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Agrarian and Power Landscapes in Epeiros during the Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods

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Abstract. As was frequently the case in other parts of Greece, agrarian landscapes were the result and, to some extent, a reflection of the political structures in existence at the time. In the case of Epeiros, this also appears to have been the case. In this chapter we shall analyse the main characteristics of the agrarian landscape that made up the different territories of Epeiros and we shall highlight the key transformative role played by the monarchic system of the time, in the first instance in Molossia, which is where the Aeacid monarchy originated, and subsequently after the end of the fourth century BC, with the establishment of the Epeirote state throughout Epeiros as a whole. In this respect, the agrarian landscape throughout this territory could be considered to be a realm that was shaped by the power of the monarchy.

Key words: Epeiros; Territory; Farmsteads; Villages; Fortifications; Fortified Farmsteads.

[esp] Paisajes agrarios y de poder en Epiro durante los períodos clásico tardío y helenístico

Resumen. Como es frecuente en otras partes de Grecia, los paisajes agrarios son un resultado y, en cierto modo, un reflejo de las estructuras políticas existentes. En el caso del Epiro parece haber ocurrido lo mismo. En este capítulo se analizan las principales características del paisaje agrario en los distintos territorios del Epiro y se subraya el importante papel transformador que ha ejercido sobre ellos el sistema monárquico existente, en un primer momento en Molosia, de donde es originaria la monarquía eácida y, en un segundo momento, a partir de finales del s. IV a.C., y con la creación del estado epirota, en el conjunto del Epiro. De tal modo, el paisaje agrario en este territorio puede ser considerado un espacio modelado por el poder de la realeza.

Palabras clave: Epiro; territorio; granjas; aldeas; fortificaciones; granjas fortificadas.

Summary: 1. The Aeacid monarchy and the shaping of the Epeirote state. 2. The configuration of the agrarian landscape in Molossia. 3. Thesprotia. 4. Chaonia. 5. Final observations. 6. Bibliographical references.

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1. The Aeacid monarchy and the shaping of the Epeirote state²

In a relatively short period of time, Ancient Epeiros was transformed from being a territory lacking in developed social and economic structures in order to become a powerful state which, during the reign of Pyrrhus and his immediate successors, played an important role within the context of the early Hellenistic monarchies. Literary sources reveal some of the results of these processes, focusing, above all, on the periods under Pyrrhus and his son and successor, Alexander II, as well as on that of one of his predecessors, his second cousin, Alexander I (that is, the period between 343-242 BC). Nevertheless, these literary accounts mainly describe the military aspects and, to a lesser extent, the political developments that took place during the reign of these monarchs, but say nothing about other matters, such as the economic and social structures that emerged throughout Epeiros during these periods. In order to gain a clearer insight into Epeiros at the time, we must make use of archaeological details and even topographical information corresponding to this historical period.

The main hypothesis that underpins this study departs from the idea that, based on an analysis of the agrarian landscapes in Epeiros during the Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods, we can explain how the Epeirote state, which was formed by the union of the three great ethno-political groupings, the Molossians, the Thesprotians and the Chaonians, organised under the authority of the Aeacid monarchs of Molossia, was able to develop the economic, demographic and political foundations that led to this period of growth, one that translated into a period of military apogee, as was so often the case in the Ancient world. Similarly, by studying the configuration of this landscape we can detect traces of some of the power structures that emerged during this historical period.

The Epeirote state, which most probably emerged during the reign of Alexander I the Molossian, was based on the union, possibly the federal union, of these three peoples, with the king playing a supervisory role and, above all, the role of military chief. The king, who was also the King of the Molossians, had long been considered the descendent of the Aeacid hero, Achilles, through the latter's son Pyrrhus-Neoptolemus, and, featuring diverse variants, of the Trojan heroine Andromache. This new state would be called Epeiros (Åπειρος in its own dialect), as witnessed by various documentary sources of the time, such as the *theorodókoi* list for Argos, in which Cleopatra, the wife (probably already widowed) of Alexander I appears as the hostesses of these sacred envoys. The new state that emerged from the integration of the three main Epeirote peoples may have already been known, from this time onwards, as κοινὸν τῶν Ἀπειρωτᾶν, as some recent studies have begun to suggest, with the state's new structures being the result of the implementation and adaptation throughout the whole of Epeiros of those structures that already existed in Molossia. Molossia.

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³ Domínguez 2014, 203-236; Raynor 2017, 243-270.

⁴ Funke 2000.

⁵ Ep. Cat. A. 1, col. I, l. 11 (Perlman 2000).

⁶ Cabanes – Hatzopoulos 2020, 160. It is not necessary to wait for the fall of the monarchy in Epeiros in order to discern the origins of the κοινόν, as tends to be believed, given that in Macedonia, for example, the monarchy and the κοινόν τῶν Μακεδόνων coexisted; in the last instance, see Panagopoulou 2019, 363-383.

Cabanes – Hatzopoulos 2020, 156.

In spite of this, certain studies, also published recently, prefer to the delay the emergence of the Epeirote state until the fall of the monarchy,⁸ a provocative hypothesis which, although supported by some authors, would appear to be based on rather feeble arguments and a somewhat subjective reading of the chronology of the epigraphic evidence.

The Epeirote state was shaped, therefore, by the union of the three main Epeirote peoples (ἔθνη), the Molossians, the Thesprotians and the Chaonians, each organised in their respective *koiná*, replete with their own powers and structures, with the king playing the key unifying role, the main (if not the only) unifying role during a good part of the existence of this state, up until the fall of the monarchy. This role, which was based, to a certain degree, on a "pact" or "contract", may have been inherited from the period in which the king's authority only extended over the Molossians,⁹ the main evidence being provided by Plutarch's famous text in which he states that an exchange of mutual vows was made in Passaron in which the monarchs swore to govern in accordance with the law and the Epeirotes vowed to protect the kingdom.¹⁰ During the unsettled period in which Aeacides, Pyrrhus' father, was supporting his cousin, Olympias, in order to implement his hostile strategy against Cassander, 11 this procedure was brought into effect, which led to the removal of the king in 317 BC based on a joint decision (κοινὸν δώγμα) of the people. ¹² And possibly in the downfall of Alcetas II shortly afterwards, the Epeirotes may have used the same procedure to justify his removal, although he was not just deposed, but executed. 13 We have suggested elsewhere that this mechanism, with its (apparently) Spartan overtones, may have arisen amongst the Molossians during the also tumultuous return of King Alcetas I to power in around 385 BC.¹⁴

The rise of Molossia, and possibly the impetus for the creation of the Epeirote state, was promoted by the dynastic marriage between Olympias, the daughter of the deceased Neoptolemus I and niece of the reigning king, Arybbas, and King Philip II of Macedonia (357 BC),¹⁵ reinforced, the following year, by the birth of Alexander, who would become known as Alexander the Great in the future. Macedonia's greater involvement in Epeiros resulted from Philip's removal of King Arybbas, who sought exile in Athens (342 BC),¹⁶ with the Macedonian king placing his brother-in-law, Alexander I, on the Molossian throne.¹⁷ This initiative would most probably have led to territorial changes in Molossia, with the latter losing territories in the easternmost part of the kingdom, which is to say, the areas bordering Macedonia (undoubtedly Orestis, but also perhaps Tymphaea, Paravaea and Atintania),¹⁸ although it would

⁸ Meyer 2013, 64-79, 125-131.

Domínguez 2018, 27-28; see also the observations made by Di Leo 2003, 239-244.

¹⁰ Plu. Pyrrh. 5.5.

¹¹ Carney 2006, 67-68.

D.S. 19.36.4.

¹³ D.S. 19.89.3; Paus. 1.11.5.

D.S. 15.13.1-3. Domínguez 2018, 26-28; in fact, the fourth century is the period in which the largest number of Spartan consultations are documented at Dodona, some in the presence of the king himself; see Piccinini 2017, 93-97

¹⁵ D.S. 16.72.1; Front. Strat. 2.5.19; Just. Epit. 7.6.10-12.

¹⁶ Just. Epit. 7.6.10-12; Rhodes – Osborne 2003, 348-354.

¹⁷ Just. *Epit.* 8.6.3-7.

¹⁸ Lévêque 1957, 185.

have received the territories of Kassopia in exchange, ¹⁹ which were perhaps formerly linked with Thesprotia and provided the kingdom with an exit to the sea, or at least the Gulf of Ambrakia, given that the Molossians may have already had access to the sea for some time through Cestrine, although we cannot be sure. ²⁰ This relationship would be strengthened still further thanks to the Molossian king's marriage to Cleopatra, daughter of Philip II and Olympias, in the year 336 BC, an occasion that Pausanias of Orestis would use to murder Philip. ²¹

Although critics have been cautious when it comes to attributing the creation of the Epeirote state to Alexander I, few historical periods appear to be more propitious for the creation of the new state. It is difficult to believe that the state may have emerged during the regency of his wife, Cleopatra, and of his sister, Olympias, following his death in Italy in the year 331 BC. Likewise, it is hard to believe that the Italian campaign could have taken place without a certain degree of stability in Epeiros and without the joint strength of a new and powerful state. However, with regard to the aspects we are about to analyse here, this is not exactly a crucial matter.

What *is* important to highlight, returning to the episode we have just mentioned, is the support that Philip II provided to Alexander I, the expression that Pseudo-Demosthenes' *Oration on the Halonese* introduces when referring to the three Kassopian cities, Pandosia, Boucheta and Elateia. After Philip had razed the territory to the ground and violently attacked the cities, he handed them over $(\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\delta\omega\kappa\epsilon\nu)$ to Alexander so that he could enslave them $(\delta\omega\nu\lambda\epsilon\omega\epsilon\nu)$.²²

Although this territory was integrated into Molossia, the truth is that the king may have disposed of this territory according to his own interests and needs, which may have entailed the inclusion of the entire region in the royal lands (βασιλική χώρα) that the king was able to use according to his will. This may explain why Pyrrhus, at the time, chose this territory as the location for the founding of the city of Berenike, specifically on the Preveza Peninsula.²³ Possibly prior to this conquest and the forced integration of the territory into Molossia, the inhabitants of this part of Epeiros had already begun to construct their ethnic identity, disassociating themselves from their neighbours in order to find their origins in the Elean world.²⁴ Even during the first century BC, when Strabo described the territories of Epeiros, following Theopompus.²⁵ he appears to refer to the Kassopians as having their own identity, given that the author mentions the Chaonians, the Thesprotians and the Kassopians, taking the trouble to add that the latter were also Thesprotians, which would not make much sense unless the Kassopians continued to maintain their own identity amongst the Thesprotians (and not amongst the Molossians, to which they had been incorporated by Philip II and Alexander I).

Although later on we shall describe the characteristics of each of the territories from the point of view of their agrarian make-up, this may be the moment to highlight certain details from literary sources and the realm of epigraphy regarding the role

^{19 [}Dem.] De Halon. 31.

²⁰ X. HG 6.2.10-11; Pliakou 2007, 287.

²¹ D.S. 16.94.1-4; Just. Epit. 9.6.4; Plu. Alex. 10.5

²² [Dem.] *De Halon*. 31.

²³ Plu. *Pyrrh*. 6.1: ἐν τῆ χερρονήσω τῆς Ἡπείρου.

²⁴ Domínguez 2015, 111-143; 2017, 79-88.

²⁵ Str. 7.7.5: Theopomp. *FGrHist* 115 F 382.

that the monarchs (in the widest sense, including the regents) played in the model of agrarian propriety throughout Epeiros.

We have, above all, three accounts that have been dated very close to one another, but are not entirely devoid of problems, since we do not have any precise information regarding the relationship that Olympias and her daughter Cleopatra maintained when Alexander the Great was still alive, nor the exact movements of both women following the Macedonian king's death. Based on the inscription of the theorodókoi list for Argos, as mentioned above, there appears to be little doubt that Cleopatra assumed authority for Epeiros, first as Regent in the absence of her husband, and then, following the latter's death, as Regent for her son, Neoptolemus II.²⁶ In this respect, she would have welcomed the Athenian ambassadors in around 331 or 330 BC, headed by Ctesiphon, who were responsible for conveying Athens' condolences to Philip's daughter on the death of her husband.²⁷ The king's dead body may have arrived in Epeiros around the same time in order to be handed over to the king's wife, Cleopatra, and his sister, Olympias, as stated by Livy.²⁸ This raises doubts as to whether, in those years, Olympias remained in Epeiros or, as the traditional version has it, she remained in Macedonia up until 324 BC, which is when she moved to Epeiros whilst her daughter went to Macedonia, as reported by Plutarch.²⁹ This and other indications would seem to suggest that Olympias must have maintained strong links with Epeiros and, even though the Regent was her daughter, she must have played an important role there.

The fact that Cleopatra wielded the reins of power in Epeiros is witnessed by the fact that it was she who handed over the shipment of corn to the Athenian Leocrates.³⁰ which, against all odds and in violation of Athenian law, the latter failed to sell to Athens but decided to transport to Leucas, finally selling it in Corinth. We do not know exactly when this transaction took place, but the point of interest resides in the fact that the monarchy, in this case represented by the Regent, had the capacity to store grain and to do business with it. Whilst on this occasion Cleopatra appears on her own, in another transaction, which was also linked with the trading of grain, Olympias once again appears. Here we are dealing with a well-known and important Cyrene inscription in which the Libyan city made an entire series of grain deliveries to numerous Greek states; the recipients of the different dispatches include Cleopatra and, on two occasions, Olympias; in total, the two of them received 122,600 medimnoi.³¹ Whether this was a gift from Cyrene or, as is perhaps more appropriate, the recipients were required to pay for the grain, it is probable that the city would have maintained reasonable prices.³² The exact chronology of these transactions is also subject to debate, but they tend to be dated between 330-326 BC. It is also

Regarding the question of Cleopatra's regency, a certain scepticism exists; for example, see Heckel 2021, 65. However, Cleopatra and Olympias' position, based on the facts we have available to us and which are analysed below, indicate a clear public character that extends beyond that of guardianship (*epimeleía*) of the heir; their reconstruction of a succession of kingdoms following the death of Alexander I is also problematic (Heckel 2021, 69-70). See, however, Carney 2006, 7, 50-52.

²⁷ Aeschin. In Ctes. 242.

²⁸ Liv. 8.24.17.

²⁹ Plu. *Alex*. 68.3; Whitehorne 1994, 61; Carney 2006, 53.

³⁰ Lycurg. Leocr. 26: ἐκ τῆς Ἡπείρου παρὰ Κλεοπάτρας.

³¹ Rhodes – Osborne 2003, 487-493.

³² Pazdera 2006, 143-144; D'Agostini 2021, 25.

debated whether the deliveries to Olympias corresponded to Macedonia or, on the contrary, to Epeiros, as some authors believe,³³ although the latter may be more likely.

Whatever the case may be, once again the monarchy appears as the institution that manages the acquisition of the grain, which, although ultimately used to feed the people, would have been stored at royal facilities, from which it would have been dispatched, either being sold at a reasonable price or being used for the purposes desired by mother and daughter.

Lastly, we have another testimony of interest in Hyperides' speech *In Defence of Euxenippus*, in which he states that, by order of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona, the Athenians had restored the statue to Dione, which they had done with pleasure despite its considerable cost. However, Olympias had complained to the Athenians about this matter stating that the region where the sanctuary stands, Molossia, belonged to her.³⁴ The exact chronology of this missive is unknown, but a good number of commentators believe this complaint must have been made in around the year 330 BC,³⁵ and this testimony shows that Olympias had the authority to write to the Athenians, presenting herself as the owner of the region of Molossia.

All of these accounts, which, rather curiously, do not relate to a king, but to a period in which Molossia and Epeiros were governed by the wife and sister of the deceased king (respectively, Cleopatra and Olympias), testify to the monarchy's capacity to control territories, sell grain and receive shipments of corn from abroad, in order to dispose of them according to the leaders' interests. Later on, we shall see how these accounts help us to understand how the rural landscape in Epeiros was organised and to what extent the royal authorities were able to act regarding this landscape.

2. The configuration of the agrarian landscape in Molossia

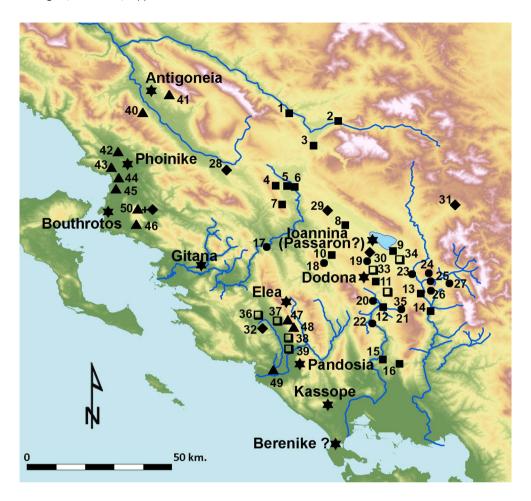
Now we must turn to the information provided by archaeological data as to how the agrarian landscapes were organised, testimonies that appear to highlight differences in each of the territories that made up the Epeirote state, originating from the varying traditions and political structures that existed before the state came into being (Fig. 1).

If we begin with Molossia, we can observe how, thanks to a series of urgent prospections carried out during the construction of the current Egnatia Odos motorway, a number of unfortified centres have been detected on the plains around the Ioannina Basin that appear to have sprung up *ex novo* as of the end of the fifth century, whose main purpose was that of agriculture and cattle-raising. Those that reveal previous levels of occupation do not present any complex building structures, which would seem to suggest that they were simple huts. An unusual feature of these establishments is that, in contrast to the habitual practices in the region, they began to incorporate layouts and building elements that are reminiscent of those frequently found in other parts of Greece, including dwellings grouped around courtyards, not

³³ Cabanes 1976, 492.

³⁴ Hyp. Euxenip. 25: ή χώρα εἴη ή Μολοττία αὐτῆς.

³⁵ Whitehead 2000, 157; Worthington *et alii* eds. 2001, 103.



| Fortresses dominating agricultural areas | Small fortified enclosures | Sanctuaries and places of worship | Unfortified agricultural settlements | * Fortified farms |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1. Mesogefyra 2. Konitsa 3. Agios Minàs 4. Moni Sosinou 5. Leprovouni 6. Chrysorrachi 7. Ieromnimi 8. Megalo Gardiki 9. Kastritsa 10. Polylofo 11. Episkopikò 12. Myrodafni 13. Kalentzi 14. Koukoulià 15. Paliokklisi 16. Orraon | 17. Vrousina 18. Psina 19. Pyrgo Pedini 20. Kopani 21. Sklivani 22. Chani Terovou 23. Tsouka 24. Chouliarades 25. Ambelochori 26. Raftanee 27. Pramanta | 28. Ktismata 29. Rodotopi 30. Dourouti 31. Votonosi 32. Kyra Panagia | 33. Agioi Apostoloi 34. Rachi Platanias 35. Episkopi Servianon 36. Sevasto 37. Mavromandilia/ Gephyrakia 38. Agora 39. Gardiki | 40. Dholani e Derviçan 41. Labove e Siperme 42. Matomara 43. Metoqi 44. Çumpora 45. Çuka 46. Malathrea 47. Agios Donatos 48. Kioteza 49. Mesopotamos/ Nekyomanteion 50. Dobra |

Figure 1. Places mentioned in the text (author's elaboration).

to mention square or rectangular rooms featuring stone foundations and skirting boards, replete with walls made of sun-dried bricks or mud, and the appearance of roofing tiles. The best-known example would be Rachi Platanias, but it appears that settlements of a similar kind also existed at Agioi Apostoloi in Pedini and at Episkopi Servianon.³⁶ We believe that their link with the reformist policy of Tharyps is beyond doubt,³⁷ and although some commentators have revealed a certain scepticism regarding their significance, derived, in part, from the sometimes unclear stratigraphic sequence at such sites,³⁸ the general chronology of these structures does not appear to be disputed, encompassing a period, according to the excavators, that ran from the end of the fifth century to the Late Hellenistic Period.

Another key element in the Molossian region is the large number of fortified enclosures of different size distributed throughout the territory and located at different altitudes. These sites have not been studied in any great detail. Some author has even commented that Molossia is a territory made of "vieilles forteresses sans nom et sans histoire".³⁹

Although in other territories throughout Epeiros a number of fortified rural residences have been identified, their presence in Molossia is more difficult to detect, if, in fact, they existed at all. In this respect, based on bibliographic accounts of a very general nature, but nevertheless of great use, we suggested a hypothesis in a previous study⁴⁰ that saw possible traces of fortified rural enclosures at certain sites in Molossia, based, above all, on criteria such as size (around 500 m. in perimeter) and altitude, which could not have been very high. The initial catalogue included sites such as Vasiliko (500 m perimeter), Vrousina (less than 300 m), Kopani (500 m), Palaiogoritsa (700 m), Pramanta (600 m), Sklivani (500 m) and Chouliarades (350-400 m).⁴¹ We should point out the fact that these sites have not been excavated and the information we have is based on prospections that are, at times, quite old, although our knowledge has been updated in certain cases.⁴²

To these sites we might also add certain isolated towers of small size such as Ambelochori, situated to the south-east of Ioannina ($6 \times 9 \text{ m}$), Tsouka, located on the Arachthos Heights ($11 \times 7 \text{ m}$), and Kastri Psinas, located to the north of Dodona ($10.5 \times 7 \text{ m}$), although these constructions are found at higher altitude and their location on the top of summits makes it difficult to think that their main function was agricultural. Rather, their purpose would have been to monitor the territory, having

³⁶ Pliakou 2007, 165-183, 152-158, 194-195; 2017-2018, 137-139.

³⁷ Domínguez 2018, 1-42.

Meyer 2021, 523; Meyer states (based on Pliakou 2017-2018, 137) that Domínguez (2018) "dates the Rachi Platanias settlement to the late classical/early Hellenistic period"; however, although Pliakou's text (2017-2018, 137) can be somewhat confusing, in her main work (Pliakou 2007, 167) we can read: "ο οικισμός της Ράχης ιδρύθηκε προς το τέλος του 5^{ου} – αρχές 4^{ου} αι. π.Χ. απέκτησε την οργανομένη πολεοδομικά μορφή του στο α' μισό ή προς τα μέσα του 4^{ου} αι. π.Χ. και εγκαταλείφθηκε γύρω στα μέσα του 2^{ου} αι. π.Χ." ("the settlement at Rachi was founded towards the end of the fifth century – beginning of the fourth century BC, acquired its urban layout during the first half or around the middle of the fourth century BC, and was abandoned around the middle of the second century BC").

[&]quot;Old and nameless fortifications with no history", according to Dausse (2019, 391-407).

⁴⁰ Domínguez forthcoming.

⁴¹ Vlachopoulou – Oikonomou 2003, 13-14, 25, 87-88, 104, 109-110, 117, 119-120.

⁴² Gerogiannis 2021a, 243-246 (MO_11 Vrousina), 362-364 (MO_41 Kopani), 439-441 (MO_64 Pramanta), 384-385 (MO_49 Sklivani), 431-434 (MO_61 Chouliarades).

been built by the state or by rich landowners, possibly during the period under Pyrrhus.⁴³

Similarly, in his recent catalogue, Gerogiannis has distinguished four categories amongst the different fortified sites he has analysed in Molossia: fortified settlements, fortresses, towers and forts made of rough-hewn stone. Although some of the sites we have mentioned are included in his catalogue as fortresses, others appear as towers. Not including those located at a high altitude in the mountains, various other sites would remain such as Pyrgo Pedini, Chani Terovou and Raftanei.

Although we cannot rule out the idea that, amongst the sites we have mentioned, some may indeed have been fortified rural residences, the interpretation that has recently been preferred for these towers and small fortresses, as well as for the larger enclosures, is to consider them to be part of a capillary network of fortifications promoted by the monarchy itself in order to protect its territory and its main communication routes,⁴⁶ forming part of the creation of the Epeirote state itself, given that their chronology would be between the end of the fourth century and the third century BC. The purpose of these constructions, therefore, would not have been to protect the borders of the different Epeirote territories, as has traditionally been thought, based, above all, on the fact that these fortifications were assigned a later timeline founded mostly on subjective evaluations of the parameters of the walls, rather than on stratigraphic data.⁴⁷

Although these new interpretations focus, somewhat excessively perhaps, on the "militarisation" of the Epeirote realm,⁴⁸ a view that would need to be qualified and refined, one aspect of considerable importance consists of the acknowledgement of the capacity that the Molossian monarchs had to exercise their authority over the Epeirote territory as a whole, imposing their will and interests with regard to the possibly less ambitious aspirations of each of the *éthne* that made up the state. Furthermore, as we are told by various ancient sources, King Pyrrhus, perhaps due to his close connection with Demetrius Poliorcetes,⁴⁹ always showed great interest in military tactics and strategies, matters in which he wrote various treatises, as did his son, Alexander II.⁵⁰ It would not be surprising, therefore, if both monarchs had sought to apply what they had learnt and written about in practice in order to defend their territory. Thus, for example, when Pyrrhus received Tymphaea, Paravaea, Ambrakia, Akarnania and Amphilochia from Alexander V of Macedonia, the first thing he did was to establish garrisons there.⁵¹

With regard to the "militarisation" of Epeirote territory mentioned above, some authors have insisted on the idea that the network of fortifications may have served

Nakas 2016, 446-455; Gerogiannis 2021a, 304-306 (MO_33 Psina), 435-435 (MO_62 Tsouka), 437-438 (MO 63 Ambelochori).

⁴⁴ Gerogiannis 2021a, 202-204.

⁴⁵ Gerogiannis 2021a, 352 (MO_38a Pyrgo Pedini), 368-370 (MO_43 Chani Terovou), 442-444 (MO_65a Raftanee).

⁴⁶ Caliò – Brancato 2020, 214-244; Gerogiannis 2021b, 478-479.

⁴⁷ Dakaris 1956, 59-60.

⁴⁸ Caliò – Brancato 2020, 217.

⁴⁹ Santagati 2020, 208.

⁵⁰ Plu. Pyrrh. 8.3; Cic. Fam. 9.25; Arr. Tact. 1.1; Ael. Tact. 1.2.

⁵¹ Plu. Pyrrh. 6.4-5.

as a headquarters or base for royal troops, as well as for local militias. 52 However, we have little information regarding this question, and we even know very little about the recruitment systems themselves for the royal army. Although the figures that are quoted for Pyrrhus's army when he disembarked in Italy are quite high, 53 to which we must also add those who stayed behind in Epeiros for garrisoning and defensive purposes, it is difficult to believe that the network of fortifications throughout Epeiros was permanently garrisoned by military contingents, given that Pyrrhus' war effort would have required the availability of the majority of men liable for military service. Similarly, we would need to qualify the idea that Pyrrhus did not demobilise his soldiers, a suggestion made by some authors,⁵⁴ perhaps exaggerating the remarks made by Plutarch,⁵⁵ this being a justification for such a large number of fortified enclosures throughout Epeiros, based on the assumption that these were used to station these troops. The truth is that, in the absence of war, a large proportion of these soldiers would have been demobilised and authorised to return to their homes. until they were needed again. This was the habitual practice, as witnessed, for example, in Polybius' account of how, in the year 219 BC, Philip V authorised his Macedonians to carry out the autumn harvest, in spite of the fact that he was in the midst of a war against the Aetolians and Dardanians.⁵⁶ Not even during the reign of Alexander II, in which Epeiros does not appear to have been embroiled in that many foreign conflicts over and above plundering expeditions into Macedonia or defensive manoeuvres against Macedonian and Illyrian attacks, do we gain the impression that a large and permanent army existed in Epeiros that might have needed stationing quarters.⁵⁷ Whatever the case may be, his long reign (30 years) and the kingdom's meagre projection abroad may have consolidated a military model based more on protecting the territory rather than expanding it.

It would seem quite probable that the network of fortifications that emerged throughout Epeiros between the end of the fourth century and the third century was the result of a royal initiative, constituting a network of forts designed to ensure the viability of the territory and facilitate the movement of troops between the different parts of Epeiros, in which respect this was a development linked to a certain centralisation. However, this does not necessarily entail the complete militarisation of the territory, in the sense that the army grew to disproportionate size.

Sources report various foreign incursions into Epeirote territory, even before the Epeirote state was established. King Alcetas I returned to power, with the help of Syracuse, by encouraging and taking advantage of an incursion of this kind by the Illyrians, who advanced throughout the territory without meeting any opposition.⁵⁹ Epeiros also suffered the imposition of a foreign general, Lyciscus, who was

⁵² Caliò – Brancato 2020, 218; Gerogiannis 2021a, 481.

When he disembarked in Italy, Pyrrhus was accompanied by 3,000 cavalry, 20,000 infantry, 2,000 archers and 500 slingers (Plu. *Pyrrh.* 15.2), to which we must add the 3,000 troops he had sent previously under the command of Cineas (Plu. *Pyrrh.* 15.1); it is not clear whether they were all Epeirotes, given that his army was augmented by many other contingents in Italy: D.H. 20.1-3.

⁵⁴ De Sensi Sestito 2011, 482.

⁵⁵ Plu. Pyrrh. 10, 16.

⁵⁶ Polyb. 4.66.7.

⁵⁷ Just. *Epit.* 26.2.9-11; Front. *Strat.* 2.5.10; Trogus *Prol.* 25.

⁵⁸ Caliò – Brancato 2020, 236-239; Gerogiannis 2021a, 482-483.

⁵⁹ D.S. 15.13.3.

appointed by Cassander following the downfall of Aeacides, ⁶⁰ and the kingdom belonging to Pyrrhus and his son Alexander II also suffered sacking expeditions, in the same way in which both monarchs carried out similar plundering expeditions in neighbouring Macedonia, as we mentioned above. This was an endemic evil that was difficult to avoid, even in subsequent periods: both Macedonia and Epeiros were affected by the incursions of the Aetolians Scopas and Dorimachus, in the year 219 BC, ⁶¹ but not even Thermus of Aetolia, located in a particularly inaccessible spot, managed to avoid being invaded and plundered by Philip V in reprisal for the former attacks, in spite of the reserve troops that Dorimachus had left behind in the country. ⁶² One might think that these incursions could have been avoided if these territories had been militarised, although it does not seem to have been the case. Nevertheless, although we cannot be sure, the Epeirotes may have been able to protect themselves from the Aetolian advance by using these fortifications erected by their ancestors, thus minimising the damage.

In this respect, we believe that the network of fortifications that was created throughout Epeiros was not designed so much to halt an army that was invading the territory, but, above all, to minimise the damage that such an invasion might wreak on the people and their possessions, which is to say, on the economic foundations for the territory's subsistence. These towers and fortresses were not only used to monitor communication routes, but also to provide warning of the possible arrival of enemies. Thus, they may have served, particularly the fortresses, together with the fortified centres and fortified cities, to protect the population living throughout the territory in the case of any kind of enemy incursion.

The recent prospections carried out by Gerogiannis show that, in numerous cases, the fortifications that have been discovered are located at sites that overlook valleys and plains appropriate for cattle-raising and agriculture, which is where a good part of the Epeirote population would have normally lived. In case of danger, they could seek refuge at the various fortified enclosures created for this purpose throughout the territory, endowed as they were with the latest defensive facilities designed to repel an attack by an invading army, which, furthermore, would waste little time laying siege to such sites in its attempt to discover other more accessible places that were more ripe for plunder. Whether permanent garrisons we stationed at these centres or not we do not know, but what is quite likely is that, as occurred in the rest of the Greek world, free individuals would have kept their own armour in their homes, as demonstrated, for example, by the discovery of a magnificent Phrygian bronze helmet and two iron spearheads amongst the destroyed remains of a dwelling in the village of Vitsa, which can be dated back to the third quarter of the fourth century BC.

⁶⁰ D.S. 19.36.5.

⁶¹ Polyb. 4.62.1-2, 4.67.1-4.

⁶² Polyb. 5.8.1-9, 5.5.1, 6.4.

 ⁶³ Gerogiannis 2021a, 27, 205-208 (MO_01 Mesogegyra), 209-210 (MO_02 Konitsa), 211-217 (MO_03 Agios Minàs), 260-261 (MO_23 Leprovouni), 262-264 (MO_24 Moni Sosinou), 265-275 (MO_25 Chrysorrachi), 281-282 (MO_27 Ieromnimi), 301-303 (MO_32 Polylofo), 316-327 (MO_35 Megalo Gardiki), 331-352 (MO_37 Kastritsa), 353-357 (MO_39 Episkopikò), 365-367 (MO_42 Myrodafni), 382-383 (MO_48 Paliokklisi), 387-400 (MO_50 Orraon), 431-434 (MO_61 Chouliarades), 445-448 (MO_66 Kalentzi), 452-453 (MO_68 Koukoulià).

⁶⁴ Vokotopoulou 2001 [1982], 153-160; 2001 [1994], 598.

Thus, we can consider that the system of Molossian fortifications might serve as an important indication regarding the areas of agricultural interest throughout the territory, in spite of the fact that the rural establishments themselves remain largely undiscovered due to the lack of archaeological excavations and prospection projects. Let us not forget that, in the Ioannina Basin itself, it is only when major infrastructure projects have been carried out that different non-fortified rural settlements centres have been discovered, evidence that went unnoticed by researchers up until that time.

As we shall see below, in other Epeirote territories these rural establishments existed alongside areas of worship of possible regional character; in the high lands of Molossia these places of worship have not been discovered directly, although there are some indications. Thus, for example, at the fortified centre of Ktismata, a fragment of a terracotta statue was found in a building;⁶⁵ similarly, in the vicinity of the fortress of Psina, another six small female terracotta figures were found, one of which dates from the end of the fifth century and beginning of the fourth century BC, being linked to a small sanctuary, of which we have no further details.⁶⁶ In addition to this scarce evidence, one of the interpretations of what is known as the "Votonosi Treasure" link this large collection of 45 bronze vessels dating from different ages (from the sixth and fifth centuries to the beginning of the third century BC) and made in different places with the possible treasure of a sanctuary,⁶⁷ although due to the circumstances of the discovery little more can be postulated.

In the case of the Ioannina Basin, as we have seen, by the end of the fifth century BC the agrarian landscape appears to have been made up of non-walled villages consisting of rectangular buildings, which were distributed throughout the territory according to both the agricultural and livestock opportunities and the viability of the terrain, especially the NW-SE axis that crossed the territory to the west of presentday Ioannina, as well as the E-W route that ran to the south of the lake and the walled settlement of Kastritsa. Amongst the establishments that have been identified, we might mention Agioi Apostoloi in Pedini, Episkopi Servianon and Rachi Platanias, the later undoubtedly being the most important of all those that have been discovered. 68 The number of lesser-known sites is even greater. ⁶⁹ These villages and farmsteads on the plain appear to have been protected (only from the early third century BC) by two fortified settlements, located, respectively, to the north and to the south of Lake Pamyotida, Megalo Gardiki and Kastritsa. In fact, and contrasting with former hypotheses, which were based more on a desire to grant greater antiquity to the political structuring of Epeiros than to objective facts, and which sought to date the origin of these fortified centres back to the fifth century BC, recent archaeological explorations have confirmed that these fortified enclosures emerged at around the beginning of the third century BC.70 This presupposes that, as of the emergence of this model of occupying the territory, which created a rural landscape made up of small villages and unfortified farmsteads, as of the end of the fifth century, resulting from the reformist policy of King Tharyps, as we have previously seen, this region

⁶⁵ Kleitsas 2010, 240; Gerogiannis 2021a, 233 (MO_07 Ktismata).

⁶⁶ Hammond 1967, 191; Gerogiannis 2021a, 304-306 (MO 33 Psina).

⁶⁷ Verdélis 1949, 19-28; Vokotopoulou 2001 [1975], 83-142; Gerogiannis 2021a, 409-419 (MO 55 Votonosi).

⁶⁸ Pliakou 2007, 152-158 (Agioi Apostoloi), 194-195 (Episkopi), 165-183 (Rachi Platanias); 2017-2018, 137-139.

⁶⁹ Pliakou 2007, 184-198; a map of the whole area in Pliakou 2017-2018, 134.

Pliakou 2017-2018, 140-141, with the previous bibliography.

did not have any effective defensive system in place. This would justify the large number of Molossian dead that resulted from the campaign that Alcetas I launched on the region, with the help of the Illyrians, in order to recover the throne, 71 although it is not unlikely that the figures may have been exaggerated somewhat. Whatever the case may be, the absence of an efficient defensive system for the territory may also have to do with a model of warfare based more on the strength of the army, either real or alleged, than on a defence strategy based on fortifications, something that would not have been exclusively the case of Epeiros. It is possible, however, that the new agrarian landscape that emerged in the Ioannina Basin as of the end of the fifth century may have been responsible for the expansion of the Molossian éthnos towards bordering territories, such as for example Dodona, which had been The protian but then passed into the hands of the Molossians during a period that tends to be dated between the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth century BC.72 This control may have been the consequence of conquest, as tends to be postulated, 73 but we cannot rule out the possibility that the Dodonians decided to voluntarily join the Molossian koinón with full rights. Such changes in membership from one *koinón* to another are not unknown in Epeiros, as witnessed by the already mentioned transfer of territories such as Orestis, Paravaea and Tymphaea from Molossia to Macedonia, possibly during the period of Philip II, the return of these territories to Epeiros under Pyrrhus or, within Epeiros itself, the changing ownership of Cestrine between Thesprotia and Chaonia.74

It would be quite suggestive to explain, at least in part, the rise of the Molossians as of the fourth century as being the consequence of the effective exploitation of these fertile lands in the Ioannina Basin, this itself being the result of royal initiative. This would presuppose the direct intervention of the monarchy, which, as we have seen, by considering the territory to be its own property, and following the Macedonian model, may have allocated royal lands to a diverse group of individuals. This would have ended up providing the foundation for a new and more structured army model than the one that previously failed, due to its poor organisation, 75 at Stratus in Akarnania in 429 BC. This reorganisation would have affected the mountain regions, even though we know little about the settlement of these territories during the fourth century, given that most of the information we have corresponds to the fortified enclosures, which are more visible in archaeological terms, but would not emerge, as we have seen, until the end of the fourth century BC. We might gain some idea from the only Molossian settlement located at altitude that has been excavated, Vitsa, which presents, thanks to its necropolis and stratigraphic analysis of the site, ongoing use between the ninth and the fourth century BC, when, during the third quarter, the site was razed to the ground and abandoned.⁷⁶

Returning to the region of the Ioannina Basin, this landscape made up of villages and unfortified farmsteads was completed with a series of sites of worship, which may have been local, restricted to parts of this region. Over and above the fact that

⁷¹ D.S. 15.13.2-3.

⁷² Str. 7.7.11; Dakaris 1971a, 21; Cabanes 1976, 113.

⁷³ Cross 1932, 6.

⁷⁴ Plu. *Pyrrh*. 6.4; Pascual 2020, 635-645.

⁷⁵ At least according to Th. 2.80.5-7, 2.81.4-5.

⁷⁶ Vokotopoulou 2001 [1987], 363-374; 2001 [1994], 595-626.

some building in these villages may have had some kind of religious and/or public purpose, as may have been the case with the series of edifices that make up Buildings A in the southern section of Rachi Platanias, we know of at least three sanctuaries in this area that would appear to have served the population established on the plains, although there would undoubtedly have been others which have yet to be discovered. One of these sanctuaries is located to the south-west of Ioannina, at Dourouti, some 200 m to the west of a necropolis that was used between the Geometric and the Hellenistic Periods, even though there are indications that it was used both before and after these periods.

The area corresponding to the sanctuary is made up of buildings of circular and rectangular design. Based on the discoveries that have been made, consisting of offerings, especially small feminine terracotta figures and the remains of sacrificed animals, the site has been linked with the cult to Demeter (or, at the very least, a chthonic divinity). Handicraft activities were also carried out in the area, such as weaving and metalworking, as occurred at other sanctuaries. The construction of these buildings would date back to the first half of the fourth century BC, although it appears that the site was already established as a place of worship before that date, although no constructions existed then. The sanctuary ceased to be used as of the end of the fourth century BC or some time later.⁷⁸

The other sanctuary we are aware of is located to the north of Ioannina, at Rodotopi, which has been identified as the Temple of Zeus Areios, where the oaths made by the Molossian monarchs mentioned above would have been carried out. ⁷⁹ Although this association has been called into question today, ⁸⁰ this certainly is an important site of worship, although its period of greatest splendour and, possibly, the construction of the first stone temple, tends to be dated back to the end of the third century BC, whilst it has also been suggested that the temple was dedicated to Artemis Hegemone. ⁸¹ Various discoveries, especially female terracotta figures and other remains, may indicate the existence of a site of worship in the area at least as of the fifth century BC, quite a long time before the construction of the stone temple. ⁸²

Finally, the last of the three sanctuaries, which is less known, is located in Driskos (formerly known as Vaxia), although it may correspond to another territory given that it is situated on the eastern side of Mount Driskos, overlooking the Arachthos River Valley. It was here that a series of female terracotta figures dating from the Early Hellenistic Period, together with other metallic items, were found, although the context is unknown. The terracotta figures have been associated with types linked to Athene, Artemis-Hecate and Aphrodite, and certain similarities have been noticed with regard to the figurines discovered at Rodotopi. 83

The monumentalisation of the sanctuary at Rodotopi, with the construction of the first stone temple, the prostyle tetrastyle *naiskos* dating from the end of the third century BC and the early second century BC, would have marked a new phase for

⁷⁷ Pliakou 2007, 167-170.

⁷⁸ Andréou – Gravani 1997, 581-626; Gravani 2004, 549-567; Andréou 2004b, 569-581; 2018, 101-116.

⁷⁹ Evangelidis 1952, 306-325.

⁸⁰ Pliakou 2011, 89-92.

⁸¹ Mancini 2018, 677-693; 2021, 51-87.

⁸² Pliakou 2007, 98; 2010, 414-419.

⁸³ Hammond 1967, 180-181; Tzouvara-Souli 1979, 11, 34, 57, 81.

this site of worship. We know little about its previous periods, but the site cannot have been especially monumental, which would be more in line with the landscape that existed throughout a good part of the fourth and third centuries BC, which was characterised by widely dispersed and unwalled villages distributed throughout the plains, centres that would only have been protected as of the early third century by fortified settlements, one of which, Megalo Gardiki, can be found close to this sanctuary. Similarly, the fact that no monumental architectural elements have been described at the sanctuary at Dourouti would suggest that this site, when it was abandoned at the end of the fourth century, continued to maintain its link with the rural environments where the majority of its devotees would have come from. This lack of monumentalisation does not imply poverty, however. Far from it, the necropolis located close to this sanctuary reveals a good level of wealth, replete with funerary offerings consisting of both pottery and local and imported metallic artefacts.⁸⁴

In the Ioannina Basin, therefore, we can find an interesting agrarian landscape, one that entails a break (an undoubtedly intentional break) with the past. And although these developments did not amount to synoecistic processes, they did organise and structure the population centres of Molossia, both in the important plains region and in the higher altitude areas, although this articulation is more difficult to observe in the latter. As we have suggested, this change process was associated with the figure of King Tharyps, serving as an indication of how the presence of the monarchy, whose power would only increase over time, also entailed the capacity to order and structure the territory as a foundation for a new political organisation. Nevertheless, this process was not especially rapid, and it must have consisted of different phases. For example, it has traditionally been thought, almost as a reflection of Tharyps' activities, that the construction of the first stone buildings at Dodona would be dated to around the end of the fifth century and the early fourth century BC,85 ignoring certain key archaeological information. New analyses, however, increasingly agree on the idea that the earliest monumentalisation initiative at Dodona would have taken place towards the end of the fourth century BC and beginning of the third, 86 which means that this would not have coincided with the integration of Dodona into Molossia, but, perhaps, with the creation or consolidation of the Epeirote state.

3. Thesprotia

Passing on from Molossia to Thesprotia, we can see that the latter region, prior to its integration into the Epeirote state, featured its own political developments, which, nevertheless, are not always easy to follow. One initial fact of interest is that, at least by the year 429 BC, the Thesprotians were no longer governed by monarchs, 87 but possessed some shared decision-making institution, which would also have controlled the army, as suggested by Thucydides' account. The various Thesprotian *éthne* would

⁸⁴ Andréou 2000, 23-38; 2004a, 557-568; 2009, 123-144; 2018, 101-116; Gravani 2004, 549-567.

⁸⁵ Dakaris 1971a, 39-42.

⁸⁶ Emmerling 2012, 259-261; Mancini 2021, 103-106.

⁸⁷ Th. 2.80.5.

have strengthened their political organisation, as testified by the appearance of the first coins in Elea as of around 360 BC, followed by the emergence of Elea and other centres such as Elina and Gitana towards the middle of the century. The appearance of the latter in a manumission inscription dating from the mid-fourth century BC that refers explicitly to a $\pi\rho\sigma\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\Theta\epsilon\sigma\pi\rho\omega\tau\~{\omega}v$, Pecals that Gitana was already the capital of the *koinón* around that time. The differences in territorial management witnessed in Molossia, on the one hand, and in Thesprotia and Chaonia, on the other, which would continue to exist throughout the Hellenistic Period, have been highlighted in various recent studies.

It is, above all, the recent explorations that have been carried out in the Kokytos River Valley that allow us to gain an idea of how the Thesprotian territory was organised, at least partially. The area that was studied by this project was bordered, at its north-eastern end, by the city of Elea, located on the side of Mount Korila, overlooking the plains some 400 m below. The founding of this city did not entail the abandonment of the agricultural and livestock establishments already in existence on the plains, although it is difficult to know whether the latter came under the control of the city, forming part of its *chóra*, or whether they maintained their independence.

The settlements that have been found on the plains traversed by the Kokytos were, above all, farms and villages, although the proximity of some of these structures enables us to talk about "clusters", of which several have been identified, such as Gephyrakia/Mavromandilia91 and Agora,92 which can be dated from between the Classical and the Early Hellenistic Periods, although traces of earlier occupation have been detected at certain points. Although less thoroughly explored, there may have been a further two clusters (Sevasto and Gardiki) in the area that was studied.⁹³ To these clusters could be added a third, which presents the unique feature of having its own place of worship, that of Kyra Panagia; in the vicinity, archaeologists discovered four houses, tombs and other buildings. The chronology of the complex is similar to that of the previous cases, even though the building devoted to worship, which has been defined as a "rural temple", appears to have been in operation since the beginning of the fifth century BC, thus pre-dating the founding of Elea itself,⁹⁴ although it is possible that the religious building was constructed between the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the third. 95 This building consisted of a small rectangular temple, in which a large amount of votive material was discovered, above all female terracotta figures linked to Persephone, Demeter, Aphrodite and Athena. To the east of the temple, an altar was identified.⁹⁶

It is possible that another centre for worship in the Thesprotian region, located not too far away from this area in the middle of the Kokytos Valley, could be the Nekyomanteion of Acheron (the real one, not the site that has traditionally been

Domínguez 2019, 339-361, with the previous bibliography; Pascual 2019, 189-206.

⁸⁹ Dakaris 1972, 86; Cabanes 1976, 576-577.

⁹⁰ Gerogiannis 2021a, 122.

Forsén 2011, 10-12; sites PS 35, PS 46 and PS 36 (villages) and PS 31, PS 37 and PS 44 (farms); Forsén et alii 2011, 99-105.

Forsén 2011, 12-13; sites PS 29, PS 30, PS 48 (villages), PS 49 (farm); Forsén et alii 2011, 116-119.

⁹³ Forsén 2011, 13; Turmo 2011, 181-201.

⁹⁴ Forsén 2011, 9-10, points PS 5, PS 6, I-IV, E 15; Forsén et alii 2011, 82-84.

⁹⁵ Mancini 2021, 296-305.

⁹⁶ Riginos 1998, 538-540; Svana 2009, 89-96; 2015, 457-463.

identified as such), and which is mentioned explicitly by Herodotus, although its exact location is still unknown.⁹⁷ The chthonic nature of this site is evidenced by coins from Elea and subsequently by those of the Thesprotians, which represent Hades, Persephone and Kerberos.⁹⁸

It appears that this settlement pattern, based on small villages and closely-linked farmsteads just 1.5-2 km to 2.5-3 km apart, may also have existed in this part of the mid-Kokytos Valley since the Archaic Period, although it is not clear how the area was affected by the urbanisation process that took place throughout the territory as of the mid-fourth century BC. Family groups may well have lived in these villages, 99 and the pre-existence and maintenance of places of worship linked to the territory, such as Kyra Panagia, would certainly constitute an indication that this was case.

Nevertheless, important changes took place throughout this territory that would appear to have transformed this agrarian landscape. For one thing, we might mention the appearance of a number of important tombs, which we can associate with the development of a powerful landowning aristocracy that distributed its grave sites throughout the territory, possibly as an indication of ownership. Thus, we have the tomb at Prodromi, located under a burial mound and featuring exceptional weaponry, including two helmets, one made of silver and the other of iron, together with an iron breastplate replete with gold adornments, amongst other items, which can be dated back to the third quarter of the fourth century BC. 100 We might also mention the grand funerary monument of Marmara Zervochori (whose sides measure more than 15 m in length), which has been plundered since Ancient times, but where the remains of a gold crown and other items were discovered, this obviously being the property of an important local family of the first quarter of the third century BC; in addition, this site may have served as a heróon. 101 These prestigious tombs might also be complemented by another tomb of Macedonian type, if a frieze discovered at the fortified centre of Agios Donatos, which we shall refer to below, corresponds to the front of one of them (Fig. 2). 102

This complex at Agios Donatos is another site of interest. Located in the first foothills that rise up to the mountains of Paramythia from the plains, but featuring clear views of the latter, Agios Donatos is situated on a small terrace measuring between 20 and 70 m in width, being protected on its northern side by the mountain, whilst a wall measuring some 215 m in length was built on the southern side, replete with a tower and two gates, all built in the polygonal style. This construction can be dated back to the first half of the third century BC, possibly to the reign of Pyrrhus. The small size of the settlement (1.1 ha) shows that, in spite of being fortified, this could not have been a city, but rather "the fortified stronghold of an aristocratic family". This role as a noble residence, together with its function as a means of monitoring the agricultural and livestock activities of the nearby plains, is

⁹⁷ Hdt. 5.92η; Fouache – Quantin 2004, 163-178; Mancini 2017, 20; 2020, 31-66.

⁹⁸ Franke 1961, 41-42, 48-49.

⁹⁹ Forsén 2011, 14.

Choremis 1978, 223-226; 1980, 3-20.

¹⁰¹ Riginos 1999, 173-174; Pietilä-Castrén 2008, 33-51; Tsinas 2008, 53-54.

¹⁰² Tikkala 2009, 133-143.

¹⁰³ Suha 2009, 119-132; 2011, 203-215; Forsén 2011, 15; Forsén et alii 2011, 109-113.

¹⁰⁴ Forsén 2009, 1-13.



Figure 2. The fortified site at Agios Donatos (author's photograph).

corroborated, in this case, by the existence of a Roman villa dating from the second century BC within the same walled enclosure, which is to say, dating from the period shortly after Rome's annexation of Epeiros. Another settlement, possibly of a similar kind and featuring a similar timeline, although less well preserved, was discovered at Kioteza, almost a kilometre to the south-east of Agios Donatos. On the south-east of Agios Donatos.

We believe that the appearance of these isolated and wealthy monumental tombs as of the end of the fourth century, continuing into the early third century, together with the emergence of fortified enclosures that appear to be aristocratic residences designed to monitor agricultural lands, could be associated with transformations in the agrarian landscape of the mid-Kokytos Valley resulting from changes in the political structure of Epeiros. As the explorations carried out by the Finnish school have demonstrated, settlement throughout this region appears to have been ongoing since at least the beginning of the Classical Period (or even before), and these researchers may well be right when they observe that the emergence of the city of Elea may have been due to an increase in the region's population, rather than a process of synoecism, an increase that would have led to the growth of this centre without entailing the depopulation of the surrounding territory. 107 Neither the appearance of this city nor the consolidation of the *koinón* of the Thesprotians would appear to have changed the situation. Nevertheless, the monumental tombs, some of which may have been active for some time if we are correct in assuming their function as *heróa*, together with the appearance of fortified enclosures, which do not appear to have had a military purpose (although they were used for defence and protection, amongst other things) could testify to the promotion of certain individuals

¹⁰⁵ Forsén 2019a, 18-19; 2019b, 361-372.

¹⁰⁶ Forsén et alii 2011, 114; Suha 2011, 216-223.

¹⁰⁷ Forsén 2011, 15.

and families that formed part of the new political circle in Thesprotia during the reign of Alexander I, namely the political realm of the Epeirote state. This king, who would have gained control of lands in different parts of his kingdom, in the same way in which he was the "owner" of Molossia (as his sister, Olympias, would have wanted in the passage mentioned above), ¹⁰⁸ may well have modified their attribution, passing the territories and the corresponding villages into his own hands, thus enabling him to grant these lands to those friends and companions (φίλοι, ἑταῖροι) who may have served him in outstanding fashion during the war or in other matters. 109 As we have seen in another study, the Epeirote system of government, in similar fashion to other monarchies at the time and, subsequently, the Hellenistic kingdoms, depended, above all, on the monarch's "court", in which these individuals played a key role. 110 These new groups, privileged due to their direct links with the king, built fortified residences in the lands whose control and whose income had been allocated to them. They were also buried, in isolated tombs, in these same lands, which now belonged to them, either in their capacity as owners or as usufructuaries. We could not find a starker contrast between the villages and farmsteads, representing the traditional type of settlement, and the new constructions and tombs that emerged after Thesprotia was integrated into the Epeirote state and came under the rule of the Aeacid monarchs.

In the southern part of Thesprotia, very close to Kassopia, which would be split from the former by Philip II in order to be incorporated into Molossia, we can observe the succession of two different models in the same place, specifically on the hill of Mesopotamos. Although lacking a precise context, in the area around the southwestern foot of the hill, various terracotta figurines were discovered that have been interpreted as depicting Persephone, together with ceramics dating from between the seventh and fifth centuries. ¹¹¹ Although these items correspond to a place of worship, this site has not been found, and even though it may have been located close to the deposits at the top of the hill, as the corresponding excavator suggested, ¹¹² the fact is that the construction of the fortified tower (erroneously identified as the "Nekyomanteion") at the end of the fourth century to early third century radically transformed the use of the space available (**Fig. 3**).

This building is a fortified aristocratic residence, whose most outstanding feature is the high tower overlooking the surrounding areas, which served both as a place of storage and a place for processing the products from the fields that were supervised and protected by it. Before it was destroyed by the Romans, this building had already undergone various modifications and, in the archaeological layers corresponding to this destruction, the remains of at least seven catapults were discovered. It is suggestive to link the appearance of the initial building with the Molossian monarchy's desire to make its presence felt in a territory that had only recently been annexed (342 BC) and whose exploitation may have resided in the hands of the king

¹⁰⁸ Hyp. *Euxenip*. 25.

D.H. 20.9.1, 20.12.2; Plu. Pyrrh. 7.9, 15.7, 16.7, 16.12-16, 17.1, 17.8, 20.10, 21.15, 29.2-3, 29.9, 34.1, 34.11; Just. Epit. 25.3.4, 29, 2-3.

¹¹⁰ Domínguez 2022, 1-37; see also Anson *et alii* 2021, 3-4.

¹¹¹ Dakaris 1958, 97-98; Tzouvara-Souli 1979, 103.

¹¹² Dakaris 1958, 97-98.

Baatz 1982, 211-233; 1999, 151-155. Thoroughly addressed in Domínguez forthcoming.



Figure 3. The fortified farm at Mesopotamos/Nekyomanteion (author's photograph).

(through his administrators or οἰκονόμοι) or which may have been assigned to one of his *philoi* or *hetaîroi*.¹¹⁴ Whatever the case may be, this political change had an impact on the agrarian environment, which would be transformed by a tower visible from all points of the surrounding area.

4. Chaonia

The monarch's capacity to act on the Epeirote territory and the corresponding management of same appears to be increasingly evident, 115 and we can observe precisely this, for example, in Pyrrhus' colonisation policy. The testimony we have in sources of a city being founded consists of Berenike, which would have been located somewhere on the Preveza Peninsula, possibly at Michalitsi or at Kastrosykia. 116 It is possible that the founding of this new city was favoured by the fact that Alexander I would have received this territory, which corresponded to Kassopia, from Philip II, in which respect the Molossian monarchs would have been able to exercise their authority there with few reserves or no reserves whatsoever.

Furthermore, the other founding of a city by Pyrrhus, which is not reflected in written sources but could only correspond to this monarch, was Antigonea, established

¹¹⁴ Domínguez 2022, 9.

¹¹⁵ Gerogiannis 2021a, 105-106, 141.

¹¹⁶ Plu. Pyrrh. 6.1: Dakaris 1971b. 43-44. 73.

in the early third century BC, 117 which also reveals something interesting. In effect, this city was located in Chaonia, whose integration into the Epeirote state may have been subsequent to that of Thesprotia, although this is not necessarily the case. 118 The fact that a monarch, who was Molossian, was able to use lands to create a new city in Chaonia would seem to clearly indicate the monarchy's capacity to interfere in the internal organisation of the kingdom, although we cannot know whether he required the approval of the Chaonian authorities to do so.¹¹⁹ Whatever the case may be, it appears that Pyrrhus, once firmly established on the throne, must have taken the trouble to free himself of those who had disputed his authority (supporters of his companion on the throne, Neoptolemus II)¹²⁰ and, previously, that of his father. And once he had achieved this, he cannot have experienced too many problems in carrying out his projects for Epeiros, an initiative which would most probably have been favoured by the considerable increase in royal lands (βασιλική χώρα). Pyrrhus had behaved in the same way as the enemies of his father, Aeacides, who, following the latter's expulsion, had killed all of his friends (φίλοι). 121 This was the same treatment Pyrrhus himself had witnessed following his expulsion, when his friends were also banished, and the properties of the king and his supporters were grabbed (τὰ χρήματα διήρπασαν). 122

It is, above all, in Chaonia where some of the establishments have been found that correspond to the type of *Turmgehöfte* or fortified farmsteads associated from the very beginning with the large landowners and the control of the large estates, ¹²³ although some scholars have sought to allocate them somewhat more specific purposes. ¹²⁴ This type of construction undoubtedly corresponds to the building in Mesopotamos, and even the structure in Agios Donatos, although based on another model.

It is possible that the urbanisation process in Chaonia took place later than in other parts of Epeiros such as Thesprotia, although there, as we have seen, urbanisation appears to have entailed the growth of certain places without any real synoecistic processes, whilst in Molossia, perhaps with the exception of Dodona¹²⁵ and, perhaps, Ioannina, ¹²⁶ this urban phenomenon does not appear to have been especially intense either. The first city that seems to have appeared in Chaonia was Phoinike, which is mentioned on the *theorodókoi* list for Argos (circa 330-324 BC).¹²⁷ From an archaeological point of view, the urban organisation of the city corresponds to the last third of the fourth century and the beginning of the third century BC, although the city's heyday was in the mid-third century BC, ¹²⁸ which is also corroborated by

¹¹⁷ Çondi 2018a, 529-538, featuring the abundant prior bibliography.

¹¹⁸ Pascual 2018, 63.

We have very little information about the ruling system of the Chaonians. The most precise reference is given by Thucydides (2.80.5), narrating the campaign of 429 BC against the Acarnanians when he says that, like the Thesprotians, they had no king (ἀβασίλευτοι), and at that time were led by two annually elected *prostátai*, who came from the (old) royal family (ἐκ τοῦ ἀρχικοῦ γένους).

¹²⁰ Heckel 2021, 73-75.

¹²¹ Plu. Pyrrh. 2.1.

¹²² Plu. Pyrrh. 4.2.

¹²³ Haselberger 1978, 147-151.

¹²⁴ Morris – Papadopoulos 2005, 155-225.

¹²⁵ Domínguez 2020, 557-564.

¹²⁶ Gerogiannis 2021b, 516-517.

¹²⁷ Cabanes 1976, 118; Perlman 2000, 205, 276.

¹²⁸ Lepore 2017, 522-523; Gjongecaj – Lepore 2017, 309-312.

the necropolises.¹²⁹ New explorations have suggested that the initial urban area would have only encompassed the easternmost part of the hill, which, since the time of Ugolini, has been called the "acropolis".¹³⁰ Also located in the south of Chaonia, Bouthrotos would have also begun its urban development following the end of the Corinthian Period, in the late fourth century and early third century BC, as testified by various sections of wall¹³¹ that have been dated back to the reign of Pyrrhus, as in the case of Phoinike.¹³²

We have an oracular tablet from Dodona in which the "city of the Chaonians" ($\dot{\alpha}$ πόλις $\dot{\alpha}$ τῶν Χαόνων) asks whether the site of the Temple of Athena Polias can be changed. Following a series of differing proposals, it has been dated to around 330-320 BC. He first publisher, followed by others, identified this city of the Chaonians as Phoinike, the main city and capital of the region, salthough more recently others have preferred to interpret πόλις as referring to the Chaonian state. Nevertheless, in the last analysis, the usual political concepts in Epeiros have become somewhat blurred and we can talk about "la comunità étnica che si aggrega attorno a un centro egemone", which is not too far removed from what we have observed in Thesprotia.

All of this suggests that the urbanisation of Chaonia would appear to have still been quite precarious at the beginning of the third century, which would have facilitated the founding of Antigonea and, eventually, the allocation of a part of the Chaonian territory to large landowners associated with the king, who would have built their fortified residences on these lands. Amongst these, the best known are located in the area around Phoinike and Bouthrotos, such as Matomara, ¹³⁸ Metoqi, ¹³⁹ Çumpora, ¹⁴⁰ Çuka¹⁴¹ and Malathrea, ¹⁴² amongst others (**Figs. 4, 5, 6**). ¹⁴³ Dobra would also need to be added to these sites, following the discovery of a tower, ¹⁴⁴ which would have formed part of a fortified residence, together with remains of what has been identified (with good reason) as a temple, possibly dating from the third century BC, from which various sculptures originate, ¹⁴⁵ although dating from subsequent periods. ¹⁴⁶

¹²⁹ Lepore – Muka 2018; Lepore 2020, 209-238.

¹³⁰ Giorgi – Lepore 2020, 161-164.

¹³¹ Hernández 2017, 248-250.

¹³² Giorgi – Lepore 2020, 171-172.

¹³³ Evangelidis 1953-1954, 99-103.

¹³⁴ Lhôte 2006, 61.

¹³⁵ Evangelidis 1953-1954, 101-102; Dakaris et alii 1993, 511-516.

¹³⁶ Cabanes 1976, 187-188, 192-193; Lhôte 2006, 60-61.

¹³⁷ Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 402.

¹³⁸ Bogdani – Giorgi 2011, 395-398; Giorgi – Bogdani 2011a, 105-106; 2011b, 105-116.

¹³⁹ Budina 1971, 292-293; Giorgi 2004, 127; Bogdani 2011, 138-139; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 167-169; Çondi 2013, 417-419; 2017, 173-182.

¹⁴⁰ Budina 1971, 301; Baçe 1987, 36-37; Giorgi 2004, 125-127 [here called Çuka]; Cabanes et alii 2008, 92-93 (also called Çuka); Bogdani 2011, 139; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 173-175; Çondi 2013, 416-417; 2017, 164-173.

¹⁴¹ Budina 1971, 299-300; Cabanes et alii 2008, 92-93; Bogdani 2011, 139; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 172-173.

Budina 1971, 322-323; Çondi 1984a, 131-152; 2013, 412-414; Cabanes et alii 2008, 95-97; Bogdani 2011, 141; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 253-254.

¹⁴³ Condi 2017, 183-190.

¹⁴⁴ Çondi 1984b, 266-267; 1986, 262-263; 2013, 415-416; 2018b, 173-198; Bogdani 2011, 140; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 193-194.

¹⁴⁵ Budina 1971, 314-315; De Maria – Mercuri 2007, 150-159; De Maria – Mancini 2018, 221-222.

¹⁴⁶ Melfi – Martens 2020, 575-606.



Figure 4. The fortified farm at Malathrea (author's photograph).

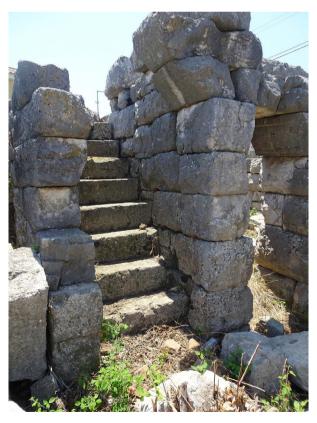


Figure 5. The fortified farm at Çumpora (author's photograph).



Figure 6. The fortified farm at Dobra (author's photograph).

There are not that many extra-urban places of worship that have been detected in Chaonian territory, as some authors have pointed out¹⁴⁷ although this function can be suggested for some cases and a number of other establishments has also been detected, such as fortifications on mountain ridges, settlements of various types in low-lying areas, etc.,¹⁴⁸ which may have to do with the mechanisms whereby the agrarian landscape was shaped in this part of Northern Epeiros, perhaps by the kings themselves. In the area around Antigonea, some of these fortified residences may also have existed, although the information we have is less explicit;¹⁴⁹ among them, the sites of Labove e Siperme and Dholani e Derviçan have been mentioned.¹⁵⁰ The period of construction of all these structures would be around the third century BC.

5. Final observations

In what we have seen so far, we can observe the capacity of the Aeacid monarchs to act with regard to Molossian territory, at least as of the end of the fifth century and the early fourth century. Starting in this period, they promoted the emergence of villages in the area of the Ioannina Basin, but then extended their activity to the rest of Epeiros with the establishment of the Epeirote state, as witnessed by the construction of fortified enclosures of different kinds in the mountain areas of Molossia, as well as in the Ioannina Basin. They also initiated the process of monumentalisation in Dodona, and they introduced changes in the agricultural property system in the Kokytos Valley,

¹⁴⁷ De Maria – Mancini 2018, 200-201.

¹⁴⁸ Perna 2021, 539-542.

¹⁴⁹ Budina 1974, 354-355; Bogdani 2011, 142; Giorgi – Bogdani 2012, 304-305; Marziali et alii 2012, 96-99.

¹⁵⁰ Perna 2021, 541.

promoting the creation of aristocratic realms that were superimposed on the previous agrarian landscape, an initiative we can also observe in the area where the Kokytos and Acheron Rivers met (what is known as the "Nekyomanteion"), all this at the end of the fourth century and early third century BC. The area where we can best observe these developments is Southern Chaonia, where the presence of various of these fortified residences can be linked to the creation of large estates, which would have benefitted the kingdom's elite class, made up of the *philoi* and *hetaîroi* of the king. Neither should we rule out the existence of areas controlled directly by the monarch himself, which would have also required structures for supervision and control. It is possible that, alongside this policy in favour of the Epeirote aristocracy, the monarchs may have also encouraged the development of more or less urban centres, until, in the period of Pyrrhus' reign, they proceeded to found a series of new cities (Berenike, Antigonea), based on a similar approach to that of Philip II in Macedonia (not to mention Archelaus) and Alexander the Great in the territories they conquered, an approach continued by the Diadochi, with whom Pyrrhus maintained intense relations and whose policies he also applied in his own kingdom.

There is little doubt that agrarian landscapes, throughout the Greek world as a whole, are linked to the political structures characteristic of each polis or koinón, and the case of Epeiros is no different, although the distinctive feature here appears to be associated with the existence of a monarchy in Molossia that appears to have acquired increasing power as of at least the end of the fifth century BC, extending this authority to the Epeirote state as a whole when it was established during the reign of Alexander I, as we have proposed. If, in Thesprotia, the exploitation of the river valleys, such as the Kokytos Valley, by means of small villages and neighbouring farmsteads is a phenomenon that may have originated in the Late Archaic and Early Classical Periods, on the plains of Molossia we have the impression that this may have been the result of the direct intervention of the monarchy, judging by the role attributed to Tharyps by Ancient sources. Whatever the case may be, and as we have sought to demonstrate, the process of fortification of the territory as of the time of Alexander I and up to that of Pyrrhus, must be attributed to the direct initiatives undertaken by the monarchy, with the situation being consolidated during the reign of Alexander II. However, at the same time, during this same period we can observe important changes in both Thesprotia and Kassopia and Chaonia, with the emergence of fortified farmsteads, which testify to the presence of large aristocratic landowners or areas under the king's control. These fortified constructions provided an additional source of protection, an obvious indication that we are dealing with a new way of organising the territory, based on a policy designed to facilitate the development of a new agrarian landscape. The territory, thus, bears traces of a powerful monarchy whose control over the economic resources of the state is an additional feature of its overall authority. The references we made at the beginning of this study to Cleopatra's access to grain for selling purposes or Olympias' response to the Athenians, reminding them that she was the owner of Molossia, would seem to corroborate this thesis. Our analysis of the territory, made up as it is of a geographically difficult and complex terrain, would appear to confirm all of our conclusions, and it may also explain why, in addition to Pyrrhus' personality, during his reign, and those of his predecessors and direct successors, Epeiros became a new power to be reckoned with, one that was capable of undertaking important military expeditions outside its territory, although the success of these campaigns was not always what the promotors may have hoped for.

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