



PELLANA

ΠΕΛΛΑΝΑ

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pellana>

State: Laconia

Country: Greece

Population: 250

Coordinates 37°12'N 22°19'E

Time zone: EET/EEST (UTC+2/3)

Pellana (Greek: ἡ **Πέλλανα**, Paus. iii. 20. 2; τὰ Πέλλανα, Strabo viii. p. 386; Πελλήνη, Xen. *Hell.* vii. 5. 9; Polyb. iv. 81, xvi. 37; Plut. *Agis*, 8), was a city of Laconia, on the Eurotas river, and on the road from Sparta to Arcadia.

According to archaeologist Theodore Spyropoulos, Pellana was the Mycenaean capital of Laconia. It is also a former municipality in Laconia, Peloponnese, Greece. Since the 2011 local government reform it is part of the municipality Sparta, of which it is a municipal unit. The seat of the municipality was in Kastoreio.

Today, Pellana is a small village in North Laconia, and it is located 27 kilometers north of Sparta, 5 kilometers west of the main road that connects Sparta with Tripoli. It is built on a hill that is an extension of the Taygetos mountains in the Peloponnese. Pellana is built on an area of 11 square kilometers, and is 370 meters above the sea level. The population of the modern village of Pellana peaked in the 1940s, and ever since it has been reduced to in excess of 200 inhabitants.

The town suffered badly during the second world War, especially during the Greek Civil war where brother fought brother and father against sons and daughters. It is a town that has lost more than its fair share of people as a result of the disastrous civil war. Today however with a population of more than 200 members it is beginning to see a revival of its past. This revival is attributed to the new highway that has been constructed with EU funds and grants.

The town offers visitors the opportunity to visit the ancient tombs located some 400 meters from the main palace that allegedly contained King Menelaus (Master of the war cry and his lovely wife Helen of Troy). It is hoped that a small museum will be located on site to house the many artifacts and objects excavated from the ruins of the palace and the tombs. Artifacts and objects that can rival even that of Mycenae according to Theodore Spyropoulos. This museum however can only be constructed with the support of those living in the Diaspora, the local inhabitants and the Hellenic Republic. The town school which once housed hundreds of pupils post World war II (now vacant) is one possible location for a museum. Another is a new building be constructed near the tombs and close to the ancient palace

ruins. Access however is somewhat difficult and infrastructure and accommodation facilities need to be revised to accommodate the potential influx of visitors.

Pellana has seen many of its inhabitants leave the town during times of severe hardships beginning with oppression by Ottoman overlords, droughts, earthquakes, famine, unemployment and war. Although many return, few remain after being seduced by the quality of life found in the Diaspora and only the die-hard remain. Pellana can boast of men and women who have achieved high office and/or distinction in the fields of education, military, medical, academics, theologians, political, business and a host of other careers and employments throughout the ages. Many of them gaining recognition in the Diaspora. Suffice to say all of them are proud to point towards their origins and roots back to Pellana.

The arrival of the modern car has replaced the previous transport that of the horse, mule and donkey and now there are few of the animals to be seen within the confines of the town. Electricity, running water, telephone, internet and access to every day utilities and facilities are available in every household which has raised the standard of living and improved the health and well being of its inhabitants. The town has its own historical society administered traditionally by the women who periodically conduct events to celebrate its ancient past. The average age of its population is approximately 45 with many members reaching the age of 90 years plus. The clean air, access to health and well being specialists, a strict Mediterranean diet and exercise appears to be the main reasons for longevity.

While agriculture is the main produce of the town, it is the oil groves that provide an income for the many small landowners who till and manage the small fields that dot the town and its surroundings. Many if not all of the agricultural products is for domestic consumption and only occasionally would excess produce be sold in the local markets such as Kastori, Sparta and surrounding smaller villages. The olive oil is pressed by the two main olive producing factories located within the confines of Pellana. These two factories also support the surrounding villages and towns small land owners. Sheep, goats, emus, chickens, cattle, ducks, cows are also maintained and sold to the major towns throughout the year while at the same time providing dairy and meat products for domestic consumption.

A new highway from Tripoli to Sparta has been constructed and goes past Pellana. The highway is scheduled to be completed by October 2014. The highway follows the same ancient road from Pellana in ancient Mycenaean and Spartan periods following the banks of the Eurotas River. Numerous ancient ruins of small towns on the side of the highway were excavated, analysed, recorded, photographed and in many cases covered with a fine layer of stones to preserve the antiquities. As a result of these findings it is believed that Pellana was the hub throughout the pre-Hellenistic, Spartan and Roman periods. Today a new hub is being created on the highway adjacent to the town of Pellana and its ancient ruins to allow tourists and locals to visit the ancient monuments.

It is envisaged that this new hub will also allow the towns and villages that are located up in the Taygetus mountain range better access to Sparta through the town of Pellana. Others are speculating that the highway will repopulate these small towns by the original owners returning to their ancestral and patriarchal homes. It is also speculated that these young families will be able to live in their homes and use the new highway to work at the major towns of Sparta, Tripoli, Kalamatta, or even Athens and Nauplio which are now brought in closer. The nearest towns to Pellana are Pardali, Perivolia, Alevrou, Georgitis, Kastori (Kastania) Longanikos, Agios Konstandinos, Vergadeieka, Foundeika, Serveika and Agorgiani. Many of these towns were depopulated as a result of the post world war II mass

migration to the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany and Argentina.

Today the second, third and fourth generations maintain contact using current social media outlets. The use of social media and with the introduction of the internet to the inhabitants to Pellana is opening up opportunities and projects unheard of before. It is of interest to note how quickly the young generation in Pellana has taken to the internet and for many it is an open window to the world. Access to online media such as Facebook, Ancestry sites, Educational sites such as Wikipedia, Encyclopedia Britannica and communication programs such as Skype and VoIP are but the tip of the iceberg.

There are more than two possibilities about the origin of the name "Pellana". The name "Pellana" has its roots on the Greek word "pella" which can mean "stone" or a "rocky hill". Indeed, the main waterway in the village is at the base of a rocky hill. Pellana, linguistically, is a cognate of Pella, the capital of Macedonia but also of Pallene, a deme of Attica, Pelle of Ithaca, Pellene of Achaia, Palamedion, the acropolis of Nauplion, Pelion of Epirus, etc., all of them being "citadels on a cliff" or a hill, except for Pelion of Thessaly which is a mountain.^[5]

According to modern oral folk tradition is that it received its name by a woman named "Pellania." This woman was going to get some water; as she was getting water, she slipped and fell into the waterway. So, the village was named "Pellana", and the main waterway: "Pellania fountain." Pausanias also mentions the same story during his travels in Laconia.

It was said to have been the residence of Tyndareos, when he was expelled from Sparta, and was subsequently the frontier-fortress of Sparta on the Eurotas, as Sellasia was on the Oenus. Polybius describes it (iv. 81) as one of the cities of the Laconian, Tripolis, the other two being probably Carystus (or, alternatively, Aegys) and Belemina. It had ceased to be a town in the time of Pausanias, but he noticed there a temple of Asclepius, and two fountains, named Pellanis and Lanceia.

Below Pellana, was the Characoma (Greek: Χαράκωμα), a fortification or wall in the narrow part of the valley; and near the town was the ditch, which according to the law of Agis [*disambiguation needed*], was to separate the lots of the Spartans from those of the Perioeci. (Plut. l. c.)

Pausanias says that Pellana was 100 stadia from Belemina; but he does not specify its distance from Sparta, nor on which bank of the river it stood. It was probably on the left bank of the river at Mt. Burliá, which is distant 55 stadia from Sparta, and 100 from Mt. Khelmós, the site of Belemina. Mt. Burliá has two peaked summits, on each of which stands a chapel; and the bank of the river, which is only separated from the mountain by a narrow meadow, is supported for the length of 200 yards by a Hellenic wall.

Some copious sources issue from the foot of the rocks, and from a stream which joins the river at the southern end of the meadow, where the wall ends. There are still traces of an aqueduct, which appears to have carried the waters of these fountains to Sparta. The acropolis of Pellana may have occupied one of the summits of the mountain, but there are no traces of antiquity in either of the chapels. (Leake, *Morea*, vol. iii. p. 13, seq.; Boblaye, *Récherches*, &c. p. 76; Ross, *Reisen im Peloponnes*, p. 191; Curtius, *Peloponnesus*, vol. ii. p. 255.)

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