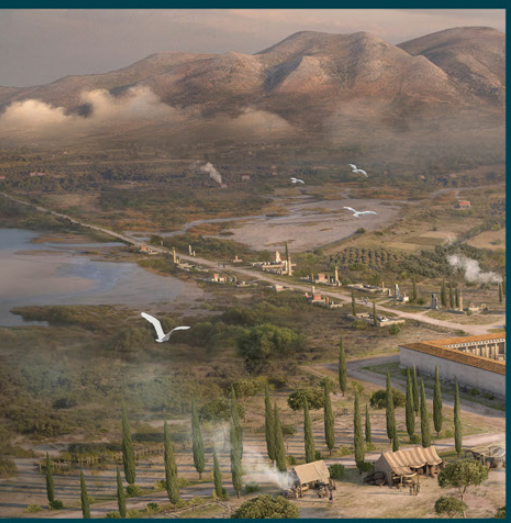


RECONSTRUCTING GREEK SACRED LANDSCAPES

DYNAMICS AND APPROACHES FROM THE FIELD



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In memory of
Dominique Jaillard

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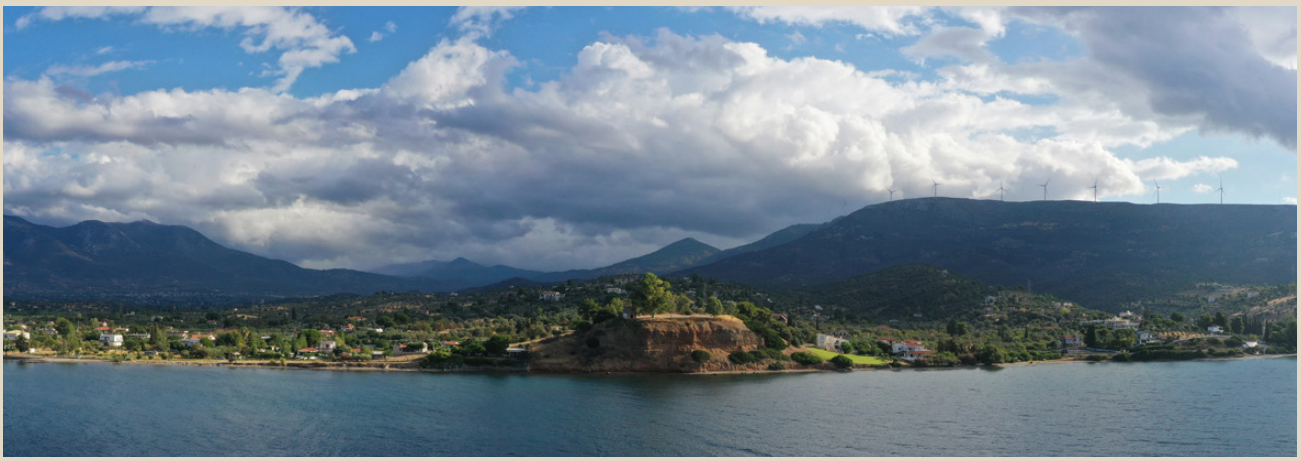

The coastal site of Amarynthos, with Paleoekklisies Hill in the foreground and the Servouni range behind (J. André, ESAG).

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.

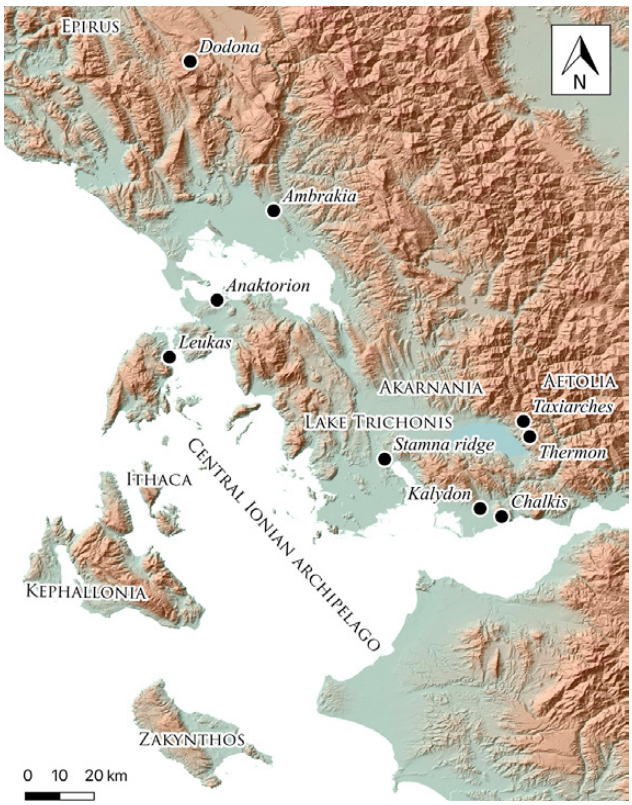

Fig. 1. Northwest Greece: principal sites mentioned in the text (Gian Piero Milani).

I thank Samuel Verdan and Thierry Theurillat for inviting me to contribute to this volume and for their advice and patience thereafter. Gunnel Ekroth, Florentia Fragkopoulou, and Tulsi Parikh offered invaluable comment on earlier drafts.

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.

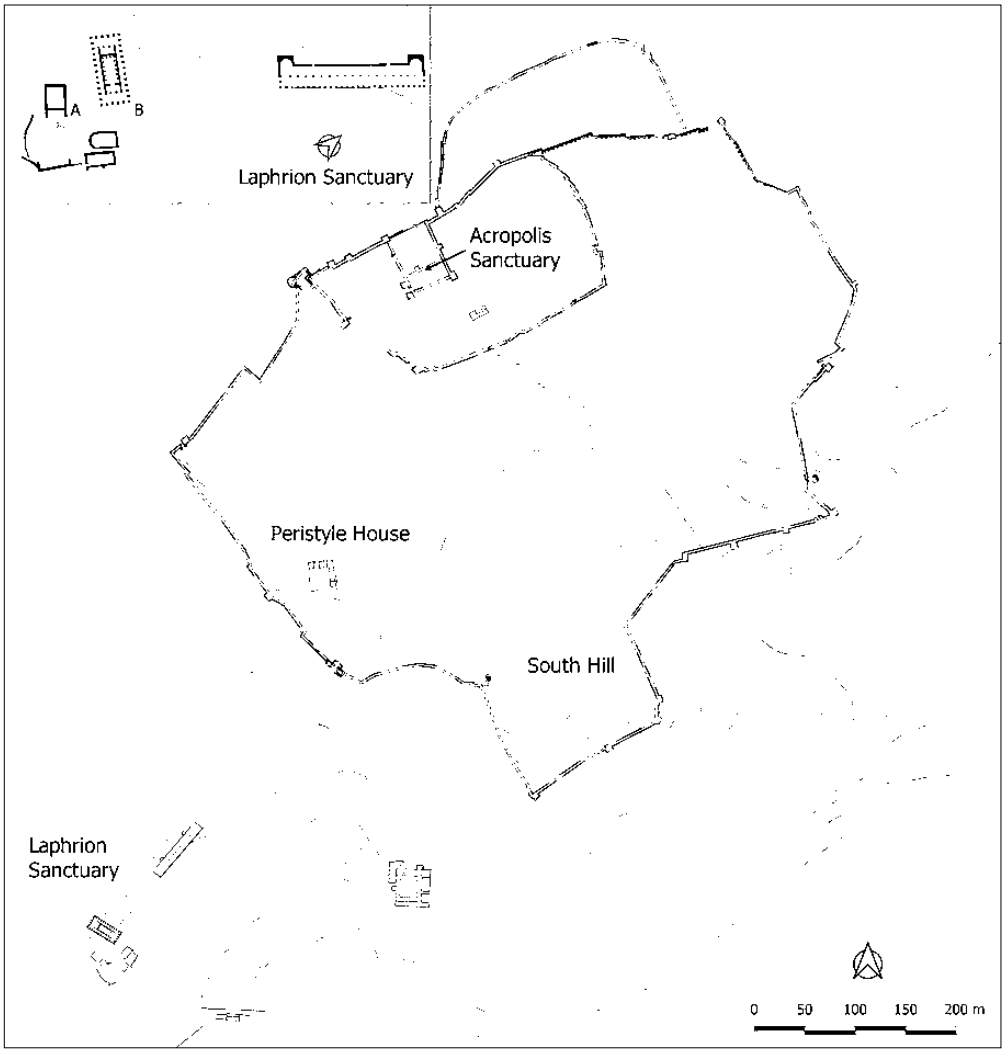

Fig. 3a. Topography of ancient Kalydon (Kalydon Archaeological Project, S. Handberg, N. Michaelides & S. Müth © Danish Institute at Athens).

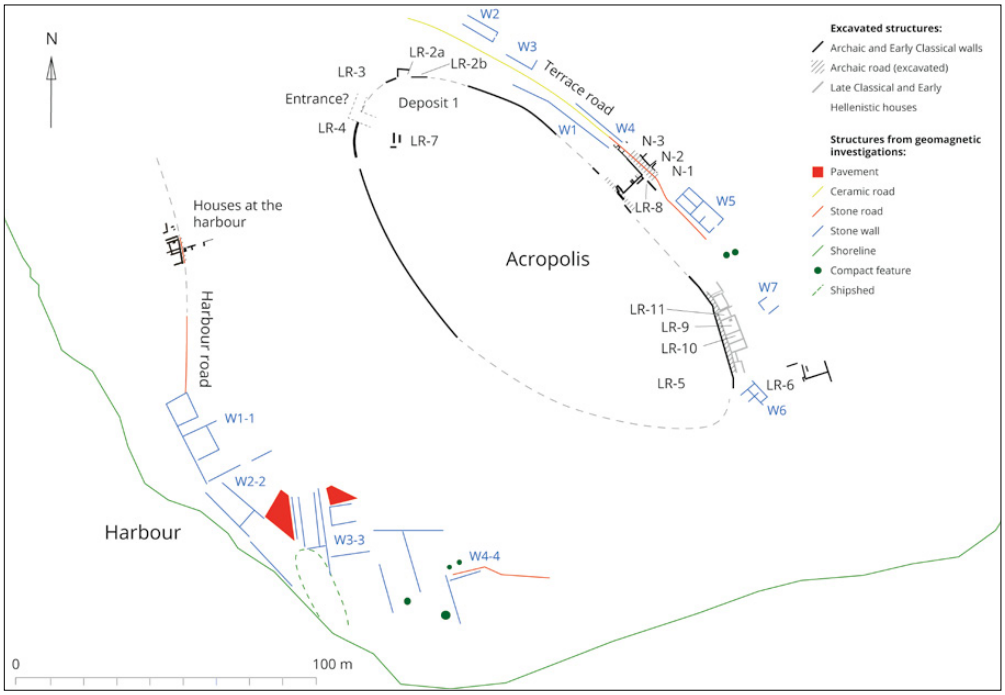

Fig. 3b. Chalkis: excavated remains of the Archaic houses at the harbour, at the terrace road and on various locations on the hill of Ag. Triada in relation to features revealed in geomagnetic studies made in 2014 (Sanne Houby-Nielsen © Danish Institute at Athens).

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.

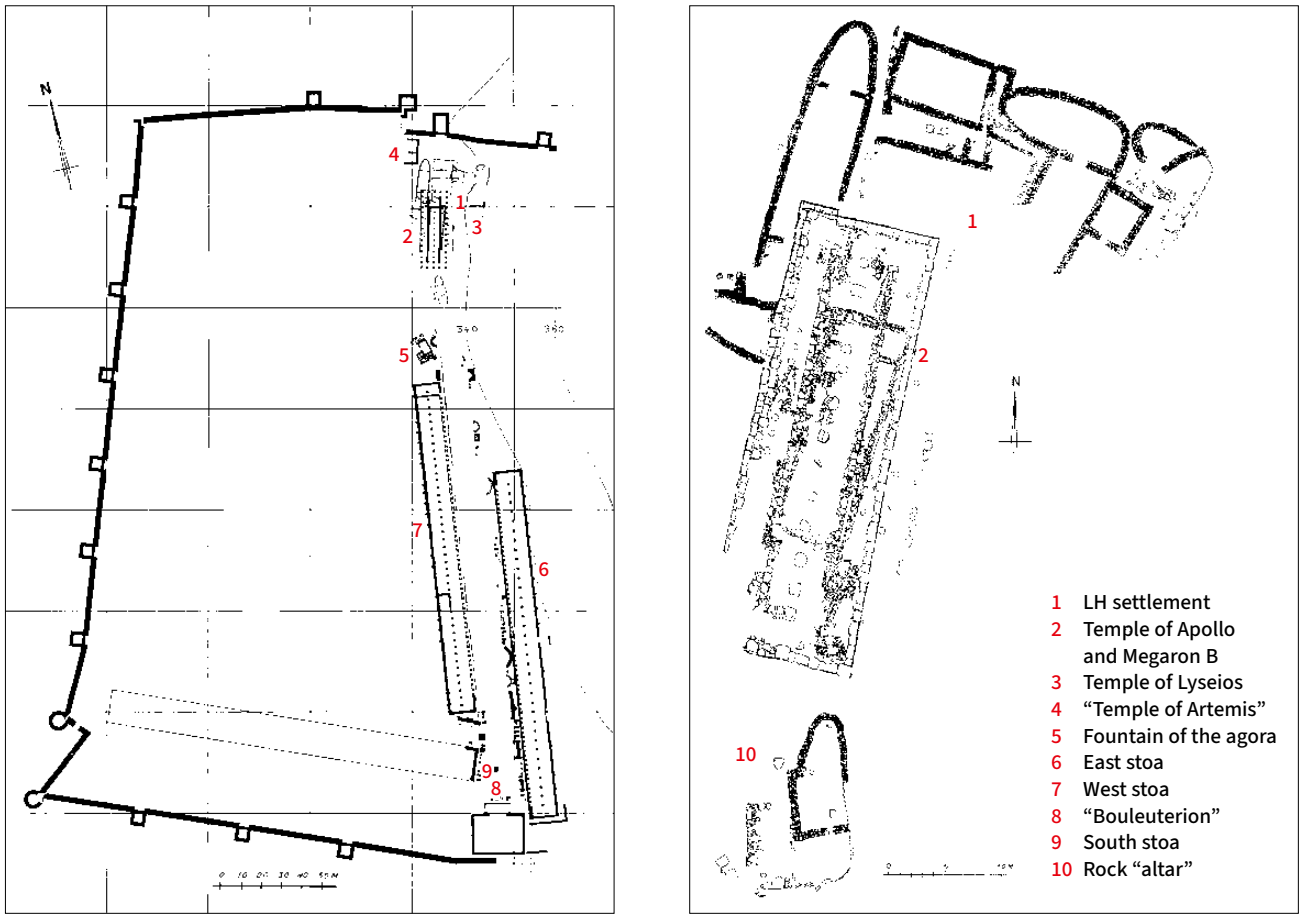

Fig. 4. The sanctuary of Apollo at Thermon, with detail of the temple area (© Archaeological Society of Athens).

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

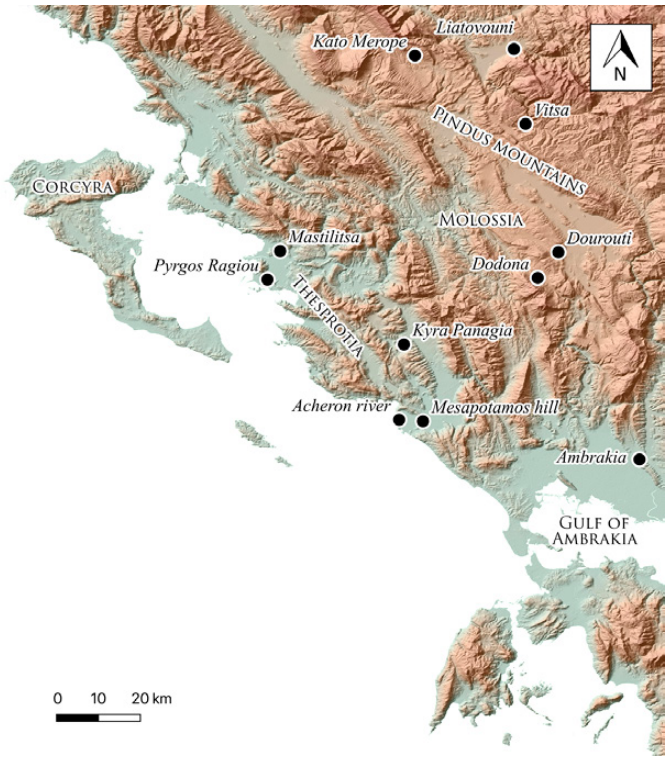

Fig. 5. Epirus: principal sites mentioned in the text (Gian Piero Milani).

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

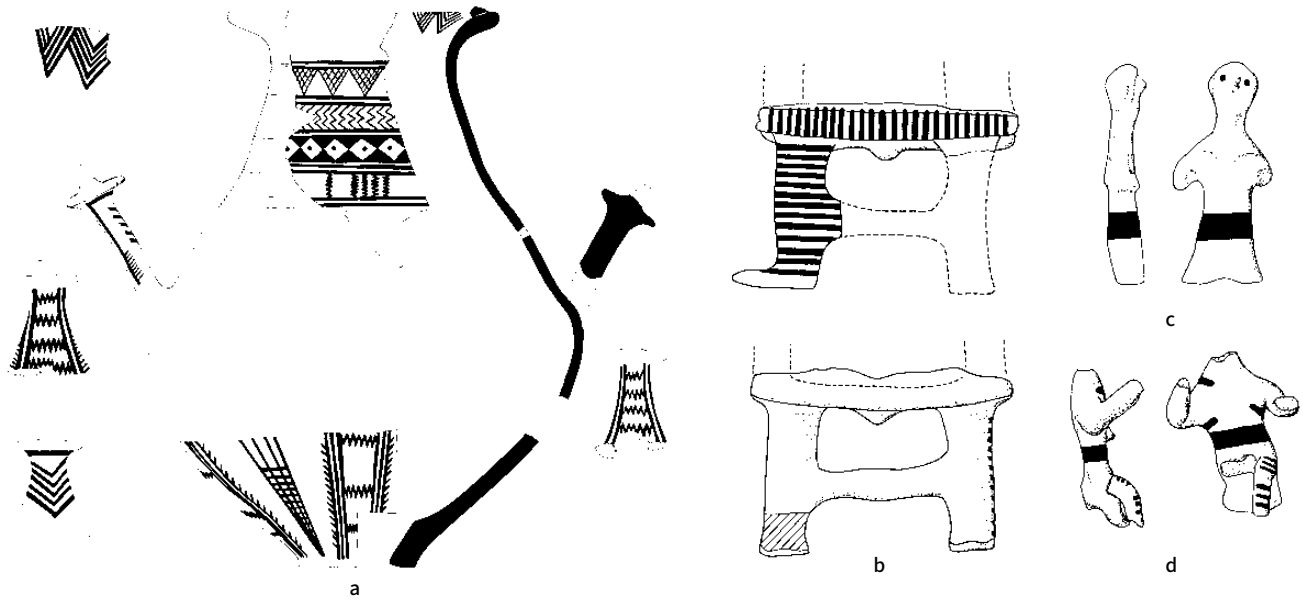

Fig. 6. Vitsa. Left: ritual vessel, Ioannina Museum a. 2033a. Right: terracotta figurines from the south cemetery deposit Ioannina Museum b. 2028; c. 2338; d. 2339 (Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, Diana Wardle, © Hellenic Ministry of Culture/HOCRED).

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.

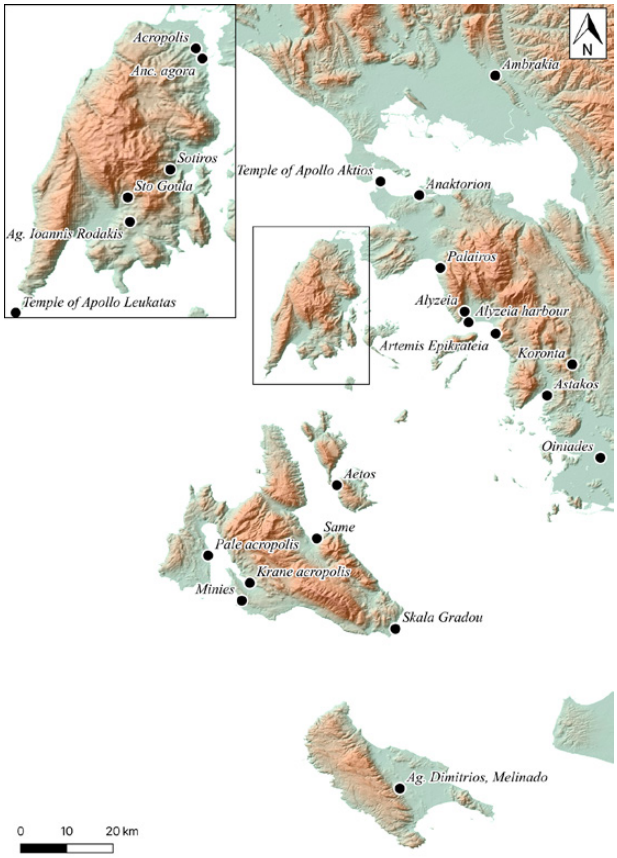

Fig. 7. The central Ionian archipelago: sanctuaries with extant temples or spolia from cult-related buildings (Gian Piero Milani).

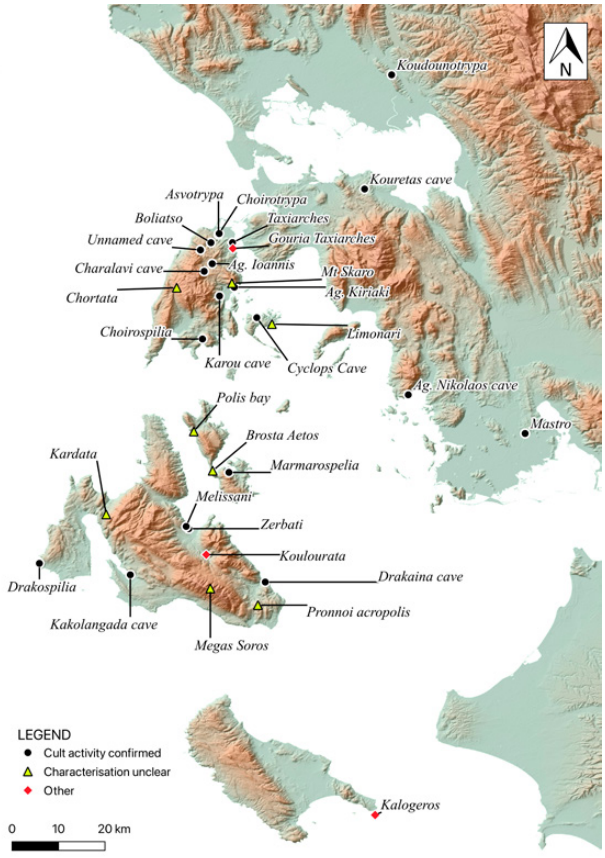

Fig. 8. The central Ionian archipelago: cave shrines and other open-air cult locations (Gian Piero Milani).

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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121 Brulé 2012, 17–18.
122 Boivin 2008, 129–138.
123 Melfi 2016.
124 Fantasia, 2011; 2017, 105–122.
125 Kindt 2023.
126 Morgan forthcoming b.
127 Graham 2021, 21–28.

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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.

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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