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Crossing the River: Observations on Routes and Bridges in Laconia from the Archaic to Byzantine Periods

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Source: *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 87 (1992), pp. 293-310

Published by: British School at Athens

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30103513>

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# CROSSING THE RIVER: OBSERVATIONS ON ROUTES AND BRIDGES IN LACONIA FROM THE ARCHAIC TO BYZANTINE PERIODS

THIS paper brings together the evidence for bridges in ancient and medieval Laconia. The immediate impetus for our discussion is our work on the publication of the BSA Laconia Survey.<sup>1</sup> Through the medium of the bridges, some issues concerning communications in Laconia over this long span of history are addressed. Questions are also posed about the bridges themselves: about the motives or events that prompted their construction (economic, military, religious, or cultural), about the means and organization of their construction (communal, by the state, or through individual or institutional patronage), and about the relationship between the bridges and the routes they served.

By way of introduction, the physical setting will first be summarized: the two main rivers under discussion (Evrotas and Kelephina) and the ancient route network. The evidence for bridges in different periods, their relationship to various routes, and the possible reasons for their construction will then be discussed. Full details of bridges and routes are then presented in the Appendix, together with the evidence for certain sites mentioned in ancient sources, reconsidered in the light of the Laconia Survey.

## INTRODUCTION

### *The rivers*

Sparta, and later Mistra, were unlike many important towns in Greece in not being on or near the coast. Land communications therefore played a vital role in their history; and the links to the north were among the most important. Two main river-valley routes served to connect the Spartan plain with places further north: the Alpheios–Kelephina route to the north-west, and the Kelephina–Sarandopotamos route network to the north-north-east.

<sup>1</sup> This paper springs from an initial idea by WGC. An earlier version was delivered in May 1991 at a conference on 'Land Routes in Greece from Prehistoric to Post-Byzantine Times' organized by the Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens. Responsibility for the whole is shared by the three authors, all of whom took part in revising and coordinating the text. The initial groundwork, however, was done separately, DGJS drafting the introduction and the section on antiquity, PA the Byzantine material, and WGC the geographical and archaeological information. The final text was prepared by DGJS, who thanks Jan Verstraete for assistance with word-processing at the BSA. The authors are grateful to Professor J. H. Crouwel and Dr D. R. Shipley for detailed and constructive comments on earlier drafts.

Thanks are due to the Archaeological Service of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Science, and to Dr Th. Spyropoulos (Ephor for Lakonia and Arkadia), for their permissions and assistance during the Laconia Survey. Mrs Kourinou and Mrs Rozaki, successive Epimeletriai in

the Lakonia Ephoreia, have been especially helpful. The Greek Army Geographical Service supplied us with the relevant sheets of the 1 : 5,000 and 1 : 50,000 map series, and with aerial photographs. FIG. 1 is the work of David Taylor. The authors wish to thank, severally or collectively, the following bodies for financial support given to the Laconia Survey or to their individual work: Managing Committee, British School at Athens; Society of Antiquaries, London; University of Amsterdam Faculty of Arts; Allard Pierson Foundation; Amsterdam University Society; Dutch Philological Research Fund; Dutch Organization for the Advance of Pure Research (ZWO); Craven Committee, University of Oxford; Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge; Governing Body, St Catharine's College, Cambridge; Research Board, University of Leicester; Research Fund Committee, British Academy.

Special abbreviation: *SAGT* = W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography*, i–vi (University of California Publications: Classical Studies, 1; 4; 22; 28; 31; 33; Berkeley, etc., 1965–89) and vii (Amsterdam, 1991).

Like most of Greece, the Evrotas furrow — the central valley of Laconia — and the Kelephina valley are scarred by winter torrents. Though they are dry through most of the year, they form a barrier to roads and tracks because of their steep sides, stony beds, and dense wild vegetation. The Evrotas (ancient Eurotas; Iri in medieval and later times) and Kelephina (ancient Oinous) are themselves exceptional in being perennial streams, fed ultimately from the limestone massifs of the Arkadian mountains and from those of Laconia (Parnon on the east, Taygetos on the west).

As they approach Sparta from the north, the courses of these two rivers are determined by narrow, steep-sided valleys to within some 4 km of the city; but thereafter they broaden out to form a system of branching, often shallow streams, meandering across gravelly beds 100–300 m wide. (In the nineteenth century the Kelephina also branched into two streams just above the confluence with the Evrotas.)<sup>2</sup> Recent alluviation along these stretches has been identified on the left bank of the Evrotas by the soil study that formed one of the projects of the Laconia Survey.<sup>3</sup> The marshy areas that gave one obelisk of Classical Sparta its name of Limnai extended alongside this stretch of the Evrotas, both north and south of the town. The course of the river in this area must have been unstable and erratic.<sup>4</sup>

The water-table has dropped considerably in the twentieth century because of pumping for irrigation, and the mouth of the Kelephina, where it joins the Evrotas, is now at times dry; but when Leake was fording it at the beginning of the last century, it was sufficiently deep and rapid to cause his pack animal to lose its footing.<sup>5</sup>

#### *The road network*

Maps of ancient or medieval Laconia in modern books rarely, if ever, include any indication of the road network that must have connected Sparta, and later Mistra, to the surrounding territory. Many often-used routes, of course, will have been little more than worn tracks across the landscape, while the most elaborate roads will have been marked by wheel-ruts (man-made?) or, at best, by stretches of rough cobbles, of which only occasional traces survive or are known today.<sup>6</sup>

It is important, then, to ask what the routes for land communications between Sparta (or Mistra) and the rest of Laconia have been at different dates. Modern Sparta (a town laid out in the 1830s, approximately on the site of ancient Sparta) is linked to different parts of Laconia by radial routes; for example, the main road north to Tripolis, a minor road via Longanikos to Megalopolis, the road west to Kalamata via the Langada gorge through Mt. Taygetos, and the highways running south-east (to Skoura and, ultimately, Monemvasia and Neapolis) and south (to Gytheion and the Mani). At first sight, limited provision is made for traffic crossing between one of these radial routes and another. Laconia, on a small-scale map, resembles the 'branching network' of the geographers (in which there is only one route between any two places, and all traffic passes through one or

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Leake, *Travels in the Morea* (London, 1830), i. 125; A. Jochmus, 'Commentaries', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 27 (1857), 1–53, map opp. p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Details to be published by J. Fiselier, 'Landscape history of the Laconia Survey area', in W. G. Cavanagh and J. H. Crowell (eds.), *The Laconia Survey* (forthcoming BSA supp. vol.).

<sup>4</sup> J. Bintliff, *Natural Environment and Human Settlement in*

*Prehistoric Greece*, i–ii (Oxford, 1977), 372–6 and map 3; Fiselier (n. 3).

<sup>5</sup> Leake (n. 2), i. 125–6.

<sup>6</sup> Note the evidence of revetments, paving-stones, and cuttings in N. G. L. Hammond, 'The main road from Boeotia to the Peloponnese through the northern Megarid', *BSA* 49 (1954), 103–22.

more nodes) rather than the 'circuit network' (in which there are loops).<sup>7</sup> However, when one looks more closely on larger-scale maps, one sees a relatively dense network of minor roads (both asphalt and dirt) joining the asphalt highways to one another. None the less, the major provision is for roads radiating from one centre; in a very real sense, all roads lead to Sparta.

How closely did the ancient network in Laconia resemble the modern pattern? To answer this, evidence must be sought for material investment in land communications on the part of the Classical Spartans and their Byzantine successors; and among the most telling evidence of investment will be the evidence of permanent bridges. We may assume that permanent bridges are a sign of the importance of a route. (Even today, it is the best-made motor roads that make most use of bridges; though there are so many, mainly across gullies and small valleys, and so well engineered, that the driver may be unaware of them.) If, assessing the roads on this basis, we see a strongly 'branched' network, with permanent bridges concentrated on certain routes or in certain areas, we shall be entitled to conclude that the picture given in the sources, of a Laconia strongly dominated by a single settlement, is to this extent valid. That would, of course, not mean that all roads led to Sparta; only that those that did so received more investment of resources. Obviously there will have been a much larger network of unmade tracks and hill paths, for the most part invisible to archaeology. The perioikic towns in the Archaic and Classical periods will have exchanged actively with one another, and will also have been integrated into the state economy that supported the Spartiates (approximately a centralized economy in terms of weapons, luxuries, and the agricultural produce of the helots). To carry out such local exchange between settlements, the Perioikoi may have used rough tracks and, in the case of coastal towns, inshore sea transport.

If the erection of a permanent bridge betokens the importance of a route, the particular nature of that importance is harder to generalize about. In the following pages various motives and occasions for the construction of bridges are considered, and it will not be assumed that 'importance' is always to be measured in purely practical terms, such as economic or military; there is also such a thing as symbolic importance.

## THE BRIDGES

### *Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods*<sup>8</sup>

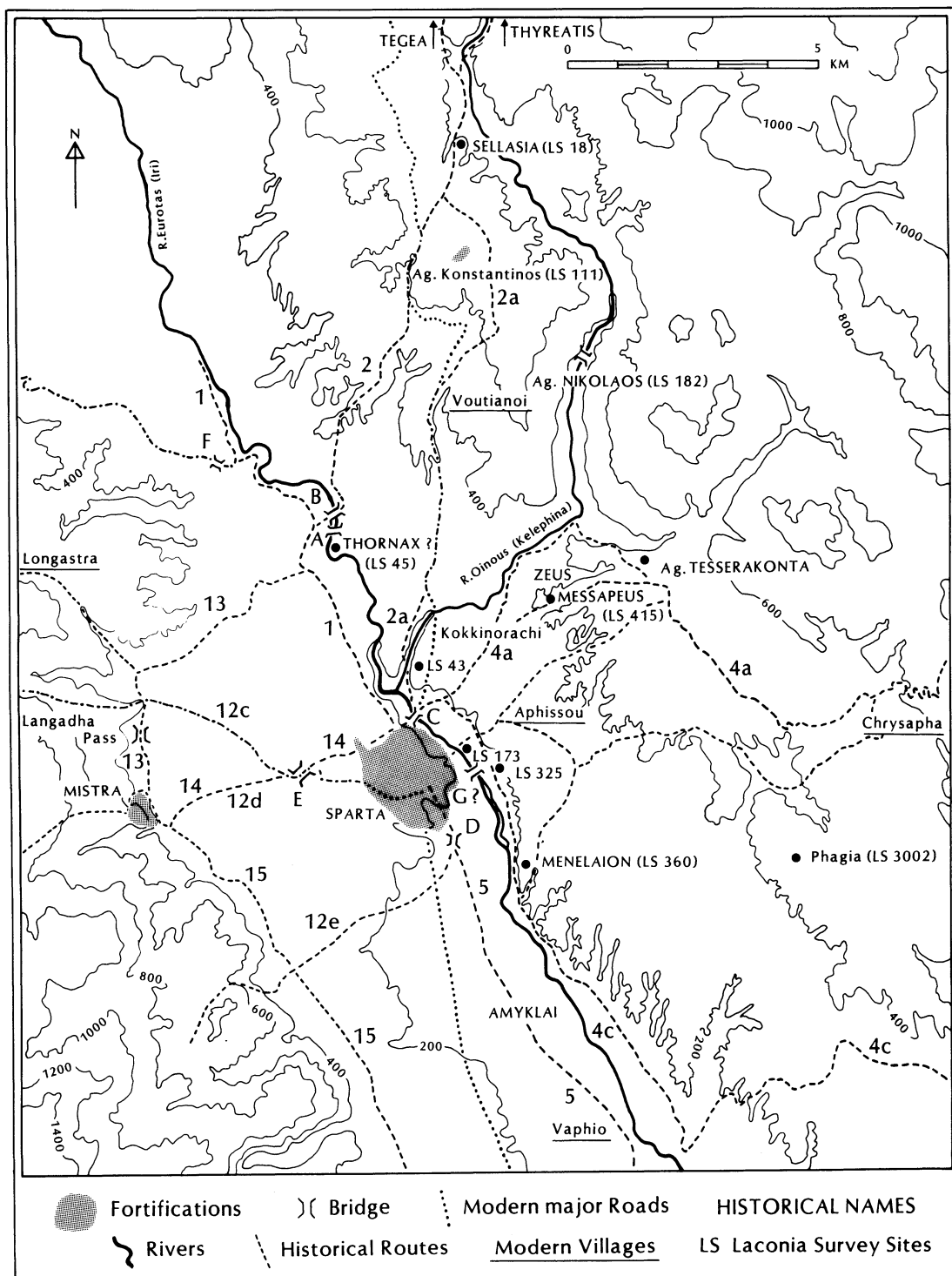
All but one or two of the bridges are close to Sparta. According to Xenophon there was a bridge (**G**) over the Eurotas (Appendix, §2; FIG. 1) on the south-east of the city, which the Theban army coming from Sellasia in 370 BC did not use as it was in the view of Spartans in the sanctuary of Athena Alea; instead they crossed the river opposite Amyklai.<sup>9</sup> We have no way of knowing whether it was of stone or of wood. This crossing-point is not far from the Menelaion, and some form of bridge certainly existed here at an early date, catering for ceremonial carriages taking maidens to festivals at the sanctuary of Menelaos and Helen.

Leake observed a bridge (**D**) that crossed the Trypitiotiko stream, a tributary running across the plain to join the right bank of the Evrotas; it has since vanished, perhaps under

<sup>7</sup> For simple descriptions of these two models see e.g. B. Goodall, *The Penguin Dictionary of Human Geography* (Harmondsworth, Middx, 1987), 47, 69, and articles cross-referred to there.

<sup>8</sup> In references to bridges and routes, capital letters denote bridges, arabic numbers routes. All are discussed in detail in the Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Xen. *Hell.* vi. 5. 27–30.



Principal bridges, routes, and sites mentioned in the text (D. Taylor).

the modern road. It will have served the road from Sellasia to Amyklai. Its masonry was very similar to that of the next bridge.

The still extant bridge at Xirokambi (**X**) should be considered here, although it is further away from Sparta than others, being situated about twenty kilometres south on the western edge of the plain. It spans the mouth of a steep side-valley running eastwards at the foot of Taygetos, and is most plausibly dated to the late Hellenistic or early Roman period. The purpose of this bridge has been debated in the past. Did it serve the main route from Sparta to Gytheion? A road from Sparta through Taygetos to Kardamyle on the Messenian Gulf (this is the solution favoured by Bölte)? Or nearby quarries? The most careful recent study concludes that it was built (possibly at the time of Sparta's revival after Actium) to serve the main road from Sparta to Gytheion, but also to facilitate the transportation and export of Lakonian marble from that port.<sup>10</sup> Some of the marble came from the quarries at Goranoi in eastern Taygetos, some 27 km south of Sparta — a strong bridge would be important when large blocks were being carted about.<sup>11</sup>

In the light of this interpretation of bridge **X**, bridge **D** — which was clearly more substantial than anything required for normal wheeled traffic — may have been intended, like **X**, to serve the needs of Sparta at a time when expensive public buildings were being erected, in the late Hellenistic period or early Principate. In the case of both bridges, additional factors to be considered include the desire of the Romans to strengthen, and to express, their control of the area, and the desire of the Spartans to capitalize upon, and to demonstrate, their success in dealing with Rome.

Once Sparta was properly walled (probably by Nabis, c.200 BC), both **D** and **G** will have served the south gate (the significance of this gate is discussed below). Only later, so far as we can tell, was there a permanent bridge at the north end of the town. A bridge (**A**) of apparently Roman date (LS H46) crosses the Evrotas some 4 km north of the city. Before the existence of Mistra, it is unlikely that the route from Sparta to Tegea crossed the Evrotas here; rather, it will have used fords lower down, or Xenophon's bridge on the south-east of the city.

The location of **A** may therefore reflect, rather, the needs of a nearby subsidiary community of Sparta, that at Geladari (site LS H45), situated in fields adjoining the left bank of the Evrotas. This site may tentatively be identified with the settlement of Thornax, mentioned in ancient authors (see Appendix, §4).<sup>12</sup> At first sight the location of the bridge, at the extreme northern end of the site, seems inconvenient, requiring a vehicle travelling out of Sparta to go beyond Geladari before crossing the river and turning back south. A shorter route, however, would have needed a river crossing lower down, where the Evrotas is wide and the land on either side was probably marshy. In fact, bridge **A** stands at the first point where the river channel is deep and narrow enough to be practicably bridged. In this context we should bear in mind Pritchett's observation that ancient Greek roads often made use of dry river-beds.<sup>13</sup> The place where **A** stands is

<sup>10</sup> H.-J. Höper, 'Die Brücke von Xerokambion (Lakonien)', *Boreas*, 4 (1981), 97–105.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. F. Bölte, 'Sparta: Geographie', *RE* (2nd ser.) iii (1929), cols. 1294–373, at 1333 and 1347 (referring to P. Ch. Doukas, 'Η Σπάρτη διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων' (New York, 1922), 18; 57): large quarry with white marble, 0.5 hrs w of Goranoi. See most recently O. Palagia, 'Seven pilasters of Herakles from Sparta', in S. Walker and A. Cameron (eds),

*The Greek Renaissance in the Roman Empire: Papers from the 10th British Museum Classical Colloquium* (BICS supp. 55; London, 1989), 122–9, at p. 123; pl. 47, fig. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Bridge **J**, repaired by Julius Paulinus in the 3rd cent. AD, possibly erected in Augustan times, should be identified either with **A** or with a successor of **G**.

<sup>13</sup> *SAGT*, iii. 153–7.

roughly the point at which the Evrotas (for a traveller making upstream) ceases to be fordable in the rainy season, or usable as a route in the dry season; from a point not far upstream from here it is usually, if not always, a perennial stream between high banks.

What was the motive for bridge **A**? It is hard to imagine that large numbers of heavy vehicles continually travelled between Thornax and Sparta (or even down from Tegea through the hills of northern Laconia, along the later route to Mistra served by **B**, the eighteenth-century Kopanos bridge).<sup>14</sup> The existence of **A** could in fact reflect the social status of some of the inhabitants of Thornax, a site where there were probably élite dwellings and certainly some monumental buildings.

An alternative — or additional — explanation is available, however. Just upstream from **A** the Evrotas runs through a narrow limestone gorge. Here, on the left bank, is a large quarry (LS site E49), as well as several small quarries (LS sites E90, D50, D84) and possible quarries (E48, D83). These appear to have been exploited in the Hellenistic and Roman periods for buildings at Sparta. The need to get blocks of stone across the river would be a sufficient explanation of the building of a bridge in itself, which can only have been reinforced by the claims of a prosperous and sizeable settlement site. Geladari (Thornax?) did not need a stone bridge; but the construction of a bridge on its doorstep will have raised its status.

It should be added that bridge **J**, known from an inscription to have been repaired by Julius Paulinus in the third century AD, and perhaps originally built by the dynast Eurykles in the Augustan period, has not been identified with certainty. It could be our **A**, or a successor to **G**.

To sum up. There was not necessarily any permanent bridge over the Evrotas at the site of the present road bridge, near the north-eastern extremity of the modern town. Here the river probably ran through marshy ground in a wide, gravelly bed. At times the current here was strong; but the river was too wide to bridge. Before bridge **A** was built, there was probably only one Evrotas bridge in the vicinity of Sparta, our **G** (just as, indeed, there is only one now). However, once the city was walled it probably had a north gate, referred to as the gate leading to Pherai (modern Kalamata) in Livy's account of Philopoimen's invasion. There was probably also a west gate. The gate Livy describes as leading to Barnosthenes is probably the south gate (leading to bridge **G** over the Evrotas, and serving all routes north).

### *Byzantine period*

An unusual monastic foundation charter from Sparta, dated AD 1027, relates to a religious establishment and a bridge (**C**) on the banks of the Evrotas, just beyond the walls of the city of Sparta.<sup>15</sup> The document begins with a reference to the construction of the bridge, which a monk, Nikodemos, has paid for out of his personal wealth. It continues by describing the construction of a *katholikon* dedicated to the Soter (Saviour), and of a monastery on the left-hand side of the bridge.<sup>16</sup> The charter was engraved onto one of the blocks forming the bridge, as a public declaration of its origins and ownership. Fourmont

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the use of wheeled vehicles in antiquity, see *SAGT* iii. 181–96. On wheel-ruts as evidence for ancient roads, see *ibid.* 167–81; I. Pikoulas, ‘H Tabula Peutingeriana καὶ ἡ χειρσόνησος τοῦ Μαλέα’, *Horos*, 2 (1984), 175–88; *id.*, ‘Συμβολὴ στὴν τοπογραφία τῆς Σκιριτίδος’, *Horos*, 5 (1987), 121–48.

<sup>15</sup> *CIG* 8704.

<sup>16</sup> The complete text can be found in D. Feissel and A. Philippidis-Braat, ‘Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance, III: inscriptions du Péloponnèse’, *Travaux et mémoires*, 9 (1985), 267–395, at pp. 301–2.

copied the inscription in 1730, and the remains of the bridge were identified and planned by the French Expedition a hundred years later.<sup>17</sup>

First, some general points. Throughout the Byzantine period the construction and maintenance of bridges was the responsibility of central government; there is legislation to this effect, dating from the time of Justinian.<sup>18</sup> Some documents, mostly from the Middle and Late Byzantine periods, reveal interested parties staking their claims to the revenue from particular bridges;<sup>19</sup> the source of the revenue, nowhere explicitly stated, can only be understood as a toll paid by anyone who wished to cross the bridge. A request to be exempted from handing these revenues over to the authorities indicates that they were normally payable to the state, but that in certain circumstances they could be retained by individuals; one occasion on which this would obviously arise was when a bridge was constructed from private funds. Foundation inscriptions on bridges thus bear a significance beyond the mere proclamation of the munificence of the founder. Three such inscriptions, from other places besides Sparta, reveal that the founders were a bishop and a high-ranking military official;<sup>20</sup> and there is evidence from other parts of the empire that the owners of private estates with rivers running through them can collect revenue from bridges on their lands, though whether the state or the individual initiated the building of the bridges is not clear.

Our inscription is unique, however, in going beyond the foundation of the bridge; it lays down rules for the governing of the monastery that controls the bridge.<sup>21</sup> A striking aspect of the Soter foundation is the importance to the founder, Nikodemos, of maintaining the independence of his establishment. This is secured both internally and externally: no *hegoumenos* (abbot) may be appointed who is not from within the ranks of the monks in the monastery, and the bishop of Sparta may not even set foot in the church (μή . . . ἐπεξουσιάζην ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ μήτε βῆμα ποδός, lines 19–22). The *krites* (representing the civil administration) and the *strategos* (for the military) are invoked, with the emperor's authority, to protect the foundation from the bishop (the ecclesiastical power). The implications of this are manifold; but for the present purpose our concern is with the significance of the bridge for the monastic foundation. It is striking that its construction is placed first in the inscription. Its importance is further emphasized by listing it with the monks (καὶ τὸ γ(ε)φ(ύ)ρην καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, 31–2) as the principal care (cf. ἐπιμελῆται, 30) of the *hegoumenos*; finally, rules are drawn up to ensure the continued independence of the bridge. All these stipulations were then publicly promulgated by the inscription being incorporated into the fabric of the bridge itself, further emphasizing its importance. The

<sup>17</sup> A. Blouet, with A. Ravosić, A. Poirot, F. Trézel, and F. de Gournay, *Expédition scientifique de Morée ordonnée par le gouvernement français* (Paris, 3 vols., 1831–8), ii. 64–6, pl. 46 z; pl. 49 vi–vii (cf. pl. 45).

<sup>18</sup> A diachronic survey of bridges in the Byzantine world and beyond can be found in G. Millet, 'Église et pont à Byzance', *Izstantina-metabyzantina*, 1(2) (1949), 103–11. For the Justinianic legislation see C. E. Zachariae a Lingenthal, *Jus Graeco-romanorum*, ii. 377; I. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graeco-romanum* (Athens, 1931).

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. G. Rouillard and P. Collomp (eds), *Actes du Athos: Actes de Lavra*, i (Paris, 1937), nos. 9. 26; 37. 100; and comments by A. Andréadès, 'Deux livres récents sur les finances byzantines', *BZ* 28 (1928), 287–323, at p. 311.

<sup>20</sup> In AD 254 Ephrem built two bridges and inscribed the fact on each of them; see *BCH* 26 (1902), 166. In AD 579 Bp Paul of Ankara built a bridge and recorded the deed in an inscription; see *BCH* 7 (1883), 22, no. 11. It was usually the duty of the state to build bridges; see *Tactical Constitution* (*Patrologia Graeca*, ed. Migne, cvii, col. 1032), where a general states that men serving under him should be subject only to τοὺς δημοσίους φόρους (i.e. regular taxes), and not to 'such as those attached to the building of castles, roads, bridges, and boats'.

<sup>21</sup> Monastic *typika* (foundation charters stipulating the organization of a monastery and the rules to be followed in it, often in minute detail) are relatively common, and many have survived. Our inscription can form only a section of the complete foundation charter.

welfare of the brothers and the maintenance of the bridge, in our view, should be seen as closely linked, the former depending upon the latter.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the revenue from the bridge was probably the main, and possibly the only, source of income for the monastery, so that only the continued possession of it would ensure the survival of the religious foundation. It follows, therefore, that the founder expected that a regular income could be relied on. If so, where did the demand for access from one bank to the other come from? And if such a demand existed, why was there no bridge at this crossing before this time?

Two different sources may provide an answer to these questions. Firstly, there is the *Vita* of St Nikon, the patron saint of Sparta, who was active in the second half of the tenth century.<sup>22</sup> He travelled extensively throughout the Peloponnese, and his *Life* mentions many villages and towns, if only to say that he passed through. If we concentrate on his journeys within a network centred fairly closely on Sparta, it is clear that the peripatetic saint travelled often to Amyklai, frequently to Megalopolis (along the right bank of the Evrotas and then the Alpheios valley), and on other occasions to Parori and Slavochori. All these places lie west of the river. Nikon died in AD 998, a generation before Nikodemos built bridge C in 1027. There must be a connection between the absence of references to villages on the east side of the Evrotas, even close to the city of Sparta, and the absence of any known bridge at that time. It would be rash to claim that the east side was a wilderness and uninhabited; but seasonal exploitation of the area is a possibility, perhaps relying on fords such as the present-day one just below the ancient sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, which is usable throughout the year except at the time of the spring flood.

The second source is the evidence emerging from the Laconia Survey. Only three sites are attested within the survey area that have tenth-century material (LS 247, 284, and 490). A significant number of new settlements came into being in the eleventh century, though perhaps not until its last decades. Would it be too rash to claim that the existence of a permanent bridge was linked with, and even promoted, the foundation of new settlements in an area previously difficult of access?

## CONCLUSIONS

### *A multiplicity of motives*

Clearly, a major factor to be considered when discussing the reasons for the erection of bridges around ancient Sparta is the strategic and political interests of the Spartan state. Broadly speaking, we can see three successive phases in Spartan history, according to the main direction of their strategic interest at the time.

- (i) During the long period when Sparta occupied Messenia, the chief policy concerns were access to Messenia and the security of the northern and north-eastern frontiers.
- (ii) Following the loss of Messenia (from 370 BC), Laconia was encircled by hostile fortresses, and the real concern, besides security to west and north, was to keep hold of the perioikic territories; those in the north-west and on the east coast were particularly under threat from outside powers.
- (iii) After 195 BC, and particularly from 148, the perioikic territories had gone, though control of the Belminatis in the north-west was usually maintained.

<sup>22</sup> O. Lampsides, 'Ο ἐκ Πόντου Ὅσιος Νίκων ὁ μετανοεῖτε (ἹΑρχεῖον Πόντου, supp. 13; Athens, 1982).

In period (i) there may have been only one permanent bridge across the Evrotas, serving all routes north and north-east: bridge **G**, on the south-east side of the city. Given the expense and labour involved in bridge-building, a bridge here was an economical compromise; vehicles approaching Sparta from the north would simply have to make a small extra journey to get across the Evrotas. Like other armies, the Spartan army will regularly have employed baggage trains comprising wagons and pack animals.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless it is hard to imagine that the Spartans would have built permanent bridges purely for military reasons; after all, a strong wooden bridge would serve perfectly well for ox-carts.

In fact, it is possible that the location of **G** was originally determined, not by military or economic considerations, but by the religious and ceremonial significance of the Menelaion, the central sanctuary of Spartan cult. We have already mentioned the ceremonial carriages that took part in Helen's festival. No doubt there was a bridge here from a very early date, though probably initially of wood. (One may recall the stone bridge at Brauron in Attica, which can serve no other purpose than to carry processions into the sanctuary of Artemis.)<sup>24</sup>

Once a bridge existed, of course, any wheeled traffic that there was would make regular use of it to obviate the need to ford the Evrotas. The erection of a permanent bridge (assuming that Xenophon is referring to a permanent structure, as seems likely) may reflect the importance of access to Messenia. One may also think of the Perioikoi and their manufacture of weapons for the Spartan state. However, weapons could be carried on donkeys or mules, as could helot produce from Messenia, which in any case would make its way down the right bank of the Evrotas, needing no major river crossing.<sup>25</sup>

Transport between Sparta and Gytheion, its main port, was always important, and there may always have been a bridge across the Trypiotiko stream. It is tempting, and not entirely flippant, to ask how giant bronze artefacts like the Vix Krater (made in a Laconian workshop in the sixth century BC and transported to northern Burgundy for a Gaulish chieftain)<sup>26</sup> would have been carried over rough terrain. We must suppose that there were many small, temporary bridges over gullies along the main roads of Laconia, particularly that to Gytheion.<sup>27</sup>

In period (ii) the Belmina route remained politically vital. Control of the fort at Belmina offered protection against a hostile Megalopolis less than two days' march away along the easy Evrotas–Alpheios route; hence the repeated attempts by Sparta to seize Belmina in the Hellenistic period, and the later appeals to Rome about it. However, there is no new bridge-building that might correspond to persistent military traffic; for while Xenophon's bridge may have continued in existence, no new bridges at all can be assigned definitely to this period. The expense of building bridges was perhaps beyond the means of an under-strength city. The citizen population was small, and the élite had no particular reason to endow their city with monuments, functional or otherwise.

In period (iii), while Sparta now had no military need for bridges, Sparta's economic

<sup>23</sup> See W. K. Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices*, i (University of California: Classical Studies, 7; 1971; = *The Greek State at War*, i), ch. 2, e.g. pp. 44–5; *SAGT* iii. 153–8, etc. For helots as baggage animals cf. Thuc. iv. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *PECS* 164 (dated to 5th cent. BC).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *SAGT* iii. 157–8: 'commercial traffic over mountain barriers between cities was often restricted to what could be carried by animals'; and similar remarks elsewhere in *SAGT*.

<sup>26</sup> *LSAG*<sup>2</sup> 202, no. 66; cf. pl. 39 and p. 446.

<sup>27</sup> We here differ from P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (London, 1989), 140, in regarding the Sparta–Gytheion highway marked on the Peutinger Table as the main road running from the s gate of Sparta to Amyklai and beyond, not (as they and Bölte thought) a road running sw from a city gate and along the w side of the plain via Xirokambi. See discussion of Xirokambi, above.

links with Gytheion became more crucial to the city (and probably greater in quantitative significance).<sup>28</sup> The island of Kythera, an important possession, gave a further reason for the Spartans to want good communications with southern Laconia. Sparta was now a politically powerless city in the Roman empire, but culturally important and the object of Roman patronage, particularly under the Principate. The trend towards the beautification of the city through individual euergetism and the patronage of powerful Romans may account for the erection of up to three stone bridges<sup>29</sup> in the Sparta area (**D**, **X**, and **A**), all of which may be linked to quarries and the transportation of architectural blocks. It seems most likely that these bridges were paid for by rich individuals, or collectively by the ruling group in Sparta (one bridge attested in epigraphic evidence has hypothetically been linked to the most powerful Spartan citizen of the Augustan period, C. Julius Eurykles). Bridges may well reflect the desire of individuals for prestige; giving honours the giver. Euergetism, in turn, may be seen as part of a process of urbanization that affected Sparta particularly strongly in this period.

### *City, territory, empire*

How do the known bridges fit into Sparta's, or Mistra's, long-distance interests? As far as major routes are concerned, during the Archaic and Classical periods Sparta's overseas interests would be served mainly through Gytheion. We are thinking of Sparta's western links with southern Messenia, and with Taras and southern Italy; and, to the south, with Kythera, Crete, and ultimately Cyrene. The eastern Aegean and Anatolia could also be reached from Gytheion (Sparta's links with Samos are relevant here). Although sailing there from Gytheion involved sailing round the dangerous Cape Malea, it was probably not economical to use the east coast ports such as Epidaurus Limera or Prasiai, in view of the long overland haul. Gytheion is the likeliest staging-post for all Sparta's overseas contacts. Thus it is understandable that crossing the river — crossing to the east bank of the Evrotas — was not so major a factor in Spartan economic life as to provoke extensive bridge-building.

Later, with the increasing power of Rome, and after Sparta's incorporation into the Roman Empire, access to the western seaways would continue to dominate Sparta's interests. The road to Pherai (Kalamata) was evidently important as a route to the western sea; and even the little harbour of Kardamyle could bulk large in Sparta's concerns. Increasing prosperity for some Spartans, together with Sparta's ideological value to the Romans, may have provoked the most marked outbreak of 'gephyrism' (to reapply a term from another context)<sup>30</sup> that can yet be identified in Sparta's entire history.

It is not clear whether the transfer of the capital to Constantinople immediately affected Sparta's network of communications. Certainly, by the ninth century Monemvasia was one gateway to Laconia.<sup>31</sup> By the fourteenth century the major entrances to Mistra were

<sup>28</sup> Cartledge and Spawforth (n. 27), 139–40.

<sup>29</sup> U. Kahrstedt, *Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Griechenlands in der Kaiserzeit* (Bern, 1954), 193, posits as many as four bridges serving Sparta in the Roman period: two over the Magoula, Paulinus' bridge, and the old bridge to Therapne, which he believes was still in operation.

<sup>30</sup> But a religious one: we refer to the Eleusinian Mysteries and the γεφυρισμός (ritual insulting) of famous persons at the Ilissos bridge in Attica (Hsch. s.v. γεφυρίς, γεφυρισταί; cf. Plut. *Sull.* 6; 13; Strab. ix. 400). G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, NJ, 1962 [dated 1961]), 256; 280.

<sup>31</sup> Monemvasia was in fact the only gateway to Laconia in the 9th cent. The central and W. Peloponnese were firmly held by Slavs; rehellenization of Laconia, both by military and by other means, was centred on Monemvasia, Methone, and Korone, and did not reach Sparta until the end of the 9th cent.; see G. Huxley, *Monemvasia and the Slavs* (Athens, 1988), 13–14; A. M. Woodward, 'Sparta: the theatre', *BSA* 26 (1923–5), 119–58, at pp. 156–7. But St Nikon, a century later, travels with seeming ease to Argos, Nafplion, Megalopolis, and Corinth, whereas he never goes to Monemvasia.

known as the Nafplia Gate and the Monemvasia Gate, indicating again that east coast ports were by now the vital ones.<sup>32</sup> It is not surprising that a new Evrotas crossing was found; the most direct route to both these places now passed over Nikodemos' bridge (C).

Bridges, therefore, do centre upon Sparta in both the ancient and the medieval periods; but there are differences. In the earlier periods no evidence can be found of permanent stone bridges outside the immediate area of Sparta, though the evidence of wheel-ruts elsewhere in the Laconian countryside<sup>33</sup> suggests that there was public investment of resources in wagon-roads. Much of the ancient traffic will have followed tracks and river beds, and will not have used wheeled vehicles. The earliest bridge known in this area (G; see Appendix, §1) was probably erected for ceremonial and cultic reasons, and was probably only a light wooden structure. Stone bridge constructions, at a later date, can be linked to ostentatious expenditure by the state or individuals. Simple economic or political explanations are, by themselves, insufficient to account for them.

In terms of the agricultural economy, strong stone bridges become important when the bulking of produce eventually makes the transport of commodities by heavy, ox-drawn vehicles cost-effective. Sparta had its own granary by the Antonine period, and there are hints that in the Roman period the market was large enough to be manipulated by hoarding. In ancient society, part of the point of euergetism seems to have been that its fruits could be enjoyed by all without payment; we have no evidence of road tolls at Sparta at this time. The Byzantine picture appears to be different; but we can only speculate about the source of the tolls. It is hard to know if a network of carriage roads supported passenger transport at this time. The roads either side of Nikodemos' bridge (C), observed by the French Expedition and by Dickins, could postdate the bridge. Markets, and the calendar of *panigyria*, must have supported extensive, if intermittent, traffic. Evidence for transhumance is, at best, ambiguous; but Nikodemos' bridge could also have been vital for flocks needing to cross the river when its waters were swollen.

In both ancient and medieval Laconia the central settlement was predominant, though the network of communications, and the bridges within it, hint at a greater degree of complexity.

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<sup>32</sup> M. Chatzidakis, *Mystras: The Medieval City and the Castle* (Athens, 1885), 13.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Bölte (n. 11); *SAGT* iii. 167–81, esp. 169–70, 178–80; iv. 3.

## APPENDIX: THE EVIDENCE IN DETAIL

## 1. BRIDGES WITH KNOWN LOCATIONS

This includes all bridges of which remains are extant today or are reported by earlier explorers.

**A. 'Roman' bridge below the Kopanos bridge (LS H46)**

This was first reported by Loring,<sup>34</sup> who thought it might be either Roman or medieval. The site has been registered by the Laconia Survey as LS H46. It is a stone and concrete structure with some brick or tile worked in; the surface has been smoothed by trowel. There was originally a central span of perhaps 10 m, with smaller side arches on the left (having a 2 m span), and probably on the right bank of the Evrotas; large pieces of masonry from the bridge lie in the river bed.

A major Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman site (Geladari, LS H45) lies within the river bend at this point. We suggest below (§4) that it is to be identified with the sanctuary of Apollo at Thornax.

**B. Kopanos bridge (LS H89)**

This consisted of a main span of just under 20 m. The heavy piers on either bank are pierced by smaller arches, and further lightened by small arches higher up. The original height is not preserved, but travellers have commented on its tall rise, confirmed by contemporary drawings.<sup>35</sup> The maximum width of the bridge, including parapets, is just under 3 m, wide enough for pack animals. Its construction is of stone and concrete; what appear to be reused ancient blocks were also observed; these may have derived from the ancient quarry immediately beside the bridge. Loring observed an inscription dating the bridge to 1730.<sup>36</sup>

**C. Nikodemos' bridge**

An inscription found by Fourmont at Sparta 'prope pontem'<sup>37</sup> records the construction of a monastery and bridge by the monk Nikodemos. Nikodemos' bridge was drawn for the French expedition of the 1830s.<sup>38</sup> Although some have recognized Julius Paulinus' bridge in this 'ancient' bridge (as it is frequently marked on maps), Wace's archaeological observation that the style of the masonry is Byzantine and not Roman would rule that conclusion out. Wace describes its construction: 'a core of rubble masonry . . . faced with squared blocks of limestone and marble laid with mortar and tiles.'<sup>39</sup> Dickins summarizes its dimensions from the evidence of the plan published by the French expedition:

There were two side piers measuring 11.50 m by 3.75 m, and two side arches measuring 13.78 m in span. Between the two arches is a span of 29 m. Whether this was one large buttress against the stream, whose strength here is very great in flood-time, or two piers and a central arch, is not certain, but the latter is certainly more probable.<sup>40</sup>

Traces of a road on the left bank proceeding NE from the line of the bridge were observed by the French in the 1830s. Recent alluviation, which has buried the ancient land surface in this area,

<sup>34</sup> W. Loring, 'Some ancient routes in the Peloponnese', *JHS* 15 (1895), 25–89, at p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> *SAGT* iv. 3–4; 9–11; pls. 2–4; W. G. Cavanagh and J. H. Crouwel, 'Laconia Survey 1983–1986', *Lak. spoud.* 9 (1988), 77–88, at p. 82 and fig. 5.

<sup>36</sup> On the r. bank of the Evrotas (outside the LS area), and a little to the N of the Kopanos bridge, Loring observed 'polygonal walls' and pottery, 'perhaps a small fort'; Loring (n. 34), 42 and map, pl. 1. Evidently this was the same site as W. Vischer's 'Wachtpost' (*Erinnerungen und Eindrücke aus Griechenland* (Basel, 1857), 401). Cf. also J. P. Mahaffy, *Rambles and Studies in Greece* (London, 1887), 381

('a quaint high mediaeval bridge at the head of the vale of Sparta').

<sup>37</sup> *CIG* 8704; Feissel and Philippidis-Braat (n. 16), 300–3.

<sup>38</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 65–6, pls. 46 z, 49 vi–vii. Cf. Leake (n. 2), i. 151.

<sup>39</sup> A. J. B. Wace, 'The city wall', *BSA* 13 (1906–7), 5–16, at p. 9.

<sup>40</sup> G. Dickins, 'Topographical conclusions', *BSA* 12 (1905–6), 431–9, at p. 437. Suggestions (e.g. by Vischer (n. 36), 379) that the structure is multi-period are not as firmly based as Wace and Dickins' careful considerations.

makes it improbable that the French road was ancient. These traces were lost already by 1905, when, however, Dickins noted a road leading from the right bank, which he linked with the bridge.<sup>41</sup> Wace commented that this road led towards the N gate in the Late Roman walls.<sup>42</sup>

#### D. Leake's bridge

This lay on the road from Psychiko towards Sklavochori, a quarter of a mile from Kalogonia; it crossed the Trypiotiko (now the Magoulitsa). Leake wrote: 'its arch has a rise of about one-third of the span, and is constructed of large single blocks of stone, reaching from side to side: a part of the ancient causeway remains at either end of the bridge, of the same solid construction.'<sup>43</sup>

Its siting best serves the ancient route to Amyklai (Bölte's view) and its construction is reminiscent of the bridge at Xirokambi (X). Thus this bridge served the road that passed through a city gate and joined up with Pausanias' 'Aphetaid road' (Paus. iii. 12. 1), which we should trace approximately along the line of Odos Archidamou in modern Sparta.<sup>44</sup> Papachatzis has suggested that the Phrouria (ibid. 12. 8) were a prominent section of the city walls, evidently in square L19;<sup>45</sup> a tile of Nabis was found here, so presumably this section of the city wall was constructed soon after 195 BC.<sup>46</sup> Flamininus deployed part of his army near the sanctuary of Diktynna (near the gate) and part at the Phoibaion.<sup>47</sup> This would effectively occupy the triangle of land outside the walls bounded by the Evrotas and the Trypiotiko. We would argue that bridges D and G, and hence the roads to Amyklai and Tegea, were thereby controlled.

#### E. Magoula bridge (?)

The bridge at Magoula<sup>48</sup> was important when Mistra was the capital, and is assumed to have been medieval. Ancient worked stone was observed at the bridge by Blouet, which Boblaye took to be the remains of an ancient bridge.<sup>49</sup> However, this evidence does not seem sufficient to allow us to posit an ancient bridge here; Blouet may have seen only a few pieces of spolia.

#### F. Nikova bridge

Blouet crossed a bridge 24 minutes (c.4 km) N of the Tripolis road (sc. further N than the Kopanos bridge, B) which must have served the medieval route to Leondari. Evidently this was in the vicinity of the modern bridge over the Nikova Rema.<sup>50</sup>

#### X. Xirokambi bridge

The bridge near Xirokambi spans the Rasina torrent quite high into the foothills of Taygetos. It consists of a single arch whose voussoirs are long narrow squared blocks, two or three per course. Its diameter is 7.4 m and its passable width 2.27 m, wide enough to accommodate wheeled vehicles with an axle width of 1.4 m. Limestone rubble masonry fills the main mass of the piers and spandrels; it is laid in irregular courses and dressed to give the appearance of polygonal walling. The balance of probabilities would place its construction in the Roman period, perhaps in the 1st cent. BC or 1st cent. AD.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Dickins (n. 40), 437–8.

<sup>42</sup> Wace (n. 39), 9. More recently, excavations near the Chymofix factory uncovered a street some 4 m broad, bounded on either side with rows of stones. This road was constructed in the early Hellenistic period (G. Steinhauer, 'Ἀποστραγγιστικός χάνδαξ παρὰ τὴν γεφύραν τοῦ Εὐρώτα', *A. Delt.* 27 (1972), Chr. 242–6, at p. 244). It ran parallel with the city walls, however, and therefore at right angles to the road observed by Dickins and Wace. The safest inference would not associate this road with the bridge.

<sup>43</sup> Leake (n. 2), i. 157.

<sup>44</sup> The Aphetais is discussed by Bölte (n. 11), 1361. (C.

Stibbe, 'Beobachtungen zur Topographie des antiken Sparta', *BA Besch.*, 64 (1989), 61–99, at p. 69, has mistaken its position for that of the Ag. Ioannis bridge to the N.)

<sup>45</sup> Wace (n. 39), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Liv. xxxiv. 38. 2; N. D. Papachatzis, Πανσάνιου Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις, vol. ii (Athens, 1976), 345.

<sup>47</sup> Liv. xxxiv. 38. 5.

<sup>48</sup> Leake (n. 2), i. 150 and pl. 2; Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 62.

<sup>49</sup> E. Puillon de Boblaye (1835), *Recherches sur les ruines de la Morée* (Paris, 1836), 84.

<sup>50</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), ii. 58.

<sup>51</sup> Höper (n. 10); cf. Papachatzis (n. 46), 398–400, pls. 405–6.

## 2. BRIDGES MENTIONED IN ANCIENT SOURCES

**G. Xenophon's bridge**

Xenophon (*Hell.* vi. 5. 27) relates that in 370 BC a formidable hoplite force deployed in the sanctuary of Athena Alea deterred the Thebans, who had come to Sparta under Epameinondas via Sellasia and were camped in the sanctuary of Apollo (at Thornax?), from crossing the bridge over the Eurotas.

Five hundred years later, Pausanias' route to Therapne also passed the statue of Athena Alea and the sanctuary of Zeus Plousios on the right bank, crossed the Eurotas (probably by fording it), and then passed the temple of Asklepios Kotyleus and the shrine of Ares Theritas before reaching the sanctuary of Helen and Menelaos (Paus. iii. 19. 7). Thus the crossing which served Therapne also, at least in the Classical period, served the road via Thornax and Sellasia to the N (§3 below, route 2).

Wace and Bölte constructed a careful argument to the effect that this was not Nikodemos' bridge (C), but must have lain to the SE of the city, where Wace located the Alea sanctuary.<sup>52</sup> Wace argued this on the grounds that it was the shortest route to Therapne, that ancient potteries were observed here (tile stamps show that tile manufacture was carried out in the name of Athena Alea), and that there was insufficient space at Nikodemos' bridge. Such a bridge would be needed from early times on, to carry the *κάνναθρα*, or carts, that took maidens to Helen's festival.<sup>53</sup>

Some support for Wace's position might be found in Livy's account of the confrontation between Nabis and Philopoimen in 192 BC. Whatever the value of the identification of Barbosthenes (or Barnosthenes) with modern Vresthena,<sup>54</sup> it is plain that Philopoimen's first camp (Liv. xxxv. 27. 13) lay N of Sparta on the line of route 2, between Sparta and Karyai. Philopoimen's ruse implies that the road from Karyai to Sparta could be blocked where the city walls ran close to the Eurotas.<sup>55</sup> After the rout he camped near the Eurotas (Liv. xxxv. 30. 7–8), perhaps in the same general vicinity as Epameinondas 180 years before; that is to say, in the region of Thornax (for which see §4 below). He then posted guards on the roads to the two gates by which he expected the fugitives to try to enter Sparta, the gates to Barnosthenes and to Pherai. (Pherai is identified with modern Kalamata in Messenia.) It is clearly implied that Nabis' troops, arriving from the N and on the wrong side of the river, would attempt to enter Sparta from the S, as indeed they should if Wace was right in placing the bridge in the SE.

Polybios' account of the battle between Lykourgos and Philip V can also be brought into play here. To the SE of the city, Polybios tells us, the Eurotas was normally too swollen to be forded (v. 22. 2–4). Nevertheless, in the course of the action Philip crossed the river a number of times (v. 22. 9; 23. 8, 10), as did Lykourgos (23. 5). The fighting took place on the Menelaion hill, and Philip crossed from there to protect Aratos' troops who were advancing from Amyklai (this is reminiscent of the position taken by Flamininus; above). The description best fits Wace and Bölte's theory that the bridge lay S or SE of Sparta.

**H. The bridges at Platanistas**

These bridges (mentioned at Paus. iii. 14. 8–10) would seem to have been footbridges, with statues of Herakles and Lykourgos at one end. Pausanias implies that the area lay on the W side of the city,

<sup>52</sup> Wace (n. 39), 6–7; Bölte (n. 11), 1370.

<sup>53</sup> Hsch., s.v. Ἑλένεια, *κάνναθρα*; cf. Xen. *Ages.* 8. 7; F. Bölte, 'Thornax', *RE* (2nd ser.) vi (1937), cols. 347–9. Wace and Bölte's view has not passed uncontested; Stübbe (n. 44), 97–8, has returned to the opinion that Xenophon's bridge was a predecessor on the same site as C, evidently on the grounds that the orientation of C in relation to the city walls implies that its line predates them. A Byzantine date for C circumvents this argument: the bridge will postdate the walls.

<sup>54</sup> Proposed by Bölte (n. 11), col. 1321.

<sup>55</sup> Steinhauer (n. 42), 242 and n. 6, has argued that the gate serving the road to Barnosthenes was located virtually under the modern Tripolis road. A road on the narrow section between the embankment and the city walls could suit Livy's description. However, the gate itself has not been found; and the careful stonework, thought to imply the presence of a gate, seems similar to that observed by Wace in the towers of this part of the wall. We would urge caution against accepting the existence of a gate here.

and, somewhat desperately, this has been associated with a mill-stream canal marked on the French map.<sup>56</sup> The plane-trees and the water-filled ditch imply a location with ground-water, and a site on the E of the city would make more sense. Perhaps Pausanias made an unheralded leap, only to return to the Dromos thereafter (at iii. 15. 6).

We do not include these bridges in our discussion above.

### J. *Julius Paulinus' bridge*

A substantial bridge, with three arches, is known, from an inscription found by Fourmont at Mistra, to have been repaired by Julius Paulinus. Wilhelm much improved the reading of this (*IG* v. 1. 538), and detective work by Spawforth on Paulinus succeeded in identifying his *nomen* and clarifying his career, dating it more securely to the period AD 230–50, perhaps nearer the mid-century.<sup>57</sup> Spawforth suggests that the bridge can have been built no earlier than the 1st cent. BC, and so might possibly be linked to the dynast C. Julius Eurykles of that period.<sup>58</sup> Bölte believed that Paulinus' bridge had not survived;<sup>59</sup> but as Spawforth has pointed out, it could be identified with **A**.<sup>60</sup> As a less attractive alternative, it may have stood on the site of **G**, perhaps already dilapidated in Pausanias' day, but still repaired by Paulinus three-quarters of a century later.

### 3. EVIDENCE FOR ANCIENT ROUTES

We take as our starting-point the routes out of Sparta listed by Bölte,<sup>61</sup> which are here numbered in clockwise sequence, beginning in the N. (Branch routes are listed after the route they diverge from. Those in square brackets are not discussed below.)

- (1) Sparta–Belmina
- (2) Sparta–Tegea – (3) Sparta–Thyreatis
- (4) routes into Parnon:
  - (a) via Kastanitsa
  - (b) via Platanaki
  - (c) via Kosmas
- (5) Sparta–Amyklai – (6) Sparta–Helos – [(7) Helos–Boiai] – (8) Sparta–Gytheion – [(9) Gytheion–Areopolis – (10) Areopolis–Tainaron – (11) Oitylos–Gerania]
- (12) routes into Taygetos:
  - [(a) via the Aigytiis]
  - [(b) via the Dentheliatis]
  - (c) the Great Langada
  - (d) Sparta–Giannitsa via Mistra
  - (e) Sparta–Giannitsa via Anavryti
  - (f) Sparta–Kardamyle via Xirokambi (?)

We can add three routes from Mistra, the successor to Sparta as capital of Laconia from the 13th cent.:

- (13) Mistra–Leondari
- (14) Mistra–Magoula
- (15) Mistra–Marathonisi

<sup>56</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), pl. v; Bölte (n. 11), 1352, 1361; Stibbe (n. 44), 82.

<sup>57</sup> A. Wilhelm, 'Inscription zu Ehren des Paulinus aus Sparta', *SB der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1913, 858–63; A. J. S. Spawforth, 'Notes on the third century AD in Spartan epigraphy', *BSA* 79 (1984), 263–88.

<sup>58</sup> Cartledge and Spawforth (n. 27), 131; Spawforth (n. 57); Wilhelm (n. 57).

<sup>59</sup> Bölte (n. 11), 1358; 1370–2.

<sup>60</sup> Cartledge and Spawforth (n. 27), 131; 216, no. 5.

<sup>61</sup> Bölte (n. 11), 1341–7.

(1) *Sparta–Belmina*

Throughout Sparta's history this was the major route northwards.<sup>62</sup> It must have been served by a N gate through the Hellenistic walls.<sup>63</sup> Whilst approximately following the course of the modern and Turko-Venetian road as far as the Kopanos bridge, further N it deviated, following the river at least as far as Elliniko; and whichever site is Pellana, none of the more recently proposed candidates lies on the modern road. The line of the modern road was followed by 19th-cent. travellers,<sup>64</sup> and a deep cleft was bridged (see discussion of **F**, above) just N of the point where the ancient route diverges from the modern. No doubt the classical road followed the Evrotas closely at this point in order to avoid the cleft. How far back into Byzantine times the alternative goes it is difficult to estimate.

(2) *Sparta–Tegea* – (3) *Sparta–Thyreatis*

The greatest difficulties in tracing these routes arise at the S end.

At the beginning of the 19th cent. there were two main routes to the Sparta area from the area of Tegea and Arachova (Karyai): (i) via the Kopanos bridge, **B** (FIG. 1, route 2 *a*), and (ii) by way of Voutianoï, a ford across the Kelephina, and a ford across the Evrotas (FIG. 1, route 2 *b*).<sup>65</sup> The latter may have been quicker, but the former was clearly the normal route. Judging from Jochmus' map, these two routes met above Palaiogoulas. 2 (*b*) did not follow the modern road to the E of the Agios Konstantinos massif because of the difficult torrent beds at Diplogephyra, just above Voutianoï.

Clearly these routes aimed at Mistra, not Sparta, and might be thought irrelevant to earlier times. In fact, someone following route 2 (*a*) from the E, having crossed at the Kopanos bridge, could turn inland to follow route 13 to Mistra (this was, for example, the route followed by Blouet;<sup>66</sup> but there seems to have been no gain in time over route 2 (*b*), which, on crossing the Evrotas, then followed route 14. Why then, in the Turko-Venetian period, was a crossing-point preferred at **B**? In the first place, bridging the Evrotas here removed any need to bridge the Kelephina as well.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, the area between the lowest reaches of the Kelephina and the modern bridge over the Evrotas was probably marshy, as it certainly was in the last century. Curtius, who believed the ancient route ran this way, thought the road acted as an embankment.<sup>68</sup> The banks of the Evrotas at Kopanos are close together and offer a hard rock foundation.

It is argued below that the site of Thornax is to be located at Geladari, Laconia Survey site H45. This location would be more consistent with the ancient route following the line of 2 (*a*), and with the identification of the Roman bridge as LS 46 (**A**).

(4) *Routes into Parnon*

(*a*) The route over the high pass across Parnon can never have been suitable for wheeled vehicles, and would be closed during winter; Leake and his entourage were almost buried in snow when crossing the pass in March.<sup>69</sup> Thus this was a minor route serving the villages of Parnon. Not least among these will have been the predecessor(s) of the modern village of Chrysapha, an important centre from the Bronze Age onwards.

The modern road to Chrysapha passes below the Archaic, Classical, and Roman cult site of Zeus Messapeus at Tsakona,<sup>70</sup> and bypasses the monastery of Agioi Saranda; it requires a bridge over a

<sup>62</sup> See Loring (n. 34), 1; more recently, *SAGT* iv, ch. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Wace (n. 39), 9.

<sup>64</sup> W. Gell, *Itinerary of the Morea* (London, 1817), 214–16; Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 58.

<sup>65</sup> Leake (n. 2), i. 125–6 (from Tegea); ii. 522 (from Agioi Saranda); Jochmus (n. 2), map opp. p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), ii. 58–60.

<sup>67</sup> We have already seen that Leake had problems crossing the Kelephina in March. Note also E. Curtius' comments on Kelephina the 'murderess', *Peloponnesiaka* (Gotha, 1852), ii. 262.

<sup>68</sup> Curtius (n. 67), ii. 259: 'Die alte Heerstrasse nach Argos . . . durchschnitt als aufgeschütteter Damm die Niederung zwischen Evrotas und Oinus'. Note Plb. v. 22, φράσσειν τὸν ποταμόν.

<sup>69</sup> Leake (n. 2), ii. 513.

<sup>70</sup> H. W. Catling, 'A sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus: excavations at Aphyssou, Tsakona, 1989', *BSA* 85 (1990), 15–35; R. W. V. Catling and D. G. J. Shipley, 'Zeus Messapeus: an early sixth-century inscribed cup from Lakonia', *BSA* 84 (1989), 187–200.

deeply incised torrent near Polyzeffa. There is a slightly shorter route from Sparta to Chrysapha, still used by drovers, via the copious spring at Kastora, branching thence towards the Aphisou plain or towards the Menelaion. It seems that Philip V, in his circuitous approach to Sparta, ended up on the latter track, with the Menelaion on his right; he then went on to Amyklai.<sup>71</sup>

The routes (*b*) via Platanaki and (*c*) via Kosmas were important lines of communication with the Geronthrai/Geraki region and with the east Parnon foreland. From Sparta to Skoura at least this route must have followed more or less the line of the modern road. The Laconia Survey has located Bronze Age, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, and medieval sites close to its course, and a Classical site has been located near Platana.<sup>72</sup> Certainly there is a ford across the Evrotas into Sparta just opposite the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia; there could have been a gate through the city walls in the vicinity, though none survives. The question of a southern bridge to Sparta is important for these routes.

(5) *From Sparta to Amyklai (and branch routes to S. Laconia)*

The modern road passes through Amykles (formerly Sklavochori), but Bölte was probably right to argue that in antiquity it followed the road via Kalogonia, to the temple of Apollo at Amyklai and to Vapheio (possibly ancient Pharis). That the medieval route passed further w, via Sklavochori, supports an ancient date for **D**, Leake's bridge, and by association **X**, the bridge at Xirokambi.

(12) *The Taygetos routes* – (14) *Mistra–Magoula–Sparta*

Routes 12 (*c*)–(*e*) and 14 were evidently not major routes in antiquity, but served only to link Sparta with the villages of Taygetos. Bölte has argued convincingly that the Great Langada, 12 (*c*), now the main road to Kalamata, was no more used in antiquity than it was in the early 19th cent.

The w course of the town walls of Sparta has not been recovered,<sup>73</sup> perhaps because it is buried under later alluvium; but there was probably a w gate. In the 19th cent. the main route from Mistra to Magoula (and thence to ancient Sparta) did not follow the modern road, but crossed first the Trypiotika stream (or Panteleimon) and then the Magoula bridge (**E**).

(13) *Mistra–Leondari*

This appears to have been the normal approach to Mistra from the n (see also route 1); it was taken as a matter of course by Blouet.<sup>74</sup> Travelling from the n this medieval route diverged from the modern Megalopolis–Sparta road close to its junction with the Turko-Venetian Tripolis road (i.e. close to the Kopanos bridge). Striking w, it skirted the village of Papioti (Agrapidoula?) on the n, passing the remains of an aqueduct. (Blouet also noted the remains of a temple on the Magoulitsa stream.)<sup>75</sup> About 1 km n of Mistra it crossed a bridge over one of the branches of the Trypiotiko stream (Panteleimon or Skatias). The ancient remains mentioned were no doubt served by minor tracks from Sparta.

(15) *Mistra–Marathonisi*

The main route from Mistra to Marathonisi (modern Gytheio) skirted the foot of Taygetos, on the w edge of the Spartan plain, and further w than the modern Sparta–Gytheio road.

#### 4. RELEVANT SITES MENTIONED IN ANCIENT SOURCES

Several sites attested in the ancient literature whose location is of relevance to the themes treated above are here discussed in the light of the findings of the Laconia Survey.

<sup>71</sup> Plb. v. 18. 1–4. Jochmus (n. 2), 46–53, places the battle between Philopoimen and Nabis (Liv. xxxv. 27–30) here; but it makes better sense for Philopoimen to have marched on Sparta by the usual route from Karyai.

<sup>72</sup> AR [6] (1959–60), 9.

<sup>73</sup> Wace (n. 39), 13.

<sup>74</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 58. The route is marked on Curtius' map (Curtius (n. 67), pl. x).

<sup>75</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 62; pl. 45; marked on Curtius' map; cf. Boblaye (n. 49), 84.

*Thornax*

This is mentioned in various ancient authors as being situated in the plain, and as being the site of a sanctuary of Pythian Apollo, which evidently had a colossal bronze statue of the god like that at Amyklai.<sup>76</sup> We tentatively identify it with site H45 (Geladari), discovered by the Laconia Survey in 1983.

Earlier attempts to locate Thornax are summarized by Bölte.<sup>77</sup> The only specific antiquities linked with the site are a 'monument héroïque', recorded by Vietty as a marble foundation under a ruined chapel and referred to by Boblaye as a little temple.<sup>78</sup> The hill of Pavleika, where this is located by the French, must be the hill now called Kokkinorachi, and the ruins must be those marked 'église' on Blouet's plan.<sup>79</sup> The modern village of Kokkinorachi (formerly Tsouni) must have been built over the site; it is not impossible that the modern church overlies the ruin. A Roman private bath has recently been excavated in this village.<sup>80</sup>

Another possible site, further E beside the road to Argos (i.e. on the present road to Chrysapha, not the road to Tripolis), is marked 'Temple' on plate 45 of the *Expédition scientifique de Morée*; Blouet also mentions 'les traces d'un temple'.<sup>81</sup> Later maps have repeated this, apparently without confirmation by autopsy. The French map, while it is far in advance of other maps of the time, is not highly accurate. It would be tempting to associate this temple with the temple of Messapian Zeus (LS N415), located by the Laconia Survey on the Tsakona ridge;<sup>82</sup> but the indication on the French map suggests a site in the vicinity of the (modern) chapel of Ag. Georgios, where the Survey found no trace of a temple.

Another candidate, the site located by Jochmus,<sup>83</sup> has now been identified with Laconia Survey site H51, a medieval structure possibly reusing Classical spolia. A further possibility, a site suggested by Waterhouse and Hope Simpson,<sup>84</sup> is probably to be identified with LS site J43.

None of the proposed sites is overwhelmingly persuasive. Without inscriptional evidence, certainty is impossible, but we would put forward another candidate: the site of Geladari, LS H45. It is a long-lived site with a Mycenaean ancestry, like the shrine of Apollo at Amyklai; indeed, a Mycenaean figurine has been found. It has produced Archaic to medieval pottery, as well as worked stone blocks from ancient monumental structures.<sup>85</sup>

*Temple of Asklepios Kotyleus*

Pausanias (iii. 19. 7) mentions the temple. No site located by the Survey can be identified with it; LS M173, found on the banks of the Evrotas immediately opposite Artemis Orthia, yielded appropriate finds, but is judged, on geomorphological grounds, to be a recent dump of ancient material.

*Shrine of Ares Theritas*

Pausanias (iii. 19. 7–8) locates this shrine to the left of the road to Therapne. Knowledge of its precise location would be useful for locating the exact line of Therapne road. The only candidate for a sanctuary site in this area (apart from the Menelaion itself) is LS M325, which produced Archaic and Classical pottery and a votive figurine, but no Roman pottery.

<sup>76</sup> Paus. iii. 10. 8; Hdt. i. 69; Xen. *Hell.* vi. 5. 27; Hsch., s.v. ἱερὸν Ἀπόλλωνος ἐν τῇ Λακωνικῇ; Steph. Byz., s.v. Ὁόρναξ; cf. Strab. viii. 363 (Amyklai).

<sup>77</sup> Bölte (n. 53).

<sup>78</sup> Boblaye (n. 49), 75.

<sup>79</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), pl. 45.

<sup>80</sup> AR 36 (1989–90), 24.

<sup>81</sup> Blouet *et al.* (n. 17), 62.

<sup>82</sup> H. W. Catling (n. 70).

<sup>83</sup> Jochmus (n. 2), 45 and map opp. p. 47.

<sup>84</sup> H. Waterhouse and R. Hope Simpson, 'Prehistoric Laconia, part I', *BSA* 55 (1960), 67–107, at p. 82.

<sup>85</sup> The site is briefly mentioned by Cavanagh and Crowell (n. 35).