, 16–19; Eidinow 2015; Bremmer 2021, 2.

199 On river gods and their cults: Parker 2016; Bremmer 2019.

200 Parker 2016, 1–3, 7–9; Bremmer 2019, 91–95.

201 Bremmer 2019, 91. This cult practice was not limited to river gods alone, as shown by repeated deposits in a summer dry riverbed in the Artemision, which must have been offered to Artemis, as evidenced by a golden female statuette, most probably depicting this goddess: Kerschner 1997, especially 94–104. On the statuette: Pülz 2009, 44–45, 155–158 pl. 3 (with bibliography).

202 Benndorf 1906, 65–73; Imhoof-Blumer 1923, 278–280, 297, 299, 301, 403; Strocka 1989, 79–82 pl. 39, 41.

203 On the location of the rivers: Benndorf 1906, 65–73. On the coastline and river estuaries in pre-Hellenistic times: Stock *et al.* 2014, 50–51 fig. 7; Brückner *et al.* 2017, 889 fig. 11.

204 I thank Vera Hofmann (Vienna) for checking the inscriptions from Ephesos in this respect.

205 Parker 2016, 4.

206 Bremmer 2019, 93: "Acheloos was the only river with a supra-local importance." On Acheloos' original important role in the hierarchy of gods: Bremmer 2019, 102–103.

207 Benndorf 1906, 52, 54–56 figs 16, 18; Engelmann 1987; Karwiese 1994.

208 Engelmann 1991, 282–286; Knibbe 2002, 213–219. For an overview of the extensive and controversial discussion on the identification of the mountains of Ephesos: Steskal 2008, 15–20.

209 Plin. *NH* 5.115; Paus. 7.5.10; *IEphesos* 1064 (poem of the prytanis Claudia Trophime). Cf. Engelmann 1991, 282–286. On the hydrogeology of Panayırdağ: Rantitsch – Prochaska 2011, 250–252 fig. 7.

210 Dio Chrys. 12.61. Mylonopoulos 2008, 63–65; Sporn 2013, 470–471; 2015, 344. Clarke 1997, 74–76, on the other hand, argues that there may have been a worship of mountain gods in certain regions of the Greek world.

211 Keil 1926, 259; Samitz in press.

212 On cult in caves: Sporn 2007; Mylonopoulos 2008, 56–59; Sporn 2015, 345–347; Katsarou – Nagel 2020. On caves in the myths: Buxton 1994, 104–107; Cohen 2007, 312–314.

213 Grotto of St. Paul: R. Pillinger in Zimmermann – Ladstätter 2010, 174–181 figs 362–370. Sütlü Panaya (also "Süt ini" or "Galateri Panhagia"): Atalay 1983; Pülz 2010, 99–101 figs 27–29; Zimmermann – Ladstätter 2010, 209–210 figs 421–422; Pülz 2012, 253–254 fig. 16.

which are the founding legends of the city and of the Artemision.[214] Natural features play a role in both stories.

Kreophylos' narrative of the city's founding includes several landmarks of the city and its immediate surroundings: the offshore island of Syrie, the Sacred Harbour, the Hypelaios spring and the "rugged mountain" of Tracheia.[215] The city's distant past, which had shaped its identity and explained key elements of its present, was anchored in a mythical landscape. It was thus directly perceptible and permanently present for all its citizens.

The founding myth of the Artemision, as related by Kallimachos, also contains a natural element as a central motif: the abovementioned oak tree, which determined the location of the cult image of Artemis Ephesia and thus the immovable position of her temple.[216] In this way, the main sanctuary of the polis was also integrated into the mythical landscape.

The Impact of Urban Development on the Cultic Landscape

The development of most cities in Ionia from ca. 1000 to ca. 200 BCE was, as elsewhere in the Aegean region, characterised by growth and urbanisation (**Fig. 1**, nos 6–9).[217] In Ephesos, there was an additional factor that played a crucial role in the development of the city and its settlement pattern: the dynamic geomorphology of the Kaystros River and its tributaries. Their alluvium pushed the coastline increasingly westwards during the first millennium BCE.[218] Considering palaeogeographical, archaeological and philological information, the following scenario can be outlined based on current knowledge.

In the Early Iron Age, the settlement was located on Ayasoluk Hill, which at that time was directly on the coast (**Fig. 6**).[219] Its steep slopes on three sides made it easy to defend. At present, the archaeological evidence consists mainly of contexts with Geometric pottery finds.[220] So far there is no trace of cult sites, although it is likely that they did exist.

The Artemision was a small open-air temenos in the Early Iron Age (and possibly earlier).[221] It was situated just outside the settlement, in a peri-urban location.[222] This was a humid area in the river delta at the foot of Ayasoluk Hill (**Fig. 6**).[223] To the north, there was a cove suitable for anchoring boats, which was probably the Sacred Harbour referred to by Kreophylos.[224] It is likely that there were already cult sites in the surrounding countryside during this period, but there is currently no archaeological evidence to prove this.[225]

Around 700 BCE, or soon after, new small settlement nuclei emerged on the north and west sides of Panayırdağ (**Fig. 7**).[226] Together with the older main settlement on Ayasoluk Hill, they formed an extensive, dispersed settlement, with the centrally located Artemision probably serving as the main communal sanctuary. The smaller settlements probably had their own cult sites. On the northern slope of Panayırdağ, this may have been the sanctuary of Athena mentioned by Kreophylos (**Fig. 1**, no. 8).[227] In Early Archaic times, Zeus was worshipped, as were probably (Athena) Malis and Demeter Eleusinia, although we do not know where.[228]

With the expansion of settlement along the coast, processions became important as a symbolic link between the individual communities.[229] Although there are no explicit records of the earliest processions, they probably originated in Archaic times. A procession linked the Artemision with Ortygia, the alleged birthplace of Artemis (**Fig. 1**, no. 11).[230] Ortygia was a rural sanctuary presumably located in the Kenchrios (modern Arvalya) Valley to the west. Strabo reports on temples containing

214 On the foundation myths of Ephesos, *supra* pp. 165–167. On the foundation myth of the Artemision and its individual versions: Fischer 2010, 19–21; Kerschner 2015, 202–218.

215 Cf. Thomas 2014, 251: "The main landmarks of Ephesus are lovingly explained," which implies "that the citizens of Ephesos maintained—and continued to develop—their own tales of foundation, tales that were tied precisely to the prominent buildings and natural landmarks of the place."

216 Call. *Dian.* 237–250. Cf. Kerschner 2015, 202–210.

217 Recent overviews: Tréziny 2006, 240–245; Kerschner 2017b; Cevizoğlu 2022; Cevizoğlu – Tanriver 2022; Crielaard 2022 (all with bibliography).

218 Brückner *et al.* 2017, 887–892.

219 Büyükkolancı 2007; Scherrer 2007, 325, 327; Kerschner 2017, 488–491 figs 3, 5. On the fortification wall on Ayasoluk: Kerschner 2016, 346–348.

220 Bozoğlan 2023.

221 Kerschner 2017a, 8–30; 2022, 378–388.

222 On peri-urban sanctuaries of Artemis: Morizot 2013.

223 Kerschner 2015, 211–213. Although the Artemision is located in the marshes (ἐν λίμναις), the Ephesian goddess is not known as Limnatis. On Artemis Limnatis: Morizot 1999.

224 *FGrHist* 417 F 1 (= Ath. 8.361d-e). On the location of the "Sacred Harbour": Benndorf 1906, 23, 48; Keil 1922–1924a, 109; Bammer 1961–1963, 139, 142; Karwiese 1995, 22 map 1; Knibbe 1998, 77; Scherrer 2007, 347; Steskal 2014, 330 fig. 6; Stock *et al.* 2014, 46–47, 49–54 figs 1, 7–8. *Supra* pp. 168–169.

225 The rock relief at Sarıkaya has possibly existed since the Bronze Age and may have been a place of worship in the 1st millennium BCE, *supra* p. 175.

226 Kerschner *et al.* 2008, 21–23, 109–114 pl. 39; Kerschner 2017b, 493–494, 497 figs 4–6.

227 *Supra* pp. 167–168.

228 *Supra* pp. 168, 170–172.

229 Cf. Mohr 2013 (with bibliography; on Ephesos: 49–59). Generally on the archaeology of processions: Stavrianopoulou 2015; Hölscher 2017, 117–129.

230 On Ortygia and the local myth of Artemis' birth there: Picard 1922, 12–13, 287–295; Keil 1922–1924b; Kowalzig 2007, 103; Rogers 2012 (with bibliography); Kerschner 2015, 210–211. On the procession to Ortygia: Rogers 2012, 34–38, 61; Clinton 2014, 119–120; Ladstätter 2016, 241–242, who assumed that the procession was first initiated by Lysimachos.

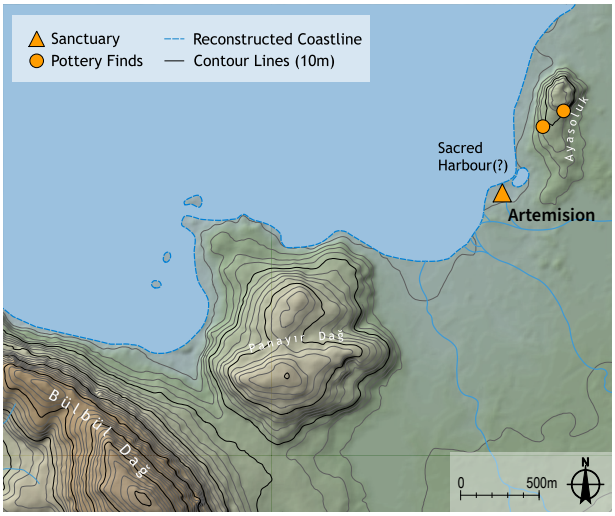

Fig. 6. Ephesos in the Protogeometric to Middle Geometric period (ÖAI-ÖAW, B. Danthine & M. Kerschner).

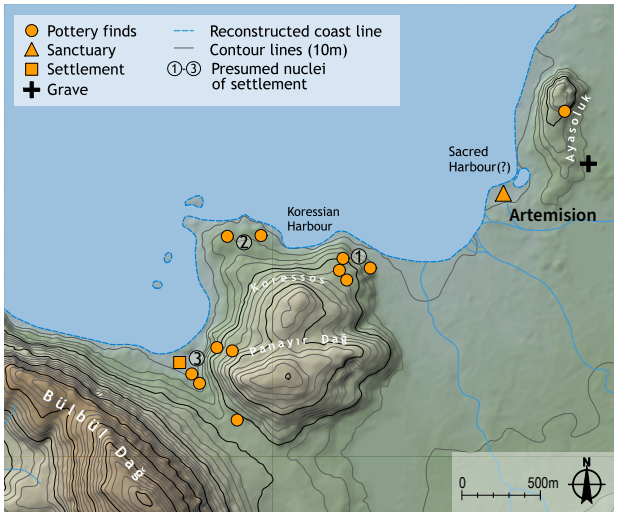

Fig. 7. Ephesos in the Early Archaic period (ÖAI-ÖAW, B. Danthine & M. Kerschner).

ancient xoana, which may date back to the 7th c. BCE when wooden cult images were particularly popular.[231] The probable route of this procession followed the coast, through the Archaic settlements on the slopes of Panayırdağ, and then up into the Kenchrios Valley.[232] An alternative route may have existed, corresponding to the calculated least-cost path, running through the plain east of Panayırdağ and over a mountain pass south of Bülbüldağ. A rock shrine was possibly connected to the procession (**Fig. 1**, no. 6).[233] The northern part of this route may have coincided with the (later) procession of the Kouretes up Mount Solmissos in the south.[234]

At the Daitis festival, the *xoanon* of Artemis Ephesia was carried by the Ephesian youth to a place on the coast, where the venerable cult image was offered salt and celeriac and perhaps bathed in the sea.[235] The exact location is unknown. However, it is clear that the procession was a ritual link between the city and its *chora*.

In the mid-6th c. BCE, the settlement area was extended by a new district in the plain "round the present temple" of Artemis (**Fig. 8**).[236] The old settlement on Ayasoluk Hill was now called the παλαιὰ πόλις, as Herodotos records.[237] There is literary evidence of fortification walls from the Archaic period and archaeological evidence from the beginning of the 4th c. BCE.[238] The rise of the Lydian Kingdom, for which Ephesos was an important trading port, brought prosperity to the city. The Mermnad king Kroisos was a major benefactor of the monumental Dipteros 1 in the Artemision, the first in Ephesos to be built of marble.[239]

During the Late Archaic and Classical periods, the Artemision was at the heart of the expanding city, partially surrounded by residential areas (**Figs 8–9**). New shrines were created in the peri-urban area and were connected with processions. To the south-east, in the fertile, water-rich valley of the rivers Marnas and Selinus, was the Thesmophoreion (**Fig. 1**, no. 10).[240] On the steep northern slopes of Panayırdağ, a large rock sanctuary comprised shrines dedicated to the Theoi Patrooi Zeus, Apollo and Meter, as well as to Hekate and Zeus Mainal(i)os (**Fig. 1**, no. 2; **Fig. 9**). Dionysos, Pan and the nymphs were probably also venerated in the pristine peri-urban zone.[241]

A major turning point in the development of the settlement was the re-founding of the city through

231 Strab. 14.1.20. Cf. Rogers 2012, 37–38.

232 On the procession: Knibbe – Langmann 1993, 28–32; Knibbe 1998, 36–37; Scherrer – Trinkl 2006, 55; Rogers 2012, 135–140. Ladstätter 2016, 241–242; 2019, 201–202, assumed that "it appears that both the local myth of the great goddess's birth in Ortygia and the city's processions to her rural sanctuary there were developed in the third century."

233 *Supra* pp. 174–175.

234 Rogers 2012, 138, 143.

235 Heberdey 1904; Picard 1922, 312–323; Kahil 1994, 220–221; Hölscher 2017, 119–120.

236 Strab. 14.1.21 (translation H. L. Jones). The temple mentioned by Strabo is unanimously identified by researchers as the temple of Artemis Ephesia. On this new district of the Late Archaic city: Kerschner – Steskal 2008.

237 Hdt. 1.26.2. On the location of the παλαιὰ πόλις: Kerschner 2016, 341–344.

238 Hdt. 1.26.1–2; Polyaenus 6.50. Kerschner 2016; Hülden 2020, 110–116, 483.

239 Ohnesorg 2007; Kerschner – Prochaska 2011, 91–117, 123–129; Kerschner 2022, 393–395.

240 *Supra* p. 171.

241 *Supra* pp. 163–164, 175.

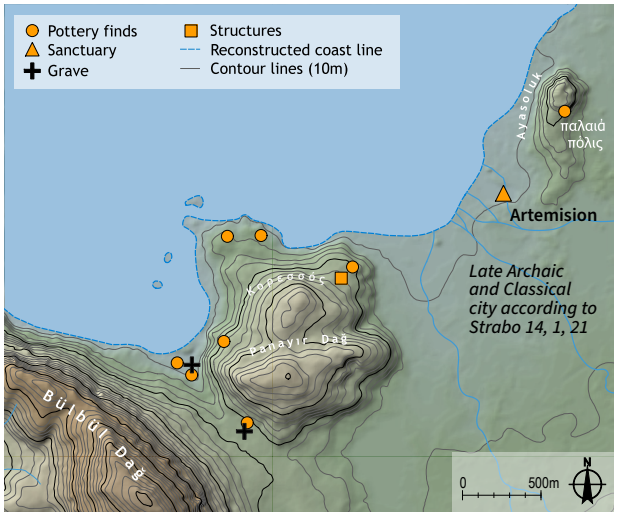

Fig. 8. Ephesos in the Late Archaic period (ÖAI-ÖAW, B. Danthine & M. Kerschner).

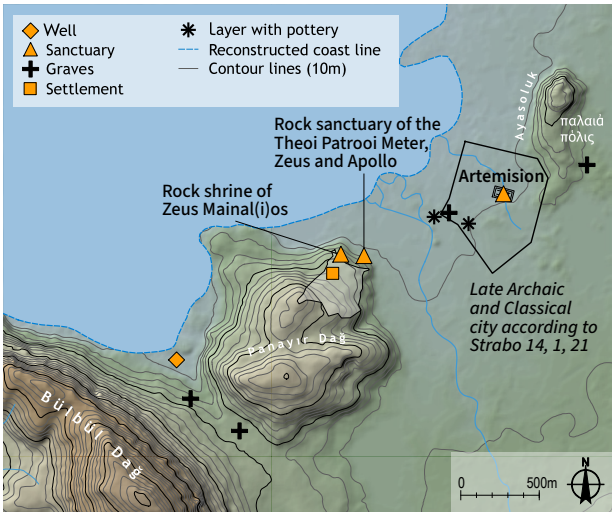

Fig. 9. Ephesos in the Late Classical period (ÖAI-ÖAW, B. Danthine & M. Kerschner).

synoecism, ordered by Diadoch Lysimachos in 294 BCE.[242] He relocated the entire city about 2.5km to the west, where a deep and wide bay on the western slope of Panayırdağ served as a new harbour (**Fig. 1**).[243]

Relocating the entire city resulted in radical changes to the cultic space. This required a reorganisation of the cultic landscape. Venerable sanctuaries that had been established long ago were tied to their locations by myth. They could not just be moved. New links were formed, which are most evident in the case of the Artemision. The main sanctuary of the *polis* was now outside the city walls, but still peri-urban.[244] The great procession of Artemis, which started from the Artemision, passed through the city and returned to the Artemision, was probably introduced at this time.[245] A branch sanctuary dedicated to Artemis Ephesia was established in the Prytaneion.[246] Although it is only documented from the Augustan period, it probably dates back further.[247] The street grid of the newly founded city was aligned precisely along the longitudinal axis of Dipteros 2 in the Artemision.[248] In this way, the layout was symbolically linked to the extra-mural main sanctuary. Lysimachos reorganised the mysteries of Artemis at Ortygia.[249] After the reorganization of the cultic landscape, the new city was positioned between two centres of Artemis veneration: her main sanctuary, the Artemision, to the east, and her mythical birthplace, Ortygia, to the west (**Fig. 1**, nos 1 and 11).[250] The patron goddess was physically and performatively connected to her city.

Other ancient sanctuaries, such as those dedicated to Apollo and Athena, were now also located outside the city walls (**Fig. 1**, nos 7 and 8). It seems that they have been maintained, given that there were no sanctuaries dedicated to these Olympian deities in the newly built city. As with the Artemision, it is likely that they were also connected through processions.

Only two sanctuaries within the new city are known to have originated in the Early Hellenistic period. The so-called Rock-Crevice Temple, possibly a sanctuary of Aphrodite, occupied a prominent position above the harbour (**Fig. 1**, no. 3; **Fig. 3**),[251] whereas an inscription from the 3rd c. BCE attests to the existence of a sanctuary dedicated to the healing god Asklepios.[252]

The sanctuaries that dominate the ruins of Ephesos today were not built until the Roman Imperial period.

242 Strab. 14.1.21; Paus. 1.9.7. Rogers 2001; Scherrer 2007, 333–334; Walser 2008, 73, 81–87; Rogers 2012, 59, 61–74; Larguinat-Turbatte 2014; Ladstätter 2016, 234–235; 2019, 195.

243 Steskal 2014, 331–334 figs 9–10; Ladstätter 2016, 253–257, 261 (with bibliography).

244 Kerschner 2015, 226.

245 Ladstätter 2016, 241–242. About the procession, the course of which is known from the foundation inscription of G. Vibius Salutaris 104 CE: Rogers 1991, 80–126; Sokolicek 2016, 99–105 (with bibliography).

246 Knibbe – Langmann 1993, 11, 21; Karwiese 1995, 82; Groh 2006, 66; Steskal 2010, 212, 235–236;

247 Bumke 2020, 14–15. Cf. Steskal 2010, 212–213.

248 Bammer 1961–1963, 145–146; Groh 2006, 66; Ladstätter 2016, 257.

249 Rogers 2001, 621–629.

250 Ladstätter 2016, 242.

251 *Supra* pp. 164–165.

252 *Supra* p. 173.

Conclusion

Analysis of all the available archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidence revealed that Ephesos had a rich and diverse cultic landscape in the pre- and Early Hellenistic periods. The emergence of individual cults and sanctuaries can only be placed in an approximate sequence. The precise date of origin remains unknown for most, but a *terminus ante quem* can be established.

The Artemision had been a place of worship since at least the beginning of the Early Iron Age. Yet it only gained supra-regional significance in the second half of the 7th c. BCE. Zeus and Demeter Eleusinia were worshipped in Ephesos by the 7th c. BCE at the latest. Cults for Zeus Maimaktes, Demeter Thesmophoros and Athena Malis are also documented in the Archaic period. Malis was a Lydian-Western Anatolian goddess whose cult was either passed down by autochthonous inhabitants or introduced by immigrants and incorporated into the local pantheon through her identification with Athena.

The Thesmophoreion was located in the peri-urban area. In the second half of the 5th c. BCE, an extensive rock sanctuary was established nearby, on the northern side of Panayırdağ with places of worship for the Theoi Patrooi Zeus, Apollo and Meter, as well as for Hekate Basileia and Zeus Mainal(i)os. The importance of the pristine peri-urban area for the cultic landscape is further illustrated by three anonymous rock sanctuaries, the exact dating of which remains unclear. Dionysos, Pan and the nymphs were also worshipped in rugged places close to the city.

Within the urban area, sanctuaries dedicated to Apollo Pythios and Athena were established by the Classical period at the latest, though they likely originated earlier. They served as focal points of worship for the respective settlement nuclei on Ayasoluk Hill and on Panayırdağ, with the Artemision lying between them. It was not until the city was expanded in the Late Archaic period that the Artemision became directly adjacent to habitation quarters. There was another, smaller sanctuary of Artemis located on the agora.

The re-founding of Ephesos by Lysimachos in 294 BCE brought about a radical change to the cultic landscape. As a result of the relocation, old urban sanctuaries suddenly found themselves outside the city walls. As they were tied to their location by myth, they could not be moved. Instead, they were connected to the new city in a performative and material way. Processions and filial cult sites were the most important means of achieving this connection. In its early stages, only sanctuaries dedicated to Asklepios and Aphrodite are documented within the Hellenistic city.

The dynamics of settlement development had far-reaching effects on the cultic landscape. This means that analysing the "temporal depth," as Susan Alcock calls the "shifting and fluid nature [of] sacred landscapes," is of particular importance in Ephesos.[253] In the 3rd c. BCE, Ephesos became a city with many sanctuaries in the former settlement area, yet outside the bounds of the new city. These reinforced the importance of the peri-urban zone for the cultic landscape.

The mythical landscape interacts with the cultic space. It connects sanctuaries to other landscape features that are given special significance by myth. On the one hand, the mythical landscape has a stabilising effect, linking the locations of ancient sanctuaries to specific natural features. On the other hand, it has an integrative effect, connecting individual sanctuaries (e.g. the Artemision and Ortygia) with each other and the surrounding landscape, which was believed to be inhabited by supernatural beings. Such connections could be expressed in processions.

Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, this analysis must remain preliminary. Further discoveries may confirm or challenge aspects of it, but will in any case complement the picture. A fundamental constant remains: while the cultic landscape of the polis and its environs was in a dynamic relationship with the development of the settlement, the mythical landscape played a stabilising and integrative role in this process.

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253 Alcock 1993, 172; 1994, 247.

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Abbreviations

IEphesos = *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Bonn, 1979–1984.

IPriene = *Die Inschriften von Priene*, Berlin, 1906.

Abstract

Ephesos had a rich and diverse "cultic landscape" in the pre-Hellenistic era, as attested by both written sources and archaeological evidence. The sanctuary of Artemis Ephesia dates back at least to the Early Iron Age. During the Archaic and Classical periods, urban sanctuaries were established in the individual quarters of the city, including those dedicated to Athena, Apollo, and Zeus. In the peri-urban zone, a Thesmophoreion and rock sanctuaries for the Theoi Patrooi—Zeus, Apollo, and Meter—as well as for Dionysos, Pan, and the nymphs, were created. The "mythical landscape" linked the "cultic space" to distinctive natural features, reinforcing a local identity grounded in mythical tradition. A major transformation of the "cultic landscape" occurred when Lysimachos re-founded and relocated Ephesos in 294 BCE: the old urban sanctuaries, including the Artemision, now lay outside the city walls. Processions and filial cults served to maintain connections between these venerable sanctuaries and the new city.

12. UN RÉSEAU À PLUSIEURS COUCHES. DYNAMIQUES DU PAYSAGE RELIGIEUX DE L'ATTIQUE ENVISAGÉ DANS LA LONGUE DURÉE

Lorenz E. Baumer

Le terme de « paysage religieux » recouvre, selon les orientations de la recherche, des réalités spatiales et religieuses bien différentes[1]. Il peut, entre autres, englober des conditions topographiques ou politiques (dans le sens propre du terme désignant la cité et ses subdivisions), une répartition spatiale des divinités, ou encore les activités cultuelles qui leur sont liées[2]. Ces différentes composantes du terme se complètent et se superposent selon les circonstances, créant un réseau d'identités religieuses à plusieurs strates qui interagissent entre elles et dont les principaux acteurs sont, d'une part, les organes institutionnels de la cité classique et les structures qui leur succèdent et, d'autre part, les utilisateurs. Nous nous limiterons, dans le cadre de la présente contribution, au paysage religieux de l'Attique aux périodes classique, hellénistique et romaine, afin d'étudier son développement structurel et fonctionnel sur la longue durée.

De l'autorité absolue de la cité à la dépolarisation des réseaux cultuels

Le terme de « réseau » fait son entrée dans la recherche historique en tant qu'outil analytique et méthodologique à partir des années 1960, avant d'être adopté, une vingtaine d'années plus tard, par l'archéologie et l'histoire des religions[3]. On citera, s'agissant de cette dernière, les travaux fondamentaux de Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood qui souligne :

> Greek religion, then, consists of a network of religious systems interacting with each other and with the Panhellenic religious dimension. [...] The Greek polis articulated religion and was itself articulated by it: religion became the polis' central ideology, structuring, and giving meaning to all the elements that made up the identity of the polis, its past, its physical landscape, the relationship between its constituent parts. [...] in the Classical period the polis had ultimate authority in, and control of, all cults, and polis religion encompassed all religious discourse within it[4].

Selon cette lecture, l'ensemble du système cultuel de l'Athènes classique était rigoureusement dirigé et structuré par la cité qui, depuis les réformes démocratiques de Clisthène, instaurait, organisait et contrôlait toute manifestation religieuse, cela au niveau de l'État aussi bien que dans les dèmes[5]. Pour Robert Parker, qui reprend cette même lecture, l'expérience religieuse des Athéniens était façonnée à l'époque classique comme une pyramide, composée de la cité et de ses sous-groupes[6].

Quelque dix ans plus tard, Julia Kindt plaide en faveur d'une plus grande différentiation des acteurs[7], alors qu'Esther Eidinow propose peu après une lecture de la religion grecque surtout en termes de réseaux religieux et identitaires :

> The idea that ancient Greek religion might better be described in terms of a dynamic network seems timely for a number of different reasons. [...] It implies that what we call "polis religion" was a budding institution that emerged from a meshing of social and cultural networks. It also reminds us that, alongside the polis, there were other networks and interactions, which, at the very least helped to define it[8].

John Scheid et François de Polignac relativisent pour leur part le concept trop rigide et monolithique de la religion de la cité, en mettant l'accent sur l'importance du paysage dans les réseaux cultuels : ils rappellent les structures très variables des communautés concernées,

1 Voir le premier chapitre du présent ouvrage.
2 Ces dernières peuvent soit se concentrer en un lieu de culte déterminé, soit, sous forme de processions, comprendre un cadre géographique plus étendu.
3 Baumer 2017, 310–312.
4 Sourvinou-Inwood 1990 in Buxton 2000, 17, 22, 24.
5 D'après une autre contribution de cette même chercheuse, parue deux ans plus tôt, le contrôle étatique s'étendait également aux activités cultuelles dans les maisons privées : Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 in Buxton 2000, 53, 54.
6 Parker 1996, 3.
7 Kindt 2009.
8 Eidinow 2011, 11, 34.

ces dernières agissant « en réseau et en interaction avec la cité sans être totalement dépendantes »[9].

S'agissant de sanctuaires des dèmes, cette image différenciée se confirme dans l'analyse de Delphine Ackermann[10] :

> C'est donc une image complexe et toute en nuance de la vie religieuse des dèmes qui ressort de notre étude : des cultes financés et administrés soit en toute indépendance, soit avec une participation partielle ou totale de la cité, mais un souci général de protéger les sanctuaires de toute atteinte et de veiller au bon déroulement des rites. [...] Mais on a vu aussi quelques exemples de sanctuaires « hybrides », où cité, dème et parfois *génè* sont impliqués dans la gestion à des degrés divers qu'il n'est pas toujours aisé de décrypter. [...] La présence de la cité dans l'administration ou le financement d'un culte de dème ne signifie donc pas forcément une mainmise totale sur le culte, une ingérence malsaine dans les affaires du dème et une perte d'indépendance de ce dernier, comme on le croit parfois[11].

Une lecture similaire, moins orientée sur les structures étatiques que sur les acteurs et leurs différents niveaux d'activité, se retrouve chez Paulin Ismard dans son analyse des associations athéniennes entre les 6ème et 4ème s. av. J.-C. Celui-ci identifie par exemple, pour les cultes de la Tétrapole de Marathon, l'organisation suivante :

> quatre échelles d'activité différentes, depuis les petits sanctuaires de dimension locale, les sanctuaires de dimension régionale, essentiels pour l'ensemble de la Tétrapole, les sanctuaires qui sont l'objet de cultes civiques, et ceux qui, associés à des cultes déliens ou delphiens, peuvent jouer un rôle dans le cadre de rites associatifs qui dépassent le cadre de l'Attique. Un même sanctuaire peut bien sûr, selon les différentes configurations, s'inscrire dans différentes échelles de pratiques et d'affiliations cultuelles[12].

En même temps, ces différentes échelles ne seraient pas à comprendre comme une dissémination du centre vers la périphérie, mais « l'analyse nous convie plutôt à concevoir une ‹ dépolarisation › et un ‹ aplatissement › de la société athénienne de l'époque classique »[13]. L'approche par réseaux et acteurs ne remet pas fondamentalement en question la notion de la religion de la cité, mais elle permet de différencier les strates de la vie cultuelle, rendant les différents paysages religieux, qui se superposaient selon les groupes d'acteurs et les entités politiques concernés, plus variables. Par conséquent, l'analyse des paysages religieux (au pluriel !) d'un dème ou d'une cité doit comprendre les divinités et l'organisation topographique des cultes qui leur étaient destinées aussi bien que les réseaux sociaux et/ou politiques qui les géraient et les utilisaient. Comme le montrent les quelques exemples suivants de sanctuaires ruraux en Attique, cette définition pluridimensionnelle des paysages religieux permet en même temps de mieux comprendre le développement de ces derniers au-delà de la période classique[14].

Sanctuaires ruraux dans l'Attique démocratique

La plupart des lieux de culte situés à la campagne, que l'on regroupe généralement dans la catégorie des « sanctuaires ruraux » (**Fig. 1**), présentent des structures extrêmement modestes. C'est pour cette raison qu'ils ont été qualifiés, par André-Jean Festugière par exemple, de lieux de prière pour les modestes habitants de la contrée[15]. Mais les calendriers cultuels indiquent que ces sanctuaires faisaient bel et bien partie du système religieux des dèmes, comme l'atteste, pour ne citer qu'un exemple, le calendrier de Thorikos (*SEG* 33 147)[16] : l'inscription, rédigée vers 440–430 av. J.-C., révèle que seule la moitié des cultes mentionnés étaient destinés aux dieux olympiens comme Zeus, Apollon ou Athéna. Les autres cultes concernent des divinités mineures et des héros locaux, comme Neanias, Hyperpedios, Nisos, Sosineos, ou le héros éponyme du dème, Thorikos. Il se dessine ainsi un panthéon local fortement différencié et parfaitement adapté aux besoins du dème[17]. La rédaction de la stèle, qui n'a été réalisée que plusieurs générations après les réformes de Clisthène, indique que ce « modelage » du système cultuel local prenait du temps[18], ou que le calendrier fût périodiquement révisé, sans que nous sachions

9 Scheid – Polignac 2010, 432.

10 Ackermann 2016.

11 Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §54. Cf. Ackermann 2018, 270.

12 Ismard 2010, 243.

13 Ismard 2010, 274. L'auteur s'exprime dans ce même sens dans Ismard 2015.

14 En complément de ce qui suit, voir Baumer 2010a ; 2010b, 47–84. Sur la religion dans les dèmes en général, Mikalson 1977 ; Whithead 1986, 176–222 ; Humphreys 2004, 130–196 ; Parker 2005, 62–78 ; Ackermann 2016 ; Ackermann 2018, 269–328.

15 Festugière 1954, 8. Contre l'idée répandue de la pauvreté générale de la population rurale en Attique, Baumer 2014.

16 Pour le calendrier cultuel de Thorikos et d'autres, Whithead 1986, 185–208 ; Parker 1987 ; Verbanck-Piérard 1998 ; Humphreys 2004, 155–165 ; Lupu 2009, 115–149 ; Ismard 2010, 220, propose cependant que « le calendrier concernait moins le dème post-clisthénien de Thorikos qu'un ensemble régional plus vaste ».

17 Dans ce même sens, Ackermann 2018, 271 : « On touche là à l'un des traits les plus marquants de la pratique religieuse dans les dèmes : la grande variété des cultes. Dieux et héros y abondent, souvent sous un aspect tout à fait original ».

18 Selon Humphreys 2004, 133 : « The first fifty years of the demes' existence were a fertile period for the circulation and elaboration of locally anchored myths ».

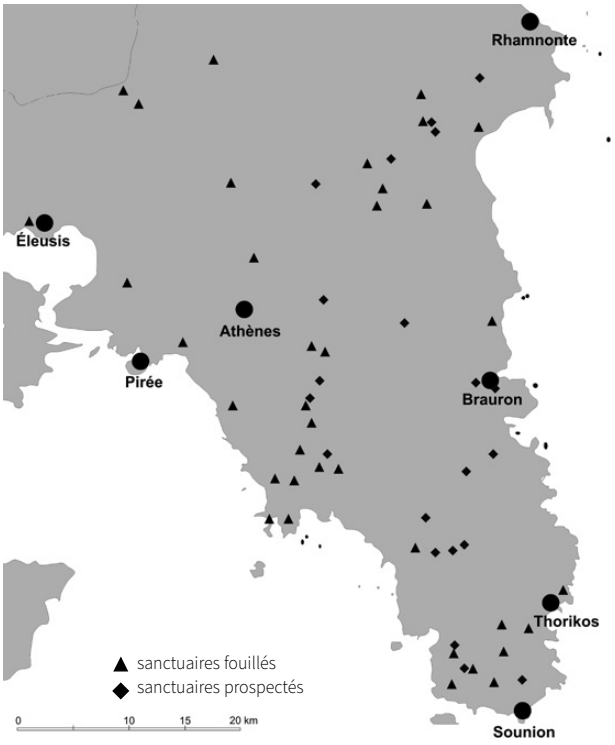


Fig. 1. Carte de répartition des sanctuaires ruraux des époques archaïque et classique en Attique (Baumer 2010b, 63 fig. 15).

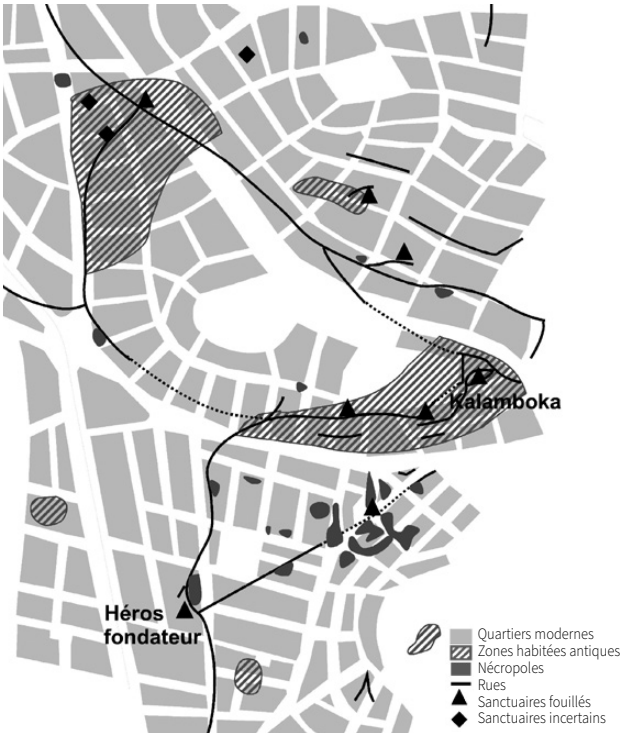


Fig. 2. Plan d'ensemble de la zone habitée antique de Voula – Ano Voula (Baumer 2004, pl. 21).

si et dans quelle mesure la cité y fût impliquée. La répartition des cultes dans le territoire du dème reste malheureusement, à quelques exceptions près, dans l'obscurité. Pour étudier l'organisation topographique des réseaux cultuels dans les dèmes, il nous faut nous tourner vers l'archéologie, en nous limitant ici à quelques exemples[19].

Halaï Aixonidès

Les nombreux sanctuaires du dème d'Halaï Aixonidès[20], situé dans le contrebas occidental de l'Hymette, dans la région de l'actuelle Voula-Ano Voula, ont été découverts dans le cadre de fouilles de sauvetage. Ces dernières permettent de restituer plusieurs zones d'habitation mixtes, comprenant des parcelles avec des maisons à tours et des jardins entourés par des murs de protection, le tout parcouru par un dense réseau viaire (**Fig. 2**). L'acropole du lieu central du dème est située à une courte distance au sud, sur la colline de Kastraki, qui marque la limite méridionale des nécropoles les plus importantes.

Les zones d'habitation comprennent toute une série de sanctuaires de petite taille, construits avec l'ensemble du village durant les 5ème et 4ème s. av. J.-C. Il s'agit d'enceintes d'une surface réduite, délimitées comme les autres parcelles par un mur de protection et accessibles depuis la voie publique par un portail, ce qui parle en faveur de leur interprétation comme lieux de culte du dème (**Figs 3** et **4**)[21]. Les structures à l'intérieur se limitent généralement à un *naïskos* et, s'il est conservé, à un autel, tous deux de petites dimensions.

Vers le sud du village, à l'intersection de deux voies de communication, les restes d'un tumulus et d'un autel de grande dimension ont été découverts, le tout entouré d'un mur décoré de boucliers en relief[22]. Cet ensemble assez monumental correspond possiblement au sanctuaire du héros fondateur du dème, installé au moment

19 Pour une étude plus complète, voir Baumer 2004 et, en complément, Ackermann 2016 ; pour la vie religieuse du dème d'Aixônè, Ackermann 2018, 269–328. Pour quelques récentes découvertes, Papadopoulou 2018, 107–111.

20 Baumer 2004, 22–25, 109–114, cat. Att 43a-43o, fig. 53–74, avec bibliographie ; Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §27–30, fig. 9.

21 Baumer 2004, 24. Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §28, n'exclut pas que « ces petits sanctuaires, du moins certains d'entre eux, aient appartenu à une association privée ou semi-privée, comme un génos, une phratrie, des orgéons ou un thiase ». L'interprétation comme sanctuaire officiel du dème se confirme au moins pour Att 43e, un sanctuaire dédié à Aphrodite, où le dème exposait des décrets : Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §29 avec n. 52.

22 Baumer 2004, 113, cat. Att 43k, fig. 71, avec bibliographie.

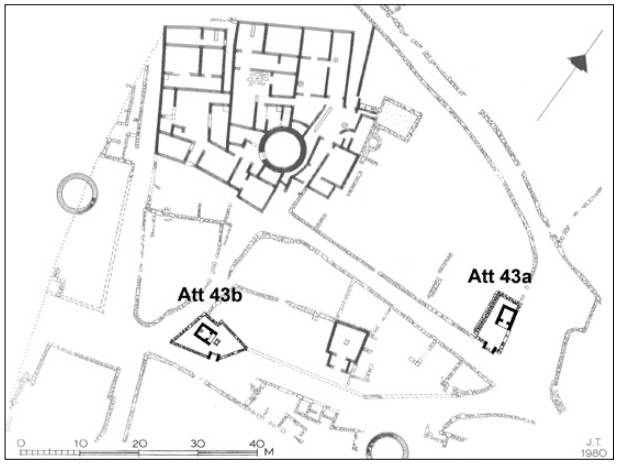


Fig. 3. Plan du quartier Kalamboka à Voula-Ano Voula avec les sanctuaires Att 43a et 43b mis en avant (d'après Travlos 1988, 475 fig. 597, retravaillé par L. E. Baumer).

Fig. 4. Voula-Ano Voula, Quartier Kalamboka, vue du sanctuaire Att 43b (L. E. Baumer).

de la création de ce dernier, à la fin du 6ème s.[23]. Le sanctuaire le plus important du dème se trouve cependant à quelque trois kilomètres au sud du village, sur le cap Zostèr (**Fig. 5**)[24]. Dédié à Athéna, Apollon, Artémis et Léto, le sanctuaire, notamment mentionné par Pausanias (I 31, 1)[25], comprenait dans son premier état un grand autel et un temple à péristyle de 6 × 4 colonnes mesurant 10,8 × 6m, tandis que l'ajout d'un adyton à l'intérieur de la cella et les murs d'enclos ne datent que de l'époque romaine. Des inscriptions découvertes à l'intérieur du temple indiquent qu'il avait été fondé au début du 5ème s. av. J.-C. et financé par le dème lui-même[26], les interventions de la cité n'étant que ponctuelles[27].

Rhamnonte

Les sanctuaires de Rhamnonte[28] présentent une image similaire : plusieurs d'entre eux, notamment celui du héros fondateur, sont intégrés dans les quartiers d'habitation de la ville, tandis que d'autres se répartissent sur les deux côtés de la route qui longe la vallée, entre le sanctuaire de Némésis et la porte principale de la ville (**Fig. 6**). Ces derniers comprennent un Thesmophorion[29], le sanctuaire d'une divinité féminine anonyme et un sanctuaire du héros guérisseur Aristomachos, probablement installé dans la première moitié du 5ème s. av. J.-C. et réattribué à Amphiaraos au 3ème s. av. J.-C.[30]. Alors que la plupart des sanctuaires remontent à l'époque classique, on retiendra que certains nouveaux cultes, comme celui d'Aphrodite Hégémonè, de Zeus Sotér et d'Athèna Soteira, ne furent, d'après les inscriptions, introduits dans la ville qu'à l'époque hellénistique[31].

Les exemples de Halaï Aixonidès et de Rhamnonte attestent de la structuration réfléchie de leurs paysages religieux respectifs durant l'époque classique, comprenant les divinités honorées aussi bien que la répartition topographique des lieux de culte. Certains lieux de culte, comme le sanctuaire de Némésis à Rhamnonte — pour ne mentionner qu'un seul exemple —, assuraient en même temps une fonction plus étendue, soit suprarégionale[32], soit pour la cité entière[33]. Dans leur ensemble, les sanctuaires situés dans les dèmes faisaient partie, comme les grands cultes de la cité, d'un réseau religieux pluridimensionnel dont les différents éléments étaient imbriqués les uns dans les autres, respectant simultanément

23 Baumer 2004, 24. Quelques hésitations sur l'interprétation proposée chez Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §28.

24 Baumer 2004, 114–115, cat. Att 44, fig. 76; Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §15–17, fig. 2–4, avec bibliographie en n. 18; Mersch 2018 propose de dater la première phase de construction au 4ème s. seulement.

25 Pour d'autres mentions littéraires du temple, voir Ackermann 2016, édition numérique n. 21.

26 Pour la gestion du sanctuaire, Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §17.

27 Ce fut le cas pendant une partie de la guerre du Péloponnèse, quand le trésor d'Apollon Zôstèr et d'Athéna Zôstéria était géré par les trésoriers des Autres Dieux, donc par la cité: voir Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §17, n. 24, avec références.

28 Baumer 2004, 29–30, 70, 98–100, cat. Att 26–30, fig. 25–31.

29 Baumer 2004, 99, cat. Att 29, fig. 25, 32. Étude détaillée du Thesmophorion par Nawracala 2014.

30 Baumer 2004, 70, fig. 25.

31 Baumer 2004, 29 n. 219, 98, cat. Att 26–27, fig. 26–29, pour les emplacements de ces sanctuaires à l'intérieur de la ville.

32 Dans le calendrier cultuel de Thorikos (*supra* pp. 190–191) se trouve la mention d'une offrande au sanctuaire de Poséidon à Sounion.

33 Même si la construction du temple de Némésis était financée par la cité, la gestion du sanctuaire était entièrement du ressort du dème: voir Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §43.

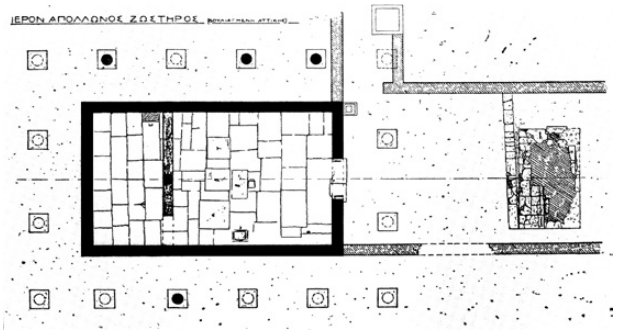


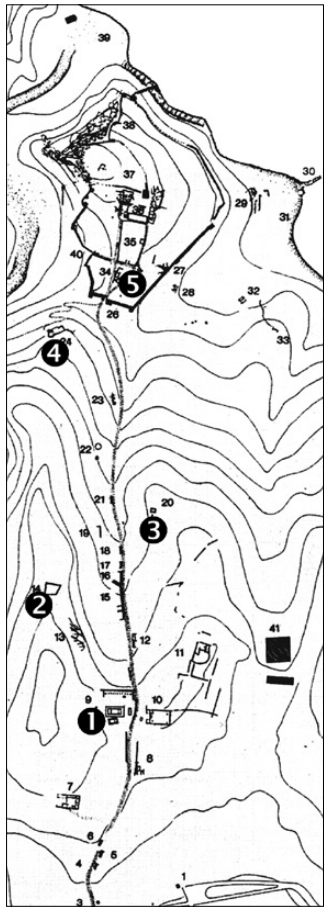
Fig. 5. Plan du temple du cap Zostèr (Mersch 1996, 76 fig. 28).

et de façon intelligente les besoins religieux locaux et les spécificités socioéconomiques des dèmes.

Cultes des tribus et des associations

Les cultes de la cité, dont nous ne traiterons pas dans la présente contribution, et les cultes des dèmes n'étaient de loin pas les seules manifestations religieuses pendant l'époque classique. Au niveau intermédiaire se situent les cultes des héros éponymes des dix tribus, ces derniers étant représentés, par exemple, sur la frise est du Parthénon et sur l'autel des héros éponymes sur l'Agora d'Athènes. Les tribus réunissant à chaque fois, selon la volonté de l'inventeur du système démocratique, des dèmes des trois régions de l'Attique, c'est-à-dire de la ville (*asty*), de la côte (*paralia*) et de la mésogée, et en l'absence d'une cohérence topographique, les sanctuaires des héros éponymes étaient distribués de manière irrégulière en Attique et ne se trouvaient même pas nécessairement dans les territoires des tribus concernées : les lieux de culte des tribus Erechtis, Kekropis et Pandionis se trouvaient par exemple sur l'Acropole d'Athènes, alors que celui de la tribu Antiochis se situait dans la région du Cynosarges et celui de la tribu Akamantis probablement dans la région de l'actuelle Kallithéa. Robert Parker suppose que cette distribution est le résultat de l'utilisation de sanctuaires préexistants, évitant le besoin d'en créer des nouveaux d'une façon artificielle[34]. Plus significatif encore est le fait que le « flottement » topographique de ces sanctuaires corresponde au rôle suprarégional et par principe virtuel des héros éponymes, qui n'impliquait pas leur rattachement topographique aux unités politiques qu'ils représentaient.

La place limitée de la présente contribution ne permettant pas d'élaborer un tableau plus complet de l'ensemble des différents paysages religieux de l'Attique démocratique à des niveaux variés[35], on mentionnera



1. Temple de Némésis
2. Thesmophorion
3. Sanctuaire d'une divinité inconnue
4. Sanctuaire d'Aristomachos/Amphiaraos
5. Sanctuaires du héros fondateur et d'Aphrodite Hégémonè

Fig. 6. Plan de Rhamnonte (d'après Petrakos 1999, 16 fig. 7, extrait ; numérotation L. E. Baumer).

seulement, à titre d'exemple, les cultes associatifs dont les origines sont probablement antérieures aux réformes de Clisthène. Comme le constate Paulin Ismard :

> à travers leur vie rituelle, les associations s'inscrivent à chaque fois dans une série de réseaux cultuels d'envergure très variable, plus ou moins amples, plus ou moins diffus. [...] l'étude révèle les limites d'une analyse centrée trop exclusivement sur la prééminence du fait civique dans l'ensemble des manifestations de la vie religieuse de la cité classique[36].

Ces quelques exemples suffisent à illustrer la structure pluridimensionnelle et très variable des réseaux religieux, dont les sanctuaires ruraux ne sont qu'un élément parmi d'autres. Leur répartition obéissait à chaque fois à la topographie et aux structures socioéconomiques locales, répondant aux besoins religieux des groupes qui les utilisaient.

34 Parker 1996, 119.
35 Voir le résumé dans Baumer 2004, 70–72.
36 Ismard 2010, 250.

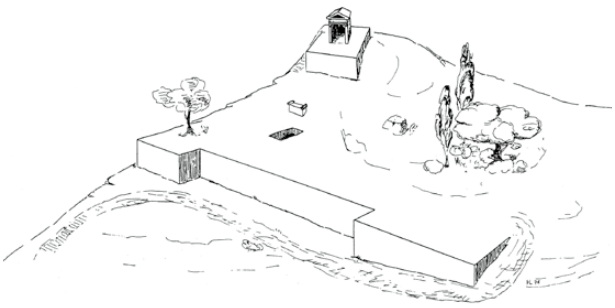


Fig. 7. Trapouria (d'après Lauter 1986, fig. 22b).

Restructurations des réseaux à l'époque hellénistique

Si l'on se contente d'un simple comptage des sanctuaires ruraux attestés par l'archéologie, on ne peut que constater leur très forte réduction à partir du 3ème s. av. J.-C. Mais comme l'illustre le cas susmentionné de Rhamnonte, certains lieux expérimentent durant l'époque hellénistique un renouvellement des cultes locaux, voire l'installation de nouveaux sanctuaires[37]. C'est le cas du sanctuaire de Trapouria, construit durant la première moitié du 3ème s. av. J.-C. et couronnant le sommet d'une colline au-dessus de plusieurs terrasses artificielles (**Fig. 7**)[38]. Bien que le petit bâtiment, qui ne mesure que 4,05 × 3,20m, ne soit pas très impressionnant, les efforts déployés pour construire l'accès « monumental » au *naïskos* le sont sans aucun doute.

Un investissement continu caractérise aussi le sanctuaire de Pousipélia, dans la vallée de Legréna, au sud de l'Attique[39]. Construit au 2ème s. av. J.-C. sur une ancienne aire de battage, il comprenait, dans sa première phase, un petit bâtiment qui servait éventuellement de trésor. Un siècle plus tard, un temple mesurant 10,30 × 7,40m vint s'y ajouter. Les sanctuaires de Trapouria et de Pousipélia partagent par ailleurs le fait qu'ils ne sont, pour autant que nous le sachions, pas situés près d'un habitat contemporain qui pourrait leur être strictement lié[40].

Malgré ces quelques exceptions, la disparition presque totale des sanctuaires ruraux à l'époque hellénistique va de pair avec une réduction générale des attestations épigraphiques et archéologiques. Il est hors de doute que la région a connu, durant le 3ème s. av. J.-C.,

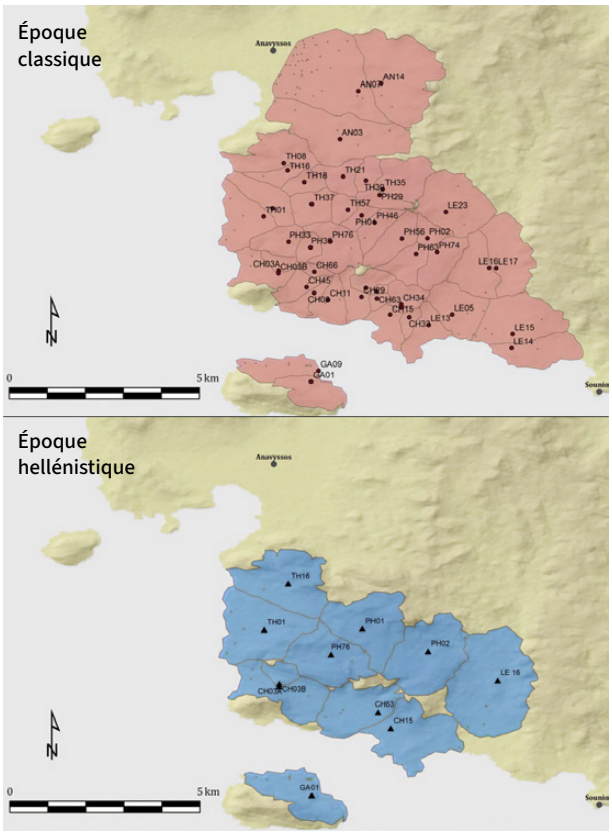


Fig. 8. Répartition et surfaces calculées de fermes au sud-ouest de l'Attique aux époques classique et hellénistique (Pönitz 2014, fig. 41–42).

une forte modification de son occupation[41]. La diminution générale de la population n'explique que partiellement ce phénomène, car on observe dans le même temps un processus de réorganisation des structures agricoles, à l'occasion duquel des unités plus importantes remplacent les innombrables petites fermes de l'époque classique (**Fig. 8**)[42]. Le phénomène contredit au moins partiellement — avec les sanctuaires susmentionnés, même dispersés — l'idée d'une concentration de la population autour de quelques grands centres, tels Éleusis ou Rhamnonte, qui seuls auraient eu les moyens de se protéger contre les menaces macédoniennes et autres. Comme le souligne à juste titre Paulin Ismard, « plutôt que d'imaginer une extinction du peuplement du territoire de l'Attique, il faut sans doute dès lors concevoir [...]

37 Baumer 2018 ; en complément, Graml *et al.* 2019.

38 Baumer 2004, 93, cat. Att 17, fig. 17–20, avec bibliographie ; Ackermann 2016, édition numérique §11, avec n. 14.

39 Baumer 2004, 90–91, cat. Att 12, fig. 12–13.

40 Une zone d'habitation (*Wüstung*) qui se trouve à une certaine distance du sanctuaire de Pousipélia n'a pas été fouillée : Lohmann 1993, 89 ; Baumer 2004, 91.

41 Cf. Lohmann 1993, 248–253 ; Ismard 2010, 334–337.

42 Les structures agricoles de l'époque hellénistique ont fait l'objet du sujet du mémoire de master de Timothy Pönitz (2014). Ce processus de concentration se poursuivra durant l'époque impériale et jusqu'à la fin de l'Antiquité (*infra*). Pour le dème d'Aténé et le développement des structures agricoles des époques classique et hellénistique, voir également Lohmann 1993 et Dimakopoulos 2016.

un processus de ‹ régionalisation ›, qui aurait progressivement dissous la structure territoriale polynucléaire de l'Attique classique reposant sur le dème »[43]. Ce processus allait de pair avec la perte d'importance politique et territoriale des dèmes durant cette même époque[44], ce qui ne nécessitait plus le maintien de leurs réseaux religieux très finement équilibrés et adaptés aux populations et aux territoires respectifs. L'abandon des sanctuaires ruraux durant l'époque hellénistique se révèle chronologiquement et structurellement lié au changement du système politique et économique. Dès lors, il suffisait de laisser subsister quelques sanctuaires choisis pour satisfaire les besoins religieux de la population locale et pour maintenir les réseaux cultuels qui leur étaient liés.

Une affaire de familles d'élite ? Les sanctuaires ruraux sous la domination romaine

Selon une interprétation proposée par Susan Alcock, la gestion des sanctuaires situés à la campagne passa progressivement des institutions politiques affaiblies dans des mains privées :

> During this period, authority within the cities was increasingly transferred to urban-based elite families [...]. As far as the countryside was concerned, attention to larger, more renowned, or otherwise "higher status" sanctuaries was particularly manifest. [...] Ritual became an active weapon in such rivalries, with, not surprisingly, some sanctuaries proving more potent allies than others in terms of their age, size, or splendour. Strategic deployment of resources would target certain cults in the countryside for support, while others were left out of such elite calculations[45].

L'hypothèse est séduisante, surtout quand on intègre dans ces réflexions le phénomène des « temples voyageurs », c'est-à-dire le démantèlement de plusieurs temples classiques dans les dèmes de Sounion, Pallène et Thorikos, destinés à être, sur l'Agora d'Athènes, soit reconstruits dans leur intégralité, comme le temple d'Arès, soit intégrés dans de nouveaux temples sous forme d'éléments architectoniques[46]. Le déplacement de ces importantes constructions à l'époque d'Auguste semble confirmer l'image d'un arrière-pays qui ne présentait plus — à l'exception significative du sanctuaire

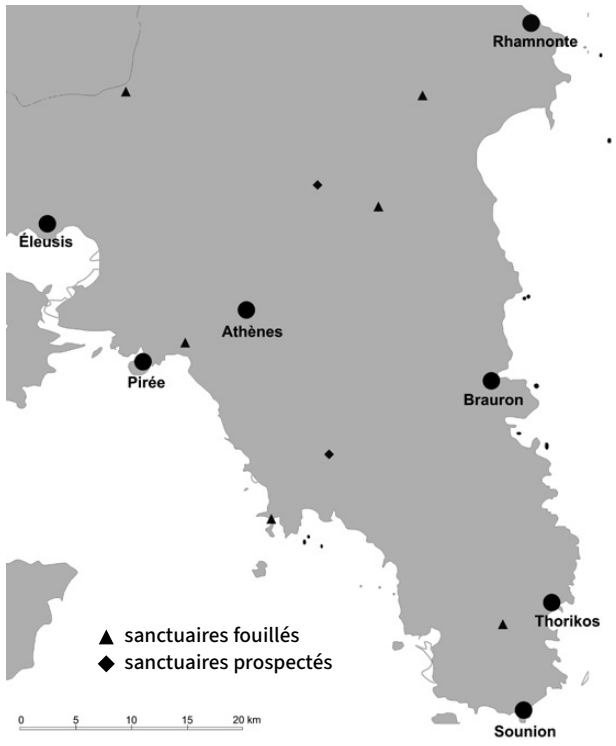


Fig. 9. Carte de répartition des sanctuaires ruraux en Attique de l'époque impériale (Baumer 2010b, 63 fig. 16).

d'Éleusis — un intérêt particulier pour les institutions politiques et religieuses la cité.

Cette interprétation est cependant contredite, entre autres arguments, par une inscription de la même période, qui rapporte la décision de l'assemblée du peuple de charger un certain Métrodore de Phylè de la rénovation de nombreux sanctuaires (*IG* II² 1035)[47]. L'inscription est complétée par une liste d'au moins 52 sanctuaires, dont 13 sont situés à la campagne proprement dite[48]. La charge attribuée à Métrodore, qui devait également superviser la bonne gestion des cultes de concert avec l'*archon basileus*, souligne l'intérêt public que l'on portait au maintien de ces lieux de culte éloignés du centre urbain. Elle confirme par ailleurs la disparition des dèmes dans la gestion des réseaux cultuels locaux, un phénomène qui remontait en fait déjà à l'époque hellénistique[49]. Le nombre réduit de sanctuaires ruraux de l'époque romaine (**Fig. 9**)[50] s'inscrit dans le processus de concentration des structures agri-

43 Ismard 2010, 336–337.

44 Ismard 2010, 343 : « On peut parler à cette date d'une dissociation radicale entre les deux figures du dème de l'époque classique, structure administrative d'intégration au corps civique sous la forme du démotique, et structure associative territorialisée ».

45 Alcock 1994, 260.

46 Voir le résumé dans Baumer 2010b, 54–56.

47 Baumer 2010a, 527, avec bibliographie en n. 20.

48 Selon l'inscription sur l'Hymette notamment et, au sud-ouest de l'Attique, dans le dème de Lamptrai ; 12 sanctuaires se trouvaient à Athènes, 10 sur l'île de Salamine et 17 au Pirée.

49 *Supra*.

50 Baumer 2010a ; 2010b, 47–84 ; Baumer 2018, avec bibliographie.

coles, en continuité avec le développement économique et politique de l'Attique qui trouve ses origines au 3ème s. av. J.-C.[51]. Que certains sanctuaires comme le temple sur le cap Zostèr (**Fig. 5**)[52] aient fait l'objet d'une attention particulière pendant l'époque romaine confirme l'intérêt que la cité portait à certains lieux de culte traditionnels à la campagne, même s'ils étaient rares. Il n'est pas exclu que certains propriétaires des terrains environnants se soient également engagés à entretenir ces sanctuaires, qui restaient malgré tout une structure publique, appartenant à part entière au réseau cultuel de l'Attique romaine.

Conclusion

Comme l'illustrent les exemples évoqués, toute étude des sanctuaires ruraux attiques, dont l'importance structurelle est trop souvent sous-estimée du fait de leur modeste apparence, ainsi que des paysages religieux dont ils faisaient partie, doit intégrer la microhistoire des dèmes où ils se trouvaient aussi bien que la topographie et le développement politique, social et économique de la cité au fil du temps. L'analyse des réseaux et du paysage religieux auquel appartenaient ces modestes lieux de culte fait de ces sanctuaires ruraux un indicateur des dynamiques des structures politiques et économiques au long des siècles, principalement dans des régions où d'autres documents archéologiques et épigraphiques font souvent défaut.

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51 Pour les fermes attiques de l'époque romaine, voir parmi d'autres D'Aco 2013.

52 Mersch 2018, qui propose de dater la reconstruction du temple très tardivement, à la seconde moitié du 3ème s. apr. J.-C.

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Abstract

In the study of the sacred landscape of Attica, the idea that all cultic activity was subordinated to centralized control by the city long prevailed. Recent research has moved towards a depolarization of this overly rigid model, highlighting both the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the demes in developing their local pantheons and the existence of different cultic networks interwoven with one another. This chapter examines the long-term development of the sacred landscape of Attic demes, with particular emphasis on the topographical organization of cult places—especially in the demes of Halai Aixonides and Rhamnous during the 5th and 4th c. BCE. In the Hellenistic period, sanctuaries were significantly reduced, owing both to the decline of political importance of the demes and to economic changes affecting demography and agricultural structures. The trend persisted under Roman rule, yet sanctuaries did not become an elite monopoly. They remained public institutions, fully integrated within the cultic network of Roman Attica. Rural sanctuaries thus prove to be sensitive indicators of political and economic dynamics.

13. SACRED SPACES, NATURAL PLACES: THE ROLE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN BYZANTINE RELIGIOUS LIFE

Fotini Kondyli

The Byzantines tell us a lot about their sacred landscapes, they speak of deserts and mountains, caves and springs as arenas for demon and temptation fighting, and as places of miracles, salvation, and divine revelation that bridge the earthly and heavenly realms. These are also storied places, deeply embedded in pilgrims' narratives, miraculous accounts, and charismatic saints' vitae, allowing different audiences to know, experience, and imagine them. Their ability to evoke and symbolize Biblical events and places, thus bending time and defying geography, renders them remarkable. Yet these are the same landscapes that were routinely encountered and hosted a range of other daily economic and social activities. Perhaps then the term "sacred landscapes" is misleading because as Van Dyke has already pointed out, such terms suggest a sharp separation between sacred and profane spaces, a distinction that fails to capture the multidimension nature of these landscapes. These spaces afford a wide range of activities and experiences to different groups and individuals, blurring the boundary between sacred and secular.[1]

The persistence of such dichotomies is partly due to scholarship's emphasis on the built environment as the primary marker and creator of sacred spaces, rather than recognizing it as one element of a more complex, dynamic, and animate sacred landscape. For example, significant scholarly works in Byzantine Studies have highlighted the multifaceted nature of religious institutions, exploring their economic, social, and political dimensions alongside their spiritual roles. Although there has been progress in understanding sacred places through pilgrimage, ritual movement, and embodied participation, discussions on sacred landscapes often remain monument and site-focused. Sacred spaces are frequently equated with built environments, particularly monumental structures, while the natural landscape is relegated to the background, lacking voice and agency.[2] A clear example of this is the study of monastic complexes, which often centers on the *katholikon* (the principal church of a monastery) while neglecting other associated buildings, especially those located outside the monastic complex, as well as the surrounding environment. Such approaches perpetuate a human-centered view of the sacred world and reinforce the sacred/secular dichotomy by treating the sacred as separate from the rest of the landscape.

Perhaps this is unsurprising when we consider both the trajectory of Byzantine Studies and Archaeology and their approaches to studying religion and sacred spaces. Byzantine Studies have traditionally privileged ontological and cultural approaches, examining buildings in terms of their dates, typologies, and architectural design, and interpreting religious spaces and activities as cultural constructs.[3] While these methods have provided important results, they are insufficient on their own to fully describe and encapsulate the complexity of sacred places and experiences. In archaeological discourses, Insoll has pointed to the reluctance of archaeologists to engage with religion, highlighting the impact of modernity's emphasis on a secular, intensely human-directed, and instrumentalist worldview.[4] This perspective prevents a full appreciation of how religion permeated all aspects of life in the premodern world. As Lane suggests, it also constrains our capacity to recover "a sense of the highly embodied and imaginative way that the natural environment participates with us in the creation of sacred meaning."[5]

Despite these challenges, promising developments are reshaping research in this field. First, advances in survey and landscape archaeology, which inherently involve the diachronic study of landscapes, enable a more nuanced exploration of the relationship between religious and secular sites and consideration of human and non-human interactions.

I am grateful to the Directors of the Thebes Synergasia Excavation Project Kevin Daly and Stephanie Larson and the Directors of the Mazi Archaeological Project Sylvian Fachard and Alex Knodell for their support and permission to include some of their projects' results in this chapter.

1 Van Dyke 2017, 729; Hamilton – Spicer 2005.

2 Lane 2002, 41.

3 On failing to take into consideration the physical aspect of a pilgrimage site, Coleman – Eisner 1994, 74.

4 Insoll 2004a, 1–6; 2004b.

5 Lane 2002, 42.

Second, within a Byzantine framework, the work of Veronica Della Dora offers a pivotal conceptual shift in understanding Byzantine perceptions of space and the environment. By reintegrating nature into Byzantine culture and reintroducing landscapes as sites of eternal returns and divine revelations, Della Dora prompts new questions about the role of the built environment within a preexisting natural sacred landscape.[6] Her approach draws attention to the co-development of people, things, and places producing sacred landscapes. Similarly, Nixon emphasizes that the sacred landscape of each period operates with " a different language with its own grammar," allowing the same landscape to hold distinct sacred meanings and symbolism for different groups in different times.[7] Veikou's work further underscores the need to consider Byzantine-specific spatial practices in reconstructing sacred landscapes which differ from modern perspectives and offer richer interpretations of the surviving evidence.[8] As scholarship increasingly adopts less anthropocentric perspectives on human-environmental interactions, new conversations emerge that emphasize the agency of the natural environment.[9] This includes examining how the location, properties, and behaviors of natural elements shape sacred landscapes and afford particular interactions.

In this chapter, I examine the relationship between human and non-human actors as a fundamental component of sacred landscapes. Moving beyond monumental religious architecture and profane/ sacred dichotomies, I emphasize the inherent sacred qualities of natural landscapes and the diverse religious experiences they foster. In doing so, I take into consideration how Byzantine-specific ideas of place-making and religious practices shaped and were shaped by these landscapes. Highlighting the role of specific natural features, such as rivers, mountains, and caves, I argue that these elements were instrumental in defining sacred landscapes and linking them to particular religious institutions. These natural elements served as powerful tools for saints and religious organizations to assert ownership, enhance their sanctity and reputation, and became key symbolic landmarks within sacred landscapes.

To illustrate these concepts, I present two case studies of sacred Byzantine landscapes in Boeotia, Central Greece, emphasizing the importance of natural features in establishing these sites as significant places of pilgrimage and healing. The first case study focused on a recently discovered Late Antique leprosarium in Thebes, associated with the cult of the evangelist Luke. I argue that water, especially the Ismenos River, played a central role in designating this site as a place of pilgrimage, which subsequently led to the establishment of the leprosarium. The second case study examines the renowned saint Hosios Meletios and his famous Middle Byzantine monastery on Mount Kithaironas. I contend that the mountain's rugged terrain, dense forests and caves, were not merely extensions of the monastic landscape but were already imbued with sacred significance. This sanctity was further shaped through the saint's life, leadership, and miracles. Moreover, this example demonstrates how movement and sensory engagement with the mountainous landscape could transform a physical ascent into a profound spiritual experience.

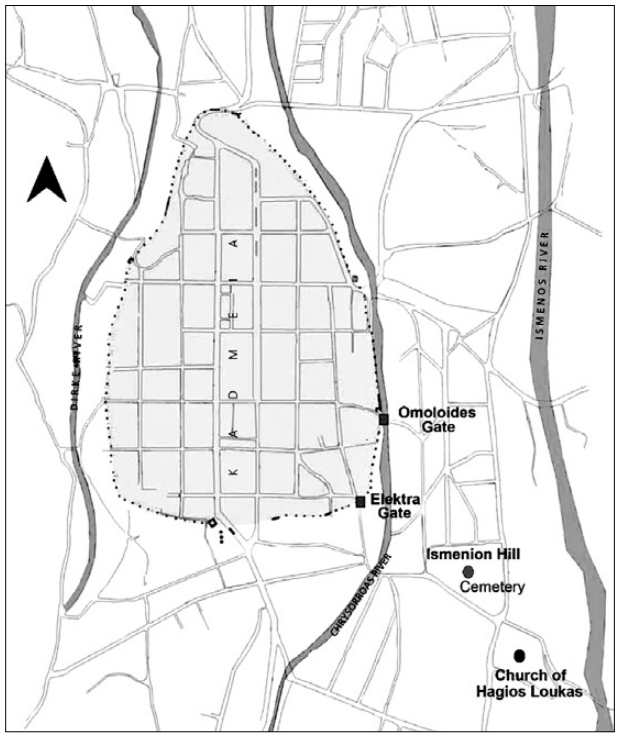

Fig. 1. Map of Byzantine Thebes with the locations of the Ismenion Hill and the church of St. Luke and their proximity to the Ismenos River (after Koilakou 2013, 182).

Sacred Waters and Healing Landscapes

The first case study explores the role of water, as a powerful agent in the creation of sacred landscapes and particularly of landscapes of healing and care. Throughout the Late Antique and Byzantine periods, there was a strong interest in sacred water and its healing powers. People often traveled to springs, rivers, and bath complexes, which were believed to possess healing and purifying qualities because they were associated with events and places of the Old and New Testament, as well as the

6 Della Dora 2016.
7 Nixon 2006, 93.
8 Veikou 2016.
9 For a discussion on how human and natural forces share agency in the making of sacred landscapes: Marsh – Jones 2014; Harmanşah 2014b. See also Lane 2002, 38–61.

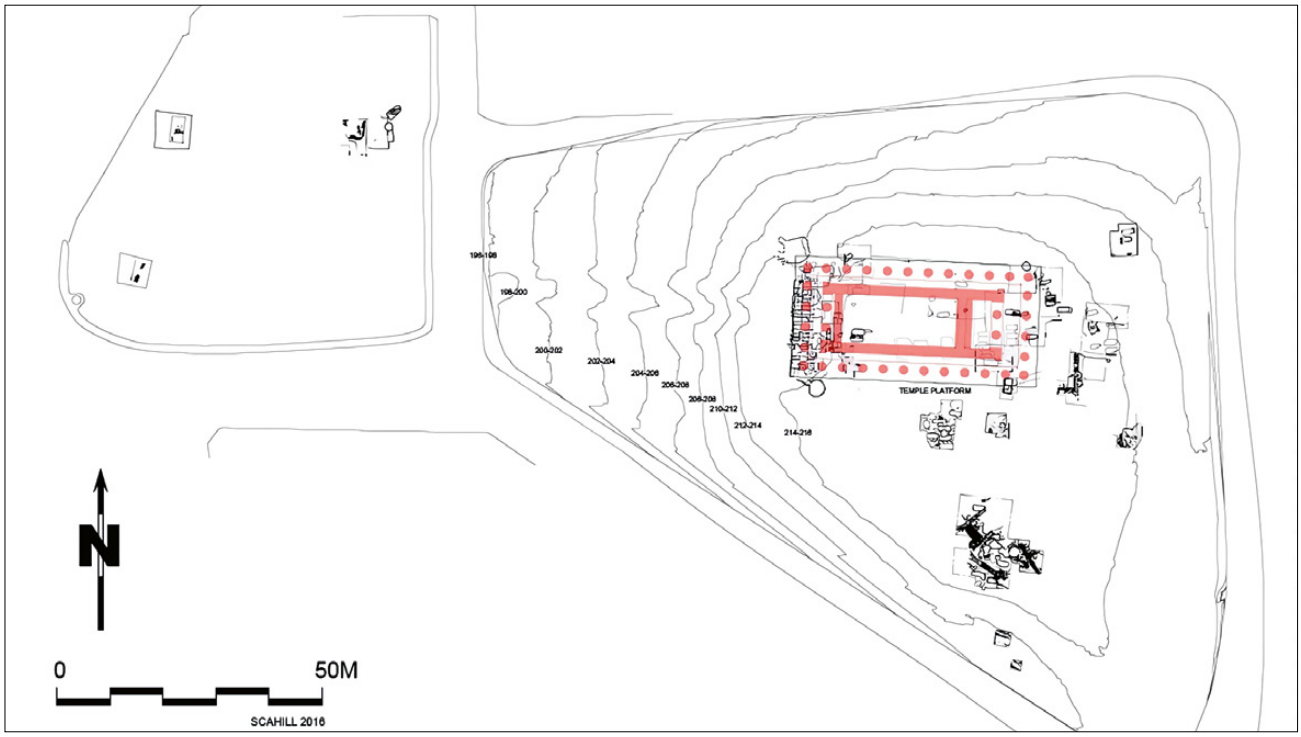

Fig. 2. Ismenion Hill, state plan of excavation site (R. Scahill, Thebes Synergasia Excavation Project).

miracles of charismatic saints.[10] Byzantine healing practices necessitated physical contact either with saints' relics and their tombs or with substances and objects directly connected to them, such as holy water, oil from the saint's tomb, garments, or even bones.[11] Thus, springs and rivers associated with holy presence provided both medical and spiritual care and were frequently visited by those suffering from various illnesses, especially chronic and incurable diseases, or their families.

The Ismenion Hill at the city of Thebes, is located outside the city walls of Kadmeia, and situated between the river streams of Chrysoroas and Ismenos (**Fig. 1**). Recent excavations in the area led by Bucknell University under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia have brought to light significant evidence of the city's sacred landscape in Late Antiquity, highlighting the important role of water as a source of healing, salvation, and pilgrimage. The excavations aimed to better understand the diachronic use of the Ismenion Hill including the study of the architecture, life, destruction, and reuse of the temple of Apollo on the hill as well as the investigation of the cemetery and its multiple periods of use in the surrounding area (**Fig. 2**).[12]

The site was already in use during the prehistoric period as evidenced by the Mycenean cemetery in the area. In Antiquity, three consecutive temples were built on top of the hill, with the remains of the latest phase surviving today. Pausanias' description of the temple, replete with votives and high-quality statues by famous sculptors, speaks to the importance and popularity of the temple and its surrounding area.[13] The Bucknell excavations have confirmed previous archaeological findings in the area about the hill's use as a cemetery in Late Antiquity which was later transformed into an area of domestic occupation and industrial activities in the Byzantine and Frankish periods.[14]

10 For an overview of pilgrimage to healing springs and water sources, see Talbot 2002, 153–154. For a similar site for lepers that also included healing springs and facilities for the sick, Niewöhner 2018, 110–114. For another example of the role of water in healing at a pilgrimage site, see Kristensen 2017, 235–236.

11 For the role of touch in pilgrims' experience, see Frank 2000, 118–133; for the pilgrims' *eulogiai* and tokens, Vikan 2010; Frank 2006.

12 A multi-disciplinary and multi-authored volume about the cemetery on the Ismenion is in preparation now.

13 For the early history of the Ismenion Hill and the temple of Apollo see, Aravantinos 2020. See also Symeonoglou 1985, 236–239.

14 Keramopoulos 1926; Louvi-Kizi 2002; Koilakou 2013.

The Late Antique cemetery at the Ismenion Hill was in use from the 5th to the mid-7th c. and contained individual burials, multiple burials, and mass graves. The grave goods were typical of the period and region, mostly ceramics such as plates and small juglets, a few adornment items including rings and buckles, and several coins.[15] It was also evident from the positioning of the finds and the articulation of the skeletons that many graves had been used multiple times, with previous skeletons and their accompanying objects pushed to the sides or partially removed to make space for the new burials.[16] What sets this cemetery apart is the large concentration of individuals who suffered from chronic illnesses. Based on the work of the project's bioarcheologist, Maria Liston, the majority of the diseased exhibited clear evidence of leprosy, with some also suffering from other life-threatening diseases, such as leukemia.

These discoveries have led to a new understanding of the area and its function, shifting our perception from that of a typical Late Antique cemetery to one that was part of a larger institution, probably a leprosarium which housed and cared for individuals suffering from chronic illnesses. Leprosaria were organized facilities designed specifically to accommodate leper communities and offering long-term care. Unlike hospitals which focused on treating curable diseases, leprosaria served individuals with conditions such as leprosy and cancer, in other words, illnesses regarded as uncurable at that time. This interpretation is further supported by evidence from the Ismenion Hill cemetery.[17] The discoveries at the Ismenion Hill cemetery thus provide valuable insights into the social and medical practices of the time, highlighting the role of religious and communal initiatives in addressing chronic illnesses and offering long-term care.

The emergence of leprosaria in the 4th c. CE marked a significant shift in society's perception of the disease and the people afflicted by it. This change was driven by the early Church Fathers, whose writings and actions encouraged society to care for lepers. They pointed to lepers' special status as those first cured by Christ and thus assured a place in the Kingdom of God. They also emphasized the spiritual rewards of caring for them, therefore transforming their care into an important and honorable act of charity. Prominent religious figures such as Basil of Caesarea founded such institutions, funding them from the bishop's treasury to ensure they were well-staffed with doctors, nurses, and other caregivers. These institutions continued to be established throughout the 5th and 6th c. in many provincial cities across the Empire but began to decline in numbers from the 7th c. onward, a phenomenon that corresponds well with the duration of the leprosarium at Thebes.[18] Many of these institutions were part of charitable foundations attached to religious entities such as monasteries and bishoprics, which often founded and supported them financially. However there are also known cases of aristocratic families and Emperors, such as Justinian, who supported such institutions.[19]

Although only the cemetery was discovered at Thebes, it is reasonable to assume the existence of a large complex designed to house and care for such a sick population. Such a complex would likely include dormitories, cooking and eating areas for both the sick and the caregivers, and auxiliary rooms for operational needs, such as storage rooms, stables, etc. No such structures have been excavated yet and they probably remain buried beneath the modern houses and shops surrounding Ismenion Hill. However, textual sources provide valuable information about such buildings, including separate quarters for female and male patients.[20] Archaeological findings from similar institutions even those of later dates like the medieval hospital at Corinth, can help us imagine the types of structures and their spatial organization required for caring for such sick communities.[21]

In the case of the Ismenion Hill, we can say more about the location of the cemetery and consequently the leprosarium and their spatial and social relationship to the city. Two critical aspects of its location are its position outside the city and its proximity to the stream of Ismenos that flows east of it. Due to the nature of the illness, water plays a significant role in both practical and symbolic dimensions. Frequent bathing was necessary to alleviate the pain and itchiness of skin in a leper population, supported by textual references to treatment procedures for lepers, including washing them in the bath and anointing their sores.[22] At the Ismenion, the cemetery and thus the general area of the leprosarium were connected to the continuously flowing water of the nearby stream which could accommodate the needs of such an institution.

While there seems to have been many leprosaria in provincial cities in Late Antiquity, it is worth considering why one was located in Thebes and how it became known to people suffering from chronic illnesses. The answer likely lies with St. Luke the evangelist whose body was initially buried in Thebes in a basilica nearby, almost across the street from the cemetery.[23] The burial

15 Keramopoulos 1926, 125–128. For an overview of Late Antique burial practices see Poulou-Papadimitriou *et al.* 2012, 379–387.

16 For the reuse of Late Antique tombs and relevant bibliography, see Ardeleanu – Cubas Díaz 2023, 36.

17 Miller – Nesbitt 2023, 80, 89.

18 Miller – Nesbitt 2023, 85.

19 Miller – Nesbitt 2023, 74–75

20 Miller – Nesbitt 2023, 82.

21 Williams – Zervos 1996.

22 Zytka 2019, 155; Miller – Nesbitt 2023, 86.

23 Koilakou 2013, 181.

site of Luke, coupled with his identity as a doctor, made this basilica in Thebes, a water-based healing sanctuary, an ideal place of pilgrimage, prayer, and healing. During Late Antiquity, Thebes was a prosperous and thriving city well-connected with other economic and religious hubs around the Eastern Mediterranean through land and sea trade routes.[24] These connections would have also facilitated access to the site and eased the movement of pilgrims and the sick.[25]

An important aspect of Luke's healing power which enhanced the site's fame and popularity, was the holy water emanating from his tomb. This water was believed to provide protection and healing to those who consumed it or came into contact with it. The Ismenos stream flowing near the basilica and the cemetery, symbolically and physically connected the Saint's tomb and his healing powers with the leprosarium, addressed the practical and spiritual needs of lepers, particularly their requirement for frequent bathing. In this context, the water from the tomb and the river co-created a sacred landscape of healing, attracting different audiences: locals, pilgrims traveling from different parts of the Empire, and lepers who arrived in Thebes seeking care. This sacred landscape functioned as a cohesive and unifying shared space of shared experiences, yet it also became a site of tension. Differing views emerged about who should have access to this water and under what conditions. For example, Church fathers and Bishops often went to great lengths to reassure the public that springs and rivers used by lepers posed no risk to others' health.

The presence of water and its healing powers also attracted other activities such as the operation of public bath complexes in the area. For example, remains of a Late Antique bath complex have been discovered outside the city walls, near the Ismenos stream and just north of the Ismenion Hill.[26] It was common in Late Antiquity to locate such facilities outside the walls to accommodate travelers coming from outside the city. If the leprosarium did not have a bath complex, this nearby facility could have been used also by its residents at different times and days from other groups. Furthermore, the presence of water in the city was instrumental to other aspects of urban identity, including some of Thebes' main economic activities in the Byzantine period. It is no coincidence that the city became an important center for industries requiring large amounts of water and easy access to natural water sources such as silk, textile, and pottery production.[27] It is thus fitting that a holy man, the evangelist Luke, who was buried at Thebes and protected its people, would be associated with water—a natural element integral to the city's geological, religious, social, political, and economic identity. Water has already been a key element of the city's topography and character since Antiquity; in fact, the springs of Thebes are prominently featured in the city's mythology and foundation myths.[28] There are also frequent references to the famous springs and rivers of the city including Dirke and Ismenos in ancient Greek literature, in poetry in particular, and celebrated for the water's good taste and ability to contribute to one's good health and poetic inspiration.[29] In a Late Antique context, the presence of water, its material properties, and its healing, protective, and transformative power played a crucial role in shaping the city's sacred landscape.

The excavation of this site is a unique archaeological discovery that, when fully published, will shed new light and open new avenues of research about illness, healing, and death in Antiquity. For the purposes of this chapter, however, it has introduced an important element in the making of sacred landscapes of miracles, healing, and pilgrimage: water as medicine, as a healing power, and as a promise of salvation that serves as a connector between the city and the saint, and between earth and heaven. This is not an argument for environmental or material determinism, but rather a discussion about affordances—how water provided opportunities for a distinct sacred landscape to develop, allowing St Luke's healing powers to become visible, sensed, bodily experienced, and mediated.

The Making of a Sacred Mountain

In the same region, south of Thebes and in the borders between Boeotia and Attica, we encounter yet another sacred landscape involved in acts of asceticism, theophany, pilgrimage, and healing. This is the case of the famous ascetic Hosios Meletios and the monastic community he established on Mount Kythaironas in the Middle Byzantine period (11th–12th c. CE). The saint's actions and miracles invited new religious experiences and informed the social and economic life of an entire region.

The monastery has attracted scholarly attention both because it survives in good condition and because there are two surviving saint's *vitae* with rich information on the saint's life, miracles, and activities in his monastery and surrounding area.[30] Furthermore, the *katholikon* (main church) of the Hosios Meletios monastery has already been the subject of many studies regarding its architecture, mural frescoes, and sculpture and is

24 Koilakou 2013, 181–183. For the Late Antique history of the region, see also Vionis – Loizou 2017, 241–243.

25 Louvi-Kizi 2002, 632–633. For housing pilgrims, see also Constable 2004, 35–37.

26 Koilakou 2005.

27 Louvi-Kizi 2002, 636.

28 Berman 2004, 3–4.

29 Berman 2007.

30 Armstrong 1988; Armstrong – Kirby 1994.

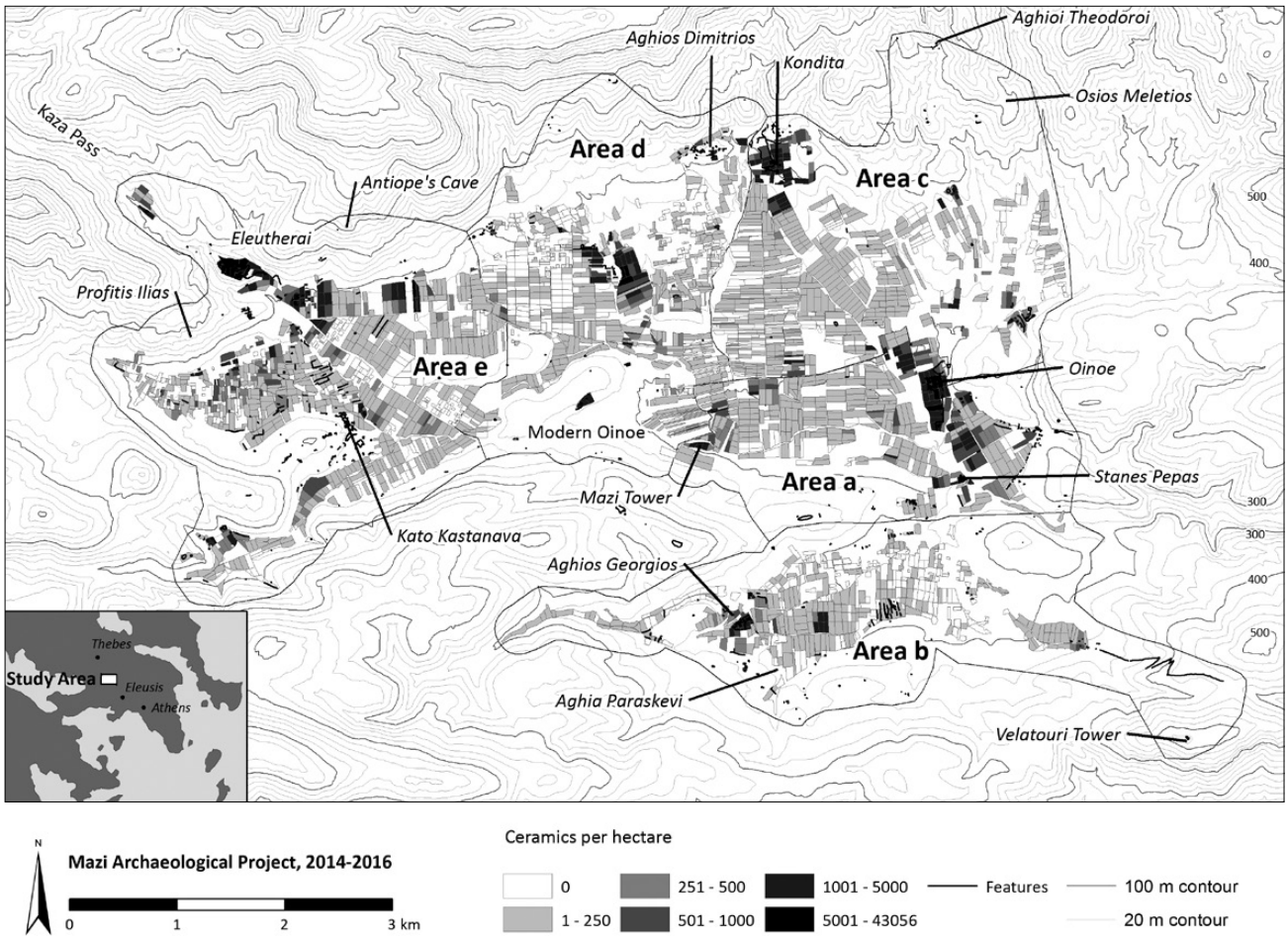

Fig. 3. Map of the Mazi Archaeological Project Survey Area (*AntK* 60 [2017], 147, fig. 1 © Mazi Archaeological Project).

often featured in studies on Byzantine monasticism.[31] However, less attention has been paid to the surrounding landscape of the monastery and its role in the making of a sacred landscape.

During the Mazi Archaeological Project (MAP), there was an opportunity to examine the monastery's role in the region from a "landscape" perspective, trace the presence and activities beyond the walls of its *katholikon*, and better understand the kind of affordances that such a mountainous landscape offered to religious experiences related to the monastery. The Mazi Archaeological Project is a diachronic regional survey on the Mazi Plain, just south of Thebes, in the borders between Attica and Boeotia that ran from 2014 to 2017 and covered an area of approximately 11.6sq and documented some 560 archaeological features (**Fig. 3**).[32] Its main aim was a deeper understanding of the Mazi Plain's diachronic human and environmental history, including questions of land use and settlement patterns, human-environment interaction, and connections to other areas.[33] In terms of the Middle Byzantine period (9th-12th c CE), one of the main objectives was to understand the monastery within a wider network of settlements, sites of activity, and road systems. Furthermore, we also focused on questions of place-making and the strategies employed by Hosios Meletios and his monastic community to shape both a sacred and a Hosios Meletios-specific monastic landscape, paying particular attention to the diverse role of its *paralavria* (dependent satellite monastic estates) in the region. Within this framework, we were equally interested in exploring how specific natural features participated in Hosios Meletios' monastic community and what kind of religious experiences they afforded.[34]

31 Orlandos 1939–1940; Vanderheyde 1994; Bouras – Boura 2002.
32 Papangeli *et al.* 2018, 153.
33 https://www.maziplain.org/theproject
34 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 135–137.

Following a long literary tradition of hagiographic texts, the saint's *vitae* talk about Kithaironas as a place of wilderness, remoteness, and isolation. However, such descriptions can be better understood as literary *topos* used to enhance the difficulties that the saint encountered, emphasizing his miracles and consequently, his sanctity.[35] The fact that there was already a monastery there which Hosios Meletios joined and later expanded and transformed into his monastery, clearly suggests that this was not a deserted space.

The results of the MAP survey further provided a deeper understanding of the monastery's spatial, economic, religious, and social interactions within and beyond its immediate area.[36] These results highlight the monastery's efforts to achieve a balance between isolation, protection of spiritual *hesychia* (quietness) and connection to God, and maintaining access to the region's economy and infrastructure that would help with the monastery's survival.[37] For example, the rise of Hosios Meletios' monastery in the 11th c. and the intense building and monastic activity that continued in the next century significantly transformed the monastery's surrounding landscape in profound ways including attracting new settlements in the area and increasing economic activity as well as reorganizing communication routed and ways to move in the landscape.[38] The large number of *paralavria* also informed how people accessed, moved, and experienced it. As such, the MAP survey revealed an area under the influence of Hosios Meletios that was not so difficult to access, had visual control over the Mazi plain and was well connected to the settlements and agricultural lands in the region as well as to important urban centers such as Athens and Thebes. Everything recorded in the project, chapels, caves, settlements, fields, streams, and roads were connected directly and indirectly with the monastery and forced us to reconsider the relationship between these sites and their degree of participation in a sacred landscape.

According to Byzantine perceptions of sacred landscapes, the natural landscape was already imbued with religious symbolism and meaning. For example, mountains with their caves, springs, paths, and streams were already a product of Divine creation and material manifestation of divine order. Many of them were recognized as locations of theophany, as geographical references to key moments in the Bible as well as opportunities for asceticism, prayer, and salvation.[39] As such, mountains play a key role in Christian tradition and Byzantine geographical imagination thus becoming places par excellence for ascetic practice.[40] Thus, the arrival of Hosios Meletios did not transform an empty landscape into a sacred one; this was already a sacred landscape, dotted with sites and natural features of religious activity and significance. Instead, Meletios reshaped a pre-existing religious monastic landscape, further enhanced its importance and sacredness, and articulated its connection to his vision and miracles.

Hosios Meletios' death delivered a holy body, ready and willing to heal and perform miracles thus, transforming this sacred landscape once again, adding another layer of religious experience by introducing a new pilgrimage site within a larger sacred landscape.[41] The reputation of Hosios Meletios' holy relics for healing and miracles attracted so many pilgrims from across the Middle Byzantine world that his body was moved from its original resting place into an auxiliary chapel to the *katholikon*, to be more accessible to pilgrims.[42] Furthermore, the popularity of Hosios Meletios' monastery as a pilgrimage site was probably responsible for the redirection of movement in the area during the Middle Byzantine period as well as a concentration of Middle Byzantine sites at the eastern end of the Mazi near the eastern route through the Plain and thus closer to the monastery.[43]

The Kithaironas Mountain was a key factor in the making and transformation of Hosios Meletios' sacred landscape that accommodated both a monastic community and a pilgrimage site (**Fig. 4**). Therefore, in what follows, I discuss how the mountainous terrain and its caves became an integral part of the monastic landscape and its ascetic practice. I also consider the reception and experience of this landscape from the point of view of visitors, participants in processions, and pilgrims.

Starting with the mountain caves, these were considered places of silence and pause from the physical landscapes or as Della Dora describes them "places of revelation and divine presence" and "as privileged settings for monks' ascetic struggle."[44] As such, caves invited a particular type of monasticism, which involved the move of individual monks from the main monastery to the caves to enhance their ascetic skills and their proximity to God—both in terms of spirituality and altitude. When they were ready, the ascetics were expected to return from the cave back to the monastery and rejoin their community, helping others prepare for the same physical and spiritual journey, a "cave period" as described by

35 Armstrong 1988, 95, 229.
36 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 150–155.
37 Della Dora 2016, 161.
38 Knodell *et al.* 2017, 162.
39 Hedstrom 2007, 368–369; Talbot 2007, 50–61; Bakirtzis 2013, 114–115; Della Dora 2014, 49.
40 Della Dora 2016, 147; 2022.
41 Orlandos 1939–1940, 39; Bakirtzis 2013, 117.
42 Kotoula 2007; Orlandos 1939–1940.
43 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 152–153.
44 Della Dora 2016, 176, 179; Hedstrom 2007. For caves as monastic dwellings and places of ascetic practice, see also Gerstel 2013; Bender 2016. For a cross-cultural perspective of caves as sacred places, see the contributions in Moyes 2012.

Fig. 4. View of the Mazi Plain and the Kithaironas Mountain; the main Monastery of Hosios Meletios, marked by an arrow, commands a wide panorama high over the agricultural plain on the heavily forested mountainside (*JMA* 33.2, 140, fig. 3 © Mazi Archaeological Project).

Della Dora which was a shared experience among fellow monks, saints, and biblical figures.[45] This was certainly the practice in Hosios Meletios' monastic community. Even today the memory of caves as important sacred spaces seems to survive at Kithaironas since one of the caves near the monastery is named after Hosios and has been transformed into a small chapel which is still visited.[46] The physical and spiritual movement between the monastery and the caves already acknowledges the role of non-human actors in sacred landscapes and suggests a hierarchical progression from lower to higher altitude, from man-made to God-made, and from the built to the natural environment. Furthermore, the repeated monastic practice of moving between caves and the *katholikon* underscores the integration of the natural landscape into monastic life and asceticism. While each of these spaces embodied different aspects of ascetic practice and possessed unique qualities, they were united in contributing to a shared, overarching religious experience.

The mountain itself is a place "in-between," a bridge between the earthly and the divine, between the physical and the spiritual, thus the ascend cannot be deprived of meaning.[47] Movement from the plain to the monastery provides a range of spiritual experiences both to the monastic communities as well as to visitors, pilgrims, and participants in processions.

The path from the Mazi plain to the monastery is filled with markers and symbols of divine presence and the saint's life and miracles, offering opportunities for the pilgrims to stop, pray, and reflect. This follows the concept of stationary liturgy known from places like Constantinople and Rome where processions as well as pilgrims and visitors, moved along the landscape from sacred local to sacred local.[48] Besides natural markers such as trees and springs as *memoriae loci* of miracles, the monastery's *paralavria* in the area also function as markers of a sacred geography and anchors in the stationary liturgy. During the MAP survey, we identified some of them in and around the plain near settlements, springs, and main roads and others on the mountain slopes and closer to the monastery itself.[49] The *paralavria* serve as outposts of the monastery, announcing its presence and becoming visible and permanent markers of the monastery's presence and control of an area.[50] They are actively participating in transforming the sacred landscape. Their presence in the Mazi plain allows both spatial and ritual connections with the mountain and the monastery, folding all the natural features paths, fields, and springs in the area into a distinct and coherent monastic landscape. The *paralavria* contributed to the making of a distinct monastic landscape and gave a geographical expression of Hosios Meletios' sanctity by commemorating important events such as the saint's miracles and death. Dedicated to different saints, the *paralavria* also celebrated and invited the power of the heavenly forces thus, legitimizing the monastery's claims of ownership of the landscape and placing it under divine protection.[51] Ascending a mountainous and encountering difficult-to-access terrain is an integral part of the spiritual journey, healing, and salvation. In her fascinating discussion of litanies (processions) performed by Athonite

45 Armstrong – Kirby 1994; Morris 1995; Della Dora 2016, 198; Armstrong 2007, 332.

46 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 140. For caves as *loci memoriae* and sites of mimesis, see also Della Dora, 2016, 199.

47 Della Dora 2022, 96–97.

48 Baldovin 1987. See also Coleman – Eisner 1994, 76–77.

49 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 143, 142 Fig. 5. Other known *paralavria* fall outside the MAP survey area but exhibit the same locational preferences.

50 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 143.

51 Nixon 2012; Gerstel 2013, 337; Della Dora 2013, 284.

monasteries within Athos and beyond, Della Dora argues that a difficult-to-climb terrain conditions the body, mind, and heart as preparation to encounter the divine and notes how this upward physical movement goes hand in hand with a parallel inward spiritual movement.[52] On the road from the Mazi Plain to Kithaironas, the landscape becomes gradually less accessible, less built, and less populated. During the ascent, smells and soundscapes also change dramatically as one moves from a busier and noisier landscape to a forested landscape where sounds of birds and animals and running water take over as well as chanting and the sound of bells and liturgy fill the air. Similarly, changes in vegetation not only invite different sensory responses but also opportunities to both hide and reveal the monastery, as one approaches. The monastery only gradually reveals itself hidden behind a green canopy and the monastery's defensive walls. From afar one can only see the raised dome of the *katholikon* which holds the promise of an encounter with the saint's body and its healing powers. The caves beyond the monastery are also barely visible and only accessible by crossing monastic lands and ascending higher up; this gradual reveal and encounter with the different elements of this sacred landscape are a key part of the overall pilgrimage experience enhancing contemplation and the hope of healing and salvation.

These are important markers of transition from the ordinary to extraordinary and from the earthly to the heavenly realm. Even once a pilgrim has completed the ascent and arrives at the monastery, the spiritual journey continues as one is now in an elevated location, able to look at the vast views below. For the Byzantines, this view from an elevated position was an invitation to contemplate Christian life and Salvation as well as take advantage of the elevated position to witness and celebrate God's creation and come Closer to God and his kingdom; this experience was only possible because of the shape, role, and symbolism of the mountain.[53] In the case of the Hosios Meletios Monastery, the monastery commands an extensive view of the Mazi plain below including visual contact with the settlements and the *paralavria* located at the edges of the plain and some of the main routes that connected Attica and Boeotia.

A final note about the different religious and symbolic readings of the mountain includes the geology of Kithaironas and the material qualities of its stones in place-making. In recent publications, we have argued that the *katholikon* and its *paralavria* share the same architectural and artistic language where specific building materials and techniques are repeated and displayed in all the buildings associated with Hosios Meletios. A striking deep red colored stone is used in both the *katholikon*, including the tomb of Hosios Meletios, and the *paralavria*. This red stone is strategically placed to draw visitors' attention and emphasize key architectural features, such as apses, and at the *katholikon* the *arcosolium* housing the saint's body. This is part of a deliberate strategy, reflecting a coordinated effort to establish a shared architectural and artistic language between the monastery and its *paralavria*, signifying their affiliation with Hosios Meletios. This red stone is locally sourced, and during the Mazi survey, we were able to locate and map the quarry near the main monastery and within its area of control.[54] Its proximity to the monastery enhances its significance, making it not just a visually attractive material but also an integral part of the holy site shaped by the saint's life and miracles. The use of this local red stone in creating a cohesive architectural language between the *katholikon* and its *paralavria*, and in shaping a unified sacred landscape, underscores the interaction between human and natural elements, highlighting the stone's active role in defining a distinct monastic landscape.

Hosios Meletios thus provides a great case study of a sacred landscape where the Kithaironas mountain together with the monastery, the *paralavria*, the fields, springs, and the caves create a unique religious experience for pilgrims and visitors based both on the ascent and the physical challenges it entails, as well as on the ability to evoke memories of a shared Christian past, elicit strong physical, sensorial, emotional, and spiritual reactions and enhance travelers' anticipation and awe through a play of discovery and visuality. This is how a sacred landscape prepares the body and the mind for an encounter with the divine.[55]

Conclusions

Sacred spaces are storied spaces, "recognized as sacred because of the stories that are told about them"—and these stories vary according to the ways they are being told, and the audiences they address.[56] As such, sacred spaces involve a wide range of actors, both human and non-human, who participate in sacred-making processes. In this chapter, I have introduced the landscape and specific natural elements as essential components of sacred environments. In the two cases discussed, there is a clear synergy between built and natural environments, revealing the entanglement of nature and people. This synergy demonstrates the potential for a broader and deeper understanding of sacred landscapes when we examine human and non-human relations as well as the qualities and affordances of natural features.

52 Della Dora 2016, 153.
53 Della Dora 2022, 72–79.
54 Kondyli – Craft 2020, 145–147.
55 Della Dora 2022, 96.
56 Lane 2002, 15.

By exploring the role of rivers, mountains, and caves in Byzantine religious experiences, such as healing, praying, and salvation I have aimed to present a more nuanced understanding of sacred landscapes, one that moves beyond simplistic sacred-profane dichotomies. This perspective aligns more closely with the way Byzantines themselves understood their sacred landscapes. A human-non-human approach is especially vital for the study of sacred landscapes that include a rich religious architectural environment. The consistent privileging of religious architecture has limited our understanding, often neglecting the complex ways in which sacred landscapes were experienced and understood.

Focusing on the natural landscape also draws new attention to the body and the senses as key participants in spiritual experiences. Bodies could be healed or conditioned in preparation for salvation through their interaction with nature such as bathing in a river or climbing a mountain. Such a framework enriches our understanding of sacred landscapes but also brings these spaces, people, religious beliefs, and rituals closer to the study of lived religion. This approach considers how diverse individuals and social groups might experience and shape sacred landscapes and how such experiences were woven into daily life.

The case studies presented here highlight landscapes that were simultaneously sacred, social, economic, and political. The monastery of Hosios Meletios and its associated sacred landscape, for instance, was also a densely inhabited area, rich in agricultural lands, pastures and other resources. At Thebes, the site of pilgrimage and healing, along with the leprosarium was strongly connected to the city's geology, topography, and industry. In both examples, people traveling to these locations of pilgrimage and healing relied on broader infrastructure of movement, including inns, markets, and an extensive network of road and sea routes that were created for and used in other aspects of life.[57]

Finally, as we seek to move beyond Western and modern perceptions of the sacred, let us remember that, as these examples illustrate, people turned to religious institutions not only for spiritual guidance but also for shelter, food, and medical care. This observation leads me to conclude that this persistent dichotomy between what is and what is not sacred, along with the disproportionate emphasis on monumental architecture disconnected from its surrounding landscape, reflects modern ways of thinking rather than the Byzantine experience.

57 For the infrastructure of Late Antique pilgrims' travels, Dietz 2005, 14–15; Whitting 2020. See also Kristensen 2017, 231–232.

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Abstract

This chapter reinterprets Byzantine sacred landscapes as dynamic, storied spaces shaped by human and non-human actors, where natural and built environments are deeply entwined. Moving beyond the sacred/profane dichotomy and monument-focused scholarship, it foregrounds rivers, mountains, and caves as active agents in sacred place-making, shaping embodied experiences of healing, prayer, and salvation. Two case studies from Boeotia, Central Greece, illustrate this approach: a Late Antique leprosarium in Thebes linked to the cult of the evangelist Luke, where the Ismenos River played a central role in healing practices and pilgrimage experiences; and the Middle Byzantine monastery of Hosios Meletios on Mount Kithaironas, where terrain, forest, and caves were integral to monastic practice. These examples reveal landscapes that were simultaneously sacred, social, economic, and political, integrated into broader networks of movement and resource use. By centering nature's affordances and sensory engagement, the study offers a nuanced view of Byzantine sacred space rooted in lived religion and local natural environments.

THE ARTEMISION AT AMARYNTHOS: INTERSECTING PERSPECTIVES

Thierry Theurillat – Samuel Verdan – Sylvian Fachard

Swiss archaeologists have been engaged in the exploration of the ancient city of Eretria since 1964. While initial fieldwork focused primarily on the city's urban remains, recent research has expanded to encompass the broader territory of the polis. One site, in particular, has garnered significant interest: the Artemision at Amarynthos. According to ancient sources, this sanctuary was the principal extramural shrine of the Eretrians and the site of the lavish festival dedicated to the goddess. Despite its regional significance, the precise location of the sanctuary remained a longstanding enigma in Euboean topography for over a century.

In the early 1970s, D. Knoepfler, then a young Swiss historian specializing in institutions and history of Eretria, undertook an exploration of the surrounding countryside in search of inscriptions and architectural remains that might lead to the shrine's identification. Geophysical surveys conducted in the early 2000s, followed by field survey (2003–2004) and targeted trial excavations (2006–2007), culminated in the 2007 discovery of monumental remains at Paleoekklisies, a coastal site approximately 11km east of Eretria. Systematic excavations began in 2012 under the direction of K. Reber and A. Karapaschalidou, and in 2017, the site was definitively identified as the Artemision (Ducrey *et al.* 2018; Reber 2023).

Since then, further investigations have been conducted successfully under the auspices of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, in collaboration with

Fig. 1. Archaeological plan of the Artemision at Amarynthos, 2025 (J. André – T. Theurillat, ESAG).

1. Hellenistic East Stoa
2. Classical propylaion?
3. Archaic Gate-building
4. Late Hellenistic Exedra
5. Classical-Hellenistic North stoa
6. Late Archaic temple of Artemis
7. Classical oikos
8. Classical oikos
9. Geometric apsidal building
10. Roman sacred well
11. Classical altar
12. Classical oikos
13. Classical oikos
14. Geometric-Archaic temple
15. Mycenaean building
16. Classical oikos
17. Geometric apsidal building
18. Mycenaean building

the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea, under the direction of S. Fachard and A. G. Simosi, yielding significant new insights into the sanctuary's history and development (see most recently Fachard *et al.* 2025).

The sanctuary developed on a coastal plain at the foot of a low promontory that remained continuously occupied throughout the Bronze Age. The earliest evidence of cult activity dates back to at least the late 8th c. BCE, marked by the construction of a long apsidal temple. In the subsequent centuries, the site underwent a process of monumentalization, with the addition of porticoes and other structures delineating the boundaries of a vast rectangular courtyard (**Fig. 1**). Following its heyday in the Hellenistic period, the sanctuary experienced a revival during the Imperial era before gradually declining in Late Roman times. By the end of the Byzantine period, a village was established atop the ruins.

From the outset, research at Amarynthos has embraced a broad-scale approach: The prominence of the Artemision within the religious framework of the Eretrian polis requires to understand its position within the wider regional network of cults, both within and beyond the city walls, as well as the dynamic and evolving nature of these religious and spatial configurations. In fact, the search for the Artemision already incorporated a landscape perspective in the early 2000s, through archaeological and geophysical surveys conducted over an extensive area. More recently, the study of human occupation within its natural environment has been further expanded with a systematic intensive survey of the entire plain between Eretria and Amarynthos (see the contribution by S. Fachard *et al*. in this volume).

As evidenced by this brief research history, the long search for the Artemision has benefited from diverse approaches over the decades, drawing on different sources and applying various scales of investigation. Following in the tradition of his mentor, Louis Robert, Denis Knoepfler focused on the historical geography of Eretria's territory and the institutions that structured its organization, in particular the distribution of the civic community into demes and districts. The identification of rural sanctuaries was of particular significance—not only due to their central role in the city's history and functioning but also because, as *epiphanestatoi topoi*, they served as "conservatoires d'inscriptions" (repositories of inscriptions), whose discovery could significantly advance knowledge of the city. This was precisely the case in 2017 when fieldwork at the Artemision uncovered a Roman well, whose steps and walls were entirely constructed from *spolia* and inscribed stelae. Knoepfler's research was remarkably wide-ranging, drawing on ancient sources to shed light on aspects of Eretria's history that are rarely evidenced in surveys and excavations. On the other hand, it left in the dark a long span of time from the prehistory to protohistory, as well as other aspects that are completely absent from literary and epigraphic sources.

The intensive survey of the vast expanse of land surrounding the Artemision and along the sacred road connecting Eretria to its principal extramural sanctuary has since 2021 completed the picture, revealing approximately 200 sites of various types, occupied from the Bronze Age to the Medieval period. Field by field, from marshy shores to steep ridges, each fieldwork season gradually populates the map of the coastal plain bordered by mountain ranges with coloured points, lines, and thematic layers representing geology, topography, hydrography, communication routes, borders, cultivated areas, settlements, and, crucially, religious landmarks. Although this reconstruction remains partial and based solely on surface finds, the extensive spatial and chronological scope of landscape archaeology provides invaluable insights into the ancient environment.

In contrast to the thousands of hectares investigated through surveys, excavations at the Artemision —spanning from the first exploratory trench in 2007 to the most recent field season in the summer of 2024— have been concentrated on just a few hundred square meters. Providing a comprehensive account of the excavation's contributions to our understanding of the Artemision, both in its architectural and religious dimensions, goes beyond the scope of the present study. However, the microscale of archaeological excavation has rarely been considered as a framework for analysing the religious landscape. One of the key merits of the roundtable was that it encouraged the Amarynthos excavation team to explore a series of questions concerning Artemis' sacred landscape and the extent to which excavation data can contribute to its interpretation.

The following chapters exemplify the three approaches outlined above. The authors advance a deeper understanding of the past environment and human occupation of the Artemision region and site, while articulating distinct perspectives on the role and meaning of the sacred landscape, which forms the central theme of this volume.

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14. A *KOME* AND A *HIERON* UNLIKE ANY OTHER? AMARYNTHOS WITHIN THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE OF THE ERETRIAN POLIS

Denis Knoepfler

What does the name Amarynthos stand for? The question might seem trivial, if not irrelevant, at a time when this toponym has gained genuine notoriety thanks to the significant discoveries from the excavations at the sanctuary of Artemis *Amarysia* in Amarynthos. Yet, given that this name has an old origin, it is worth investigating what it might have referred to over the centuries and millennia, even before the *hieron* came into existence and eventually achieved its fame. In this regard, Pausanias offers little help. In Book I of his *Periegesis*, where he seeks to explain the origin of the epiclesis *Amarysia* as applied to Artemis in the Attic deme of Athmonon, he merely notes that "there is Amarynthos in Euboea" (1.31.5: ἔστιν Ἀμάρυνθος ἐν τῇ Εὐβοίᾳ).[1] Greater precision could have been found in his work had he fulfilled his intention to include Euboea into the *Periegesis Hellados*. At the very least, he might have distinguished between the *kome* and the *hieron,* as is clearly shown by Strabo's testimony (*infra*).

However, the *Periegete*, in his projected (and perhaps partially realized but lost) excursus on Euboea,[2] might have suggested a more complex geographic reality, hinting that Amarynthos was also the name for an entire region, including a mountain and a river located near the settlement. For instance, regarding the Arcadian Erymanthos (8.24),[3] Pausanias illustrates how a single toponym can conceal diverse realities: primarily a mountain, but also a locality bearing the same name (later known as Phegia or Psophis), and a significant watercourse. Indeed, the land of Erymanthos, though not maritime, shares at least two features with that of Amarynthos. First, there is an undeniable toponymic similarity, as both names, structurally identical, can trace their origins back to the Mycenaean period (an even older origin is not excluded, especially in the case of Amarynthos).[4] Secondly, and more importantly, a common religious ground is evident, as both regions were equally dear to the divine huntress. Just as the Peloponnesian Artemis, in a famous passage of the *Odyssey*,[5] "who ranges over Taygetos, the lofty mountain, or Erymanthos, delighting in wild boars and swift-footed deer" (trans. Emily Wilson), the Euboean-Attic Artemis similarly roams the mountains and valleys, fully earning the title *montivaga dea* bestowed by the poet Statius in the *Achilleid*, who evokes the continental and insular shores of the "Euboean sea" near Aulis.[6] Earlier, Callimachos had already mentioned these same sites,

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to the editors of this volume, who not only oversaw the publication but also undertook the translation of the present contribution into English.

1 On the transfer of this cult from Euboea to Attica, see most recently Canopoli 2022, 224–225, who links it to the presence of Eretrians in Athens, following previous scholars. More specifically, Bultrighini 2024, 196 ff., hypothetically situates it in the time of Peisistratos, as a later date seems unlikely given that a branch of the Athmonean cult of Artemis Amarysia already existed in Athens before the late 5th c. BCE. However, in light of recent excavations at Amarynthos, a significantly earlier expansion of the cult should not be ruled out.

2 This could explain why Stephanus Byzantius refers to a Book 11 (ια') of the *Periegesis* in his entry on Tamynai (*s.v.*, ed. M. Billerbeck, IV [2016], T 14). Additionally, in 9.27, Pausanias states his intent to discuss Opuntian Locris, a section missing from Book 10. It is therefore plausible that Pausanias initially planned to cover this coastal region before embarking on an Euboean itinerary from Histiaea to Karystos, eventually returning to his starting point at Cape Sounion (1.1).

3 See M. Jost's commentary in the CUF edition, Paris, 1998. See also Jost 1985, 51 (on Erymanthos as a mountain range) and 55 ff. (on the river and its eponymous river god).

4 On the toponym Erymanthos, see *Lexikon der frühgriechischen Epos*, 2, 1991, *s.v.* (B. Mader), which compares it to O-ru-ma-to in the Pylos tablets, referencing Hiller 1972. For evidence from the Theban tablets—unknown to the author of the entry "Amarynthos" in the same dictionary (1, 1979, *s.v.*)—*infra* n. 48.

5 *Od*. 6.103–104: ἢ κατὰ Τηΰγετον περιμήκετον ἢ Ἐρύμανθον, τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι. These verses were also cited by Pausanias (8.24.2) regarding Erymanthos, in a passage where the manuscript tradition is notably corrupt.

6 Stat. *Achil*. 1.449–450: *Euboicum scandens Aulis mare, litora multum montivagae dilecta deae, iuxta Caphereum*, etc. See Knoepfler 1988, 382 n. 3; Brulé 1993, 57 ff.; Kowalzig 2018, 102 ff., with map fig. 5.2, on the cult of Artemis on both shores of the Euboean Gulf. Kowalzig highlights the emblematic figure of Iphigenia, suggesting "a perpetual echoing or even re-enactment of Agamemnon's experience in local religious ritual," potentially including Amarynthos (cf. *infra* p. 214 and n. 9) as a means of ensuring safe maritime crossings. Indeed, Amarynthos' promontory provided an excellent vantage point over the Aegean (*infra* with **Figs 4–5**).

answering in a single verse the dual question of which mountain and port Artemis cherished above all: "Of the mountains, Taygetos; of the harbours, those of Euripos."[7] Today, it is almost certain that these references included not only the shrine at Aulis but also the sanctuary at Amarynthos,[8] where, according to an etiological tradition linked to local cult practices,[9] Agamemnon himself offered sacrifices to the goddess before the Achaean fleet's journey to Troy.

Amarynthos: A toponym with Shifting Dimensions

The toponym Amarynthos, like Erymanthos, could originally have extended not only to this portion of the coast with its sacred harbour, but also to the river whose sediment deposits, just a few hundred meters west of the sanctuary, have continuously altered the coastline.[10] Historian L. Breglia, without risking a precise identification, noted a possible connection between Artemis *Amarysia* (for whom she still used the literary epiclesis *Amarynthia*) and the river, a hypothesis recently revisited by M. Canopoli.[11] Furthermore, this seasonal river, now known as the Sarantopotamos, was most likely called the *Erasinos* in Antiquity, probably the *Erasinos Eretrikos* mentioned by Strabo (8.6.8, C 271).[12] This river constituted an essential feature of the sanctuary's landscape, especially from the period—still not precisely determined—when the cult of Leto and Apollo was added to that of Artemis.[13] Indeed, it is well known that water plays an key role in the myth of the twins' birth, not only on Delos (the Trochoid Lake, ca. 50m away from the Leto temple) but also at the Letoon of Xanthos, since, according to local tradition, the goddess, after giving birth, hastened to bathe Artemis and Apollo in the waters of the Xanthos River.[14] Given the near-total disappearance of Euboean mythological accounts, we cannot exclude that the Eretrians had their own version of the birth of the Letoids, which they would have naturally situated at Amarynthos and along the nearby watercourse.

Besides, Artemis was at home in the surrounding mountains. A Hellenistic dedication to Artemis *Olympia* (**Fig. 1**) indirectly testifies to her presence in the Euboean Olympos range, which dominates the plain.[15]

7 *Dian.* 3.188: Τηύγετον δ'ὀρέων, λιμένες γε μὲν Εὐρίποιο.

8 In his annotated edition, F. Bornmann (*Callimachi Hymnus in Dianam*, Florence, 1968, 90 *ad loc.*) found the emphasis on proximity to the Euripus unexpected, given that the most renowned harbour sanctuary of Artemis, in his view, was Artemis *Munichia* in Piraeus. While he acknowledged that, besides Aulis, the sanctuaries of Delion and Amarynthos might also underlie the poet's words, he ultimately dismissed them due to their lack of a port. In the case of Amarynthos, he considered the association of Artemis *Amarysia* with warfare—though certainly not her primary function—an additional argument against identification. However, this view is now untenable (*supra* n. 6 for references), given that the Artemision was located directly on the shore. Moreover, one might question whether, in the same passage, the island most beloved by the goddess (v. 187), named Dolichè ("Long Island"), should indeed be identified as Ikaria—despite its sanctuary of *Tauropolos* (cf. Strab. 14.1.19, C 639)—or whether Euboea, traditionally called Makris in poetry, could be a more plausible, if unexpected ("la prima sorpresa," as Bornmann notes), substitute for Delos, which the Cyrenean poet does not mention.

9 *Souda*, *s.v.* On the epithet *Kolainis*, originally applied to Artemis of Myrrhinous but also linked to Artemis *Amarysia* in a scholium on Aristophanes, see now Canopoli 2022, 223–224. However, neither Canopoli nor Bultrighini 2024, 197, seems to have been aware of a late dedication to this deity, tentatively attributed to Eretria (cf. *IG* II³ 4, 1104; Knoepfler 2019b, 318, no. 188).

10 See the contribution of S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume, pp. 259–261. M. Ghilardi and collaborators (2012, 2016, and 2018, referenced in Verdan *et al.* 2020, 77–80, with fig. 6) illustrate the relationship between Bronze Age remains and the shoreline of the ancient bay. See also Krapf – Reber 2018, 854–855, n. 18.

11 Breglia (Pulci Doria) 1985, 38–39: "L'epiclesa Amarynthia ci riporta direttamente ad una divinità fluviale o ctonica," due to its association with the narcissus, "avalorando l'elemento fluviale." See also Canopoli 2022, 224 n. 94: "Amarynthos was also the name of the personification of a river," a claim that could have been reinforced with more specific arguments.

12 The likely identification with the "Bach von Vathia" was already proposed by Philippson (*RE s.v.* Erasinos 2; see Philippson 1951, I, 608, followed by Radt 2007, 460). Roller's commentary (2018) is, here as elsewhere—particularly regarding Euboea—highly insufficient (cf. Knoepfler 2019b, 223 no. 7). I had defended this identification even before 1970, and it was accepted by Auberson–Schefold 1973, 153, with n. 34 on p. 195. Meanwhile, in his commentary on *Strabo, Book VIII* (CUF, Paris, 1978), R. Baladié (index *s.v.*) cautiously suggested identifying this Eretrian Erasinos with the torrent "dont le lit protégeait la ville à l'ouest," though this hypothesis was not particularly compelling. The identification of Amarynthos at the Paleoekklisies Hill has now made it highly probable that the Eretrian Erasinos was adjacent to the Artemision, much like the Attic Erasinos near Brauron (as noted by Strabo himself). See also Ducrey *et al.* 2004, 297; Fachard 2012, 35 and 53 n. 19: "peut-être l'ancien Erasinos"; Knoepfler – Ackermann 2012, 41 n. 122; Verdan *et al.* 2020, 76, with reference to Knoepfler 1988.

13 The presence of the triad at Amarynthos is considered possible "since the outset" by Verdan *et al.* 2020, 78 and n. 117. For the spread of the cults of Apollo Delios and Artemis Delia across the Aegean, see Grandjean – Salviat 2006, 318 ff., with map fig. 6; Kowalzig 2018, 99, with map fig. 5.1 (though unaware of the new Thasian decree).

14 See Baker – Thériault 2024, 169–203, particularly 200 ff., on the testimony of Antoninus Liberalis (*Metamorphoses* 35.2–3), following the historian Menekrates of Xanthos and the grammarian Nicander of Colophon.

15 *IG* XII 9, 260 (Eretria Museum). This remarkable dedication by a woman, dating to around 300 BCE, was first copied in 1885 by the Byzantinist G. Lampakis and published in *The Scottish Review* 9.18, 1887, p. 351 no. 11. Slightly later, it was recorded by A. Wilhelm during his Euboean journey in 1890 (cf. Wilhelm 1892, 141 no. 9 [= Wilhelm 1984, 93]), who immediately linked the epithet to the modern—and most likely ancient—mountain name *Elympos/Oympos* (cf. Bursian 1868–1872, 397). This interpretation was endorsed by Stavropoulos 1895, 157

Fig. 1. Hellenistic dedication of an Eretrian woman to Artemis *Olympia* (*IG* XII 9, 260). Votive stele in the Museum of Eretria, ME 1126 (J. André, ESAG)

Although the mountain was perhaps primarily dedicated to Zeus Olympios, it does not exclude the possibility that other Olympian deities may have been worshiped there under the same epiclesis. Furthermore, another mountain in the Eretrian chora is linked to the worship of this goddess: Mt Kotylaion. This is highlighted in a passage from Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon* (3.86), which describes how, in 348 BCE, the Athenian army was about to cross this mountain when facing an Euboean coalition at the Battle of Tamynai.[16] According to Stephanus Byzantius, a reference to this mountain in Antimachos of Colophon's work[17] revealed that Mt Kotylaion—just like Mt Kotylion in Arcadia, overlooking the Apollo temple at Bassai[18]—was "a mountain in Euboea dedicated to Artemis" (ὄρος Εὐβοίας, ἀνακείμενον Ἀρτέμιδι, ὥς φησιν Ἀρχέμαχος ἐν Εὐβοϊκῶν β̄).[19]

Until recently, it was believed that this oronym—which also designates an Eretrian deme, as attested in an important civic catalogue[20]—referred to the elongated mountain that runs from north to south (starting at the Seta or Vordolakka pass) and separates the plain of Eretria from the Aliveri region (**Fig. 2**). This identification, advocated by Alfred Philippson,[21] influenced

(with useful contextual details), then by Geyer 1905, 5 and 58. The only notable objection came from the late P. Themelis, who, while not disputing the mountain identification itself (Themelis 1969, 177), somewhat arbitrarily proposed that the sanctuary of Artemis Olympia was the one excavated in 1963 on the southwestern slope of the Acropolis, west of the likely *Thesmophorion*. Auberson – Schefold 1972, 106 (with n. 82 on p. 198, citing my epigraphic clarification) were inclined to accept this view, whereas Metzger 1985, 9 n. 4, rejected it in favour of attributing the temple to Demeter and Kore—a still uncertain hypothesis (cf. Huber 2017, 50–51, with fig. 2, city plan 5d). See the contribution by S. Fachard *et al.* in this volume.

16 Regarding this passage, the Atticist lexicographer Harpocration (*s.v.* Κοτύλαιον, ὄρος Εὐβοίας [155 Keaney]) cites the historian Archemachos in Book 3 of his *Euboïka* (Jacoby, *FGrHist* 424 F 2a), but this name should not replace that of Antimachos in Stephanus Byzantius (*infra* n. 19).

17 Little is known about this well-informed Hellenistic poet, credited with a two-book epic about Artemis. As a citizen of Colophon, Antimachos likely had a special veneration for Apollo of Claros, as well as for the other members of the triad represented in this sanctuary by a monumental statuary group.

18 On the sanctuary of Artemis *ἐν Κοτυλίῳ* (mentioned in the manumission decree *IG* V 2, 429 found *in situ*), where the goddess held a preeminent position alongside Apollo and Pan, see Jost 1985, 51 ff., with additional insights from Sinn 2002 on Artemis' role among the people of Phigaleia, including her depiction on the Centauromachy frieze at Bassae.

19 Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Κοτύλαιον (Billerbeck, III [2014] K 190 = fr. 98 Matthews = fr. 75 Wyss). In her commentary on the lexicographer's source—Antimachos, whose name should not be corrected to Archemachos, author of the *Euboïka* (cf. *supra* n. 17)—the editor refers to Matthews 1996, 39–45 and 265 F 424 F2a265), as well as S. Sprawsky (Brill's New Jacoby, *The Fragments of the Greek Historians*, www.brillonline.nl), though she does not express a clear stance "zur Lokalisierung des Berges." In fact, this new localization seems to have been unknown to any of these scholars.

20 The great civic list *IG* XII 9, 249, was first published by Chr. Tsoundas (cf. Petrakos 2023), for which see *infra* p. 217. Previously, the locality was known, apart from grammatical sources, only through the "Homeric" catalog in the *Dionysiaka* of Nonnos of Panopolis, 13.163, which mentions, between two otherwise unknown places, the *Kotylaion hedos*; see Baumeister 1864, 39, and already 13 for the commentary on Aeschines' testimony. At that time, given the usual localization of Tamynai near Aliveri, it seemed clear that this mountain should be sought near the Euripos Strait, somewhere between Eretria and Porthmos; cf. Bursian 1868–1872, 397 and also 422, 425; Kiepert, *Formae Orbis Antiqui*, pl. XV; Stavropoulos 1895, 149–150 no. 12; Geyer 1905, 5, then 58 and especially 78 (where the identification with Servouni—though not explicitly named—follows from the mention of the monastery of Ag. Nikolaos, which had previously given its name to this mountain).

21 However, it is known that his monumental work on the "lands of Greece" was only published posthumously after World War II by Ernst Kirsten; cf. Philippson 1951, 610–611: "Das auf der griechischen Karte Servuni genannte Kalkgebirge (770m) hiess im Altertum *Kotylaion* und war, wie auch der Ólumpos, der Artemis heilig," with n. 1, where Kirsten also endorses this identification, referring to Ziebarth *IG* XII 9 (1915), 164–165 (regarding the homonymous deme "situs ad montem Cotylaeum inter Tamynas et Βάθειαν loco ignoto") and Wallace 1947, 119 (see also 134 and 139, with the map on p. 131 fig. 1, now reproduced in *Amarynthos* I, 253 fig. 46), where Wallace mentions "Mt Kotylaion the position of which is known from Aischines 3.86" but does not identify it with Servouni. However, Ziebarth, *loc. cit.*, noted that the modern δῆμος Κοτυλαίων occupied a different region, as it was located at the eastern foot of Mavrovouni, "ita ut nostris temporibus aberraverit ab antico loco." In reality, this is an example of remarkable toponymic persistence, which likely explains the name given to the new

Fig. 2. Map of the Amarynthos region, with the correct insertion of the oronym Kotylaion at the site of present-day Mavrovouni (Karvonis – Mikedaki 2012, Map 27, Southern Euboea, Map 3).

subsequent scholars and cartographers to commonly identify the Kotylaion as the Servouni Mountain. However, I demonstrated—while reconstructing the Athenian military campaign culminating in the Battle of Tamynai—[22] that this oronym was, in fact, the name given by the Ancients to Mt Mavrovouni (or at least its southern portion), a vast limestone massif whose southeastern tip was occupied by the deme of Kotylaion,[23] with its ancient and medieval fortress, studied by S. Fachard. The latter adopted this new identification, and his excavations have practically confirmed it.[24] Although philologists have largely ignored this identification, and a few historians doubted it due to their attachment to traditional reconstructions of the events of 348 BCE,[25] it is now recognized in the *Barrington Atlas*[26] and the excellent maps of southern Euboea recently published in the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (see **Fig. 2**).[27]

But how did the Ancients refer to Mt Servouni, which necessarily had to be part of Artemis *Amarysia*'s domain, given that it was precisely at this mountain's southwestern promontory that the goddess had her main sanctuary. Could it simply have been *Amarynthos*? In a general sense, this toponym evoked the realm of hunting, *ta kynegesia*. Indeed, Amarynthos was not just a name for a hunting dog, as shown in the myth of Actaeon.[28] According to a testimony that still echoes distantly in the works of Stephanus Byzantius, it was also and especially the name borne by a "great huntsman of Artemis" (κυνηγὸς Ἀρτέμιδος), the eponymous hero of the site and, according to another source,[29] the father of Narcissos. Narcissos himself, also a hunting hero according to the well-known myth, likely received civic cult at Amarynthos (*infra*).

Thus, the entire mountainous massif forming the core of the city's original territory, with its three distinct ranges—Olympos, Kotylaion, and Amarynthos—was dedicated to Artemis. To the northwest, meanwhile, Mt Dirphys unmistakably belonged to Hera, the tutelary deity of the Chalcidians (**Fig. 3**).[30] The territorial predominance of one deity over others is a general phenomenon. The Eretrians long nurtured a special veneration for Artemis. They were fully conscious of this, as evidenced by a striking declaration, found in a decree from around 200 BCE, which marked Eretria's acceptance of the new festival established by the people of Magnesia on the Maeander in honour of Artemis *Leukophryene*: The Eretrians stated that they responded to the invitation

administrative division (for the list of the 20 demes created in 1833, cf. p. 146: note that the existence of a deme of Aulon, as well as of Koumi and Konistres, excludes the possibility that Kotylaion had a large extent). The brief article "Kotylaion" in the *Realencyclopädie* XI (1922), *s.v.*, by L. Bürchner, is utterly inadequate, like most entries by this author (cf. Robert 1962, 142 n. 2: "modèles de travail inintelligent").

22 Knoepfler 1981, 293 and 302 ff., with the map fig. 3; cf. Knoepfler 1997, 368 and 384–385, with n. 127–130 (on pp. 422–423); 2001, 194.

23 Knoepfler – Ackermann 2012, 930, regarding a new mention in a subscription list found in 2011 (*infra* pp. 225–226).

24 Fachard 2006, 87: "Nous nous rallions volontiers à cette hypothèse, d'autant plus que nous avons entendu à plusieurs reprises l'oronyme *Ta Kotylia* pour désigner cette partie du Mavrovouni"; cf. Fachard – Boukaras 2011, 129 ff., particularly 130 and n. 6 regarding the identification of the fortress with the deme of Kotylaion, a hypothesis itself based on the northward shift of the corresponding oronym, following the 1981 study and the 1997 synthesis; see also Fachard 2012, 67, with the extensive n. 133, mentioning some proponents of the traditional localization, including archaeologist Athina Chatzidimitriou, who remained more or less convinced of the validity of the identification of Tamynai with Aliveri.

25 Thus, in his study on Eretrian demes, H.-J. Gehrke, judging that "die von D. Knoepfler mit ingeniösen Argumenten vorgeschlagene Identifizierung mit dem Mavrovouni-Gebirge muss freilich problematisch bleiben," was of the opinion that "eine Identifizierung des Kotylaion mit dem Zerbouni–Gebirge ist deshalb nicht ausgeschlossen" (Gehrke 1988, 29–30). The same caution, or even scepticism, is found in other historians who had previously dealt with Phocion's expedition to Euboea. This is particularly the case with Bugh 2011, 275 ff., a specialist in Athenian military institutions, who, when revisiting this campaign more recently, seems nevertheless to accept, based on S. Fachard's early works, the identification of the deme of Kotylaion with the fortress of La Cuppa–Vrisi (as evidenced by figs 6–7 of his article). He thus rightly criticizes Tritle 1992, especially 136 n. 20, for his desperate attempt to defend the traditional opinion regarding the route of the Athenian expeditionary force crossing Kotylaion from the Eretrian plain before even reaching the Tamynai region. However, it is regrettable that Bugh did not clarify his views on the identification of Mt Kotylaion, even though he hints that Wallace 1947 was mistaken on this point as on many others.

26 Published under the direction of Richard Talbert (2000), pl. 55. It is interesting to note that this was not yet established in the first editions of this map.

27 *Tabula Imperii Byzanti*, J 35 *Smyrna*, I (2012), Map 27, Euboea Southern Part Map 3.

28 Ael. *NA* 7.40 (σκυλακες Ερετρικαι). Morevoer, Eretrian hounds were renowned for their loyalty. According to Apollod, *Bibl.* 3.4.4, ed. J. G. Frazer (where this list is part of a passage in hexameter verse considered an interpolation). The "cynonym" Amarynthos, however, does not appear in the series of dog names—all disyllabic for being "easy to call" (ευανακλητα)—provided by Xen. *Cyn.* 7.5. Regarding the names of dogs inscribed on the François Vase (Calydonian Hunt), see Wachter 1991, 87–88 and 91–94.

29 Pseudo-Probus, Commentary on Virgil's *Bucolics* (2.48): "Narcissus flos [...] a Narcisso, Amarynthi filio, qui fuit Eretrieus ex insula Euboea." Cf. Knoepfler 2010a, 128 ff. and 156.

30 As evidenced by several coin issues: see Picard 1979, in particular p. 14. When Hera, having quarrelled with Zeus, left their residence on Cithaeron "to take refuge in Euboea" (Paus. 9.3.1), the Ancients undoubtedly understood that she was heading for Chalcis and, more specifically, for Mt Dirphys.

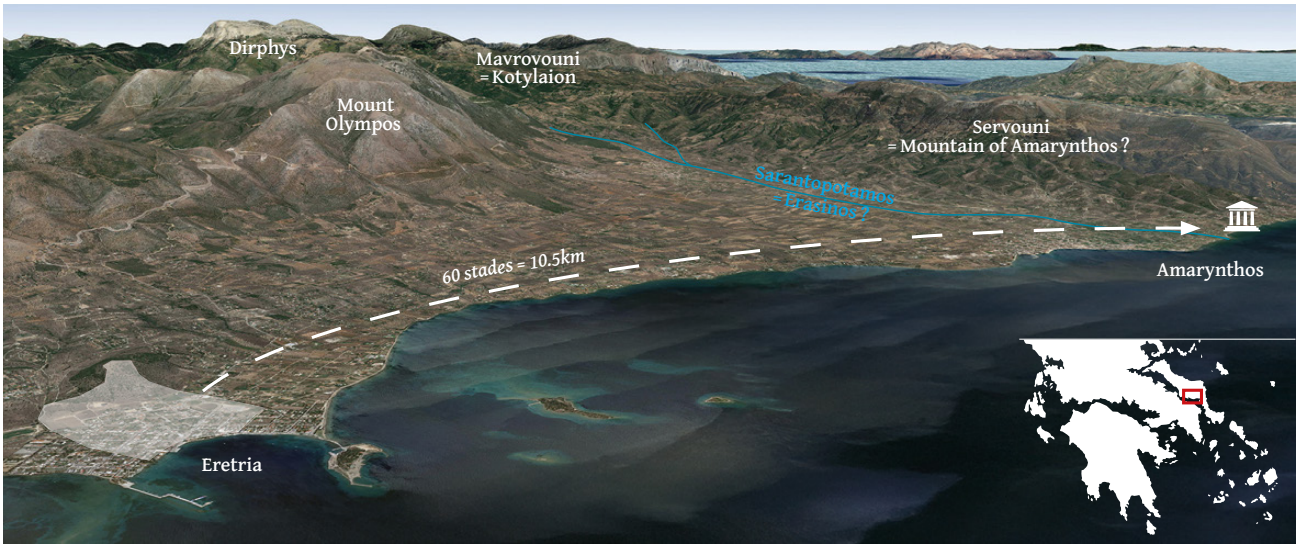

Fig. 3. The mountain ranges of central Euboea, Artemis' favoured domain (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

from the Magnetes out of piety in general, but "especially towards Artemis" (μάλιστα πρός τὴν Ἄρτεμιν).[31]

At the very least, the toponym Amarynthos referred to the westernmost and most visible maritime promontory (τὰ ἄκρα) of the modern Servouni Mountain. According to the same entry by the Byzantine grammarian (whose long-disregarded testimony now proves invaluable), Amarynthos also appears as an "island of Euboea" (νῆσος τῆς Εὐβοίας). This characterization, which might appear enigmatic or even absurd,[32] finds a plausible explanation.[33] This new reading highlighted a well-attested meaning of the term νῆσος, namely that of the compound χερσόνησος, meaning "peninsula."[34]

Indeed, in ancient times, the peninsular nature of the site designated by the toponym *Amarynthos* must have been far more pronounced than it is today, following two millennia of maritime erosion and the progressive infilling of the nearby bay on the western side, which began no later than around 1000 BCE.[35]

These elements suggests that this *(cherso)nesos Euboias*, perhaps sometimes referred to simply as *Nesos*,[36] served as a useful landmark for navigation in the southern Euboean Gulf from the earliest antiquity, a position that it later retained under the name Paleochora or Paleoekklisies until premodern times.[37] I believe this interpretation explains why the toponym Amarynthos appears among the Euboean place names

31 O. Kern, *Inschriften von Magnesia*, 48, ll. 12–14 (cited in Rigsby, 1996, 235–236, no. 98), with my observations (Knoepfler 2001, 359, no. XXXI). I had already highlighted the significance of this testimony in Knoepfler 1988, 390, and n. 34

32 Thus, E. Ziebarth, in his Euboean corpus (1915), was inclined to correct this νῆσος to δῆμος (*IG* XII 9, p. 161, l. 38), which was hardly advisable from a philological standpoint (see Knoepfler 1988, 404 n. 94). In her recent and valuable edition of *Ethnica*, Billerbeck 2006–2017 (I, A) accepts the manuscript reading while rightly rejecting another arbitrary correction. However, she fails to account for the transmitted text ("Es handelt sich in Wirklichkeit von einer Ortschaft in Euboia"; similarly in Canopoli 2022, 224), whereas A. Meineke, in his 1844 edition, had already intuited the correct explanation by suggesting that the designation νῆσος given to Amarynthos here likely emphasized the site's proximity to the maritime shore.

33 Knoepfler 1988, 404 and 2018, 901–902. Krapf – Reber 2018, 855 n. 19, rightly note that the testimony transmitted by the Byzantine grammarian must mean that the peninsula-like nature of the hill—confirmed by geological surveys—remained perceptible well into historical times.

34 This meaning of the word is duly acknowledged in standard dictionaries of Ancient Greek. See in particular P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, *s.v.* Notably, the first known visitor to the site of Amarynthos, the Greek P. Revelakis, reporting in 1816 to Vice-Consul Fauvel from his visit to Vathia, "luogo marittimo", mentioned the presence of "moltissime capele sopra in un impedio, o promontorio" (Ackermann – Knoepfler 2009, 135).

35 *Supra* n. 10 for the bibliography on geological studies of this coastline. See S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume, pp. 259–260.

36 Hence the name of a mysterious Euboean locality mentioned in the Latin geographical tradition: Pomponius Mela, *Chor.* 2.108 (ed. Silbermann, CUF), and Plin. *NH* 4.12.64, mention this *Nesos* among the island's ancient localities, while both of them omit the name of Amarynthos. However, it is certain that the mention of Pyrrha alongside *Nesos* in these two authors results from a confusion with the homonymous city on the island of Lesbos (see Knoepfler 2010b, 70–71, with n. 24).

37 According to the French *Instructions Nautiques*, ships navigating northward through the channel are advised to leave the Euboean coast at Vathia to follow the mainland coastline. Indeed, east of the port of Eretria, over several nautical miles, there are numerous hazards: "one must not approach these dangers, as there are no markers to avoid them" (*Bassin oriental de la Méditerranée*, Paris, 1913, 142 = 161 in the 1886 ed., no. 691).

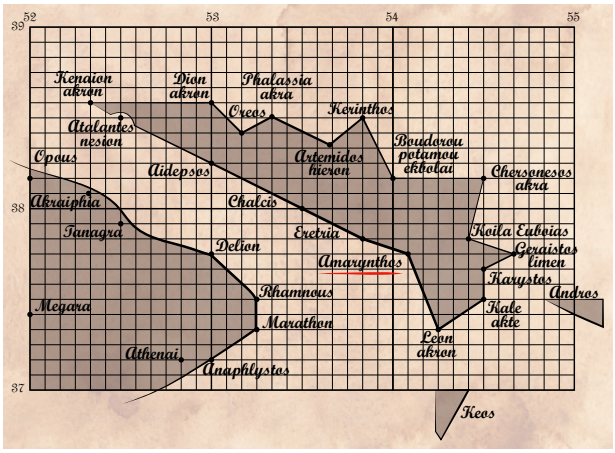

Fig. 4. Euboea according to Ptolemy (map drawn by the author and finalized by T. Theurillat, ESAG).

listed by Ptolemy, as it certainly does not arise from the site's religious renown. If the geographer deemed it necessary to include the coordinates of this coastal locality, it is because the Amarynthos promontory indeed marks a notable feature in the seascape when sailing north and passing *Leon Akron* (likely identifiable with Cape Pounta on modern maps),[38] which Ptolemy lists immediately after Amarynthos. Indeed, Ptolemy's coordinates—imprecise though they may seem to modern eyes—had value only for the creation of a map of the island as he envisioned it based on the data available to him (**Fig. 4**). The virtual reconstruction of the Artemision recently published by the ESAG (**Fig. 5**) provides a much better understanding of the significance attributed to the Amarynthos Hill by ancient sailors: arriving there from the ports of Eretria or Oropos, they saw the southern Euboean Gulf opening up to the wider sea, beyond Styra and Rhamnous, towards the Aegean.[39] Conversely, from the top of the hill, one could spot an approaching (enemy) fleet from far away, long before it became visible from Eretria. By contrast, the city's Acropolis, which I believe was known as *Palaia Eretria* or *Astypalaia*, served as a useful landmark for sailors navigating up the Attic coastline, visible as soon as they reached the Delphinion, the sacred port of the Amphiaraion of Oropos.[40]

Amarynthos as a Deme within the System of "Districts" and "Tribes"

The recent excavations conducted on the promontory of Paleoekklisies by the ESAG under the direction of T. Krapf have clearly demonstrated that the site was occupied during the earliest phases of the Bronze Age but was then uninhabited from the end of the Mycenaean period to the early Byzantine era.[41] In other words, following an event or a deliberate decision related to the establishment of the Artemision in the Early Iron Age, the settlement was relocated to another site, probably further inland, while the pre- and protohistoric site was transformed into a sacred zone. The latter likely included an *alsos*[42] and enclosures for small livestock intended for sacrifices, as attested in literary and epigraphic evidence from many Greek sanctuaries.[43]

The *kome* of Amarynthos, explicitly mentioned by Strabo in his famous passage about the distance separating this village from the *teichos* of Eretria (10.9.10, C 448), could not have been located on the same spot as the settlement whose existence during the Mycenaean period is attested by both archaeology and Linear B tablets from the Kadmea in Thebes (in its allative form, *A-ma-ru-to-de*).[44] Even before systematic excavations began, it was logical to assume that the *kome* was

38 The precise location of the homonymous *demos*, Leon, whose existence was revealed by the civic catalogue found in Eretria in the House of Mosaics (Ducrey *et al.* 1994, 245–246, and *infra* p. 224 n. 78), remains debated. I inclined towards Cape Korphia, at the northwestern border of the *dēmos* of Zarex, possibly in the Argyro/Virra doline (Knoepfler 1997, 357–358), while S. Fachard would rather place it on Cape Pounta (Fachard 2012, 74 n. 191).

39 As Verdan *et al.* 2020, 76, rightly observe: "The 250 × 150m promontory offers an unobstructed view over the Euboean Gulf."

40 Indeed, upon reaching this point, they could see the elongated silhouette of the Eretrian Acropolis, originally called *Astypalaia* (like other coastal elevations in various parts of the Aegean), later renamed *Palaia Eretria*—a result of folk etymology interpreting this pre-Hellenic or possibly Phoenician toponym differently, as becomes evident when comparing the two passages in Strabo referring to this so-called "Ancient Eretria" (9.2.6, C 403 and 10.1.10, C 448). The first passage almost certainly relies on Artemidoros of Ephesos' description, while the second likely draws on Apollodoros of Athens' commentary (Knoepfler 1997, 363 and 417 n. 93. See also Fachard 2012, 52 n. 9, on the probable persistence of *Astypalaia* as the name for one of the city's urban *demos*. More recently, Verdan *et al.* 2020, 96 n. 97–98, rightly reject earlier attempts to identify Strabo's *Palaia Eretria* with Lefkandi or Amarynthos, considering it "more likely" that this designation referred to the acropolis itself (as I had already proposed in my 1970 Parisian *Thèse de 3e cycle*, which remained unpublished in that form). See now Fachard – Verdan 2024, 121, and Knoepfler 2025, 40–50.

41 See most recently Fachard *et al.* 2023 and 2024. See also the *ESAG 2022 Preliminary Report*: "throughout antiquity, however, the hill no longer appears to have been inhabited" (p. 12); cf. *ibid.* 2023, 6–9, and this volume, pp. 240–241.

42 This hypothesis seemed compelling to me as soon as this negative result became apparent at the end of the 2022 campaign (*Amarynthos* I, 265 n. 1588).

43 For the term's use in Pausanias, see Pirenne-Delforge 2008, 131 (which also cites epigraphic attestations) and *passim*: see the general index.

44 Del Freo 2009, 42 n. 6, provides a useful catalogue that should not overshadow the essential contributions of J. Chadwick and V. Aravantinos to the study of Mycenaean toponyms from Cadmea.

Fig. 5. The sanctuary of Amarynthos, with an arrow indicating the opening towards the open sea (J. Rohrer and O. Bruderer, ESAG).

distinct from the *hieron*,[45] as often observed with larger sanctuaries. Thus, the location of a suitable site near the Artemision that must have developed alongside the sanctuary from at least the early Archaic period and likely persisted until the Late Imperial period deserves further investigation.[46] During his survey of the Eretrian plain, S. Fachard made it a topographical priority. In 2022, an ancient settlement less than 1km from the coast was identified as "a serious candidate for the deme centre of Amarynthos" despite its relative distance from the sanctuary.[47] It seems clear that this settlement, destined to become the administrative centre of the eponymous deme, could not have been much farther from the Artemision. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand how the name Amarynthos could have designated both the *kome* and the *hieron*—as was the case for panhellenic sanctuaries like Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, Amyclae, and Didyma. An example of the name's dual use appears as early as the late 5th c. BCE in the treaty of alliance between Eretria and Histiaea,[48] which stipulated that the Eretrian copy of the agreement should be deposited "at Amarynthos" (Ἀμαρυνθοῖ), without further specification. Later, to avoid ambiguity, inscriptions specified "at Amarynthos, in the sanctuary of Artemis" (ἐν Ἀμαρύνθωι ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος), as in a decree dated around 300 BCE discovered during the 2019 season,[49] while other documents from the mid-4th c. refrain from mentioning the toponym, merely indicating the sanctuary as the place of display.[50] It is equally challenging to imagine that Strabo, following his

45 In fact, Fachard (2012, 53) had already raised the question of where "le centre du dème d'Amarynthos" could have been (and thus the town mentioned by Strabo), implicitly dismissing the idea that it should be sought on the very hill of Palaeoekklisies.

46 The milestone (now lost) *IG* XII 9, 146, found by Ziebarth in a field near the village of Kato Vathia, must have originated from this town. It mentioned the emperors of the Tetrarchy and some of their successors on both sides.

47 S. Fachard – A. Simosi – C. Chezeaux, *ESAG Annual Report 2022*, 14 (site no. 1, "à 950m au nord-ouest de l'Artémision"). See also the map in Fachard – Simosi *et al.* 2023, 99, fig. 9, where the site is marked as "Amarynthos?" midway between the Artemision and the location of Ag. Savas (*infra* p. 242, fig. 9).

48 *IG* XII 9, 188 (photograph in Knoepfler 1988, 384, fig. 1, reused as cover in Del Barrio Vega 2015, with document reissue in EUB 9).

49 See *Amarynthos* I, 37–38 and 151 ff. For decrees from the later Hellenistic period, they use the goddess's epiclesis, ἐν τῶι τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος τῆς Ἀμαρυσίας ἱερῶι, but never Ἀμαρυνθίας, a form restored late by analogy, only found in literary texts, especially Strabo, who, following his Hellenistic sources, uses the term *to Amarynthion* (ἐν τῷ Ἀμαρυνθίῳ), proving that he had no direct knowledge of the two major public inscriptions he transmitted, or their exact text. It is also worth noting that the derived form *Amarysios* emerged towards the end of the 2nd millennium, according to leading linguists, through a phonetic shift called "assibilation," originating from the adjective *Amarynthios* (see Knoepfler 1988, 393 and n. 50 for essential bibliography).

50 This is the case in the famous *Artemisia* regulation, *IG* XII 9, 189 = (improved) Rhodes – Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Oxford, 2003, no. 73; Del Barrio Vega 2015, EUB 13. Other ancient documents likely from the Artemision, such as the law against tyranny (Knoepfler 2001–2002; *SEG* 51 1105) or the new *sympoliteia* with Styra, do not include a clause specifying the posting location.

Hellenistic sources,[51] would have recorded the distance between the city and the village of Amarynthos unless the *kome* had been contiguous with the eponymous sanctuary, practically forming a single entity. Today, there is little doubt that the distance of 60 stades—corrected from a faulty transcription—[52] refers to the "sacred way" between the city and its main sanctuary. However, before this textual correction, no one had considered identifying this route as a *hiera hodos*.[53] It must also be noted that if this road had not been recognized as sacred by the Ancients, Strabo would not have known its length, which was most plausibly drawn from a written source, perhaps the Aristotelian *Eretrieon Politeia*.[54] This observation, too often overlooked, is critical: it is the only distance between two localities the Geographer provides in the entire chapter! There is no trace in his writings of an Euboean itinerary outside this *sui generis* case.

Evidence for the existence of an Eretrian deme named Amarynthos was provided at the end of the 19th c., following two almost simultaneous epigraphical discoveries. This fact was by no means a given, as the sanctuary, despite its importance, could very well have been part of a deme bearing another name. This is precisely the case in neighbouring Attica with the great sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron: The site was mistakenly considered a deme by Pausanias and others,[55] while it was in fact an integral part of the deme of Philaidai. Such a configuration seemed plausible for the Artemision, as one of the three *choria* mentioned by Herodotus in his account of the Persian attack on Eretria (6.101),[56] Temenos—not Tamynai, a correction as unjustified as it is unfortunate!—, could have been identified as a suburban deme encompassing the village and sanctuary of Amarynthos. Indeed, the epigrapher D. Stavropoulos observed in 1895 that Amarynthos was not listed among the roughly 30 demes then known from various

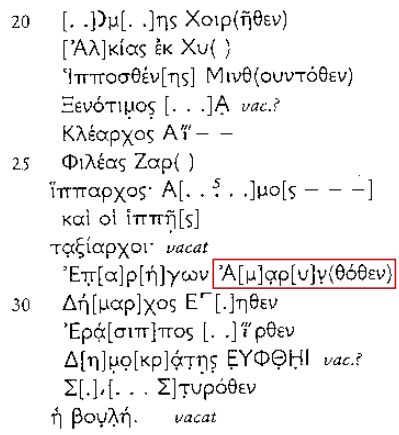
20 [. .]Ͻμ[. .]ης Χοιρ(ῆθεν)
[Ἀλ]κίας ἐκ Χυ( )
Ἱπποσθέν[ης] Μινθ(ουντόθεν)
Ξενότιμος [. . .]Α vac.?
Κλέαρχος Α[ἰ]− −
25 Φιλέας Ζαρ( )
ἵππαρχος· Α[. . ⁵ . .]μο[ς − − −]
καὶ οἱ ἱππῆ[ς]
ταξίαρχοι· vacat
Ἐπ[α]ρ[ή]γων [Ἀ[μ]αρ[υ]γ(θόθεν)]
30 Δή[μαρ]χος Ε[.]ηθεν
Ἐρά[σιπ]πος [. .]ί̣ρθεν
Δ[η]μο[κρ]άτης ΕΥΦΘΗΙ vac.?
Σ[.],[. . . Σ]τυρόθεν
ἡ βουλή. vacat

Fig. 6. Attic list of Eretrian magistrates, the first known appearance of the deme of Amarynthos (*IG* II^3 1, 2, 412b).

catalogues.[57] He wondered whether Temenos might have been the administrative name used by the Eretrians to designate their great Artemision.[58] However, in 1898, Adolf Wilhelm demonstrated that a small inscribed fragment found on the Athenian Acropolis preserved a list of Eretrian magistrates who had sworn an oath during the conclusion of a treaty with Athens: among the five *taxiarchs* was almost certainly a citizen bearing the demotic of Amarynthos (**Fig. 6**).[59] A year later, inscriptions discovered by K. Kourouniotis near the Temple of Apollo *Daphnephoros* included a fragment listing several demesmen of Amarynthos among other civic catalogues (**Fig. 7**).[60] This document used the abbreviation Ἀμαρ. for the demotic, easily resolved by the ancient ethnic (and also the usual epiclesis of the divinity)

51 Most likely, this refers to Apollodorus of Athens: see *supra* n. 40.

52 For the background of this necessary intervention in the Geographer's text, see Knoepfler 1988, 421, and especially 2018, 922–930.

53 On the concept of "sacred way," see particularly Bekker-Nielsen 2009, 9–16, who attempts to restrict its use to the few cases where this term is explicitly attested (e.g., Athens–Eleusis, Athens–Delphi, Miletus–Didyma), while overly doubting—perhaps excessively—the more common cases where the road between a city and its main sanctuary is not recognized as a procession route (e.g., Mylasa–Labraunda, Paphos and the sanctuary of Aphrodite, and so on; see Knoepfler 2018b, 934 and n. 126 for these examples). In our case, ESAG researchers are right to call the road they have followed on the ground from 2021 as *hiera hodos* (Fachard *et al.* 2022, 133; *Annual Report 2022*, 14, site no. 1 on the map 3c). See in this volume, p. 242.

54 For this hypothesis, following Strabo specialist Wolfgang Aly, see Knoepfler 2018b, 938–951.

55 Paus. 1.23.7, and Steph. Byz. *s.v.*; see Canopoli 2022, 218 and n. 40.

56 For the location of the three *choria* of the Persian landing, see the clarification in *Amarynthos* I, 264–267, with fig. 55.

57 Especially catalogs *IG* XII 9, 191B-C and 249A-C.

58 In his pioneering study on the demes, Stavropoulos (1895, 147) counted exactly 31, acknowledging that this number could not represent all Eretrian demes, as the three *choria* mentioned by Herodotus (6.101) did not seem to appear in the epigraphic list. On his hypothesis regarding the designation of Amarynthos, see *ibid.*, col. 153 n. 11. Ten years later, Geyer (1905, 72 ff.) had made little progress on this point, despite having some additional documents, since he was unaware of Wilhelm's contribution (*infra* n. 59), nor of the unpublished discoveries made by Kourouniotis in 1899.

59 ÖJh 1898, *Beiblatt*, 45 (note not included in the author's *Kleine Schriften*). See Kirchner, *IG* II^2, 230b (1913), who adopted this illuminating interpretation; the list was subsequently reproduced unchanged by Wallace 1947, 145, and later studied by Knoepfler 1971, 225–232 (see Knoepfler 1985, 244 for fragment a of the same document), with modifications accepted in 2012 by S. Lambert in the authoritative edition of decrees from 353/2–323/2: see *IG* II^3 1, 412b (reproduced and discussed now in *Amarynthos* I, 92 fig. 17).

60 Kourouniotis 1911, 20–21, no. 4., later included in the Euboean corpus in 1915 under no. 247. This fragment is lost, but a photograph of it is preserved in the *IG* archives in Berlin.

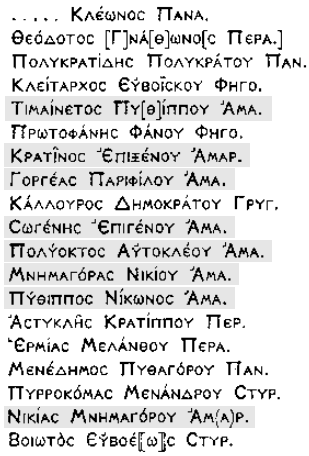

Fig. 7. Fragmentary stele *IG* XII 9, 247, from the Sanctuary of Apollo *Daphnephoros*, mentioning eight demotes from Amarynthos (inscription now lost, formerly held at the Eretria Museum).

Ἀμαρύσιος or perhaps better rendered as the adverbial form indicating origin *Ἀμαρυνθόθεν.[61]

The publication of these two fragmentary inscriptions marked a turning point in understanding Amarynthos' role within the political structure of the Eretrian state. To be sure, Amarynthos never formed an independent polity in the Archaic period. It was integrated within the Eretrian *polis*, most probably during the formative period of the 8th c. BCE. Yet, the status Amarynthos enjoyed within Eretrian institutions has remained unknown. It also took a long time to determine which territorial division or "district" the deme belonged to, as the catalogue *IG* XII 9, 241 primarily used to distribute the demes among the five "districts" of Eretria does not mention any citizens of this deme—an absence likely due to an accidental break on the left and lower portions of the stele.[62] Although it was clear that Amarynthos, given its approximate location in the plain immediately east of the city, belonged to the westernmost "district," the name of the latter long remained uncertain. W. Wallace, in his 1947 study, tentatively identified this "district" with the ancient name *Mesochoron* or "district III."[63] However, I showed that this designation needed to be shifted (along with the deme of Ptechai and its lagoon) to the Velousa–Lepoura–Krieza plateau, indeed forming the heart of the *chora*.[64] Meanwhile, "district I," incorrectly placed by Wallace in the border region with Karystos, should be located instead in the area at the southern foot of Mt Olympos.[65] It is thus almost certain (despite the lack of epigraphic evidence) that Amarynthos belonged to this first "district," whose ancient name currently remains unknown (**Fig. 9**).

The deme of Amarynthos was apparently modest. It supported a small population of two or three dozen citizens with their families and occupied only a narrow territory, constrained by the sea, the mountains to the east, and neighbouring demes to the north and west. In contrast, the most populous political communities could include up to 250 demesmen (as in Zarex), with the average ranging between 50–70 individuals, as shown on the main side of the catalogue no. 249. This inscription lists, in orderly succession, the four demes of Boudion, Oropos, Histiaia, and Komaia,[66] with 72, 42, 87, and 48[67] adult males respectively. However, the inference drawn from the small number of attested Amarynthian demesmen must be examined with scrutiny. For as long as the traditional location of the sanctuary was accepted, these demographic data could be reconciled by assuming that Amarynthos was, after all, just a very small suburban deme, as its *kome* was thought to be located near the city walls. Yet we now know this is not the case.[68] Similarly, it was long considered probable that the small (?) deme of

61 This adverb was not yet known to linguist M. Lejeune in his Bordeaux thesis on words formed in this way, where Eretrian *demotika* were meticulously catalogued (Lejeune 1939, 128 ff.): it is only after the reissue of the Attic fragment in *IG* II^2 230b (*supra* n. 59) that one might have considered completing the *demotikos* as Ἀμαρ[υ]ν(θόθεν). It is reasonable to hope that a proxeny document will one day provide the complete *demotikon* for the proposer. In fact, it is through such documents that abbreviations like Παν. (Πανακτόθεν: cf. Knoepfler 2001, 151–158 no. 11 = *SEG* 51 1113) and Φηγ. (Φηγοῆθεν: cf. Knoepfler 2017, 438 ff. no. 1 = *SEG* 68 661) were resolved.

62 On this stele, see after Wallace's study (next note) Knoepfler 1997, 371 ff. with fig. 2; more recently *Amarynthos* I, 57 and fig. 7, no. 25 (for its dimensions), and 89 with fig. 15 (for the division into five districts, regarding the five magistrates honoured in the decree found in 2019).

63 Wallace 1947, 115 ff. with the map on p. 131, fig. 1 (reproduced in *Amarynthos* I, 23, fig. 46). In my 1988 paper on Amarynthos, I mistakenly followed this reconstruction (cf. Knoepfler 1988, 396, fig. 4). According to Wallace, at least one demote from Amarynthos might have been listed in the central column (cut at the bottom), among the soldiers registered under the term *Mesochorou hoplitai*. However, Wallace's hypothesis must be definitively rejected, as Amarynthos cannot belong to district III on geographical grounds.

64 Knoepfler 1997, 378 ff.; 2001, 239–240.

65 This relocation has been widely accepted: for the border between Karystia and Eretria after the annexation of Styra, see Reber 2002.

66 For the number of demesmen of Komaia, the arrangement of the corpus is misleading, as it suggests their number is undetermined due to the break; in reality, from line 170 of the central column and line 256 of the right column, two other demes must be inserted, the first most likely Minthous (across two columns), the second certainly Aiglepheira (see *infra* n. 85).

67 Not counting later additions inscribed on the secondary face of the stele in question.

68 Regardless of whether one attributes this manifest error to Strabo or not. For the philological justification, not just topographical, of the correction made to the transmitted text, see Knoepfler 2018, 922–930.

Tribes and Districts	Tribe 1 ?	Tribe 2 ?	Tribe 3 *Narkittis*	Tribe 4 *Admetis*	Tribe 5 ?	Tribe 6 ?
District I	Dismaros Esch(atia?)	Aigalea As. Chyt(roi?)	Amarynthos	Boudion Aiglepheira	Choireai Temenos?	Temenos?
District II	Styra... Zarex	...Styra... Platauroi?	...Styra... Leon	...Styra... Histiaia Minthous	...Styra?...	...Styra?... Dystos
District III	Grynchai... Phlieus	...Grynchai... Aphareus	...Grynchai... Panakton Phegoe?	...Grynchai... Lake Parthenion?	...Grynchai?... Ptechai? Spl(e)ai?	...Grynchai?... Ptechai? Spl(e)ai?
District IV	Raphieus Oinoe? Xeniadai?	Kyl. (Apokyl.?) Petra?	Phegoe?	Parthenion? Oropos Tamynai Kotylaion?		
District V	Oichalia Têleidai Ne(don?)	Petra?		Kotylaion? Komaieis		
Undetermined District	Peraia... Karkinous Phallas	...Peraia... "Ego" (Goion?) Pherai(a?)	...Peraia... Mylaieis Aliphai?	...Peraia...	...Peraia?...	...Peraia?...

Fig. 8. Distribution of *demes* among the six tribes (*phylai*); confirmed for cols 1–4, still incomplete and hypothetical for cols 5–6.

Temenos, due to its very name, was located very close to the Artemision, functioning as an annex to the sanctuary.[69] However, this too is far from proven, given the fact that the Herodotean village (*chorion*) named Temenos enjoyed no direct connection with the sanctuary of Amarynthos and could instead well be located at the opposite end of the Eretrian plain.[70]

Epigraphy provides further evidence. Observing that "les démotes (d'Amarynthos) n'apparaissent que rarement dans les inscriptions et catalogues," S. Fachard was somewhat puzzled that I had nonetheless qualified it as an important deme.[71] Yet we must carefully assess the weight of the argument based on the very limited number of documents. It is indeed striking that the demotic *Amar.* appears practically only in one of the many civic catalogues published to date, namely *IG* XII 9, 247, which records only eight Amarynthians.[72] No citizen from this deme is to be found in the two large opisthographic stelae of the same series—except for a single instance likely

69 Thus, apart from Stavropoulos (*supra* n. 58), Ziebarth, *IG* XII 9 (1915), 165, l. 89 ff.; Wallace 1947, 143 ("Τεμ. will not in any case have been far from Amarynthos"); Knoepfler 1988, 396 fig. 4; Gehrke 1988, 28, who, however, believed he could combine this information with the highly speculative hypothesis of P. Themelis about a second Artemis sanctuary, called *Amarysion*, at the site of Ag. Paraskevi near the ancient city (Themelis 1969, 167 ff.); Müller (D.) 1987, 423–424; Fachard 2012, map outside text (Temenos placed—with uncertainty—just west of Amarynthos, near the Kokaki site no. 58); but elsewhere the author seems to have favoured a location close to the city, at the Kotroni site no. 46: see pp. 52–53 and the map published by Fachard *et al.* 2023, 99 fig. 9, where the name of Temenos appears on the left with a question mark.

70 This opinion is defended in *Amarynthos* I, 254 ff., with map fig. 55.

71 Fachard 2012, 53 and n. 18, with reference to Knoepfler 1997, 380 n. 222 (actually p. 436), as well as Gehrke 1988, 27–29, who, in fact, did not take a stance on the importance of Amarynthos as a deme, but noted that near the sanctuary, "wohl vor allem in westlicher Richtung, eine Siedlung anschloss, die einen beträchtlichen Umfang gehabt dürfte" (p. 29), a claim justified in his view by the existence of a *kome* Amarynthos, distinct from the Artemision itself, according to Strabo.

72 For a new fragment of the same stele, *infra* p. 224.

due to a mistake[73]—although these remarkably extensive inscriptions list several hundred citizens: nearly 1,000 in one (no. 245) and more than 500 in the other (no. 246). Clearly, the absence of Amarynthos from these catalogues (as well as from nos 244, 248–249, remnants of other censuses) cannot be explained by the supposed small size of this deme, especially since these two lists do include demes that were undoubtedly sparsely populated.[74]

The correct explanation—which entirely escaped W. Wallace and E. Ziebarth—[75] suggests otherwise: these lists were compiled according to the division of the citizen body into a specific number of tribes. Each stele in the series reflects the composition of a *phyle* (tribe) of the polis, where citizens from various demes were grouped into units unrelated to the five territorial "districts." The long catalogue no. 245 lists approximately twelve demes belonging to Tribe 1 (conventionally called the Tribe of Zarex after the most prominent of them), while no. 246 records roughly ten demes of Tribe 2 (tentatively called the Tribe of Aphareus). Meanwhile, catalogue no. 249, which belongs epigraphically to a different series, lists the citizens of Tribe 4 (called the Tribe of Boudion),[76] also made up of a dozen demes. Being clearly outside of these three units, the people of Amarynthos had no legitimate reason to be recorded on any of these large stelae.[77] However, eight of them, as noted, were recorded in catalogue no. 247. Therefore, this list should be considered as the surviving fragment of a stele, similar to the first three, that likely included the citizens of Tribe 3. The latter was known by convention as the Tribe of Amarynthos, given the deme's prominence (*infra*). Therefore, given the highly fragmentary state of this stele, it is unsurprising to find the names and demotics of only eight Amarynthians.

Furthermore, this number can now be increased. A second fragment of the same stele (positioned higher but without a direct match) was reused in the House of the Mosaics in Eretria.[78] On face A, the abbreviation Ἀμαρ. appears three times, while this demotic does not distinctly appear on face B, where line endings are often difficult to decipher. As the two fragments together include, at most, some 100 names (about 20 in the right column of no. 247 lack demotics due to the stone's damage), it must be assumed that only about one-fifth of the total list of citizens from the demes of Tribe 3 has been preserved. In some cases, the abbreviated names of these demes have been reliably completed thanks to new discoveries, such as for Panakton, Phegoe, Aliphai, and Leon.[79] Meanwhile, the three large demes of Grynchai, Peraion, and Styra—present in this list as in other known sets—were distributed, due to their demographic weight and later integration into the territory, among the six tribes.[80] Consequently, the number of Amarynthians originally listed on this stele, before its fragmentation and the loss of four-fifths of the list, could easily have exceeded 50 individuals. This places Amarynthos in the upper range of population groups (among those with more or less precisely known numbers).

Thus, the deme of Amarynthos, without being among the most populous, surpassed many others not only due to the presence of the Artemision and its central position but also because of its size and resources. Ideally located at the end of the Vathia Valley—"l'une des plus

73 In *IG* XII 9, 245B 13, we read Πρηξάγγελος Τιμοκλέου Αμα., as verified from the squeeze. It is notable that the name Πρηξάγγελος, typically Eretrian (see *LGPN* I, 1987, *s.v.* nos 1–2; for names in Πρηξ- in Eretria, see Knoepfler 2001, 95), also appears in the deme of Boudion, likely close to, if not bordering, Amarynthos (most recently Knoepfler 2017, 473 ff., with a correction of Wallace 1947, 135, regarding the position of this deme due to his unfamiliarity with the tribal system). It must be assumed that, for an unknown reason, this Prexangelos of Amarynthos was mistakenly inscribed on a stele where it should not have appeared, as his deme—like that of Boudion—was not attached to the tribe for whom this stele was intended. For other similar exceptions, see *Amarynthos* I, 261 and n. 1575.

74 Thus, Oichalia in no. 245 (three occurrences!), even though this deme, seemingly small, certainly held great religious or mythological prestige (*infra*).

75 As evidenced by the fact that both attempted to assign slightly different dates to the two major lists nos 245–246 (Wallace 1947, 116 and n. 5; Ziebarth, *IG* XII 9, p. 164, l. 26 ff.), while they are perfectly identical in terms of material and engraving! The importance of the tribal system in Eretria was anticipated by Jones 1987, 74, who, however, did not explain the distribution principle at work in the civic catalogues.

76 Not that this deme was, in this instance, the most populous; but it is the one whose demesmen are listed at the top, in what was probably the second of the two stelae listing the members of this tribe: for its identification, *infra* pp. 224–225.

77 Their absence from the (partially preserved) list attached to the contract of Eretria for the drainage of the Ptechai lake (*IG* XII 9, 191B-C)—whose text, accompanied by a French translation, was included in the Pernin 2014 collection under no. 134—should, on the other hand, be explained by geography, as most of the approximately twenty demes represented in this list are to be found in the central part of the Eretriad, thus in the close or more distant vicinity of Ptechai.

78 I have briefly indicated its content in Ducrey *et al.* 1994, 245–246, pointing out its belonging to *IG* XII 9, 247; cf. *SEG* 45 1217.

79 For this homonymous deme of Cape Leon, *supra* n. 38. For Panakton, see Knoepfler 2001, 155–158; for Phegoe, Knoepfler 2017, 412 ff. The deme of Aliphai, which was known only from the epitaph *IG* XII 9, 532, is now also attested by at least one occurrence in the unpublished fragment.

80 See Knoepfler 1997, 401 (conclusion adopted by Fachard 2012, 69 and n. 156, who points out that the authors of *Inventory of Greek and Archaic and Classical Greek Cities*, Copenhagen, 2004, 666, have also confirmed it). I return to this question in the publication of the *sympoliteia* with Styra, where the distribution of the population of the small city is explicitly discussed. It will be demonstrated that Styra was integrated as a *choros* within the Eretrian territory. Thus, the correct meaning of the term is "deme," not "district" (as has been assumed by scholars since the 1980s).

fertiles de l'île," according to an early traveller—,[81] it was also situated at the heart of a road network whose importance is no longer in doubt following the work of S. Fachard.[82] To the east, its territory likely extended to the rocky promontory known as the "Kaki Skala." To the west, Amarynthos was bordered by the deme of Aigale, as suggested by epigraphical and topographical evidence.[83] To the north, the *Amarysia chora* probably encompassed both banks of the sacred river, now known as the Sarantapotamos, up to at least the Ano Vathia area (if not as far as the village of Kallithea, formerly Kato Mamoula, 6km from the shore), as the two large demes of Boudion and Dismaros appear to have occupied the upper valley.[84] Last, the deme of Aiglepheira—certainly much smaller—can confidently be placed on the slopes of Servouni,[85] which I interpret as the mountain of Amarynthos.

It is still to be determined what connection, beyond the administrative aspect, existed between the deme of Amarynthos and Tribe 3, to which it was undeniably attached as evidenced by the composition of stele no. 247 (uncovered as early as 1899 and supplemented by the fragment discovered in 1978). For years, the limited understanding of the Eretrian tribal system led to bold theories about its structure and number of tribes.[86] The only sound evidence was the mention of a *Mekistis phyle*, provided by an inscription dating no later than the mid-5th c. BCE [87] which showed that, in Eretria as in Athens, the names of the tribes originated from a local panel of heroes. This was confirmed by the discovery, in 1973 and 1975, of two choregic bases which, despite their damaged state, revealed the existence of a tribe called *Narkittis*, associated with another tribe whose name had almost completely disappeared.[88] We could conclude that the system was based on an even number of tribes grouped in pairs (as in the *Thargelia* of Athens). The number of tribes was probably no greater than six: indeed, reconstructing a set of six stelae of the type examined above allowed for the best distribution of the roughly 60 attested or potential demes into six sections, each consisting of about ten demes.[89] Additional support for this hypothesis was found in the figures provided by the famous military procession described by Strabo, which were best explained by the existence of a six-tribe system at the end of the Archaic period (6 × 500 = 3,000 *hoplitai*; 6 × 100 = 600 *hippeis*; 6 × 10 = 60 *harmata*).[90] It is now certain that the number of Eretrian tribes was indeed six, as the *sympoliteia* treaty with Styra, unearthed in the Artemision of Amarynthos in 2017, stipulates that the population of the small city would be divided "into six sections within the tribes."[91]

It is highly probable that Tribe 3 was named *Narkittis* and hosted Amarynthos and some ten other demes originating across the five "districts" of the Eretrian territory. Indeed, the hero Narkissos/Narkittos, already known to be a native of Eretria thanks to a *mnema* located in the neighbouring territory of Oropos (Strab. 10.2.6, C 404),[92] was undeniably linked to the sanctuary of Amarynthos. Local mythology—echoed by later authors—describes him as the son of the eponymous hero Amarynthos, who was regarded as Artemis's servant in her hunting activities. It can thus be assumed that the Artemision housed a place of worship for this Narkittos, just as the ill-fated Hyakinthos had his tomb in the Laconian Amyklaion, celebrated at the outset of the great *Hyakinthia* festival in honour of Apollo and, secondarily, of Artemis *Hyakinthotrophos*.[93]

Excavations at Amarynthos have so far yielded no concrete evidence of the presence of the eponymous hero of the *Narkittis phyle*. Nevertheless, substantial support for this hypothesis is provided by the 2011 discovery, within the substructures of the Roman baths at Eretria, of a subscription list originating from the most prominent members of another tribe, the *Admetis phyle*.

81 According to Rangabé 1853. This Vathia Valley is identical, of course, to the one now often referred to as the "valley of Amarynthos" (as in *AntK* 66 [2023], 100), which shows how easy it would be to accept the name Amarynthos for Mt Servouni, as well as possibly for the river that runs alongside it.

82 See Fachard 2012, 91–110, with maps figs 36–38; for the results of the ongoing survey, see the preliminary reports from the ESAG for the years 2021 and beyond; most recently Fachard *et al.*, *ESAG Report* 2023, 10–12, and this volume, pp. 235–237.

83 See *Amarynthos* I, appendix 3.

84 See Fachard 2012, 53–54, with additional details provided by Knoepfler 2014 and 2017.

85 For its precise location, already practically established (see Fachard 2012, 311 no. 61)—which was initially based on a remarkable toponymic persistence (overlooked by Wallace 1947, 133–134; cf. *Amarynthos* I, 251 and n. 1505)—see the conclusive results from the 2022 survey, with the map published in the *ESAG Report* 2023, 11; see also Fachard *et al.*, 2023, 98–99, map fig. 9; 2024, 102–104, map fig. 9.

86 Kondoleon (1963) proposed a three-tribe system, where *Mekistis* would form a *phyle* facing a heterogeneous entity like the *Aeinautai* and a possible *Melaneis* (P. Themelis); the hypothesis is rejected by Knoepfler 1998, 106.

87 *IG* XII Suppl. 549; see Knoepfler 2001, 69–76 no. I, with a development on the *Mekistis* Tribe.

88 Published in Knoepfler 2010, 219 ff. (*SEG* 60 965–966; reprinted in Csapo – Wilson 2020, II, 658–662, with previously known fragmentary bases); cf. Knoepfler 2019, 59–61 and fig. 7.

89 Knoepfler 1997, 390 ff.; 2001, 75–77; 2010a, 111 ff. (with no subsequent objection from specialists).

90 Knoepfler 2018b, 920; Verdan *et al.* 2020, 74 n. 3 ("It involves a military parade by tribes"); most recently, *Amarynthos* I, p. 272 and n. 1615; Fachard – Verdan 2024, 155–158.

91 See provisionally Knoepfler 2018a, 920.

92 On this Oropian tomb and its probable location, see Knoepfler 2010a, 81 ff.

93 For the comparison between these two heroes, dating clearly to very ancient times, see Knoepfler 2010a, chap. VI, and mainly 2019a.

This inscription reveals that Tribe 4 (whose composition was already known, notably through catalogues nos 249, 244 and 248, as well as two unpublished fragments) was named after the hero Admetos (**Fig. 8**).[94] A local tradition reported by Strabo (10.1.10, C 448) specifically links this Thessalian figure with the foundation of the sanctuary of Apollo at Tamynai. The latter, situated at the heart of the Eretrian territory near modern-day Avlonari, is undoubtedly the most important deme of this *phyle* 4, as well as of "districts" IV.[95] It is probably not too far-fetched to conclude that, at Amarynthos as well, local tradition considered Narkittos as the founder of the sanctuary, following an episode that (still) remains unknown to us.[96] The four remaining eponyms—among them the hero Mekistos, the eponym of the *Mekistis phyle*, evidently tied to the foundation myths of Central Euboea[97]—were also closely related to a major sanctuary. One can hypothesize an urban *hieron* such as that of Apollo *Daphnephoros* (or, though less likely, Athena on the Acropolis)[98] or a still unknown shrine in the countryside, such as a sanctuary within the deme of Oichalia, situated on the Euboea's eastern shore facing Skyros. This "village of the Eretriad" (Strab. 10.1.10, C 448) has been plausibly identified at the site of Viglatouri, excavated by E. Sapouna-Sakellaraki.[99] It is linked to the widespread myth, also attested in Euboea, of Heracles' capture of the city of Oichalia,[100] ruled by the archer Eurytos, son of Melaneus and father of the young Iphitos.[101] Such *chora* sanctuaries must have been located within the original territory of the polis because it is highly unlikely that one of the six eponyms would have been chosen from among the heroes of the southernmost

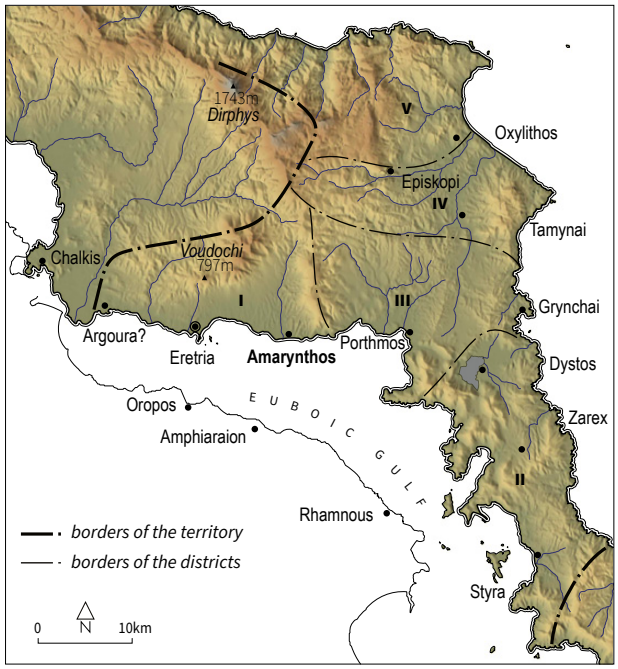

Fig. 9. Map of the five "districts" of Eretria during the Classical and Hellenistic periods (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

94 Knoepfler – Ackermann 2012, with the text of the inscription on p. 915; cf. *SEG* 62 626; *BE* 2014, 237.

95 The location of Tamynai in this region is supported by robust evidence, as demonstrated by Fachard 2012, 64–65 and *passim*, and Knoepfler – Ackermann 2012, 941 ff. with figs 17–23, based on research that began in the 1970s. It is therefore surprising that a respected scholar such as B. D'Agostino has raised doubts about this identification, stating that "the localization of Tamynai, however, is moot" (D'Agostino 2020, 165 n. 41). He references an article by Nota Kourou (Kourou 2011) which discusses findings from a site referred to as "Tamynai," though these were in fact located in the region of Aliveri. Although Kourou presents interesting finds, her conclusions on historical geography are problematic. In particular, she follows the arbitrary correction once made to the text of Herodotus 6.101, interpreting Tamynai as a coastal site identified with Aliveri. This recurring misunderstanding is further addressed in *Amarynthos* I, 252 n. 1509; see also Fachard – Verdan 2024, 204–205.

96 In any case, it can be assumed today that Narkittos, as the eponymous hero of one of the six tribes, was not the 15-year-old ephebe mentioned by Ovid in the probable tradition of Hellenistic poetry, but rather a distinctly more virile figure, much like the hero Hyacinthus honoured at Amyclae (Knoepfler 2019a, 65).

97 For evidence pointing towards Triphylia, with the locality called Makistos, the homeland of the founding hero Eretrieus, see Knoepfler 2010a, 116–117.

98 The presence of an eponymous cult in the sanctuary of an Olympian deity is not self-evident. Even in Athens, this seems rather exceptional, as eponymous heroes most often have a separate *heroon*. However, a case recently highlighted by François de Polignac (2011) seems interesting: that of the hero of the *phyle Hippothontis*, Hippothoon, closely linked to Eleusinian cults and honoured near the sanctuary of the Two Goddesses (Paus. 1.38.4).

99 See D'Agostino 2020, 167 ff. and 179 for the bibliography.

100 For the Euboean version of this myth, see particularly Talamo 1975. In her rich article on the mythical traditions of Euboea and Boeotia, Breglia 2020, 189 ff. refrains from treating a myth that does not highlight any particular link between these two regions, apart from the importance of the cult of Heracles at Thebes and elsewhere.

101 Paus. 4.2.3 (quoting Hecataeus of Miletus, *FGrHist* 1, fr. 28), who also knows the Euboean version of the myth and whose topographical indication, despite the corruption of the received text, allowed for the localization of the Eretrian Oichalia "opposite Skyros." See J. Auberger – M. Casevitz, in the edition of book IV, published by CUF in 2005, 5 and 177: "La conjecture de D. Knoepfler supprime élégamment la difficulté en réintroduisant un toponyme connu." See also Fachard 2012, 66 with notes; D'Agostino 2020, 172: "D. Knoepfler has the merit of having narrowed down the location of the city by convincingly correcting the text of Pausanias"); our colleague also seems attracted to the idea that this Tribe 1 could have been called *Iphitis*, after the young hero Iphitos loved by Heracles, who might have founded the sanctuary at Oichalia.

regions that were later integrated within the Eretrian polis. Indeed, we must exclude the area of Styra (and perhaps that of Zarex,[102] and possibly even Dystos), as these regions were annexed only around 410 BCE,[103] at a time when the Eretrian tribal system had been established for at least a century, if not longer.

A *kome* and a *hieron* unlike any Other

Does this mean that the Eretrians regarded the Artemision of Amarynthos as being on the same level—no more, no less—as the five other sanctuaries that housed the cults of eponymous heroes? This appears unlikely, given Amarynthos' attested prominence over all other localities in the Eretriad, already attested in Prehistory and the Early Iron Age.[104] Moreover, three arguments demonstrate that this prominence persisted during the historical period, at least until the early 1st c. BCE.

The first indication of the Artemision's privileged status lies in the fact that it was the only *chora* sanctuary[105] regularly chosen to display highly significant public documents issued by the polis. This was already highlighted by Strabo and is further supported by inscriptions (treaties and laws).[106] By contrast, the sanctuary of Apollo *Tamynaios*, even in the absence of excavation and despite its undeniable renown both within and beyond Eretria's borders, was never chosen for such a purpose. Based on the inscriptions, it seems to have housed only public and private dedications, occasional decrees from associations, and, particularly from the Late Hellenistic period onward, agonistic catalogues associated with the musical, gymnastic, and equestrian contests of the *Tamynaia*.[107] It is very unlikely that the Eretrians ever decided to display copies of decrees honouring their most prominent benefactors at Tamynai, or to erect a second statue of such *euergetes* there—a practice evidenced at Amarynthos throughout the 2nd c. BCE.

A second distinction between Artemis *Amarysia* and Apollo *Tamynaios* is that the latter was apparently never entrusted with overseeing the financial control of sums owed to the *polis Eretrieon*. By contrast, there are multiple examples[108] where the treasurers of Artemis *Amarysia*'s sacred treasury were instructed to collect revenues from fines, confiscations, or at least a tenth of such proceeds for the state. One notable instance is found in the "Law against Tyranny and Oligarchy", whose copy found in the port of Aliveri is likely to have originated from the Artemision of Amarynthos.[109] The exclusivity granted to Artemis's *hiera kibotos* is all the more remarkable considering that the inscription also highlights the importance of urban *Dionysia* as a key occasion—alongside the annual celebration of the *Artemisia*—when priests and priestesses of all public cults solemnly pronounced curses against the enemies of democracy.

Lastly, a crucial difference appears in the fact that the Artemision of Amarynthos seems to have been the only Eretrian sanctuary to enjoy a pan-Euboean, if not outright federal, dimension.[110] While the documentation

102 Even though a hero by this name is known in Attica (cf. Paus. 1.39.1, who probably errs in tracing the origin of this *xenos* to Laconia, due to Zarax, while there was also a Zarex from Euboea, reputedly the son of Karystos!). But if Zarex had been the eponym of Tribe 1, we would have to abandon the compelling hypothesis (see the previous note) of one of the heroes linked to the Oichalia saga, since this deme also belonged to Tribe 1. On the population of the deme of Zarex, see Knoepfler 2014, 60–63; for its cults, notably that of Apollo *Delios*, see Chatzidimitriou 2020.

103 For this early chronology, following the date advocated since 1971, refer to the forthcoming publication of the *sympoliteia*.

104 See most recently Verdan *et al.* 2020, 74–76 and *passim*; also Fachard – Verdan 2024, 133 ff. For the most recent discoveries on the site, see ESAG annual reports.

105 In other sanctuaries of the *chora*, inscriptions closely related to the cultic activities carried out in each of them may have been occasionally displayed: thus, a regulation, long lost, is known regarding a sanctuary of Apollo, which must be that of Tamynai (*IG* XII 9, 90; reproduced notably in Del Barrio Vega 2015, 59–62 EUB 10). It is also from a probable Asclepios sanctuary located outside the walls that the "sacred law" *IG* XII 9, 194 (Sokolowski, *LSCG*, 93) copied at the village of Ag. Loukas, north of Aliveri, must originate (cf. Fachard 2012, 315 and n. 217, who recalls that I found near this spot, in 1975, a fragmentary hymn that could, incidentally, equally come from Amarynthos). The provenance of the regulation *IG* XII Suppl. 533 (cf. *BE* 2013, 189), copied shortly before the Second World War by N. Pappadakis in a ruined chapel near Lake Dystos (where the stone still stands), is however very uncertain.

106 *Supra* n. 48 for the treaty between Eretria and Histiaea. Cf. Knoepfler 2018a, 885 ff. for other examples.

107 Among which are two unpublished fragments that will be discussed in a forthcoming publication along with fragments from civic catalogues from Eretria itself or Amarynthos.

108 Already mentioned in Knoepfler 1988, 385–386.

109 Knoepfler 2001–2002, particularly 2001, 197–199 (findspot and display location) and 223–224 (clause of the *epidekaton* on confiscations); for additional bibliography and details concerning this document, see Knoepfler 2018a, 891–893 with fig. 3; 2019b, 315 no. 182.

110 The late O. Picard had firmly supported the federal character of the Amarynthos sanctuary, in agreement with his belief that the coins issued in the name of the Euboeans from the early 4th c. testified to the existence of a confederation having authority over the member cities (cf. Picard 1979, 218–221: "L'Eubée et le sanctuaire d'Artémis *Amarysia*"). He could also point to the fact that Pausanias mentions the Euboeans—and not the Eretrians—as the organizers of the *Amarysia* celebrated on the island in his time (*supra*), as well as the decree of Karystos mentioning the *Artemisia* of Amarynthos (Knoepfler 1972; *Amarynthos* I, 152). When discussing Euboean federalism, I have been somewhat more reserved on this point, since so far there is no document implicating the *Koinon Euboeon*—even in periods when its existence is assured—in the financial management of the sanctuary and the organization of the *Amarysia*, which was in principle always the responsibility of the city: see Knoepfler 2015, particularly 167 ff.

Fig. 10. Left, didrachm of the Euboeans featuring the nymph Euboia on the obverse and a reclining bull on the reverse (ca. 370 BCE); Right, tetradrachm of the Eretrians, with Artemis on the obverse and a bull adorned for sacrifice on the reverse (ca. 170 BCE) (Martin-Pruvot *et al*. 2010, nos 161 and 174).

remains limited in this regard, the famous testimony of Livy (*Ab urbe condita* 35.38.5, likely from a lost passage of Polybius) on the *sacrum anniversarium* [...] *Amarynthidis Dianae*, celebrated by Eretrians alongside Karystians and Chalcidians confirms the cult's aura across much, if not all,[111] of Euboea. Therefore, promoting it as a federal sanctuary in the strict sense of the term appears problematic given the absence of unequivocal proofs. As a reminder, by the early 2nd c. BCE, federal proxeny decrees were displayed in Chalcis, where the new *Rhomaia* games—undoubtedly of federal nature—were later celebrated.[112]

However, it cannot be ruled out that Amarynthos served as a federal sanctuary at some point. The Artemision may have been the site for the annual appointment by the Ionian *ethnos* of Euboea of the *hieromnemon*, tasked with representing this composite ethnic group at the council of the Pylean-Delphic Amphictyony.[113] Thus, given the prestige of the festival dedicated to the great Artemis *Amarysia*, it is plausible that during the Hellenistic period, this sanctuary was recognized by the Amphictyony as *hieron kai asylon*, a privilege that, by the mid-3rd c. BCE, had already been granted to the *Itonion* of Coronea, one of the principal federal sanctuaries of neighbouring Boeotia.[114] A particularly relevant parallel might be drawn with the Ptoion sanctuary, which served both the *polis Akraiphieon* and the *Koinon Boioton*. There, an Amphictyonic decree from 230–220 BCE was discovered nearly 150 years ago, recognizing the asylum status of the sanctuary and the *hiera chora* of Apollo *Ptoieus*. This recognition allowed Boeotian civic and confederate authorities to organize the *Ptoia* festival under the divine protection of the Delphic Apollo.[115] Once the Euboeans regained their ancestral seat in the Amphictyony after the collapse of Macedonian control (post-194 BCE), a similar initiative by the Eretrians—with the essential support of their fellow Euboeans—seems perfectly plausible. This would explain why, on their new silver coinage around 175 BCE, the Eretrians prominently featured the cult of Artemis *Amarysia*, with a splendid effigy of the goddess on the obverse and a garlanded bull on the reverse, symbolizing the grand sacrifice (**Fig. 10**).[116] What is certain is that the sanctuary experienced a period of great prosperity during the latter half of the 2nd c. BCE, as demonstrated by the latest excavations, including the epigraphic finds. There is no doubt, therefore, that within the Eretriad, Amarynthos was then—and perhaps throughout the Early Imperial period[117]—"a *kome* and a *hieron* unlike any other."

111 For the absence, likely linked to the political situation, of the Histiaeans, see Knoepfler 2015, 172. The ties between Eretria and Histiaea were, moreover, long-standing (*supra* p. 220); this city fully participated, around 300 BCE, in the organization of the Dionysia and Demetria in the Euboean *tetrapolis*.

112 Also highlighted by Robert 1969, 44–49 (= Robert 1990, 750–755).

113 On these issues and whether the sanctuary of Amarynthos was amphictyonic or not, see Lefèvre 2015, 1 ff. and n. 5 for the problematic participation, at an early date, of the Dryopes of Karystos (and Styra), in the occupation of the Euboean Ionian seat in the Council of the 24 *hieromnemones* of the Amphictyony.

114 As evidenced by a decree recently found at Delphi, see Rigsby 1996, 58–59 no. 1; Lefèvre 2002, 138–140 no. 38.

115 Rigsby 1996, 65–67 no. 3; Lefèvre 2002, 198–200 no. 76. For the history of the *Ptoia*, cf. Müller 2020, 57 ff.

116 But this short-lived civic coinage (around 175–160 BCE) would necessarily correspond—in accordance with the incompatibility principle defended by Picard—to a period of interruption in the federal coinage, which he argues was briefly reinitiated around 192, then resumed only after 146. The exaltation of Artemis *Amarysia* that these beautiful coins clearly testify to would thus have been the work of the Eretrians alone.

117 When the Euboean Artemision likely received support from the Athenian millionaire Herodes Atticus, a benefactor primarily of the *Amarysion* at Athmonon: see Knoepfler 2018b, 359 ff.

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Abbreviations

BE = *Bulletin Épigraphique* in *Revue des Études Grecques*, Paris, 1888–.

LSCG = *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, Paris, 1969.

Abstract

This chapter explores the multifaceted identity of Amarynthos, a site in Euboea renowned for the sanctuary of Artemis Amarysia, and its evolving role within the Eretrian polis. Drawing on recent archaeological discoveries and epigraphic evidence, it argues that Amarynthos referred not only to a village (kome) and sanctuary (hieron), but also to a broader region encompassing mountains, rivers, and coastal landmarks. The paper traces the development of the toponym and its associations with local geography, myth, and cult—particularly the figures of Artemis, Amarynthos, and Narcissus. It also clarifies the deme's position within Eretria's six-tribe system. The sanctuary's prominence is underscored by its use for the display of public documents, its role in financial oversight, and its possible pan-Euboean or federal function. Through this case study, the complex interplay of geography, myth, cult, and politics is highlighted in shaping ancient Greek urban and rural identities.

TRACING THE SACRED IN THE ERETRIA-AMARYNTHOS SURVEY PROJECT

Sylvian Fachard – Chloé Chezeaux – Angeliki G. Simosi

In Greek landscape archaeology, finding evidence of cult has most often been a source of frustration. Outside previously known and major sanctuaries, survey projects conducted in Greece since the 1970s recorded few or no rural sacred sites at all. Therefore, when relying exclusively on field data, survey archaeologists have struggled to trace the archaeological signature of cults and to give a relevant account of them. As a result, archaeologists working in the ancient Greek landscape have been very cautious, if not defiant, when identifying traces of ritual activity. To quote S. Alcock, "survey archaeologists have, it is true, been relatively restrained about 'finding religion' in the landscape, perhaps in reaction to some of the previous predilections of the discipline, and on the whole continued caution seems the wisest course."[1] On the other hand, historians of ancient Greek religion have promoted a form of ubiquity of cults in the landscape, often relying on Pausanias' strong interest in local cults and mythology. This has led to a paradox and a methodological divide: In religion studies, sanctuaries and small shrines often seem to dot the landscape, while they are mostly absent from archaeological survey literature. Besides problems of scale and interpretation, how can we explain this dichotomy and, most importantly, find a middle ground?

This paper aims to tackle these issues by relying on the data provided by the Eretria-Amarynthos Survey Project (EASP). The latter covers a study area of 40 square kilometers dominated by the large city of Eretria and its urban shrines, as well as the major *chora* sanctuary of Artemis Amarysia at Amarynthos. In combination with the excavation results from Eretria and Amarynthos, the new survey data provides a rare case-study for investigating the topography of cult and the sacred components forming what scholarship got into the habit (and trend) of naming the "sacred landscape." Although we acknowledge the utility of this term and its common use in the present volume, we prefer to avoid it for several reasons. First, it has often become something of a catch-all term, conveniently used to sketch general phenomena and broad categories, leading to a multiplication of landscapes within the landscape: "military landscape," "economic landscape," "social landscape," "imperial landscape," "imaginary landscape."[2] Second, these multiple terms too often blur lacunae in the archaeological record and compress historical complexity.[3] Last, the "sacred landscape" is frequently studied in isolation and, therefore, wrongly extracted from the other components that form the landscape.[4] In our view, a given "landscape" results from the imprint in a region of all human activities and their multiple interactions with the environment. An archaeological landscape comprises several layers—mainly domestic, agricultural, economic, political, social, military, and sacred—which all interact constantly and at different levels and scales. Therefore, we avoid the term "sacred landscape" and promote instead the concept of a multilayered landscape, with a sacred stratum made of multiple and varied sacred/religious/ritual components in constant evolution along with the other strata.

The present contribution consists of three main sections. First, we present the nature and limitations of the data collected during EASP, briefly reviewing the archaeological signatures of sanctuaries in survey archaeology and addressing the issue of positive and negative evidence. Based on these results, we outline a landscape reconstruction for the Late Geometric-Early Hellenistic periods, analyzing the position of the Artemision and the other shrines in relation to the natural environment, settlement patterns, agricultural surfaces, and the road network, which includes the "sacred road" linking the city to the shrine. Last, relying on topography and spatial analysis, we provide some insights into how the Eretrians might have experienced and interacted with their shrines, which in turn will allow us to make some hypotheses regarding their changing perceptions of the sacred component of their landscape.

1 Alcock 1994, 252.

2 See the introductory chapter by S. Verdan in this volume.

3 Rousset 2023.

4 A similar point is made by F. Kondyli in this volume.

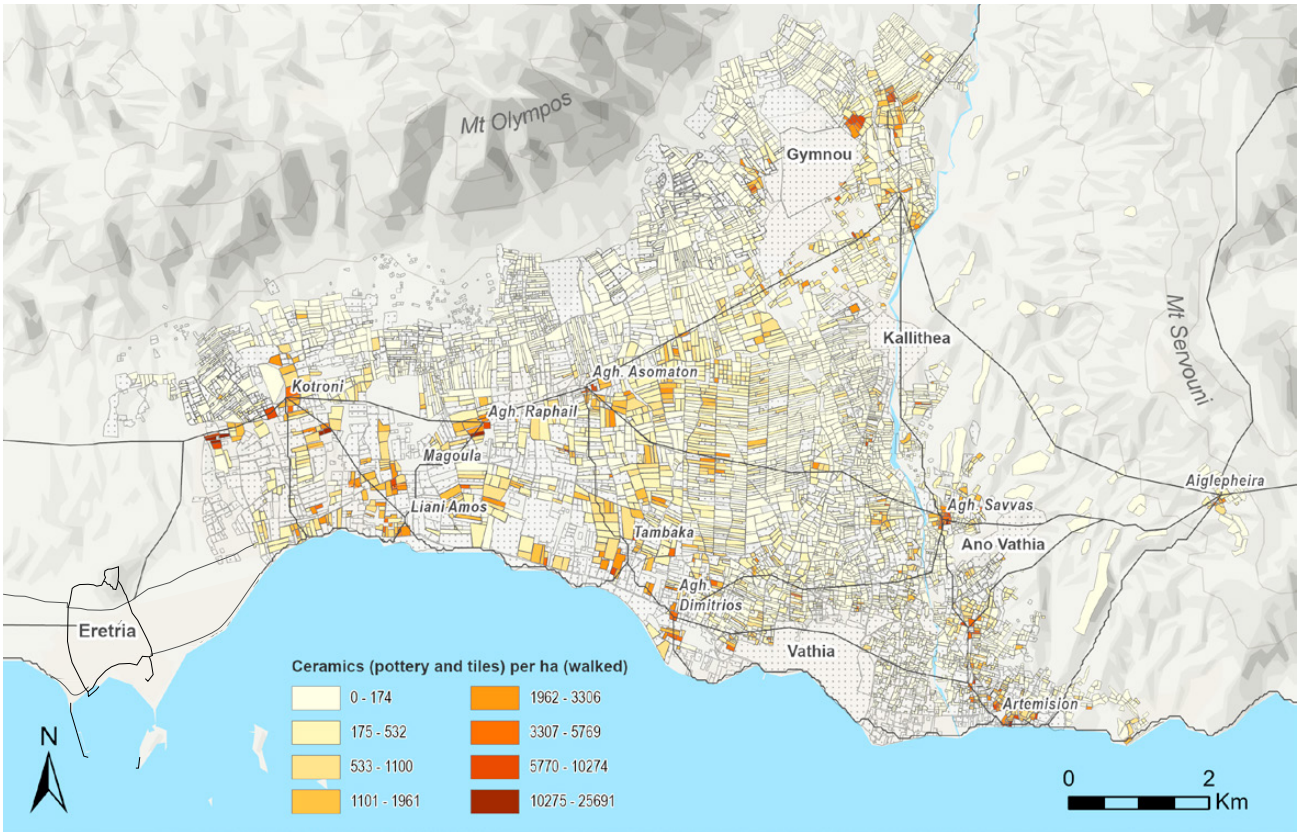

Fig. 1. Survey map showing ceramics (pottery and tile) densities, 2021–2025 (ESAG, C. Chezeaux – S. Fachard).

EASP: Framework, Goals, and Limitations

When we launched the new research project at Amarynthos (2021–2025), we deemed it crucial to include a landscape approach in order to assert the position of the Artemision within the Eretrian plain and the wider region.[5] Despite difficulties related to the modern urbanization of the area stretching between Eretria and Amarynthos, we decided to conduct an archaeological survey combining intensive and extensive methods of fieldwalking, remote sensing (using aerial imagery and lidar), geophysics, geomorphology, environmental reconstruction, and coring. The goals of the survey were to produce an up-to-date, exhaustive, and detailed archaeological map of the Eretrian plain; to understand the evolution of settlement patterns in the long term (Bronze Age to Ottoman and Early Modern); to study the parallel development of Amarynthos and Eretria within the region; to analyze the plain's overall connectivity by studying the road network, including the position of the "sacred road" between Eretria and Amarynthos; to locate the settlement (deme) of Amarynthos and define the nature of the space surrounding the sanctuary's *temenos*; and possibly locate additional evidence for sacred sites.

The study area covers the entire Eretria-Amarynthos plain, as well as the Sarandapotamos Valley (the ancient Erasinos?) and the slopes of Mt Olympos and Mt Servouni (**Fig. 1**). The area cannot be entirely investigated with the same intensity and method, due to the presence of an almost continuous carpet of modern constructions on the coastal plain (including the modern "city" sprawls of Eretria and Amarynthos, as well as hundreds of secondary residences), restricted property and fenced plots, steep sloped terrain, and maquis-covered areas. Moreover, as expected beforehand, large areas confirmed to have no traces of ancient occupation on the surface, such as the delta of the Sarandapotamos River (whose ancient levels are covered with alluvia) or the karstic, eroded bare rocks of the slopes of Mt Olympos. In fact, one might rightly argue that it would be difficult to find a worse setting for an archaeological survey project. But despite such bad omens, the project makes sense from a heritage and methodological point of view. First, facing the intense phenomenon of chaotic *rurbanization* of the Eretrian countryside, the project probably offered

5 We are grateful to the Hellenic Ministry of Culture for granting the study permit, a collaboration between the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea under the direction of S. Fachard and A. G. Simosi. The research project was made possible thanks to the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation.

the last opportunity for a "rescue survey," preserving crucial archaeological data before it is too late, as we suspect that the entire coastal stretch will form a continuous built entity in less than a generation. Second, once we leave the coastal stretch, we find preserved rural areas that can be thoroughly investigated, rolling fields, and olive groves where survey teams can deploy.

The field method is the one adopted for the Mazi Archaeological project, with a combination of "intensive" survey in the plain—fieldwalkers 10m apart, systematically counting sherds, tiles, and lithics—and "extensive survey" on the mountain slopes.[6] The latter method was enhanced by lidar-based remote sensing and ground truthing, thanks to the acquisition of high-resolution lidar data covering 240 sq. km. The lidar technology provided an essential tool for exploring the rugged, hilly, mountainous, and maquis-covered slopes of Mt Servouni and Mt Olympos, revealing significant archaeological features.[7]

Over the course of five seasons, EASP systematically surveyed an area of 50 sq. km, documenting over 220 archaeological features from all periods and counting over 150,000 pottery sherds and tile fragments on the surface.[8] Despite the challenges posed by the extensive development of modern urbanization along the coast, the survey has been able to map broad patterns of ceramic distribution and long-term human occupation across the entire landscape. In addition to the excavation and heritage data, the unpublished results of the Eretria Survey Project conducted by P. Simon in the early 2000s, and the extensive survey conducted in the plain for more than 20 years by S. Fachard, we possess a critical mass of archaeological data for studying the long-term human occupation of the plain and the main components, layers, and interactions forming the ancient landscape.[9]

Settlement Patterns, Agricultural Surfaces and Road Network

It is important to stress that the bulk of survey data has contributed to reconstructing the local settlement patterns, as large densities of surface pottery and tile help us delimit the footprint of settlements (**Fig. 1**). Condensed, high-density areas with architectural features, surrounded by low-density zones, demarcate nucleated settlements, such as in the sectors of Aglepharos and Ag. Raphail, identified as the deme centers of Aiglepheira and Dismaros (?), respectively. In other areas, we find lower but more continuous densities stretching over larger areas, probably along roads,

Fig. 2. Marble fragment of a funerary monument (ESAG, S. Fachard).

such as at Kotroni, Magoula, Ag. Dimitrios, and Tambaka: This pattern suggests the presence of non-nucleated settlements, characterized by a more dispersed distribution of houses, farmsteads, shacks, gardens, and rubbish. In a few instances, we can identify single houses or farmsteads, but they appear to be rare or poorly visible outside the larger densities. Overall, the combined analysis of ceramic densities, architectural features, and other surface remains such as walls, ancient blocks, inscriptions, and graves (*infra*) suggests the presence of 8–9 settlement cores, best interpreted as ancient demes (*demoi*).[10]

The survey also identified rich funerary evidence, mainly graves, funerary terraces and enclosures, pottery, sculpture related to funerary monuments (**Fig. 2**), grave stelai (some inscribed), and cippi. Aggregations of diverse funerary features were also found outside settlements and along roads, signaling the presence of cemeteries and a large section of the eastern Eretrian necropolis.

Agricultural surfaces can be identified and mapped outside settlements, where soil allows cultivation. Some of these surfaces can appear to be void of surface ceramics, especially in sloped, schist terrain, which can support olive cultivation, essentially the upper valley of Ano Vatheia and the slopes of Mt Servouni, where terracing was used intensively. Some of the long terraces outside ancient settlements (Aglepharos) could well be ancient. Still, the majority belong to the Byzantine/Ottoman and Early Modern periods, in some cases reusing older ones. In the peneplain, large fields with very low densities suggest the existence of

6 Fachard *et al.* 2015; Knodell *et al.* 2016; 2017; Papangeli *et al.* 2018.
7 Fachard *et al.* 2025.
8 Fachard *et al.* 2022, 2023, 2024.
9 Simon 2000; 2001; 2002; 2007; Fachard 2012.
10 On the Eretrian demes, see Fachard 2012 and Knoepfler 1997.

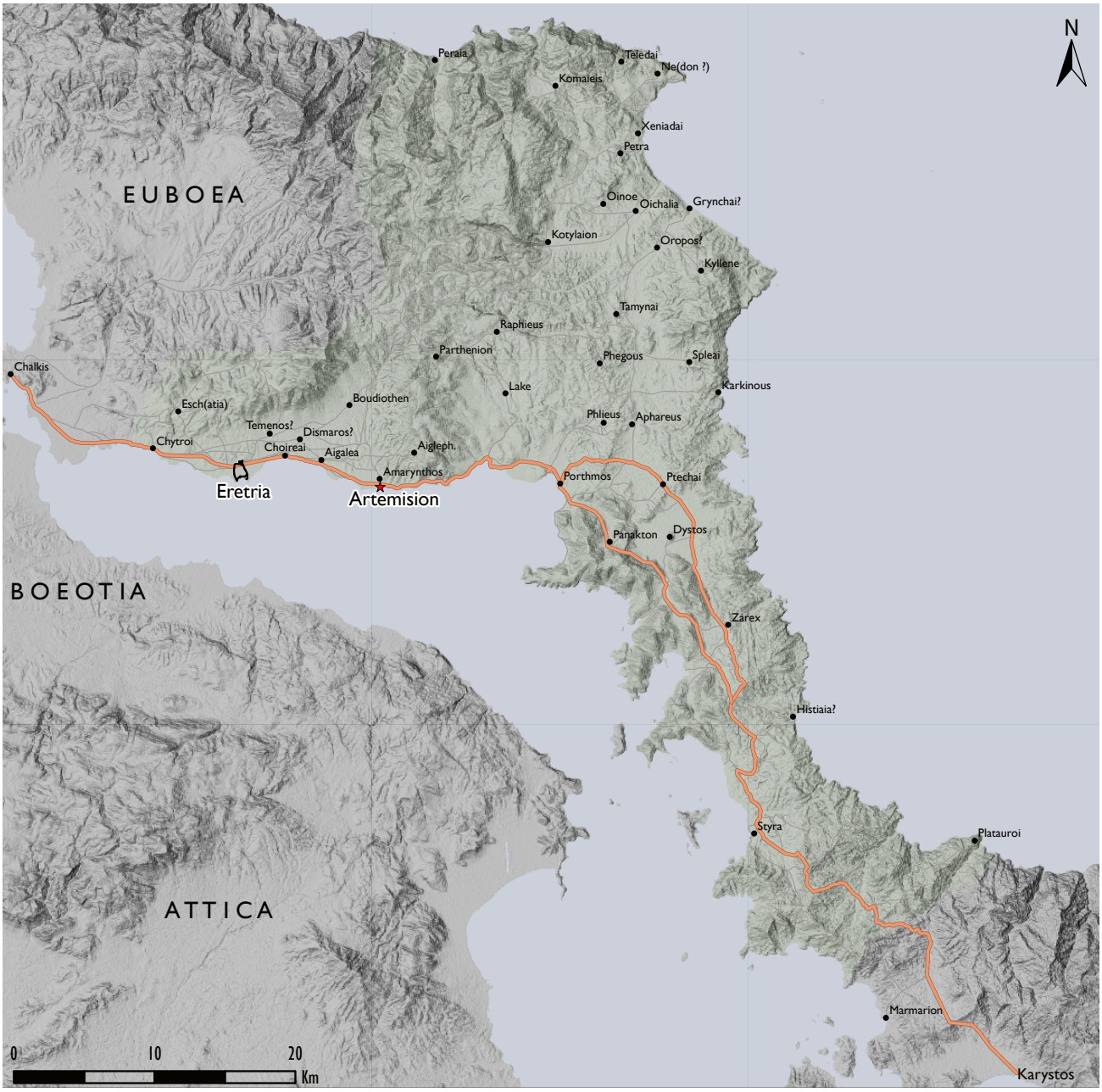

Fig. 3. The territory of Eretria and road network (ESAG, S. Fachard).

agricultural surfaces, mainly dedicated to grain (primarily barley) and olive, while vine was probably privileged closer to settlements. Several threshing floors were discovered in the plain, but most of them are found around Ano Vatheia and Metamorphosi and date to the Byzantine-Ottoman periods. In general, based on the climate, slope, and nature of the soil, it seems that olive cultivation was dominant in Antiquity.

The evidence for roads is of indirect nature, as very few physical remains of ancient roadbeds were discovered. However, the presence of funerary evidence along terraces or paths suggests the presence of roads. Moreover, the settlement cores were necessarily connected within a larger network of roads and paths, which we can tentatively restore by using 19th-c. maps (mainly the work of the French Mission of Morea), spatial analysis, lidar-based remote sensing, and least-cost paths in GIS.[11] The reconstructed communication network (**Fig. 1**) shows a high degree of connectivity within the plain, including strategic routes through

11 Fachard 2012, 91–100; 2023 and in print. For the method (least-cost paths and spatial analysis), see Fachard – Knodell 2020; Fachard – Pirisino 2015.

the Servouni pass at Marmara/Vordolakka leading to Tamynai and the demes of the central and northern districts of the Eretriad, and the great Euboean corridor route leading to the Artemision and continuing along the Kaki Skala, Porthmos (Aliveri), Dystos, Styra, and Karystos (**Fig. 3**). The segment of this road between Eretria and Amarynthos was used by the Artemisia procession and, therefore, might have assumed a sacred character, which now brings us to review the archaeological signature of cults and rituals.

Tracing the Sacred in Archaeological Survey

The "sacred" evidence collected by EASP is limited and tenuous. Outside Eretria and Amarynthos, no clearly identified architectural feature can be *directly* associated with a shrine. Among the 236 features discovered during the survey, only 1.7–3% can be tentatively associated with a cultic space, yet with limited and ambiguous evidence in most cases. These figures are comparable to other survey projects conducted in Greece, where the number of rural sanctuaries varies from 0 to 7 for study areas of up to 44 sq. km.[12] However, some elements inherent to Greek cult and ritual are "hidden" in the landscape and cannot be detected by survey archaeology. We now review the archaeological evidence and include in the discussion a list of potential sacred features and locales that must be accounted for, thus addressing the issue of positive and negative data.

Mt Olympos

A dense and rich pottery assemblage was discovered during the systematic "extensive" survey conducted on the summits and ridges of this massif (**Fig. 4**). The pottery is concentrated just below the summit of Elatias, at 1,100m asl. Over 100 fragments were collected, with a high proportion of black glaze fine pottery dating between the Late Archaic and Hellenistic periods. No structure was assimilated with the assemblage. The quality? of the assemblage excludes a sheepfold, while no settlement or farmstead makes sense at this altitude. The most plausible hypothesis at this stage is to interpret the site as a small peak sanctuary, where pottery, including fineware and drinking cups, was deposited.

A section of the elongated massif of Mt Olympos was part of the long border between Chalkis and Eretria, with the Eretrian controlling most of the massif and the Chalkidians arguably a smaller area at its northwestern tip.[13] The oronym is attested since antiquity and appears as an epithet in two inscriptions from Chalkis and Eretria: a shrine honoring Zeus *Olympios* in the city

Fig. 4. Pottery sherds on Mt Olympos (ESAG, C. Chezeaux).

of Chalkis (*IG* I^3, 39, ll. 61–62) and an Eretrian dedication to Artemis *Olympia* (*IG* XII 9, 260, see D. Knoepfler in this volume). In the absence of written evidence, the identification of the site remains subject to discussion. However, Chalkis is far away, while the entire Sarandapotamos Valley (the ancient Erasinos?) and the surrounding mountains of Olympos and Servouni (ancient name Amarynthos?) were the realm of Artemis and the local heroes related to her shrine: the hunter Amarynthos and his son Narkissos.[14] Given the position of Elatias within the massif and, above all, its stunning and direct view over the Artemision at Amarynthos which cannot be fortuitous (**Fig. 4**—note that Eretria is not visible), a link with Artemis *Olympia* seems most plausible.

12 Alcock 1994, 249–253.

13 For an analysis of the borders and a tentative delimitation, see Fachard 2012, 77–90.

14 D. Knoepfler in this volume; see also Knoepfler 1997, 390, and 2010.

Fig. 5. Prehistoric occupation at Olympos Cave (ESAG, S. Fachard).

Olympos Cave

Below the summit of Elatias, at an altitude of 660m, is a small cave first mentioned by K. Kourouniotes in 1911, who discovered Neolithic material and possibly a Prehistoric marble figurine.[15] D. Theochares collected obsidian, while a recent autopsy (**Fig. 5**) revealed dozens of sherds eroded below the cave, including coarseware (cup), a table amphora handle, and one black glazed sherd of Classical date. The cave was, therefore, used in the (Late?) Neolithic as a rock shelter and hunting ground, and visited in the Classical period, where artefacts, including fineware, were left or deposited. The cave is easily visible from the plain, including from the Artemision. Interestingly, it is situated on a direct mountain path between Gymnou (ancient deme of Boudion) and the Elatias summit. Hypothetically, it might have served as a stopover and small shrine on the way to the Elatias-Artemis *Olympia* (?) peak sanctuary, but the evidence remains slim.

Ta Marmara (Vordolakka)

This site is located on the elongated ridge of Mt Servouni, more specifically on the pass connecting the Erasinos (Sarandapotamos) Valley to the modern village of Partheni, below the ancient deme of Parthenion.[16] Known since the 19th c., it has been briefly described by travelers who variously interpreted it as a small temple or watchtower.[17] Sadly, the site has been looted and partially destroyed by the removal of blocks. A small excavation in 2022 revealed a rectangular building of 10,08 × 6,71m, oriented SW-NE (**Fig. 6**).[18] The foundations, made of

15 *Prakt* 1911, 57. The figurine may have been found by Kourouniotis, according to V. Petrakos (*ArchDelt* 17, 1961–1962, Chron. 159 and pl. 167). See also Theochares 1959 and Sackett *et al.* 1966, 64.

16 See Fachard 2012, 59.

17 Fachard 2012, 151–153 (with previous references).

18 We thank J. André for supervising the cleaning operations and completing the architectural study. A separate article by J. André – S. Fachard – Ch. Chezeaux – A. Simosi is in preparation.

Fig. 6. Funerary or religious monument at *Ta Marmara* on the ridge of Mt Servouni (ESAG, J. André).

limestone blocks and a carefully carved euthynteria, support a first course of trapezoidal limestone blocks with fine staggered broached work. The blocks originate from a quarry located about 500m north. Construction in the 4th c. is suggested by a few sherds and Corinthian tile fragments. In the initial field report, the building was interpreted as a small *oikos* or temple, based on its rectangular plan, the presence of an euthynteria, the care taken in its construction, and its position along a mountain crossroads.[19] The latter sits on the shortest road between Eretria, Tamynai, and the Aegean; it connects the Amarynthos Valley with the central and northern districts of the Eretrian territory, and was, therefore, on the path to the Artemision.[20] Although the hypothesis of a sacred *oikos* or roadside shrine dedicated to Artemis or a local hero (Amarynthos?) on this mountain pass would, in theory, make sense, the absence of surface pottery around the building is problematic. Normally, a shrine would leave some traces of occupation, such as surface pottery.[21] Therefore, the absence of pottery around these prominent remains could suggest another function—perhaps a funerary terrace belonging to a wealthy individual or family, a practice well attested in Eretria and Attica (Vari, Rhamnous, Kerameikos).[22] However, such terraces are usually found outside cities or significant settlements (demes), which is not the case with Ta Marmara. It is also not immediately clear why a wealthy individual would choose to erect such an elaborate and ostentatious funerary monument on a mountain pass, instead of the

19 Fachard *et al.* 2023.

20 Fachard 2012, 101–105 (roads III.1–5).

21 Looting, well attested at the site, cannot entirely erase the traces of such deposits: In our opinion, fragments of pottery would have been naturally eroded on the surrounding slopes over the millennia, which is clearly not the case.

22 This hypothesis, which also relies on architectural data, is supported by J. André (see n. 18). It should also be noted that people from Partheni claim that a sarcophagos was brought to the village from Ta Marmara, which, if true, would strongly support a funerary function.

Fig. 7. Section of the Sacred road between Eretria and Amarynthos (ESAG, S. Fachard).

Eretria necropolis, near the Artemision, or along the sacred road. In summary, pending new evidence, a sacred function appears to be limited.

Sacred Road

The famous procession (*pompe*) connecting the Agora of Eretria to the Artemision in Amarynthos is mentioned in the regulations for the Artemisia.[23] The procession, obviously one of the highlights of the celebrations, brought together the entire population, including women and children, ephebes, magistrates, and musicians. Its exact origin is unknown, but the character of the military parade mentioned by Strabo (10.1.10), which included 3,000 hoplites, 600 cavalry, and 60 chariots, has often been associated with the Late Archaic period.[24] Exiting the city from the East Gate, the procession followed the main road to the Artemision, whose sacred character (*hiera odos*) has long been suggested by Knoepfler[25].

A "sacred road" was identified by American archaeologists at the end of the 19th c. and described as a road lined with graves.[26] On the American map, the road starts at the East Gate of the city and extends east towards Magoula and Amarynthos. Using old maps, least-cost path analysis, lidar-based remote sensing, and intensive survey, the likely remains of the road were discovered in 2021. These consist of an elongated terrace about 600m long, oriented east-west and supported by conglomerate blocks (**Fig. 7**). Architectural limestone blocks and marble sculptural fragments from funerary monuments were found along this axis, supporting the late 19th-c. description of the "sacred road." No other traces of the road were uncovered during the survey. It probably remained a key route through the Late Antique, Byzantine, Ottoman, and Early Modern periods, as this segment was on the main Euboean road connecting Chalkis, Eretria, Amarynthos, Porthmos, Styra, and Karystos. The study of the Morea maps combined with spatial analysis provides strong evidence for a theoretical axis corresponding to the (corrected) 60 stadia between Eretria and Amarynthos recorded by Strabo. The "sacred road" to Amarynthos, used by processions, was the Eretriad's busiest axis of communication and a constant evocation of Artemis' footprint in the landscape.

The also *by the Artemision at Amarynthos*

The Paleoekklissies Hill above the Artemision served as a landmark visible from the plain and the sea. It was home to a major Bronze Age settlement, whose toponym *Amaruto* was recorded in the Linear B tablets from Thebes. Recent excavations showed that the hill was left abandoned after the end of the Mycenaean period, marked by the transfer of occupation in the area of the sanctuary, at the western foot of the hill.[27] Interestingly, the excavations on the hill revealed no occupation

23 *IG* XII 9, 189 (see Rhodes – Osborne 2003, no 73).
24 Fachard – Verdan 2024, 152.
25 D. Knoepfler in Ducrey *et al.* 2018, 934–935.
26 Pickard 1891, 371 and plate 19.
27 S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume.

Fig. 8. Paleoekklisies Hill above the Artemision (ESAG, S. Fachard).

between the Late Mycenaean and Byzantine periods, which the survey confirmed for a slightly larger area. As a result, the site was left empty and unoccupied during Classical Antiquity, possibly becoming a natural reserve or sacred grove (**Fig. 8**).[28] The presence of such a sacred grove above the sanctuary enhanced the scenic view of the *hieron*, as shown in various figures in this volume.[29]

Sacred groves (*alsos*, plural *alse*) composed of stands of trees, represent a significant feature in Pausanias' sacred countryside. They are found inside sanctuaries, near temples and altars, or on the outskirts, creating a scenic setting that enhances the sacred atmosphere of the site. Pausanias had an eye for them and was particularly sensitive to their power of attraction: as demonstrated by Birge, Pausanias records 45 *alse* dedicated to deities, both in cities and territories, more than *temene*.[30] Given the perishable nature of trees, sacred groves cannot usually be identified through archaeological survey alone. However, in some cases, certain environmental conditions perpetuate similar types of vegetation for thousands of years, such as in the Valley of Tempe, celebrated in poetry, or at the Trophonios shrine in Lebadea, which Pausanias describes as an *alsos* (9.32.2, 4). The scenic plane trees and fresh waters at the bottom of a steep gorge still delight visitors today.

The combination of excavation, pollen analysis, and geoenvironmental reconstruction can indicate specific elements of the vegetational landscape. At Amarynthos, coring and geoenvironmental studies confirmed the presence of marshes west of the Classical sanctuary.[31] Based on numerous examples from Pausanias, including Artemis sanctuaries, the "Artemision *alsos*" might have been part of the sanctuary or located just outside its *temenos*.[32] Both the marshes, dear to Artemis, and the *alsos* would have created an Artemisian *décor* (reminiscent of Brauron in Attica) while shielding and isolating the Artemision from the noise and activity of the nearby Euboean corridor route, just a few meters north of the temenos.[33]

Natural Features, Locales, and Perishable Markers

Abundant literary evidence amply demonstrates that the ancient Greek landscape was littered with small and modest shrines and that natural features such as springs, caves, summits, and trees, were the object of cults and veneration. As stressed by S. Alcock, reading Pausanias leaves us with the belief that such rural shrines and sacred places "were everywhere in the countryside: on mountaintops, near springs, on hills, in groves."[34] Although there's no reason to doubt the Periegete's testimony, as abundantly demonstrated in scholarship,[35] such sacred places and features obviously leave no tangible

28 D. Knoepfler and S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume.

29 D. Knoepfler, p. 220, fig. 5 and S. Verdan *et al.*, p. 256, fig. 3, in this volume.

30 Birge 1994, 238.

31 Ghilardi 2018; S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume.

32 See Artemis *Issoria* in Sparta (3.14), Artemis in Phokis (10.37), as well as the palm trees "in front" of the sanctuary of Artemis at Aulis (9.19.8).

33 See the place named *Limnaion* ("Marshy") sacred to Artemis *Orthia* in Laconia (Paus. 3.16.7) and the sanctuaries of Artemis *Limnatis* in Laconia ("of the marshes/lake" 3.23.10) and Messenia (4.31.3). See Jiménez San Cristóbal 2021 and S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume.

34 Alcock 2012, 133.

35 Jost 1985; Osborne 1987, 165–92; Habicht 1998; Jost 1994; Alcock 2012.

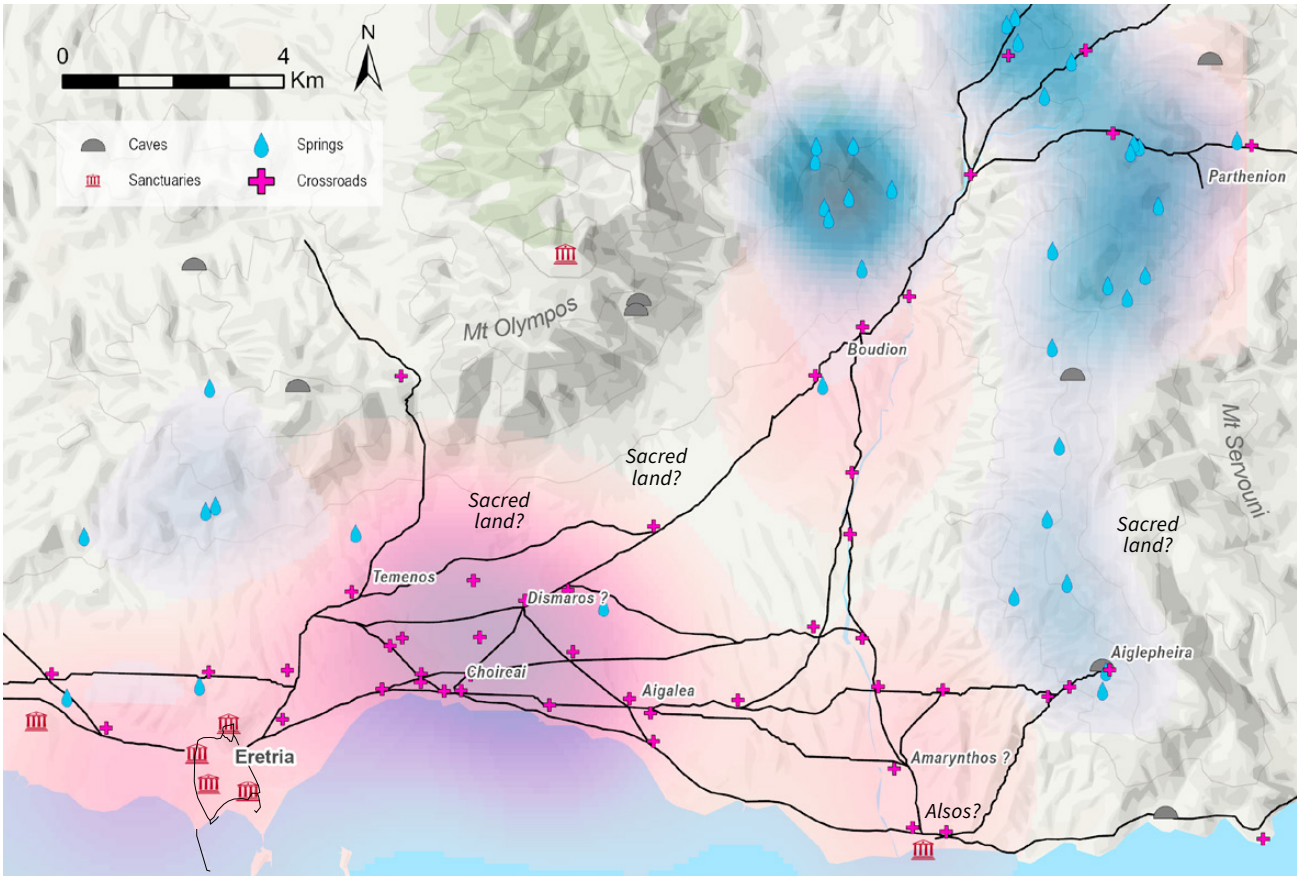

Fig. 9. Probability maps of the landscape's sacred components (ESAG, S. Fachard).

trace, and many more would be undetectable through survey reconnaissance due to their size, nature, or type of dedication. Sacred groves (*alsos*, *infra*), trees (*drymos*, *dendra*), a pointed rock, a mountaintop, a spring (*pege*), a wooden effigy, a pile of stones, a small roadside shrine or a wooden herm leave no material evidence.

Such examples cruelly remind survey archaeologists of what they are missing when studying the landscape's sacred components. To address this, we have created "probability maps" to identify and project potential sacred sites and natural features like caves, springs, and summits (**Fig. 9**). All were visited during the course of EASP, sometimes leading to interesting discoveries (see Elatias and Olympos Cave *supra*). Additionally, on the higher slopes of Mt Servouni, the rock shelter and spring at the Church of Zoodochos Pigi were part of the deme center of Aiglepheira. The presence of a spring certainly dictated the location of the ancient settlement, but it also likely served as a cult site for the deme and a sacred locale. Further north, another church (Theotokos) was built next to a small spring, at the foot of a limestone and karstic outcrop. Black-glazed pottery was found above the spring, and a Late Byzantine site later occupied the area. At the same elevation, the Byzantine church (and settlement) at Ag. Georgios sits by a beautifully shaded spring of fresh water, covered by the oldest (several hundred years) and largest olive tree in the region (**Fig. 10**). The combination of this majestic tree and a fresh spring in a delightful cove is evocative of Pausanias' descriptions of sacred trees and springs. A similar configuration is found on the other side of the valley, on the slopes of Mt Olympos, at a spring called Aghia ("Holy"), where the Byzantine church of Ag. Paraskevi was built using ancient spolia. The fact that churches systematically occupied such springs and locales stresses the role they played in the construction of the Byzantine religious landscape and offers an interesting parallel, if not a form of continuity, with antiquity.[36]

Therefore, locales containing caves, rock shelters, impressive rocky outcrops, springs, stands of majestic trees, and scenic coves should be visited and mapped, providing features in the sacred and hidden background.

36 On the role of the natural environment in Byzantine "sacred landscapes," see F. Kondyli in this volume.

Fig. 10. Olive tree by Theotokos church (ESAG, S. Fachard).

Sacred Lands

The existence of sacred land (*hiera ge*) and estates (*temene*) is well attested in the Greek world. In addition to the limits of a sanctuary, the word *temenos*, attested in Linear B tablets, can describe a sacred estate (often arable) belonging to a deity and administered by a sanctuary or a political body.[37] The numerous *temene* of Athena in Attica provide plentiful evidence, and the Athenians also exploited such estates outside Attica (Aigina, Kos, Samos), including Euboea, as evidenced by the *temene* of the Other Gods in the territories of Chalkis and Eretria (*IG* I^3, 418). Other examples of sacred land are found at Argos, Thebes, Hymanpolis, Delos, Rheneia, and Delphi, with the complex administration of the Sacred land located on the peninsula of Desphina.[38]

In Eretria, despite the lack of epigraphical evidence, the existence of sacred land dedicated to Artemis is almost certain. Indeed, it would be highly unusual if Artemis, whose treasury was supplied with state fines,[39] did not "own" land. The possible alsos above the Artemision would provide a first example, and we believe that other sacred estates existed in the valley and surrounding mountains, on the slopes of Mt Olympos and Mt Servouni (Mt Amarynthos?). The deme of Temenos was probably situated next to a sacred estate (temenos), possibly "owned" by Artemis, Apollo, or another deity or hero. If we are correct in placing the deme at Kotroni,[40] the temenos could have included a large portion of land on the piedmonts of Mt Olympos. Other *temene* of various sizes might have existed in the Eretria-Amarynthos region, thus adding another imprint of the gods in the landscape.

Sacred land is difficult, if not impossible, to identify without *horoi*, but large, empty areas of land devoid of occupation, recorded through archaeological "intensive" survey, could potentially indicate the existence of sacred land left untilled or uninhabited. As a matter of hypothesis, several such candidates have been mapped for EASP, awaiting further evidence (**Fig. 9**).

Deme Sanctuaries

Religious activity, both domestic and public, was generally present in demes, as evidenced in the Eretriad with the cults of Artemis in Amarynthos, Apollo in Tamynai and Zarex, Zeus *Hypsistos*, and Aphrodite in Styra.[41] This phenomenon is, of course, best documented in Attica, through both epigraphic and archaeological evidence.[42] The Thorikos Calendar lists a cohort of local deities and heroes, along with their rituals, sacrifices, and feasts.[43] Other calendars from the Marathonian Tetrapolis (*SEG* 50 168), Erchia (*SEG* 21 541), and Eleusis (*SEG* 23 80) demonstrate their widespread use and highlight the wealth and diversity of religious life in the countryside. Excavations conducted in demes have largely confirmed the ubiquity of deme cults throughout Attica.[44] For the Eretriad, it is reasonable to assume the existence of various-sized shrines and cults in most, if not all, of its 60 demes. For the survey area, and although evidence outside the deme of Amarynthos is still lacking, we can tentatively project the presence of cults and shrines in the 8–10 *demoi* recorded during EASP (**Fig. 9**). Toponymy

37 Papazarkadas 2011; Rousset 2013.

38 Rousset 2002 (Delphi) and 2013, 125–133 (for cases of sacred land in Greek cities).

39 Knoepfler 1988, 385–386.

40 The location is accepted by Knoepfler 2024, 257 (see also his discussion of the word *temenos* in this context).

41 Fachard 2012, 64–65 (Tamynai), 73 and 230 (Styra), as well as the catalogue entries 107 (Apollo *Tamynaios*), 158 (Zarex), 166 (Styra). For a possible deme sanctuary of Zeus *Olbios* at Dismaros, see Knoepfler 2014, 66.

42 See L. Baumer in this volume; Mikalson 1977; Whitehead 1986; Parker 1996.

43 Daux 1983; *SEG* 26 136 and 33 147.

44 Besides large demes such as Eleusis, Sounion, and Rhamnous, see the cases of Pallene, Halai Aixonides at Kalamboka (Lohmann 1992), Halai Araphenides (Kalogeropoulos 2013), Oe, Myrrhinous, etc.

offers clues: the deme of Temenos probably derived its name from a large temenos belonging to a deity (*infra*); Boudion, located at modern Gymnou, may come from an epiclesis of Athena;[45] targeted cleaning and excavation at the newly discovered Aiglepheira could uncover a shrine near the cave and within the settlement.

Assessing the Survey Evidence

In summary, less than 3% of archaeological features recorded by EASP can be associated with sacred sites, a low rate that is concordant with other survey projects in Greece.[46] This confirms the low archaeological signature of sacred features in the landscape outside cities and major sanctuaries with monumental architecture. Therefore, if we rely only on survey data, the sacred components within the ancient Greek landscape are evanescent compared to the domestic, economic, and connectivity layers.

However, this section clearly shows that the Greek countryside consists of a complex combination of locales, natural features, and lands that must be integrated into the larger picture (**Fig. 9**). These can be projected thanks to "probability maps" that display springs, mountaintops, caves, rock shelters, settlements, and major crossroads (roadside shrines). They serve as a useful tool for selectively choosing locations to visit and remind survey archaeologists of what they might be potentially missing. In combination with raw archaeological survey data, probability maps are a valuable tool in landscape reconstruction.

Landscape Reconstruction

Based on our survey data, and despite the caveats of the available data, we can outline a rapid and preliminary landscape reconstruction for three chronological milestones (Late Geometric, Late Archaic, and Classical). The goal of this narrative is to examine the structure and social organization of the Eretrian-Amarynthos countryside at different periods and to try to perceive how the sacred components of the landscape might have developed and been experienced by its population.

Late Geometric Period

At that time, Eretria was the dominant settlement in the plain, both in size and settlement hierarchy. The population grew dramatically in the second half of the 8th c., transforming the area below the acropolis into a proto-urban settlement with various neighborhoods, a major sanctuary with a monumental temple dedicated to Apollo, and signs of communal enterprise (canals, dykes, roads).[47] Amarynthos, which was the most important settlement in the plain during the Late Bronze Age, gradually lost prominence to Eretria in the 8th c., perhaps following complex social changes and a larger population shift; the site, which lacked a deep harbor and an acropolis for defense, was now mainly occupied by the Sanctuary of Artemis *Amarysia*. The transformative forces leading to such a paradigm shift between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age still largely escape us. Still, Eretria emerges as the primary site by 700 BCE in size, population, and political power. Amarynthos nevertheless retains considerable religious importance, as evidenced by the hekatompedon-type temple, which is comparable in size to the one dedicated to Apollo in Eretria.

Outside these two poles, connected by a road, occupation is highly tenuous (**Fig. 11**). Agriculture, cattle, and horse breeding played an important role, but taken at face value, the data would suggest that the land was mainly exploited by farmers and breeders operating from these main poles. Scattered farms and domains might have existed between the two sites, but no archaeological traces remain, which, after all, is not surprising given the fact that the finewares of the period are fragile and preserved poorly on the surface and outside excavated contexts, and that such constructions would have been made of mudbrick elevations and thatched roofs. Overall, the presence of two *hekatompeda* in two major sanctuaries only 11km apart (and likely part of the same polity) is unparalleled in Greece at this time. Still, the expression of religious architectural monumentality seen at Eretria and Amarynthos contrasts with what seems to be a mostly underused and underexploited landscape, indicating that sacred components within the landscape are still limited outside settlements and large sanctuaries.

Late Archaic Period

In the Late Archaic period, especially in the last decades of the 6th and the early 5th c., we witness a spectacular level of building activity. At Amarynthos, the Artemis temple was rebuilt around 520 BCE following a fire, sealing a rich deposit of offerings including local vases, weapons (helmets and shields), precious cloths, jewelry, and exotica.[48] Eretria acquires an advanced urban character, with the construction of city walls, an agora, a grid of streets, a fountain house, and the new Doric temple of Apollo Daphnephoros with its pedimental sculptures.

45 Knoepfler 1997, 359.

46 There is not enough space here to present side by side the data from other projects, but recent results from the Mazi Archaeological Project illustrates this point well: of the 500 recorded features, only two ancient sacred features were identified, the previously excavated temple of Dionysos, and the Cave of Antiope mentioned by Pausanias (1.38.9).

47 For an exhaustive historical and political draft of the period, see Fachard – Verdan 2024.

48 See S. Verdan *et al.* in this volume; Fachard 2023, 1358–1365.

Fig. 11. Early Iron Age sites in the Eretria–Amarynthos plain (ESAG, S. Fachard – C. Chezeaux).

It is now the *asty* of a powerful polis, with an army and a fleet that operates in the Euboean Gulf and beyond, as evidenced by its role in the Ionian Revolt.[49]

Around 500 BCE, we record for the first time steadier forms of occupation in the countryside (**Fig. 12**).[50] Although the pottery evidence remains limited, it appears in areas of high ceramic densities interpreted as Classical deme centers, suggesting that these sites are older. Remarkably, the presence of Late Archaic settlements confirms Herodotos' account of the Persian siege of Eretria in 490 BCE (6.101), mentioning by name three *choria* ("villages") occupied by the Persian armada deployed between Amarynthos and Eretria: Temenos, Choireai, and Aigalea, all epigraphically recorded as Classical-Hellenistic demes. The existence of (at least) three Late Archaic villages between Eretria and Amarynthos attests to a demographic increase and a more intensive occupation of the countryside.

The last years of the 6th c. also witnessed significant political, military, and religious reforms, as the Eretrian tribal system expanded from the four original Ionian tribes to six, each named after Eretrian heroes.[51] Among them is Narkittis, named after the hero Narkittos, who is closely associated with Amarynthos and the Artemision. This reform could be motivated by the need to include within the polis a larger group of citizens from neighboring regions and, therefore, seal the inclusion of new districts into the polis. The reform of the tribal system also has implications for the military and civic organization of the state: The famous procession described by Strabo, displaying the 3,000 hoplites, 600 cavalry, and 60 war chariots (10.1.10), could reflect the new tribal organization, with its six tribes each mobilizing 500 hoplites, 100 cavalry, and 10 war chariots. The institutionalization of the procession between Eretria and Amarynthos provides a "sacred" character to the existing road linking Eretria to the Artemision, and therefore, an attempt to bond key sacred sites in the landscape. In this vein, the cult activity at the peak sanctuary of Elatias, possibly in honor of Artemis *Olympia*,

49 Fachard – Verdan 2024, 176.

50 Fachard 2023, 1369–1370. For a similar increase of rural activity in the area of Thespiai, see Bintliff *et al.* 2007, 131–133, 173; see also J. Bintliff *et al.* in this volume.

51 See D. Knoepfler in this volume; Fachard 2019; Fachard – Verdan 2024, 140–141, 155–158.

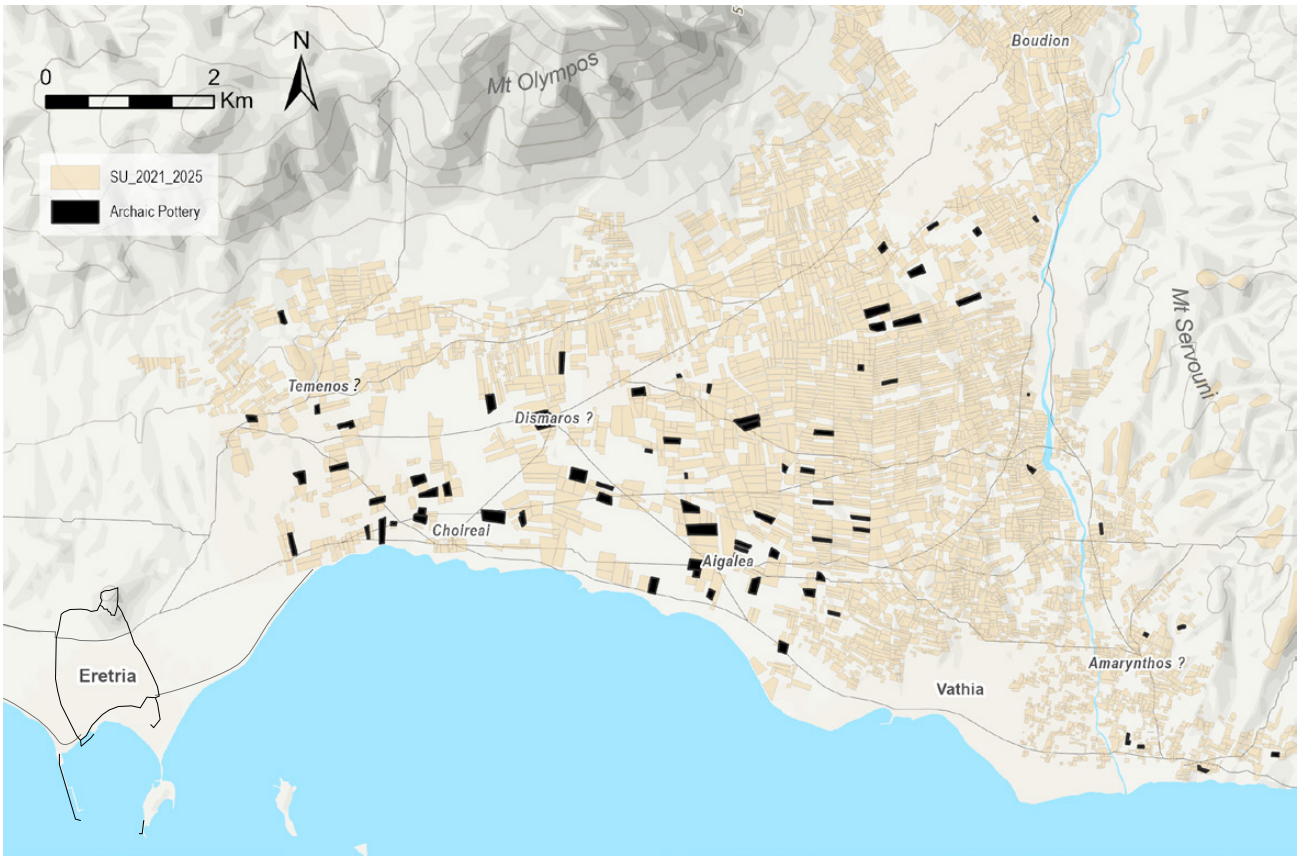

Fig. 12. Late Archaic sites in the Eretria–Amarynthos plain (ESAG, C. Chezeaux – S. Fachard).

suggests a broader attempt to link sacred locales within a larger communion of people, beliefs, and rituals. And if our hypotheses about the deme of Temenos and the Artemision *alsos* are correct, they would then prove the existence of sacred domains at that time, showing that the Eretrians were carving space and estates for the gods, perhaps in the face of an ever-growing population and agricultural densification. For the first time, signs of sacred spatial organization are traceable in the landscape.

The conquest of Eretria and the destruction of the shrines by the Persians mark the end of a great run.[52] The fate of the Artemision is unknown, and it might have well escaped destruction, as suggested by D. Knoepfler.[53] True, no destruction layers in relation to this episode have been recorded so far at the shrine, but these are notoriously difficult to interpret and tend to disappear when a site is cleaned or rebuilt during a recovery phase.[54] It is hard to believe that the Persian armada would have "missed" the Artemision while landing hundreds of ships and military personnel west of Amarynthos and then spared the sanctuary, while the goal was expressly to punish Eretria and destroy its shrines. The Artemision was probably looted but not utterly destroyed, as the Persians, *en route* to Marathon, had bigger fish to fry. For Eretria, 490 marks the end of an era. But the city was to recover, thanks, in significant part, to its dynamic countryside and its regional demographic basin.[55]

Classical Period

The survey data shows a massive increase in occupation in the plain, reaching its peak in the 4th c. BCE (**Fig. 13**). The Archaic findspots all develop into large settlements, while new sites appear in different areas of the plain and the Amarynthos Valley, including more remote and marginal settings. The main settlements, identified as deme centers (both nucleated and non-nucleated), were recorded at Kotroni (Temenos), Magoula (Choireai), Ag. Dimitrios-Tambaka (Aigalea?), Ag. Raphail (Dismaros?), Gymnou (Boudion), Aglepharos (Aiglepheira), and Ag. Kyriaki-Ag. Savvas (Amarynthos?). Other smaller settlements were found elsewhere,

52 For an exhaustive study of the archaeological evidence, see now Saggini 2025.
53 Knoepfler 2024, 264–267.
54 See Karkanas 2020.
55 Fachard in preparation.

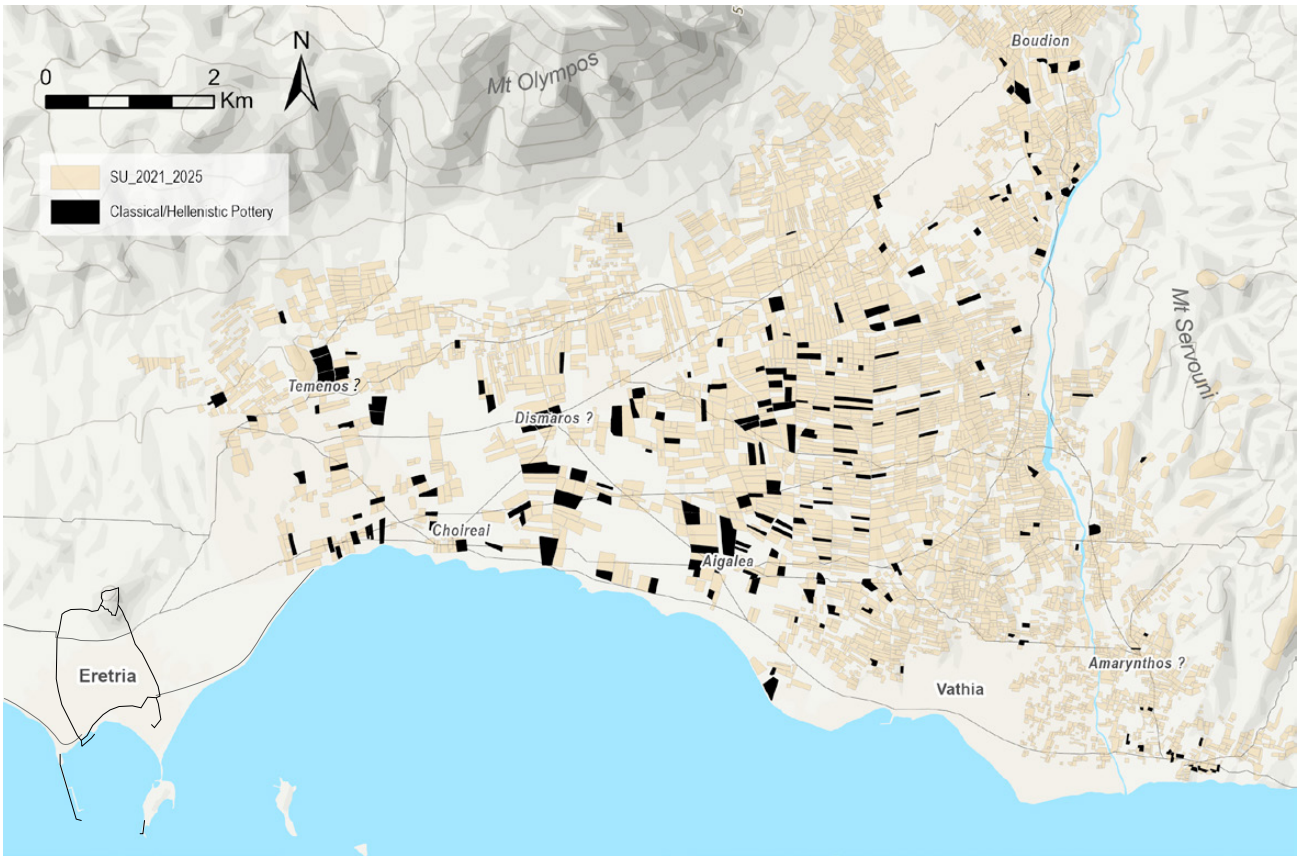

Fig. 13. Classical–Early Hellenistic sites in the Eretria–Amarynthos plain (ESAG, C. Chezeaux – S. Fachard).

possibly hamlets and farmsteads. The survey data, especially for the 4th c., shows a remarkable densification of habitation and agricultural exploitation, which extends to the highest slopes of Mt Servouni. This increase in permanent occupation reflects strong demographic growth, accompanied by an intensive and systematic occupation of the land for agriculture (mainly olive, barley, and vine). Overall connectivity, movements of goods and trade between the city and its countryside, is facilitated by a dense road network.

Overall, the 4th c. represents a golden age for Eretria, as attested by the complete reconstruction of its city walls, the erection of public buildings, lavish private dwellings, and coinage. The temple of Apollo is probably never rebuilt, but the sanctuary continues to function, as amply demonstrated by the epigraphical record. The chora also reaches its maximal extension around 400 BCE, with the incorporation of the polis of Styra.[56] In the second half of the 4th c., the Artemision saw the most ambitious architectural and spatial reorganization since the Late Archaic period. The building of the monumental East Stoa, around 340–325 BCE, framed the inner courtyard, or *aule* to the east, acquiring its final shape. As suggested by D. Knoepfler, this ambitious building program is perhaps linked with the reorganization of the Artemisia ca. 340 BCE. The famous Artemisia regulations (*IG* XII 9, 189) describe the musical contexts, the prizes, the sacrifices, the animals provided by the five *choroi* of the Eretriad, and the procession (*pompe*) marching to the Artemision (along the sacred way). The reorganization of the procession and the festival, as well as the building of the East stoa in the second half of the 4th c., suggest that the Artemision acquired a new, central dimension, a point on which we will elaborate in our conclusion.

We argued above that the multiplication of deme centers between Eretria and Amarynthos organically increases the overall number of sacred features and shrines in the landscape. Busier roads might also imply shrines along them and at the crossroads. A "full landscape" also means tensions, including over sacred land and estates in need of protection from private encroachments. Such "empty" spaces dedicated to the gods, like the *alsos* above the Amarynthos and the (large) *temenos* on the piedmonts of Mt Olympos, amplify the contrast with the bustling countryside and, therefore, augment their visibility. Dedications at springs (Theotokos), caves (Olympos, Aiglepheira), as well as rocky outcrops and scenic landmarks (Elatias), evoke the presence of

56 D. Knoepfler in this volume; Fachard 2012.

deities and multiply the perception of the sacred. In sum, we observe that the multiplication of sacred features and locales within the landscape follows a curve of occupational growth, which reaches its peak in the 4th c. BCE.

Hellenistic to Byzantine

There's no space here to deal in detail with the Hellenistic, Imperial, and Byzantine periods.[57] The survey data show a decrease in occupation in the Hellenistic period (especially in the 2nd and 1st c. BCE), followed by a recovery during Imperial times, which is surprising and has perhaps something to do with Eretria's new phase of urban prosperity, which might also find a counterpart in the Artemision's 2nd-c. CE repairs. A general decrease in occupation after the Classical period—the size of demes shrinks and the level of activity in the countryside falls, literally collapsing in the Late Hellenistic period—does not mean that sacred features and locales are abandoned or forgotten. The shrines fallen into disuse remain in the collective memory and continue to be recognized in the landscape, as amply demonstrated by Pausanias' testimony.[58]

In the Byzantine period, we note a significant paradigm shift in settlement patterns, marked by the abandonment of Eretria, the discrete occupation of the western part of the plain, and a massive transfer of population and agricultural exploitation towards Amarynthos and the eastern part of the Sarandapotamos Valley, centered around the Paleoekklissies Hill and the area of Ano Vatheia. Pagan deities give way to saints, with new and reused sacred features and locales marking a radically different landscape.

Conclusion

The low archaeological signature of sacred features and locales outside cities and major sanctuaries explains their discrete appearance in survey publications. As a result, survey archaeologists have been more focused on reconstructing settlement patterns and agricultural practices than tracing shrines. This might also have something to do with their training and scientific interests, as well as the fact that survey opened new avenues of research in the Greek polis without addressing Classical archaeology's past obsession with urban monuments and major sanctuaries. On the other hand, historians of ancient Greek religion increasingly interested in the countryside—mainly due to the groundbreaking results of survey archaeology—relied heavily on the "Pausanias gospel" (to quote Alcock[59]) to portray a landscape littered with sacred sites.

In this chapter, we tried to show that this dichotomy and methodological gap can be addressed by cautiously combining both approaches, first by analyzing survey data, then by projecting potential sacred components (based on indirect evidence and comparanda). This method engages more thoroughly and systematically with positive and negative evidence, thus compensating for the archaeologically invisible nature of many sacred components. EASP has confirmed the very low archaeological visibility and ambiguity of sacred sites. However, the survey-based landscape reconstruction and narrative have enabled us to identify potential sacred locales and gain a deeper understanding of their connections to other landscape components, including the Artemision's role within an evolving territory. Two main conclusions can be drawn from our study.

Between the Late Geometric and Early Hellenistic periods, a discrete yet steady increase in the number of sacred features and locales would appear to parallel demographic and economic growth. Indeed, the number of shrines, drastically limited in the Geometric period, increases in the Late Archaic period and peaks in the 4th c. As a hypothesis, this ascending curve suggests a dual development between settlements and sacred places in a phase of demographic growth: the more people and activities in the territory, the more traces of the sacred. Although this postulation might appear simplistic, two nuances amplify its resonance. The curves of settlements/people and sacred components are not parallel, as the former grows more exponentially and steeply than the latter. We might add that this postulate is valid when both curves go up, but that the picture gets blurred when the rural population within a region decreases: sacred places do not immediately disappear, but they will be visited by fewer people, thus diminishing their archaeological visibility.

Second, outside major sanctuaries, numerous components of the sacred stratum are dynamic and evolve in an ever-changing landscape. This point was already made by S. Alcock, who argued that such fluidity contrasted with the "assumption of static Greek religious practices," which relied on the supposed immutability of major multi-phased sanctuaries and an overreliance on Pausanias.[60] The case of EASP brings a nuance: some sacred components are preservative, with major sanctuaries remaining in activity for a millennium or more, while others are evolutive. But sacred components, both tangible and intangible, preservative and evolutive, form a complex and ever-changing configuration of ritual practices through which people position themselves

57 These periods are studied in greater details in different contributions in preparation.

58 See Alcock 1994.

59 Alcock 1994, 247.

60 Alcock 1994, 247.

within their world and engage with it, as suggested in the preface of this volume. By studying the various layers—economic, social, domestic, public, sacred—that compose the landscape in the long term, we can generate a finer analysis of their components as well as their articulations and interactions between and within them. The sacred components of the landscape move and evolve in tandem with the others, meaning the sacred stratum is fluid and constantly evolving, alongside the people who inhabit and interact with the landscape.

To sum up, the case of the Artemision at Amarynthos best exemplifies the dynamic nature of sacred components. Organically related to Eretria, the Artemision was situated at the eastern extremity of the plain in the Late Geometric period.[61] The "liminality" of the position should not be exaggerated, as Amarynthos was always situated at a strategic position controlling the main Euboean road between Central and Southern Euboea, as it still does today (**fig. 3**).[62] But it was initially at the eastern end of a polity dominated by Eretria. As the latter grew in size, other districts and polities were politically and socially integrated (Porthmos/Aliveri, Tamynai, Oichalia, Dystos), thus expanding the territory of the polis and changing the position of the Artemision within it. The reform of the tribal system accommodated new population groups and provided them with a role and status in a newly defined territorial, political, and religious system, in which the Artemision played a key role. At the beginning of the 4th c., when the Eretrian territory reached its maximum extension (1,400 sq. km) following the integration of Styra, the Eretrian plain formed one of the territory's five administrative districts. This integration was formalized by a *sympoliteia* decree recently discovered at the Artemision.[63] This unique document shows that the Artemision was chosen for the display of the stone, and that the political act was put under the protection of Artemis Amarysia, thus highlighting the crucial role played by the Artemision in the formation and expansion of the Eretrian polis.

By the late 4th c. (at the latest), the shrine was the central point of reference for the entire population, the religious pivotal point of the polis, where all inhabitants of the districts met once a year during the festival of the Artemisia. Arguably, this was already true in the Late Archaic period, but what is interesting is that the Artemision maintained this leading role in a phase of territorial expansion, during which the original Eretrian polity more than tripled in size. Once positioned at the geographical extremity of the polity, the Artemision had now acquired a central position within the polis. This centrality is also reflected in the Sacred Law for the Artemisia, in which the Eretrians promoted Artemis as *Phylake*, "savior," and *Metaxy*, "in the middle."[64] Symbolically and geographically, Artemis was *metaxy*, "in between" the different groups, identities, and geographical entities that were part of the Eretrian polis.

Reconstructing the sacred stratum of the landscape has not been a priority for archaeologists working primarily with mostly ambiguous and discrete survey data. But renewed approaches and a more focused interest in both visible and invisible sacred components highlight crucial links with the other layers of activity, thus showing their organic integration as well as their strong potential for studying the ancient landscape's social complexity.

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61 See F. de Polignac in this volume, with reference to his previous work.

62 See Fachard 2023 and Fachard in print.

63 Ducrey *et al.* 2018, 918–921; D. Knoepfler in this volume.

64 Knoeplfer 1997, 376–377, which we adopt here. See F. de Polignac in this volume and Fachard in print.

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Abstract

This chapter examines the challenges of identifying cult practices in the Greek countryside through the Eretria-Amarynthos Survey Project (EASP), which combines survey, excavation, and spatial analysis across 40–50 sq. km of Euboea. Archaeological surveys in Greece have long struggled to detect rural sanctuaries, contrasting with literary traditions that portray cults as ubiquitous. By documenting over 220 features and 150,000 artifacts, EASP reconstructs settlement patterns, agricultural activity, and road networks from the Late Geometric to Hellenistic periods, with special attention to shrines, sacred roads, groves, caves, and potential sacred estates. Despite sacred features representing less than 3% of finds, the project shows their dynamic integration within multilayered landscapes, interacting with domestic, economic, and political strata. The study argues that sacred components increased alongside demographic and agricultural growth, with the Artemision of Amarynthos evolving from a peripheral sanctuary to a central religious and political landmark of the Eretrian polis.

16. THE LANDSCAPE AND THE SANCTUARY: WILD SPACES, WATERS AND RUINS AT AMARYNTHOS

Samuel Verdan – Tamara Saggini – Tobias Krapf – Jérôme André – Olga Kyriazi – Thierry Theurillat

Engaging with a sacred landscape requires considering various scales and adopting multiple perspectives. This is precisely the approach taken in the studies dedicated to the Artemision of Amarynthos in this volume. The two previous chapters have placed Amarynthos within a broader geographical, political, and religious context. Knoepfler highlights the importance of the Artemision in relation to the polis of Eretria and Euboean sanctuaries, whereas the chapter by Fachard *et al.* examine the sanctuary's position within its territory by considering the broader dynamics of land occupation and embracing a diachronic perspective. Our approach in this contribution differs in two key respects: First, it adopts a more localized scale of analysis, focusing specifically on the sanctuary, its immediate surroundings, and even artefacts found in the sacred area. Second, it emphasizes the religious dynamics that may have shaped the emergence and development of a cult to Artemis at this particular site.

The case of the Artemision at Amarynthos—a key shrine of the Eretrians outside the urban centre—raises important questions about the choice of its location and the reason of Artemis' prominence in the sanctuary, at least in the periods for which written sources attest to her presence (bearing in mind that she belonged, here as elsewhere, to a wider network of deities). Theoretically, these questions can be asked of any sacred place,[1] and numerous studies have already explored this avenue, proposing both natural explanations (such as topographical features) and cultural factors (including human settlement patterns, political boundaries, etc.). A historical perspective is frequently favoured, as illustrated by F. de Polignac in his seminal study of the rise of the city-states.[2] However, this approach is often hampered by the available body of evidence: the earliest phases of a sanctuary are often poorly understood, and even when they are documented, reconstructing the broader sociopolitical context in which they are embedded remains a significant challenge.

Such is precisely the case at Amarynthos, where these inquiries might appear too speculative, given our limited understanding of the context in which this sacred place emerged and developed, between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the historical period. The early centuries of the first millennium BCE witnessed significant shifts in the hierarchy and nature of sites in central Euboea, with Lefkandi and Amarynthos in the forefront while Eretria was still in the making. A profound transformation took place in the 8th c. BCE, with Eretria experiencing rapid urban growth, while Lefkandi declined and a major sanctuary developed at Amarynthos. The emergence of the Artemision is intrinsically linked to regional geopolitical dynamics, shaped by the rise of the Eretrian polis.[3] More elusive, discrete historical events may also have had a decisive impact on the establishment of the sanctuary, such as conflicts between local communities or the role of a prominent individual or a dominant group. Beyond local history, the foundation and development of the Artemision should eventually be interpreted in relation to the changes in religious practices taking place in Greece at the time.[4]

Certainly, further reflection is needed on the historical conditions surrounding the emergence of the sanctuary.[5] However, while acknowledging the significance of these temporal factors, this paper adopts a primarily spatial rather than chronological perspective. Our focus is twofold: First, the salient features of the site's topography, encompassing the natural environment and long-term patterns of human occupation—both of which constitute fundamental aspects of the location that the sanctuary's development not only acknowledged but clearly built upon. Second, the material evidence of ritual activities (such as paraphernalia and offerings) that may be linked to these physical components of the site. The aim is to explore whether—and how—these

1 Brulé 2012; Miles 2016; most recently Van Wijk 2024, on Boeotia.

2 Polignac 1995 (1984).

3 Verdan *et al.* 2020a, 73–76, 95–99; Fachard – Verdan 2024, 112–113, 133–135; see also the contributions of D. Knoepfler and S. Fachard *et al.* in this volume.

4 On this topic, see Eder 2019; Haysom 2020.

5 For preliminary considerations, see Verdan *et al.* 2020a.

various elements interact in a dynamic and negotiated process that we conceptualize in our analysis as the "making of a sacred landscape."[6]

Salient Features of Artemis' Landscape

In research on sacred landscapes, a common approach is to trace recurring patterns in the relationships between deities—their spheres and modes of action—and the environment, by cross-referencing various sources: Cult-epithets, myths, ritual performances, and locations of sanctuaries. Actually, when it comes to associating a Greek deity with a specific type of "natural" environment, Artemis is often the first to be cited as an example.[7] Before turning to the specific case of Amarynthos, let us begin with some general considerations on this "Artemisian landscape." It is commonly associated with pervasive features: a certain degree of wildness, often linked to marginal or liminal spaces;[8] and lush vegetation, typically resulting from the presence of water. However, to claim that Artemis favours wild spaces is not only a commonplace but also a simplification that fails to capture the complexity of these landscapes. Such a claim risks limiting the movements of a goddess who, on the contrary, crosses boundaries with ease. Indeed, multiple categories of space are associated with varying degrees of wildness; these are neither entirely distinct from one another nor mechanically distributed across a given territory. Let us briefly review them.

First, there is the mountain (*oros*). "May all the mountains be mine," Artemis declares to Zeus in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* (l. 18).[9] It is the quintessential space of wildness—the realm of gods, other supernatural beings such as centaurs, as well as wild beasts, with whom Artemis is closely associated as *Potnia Theron*.[10] It is also where the goddess dwells alongside her most faithful companions, the nymphs.[11]

Second, there are the *eschatiai*, the spaces at the margins. This is the term Euripides uses to describe the location of the Artemision at Halai in Attica[12]—a term that would be apt for characterizing the position of many Artemis sanctuaries throughout the Greek world.[13] As P. Ellinger reminds us, these peripheral zones may lie at the upper edges of a territory (hills, mountains) or at the lower limits (wetlands bordering rivers and the sea). The marginality of the *eschatiai*, however, is relative: They may border any cultivated land, not just the civic territory.[14] More than a precise location, the term refers to a type of terrain, defined by its particular vegetation and the human activities it enables—or precludes.[15]

Third, there is the *agros*, to which Artemis was originally connected through several epithets—the most common being *Agrotera*, already attested in the *Iliad*.[16] Although etymologically linked to *agros*, the epithet eventually came to be associated with hunting, due to its similarity with the term *agra* (hunt). However, it is not unlikely that both semantic fields remained present in the minds of the ancients.[17] The term *agros* itself covers a range of meanings, depending on the speaker's perspective, the level of generality implied, and whether it is used in contrast with other types of space (*oros*, *astu*, etc.). It can refer to a form of wildness, but also more broadly to any land situated beyond the urban centre.[18]

The case of the *agros* clearly illustrates the difficulty of drawing too strict a line between "wild" and "civilized" spaces. A schematic view tends to classify the various spatial categories mentioned above in relation to

6 For an overview of different approaches to landscape, see the introductory chapter in this volume. In the following pages, we aim to explore the construction of both material and mental landscapes.

7 See, among others, Motte 1973, 93–104; Brulé 1987, chap. 2, *passim*; 2012, 98–102; Morizot 1994; 1999; Cole 2000; 2004; Calame 2009; 2019; Canopoli 2022; Giuseppetti 2022; Bultrighini 2024. For further examples involving other deities, see Cole 1994 (Demeter).

8 Vernant 2007a, 1477–1483; 2007b, 1612–1616; Cole 2004, 180–182, 198–203; Ellinger 2009, 15–36.

9 This preference for mountainous settings is scarcely reflected in the cult epithets, with the exception of an attestation from the Imperial period, at Skydra in Macedonia: *bloureitis* (= *philoreitis*), "she who loves the mountains" (https://epiclesesgrecques.univ-rennes1.fr, nos 1170–1171).

10 On mountains in the Greek imaginary, see Buxton 1990; 1992; 1994, 81–96. On aspects of Greek religion associated with mountains, see Langdon 2000. On Artemis *Potnia Theron*, *LIMC* II, *s.v.* Artemis (L. Kahil), 623–629, 738–740.

11 On the mountain as the nymphs' "macrohabitat", see Larson 2001, 8–9.

12 *IT*. 1234, *πρὸς ἐσχάτοις ὀροῖς*, "towards the remotest borders."

13 For Arcadia alone, see Jost 1985, 393–396 ; for the Peloponnese, Brulotte 1994.

14 Polinskaya (2003, 97) refers to "a multiplicity of spatial perspectives, each centered on a particular territorial unit each with its own *eschatiai*." This complex spatial entanglement is also emphasized by Ellinger (2009, 28).

15 Brulé 1987, 192: "Quand on lit *eschatia*, on doit envisager une double valeur topographique et phytosociologique." On the use of the *eschatia* for terraced cultivation, Foxhall 1996.

16 *Il*. 21.470–471: Artemis is referred to as both *potnia theron* and *agrotere*. See the commentary in Mauduit 1994, who interprets it as a way of designating the goddess as "maîtresse de l'ensemble de l'espace sauvage, et de tous les animaux qui y vivent" (*ibid*., 59). Other epithets: *agrotis*, *philagrotis*, *endiagros*.

17 Giuseppetti 2022. Pirenne-Delforge (2021, 12) summarizes this dual meaning as follows: "Artémis est Agrotéra, une dénomination difficile à traduire, où se croisent l'*agros*, désignant des espaces non cultivés, et l'*agra*, la chasse, en un rapprochement d'homonymie sémantiquement parlant."

18 Critical discussions in Polinskaya 2003, 97–98 (link *agroi* – hunting); 2006, 69–74; Giuseppetti 2022 (especially 130–131).

the urban center of the *polis*—the "heart of the civilized world"—and to assess their degree of wildness accordingly.[19] However, this model cannot be directly applied to real geography, which consists of a mosaic of contiguous, interwoven spaces marked by forms of continuity.[20] Returning to Artemis, what is most striking is the way she moves across these different types of spaces (even occupying, quite naturally, a place at the city centre), thereby contributing to the connections between them.[21] It is from this perspective that we approach the question of the landscape around Amarynthos.

For while identifying the recurring features of Artemis' landscapes over time and across the Greek world is certainly valuable, even more insightful is the close analysis of each case individually, taking into account its unique local characteristics. In the case of Amarynthos, this approach is primarily grounded in archaeology. The epigraphic and literary testimonies related to the site reveal little about the sacred space and even less about the broader environment—though, in any case, such sources are not expected to offer much in that regard. Even the goddess's epiclesis *Amarysia*, although toponymic, does not explicitly reference topographical features characteristic of an Artemisian landscape (unlike the aforementioned *agrotera* and *endiagros*, or *limnaia, potamia*, for instance).[22] The few cultic elements recorded in written sources for various periods—such as the procession, the pyrrhic dance, and musical competitions—offer little insight into the spaces in which they took place.[23] To bring an Artemisian landscape at Amarynthos to light, we must rely on direct observation of the site: its topography and its relationship with the surrounding environment, the spatial organization of the sanctuary, its architecture, and—more speculatively—artifacts deposited within the sacred space.

In fact, the association of the Artemision of Amarynthos with an environment suited to the goddess had already been considered even before the sanctuary was definitively located and identified, with particular emphasis on both its marginal location within the Eretria plain and its connection to water.[24] The recent identification and large-scale exploration of the site confirm these assumptions and provide a well-documented account of the situation—at least concerning the natural environment. From the perspective of the making of the landscape, we need to identify configurations designed to incorporate elements of the surrounding environment into the sanctuary, to direct the gaze or movement of worshippers towards them, or to evoke them when they are absent or not visible within the sacred precinct. This process may have become particularly significant in the context of the increasing monumentalization and "artificialization" of the sacred space from the end of the Archaic period onward. Our contribution represents a first step in that direction.

Where Plain Meets Mountain

To begin at a broad scale before narrowing our focus, let us return to the geographical position of the Artemision, whose so-called "marginal" nature is debated. On the one hand, the polarity between the centre (Eretria) and the periphery (Amarynthos),[25] fits well with the idea of Artemis as a "goddess of the margins." On the other hand, this is counterbalanced by the sanctuary's centrality within the city's territory, at least from the Classical period onward.[26] In terms of human geography, marginality is clearly relative; it depends on the perspective of each community and can shift over time. Yet, the enduring and structuring force of physical geography must not be underestimated. In the case of Amarynthos, noting its position at the eastern edge of the Eretrian plain is insufficient; its topography requires closer examination. The hill of Paleoekklisies, which rises above the Artemision, is in fact the first elevation on the coast that marks the end of the peneplain and the beginning of the relief of Mount Servouni. This contrast is particularly visible from the sea—a vantage point rarely adopted by

19 See, for example, the diagram proposed by Hölscher (2018, 19–20, maps 2–3).

20 Polinskaya 2006, on the relationship between Greek pantheons and these spatial configurations.

21 To quote Frontisi-Ducroux (1981, 37): "Sa position se situe, non pas toute du côté de la sauvagerie, [...] mais précisément à la charnière du sauvage et de la culture, et son statut se définit à la fois dans l'opposition de ces deux termes et dans leur continuité."

22 Brulé 1998, 23–24; 2021, 320–325. More generally on Artemis' toponymic cult-epithets, Canopoli 2022. Pulci Doria Breglia (1975, 38–39), however, interprets the cult epithet *Amarysia* as reflecting the fluvial, aquatic nature of Artemis at Amarynthos. See also D. Knoepfler's contribution in this volume, pp. 213–214, n. 11

23 The inscription concerning the regulation of the Artemisia (*IG* XII 9, 189, l. 13) mentions a courtyard or esplanade (ἐν τεῖ αὐλεῖ), where the participants in the competition perform the introductory hymn to the sacrifice, and a procession from the agora of Eretria to the Artemision, which implies a roadway. For Stephanus of Byzantium's characterization of Amarynthos as a peninsula or promontory (νῆσος) of Euboea, see D. Knoepfler's contribution in this volume, p. 218.

24 Situation: Polignac 1995 (1984), 33–37; Novaro 1996, 78; Cole 2004, 18–19. Water: Pulci Doria Breglia 1975 (*supra* n. 22). Brulé (1987, 190, 197) considers Amarynthos among the Artemisian sanctuaries associated with freshwater, specifically that of the river. The concept of an "Artemisian landscape" is introduced on the very first page of Knoepfler's 1988 article, which emphasizes the river's significance (*ibid*. 416–417). Similarly, Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1992, 239–240) highlights the sanctuary's proximity to the watercourse while suggesting the existence of a spring linked to the site, an idea later echoed by Morizot (1994, 204) and Cole (2004, 19, 184–192), though no conclusive evidence has been found to date.

25 See previous note; this perspective is nuanced by Knoepfler 1988 (402, n. 84).

26 See the contributions by F. de Polignac and S. Fachard *et al.* in this volume.

Fig. 1. The coastal site of Amarynthos, with Paleoekklisies Hill in the foreground, and in the background the Mt Servouni range (possibly Amarynthos?) to the right and Mt Olympos to the left (J. André, ESAG).

modern observers, but one that would certainly have been familiar to the ancients (**Fig. 1**).[27] The site also lies at the boundary between two geological formations: the Miocene basin of the plain and the Triassic/Jurassic rocks of Mount Servouni. This distinction is not only of interest to modern geologists. It has concrete effects on soil quality, water availability, and vegetation cover—all factors directly relevant to those who cultivated the land, and thus of primary importance to ancient populations. In addition, the sanctuary is separated from the rest of the plain by the bed and delta of the Sarandapotamos River and is located on the seashore. Taken together, these elements contribute to making the Artemision and its surroundings a distinct space—evoking various kinds of transitions, without being truly marginal.

Indeed, the site was by no means isolated. Preliminary results from the survey and related analyses reveal the density of human occupation in the region—farmsteads, likely deme centres, and the roadways that once connected the Artemision to the rest of the territory.[28] However, they also suggest that during the periods of most intensive occupation (Classical and Hellenistic), habitation remained at some distance from the sanctuary.[29] This may not have been the case earlier, at the end of the Geometric period, when the first monumental temple was built—if the contemporary remains discovered at the foot of the hill indeed belonged to a domestic area.[30] It is therefore possible that the settlement of

27 As it was to sailors throughout history: Vathia, the modern toponym of Amarynthos, appears in portulans from at least the 18th c. (Ackermann – Knoepfler 2009, 129, and the contribution by D. Knoepfler in this volume).

28 See the contribution by S. Fachard *et al.* in this volume.

29 The Classical deme of Amarynthos in particular, centre of life for a bustling local community, was probably located at some distance further north of the Artemision and not in its immediate vicinity (*AntK* 66 [2023], 97). See also the contribution by D. Knoepfler in this volume.

30 *AntK* 68 (2025), 145–146; *AntK* 67 (2024), 97–100.

Amarynthos was moved inland in the early phases of the sanctuary, to make room for the expansion of Artemis's domain. If confirmed, such a shift would mark a major stage in the making of the Amarynthian landscape.

A noteworthy aspect in this regard is the hill of Paleoekklisies. Extensive trenches on the hillslopes and on the summit have yielded no evidence of occupation from the Early Iron Age to Late Antiquity. A convincing explanation for this hiatus is that the promontory was intentionally left free of construction. That this space was dedicated to Artemis is hardly in question, and it is not unlikely that it was once home to a sacred grove (*alsos*) during the existence of the sanctuary.[31] The top of the eminence overlooking the sanctuary was visible both from inside the sacred courtyard (notably from the temple gate) and from a great distance, whether approached from land or from sea. As such, it may have encapsulated a quintessential Artemisian landscape—on display for all to see and close to the focal point of the cult.

The coastal promontory stood as the first horizon of the sanctuary to the east. The participants in the Artemisia procession would have had it in their line of sight the entire way from Eretria, if not directly, then perceptible through the alignment of the Servouni ridge as it slopes towards the horizon (**Fig. 2**). As they entered the sacred courtyard, the hill must have appeared even more prominent, rising above the eastern portico (**Figs 3** and **8**, 1).[32] The elongated edifice (**Fig. 6**, 3) which stood on the same spot during the Archaic period might have conveyed a similar impression, as if the summit of the hill, or the sacred grove covering it, was staged upon a

31 A long-standing hypothesis proposed by D. Knoepfler, see his contribution in this volume, n. 46.

32 3D reconstructions—encompassing not only the buildings themselves but also their integration within the surrounding environment—are essential for understanding how the gaze of ancient spectators may have been directed towards the landscape (Sussman 2024; Papantoniou *et al.* 2020).

Fig. 2. Panoramic view from the Eretria Acropolis looking eastward towards Amarynthos (A. Voegelin, ESAG).

pedestal. Both buildings had not only a visual impact but also channelled movement from within the temenos towards the hill through their gates. The temple front façade and the monumental altar were also oriented towards the hilltop, thus creating a visual link during religious ceremonies.

On the same side, the Servouni Mountain range creates a second horizon, highly visible due to its relative proximity, elevation, and continuous line (**Fig. 2**). It also belonged to Artemis' domain, according to D. Knoepfler.[33] Fragments of local myths allude to the "cynegetic" dimension of Artemis *Amarysia*, most notably to the figure of the hunter Amarynthos, eponymous hero of the site and father of Narkittos.[34] The mountainous scenery, towering over the sacred space, would have naturally evoked such stories and fits well the *montivaga dea* (Stat. *Achil.* 1.449–450).

To summarize at this stage, we suggest that a strong visual connection existed between the heart of the sanctuary, the hill that rose above it, and the rocky ridge of Mount Servouni—three spaces of very different character, yet all consecrated to Artemis. This connection, we argue, was inherent to the sacred landscape of Amarynthos, making the goddess's "natural and wild" domains present within the sacred space itself.

Where River Meets Sea

Another major natural element deserves attention at this point—water—which has only been briefly mentioned so far. Its presence is, of course, not specific to sanctuaries of Artemis. As it is required for various ritual acts, water must have been present—under one form or another—at most sacred sites.[35] Some, however, stand out for their particularly close connection to the aquatic element.

In the semi-arid Mediterranean regions, river streams, in particular, are significant landmarks, supporting agriculture and attracting animals for freshwater, offering routes or impeding movements across the land, anchoring communities and delineating natural limits in the landscape.[36] Considered as animate powers of divine nature, they have given rise to a rich mythology and were often the focus of rituals, for instance during their crossing.[37] They were seen as propitious *loci* for the establishment of cult places, particularly at their sources and where they flow into the sea. The proximity of a river, a deltaic zone, and a marshland all contribute to a lush landscape of thriving greenery and wet meadows (*leimon*).[38] This presence of water is conducive to the expression of the vital forces that the Greeks associated with divine agency in general. Artemis is particularly at home in this type of environment, as evidenced by several of her epithets, the location of many of her sanctuaries, and the cult practices associated with them.[39]

33 See D. Knoepfler's contribution in this volume, pp. 217–218.

34 *Ibid.* and Knoepfler 2010. Let us also mention the discovery of a bronze quiver near the altar (*AntK* 62 [2019], 149).

35 Dunant 2008; Beaulieu – Bonnechère 2019; Ehrenheim *et al.* 2019; Kobusch 2020; Leypold 2022; Klingborg *et al.* 2023; Klingborg 2025.

36 For a Greek case study, Robinson 2019.

37 Bremmer 2019. Hesiod urged to "never cross the sweet-flowing water of ever-rolling rivers afoot until you have prayed" (*Op.* 737) while Pausanias described how, during the processions in Eleusis, participants would offer a lock of hair to the Kephisos River as they crossed it (1.37.3).

38 Morizot 2006; Calame 2019; Jiménez San Cristóbal 2021; Lebreton 2022.

39 Artemis and water: Morizot 1994; 1999; Cole 2004, 191–194. Epithets (*limnaia, limnatis, eleia/heleia, potamia...*): Brulé 1998, 24; 2021, 349, table XII.5. The case of the Arcadian sanctuaries: Jost 1985, 396–400.

Fig. 3. Reconstructed view from the temple's porch towards the hill of Paleoekklisies at sunrise (O. Bruderer, ESAG).

In this respect, the Amarynthian environment fits the profile remarkably well. The Artemision is located on a coastal lowland, in the drainage basin of the Sarandapotamos River, probably called Erasinos in Antiquity, like the watercourse that flows at Brauron.[40] It lies in immediate proximity to the river and thus also to the coastal wetlands that characterize Mediterranean deltaic zones.[41] A similar topography can be observed at the sanctuaries of Brauron, Aulis, and Halai, to mention only those geographically close to Amarynthos.[42] To go beyond this general observation, a closer look is needed at how this environment shaped—and was shaped by—the sanctuary's development. This first requires a precise understanding of the natural setting and its evolution, in order to then assess the choices made by the users of the Artemision.

This is where the study of the paleoenvironment intersects with that of the religious landscape. To reconstruct past environmental dynamics and assess their impact on human occupation over time at Amarynthos, a geomorphological study was carried out, including a series of boreholes drilled in the alluvial plain (**Fig. 4**). This research was part of a broader project conducted across multiple coastal sites around the central Euboean Gulf, particularly in Eretria, Lefkandi, Amarynthos and Aulis.[43]

At Amarynthos, analysis of sediments and microfauna dated with C14 have revealed the typical features of a coastal wetland ecosystem that regressed over time, due to intense alluvial deposits from the nearby river and, in part, due to anthropic backfilling.[44] During most of the Bronze Age period, the area featured two shallow maritime bays evolving into brackish lagoons on either side of a coastal hill, providing a double sheltered anchorage.[45] By the end of the period and into the Early Iron Age, when the sanctuary was established, the littoral wetland gradually turned into a continental swamp, which was partially backfilled at the end of the Archaic period to facilitate the sanctuary's westward expansion.[46] Nevertheless, the wetland ecosystem persisted until modern times, when the coastline was reshaped by the construction of a modern road.

A pollen-rich peat sequence, radiocarbon dated to 996–834 cal BCE and located just a hundred meters from the core of the sanctuary, helps clarify the vegetation cover in the period preceding the building of the temple of Artemis at the end of the Geometric period.[47] Analysis records high values of *Chenopodiaceae* attributed to the omnipresence of halophyte vegetation (saline environments),[48] whereas the appearance of olive cultivation in the plain and pastoral activity, as evidenced by coprophilous spores, may be

40 See Knoepfler 1988 and his contribution in this volume, n. 12. Cole 2004, 19. On the Erasinos at Brauron, see Brulé 1987, 187, 197–198.

41 Deltas, positioned at the threshold between land and sea, may have been particularly fitting for Artemis as they united contrasting properties of fertile freshwater and sterile saltwater converging in a single place (on sterile sea water and its use for purification, see Beaulieu 2018).

42 *Infra* p. 268 n. 91.

43 Ghilardi *et al.* 2012; 2018.

44 Verdan *et al.* 2020a, 76–80.

45 This dual anchorage was certainly an asset for the site's maritime activity during the Bronze Age—a strategic advantage also seen at Lefkandi (Lemos 2014, 176) or Manika on Euboea.

46 Ghilardi *et al.* 2018, 104 and fig. 5.

47 Ghilardi *et al.* 2018, 110.

48 An ongoing study led by E. Margaritis of plant seeds recovered from the temple's sediments confirms the persistence of *Chenopodiaceae* in 8th to 6th c. BCE samples.

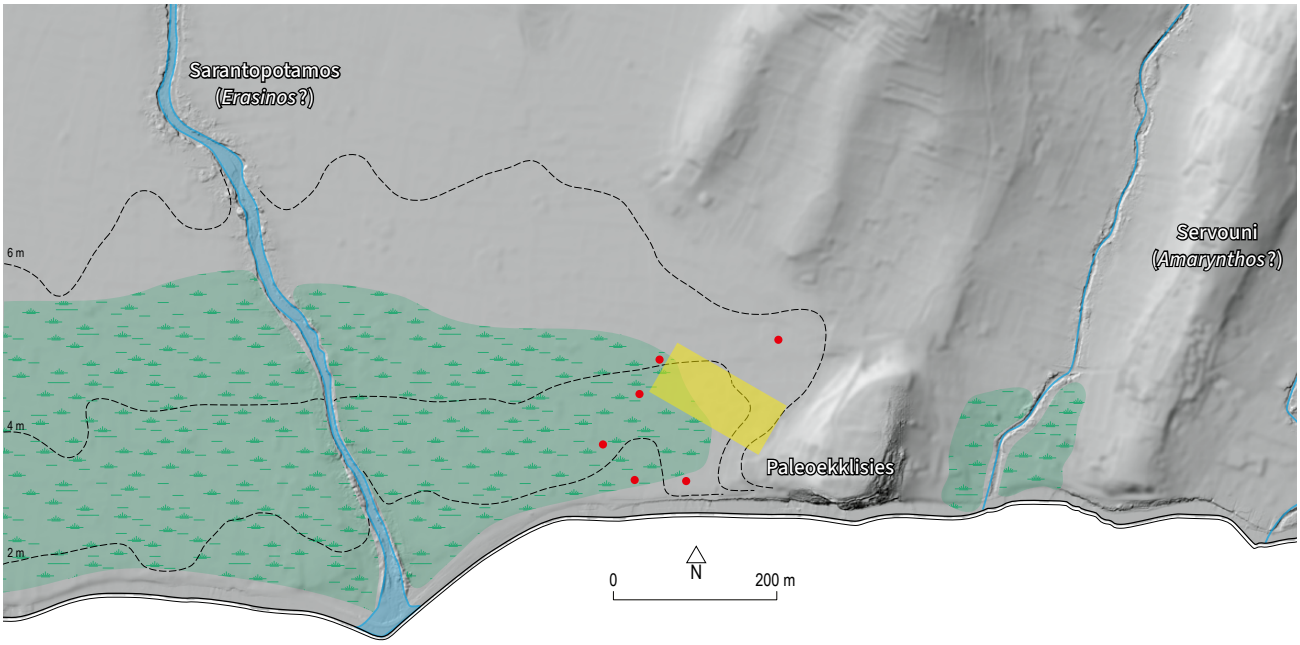

Fig. 4. The alluvial plain based on a LiDAR survey with the location of the boreholes (red dots) drilled around the area occupied by the sanctuary (yellow surface) (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

linked to the dwelling remains from this period brought to light by excavations (*infra*).

Beyond this generic reconstruction of the paleoenvironment, the microtopography of the Artemision site remains largely elusive, in particular the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age occupation in the deltaic plain (**Fig. 5**). Additional evidence is provided by the excavation, despite the limited number and extent of deep trenches. The brackish or marshy wetland does not seem to have been unsuitable for human occupation, as significant remains have been found over a large area.[49] The first monumental temple itself (**Fig. 5**, Ed14) was built in such an environment around the end of the 8th c. BCE. Its foundations were markedly more massive and extended much deeper beneath the western apse. Since this cannot be explained by architectural considerations alone, the reason likely lies in the nature of the underlying terrain: the apse appears to have been constructed over uneven, waterlogged soil, whereas the rest of the building rested on the remains of an earlier structure that provided more stable foundations. At that time, the temple probably stood in the transitional zone between dry and wet land. Choosing such an unstable terrain for the construction of a monumental building was a bold decision on the part of the builders, but it may have been motivated by several factors—proximity to water being one of them. There is no shortage of major Greek sanctuaries established in wetland areas, despite the practical challenges such locations could present.[50]

Another, more dynamic aspect of the water's presence in relation to the sanctuary is that provided by the flowing river. Torrential floods from the nearby Sarandapotamos were common throughout the Archaic period, as evidenced by extensive alluvial deposits to the east of the temple, occasionally reaching inside the pronaos. One might be surprised that the sacred space, and even its main building, were so exposed to natural elements. However, a similar situation is well documented at the sanctuary of Apollo in Eretria during the Geometric period, where thick layers of sand spread across the sacred space.[51] The frequency of flooding events on both sites might indicate a recurrent vicissitude that the sanctuary's users were unable to mitigate. In our view, this rather suggests that recurrent flooding was not a concern—or perhaps even that the spatial organization was deliberately designed to allow water to

49 *AntK* 67 (2024), 100. At a reduced scale, this configuration evokes the Eretrian delta in the Geometric period, where settlement developed as scattered habitation nuclei alternating with marshy zones and the shifting course of a seasonal stream (Verdan *et al.* 2020b, 25–28).

50 For instance, Heraion of Samos: Walter *et al.* 2019. Artemision of Ephesos: Kerschner 2015, 211–213; 2017, 13–16. Sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea: Ødegård – Klempe 2014. Brauron, Aulis, Halai: *infra* p. 268 n. 91.

51 Verdan 2013, vol. 1, 50–52, 61–62, 154–156, and vol. 2, pl. 7–9.

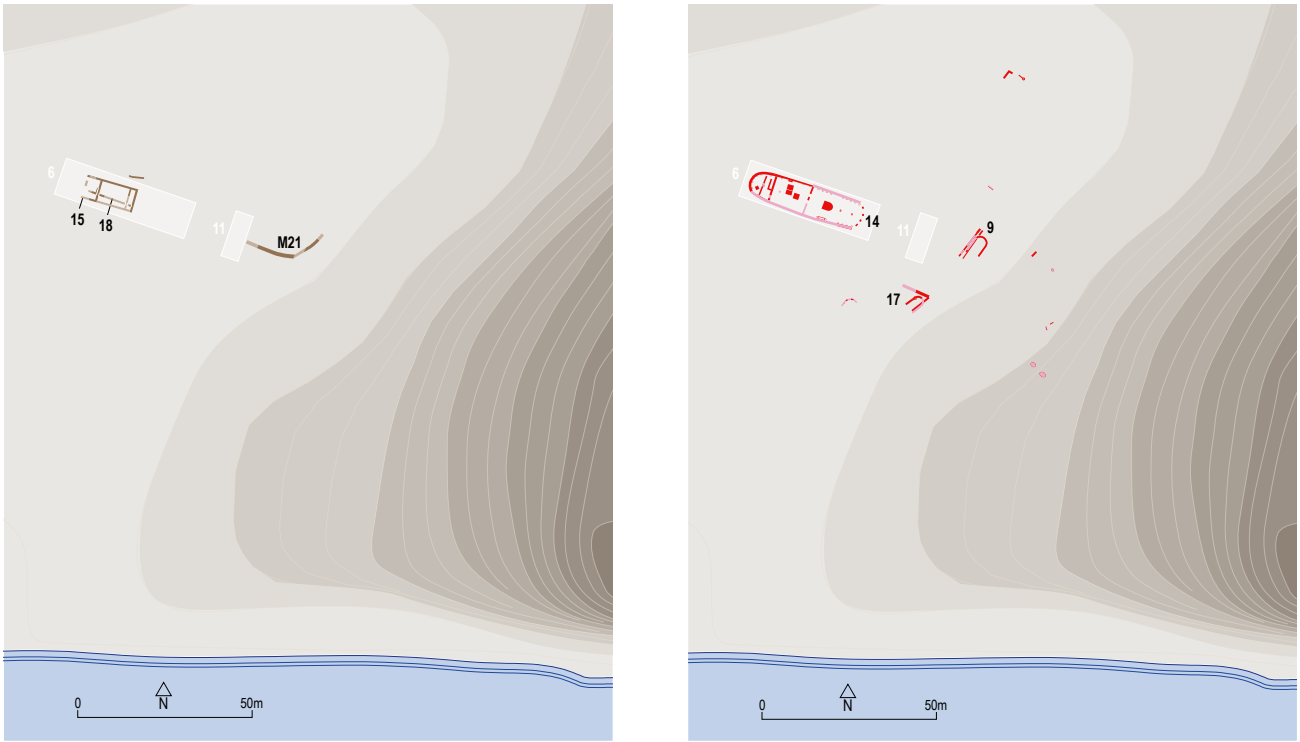

Fig. 5. Late Bronze Age (left) and Early Iron Age (right) occupation in the deltaic plain (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

flow through the sacred area, either for practical reasons (such as cleaning) and/or symbolic purposes.[52]

Obviously, the site's initial layout ensured a regular presence of water at the very heart of the sanctuary, providing a favourable setting for ritual activity. This situation will later change with the monumentalization of the sacred space: as in Eretria, the restructuring of the spatial organization in the Artemision at Amarynthos towards the end of the 6th c. marks the end of torrential episodes (**Fig. 6**). The sand deposits appear to cease after the edification of the late Archaic temple (Ed6) and of a long portico to the north (Ed5).

As the sanctuary became increasingly enclosed by built structures—thus progressively detached from its natural surroundings—water-related features were likely introduced within its boundaries to maintain ritual access to the element, an interpretation supported by two structures uncovered in the excavations.

The western side of the temenos towards the hillslope was bordered in the Archaic period by an elongated gate-building (**Fig. 6**, Ed3). With its two gates, it was likely the main—if not the only—access point to the sanctuary from the east. To the west, between the two

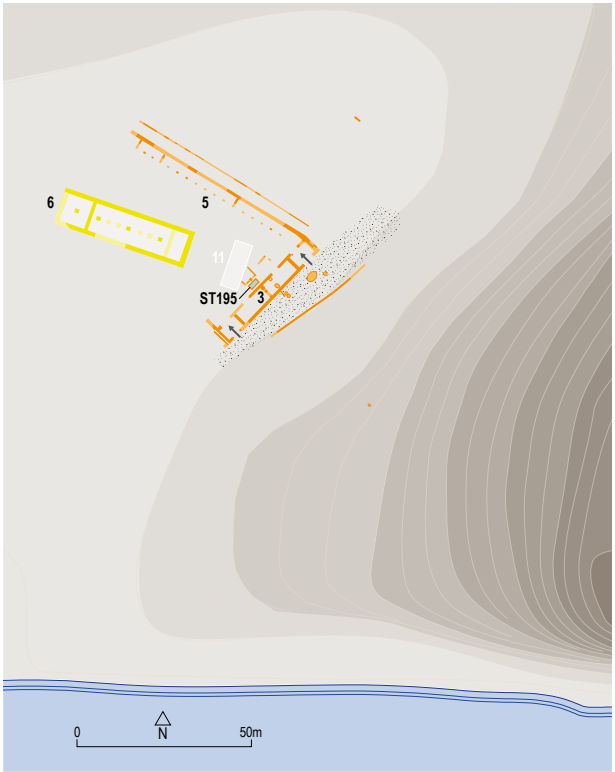

Fig. 6. Archaic occupation in the deltaic plain (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

52 As suggested by Houby-Nielsen (2009, 205), concerning "water-related sanctuaries": "Elsewhere in Greece and the Mediterranean regular inundations sometimes formed an integrated part of the rituals in river and seashore sanctuaries."

Fig. 7. Shallow pool St195 built in front of the Archaic gate building Ed3 (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

Fig. 8. Hellenistic phase in the plain (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

gates, a shallow pool constructed with large Corinthian tiles (**Figs 6** and **7**, St195) suggests that water-related activities were conducted in front of the building during this period.[53] An alternative interpretation would be to see this feature as a temporary structure for the construction of Ed3. However, there is evidence supporting a ritual function: In the Hellenistic period, when a large, winged stoa marked the eastern boundary of the sanctuary and provided access through two rear entrances (**Fig. 8**, Ed1), a well was located in a position strikingly similar to that of the Archaic basin (**Figs 8**, Ed10, and **9**). This structure remained in use for an extended period —until the 3rd c. CE—underscoring its significance.[54] In its final phase, the well was flanked by two flights of steps providing access to the underground water—an arrangement that may have served for purification rites. Among other objects, 178 coins were found in the well. These offerings are reminiscent of the ritual described by Pausanias for nearby Oropos, where worshippers throw silver and coined gold into the Spring of Amphiaraus as a gesture of gratitude.[55] The basin and the well are different types of structures, but both likely provided access to water for cultic purposes.

To the topographical features and man-made structures discussed so far, we must add the material finds from the sanctuary, notably the high number of vessels related to the ritual use of water. We argue that these objects—along with others—played a role in shaping the sacred landscape, in a way that now calls for closer examination.

Fig. 9. The sacred well 10 built in front of the Hellenistic eastern stoa Ed1 (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

53 *AntK* 64 (2021), 147. See also Kobusch 2020 for a discussion of similar structures.

54 *AntK* 61 (2018), 133–135; Reber 2023, 28–30; Reber – Karapaschalidou 2025. Furthermore, a monumental pithos (St71) was placed between the well and the krepis of the stoa.

55 Paus. 1.34.4. See also for a close parallel the well/fountain in the Artemision at Aulis (Glaser 1976–1977).

Objects: Landscapes in Miniature

At first glance, it may seem surprising to include objects into the analysis of the sacred landscape, given that they operate on a completely different scale from sacred sites, built spaces, or monuments. A comparison with textual sources may help clarify the approach. Since landscape is, in part, a cultural construct, it must necessarily be articulated in words: descriptions, evocations, prescriptions, and metaphoric expressions all serve both to anchor the landscape in the collective imagination and to shape the ways it is materially constructed. Such is the case, for instance, with Euripides' staging of Artemis' sanctuary at Halai or his depiction of the district of Eleutherai in *Antiope*.[56] Objects can take part in the same processes when they serve as material expression of mental projections[57] and discourses on the surrounding space. From this perspective, the manipulation of objects—especially in ritual contexts—was certainly accompanied by spoken words; both were closely intertwined in the production of meaning. If we are compelled to focus primarily on the former here, it is for obvious reasons of preservation. More to the point, our aim is to explore the specific ways in which objects, through their materiality, form connections with a wider environment.

Objects can contribute to the construction of the sacred landscape in various ways. A basic principle is that they evoke natural elements associated with the presence and action of divine powers. They help make this presence tangible within the ritual space by materializing connections between participants, the deities, and the surrounding environment. This form of agency is not easy to grasp or define from a modern perspective. To put it simply, we suggest that it operates through metaphor, synecdoche (*pars pro toto*), or metonymy, as we will illustrate with concrete examples below. It may arise from a single object specifically referring to one aspect of the landscape or—more frequently maybe—from a set of objects whose association "embodies" the landscape. This role of objects—one of many—is what we aim to highlight here, though we make no claim to be exhaustive. The following examples relate to only a few such strategies: the ritual manipulation of natural elements (such as water or plants); visual representations; and miniaturization.[58]

Encapsulated Water

Among the Geometric and Archaic pottery found in the Artemision, more specifically in association with the temple, a majority of the ritual vessels are linked to water. Two shapes, already well attested in Eretrian sanctuaries, dominate the repertoire: the hydriskos and the high-necked jug (**Fig. 10**).[59]

Fig. 10. A hydriskos and a high-necked jug from the Artemision (T. Saggini, ESAG).

The case of the hydriskos is the most straightforward. Morphologically, it unambiguously recalls the hydria, whose primary function is the transport and storage of water.[60] This vessel is characterized by its three handles (one vertical and two horizontal), designed to facilitate its use—drawing, carrying, pouring—especially when full and therefore heavy, since it must have a certain capacity to be truly functional.[61] The reduced-size version cannot obviously serve the same purpose. Moreover, its horizontal handles are superfluous, non-functional. This does not mean, however, that hydriskoi never contained anything. On the contrary, they likely served to draw, carry, and pour small quantities of water in ritual

56 Polignac 2010. Perspectives outlined in the introductory chapter to this volume.

57 See contribution by R. Simenel in this volume, pp. 39–42.

58 The approach adopted here—seeking correlations between the microcosm of objects and the macrocosm of the landscape—follows in the footsteps of anthropological and ethnological studies. See for instance Descola 2015; Gaillemin 2017.

59 The sanctuary of Apollo *Daphnephoros* in Eretria provided concrete evidence of the connection between these two ritual vessels and water: an Archaic well containing a large number of hydriskoi and high-necked jugs (Verdan 2013, vol. 2, pl. 3, St114; Riva 2007).

60 This does not preclude a variety of secondary uses.

61 The diversity of ways in which hydriai were carried is well illustrated in Attic imagery (Pilo 2012, 366–369).

contexts.[62] Still, their main function is referential: they evoke the water vessel and its uses, both everyday and extraordinary. This is how their role in shaping the landscape should be understood. They allow for a kind of staging, in miniature, of the vital issue of access to water, with its social implications for a society in which the fertility of land and the fecundity of animals and humans are closely intertwined.[63] Hydriskoi situate ritual activity within a water-providing environment. Their decoration also evokes a humid landscape with its associated flora and fauna: when adorned with figural motifs, these typically depict water birds, sometimes grazing horses, and plants, whereas more simply decorated examples often display wavy lines, which may allude to water.[64] It is, in fact, possible that hydriskoi were used alongside full-sized hydriai within the sanctuary.[65]

The high-necked jug presents a different case from that of the hydriskos. This distinctive shape within the Euboean ceramic repertoire is, in itself, a broad subject of study, which cannot be fully addressed here. As a working hypothesis, we suggest a comparison with the loutrophoros, well known from the Attic repertoire, as the two shapes share several common features: an elaborated morphology—characterized by an elongated neck and one or more handles, a wide mouth with pronounced rim, and occasionally a high conical foot—, as well as similar decorative themes, predominantly depictions of women engaged in ritual actions. This imagery is recurrent on black-figure loutrophoroi from the Sanctuary of the Nymphs on the slopes of the Athenian Acropolis and exclusive to Eretrian high-necked jugs.[66] Another point of convergence is the serpent motif, which appears as plastic decoration on the handles, shoulders and rims, or is evoked through wavy lines.[67] On the basis of this comparison, we suggest that the high-necked jugs were originally produced for use in rituals linked to the nuptial cycle (such as pre-nuptial baths or post-partum purification), before being dedicated in the Eretrian sanctuaries and at Amarynthos. If this hypothesis holds true, it is possible that the river, a spring, or a well associated with the Artemision (*supra*) supplied the water required for such ablutions. The Greek world offers numerous examples of waters specifically designated for pre-nuptial bathing and similar purification rites: the Enneakrounos fountain for Athenian maidens, the *nymphaea* at Argos, the Ismenus River in Thebes, or the Scamander for the daughters of Troy.[68]

In addition to their figural scenes depicting women —one of the keys to interpreting these vessels— high-necked jugs consistently feature two decorative elements also observed on hydriskoi: vegetal motifs (stylized trees or branches) and wavy lines, possibly evoking water. Once again, the imagery appears to situate the ritual and its protagonists within a natural environment marked by moisture and vegetation —a small-scale reflection of a broader network of meanings that contributes to the shaping of the sacred landscape.

Vegetal Metaphors

Within this system of representations, the vegetal world holds a prominent place. It is evoked through the depiction of trees and branches on hydriskoi and high-necked jugs,[69] as well as through floral motifs that appear on other artefacts found within the temple at Amarynthos—among them a series of oversized kotylai, black-figure hydriai, items of jewellery or ornamentation, and terracotta figurines.[70] At first glance, the corpus may appear modest, but it should be contextualized within a much richer set of practices. Indeed, the use of flowers, wreaths, garlands, and branches in various festive occasions—particularly in cultic activities—is well attested in the Greek world through both literary and iconographic sources.[71] Adorning the sacred space, cult participants, and sacrificial animals

62 Microresidue analyses often yield important clues about the use of vases. Analyses were carried out on 27 vessels (by M. Roumpou, Harakopio Univ.), including two hydriskoi (FK2465-18, V5230; FK2374-4, V5233) and two black-figure hydrai with floral decoration (FK2012-2017-2143, V5236; FK2374-15, V5235). However, the analyses did not reveal any detectable residues.

63 Motte 1973, 7–17.

64 Huber 2003, vol. 2, pl. 66–80 (Eretria); Verdan *et al.* 2020a, 109, pl. 6, 64–68 (Amarynthos).

65 For hydriai found in sanctuaries (notably of Artemis): Diehl 1964, 171–209; *ThesCRA* V, 170–173. In relationship to Artemis: Cole 2004, 193.

66 Attic loutrophoroi: Papadopoulou-Kanellopoulou 1997; Sabetai 2014. Eretrian jugs: Huber 2003, vol. 1, 61–63 and vol. 2, pl. 24–28; 2013, 88–89; 2021.

67 See for instance Papadopoulou-Kanellopoulou 1997, pl. 31, cat. 151 (plastic), pl. 13, cat. 73.II and pl. 33, cat. 166 (painted), pl. 87, cat. 446, 448–450 (wavy line); Sabetai 2014, 75, fig. 2. On high-necked jugs from Amarynthos (unpublished), a vertical wavy band is a common decorative motif on the handles. See also the scene depicting two female figures handling a snake on a high-necked jug of unknown provenance (Louvre CA2365: Boardman 1952, pl. 7; Huber 2021, pl. 30.2). It is worth noting that the serpent motif also features on some early Eretrian hydriskoi (Huber 2003, vol. 1, 51–53, 160–161, vol. 2, pl. 20, 72 and 74, cat. H134–H147).

68 Ginouvès 1962, 265–282; Brulé 1987, 318–319; Morizot 1994, 208–210; Marchetti – Kolokotsas 1995, 233–237 (Argos, Cyrene); Haland 2009 (Troy).

69 Comparable imagery also appears on the necks of pithoid amphorae found in the Eretrian necropoleis: Boardman 1952, pl. 5–7; Verdan 2015.

70 Most objects have not yet been published; however, see for example a terracotta figurine with vegetal motives on the headdress—similar pieces bear large rosettes on their garment (*AntK* 64 [2021], 148, fig. 8), and a gold applique (*AntK* 65 [2022], 134, fig. 7f).

71 Blech 1982, especially 269–312; *ThesCRA* III, 327–329; V, 384–401.

—and fulfilling specific ritual functions—vegetal elements were omnipresent. Our aim is not to indiscriminately link a wide range of practices to the shaping of a sacred landscape. Rather, we will draw selectively from a well-studied field to inform our broader reflection and apply certain elements to the interpretation of the finds at Amarynthos.

Just as hydriskoi evoke hydriai, their function, and, more broadly, the central role of water (*supra*), vegetal elements used in ritual, beyond their decorative purpose, also point to wider meanings. Two associations come to mind. The first is the idea that flowers and branches brought into the sanctuary represent a sample of the surrounding nature—or of specific biotopes—based on the idea of a microcosm within the sanctuary that reflects the surrounding macrocosm. It is easy to imagine that such correspondences served to make present, in the context of cult practices, the spaces associated with the respective divinities and, ultimately, their active power; as suggested by A. Motte in his reading of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, when he refers to "les couronnes qui, par leur contenu et leur forme circulaire, sont comme des prairies en miniature et autant de signes visibles de la déesse [Artemis]."[72] The second association is that between the younger members of society—girls and boys—and new vegetation—young shoots and budding flowers: a seemingly conventional metaphor, yet one that reveals a particular way of thinking, of conceiving the unity of living processes, of *phusis*, behind its various forms.[73] In short, the presence of the vegetal world in the cultic space, whether real or represented, expresses the triangular relationship between humans, the natural environment, and divine agency—a structuring principle of the sacred landscape.

Returning to Amarynthos, while it is nearly impossible to recover traces of the abundant flowers and foliage that must have adorned the sanctuary throughout its long existence,[74] their echo can nonetheless be discerned in representations preserved on more durable media. The most explicit images, such as those decorating jug necks, emphasize the ceremonial use of vegetal elements and highlight the feminine dimension of the rites.[75] For other representations, the link to the cultic context is established by the mere presence of these objects within the sacred space. Overall, this body of material fits seamlessly into Artemis' sphere—into the domains of action of the goddess, into appropriate environmental settings, and, it must be added, into a ritual temporality: at Amarynthos, the great festival of the Artemisia took place at the beginning of spring,[76] when nature bursts back into bloom.

Time in the Landscape: Present Past

Indeed, landscape encompasses not only space, but also time. Leaving aside the question of seasonality and cyclical time, let us consider the presence of the past. Whether recent or remote, real or imagined, the past is omnipresent in the landscape, which thus serves as a medium for collective memory.[77] This dynamic is clearly at work on a broad scale in the territories of Greek poleis, and the Eretrian territory, for instance, would offer a compelling case for a wide-ranging study. Here, we take the case of Amarynthos as a starting point for this reflection, where the past is very much present, in and around the sacred space.

The first question that arises—here as elsewhere—when considering the relationship between the sanctuary and earlier remains is whether or not there was continuity of cult between the Mycenaean and Geometric periods. While relevant, this issue cannot be addressed here in depth, as it would be both premature and overly extensive.[78] Given the current state of knowledge, the situation at Amarynthos can be summarized as follows: at the scale of the site as a whole, occupation appears to have been continuous from the end of the Bronze Age through to the Archaic period.[79] At the location of the temple itself, however, layers dating to the 10th and 9th c. are missing, and pottery from the same period is virtually absent.[80] While Mycenaean wheel-made bull figurines, recovered from the temple area and hillslope deposits, suggest cult activities in the late 12th to early 11th c. BCE, the earliest secure material evidence of religious practices onsite thereafter dates to the 8th c. BCE.[81]

72 Motte 1973, 102 (on Eur. *Hipp*. 73–87).

73 For a discussion of metaphor not merely as a poetic device but as a fundamental structuring element of thought—particularly in the analogy between human and plant life—see Buccheri 2024. On the relationship between plant growth, young girls, and Artemisian landscapes, see Calame 2019. See also Monbrun 2009 on *Od*. 6, where Nausicaa is compared both with Artemis and a palm shoot in Delos.

74 Exceptions are extremely rare, such as a leaf preserved by mineralization on a bronze shield discovered inside the temple, or seeds perhaps introduced along with their plant—though such instances appear to have been infrequent.

75 To the painted scenes on vases, one may add the example of a terracotta figurine depicting a female figure holding a flower and a wreath in her hands (*AntK* 65 [2022], 134, fig. 7b; Simosi 2022, 58–59).

76 Knoepfler 1988, 387–388.

77 Key studies on the inscription of the past in ancient landscapes: Alcock 2002 (esp. 23–32); Van Dyke – Alcock 2003 (see introductory chapter). For the specific and particularly well-documented case of Rome, see Cancik 1985–1986; Grandazzi 2010 (on the "spatialization of temporality").

78 This issue has been debated numerous times for several sites across Greece. For recent appreciations on the matter, see Cosmopoulos 2016; Kotsonas 2017; Eder 2019; Haysom 2020.

79 Verdan *et al*. 2020a, 79–82; *AntK* 66 (2023), 96 and fig. 8.

80 *AntK* 68 (2025), 145–147.

81 Verdan *et al.* 2020a, 97–99; *AntK* 67 (2024), 99 and pl. 1.1j.

Fig. 11. Reconstructed view of the Artemision (J. Rohrer – O. Bruderer).

Without presuming either continuity or discontinuity of the cult, our focus here is on the traces of the past that might have been visible by the users of the sanctuary during the historical period and could have served as a basis for memorial narratives.[82]

Once again, the hill adjacent to the sanctuary takes centre stage. Inhabited since the Early Helladic period, it was remodelled through large-scale constructions, including terracing and fortifications.[83] In historical times, these were probably the most impressive man-made remains to be seen in the region, alongside those of Lefkandi. By the time the sanctuary flourished, the hill no longer appears to have been occupied, yet the prehistoric structures remained visible from within the sacred area itself (**Fig. 11**). Their presence likely drew attention and may have offered the tangible support for various narratives about the past. While this is difficult to demonstrate, at least one evidence supports the idea: a small deposit of two terracotta figurines, three kotyliskoi, a squat lekythos, and a plate was placed around a flat stone at the foot of an Early Helladic terrace wall sometime after the mid-4th c. BCE (**Fig. 12**).[84] The true significance of these offerings eludes us. More broadly,

Fig. 12. Mid-4th c. BCE offerings deposited at the foot of an Early Helladic terrace wall (T. Krapf, ESAG).

82 Polignac 1995, 27–31; Cosmopoulos 2014.
83 Müller Celka *et al.* 2022.
84 *AntK* 65 (2022), 129 n. 8. It is worth noting that the large eastern portico (**Fig. 8**, Ed1) was built during the same period.

Fig. 13. Aerial view showing the building phases of the temple of Artemis over Mycenaean remains in white (J. André, ESAG).

the way worshippers in the 8th and 4th c. BCE perceived the prehistoric remains may have differed significantly. Nevertheless, the hill made visible, to those who visited the sanctuary, not only the Artemisian character of the site but also its venerable past.

At Amarynthos, another context reveals a deliberate effort to integrate traces of the Mycenaean past into the sacred space. The temple built towards the end of the 8th c. was erected atop the remains of two LH IIIC edifices (**Figs 5** and **13**, Ed15 and Ed18), preserving their original orientation. Parts of the ancient walls may have remained visible on the floor of the new building, throughout its lifetime.[85] Furthermore, several Mycenaean artefacts appear to have been associated with more recent objects (Geometric and Archaic) deposited in the area.[86] These are the most convincing signs of a deliberate connection established between the emerging sanctuary and the earlier phases of the site's history. In any case, during this period, engagement with the past took shape on multiple levels—the site's topography, a monument, and objects—which, when considered together, contributed to the formation of a landscape. In short, Amarynthos was imbued with a distant yet tangible past that shaped the perception of the sacred space and was integrated into the emerging cult practices.[87]

While the remains of the past and their reinterpretation represent a pervasive feature of landscapes, the phenomenon is more perceptible in certain periods than in others. To draw a comparison with the Early Iron Age, we briefly turn to another phase in the site's history.

Fig. 14. Panagitsa church built with architectural blocks and steles from the Artemision (A. Voegelin, ESAG).

In the Byzantine period, numerous chapels were erected within a 2-kilometer radius of the former sanctuary area, including eight to nine at the top of the hill,[88] as part of a dynamic that can be understood as a reconfiguration of the sacred landscape. Yet this is not merely a matter of imprinting the territory through the construction of buildings visible from afar. Most of the chapels still standing conspicuously incorporate architectural blocks and steles relocated from the Artemision (**Fig. 14**), thus displaying the material presence of the "Classical" past. This practice was common during the period and reflected

85 In several places, the upper courses of the ancient walls seem to lie at a higher elevation than the temple floor level and are not covered by a soil deposit.

86 Among which a terracotta figurine depicting a bull's head found next to a kylix stem (*AntK* 67 [2024], 99 and pl. I.1i), various seals, a T-shaped figurine and, possibly, a bronze dagger with an ivory handle (*AntK* 68 [2025], 146, pl. I.1e-f).

87 Cosmopoulos 2016; Van Wijk 2024, 343.

88 As recorded by T. Spratt in 1845: Ackermann – Knoepfler 2009, 147.

Fig. 15. Sanctuaries of Artemis along the Euboean Gulf (T. Theurillat, ESAG).

a range of motivations, both practical and symbolic.[89] Regardless of how this reuse of blocks was conceived or perceived, it evoked earlier sacred places and monuments, even after their dismantling. By directing attention towards these visible traces in the surrounding area, it actively contributed to the meaningful construction of the landscape.

Beyond Amarynthos, beyond Artemis

While our analysis has focused on the Artemision of Amarynthos and its local context, examining the sacred landscape also invites interpretation on a wider scale. In closing, we turn our attention beyond the boundaries of the Eretrian polis—as delineated by D. Knoepfler and S. Fachard—and even beyond Euboea, though remaining within the regional sphere marked by the presence of Artemis sanctuaries along the Euboean Gulf: at Aulis (Artemis *Aulideia*), Brauron (Artemis *Brauronia*), Halai Araphenides (Artemis *Tauropolos*), Histiaia in Northern Euboea (Artemis *Proseoa*) and possibly Plakari in Southern Euboea (**Fig. 15**). Scholars have long pointed out how these "havens of Euripus cherished by the goddess" (Callim. *Dian.* 3.188) formed an interconnected religious network, united by shared myths, rituals, and geographical features.[90] Most of these coastal sites shared a wetland ecosystem watered by a river stream.[91] At Aulis and Brauron, sanctuaries developed in a lowland

89 Papalexandrou 2003; Frey 2018.

90 Brulé 1987; 1993; Ekroth 2003; Kowalzig 2018, 102–106; D. Knoepfler in this volume, pp. 213–214, n. 6–8.

91 Aulis: Sampson 1999; Ghilardi *et al.* 2018; Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* mentions Artemis' sacred grove (ἄλσος, l. 1544) and meadow (λειμών, l. 1463). Brauron: Cosmopoulos 2016, 258–259; Papadopoulos – Kontorli-Papadopoulou 2020. Halai Araphenides: Kalogeropoulos 2013. Histiaia: Schäfer 2020. Plakari: Crielaard 2017 and Crielaard, this volume.

dominated by a prominent elevation and marked by significant remains of a Mycenaean past. At Brauron in particular, the topographical setting closely resembles that of Amarynthos, with a rocky hill rising directly behind the sanctuary. The elevation is especially prominent when viewed from the courtyard. In both cases, the hills were once occupied by Bronze Age settlements, whereas the sanctuaries later developed not on the hilltops, but in the adjacent marshy plains. There are also notable parallels in the layout of the two sanctuaries and in the character of their votive practices. Most strikingly, the temples at Brauron, Aulis, Halai and Amarynthos share a distinctive plan featuring an "adyton".[92]

Of all these similarities, those relating to site selection and their long-term histories are the most intriguing. Certainly, their proximity along a major maritime route across the Euripus strait facilitated cultural and religious exchanges.[93] Correspondences are partly the result of close interactions, and perhaps emulation, between neighbouring communities. They also arise from widely shared religious conceptions, each sanctuary's configuration representing a variation on a common scheme. In terms of sacred topography, this reflects the tangible expression of the interplay between shared traditions and local specificities—a hallmark of Greek polytheism.[94]

Another way to broaden the perspective is to move beyond an exclusive focus on Artemis. There are at least two compelling reasons for this. First, the goddess was not the only deity present in her sanctuary at Amarynthos—let alone in the surrounding landscape. The presence of Apollo is also attested from the earliest phases of the Artemision, as evidenced by an unpublished early 7th c. BCE dipinto, whereas Leto also became part of the cult at a time yet unknown.[95] There is also strong reason to believe that the Eretrian hero Narcissus was closely associated with the sanctuary of the goddess, while an epigram refers to the nymphs of Amarynthos.[96] A second reason for expanding our scope beyond Artemis is that the landscape features discussed so far are not exclusive to Artemis, but also associated with other deities, notably with Apollo, whom Hesiod portrays as nurturer of youths along with the nymphs and the rivers.[97] In this regard, it is worth noting that Apollo *Daphnephoros*' sanctuary in Eretria probably exhibited, at the time of its foundation in the mid-8th c. BCE, similar environmental characteristics to the Artemision at Amarynthos. It developed near the seashore with good moorings, on a brackish or marshy lowland frequently flooded by the nearby river, not far from a rocky eminence occupied during the Bronze Age.[98] The association with water appears to have persisted over time, as evidenced by the presence of a well within the temple precinct in the Archaic period, and possibly by a nearby public fountain situated midway between the temple and the agora.[99] As scholars have long recognized, the Apollonion probably hosted a shrine devoted to Artemis.[100] This proximity between the two twins hints at their complementarity and sheds light on how the Artemision at Amarynthos was part of a dense network of cults and festivals that structured the religious system of the Eretrian *polis*.

Conclusion

At the intersection of subjective perspectives, human actions embedded in space, and natural environments endowed with their own agency, landscapes appear to be made up of a wide range of elements, as numerous as they are diverse. Regardless of the angle from which they are approached, only a partial understanding can be gained—especially when they belong to the past. This paper has touched upon only a few aspects of what may have constituted the religious fabric of the landscape around Amarynthos. Other dimensions could have been further explored, particularly those related to movement. As a site of convergence for multiple communities, the sanctuary of Artemis was periodically connected to the broader territory through processions. Strabo's account of a venerable *pompe* whose ritual order was engraved on a stele comes to mind—yet it was but one among many.[101] They set the landscape in motion,

92 Travlos 1976; Hollinshead 1985; 1999; most recently Verdan *et al.* 2025.

93 Some of these coastal sites along the Euripus strait also appear in relation to the annual offerings supposedly originating from the Hyperboreans: "And from there, to descend to the Maliac Gulf and travel across to Euboea, sending from city to city as far as Carystos" (Hdt. 4.33). The route of the offerings may have shifted to the shores of Attica after Athens took control of the Delian League. Although the recipient of these offerings is not formally attested, converging clues point to the goddess Artemis (Castiglioni 2013).

94 V. Pirenne-Delforge (2020, 11) speaks of "la tension entre unité et pluralité, entre général et particulier."

95 On the triad at Amarynthos: Knoepfler 1988, 411–415; 2018, 914–918. More generally Vikela 2015.

96 Narcissus/Narkittos: Knoepfler 2010 and this volume, pp. 225–226. Nymphs (*kourai Amarynthiades*): *AP* 6.156 (see Brulé 1987, 25; Semenzato *et al.* 2020).

97 *Theog.* 347: αἳ κατὰ γαῖαν ἄνδρας κουρίζουσι σὺν Ἀπόλλωνι ἄνακτι καὶ Ποταμοῖς. On Apollo and Artemis sharing similar ecosystems, see Brulé 2012, 215–218. In addition to Apollo, Dionysus also shares an affinity with Artemis for places located outside the city, such as mountains, lakes and marshes, which are often described as distinctly Dionysian landscapes (Jiménez San Cristóbal 2021).

98 Müller Celka *et al.* 2022.

99 Archaic well: *supra* n. 59. Public fountain: Ducrey *et al.* 2004, 244–245.

100 Huber 2003, 150–156.

101 Strab. 10.1.10.

turning everyday routes—like the one from Eretria to Amarynthos—into sacred ways imbued with religious significance.[102]

We walked a thin line between our attempt to include elements not usually associated with the shaping of landscapes—such as artifacts—and the urge to resist the temptation to attribute everything to the landscape, which would dilute the concept and undermine its relevance. Although every thought and action is grounded in space, not all engage with the perception or construction of the environment. Certain portions of sacred space, rites, and ritual objects reveal nothing about the landscape itself.

We have endeavoured to present a coherent picture of an "Artemisian landscape," first at the scale of Amarynthos, but also in relation to other sanctuaries of Artemis along the Euboean Gulf and throughout the Greek world. Two caveats should be noted in conclusion. First, one could equally undertake the reverse exercise—namely, to identify inconsistencies within this "system," highlighting divergences from one site to another, or in practices on a single site.[103] Second, for convenience, we have spoken of the landscape in the singular. In truth, the plural would be more appropriate to reflect the plurality of realities that vary depending on perspective—such as those of the Eretrians and other Euboeans, for instance—and that change over time. The construction of ancient landscapes was neither monolithic nor permanent, and the same must apply to their reconstruction by modern research.

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102 It is also likely that processions originating from Eretria left their mark on the terrain, influencing the layout of buildings (such as the porticoes) in the western part of the sanctuary.

103 See the works of H. Versnel on inconsistencies in ancient religion, particularly the introductions in Versnel 1990 and Versnel 2011.

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Abbreviation

ThesCRA = Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum, Los Angeles, 2004–2014.

Abstract

This chapter focuses on the Artemision of Amarynthos on Euboea Island and examines how religious landscapes were conceived, perceived, and constructed both within the sanctuary and in relation to its immediate environment. As in other "Artemisian configurations" across the Greek world, the topography at Amarynthos—marked by the transition from plain to mountain, proximity to the coast, a waterway, and a wet delta environment—echoes the goddess's affinity for wild, liminal, and watery spaces. The analysis considers whether, and in what ways, these features were integrated into the sanctuary's layout and ritual practices. Particular attention is given to water, present both in the natural environment and in ritual facilities and vessels. Another dimension of the Amarynthian landscape is explored through the remains predating the sanctuary of the historical period. Their presence raises the question of how Bronze Age ruins and artefacts may have been endowed with new significance in subsequent cultic contexts. Finally, the discussion situates Amarynthos within a broader network of sanctuaries sharing comparable topographical settings and ritual configurations.

What is meant by "sacred landscape"? How can ancient sacred landscapes, greatly eroded by time, be reconstructed? In the landscape, how did the religious dimension relate to the economic, social and political dimensions? In this book, scholars with many years' experience of archaeological approaches to Greek religion offer answers to these questions, by presenting a variety of case studies.

The examples selected relate to various regions of the Greek world (Attica, Arcadia, Boeotia, Euboea, Asia Minor) and the periods covered range from the Late Bronze Age to the Byzantine era. Several chapters are based on survey data, which are examined in relation to written sources. Topics covered include the development of sacred landscapes over the long term and the integration of major sanctuaries into their wider environment (Olympia, Kalapodi, Artemision at Amarynthos).

The contributions reveal different understandings of a sacred landscape. As a modern concept, the latter is examined in a methodological introductory chapter. Two recent ethnographic examples, one from Morocco and the other from India, provide further food for thought. The book is intended as an incentive to exploit the heuristic potential of the concept of sacred landscape, while defining its boundaries.

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