

The British School at Athens

SPARTA AND LACONIA
FROM PREHISTORY TO PRE-MODERN

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SPARTA AND LACONIA

FROM PREHISTORY TO PRE-MODERN

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List of abbreviations

AA	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>	HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
AAA	<i>Athens Annals of Archaeology</i> (Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εξ Αθηνών)	IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>	JAS	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
AJAH	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>	JdI	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
AK	<i>Antike Kunst</i>	JFA	<i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>
AM	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>	JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
AR	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies, Archaeological Reports</i>	JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
ArchDelt Chr	<i>Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον Χρονικά</i>	Lak. Spoud.	<i>Λακωνικάί Σπουδαί</i>
ArchDelt Mel	<i>Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον Μελέται</i>	LIMC	<i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i>
Arch. Eph	<i>Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς</i>	Mus. Helv.	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>	OGIS	<i>Orientis Graecae inscriptiones selectae</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, London</i>	OJA	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
BSA	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>	PAE	<i>Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>	PMG	<i>Page, Poetae Melici Graeci</i>
CEG	<i>P. A. Hansen, Carmina Epigraphica Graeca. Berlin</i>	PZ	<i>Prähistorische Zeitschrift</i>
CMS	<i>Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel</i>	RA	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>	RE	<i>G. Wissowa et al., Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft. Munich.</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>	REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
CVA	<i>Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum</i>	RE Byz.	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
DELG	<i>P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Paris</i>	REG	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>
Ergon	<i>Το Έργον της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας</i>	Rh. M.	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
FD	<i>Fouilles de Delphes</i>	RM	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, römische Abteilung</i>
FGH	<i>Jacoby, Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker</i>	SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>	SIMA	<i>Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
HCT	<i>A. W. Gomme, A. Andrews and K. J. Dover, A Historical Commentary on Thucydides. Oxford.</i>	TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i>
		TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
cm	centimetre	max	maximum
Diam.	Diameter	min.	minimum
est.	estimated	mm	millimetre
Ht.	height	O.T.	Οικοδομικό Τετράγωνο (city block)
L.	length	Th.	Thickness
m	metre	W.	width

Ancient quarries in Laconia¹

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In the context of a research programme funded by the Special Research Account of the University of Athens, which aims to assemble a corpus of ancient quarries, the ancient quarries of Laconia have been studied in collaboration with archaeologists of the 5th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. In this paper we will briefly mention the preliminary results for the quarries whose study is under progress and we will focus on the presentation of the quarries of ancient Asopos, which are of particular interest and the research on which has been completed. (See FIG. 17.1 for locations of the quarries.)

GYNAIKA, PLATYVOUNI (SOCHAS)

The quarries at the site Gynaika and those at Platyvouni on Taygetus, above the village of Anogeia, known in the literature as the quarries of Sochas, have already been systematically studied and presented at the Conference of Laconian Studies at Xerokambi, Sparta, in October 2004.²

VRESTHENA

Known since the end of the 19th century from a description by R. Lepsius,³ though still unpublished, are two quarry sites between Vamvakou and Vresthena in the valley of the River Oinous (modern Kelefina). As a matter of fact, we discovered a limestone quarry at the outskirts of Vresthena, near the site of Sta Marmara (i.e. at the marble outcrops), on Karditsa hill, not far from the site of Lessaiika. Access to the very high and steep quarry face was difficult and did not yield any finds, nor were clear traces of ancient quarrying identified. Therefore, it is doubtful that these are the quarries of blue-grey and yellowish, coarse, thick-grained marble described by Lepsius,⁴ who in fact believed that Vresthena marble was used to build monuments in ancient Sparta. He, however, was unaware of the existence of quarries on Taygetus. It is clear that further research over the whole area is needed.

CHRYSAFA

In the catalogue of the Sparta Museum M. N. Tod and A. J. B. Wace mention a quarry at Chrysapha,⁵ from which they hypothesize came the marble for the Archaic

sculpture of Sparta. While searching for this quarry we visited the site of Gleistra, on the outskirts of the modern village, where there is a low outcrop of limestone with traces of quarrying still visible; specifically, we observed well-carved blocks of similar size (3.0 m × 0.8 m and 3.35 m × 0.9 m), separated by deep channels, 18–25 cm wide, cut round them. The adjacent stream, Polydeuki-Skoura, has eroded that part of the outcrop that was not exploited.

VIGLAFIA

Of great interest and importance are the quarries of Viglafia, mentioned in the Laconia Survey, though with reservations concerning their dating.⁶ In fact, there is a huge area S of the so-called Viglafia massif, where vast sandstone quarries were opened, which extend as far as the S coast opposite the island of Elaphonessos. Huge chambers were shaped by the extensive quarrying, today used as sheepfolds and gardens.

Fairly visible on the many quarry faces at Viglafia is the 'a festoni' technique, which dates these quarries to the Roman–Early Christian period.⁷ Tool traces from earlier periods were not detected, though part of an architrave of large dimensions and part of an ancient road 1.40–1.80 m wide were discovered.

DAIMONIA

Traces of ancient quarrying were also found in the village of Daimonia, near Epidauros Limira on the Maleas Peninsula in the SE Peloponnese.⁸ On the E foot

¹ The text was written by G. Kokkorou-Alevras.

² Kokkorou-Alevras *et al.* 2006.

³ Lepsius 1890, 34.

⁴ Lepsius 1890, 35.

⁵ Tod and Wace 1906, 102.

⁶ Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 312, site NN 248.

⁷ Koželj 1998, 53, pl. 21, fig. 8.

⁸ On the site of Kastelli Daimonia see Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 311 site, NN 239: the site existed during the Classical and Hellenistic periods as well as the Roman period, in all probability, but not during the Late Roman and Early Christian periods. In any case ancient quarries are not mentioned.



Fig. 17.1. Map of Laconia with ancient quarries.

of the rocky hill, which extends as far as the present coast road, traces of quarrying were observed and in particular the imprints where small blocks have been extracted. Particular mention must be made of the tool-marks of a stone-cutting saw, a quarry tool used from the prehistoric to the late Byzantine periods and suitable for soft rock, such as that extracted at this specific site, a type of off-white limestone. It is possible that quarrying at this site was occasional, perhaps spasmodic, and even carried out in modern times.

AYIA MARINA

In addition, traces of occasional quarrying were also observed on a rocky islet in the sea, immediately below the modern chapel of Ayia Marina in the same locality.

ZARAKAS

Outside the walled city of Zarakas (Zarax), in the Laconian municipality of the same name, an extensive quarry was discovered, where traces of stepped stone

extraction are still to be seen. The quarry extends over the slope beyond the ancient walls and reaches the seashore. Specific tool marks do not survive due to erosion, but there are distinct quarry faces — the highest is over 8 m — and stone blocks were observed of around 0.50 m × 1 m, left *in situ* before their final extraction, as well as rock-cut benches, channels and stone chips.

OITYLO

The study is currently in progress of the ancient quarries within the bounds of the modern municipality of Oitylo. The quarries at Oitylo have been known for many years.⁹ Within the modern village the most important extraction site is located on the property of N. Aletras. This is a very large quarry face below the modern road. The ‘a festoni’ technique is clearly evident on the quarry face, thus indicating a date in the Roman–Early Christian period. Characteristic traces of iron wedges can also be seen. Moreover, on a modern threshing floor we discovered the drum of a non-fluted column and a stone basin of uncertain date.

Within this municipality an ancient limestone quarry was also found at the site of Latomas (i.e. quarryman), on the scheduled archaeological site of ancient Kainepolis.¹⁰ The quarry is located in among the modern houses of the village of Alika. A large quarry face survives whose height at some points exceeds 10 m. The stone extraction is vertical and stepped with well-preserved traces of the ‘a festoni’ technique.

In the same municipality, a little outside the village of Mezapos, there is an ancient limestone quarry.¹¹ Altogether four quarry sites were discovered, some larger and some smaller. These sites are found in a ravine and rock extraction is stepped, while at some points the quarry faces are over 10 m high. There are clearly discernible tool marks, such as traces of the pointillé and ‘a festoni’ techniques, deep channels surrounding the blocks, which are left *in situ* before their final detachment from the bedrock. On one side of the quarry the characteristic wheel-grooves of an ancient road are attested and probably belong to the road network which led to the city of Hippola.

An ancient limestone quarry also in the municipality of Oitylo was found on a hillside near the village of Mianes.¹² The stone extraction appears to be on the surface of the ground (superficial) and horizontal, without quarry faces, yet clear traces of ancient quarrying survive: grooves, encircling channels, tool-marks, unfinished architectural members and curved blocks, while at a certain point seven wedge-holes in a row can be seen.

TAINARO

An ancient coastal quarry for grey marble was found in the past in the municipality of E Mani, a little w of Cape Tainaron.¹³ It is a particularly extensive and

interesting site. The marks of stepped stone extraction are visible from afar, as well as the special formations of rock for loading massive blocks into ships.

PLYTRA, ANCIENT ASOPOS

The quarries of ancient Asopos, a city near modern Plytra, are exceptionally interesting.

The open-air sandstone quarries of Plytra, which are referred to for the inscriptions by Cavanagh *et al.*¹⁴ and in summary by Christien and della Santa,¹⁵ lay on a hilly part of the E coast of Xylis Bay in the Gulf of Laconia. In all, three quarry sites totalling 350 m in length were discovered, located with the help of GPS (Global Positioning System) and recorded (FIGS. 17.2, 17.3 a–b).

On site 1 the largest quarry site (FIG. 17.4) is formed by chamber II, 5.50 m wide, 4 m deep and around 3 m high, with sloping sides owing to the stepped extraction of the stone. The footprints of extracted blocks are preserved as well as many quarrying tool-marks. The upper surface of the hill above chamber II has also been quarried, and much carving is discernible there.

The most impressive find is a relief of Heracles (FIG. 17.5) within a shallow four-sided niche 0.75 high × 0.42 m wide, found 1.90 m above the present floor of chamber II, that is, in the most prominent location. The hero is depicted in a frontal pose and nude, with a lion’s skin over his left shoulder covering his left arm completely. A club in his right hand rests vertically on the floor. Unfortunately, the surface of the relief is seriously eroded and the head together with the face of the figure is very battered. The body is muscular and stands firmly on both feet. In general, the relief recalls a similar one found in the quarry at Saliara on Thasos,¹⁶ but the Heracles in that relief is solidly and more clearly structured. The Heracles on the Thasos relief belongs to the Boston/Oxford type created in the middle of the 5th century BC.¹⁷ The reversed position of the legs of our Heracles shows that this type is a variation of the type just mentioned, or it follows some other classical Heracles type. Whatever the case, our relief must be of much later date.¹⁸ Heracles’ relationship with quarries is well attested in

9 Bölte 1929, 1343; Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 300, site LL 154.

10 Governmental Gazette Issue (FEK) 267/B/16-4-70; Governmental Gazette Issue (FEK) 1314/B/30-10-2000.

11 Waterhouse and Hope Simpson 1961, 123; Katsaphados 1994, 46, 55; Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 304.

12 Cooper 1988, 68–9; Bruno 1998.

13 Cooper 1988, 68; Chiotis 2001, 559.

14 Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 310, site MM 320.

15 Christien and della Santa 2001–2, 205.

16 Holtzmann 1994, no. 54, pl. 16.

17 Palagia 1988, 751.

18 Cf. Palagia 1988, no. 385, 419: Roman.



Fig. 17.2. General view of Asopos quarry.

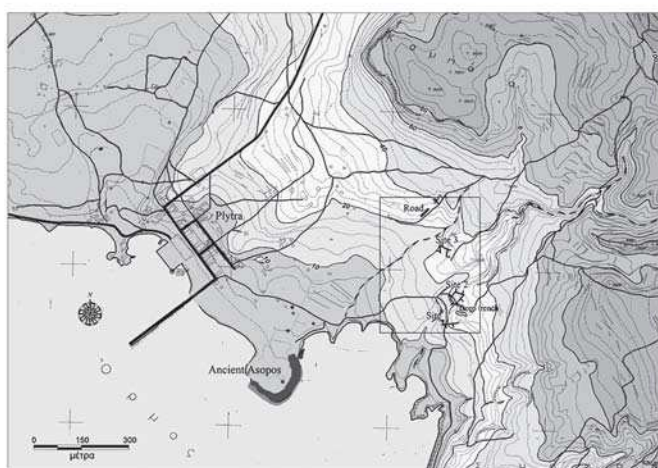
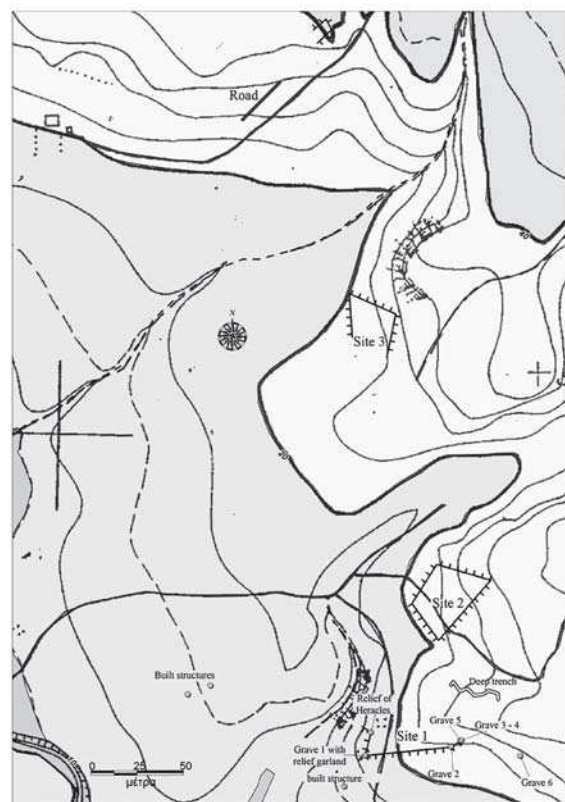


Fig. 17.3 a (above) and b (right). Drawing of Asopos quarry.



antiquity, as well as his worship by quarrymen. The dedication of reliefs of Heracles of a tutelary and cultic character is a common practice in ancient quarries. In addition to the previously mentioned relief at the quarry of Saliara on Thasos, there is another relief of a reclining Heracles at the same quarry as well as at

another quarry on the same island at Vathi, both of the Hellenistic period.¹⁹ Moreover, reliefs depicting Heracles are customarily carved in the natural rock

¹⁹ Holtzmann 1994, pl. 15, no. 51, pl. 40, no. 52.



Fig. 17.4. General view of chamber 2.

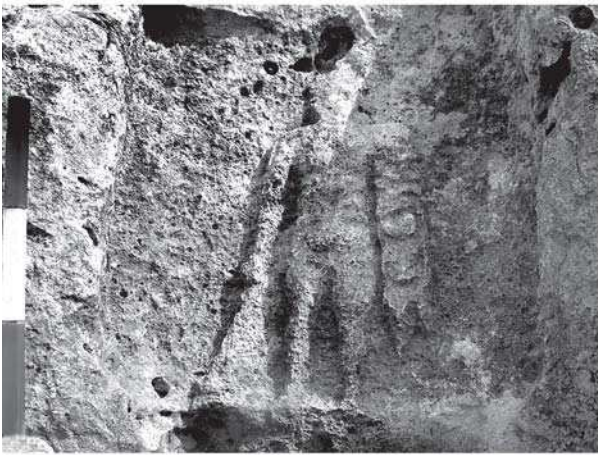
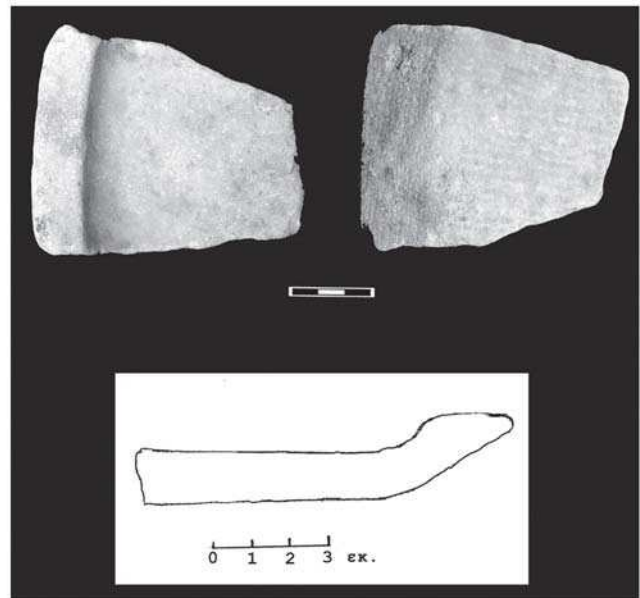


Fig. 17.5 (above). Heracles relief.

Fig. 17.6 (right). Photo and drawing of the perirrhanterion.



beside major technical works, such as the Roman aqueduct at Gytheion,²⁰ and also in outdoor sanctuaries, such as a relief at the site of Vatheia Mouzi or Kouloumi in Mani.²¹

An especially interesting find is the fragment of a marble perirrhanterion (FIG. 17.6), from the Roman period, uncovered in the course of recent cleaning in chamber II.²² Part of an unfinished basin has also been found, carved out of the quarry rock, with 0.40 m external diameter, 0.125 m max. height and rim 0.10 m wide. Perhaps this chamber served as a shrine of the hero protector of quarries and the relief, together with the perirrhanterion, formed the basic elements of its simple equipment.

Many traces of quarrying (a series of square wedge-holes 0.06–0.10 m wide, a stone block 0.5 × 0.5 × 0.3

m left *in situ* and surrounded by encircling channels 0.10–0.16 m wide, traces of the pointillé technique, etc.) survive in the adjoining chamber I of site 1, which measured 4.20 m wide and around 3 m high. The most interesting find, however, is a rectangular grave (Grave 1) of careful construction, 1.70 m long × 0.55 m wide, with the free-standing side 0.10 m thick (FIG. 17.7 *a–b*). Carved out of the natural rock, which had previously been quarried away, it bears rectangular cuttings in the upper surface of the free-standing long side, possibly for the secure emplacement of a stone lid, such as those

²⁰ Themis 1996, 403, figs. 9, 10.

²¹ Woodward 1906–7, 242.

²² Hiesel 1967, 82, no. 100, 87, no. 147, 98, 102.

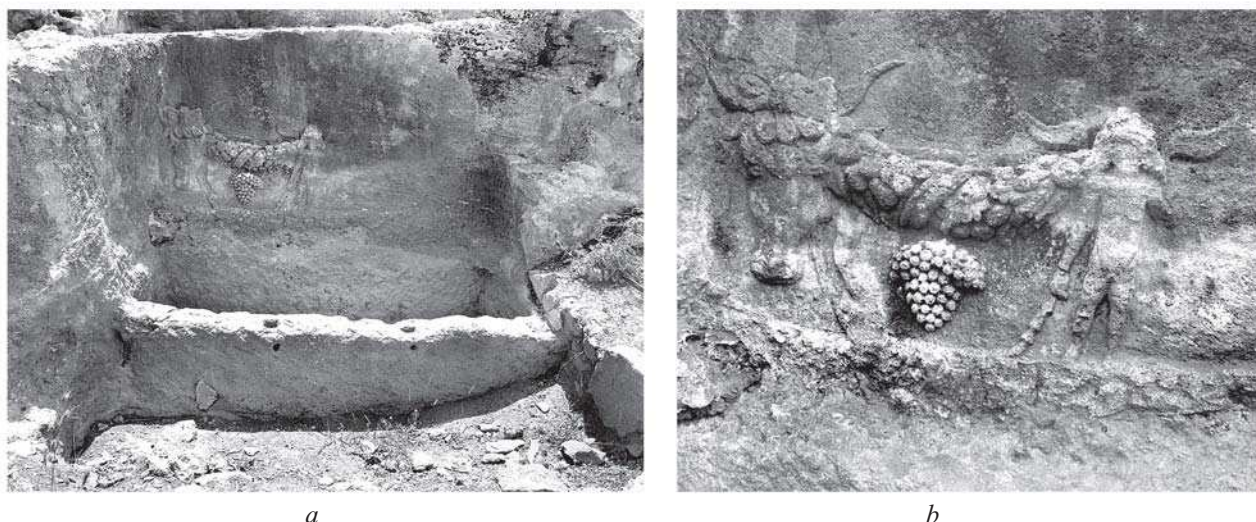


Fig. 17.7 a–b. Grave 1 with garland.



Fig. 17.8. Larnax from ancient Asopos.

used for sarcophagi, which unfortunately did not survive. This grave conveys the general impression of a sarcophagus, because a garland is carved in relief on the face of the rock immediately above the grave, a standard decorative motif on Roman sarcophagi. The garland of fruit is tied at the centre by a sloping fillet, which is supported on the left and right ends by bucrania and at the centre by a figure of Cupid. The right bucranium has been almost completely cut away during a later intervention at this site: only the outline of the left ear and the end of the fluttering ribbon further below survive. Also visible on the right transverse side of the facade above the grave are the marks of a light pick, the quarry tool used for carving. It is most likely to this second intervention, namely at the time of its

possible reuse in Christian times,²³ that the remains of a built structure that may have sealed the cover of the grave can be attributed. The identification of the Cupid on the garland with an angel may explain why the relief decoration was only partially destroyed. Five more carved graves discovered SW of site 1 further strengthen our interpretation; they should date to the Early Christian period and will be discussed below.

The figure of Cupid, depicted *en face* at the centre, carries the garland on his shoulders. He holds an inverted torch in his lowered right hand, whose flame

²³ Laskaris 2000, 301.

touches the ground,²⁴ a motif claimed to have funerary symbolism.²⁵ At the centre of the garland hangs a bunch of grapes rendered in a naturalistic manner.

Overall, decoration with garlands supported by bucrania and cupids is common on Roman sarcophagi from the capital,²⁶ as well as on sarcophagi from Attica²⁷ and Asia Minor, or those of eastern origin in general.²⁸ Sarcophagi produced in Laconia also bear decoration with garlands, such as that in Gytheion Town Hall no. 53.²⁹ Laconian sarcophagi are thought to have copied or adapted Attic models, and it is chiefly the material and artistic quality that attest to their Laconian origin. Note must be made of the fact that Laconian sarcophagi are carved not only in marble but also in more modest sandstone, such as the characteristic example also in Gytheion Town Hall, no. 55.³⁰

Particularly noteworthy is the omission of grapes from Laconian sarcophagi and larnakes decorated with garlands.³¹ Furthermore, Attic sarcophagi, which are believed to have acted as models for Laconian sarcophagi, also have neither bunches of grapes nor leaves suspended from the garlands.³² The same holds for sarcophagi from the western part of the Roman empire.³³ But this decorative element is standard for sarcophagi from Asia Minor and eastern centres in general.³⁴ We have found just a single example of a garland with grapes from Laconia, on a marble larnax, itself from ancient Asopos, found in the small columbarium on the Vraimaki property (FIG. 17.8) and kept in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta.³⁵

Therefore, while Laconian sarcophagi in general follow Attic models, the relief found in the quarry of ancient Asopos together with the marble larnax just mentioned seem, paradoxically, to follow Asia Minor or eastern models.³⁶

Attic and Asia Minor sarcophagi with garlands and Cupids are usually dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD.³⁷ Local Laconian sarcophagi with similar decoration are dated to the end of the 2nd and the 3rd century AD.³⁸ The relief decoration of the carved grave ought therefore to date to the same period.

At the SE end of the same quarry site a group of five rectangular rock-cut graves (FIG. 17.9) was discovered in a row along a NW–SE axis, set close to one another.³⁹

The graves are carved with particular care in the sandstone rock and around their rim a ledge is carved approximately 0.10 m wide, to support the stone slabs or tiles that would have formed their covers, no part of which survives, unfortunately. In two instances the graves are double (Graves 3 and 6), with an internal dividing wall built of small stones, tiles and lime mortar.

Unluckily, the five graves did not provide any finds to indicate their date.⁴⁰ Similar rock-cut graves, however, found on Aegina, also close to ancient quarries,⁴¹ at Corinth⁴² and elsewhere⁴³ are dated to the Early Christian period from the 4th to the 6th centuries AD. The five carved graves of Asopos thus must be dissociated from

the Roman Grave 1 and be dated to the Early Christian period. In addition, four buildings with arched niches (FIG. 17.10) appear to belong to a later period, though no sound conclusions regarding their function can be made since they have not been excavated.

The question arises why this particular site was chosen for the burial of the dead. It is plausible that

24 Hermary 1986, 666, fig. 981–2.

25 Though this has been questioned recently: Hermary 1986, 938–9.

26 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 223–35, pls. 267–77; Herdejürgen 1996, 25.

27 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 435–41, pls. 467–72.

28 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, *passim*.

29 A sarcophagus in the Town Hall of Gytheion, no. 53 (Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 362) is adorned with garlands and Cupids and seems to be carved out of local marble, perhaps from the quarry at Platyvouni. However, the decoration of the Gytheion sarcophagus differs substantially from that on the quarry face at Asopos: first, the garland on the sarcophagus of Gytheion bears three Cupid figures, while the bucrania were depicted in all probability on the narrow sides of the sarcophagus and were deliberately carved away. Next, two Cupids extend their hands on the garland, which passes over their shoulders, while the left Cupid holds a club on his shoulder with his bent right hand. Furthermore, depicted within the arches formed by the garlands are: a Cupid on the left with a club on his shoulder running to the right while a small animal, probably a hare, follows, with two Cupids on the right in a dancing pose. One of the differences between the Gytheion sarcophagus no. 53 and the Attic sarcophagi is that the Cupids of the latter are depicted mostly hovering over the field, while those of the Gytheion sarcophagus stand firmly on the ground (Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 436).

30 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 361.

31 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 362 pl. 401. Also: Archaeological Museum of Gytheion: inv. nos. 29, 113; and a third without inv. no.

32 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 435.

33 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 224–5; Herdejürgen 1996, 24–5, 33–4, 72.

34 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 228.

35 Cavanagh *et al.* 1996, 310.

36 Koch 1993, 249.

37 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 438, 500.

38 Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 362.

39 Grave 2: length 1.99 m, width 0.61–0.69 m, depth (to rim of grave 0.70 m, width of ledge 0.07–0.08 m. Grave 3: length 1.97 m, width 1.55 m, width of ledge 0.05–0.10 m, depth to ledge 0.60 m. Grave 4: length 1.80 m, width 0.65 m, width of ledge 0.09 m, depth to ledge 0.65 m. Grave 5: length 2.00 m, width 0.75 m, depth c. 0.55 m. Grave 6: length 2.20 m, width 1.25–1.50 m, width of ledge 0.05 m, depth 0.75–0.80 m, width of S wall, which is built with tiles, 0.20 m.

40 Only a sherd of burnt pottery of the Late Roman–Early Christian period was found during our recent visit to the graves.

41 Wurster 1969, 23–6.

42 Wiseman 1967, 417–20, pl. 84.

43 Laskaris 2000, 301.



Fig. 17.9. Graves 4 and 2.



Fig. 17.10 (above). Building with arched niche.



Fig. 17.11 (right). Quarry site 3.

these were the graves of those working in the quarry, quarrymen and stone-carvers, since it was usual for such workers to be buried on the spot, as the existence of graves in other quarries attests.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the special appearance of Grave 1, with relief decoration recalling that of a sarcophagus, leads us to the hypothesis that perhaps this is the grave of the head of the quarries at the time, the tomb of the chief quarryman, *ἡγούμενος, ἐπίτροπος* or *ἐργεπιστάτης τῶν λατόμων*.⁴⁵

There are, moreover, very well-known reliefs associated with head quarrymen in ancient quarries. They are usually dedicatory reliefs, such as that of Archedamos in the Vari Cave of the 5th century BC⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Dworakowska 1975; Koželj 1988, 10, pl.18; Bedon 1984, 160–1, n. 8–11.

⁴⁵ Orlandos 1994, 83, n. 6.

⁴⁶ *IG* I.2, 788; Orlandos 1994, 83 n. 6 fig. 26.



Fig. 17.12. Remains of the city of Asopos.

and that dedicated to the Nymphs by Adamas from the region of Odryson in Thrace, found in the Quarry of the Nymphs at Marathi on Paros and dating to the Late Classical period.⁴⁷

The second quarry site is in fact an extension of site 1, the two being separated by the modern road. Here too the upper layer of the hill has been quarried, but only on the surface, in a horizontal direction and not vertically, as at site 1. All the same, wedge-holes are visible here too, together with traces of an extracted block, tool-marks and an unfinished cylindrical column drum — lower diameter 0.90 m, upper diameter 0.85 m and preserved height 0.30 m — with marks of the pointillé technique on its lower section.

Furthermore, between sites 1 and 2 alongside the modern road that runs around the quarry a deep zigzag trench has been carved, 0.80 m wide, current measurable depth 1.70 m and total length approximately 35 m. On its right and left side niches of variable shapes and different sizes have been formed as well as narrow vertical shafts approximately 0.50 m wide. Unfortunately, there are no indications of the date of its construction, which may even belong to more recent times. The purpose of its creation, in any case, seems to be to channel water into a small stream formed at the end of the trench and crossing the plain.

The third quarry site (site 3) (FIG. 17.11) is found much further N, at a distance from the two previous ones, with an intervening gorge, and this constitutes the highest quarrying point, which is formed mainly but not exclusively by graded vertical extraction. On site 3 many footprints of extracted blocks are evident,

as well as traces of quarrying tool-marks, traces of the ‘a festoni’ technique being most prevalent, features which date the site to the Roman–Early Christian period.

The vertical quarrying faces are over 5 m high and 23.30 m long. The site is bounded to the N by yet another gorge beyond which the ancient road appears with traces of chariot-wheel tracks, discovered by G. Pikoulas and described in 1984.⁴⁸

The existence of roads is a necessary precondition for the operation of quarries given that the transport of extremely heavy massive stones required the use of wagons and various other, usually wheeled, devices.⁴⁹ In this case, however, this must be the main ancient road which linked ancient Asopos to ancient Boiai (modern Neapolis), as suggested by Pikoulas,⁵⁰ that would at the same time have served the needs of the quarry.

CONCLUSIONS

Ancient Asopos was founded most probably during the Late Hellenistic period⁵¹ but flourished during the Roman period.⁵² Well preserved on land and under the

⁴⁷ Berranger 1983, 235–59; Bruno 2000, 92–4, pl. 7.

⁴⁸ Pikoulas 1984, 179–82, fig. 1–4.

⁴⁹ Orlandos 1994, 88–98; Korres 2000.

⁵⁰ Pikoulas 1984, 179–82.

⁵¹ *JG* V.1.1143; Spyropoulos 1982, 112; Kourinou and Pikoulas 1989, 125.

⁵² Shipley 1997, 244–5.

sea,⁵³ the building remains of the city are impressive (FIG. 17.12) and are visible over a wide extent.⁵⁴ From examination of building remains it appears that the ancient quarries of Asopos provided the necessary material for the construction of the city, in which little marble is used, to judge from the preserved remains. The soft sandstone rock from local quarries, found at a short distance from the city, would not have been distributed widely to other cities since it is not a stone of especially fine quality.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the decorative garland surviving in relief on the face of the quarry suggests that sarcophagi, which followed eastern or Ionian rather than Attic models, were manufactured on site. Perhaps the stone-carver came from the E or was an apprentice at some eastern workshop, a likely occurrence for the Roman city of Asopos which was a major port in the region. Besides, the import of eastern, perhaps Proconnesian, sarcophagi cannot be excluded. The quarries, at least that of site 1, must have ceased production by the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD, since the grave with the garland on its facade was carved then. During subsequent years site 1, though abandoned, would continue to have been used for worship by the workers on the other two sites and occasionally for the carving of graves. On the remaining sites 2 and 3 stone extraction probably continued into the Late Roman–Early Christian period, as surviving quarrying traces indicate. Written sources verify the continuous prosperity of ancient Asopos during the Late Roman–Early Christian period,⁵⁶ as well as its survival into the Iconoclastic period (8th century AD).⁵⁷

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53 Flemming *et al.* 1973, 10; Hadjidaki *et al.* 1980, 227–36; Touchais 1980, 607.

54 Pikoulas 1984, 186.

55 However, the building material of the Doric capitals from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in neighbouring Akries may derive from the quarries we are examining. Perhaps the same material was used in other neighbouring buildings as well, though on a limited scale.

56 Bon 1951, 184, Appendix; Pikoulas 1984, 179.

57 Hierocles *Historicus* 647, 12; Bon 1951, 23–4; Konidaris 1976–8, 403–34.

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