

The Annual of the British School at Athens

<http://journals.cambridge.org/ATH>

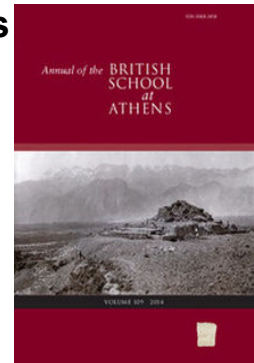
Additional services for *The Annual of the British School at Athens*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



II.—Topography: East-Central Laconia

A. J. B. Wace and F. W. Hasluck

The Annual of the British School at Athens / Volume 15 / November 1909, pp 158 - 176
DOI: 10.1017/S0068245400017585, Published online: 18 October 2013

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0068245400017585

How to cite this article:

A. J. B. Wace and F. W. Hasluck (1909). II.—Topography: East-Central Laconia. The Annual of the British School at Athens, 15, pp 158-176 doi:10.1017/S0068245400017585

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

LACONIA.

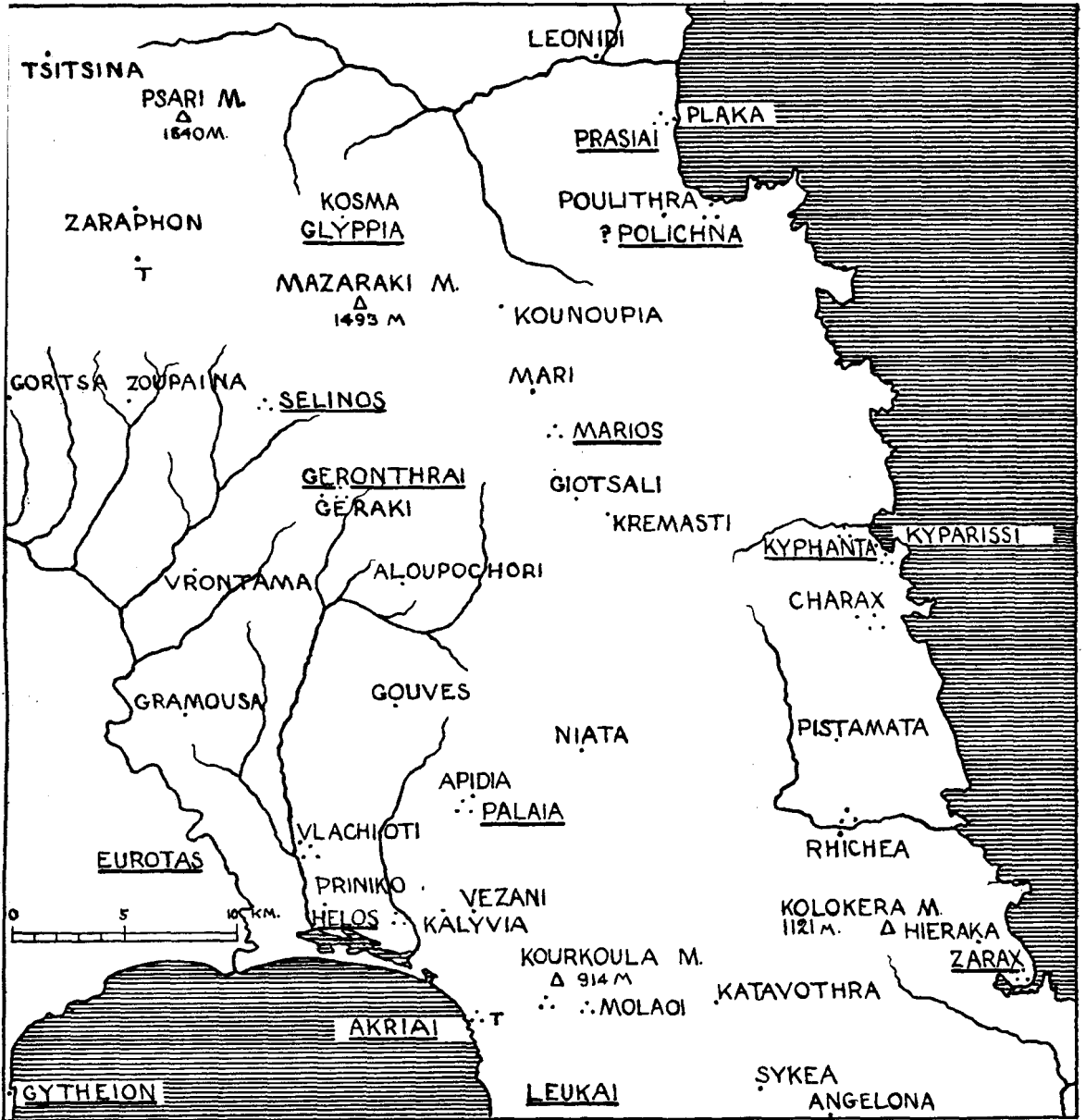
II.—TOPOGRAPHY.

EAST-CENTRAL LACONIA.

§ I.—THE EUROTAS VALLEY.

SCYLAX, 47.	STRABO, VIII. 363.	PTOLEMY, III. 16.	PAUSANIAS, III. 22.
	Helos		Helos ↓ Palais ↓ 120 st. Geronthrai ↓ 20 st. Selinos ↓ Glyppia ↓ 100 st. Marios

THIS paper is a brief account of the classical topography of east-central Laconia. It includes all the country on the left bank of the Eurotas between Leonidi and Zarax with the exception of the small piece directly opposite Sparta and round Chrysapha. The whole of this district is not well watered and irrigation is not possible, for the fertile, undulating plain below Geraki is well above the level of the river; the olive tree, however, flourishes here, and in the neighbourhood of Gouves there are some splendid old trees. In the alluvial plain at the mouth of the Eurotas corn grows well but is often severely damaged by winter floods. Round the foot of



∴ = Ruins; T = Watch-Tower; Δ = Mountain-Top. ANCIENT NAMES underlined.

FIG. I.—LACONIA: SKETCH MAP OF EAST-CENTRAL DISTRICT.

Mount Kourkoula the valonia oak flourishes, but owing to the present low price little trouble is taken to gather the crop. Between Geraki and the sea runs the rugged range of Parnon, which drops as abruptly to the sea on the east as it rises gently from the plain on the west. In the gorges among the steep pine-clad slopes above Kyparissi is some of the finest mountain scenery in Laconia. In the mountains the struggle for existence is hard, and some of the villages are merely the summer homes of the plain dwellers, for instance Kosma is the summer village of Vrontama, and Tsitsina that for the inhabitants of Gortsa and Zoupaina. On the sea-coast there is little land suitable for cultivation, except in the small valleys near Zarax, Kyparissi, Poulithra, and Leonidi.

This district differs from the rest of Laconia in being largely inhabited by Albanians: for instance, practically all the villages in the mountains, Hieraka, Rhichea, Niata, Pistamata, Charax, Kyparissi, Kremasti, Aloupori, Giotsali and Geraki, are occupied by people of Albanian descent,¹ although in some villages such as Geraki, they have been almost completely hellenized. But in the deme of Zarax, the capital of which is Kremasti, Albanian is commonly spoken by the people amongst themselves in preference to Greek, especially by the women; further in the north this district includes part of the country where Tsakonian is still spoken, the villages of Poulithra, Kounoupia, and Leonidi.² According to the mediaeval authorities such as the *Chronicle of the Morea*, Tsakonia was the name for the greater part of east-central Laconia between the Eurotas and the sea, as far south as Monemvasia.³ We hear of three divisions of Laconia east of the Eurotas: Tsakonia, Helos, the district between the mouth of the Eurotas and Mount Kourkoula, and Vatika, the Malea promontory. A rescript⁴ of Theodore II., Despot of the Morea, dated 1442, which grants certain privileges to the inhabitants of Monemvasia, specially excludes the people of Vatika, Tsakonia, and Helos, and the following villages, Molaoi, Asopos, Geraki, Apidia, Zaraphon, Tsitsina, Rheonta, Prastos, Kastanitsa, and Hagios Leonidas (Leonidi). We also hear that Rheonta, Leonidas, and Kyparissi were included in the towns of Tsakonia⁵ given as a dowry to

¹ As also Katavothra, Angelona, and Sykea to the south; cf. *B.S.A.* xiv. p. 169, 1.

² Thiersch, *Sprache der Zakonen*; Deffner, *Deffners Archiv*, pp. 1 ff.; Deville, *Étude sur le dialecte Tsakonien*.

³ *E.g.* ll. 2064, 4576, 4588, 4591, 5622, ed. Schmidt.

⁴ Δάμπος, Παργασσός, 1883, pp. 471 ff.

⁵ Phrantzes, p. 159, ed. Bonn.

Maria Melissene when she married Antonio Acciaiuoli, Duke of Athens, who died in 1435. It is not known when the Albanians first settled in this part of the country and apparently dispossessed the Tsakonians of some of their villages; they first appear¹ as mercenaries in the service of the despots of Mistra, and were afterwards settled on waste lands in Laconia, but we do not know if their settlement in this district dates from that period. It is interesting to note that the three districts of Vatika, Helos, and Tsakonia (including of course the Albanian villages) are still quite distinct and that their inhabitants can be told by their costumes. In Vatika the marked feature is the width of the trousers, in Helos tight trousers are worn; a Tsakonian wears a fez with a dark red handkerchief tied round it and often has only the handkerchief tied round his head, while the foustanella is the distinguishing feature of those who live to the east of the Eurotas in the neighbourhood of Sparta.

HELOS.

Pausanias speaks of this city² as being in ruins in his day, and Strabo calls it a village. According to the former it was an Achaean city and famous for its long and stubborn resistance to the Dorians; it was finally taken by king Alkamenes about 680 B.C. in spite of Argive assistance. Its exact site is still unknown: former travellers such as Leake and Le Bas looked for it by Priniko, but Pausanias gives its distance from Trinasos³ as eighty furlongs, which indicates a site further east. Near the Kalyvia of Vezani Boblaye found ancient remains, small chapels, broken pottery and the like, but he gives no exact information where this place was. On a hill called Hagios Ioannes a little to the north of the Kalyvia, Greek potsherds are common,⁴ further west on a low hill called 'στο Μανολάκι 'marbles' are said to have been found and also the foot of a statue of inferior workmanship; here too, broken pottery is visible on the surface. Between this site and the lagoons on the coast is a chapel called Hagios Strategos, near which are the remains of small houses built with mortar.

¹ Finlay, *History of Greece*, iv. pp. 31 ff.; Miller, *Latins in the Levant*, p. 367.

² Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 584; Thucydides, iv. 54; Strabo, viii. 363; Pausanias, iii. 2. 7, 20. 6, 22. 3; Stephanus, *s.v.*; Leake, *Morea*, i. pp. 197 ff.; Boblaye, *Recherches*, p. 94; Aldenhoven, *Itinéraire*, p. 357; Le Bas, *Rev. Arch.* 1845, p. 217; Curtius, *Peloponnesos*, ii. p. 289; Bursian, *Geogr. Griechenlands*, ii. p. 133; Phillipson, *Peloponnes*, p. 180; Niese, *Nachrichten v. d. kgl. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Goettingen*, 1906, p. 115.

³ *B.S.A.* xiii. p. 230.

⁴ A bored celt found here indicates a prehistoric inhabitation of this district.

Excavation alone can decide which is the true site of Helos. The only historical fact we have about Helos is that it was ravaged by Nikias in 424 B.C.

As remarked by Leake, the ancient road from Sparta to Asopos and Monemvasia came through Helos, it passed by Amyklai (Slavochori), entered the gorge of the Eurotas by Skoura, and went down the left bank of the river past the village of Gramousa where the ancient wheel-tracks noted by Leake are said to be still visible.¹ Thence it went by Vlachiotei, where some architectural remains of a late period have been found, and Priniko, where Leake and Gell saw a Constantinian mile-stone,² to Helos. Thence one branch ran along the coast to Asopos, and another through the pass of Mount Kourkoula to Monemvasia.

The plain on both banks of the Eurotas at its mouth is alluvial land of comparatively recent formation, and though very fertile, is subject in the winter to violent floods which cause considerable damage. This district seems to have been granted by Mohammed II. after the conquest of the Peloponnesus, as a military fief to Krokodeilos Kladas, a Greek guerilla chief.³ Helos also in the middle ages was the seat of a bishopric.⁴

PALAIÀ AND PLEIAI.

The village Palaia⁵ mentioned by Pausanias as being on the way from Akriai to Geronthrai, is conjectured to be the same as the town Pleiai referred to by Livy as a strategic point covering both Akriai and the plain of Leukai. This description suits the proposed site for Palaia at Apidia, where there are many ruined Byzantine churches and, on a hill to the south of the village, a small and ruined mediaeval fort. No Greek remains are to be seen here, though it is reported that an inscription was found some twenty years ago in the neighbouring village of Niata. It is just possible, since we know that there was a shrine of Artemis Patriotis at Pleiai, that

¹ Leake, *Morea*, i. pp. 194 ff. Mr. Forster (*Class. Rev.* 1909, p. 222) is in error in stating that Helos lay on the road from Sparta to Gytheion.

² Leake, *Morea*, i. p. 199; Gell, *Narrative*, p. 342; cf. the Peutinger Table.

³ Phrantzes, p. 407, ed. Bonn.

⁴ Le Quien, *Oriens Christ.* ii. pp. 179, 218, 224; Miller, *Latins in the Levant*, pp. 62, 63.

⁵ Livy, xxxv. 27; *C.I.G.* 1444, cf. *B.S.A.* xiii. p. 212; Leake, *op. cit.* iii. p. 8; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 95; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 328; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 143; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 366; Philippson, *op. cit.* p. 181; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 114, 11.

the votive relief to Artemis formerly at Gytheion,¹ and said to come from the opposite coast of the gulf, is the inscription in question. Near Gouves a tomb has recently been found, which contained plain aryballoi like those from Sparta.²

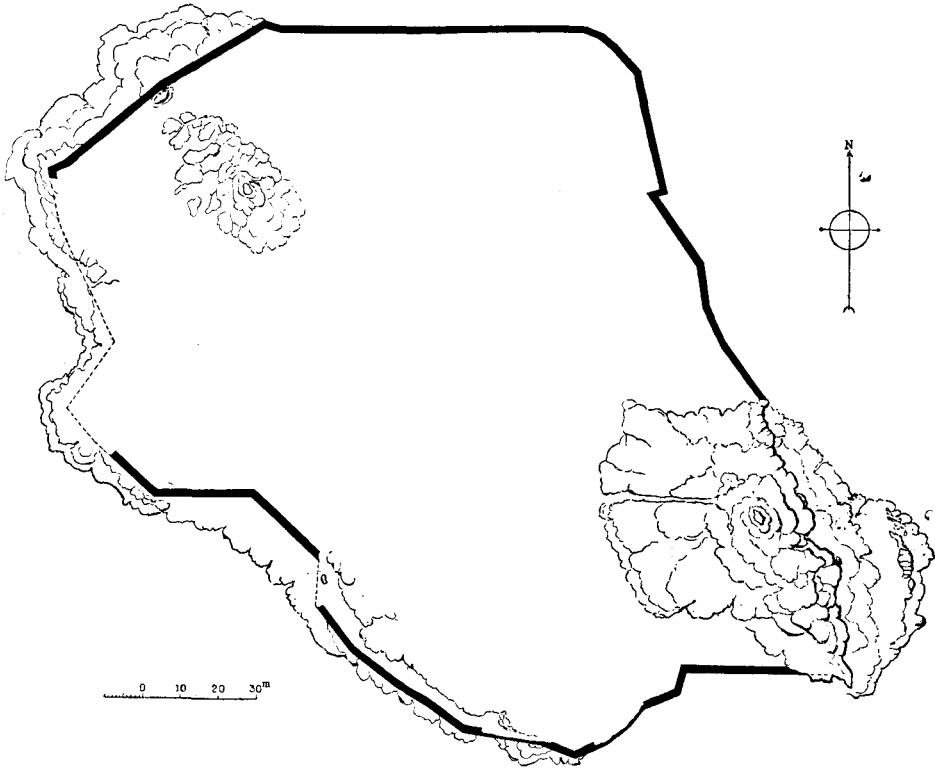


FIG. 2.—GERAKI: PLAN OF ACROPOLIS.

GERONTHRAL.

The site of this city,³ which was 120 furlongs from Akriai according to Pausanias, has long been known. Leake's conjecture that it stood

¹ *Arch. Zeit.* 1880, Pl. VI. 1.

² *B.S.A.* xiii. p. 129, Fig. 7, a.

³ Hierocles, 647; Leake, *op. cit.* iii. p. 8; *Peloponnesiaca*, pp. 149, 362; Gell, *Itinerary*, p. 233; Le Bas, *Rev. Arch.* 1845, pp. 67 ff.; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 95; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 302; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 366; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 136; Philippson, *op. cit.* p. 181; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 114; Stephanus, *s.v.*; *C.I.G.* 1334; Collitz-Bechtel, 4530, 4531.

at Geraki was confirmed by Le Bas' discovery of inscriptions here, and the finding of others since, leaves us no doubt as to its identity. Trial excavations were undertaken here by the British School in 1905, and though the temple of Apollo on the Acropolis was not found (Fig. 2), interesting neolithic and pre-Mycenaean vase fragments were discovered. As a full account of the extant remains is given in the report of the excavations,¹ it is not to the purpose to repeat it here. According to Pausanias, Geronthrai was an Achaean town that surrendered to the Dorians in the reign of Teleklos, and was colonised by them; in later times it was one of the Eleuthero-Laconian towns and, to judge by the copy of the Edict of Diocletian,² was apparently a market town in the imperial period. The many Byzantine churches in the plain near the modern village seem to indicate that it was also important in the middle ages; Boblaye states that it was the seat of a bishopric. On a high hill to the east stands the Frankish castle of Geraki, the interesting ruins of which have been fully described by Mr. Traquair.³ This castle was the seat of one of the original twelve Frankish barons, Guy de Nivelet, who held twelve fiefs, but it seems to have been one of the castles surrendered by Villehardouin to the Byzantines after the battle of Pelagonia in 1262. It was held by the Venetians for a short time after 1464, and then fell into the hands of the Turks.⁴ In the plain to the east of the Frankish castle is a small conical hill called Zavrena, round the top of which is a wall of large, rough stones, terraced up on the inside. This seems to date from Hellenic times, since glazed Greek tiles are to be found scattered over the surface.

SELINOS.

This village⁵ lay twenty furlongs from Geronthrai, and has been placed at Kosma by most topographers. Leake suggested it should be looked for near Zaraphon, and Curtius that it might be near the ruined monastery of Daphni on the road to Zaraphon. In the narrow valley below Daphni, and one hour from Geraki, is a place called Nerotrivi: here there are many Greek walls of large cut limestone blocks laid in

¹ *B.S.A.* xi. pp. 91 ff.

² Le Bas, *Rev. Arch.* 1845, pp. 67, 129 ff.

³ *B.S.A.* xii. pp. 263 ff.

⁴ Miller, *Latins in the Levant*, pp. 51, 147-8, 465, 470.

⁵ Leake, *op. cit.* iii. p. 12; *Pelop.* p. 364; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 97; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 304; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 136; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 113.

rough courses, and some still stand to a height of about two metres. One building measures 9·80 by 6·15 metres, and black glazed pottery is common amongst the ruins which occupy a considerable area. In the gully leading into the valley from the monastery is a small water-channel cut in the rock, '33 m. wide and '31 m. deep. This site, which is approximately the required distance from Geronthrai, is most probably that of Selinos.

On the road between the site of Selinos and the village of Zaraphon are the ruins of a mediaeval watch-tower.

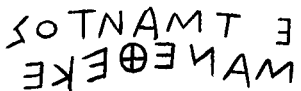
GLYPPIA.

The site of this town¹ is quite unknown, but it seems to be the place called Glympeis by Polybius. Most topographers have identified it with Lympiada in Kynouria at the upper end of the river of Leonidi, where there is a Greek acropolis, but since the Messenians who were defeated at Glympeis were making their way through Kynouria to join Philip V. south of Sparta, we should expect Glympeis to be near one of the passes leading from Kynouria into the Eurotas valley, especially since Polybius says it was on the borders of Argolis and Laconia. The two principal modern routes are those by Kosma and Mari, leading respectively north and south of Mount Mazaraki; so possibly, since Kosma is not Selinos, because it is over twenty furlongs from Geronthrai, and we have found another site for Selinos, it may be Glyppia. At Kosma, on the low hill where stands the church of Prophetes Elias, the villagers have often found small bronze statuettes; one which they showed, represents Tyche with a patera and cornucopiae, and is of Roman date. All over the surface of the hill Greek tiles and black glazed potsherds are to be found. At a site called Palaiochora, one hour from the village, tombs are said to have been found, and at a place called Sormpani, two-and-a-half hours to the west at the foot of Mount Mazaraki, is said to be a ruined village.

¹ Polybius, iv. 36, v. 20; Leake, *op. cit.* iii. pp. 7 ff.; *Pelop.* p. 362; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 96; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 366; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 303; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 135; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 113; Bölte, *Ath. Mitt.* 1909, pp. 376 ff.; inscription from Kosma, Collitz-Bechtel, 4525.

MARIOS.

The site of this town¹ which was, according to Pausanias, a hundred furlongs from Geronthrai, is to be recognised, as Boblaye suggested, at the modern village of Mari, which is actually about eighty furlongs from Geronthrai. The acropolis is on a high hill called Kastelli in the valley below the village and on the left bank of the river of Mari. A wall of large rough blocks encircles the top of the hill which is not very broad; on the north-west the wall has three courses still standing, and is about 1·80 metres thick. On the north-east the wall has five courses of roughly squared blocks irregularly laid, and is over three metres thick, and there seem to be traces of a gate. Fragments of pottery, including black glazed ware, are common on the hill, and within the *enceinte* are traces of other walls. In the valley below are some ruined churches and other apparently Byzantine remains. Near here an inscription was found; the stone is now used as a doorstep in a neighbouring mill, but owing to constant wear no letters are now legible. In the village, which is further to the north and high up on the opposite side of the hill, copious springs gush forth from a riven wall of rock. At the bottom of the village is said to be a Greek wall, near which an inscribed bronze horse is reported to have been found; this spot may be the site of Pausanias' Pantheon. The position of the shrine of Artemis is still unknown. On the top of the hill opposite the village, at a place called Zougana, an inscription has recently been found, and is now built into the village church. This reads:—



'Ε . . . μαντος
 μ' ἀνέθηκε

The second letter is illegible, and the third letter may be E, therefore we might restore the name as 'Ερέμαντος or 'Εχέμαντος, though neither is known.² The letters are '025 m. high, and the stone measures '25 by '125 metres. There is a hole in the top of the stone, probably for the attachment of a small bronze statue.

¹ Leake, *op. cit.* iii. p. 11; *Pelop.* p. 362; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 96; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 365; Le Bas, *Rev. Arch.* 1845, p. 141; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 303; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 135; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 113.

² Bechtel-Fick, *Personennamen*, p. 195.

To judge by the fragments of tiles that lie about, a small heroön like those at Chrysapha and Angelona¹ seems to have occupied this spot.

§ 2.—THE EASTERN COAST.

SCYLAX, 47.	STRABO, VIII. 368.	PTOLEMY, III. 16.	PAUSANIAS, III. 24.
		Zarex	Zarax
		Kyphanta	↓ 100 st Kyphanta
Prasia , urbs cum portu	Prasiai	Prasiai	↓ 200 st. Brasiai

This territory, consisting apparently of Prasiai, Polichna, Glympeis, Kyphanta, Zarax and Leukai, was originally Argive, but we do not know when it was conquered by the Spartans. In the fifth century it was Laconian, but about 337 B.C. it was given to Argos by Philip II. after the battle of Chaironeia. In 219 B.C. it was attacked with some success by the Spartans under Lykourgos, but seems to have remained Argive, for it was not restored to Laconia till the time of Augustus, when the towns became members of the Eleuthero-Laconian League.

ZARAX.

The remarkable ruins of Zarax,² though long known, have hitherto never been accurately surveyed. Besides the rough indication of walls given in the Admiralty chart (reproduced as showing the position of the town in relation to the harbour, Fig. 3) the only plan is the inadequate sketch of Aldenhoven.

The site is a beautiful one. The entrance from the sea is narrow and hemmed in by steep limestone cliffs; on the right hand lie the few white

¹ *Ath. Mitt.* 1877, p. 303, 1; *B.S.A.* xi. pp. 81 ff.; cf. *B.S.A.* xi. pp. 137 ff.

² Polybius, iv. 36; Stephanus, *s.v.*; Leake, *op. cit.* i. p. 219; Albrizzi, *Notitia di Morea* (1686), p. 106; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 364; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 101; Bory de St. Vincent, *Expéd. de Morée*, p. 465; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 291; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 137; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 113.

houses of the village port, beyond which the harbour expands into a shallow lake (called *λίμνη*) bounded by olive groves: a strip of red alluvial soil at the further end offers a striking contrast to the greys and greens of the rocks and the blue of the sea. All that we know of the ancient history of the place is contained in Pausanias' words¹: 'A hundred furlongs from Epidaurus is Zarax, a place with a good harbour, but of all the towns of the Free Laonians this is the most decayed, for it was the only town in Laconia which was destroyed by Kleonymos, son of Kleomenes, son of Agesipolis. . . . There is nothing in Zarax but a temple of Apollo at the end of the harbour with an image holding a lute.'

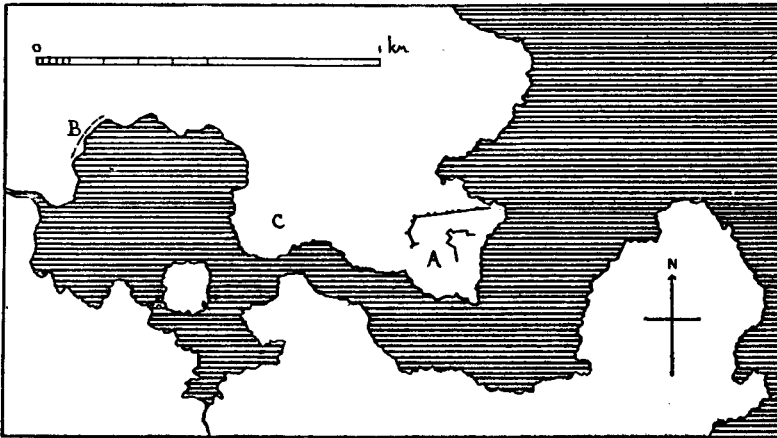


FIG. 3.—ZARAX: PLAN OF HARBOUR.

Zarax presumably belonged to Argos in 272 B.C. when it was destroyed by Kleonymos, as also in 219 B.C. when Lykourgos failed to take it. Like the other coast towns Kyphanta and Prasiai, it seems to have been given back to the Eleuthero-Laonian League by Augustus. The whole of Laonian littoral as far as Zarax,² including apparently Glyppia and Leukai, had been taken from Sparta and given to Argos by Philip II. when he arranged the affairs of Greece after the battle of Chaironeia about 337 B.C.

¹ Cf. i. 38. 4: 'Hard by (Eleusis) is a shrine of the hero Zarex. They say that this Zarex learned music from Apollo. I believe that he was a Laonian, . . . and that the city of Zarax on the sea-coast of Laonia is called after him.'

² The inhabitants of Zarax are mentioned in one of the Hyperteleteic decrees (Collitz-Bechtel, 4547) dating from the third century B.C.

Curtius identifies the temple of Apollo with the wall (Fig. 3 B) marked on the Admiralty chart at the inner end of the *λίμνη*. This we were unable to find, and it is on general grounds more probable that (the word *λίμνην* being taken as excluding the *λίμνη*) the site of the temple should be sought on the low terraced hill (Fig. 3 C) just beyond the quay, where a few large worked limestone blocks are lying about.

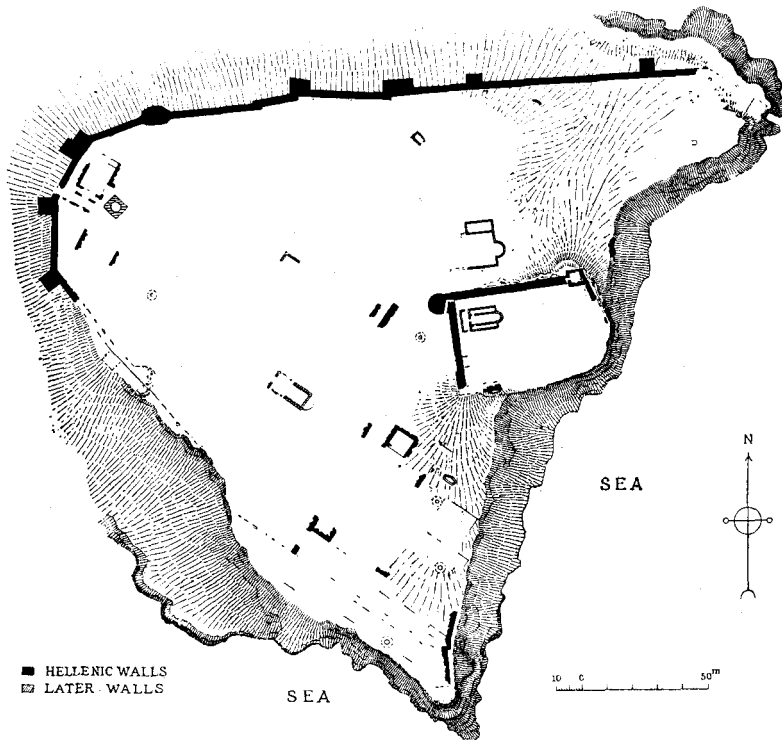


FIG. 4.—ZARAX: PLAN OF WALLS.

The important ruins lie on the northern side of the harbour¹ mouth (Fig. 3 A). These consist of two massive and well-preserved series of walls (Fig. 4): their construction is very varied, ranging from the rudest polygonal to fine squared work (Figs. 5-8); there are even traces of rubble repairs, and within the *enceinte* several ruined churches, all roofless and decayed, are evidence for the late occupation of the site.

² Near the harbour was found the tomb which yielded the fine statuette of Aphrodite: Stais, 'Εφ. Ἀρχ. 1908, pp. 135 ff.

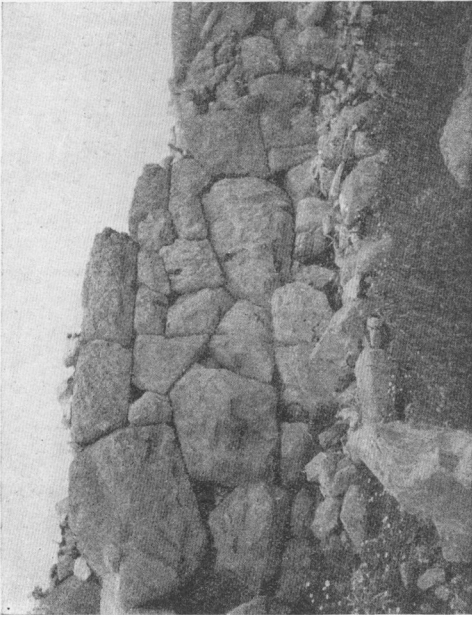


FIG. 6.—ZARAX: TOWN WALL FROM OUTSIDE.

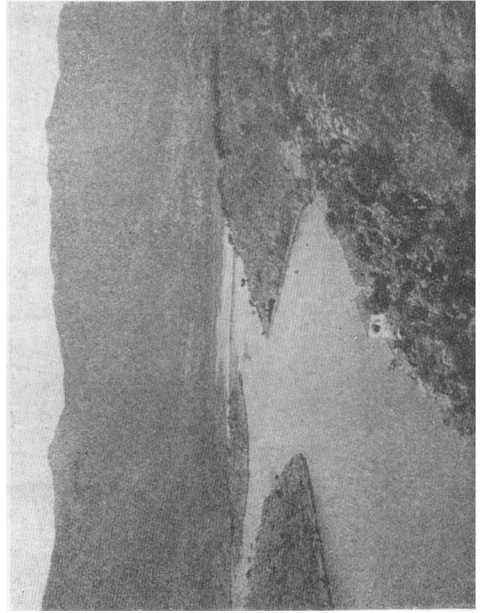


FIG. 8.—ZARAX: VIEW OF HARBOUR.

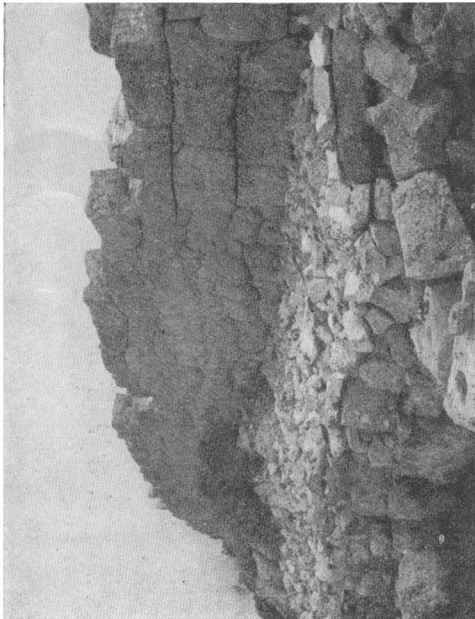


FIG. 5.—ZARAX: ACROPOLIS WALL FROM OUTSIDE.

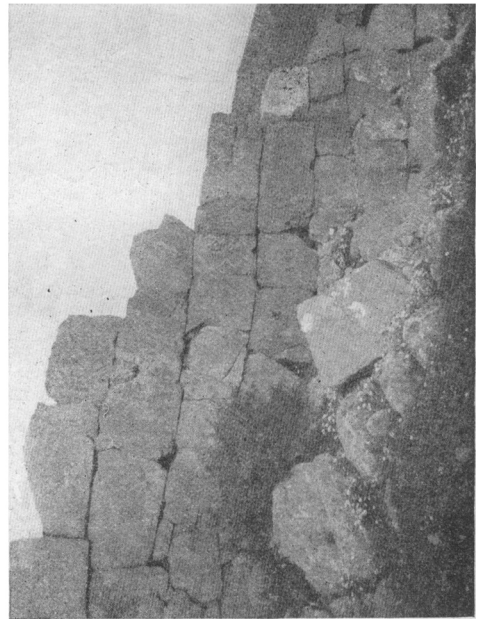


FIG. 7.—ZARAX: HARBOUR WALL OF ACROPOLIS.

The outer defences enclose a triangle, two sides of which, towards the harbour and the open sea, are naturally defended by the cliffs, while the third faces inland. Of the seaward wall hardly anything remains; of that adjacent to the harbour enough can be traced to make good the natural assumption that it followed the line of the first drop in the cliff. The landward wall, which could avail itself only of a slight rise in the ground and thus called for the strongest artificial defences, is still very well

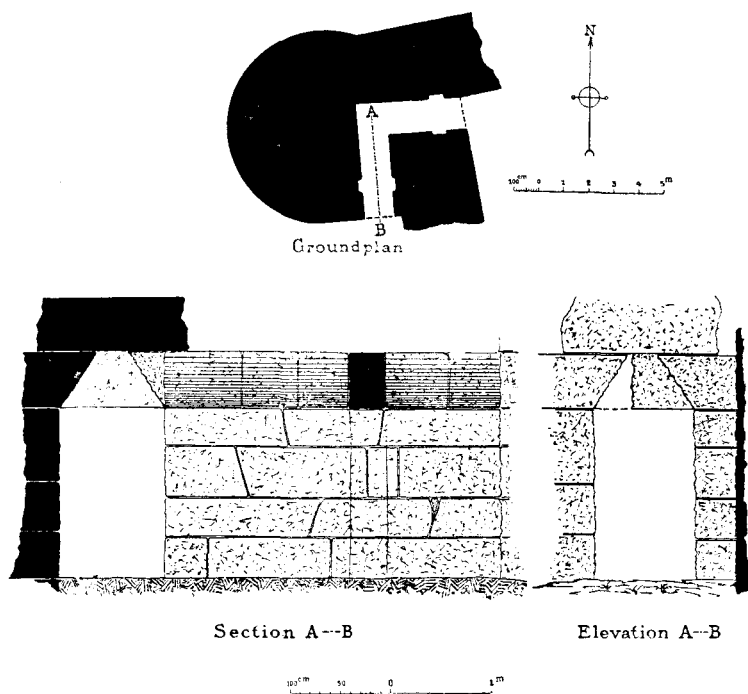


FIG. 9.—ZARAX: PLAN OF ENTRANCE TO ACROPOLIS.

preserved. The towers are generally of carefully squared blocks with drafted corners, and stand to a height of three or four courses (2.10–2.40 m.): the irregular west bastion is in bad repair and the wall at this point is built in a rough style, mostly of moderate-sized stones, but including some blocks as long as 1.65–1.80 m., not laid in courses but placed haphazard and wedged together with small stones. The first set-back marks an improvement in construction, and squared work is, as a rule,

employed at angles and towers, even where the stretches of curtain between are of the roughest polygonal. The seaward bastion bears traces of a mediaeval reconstruction : its platform is approached from inside by a staircase (now ruined) running first at right angles to the wall and then parallel to it. The angles are treated with the same carefully-squared masonry that we have noticed as used for towers and angles throughout.

Of the tiny acropolis, originally quadrangular, the two landward walls (on the north and west) only survive (Figs. 5, 7). They are built for

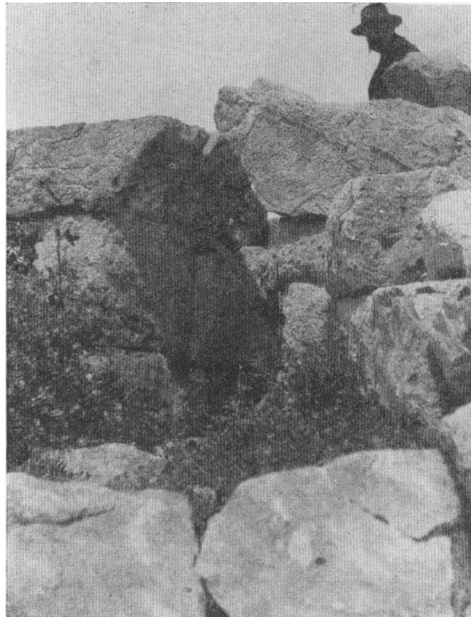


FIG. 10.—ZARAX : ENTRANCE TO ACROPOLIS.

the most part of finely adjusted polygonal blocks of no great size ; the two towers at the junction of the north and west walls and at the seaward extremity of the former, are built of squared stones regularly coursed. In the angle tower is the sole entrance to the acropolis (Figs. 9, 10), a vaulted passage striking first north and then east, and still preserved entire in some places. The roof consists of pairs of large squared stones laid horizontally, the opposed ends being cut away so as to touch only at

the top. At two points there were doors, one in each section of the passage; here there is a square lintel at the level of the spring of the vault, and each lintel is placed over a pair of sinkings cut in the side walls to admit door-jambs.

In spite of the varieties of masonry used, there is no reason to attribute a pre-hellenic origin to the ruins of Zarax: the alternation of polygonal and squared masonry is seen at the neighbouring Epidauros Limera,¹ and even in so elaborate and late a fortification as Messene; and the horizontal vault was also used in classical fortification. As to the mediaeval importance of the place nothing is known. Zarax retains its name in a document of 1292,² and seems later to have been called Porto Bottas.³ The silence of history is not to be wondered at in view of the nature of the site. Zarax, though the finest port on the coast, has no communication except by high and stony passes, with the interior; it is ill-watered and fever-haunted, and the modern villages (Hieraka and Hagios Ioannes), were settled comparatively recently by Albanians from Kremasti, and are backward and cut off from the world. The so-called Kastro close to the village of Rhichea, which lies in a small upland plain about three hours north-west of Zarax, is only a ruined monastery.

KYPHANTA.

It has long been thought that Pausanias was mistaken in saying that Kyphanta⁴ was six furlongs from Zarax, for at this distance there is no site corresponding to his description, but Kyparissi which is over a hundred furlongs to the north, exactly corresponds. Here there is a fine bay giving good anchorage, and on two hills overlooking it to the south are two Kastras. One is a Byzantine, and the other a Greek acropolis; the latter is surrounded by a wall standing five or six courses high, and built in a polygonal style that recalls the walls of Zarax. Half an hour inland, in a small valley to the south, a fine spring gushes forth at the foot of a steep cliff. Here there are several rock-cut basins and three terraces, to the

¹ *B.S.A.* xiv. p. 181.

² Buchon, *Recherches sur la Morée*, lxxxiii.

³ Uzzano Guilletière, *Lacédémone*, p. 579; *Expéd. de Morée*. iii. p. 56; Pouqueville, *Voyage*, v. pp. 574, 580, where the explanation *Port des Tonneaux* is given. Leake (*Morea*, i. p. 219), citing early *portolani*, gives the name *Porto Cadena*.

⁴ Polybius, iv. 36; Pliny, iv. 17; Leake, *op. cit.* ii. p. 500; *Pelop.* p. 298; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 101; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. p. 306; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 237; Philippon, *op. cit.* p. 169; Niese, *op. cit.* p. 112.

uppermost of which a flight of five steps leads. Also, on the upper terrace is a deep bath cut in the rock, and a rock-cut channel to lead water into a square basin below. There are signs that water used to run into all these basins, and probably the spring has been affected by earthquakes. The site is surrounded by a semicircular wall that abuts at both ends on to the cliff. This is without doubt the shrine of Asklepios mentioned by Pausanias: 'Turning inland, and going up country for about ten furlongs, you come to the ruins of Kyphanta. Amongst the ruins is a grotto sacred to Asklepios: the image is of stone. There is also a spring of cold water gushing from a rock.' Pausanias' description so exactly suits the site at Kyparissi, that no one who has seen it can doubt that this is Kyphanta.

The so-called Kastro at Charax¹ two hours to the south of Kyparissi, at the head of a romantic gorge, is only a ruined monastery like that at Rhichea. Near Kyparissi itself, on the road that leads to Kremasti, is a ruined mediaeval village.

PRASIAI OR BRASIAI.

This town² is probably rightly identified by Bursian with the ruins at Plaka, the port of Leonidi, although Boblaye, Ross and Curtius would place it at Tyrou further north, and Leake at Hagios Andreas still further north. Since, as we have seen, Kyphanta is to be identified with Kyparissi, we should be left without a name for the not inconsiderable ruins at Plaka, if we were to put Prasiai at Tyrou or elsewhere. At Plaka at the foot of a steep hill is a small, low point running into the sea, probably that on which stood the statues of the Dioskouroi or Korybantēs mentioned by Pausanias. The slope of the hill behind is broken by a projection, on which is a tower built of large roughly squared blocks laid in irregular courses (Fig. 11); from here a wall runs down to the north with three or four other towers, each about four metres square, placed at set-backs. The town probably lay to the north of the projection mentioned, because the wall

¹ Philippson, *op. cit.* p. 172.

² Thucydides, ii. 56, vi. 105, vii. 18; Aristophanes, *Pax*, l. 242; Polybius, iv. 36; Xenophon, *Hell.* vii. 2; Strabo, viii. 368, 374; Stephanus, *s.v.*; Leake, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 484, 498; *Pelop.* p. 225; Boblaye, *op. cit.* p. 102; Aldenhoven, *op. cit.* p. 366; Ross, *Reisen im Pelop.* p. 165; Curtius, *op. cit.* ii. pp. 306, 322; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 134; the inscribed bronze, said by Mylonas to come from Leonidi (*B.C.H.* 1877, p. 356), according to Julius (*Ath. Mitt.* 1879, p. 18) comes from Kosma.

runs in this direction, and amongst the olive trees on the slope are traces of terrace and foundation walls, and black glazed potsherds are to be found on the surface. On the top of the steep hill are ruins of a Byzantine and mediaeval settlement, and two churches, Hagios Demetrios and Hagios Athanasios, with wall-paintings. There are also a large cistern, a semi-circular tower and the remains of many huts built of small stones with bad mortar.

On the south slope of the hill, tombs with terracottas and coins are said to have been found.

Prasiai was one of the more important Laconian ports, and was one of the original members of the Kalaureian amphiktyony, and probably at

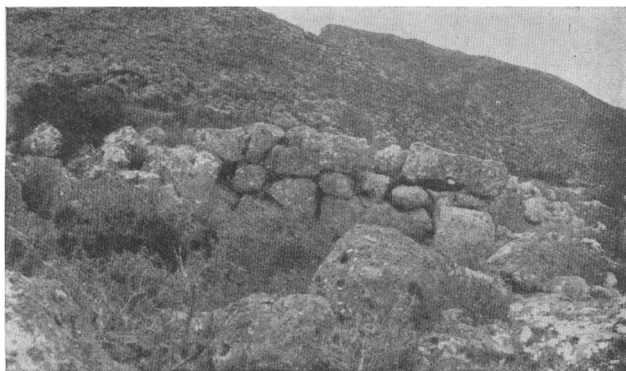


FIG. II.—TOWER AT PLAKA, LEONIDI.

first belonged to Argos like Kyphanta and Zarax. In 430 and 414 it was ravaged by the Athenians. About 337, after the battle of Chaironeia, it seems to have been given with the rest of the Laconian littoral by Philip II. to Argos. In 219 B.C. it was surprised and taken by Lykourgos, but does not seem to have been restored to Laconia till the time of Augustus, when it, Zarax and Kyphanta were united with the Eleuthero-Laconian League. The importance of this port to Sparta is illustrated by the fact that in 369 B.C. after the battle of Leuktra, when the Corinthians, Phliasians, Sikyonians, Troizenians, Epidaurians and other Spartan allies wished to come to Sparta to help resist the Theban invasion, they reached Sparta by way of Prasiai.

By the village of Poulithra on the south side of the bay of Leonidi, is a hill surrounded by a Greek wall (Fig. 12). This perhaps marks the site



FIG. 12.—WALL AT LEONIDI.

of Polichna,¹ which is only known as one of the towns taken from the Argives, together with Prasiai, Leukai, and Kyphanta, by Lykourgos in 219 B.C.

A. J. B. WACE.

F. W. HASLUCK.

¹ Polybius, iv. 36; Leake, *Pelop.* 364; Ross, *Reisen im Pelop.* p. 166; Bursian, *op. cit.* ii. p. 135.