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Pausanias' Messenian Itinerary and the Journeys of the Past

Summary

Messene was unusual among ancient *poleis*. It was one of the few major settlements on the Greek mainland to be founded in the Hellenistic period. Moreover, on account of this, its claim to a culturally authoritative past rooted in the mythic period could not rest on suppositions about the continuity of knowledge handed down through the continuation of civic, cultic, and communal institutions. This chapter examines how Pausanias' account of Messenia (book four of his *Periegesis*) approaches this dilemma by making knowledge both an artefact preserved unchanged in texts, and a conceptual possession encountered and attained through travel. It goes on to argue that the interplay between these two forms of knowledge is specifically relevant to this text, since the *Periegesis* also serves as a fixed, written object, which nonetheless offers opportunities for autonomous exploration and experience to the hodological reader-traveler.

Keywords: Pausanias; Messenia; travel writing; Homer; genealogy; Greek myth; transmission of knowledge

Messene war eine ungewöhnliche *Polis*. Gegründet in hellenistischer Zeit, war sie eine der wenigen großen Siedlungen auf dem griechischen Festland. Messenes Ansprüche auf eine kulturelle Vergangenheit, die Maßstäbe setzte und in mythischen Zeiten wurzelte, konnten daher nicht auf bloßen Vermutungen über die Kontinuität des Wissens, das durch bürgerliche, kultische und kommunale Institutionen weitergegeben wurde, beruhen. Dieses Kapitel untersucht wie sich Pausanias in seiner Darstellung von Messene diesem Dilemma nähert (im vierten Buch seiner *Periegesis*), indem er Wissen sowohl zu einem Artefakt erklärt, das unverändert in Texten erhalten ist, als auch zu einem konzeptuellen Besitz, der durch Reisen erworben werden kann. Es soll gezeigt werden, dass gerade das Zusammenspiel dieser beiden Wissensformen von größter Bedeutung für den Text ist, da Pausanias' *Periegesis* selbst als ein festgeschriebenes Objekt verstanden werden kann, welches gleichwohl Gelegenheit bietet, vom hodologisch versierten Text-Reisenden eigenständig erkundet und erfahren zu werden.

Keywords: Pausanias; Messenien; Reiseliteratur; Homer; Genealogie; griechische Mythologie; Wissenstransfer

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I Introduction

The idea that knowledge possesses spatial dimensions seems so obvious to us in English that we barely register it as a figural trope. Knowledge can be described as a landscape with disciplinary boundaries and frontiers, intellectual climates, conceptual landmarks and horizons; it can be discovered, explored, and charted.¹ In our hyper-literate culture, knowledge is encoded in stable, tangible forms; and yet we instinctively speak of the textual archive as if it were a living organism, still developing and forming. Even an ancient text can communicate to us as if a present interlocutor: “Herodotus says that...” “He makes the point that...” “This means that...”² Despite the separation of millennia, millennia that have seen the emergence of ever more sophisticated technologies for recording and storing information, we hold to the idea that knowledge is attained through personal, experiential intimacy.

The spatiality of the textual archive overwhelms its potential temporal dimensions: we would naturally say “*where does Herodotus say that?*” (and not, for example, “*when did Herodotus say that?*”). We *look* for information *in particular places* (regrettably we cannot replicate the ambivalence of τόποι or *loci*); we *encounter* characters in novels; we *stumble across* useful references; and when we experience a moment of *aporia* – where we cannot proceed further because we have lost the track we were following – we describe this as a ‘dead-end’. Such figurative language is neither accidental nor insignificant. It accompanies the very practical observation that texts preserve knowledge in material forms but that such knowledge is activated through human action and desire. Transmission is less a facet of precise, disinterested objectivity; it is rather a product of countless interlocking journeys through space and time. For travel is made up of irreplicable moments, of accidental encounters, and of subjective observations. To attribute this sensibility to texts is to lend them an experiential ephemerality.

1 For knowledge as a territory and a journey, see Salmond 1982, esp. 68–72, who rightly goes on to argue for the cultural specificities of such tropes.

2 On this point, Pausanias is instructive: when he uses

present tense verbs of speaking or showing, only context allows the reader to determine if he is referring to a written or an oral source. See Jones 2001, 34.

In this chapter I explore how Pausanias combines the concept of knowledge preserved unchanged through time in texts with the idea of knowledge as something encountered and attained through travel. These two aspects of knowledge are not, as we have seen, antithetical, and Pausanias brings them together in various configurations in his account of Messenia. The particular history of this region, which only emerged as an independent polity in the Hellenistic period, raises questions about how a previously subordinate group might claim to have kept safe and recovered unique knowledge about their past despite a long period of political subjugation. In this context, the necessity of journeying in search of knowledge and the need to exploit the preservative power of texts take on pragmatic pertinence. That said, we must not fall into the trap of assuming that, just because it is observably true that knowledge comes from both personal autopsy and from reading, all claims to have recovered knowledge in these ways are equivalent to 'real journeys.' As we shall see, in Pausanias' vision of Messenia such claims also bear rhetorical weight.

The area of the south-western Peloponnese designated Messenia was, from some point in the archaic period, subject to Lacedaemonian control. It developed a distinctive economic system based on helot labor within scattered, small-scale settlements. In 369 BC Epaminondas' defeat of the Lacedaemonians at Leuctra led to the founding of Messene beneath Mt Ithome as notional head of an independent Messenian polity.³ Pausanias' account reveals that the Messenians had developed this bare outline into a national foundation narrative – the Messenian Wars – of conquest, rebellion, and liberation. We recognize in this historical narrative a prime case-study in the mutually-enforcing power of mythmaking and *ethnogenesis*: it is not merely that Epaminondas' victories created a Messenian polity; the polity *required* stories of subjugation, resistance, and liberation as a foundation for its sense of identity.⁴ In this chapter I am not concerned with the strict historicity of Pausanias' account, nor with the question of whether particular aspects of Pausanias' account accurately transmit sources or attitudes apparent within Messenia at any point in its history. Rather, I take Pausanias' account as an idiomatic artifact in its own right, one that is "the product of his coming to terms with the structural aspects of Messenian memory and of the Messenian landscape, as they had been taking shape over the centuries";⁵ and one that in very real ways shaped how archaeologists and historians have understood and approached the region in the millennia since.⁶ In the three sections that follow, I examine how Pausanias grapples with the

3 Although the city bore the name Ithome, Pausanias calls it "Messene" and I, for clarity, follow his lead. His practice in this regard reflects his general conflation of the founding, ambitions, and perspective of the city, those of the broader Messenian polity, and the region of Messenia as a whole.

4 For the formation of Messenian identity, see esp. Alcock 1999; Alcock 2002, 132–175; Luraghi 2002; Luraghi and Alcock 2003; Luraghi 2008.

5 Luraghi 2008, 323.

6 For the influence of Pausanias' account in these ways, see Alcock, Cherry, and Elsner 2001, 146–153.

problem of conveying knowledge about a place whose relationship to secure knowledge was fraught.

2 The paths of Pausanias

Without Pausanias, we would know much less about ancient Messenia. His fourth book preserves – uniquely – the entire story of the Messenian Wars, and is our only detailed eyewitness account of Messenian topography.⁷ Yet, at the beginning of his account Pausanias comments not on the gaps in knowledge that he *does* fill, but on a particular gap that he cannot fill. So, regarding basic data on the region's eponymous heroine:⁸

I was eager to know the children born to Polycaon by Messene, so I read through (ἐπελεξάμην) the *Ehoëae* and the epic *Naupactia*, and then the genealogies of Cinaethon and Asius, but no reference is made to them in these works. I am aware that the *Great Ehoëae* says that the Polycaon who is the son of Butes married Euaichme, the daughter of Hyllus, son of Heracles, but it does not mention the Polycaon who was husband of Messene, nor Messene herself.⁹

With this extravagant display of *aporia*, Pausanias sets out his antiquarian bona fides and his Herodotean aspirations¹⁰ while pointing out a distinctive characteristic of Messenia: its traditions are poorly represented in the panhellenic textual tradition. In fact, without Pausanias' testimony we would assume that Messene was just another colorless eponym: among *our* mythographic resources, neither R. L. Fowler nor T. Gantz have information on her, and W. H. Roscher and J. Larson both send us to Pausanias.¹¹ Aside from some brief genealogical comments in a Euripidean scholion (*ad Or.* 932), only Pausanias offers Messene any kind of literary footprint. He explains her role in the early history of Messenia: she, daughter of the king of Argos and unsatisfied with being married off to the brother of the king of Laconia, persuaded her husband to raise an army and take Messenia as their own kingdom.¹²

7 The Messenian Wars dominate Pausanias' account of Messenia (4.4.1–4.27.11). He mentions two third-century writers as sources: the historian Myron of Priene and poet Rhianos of Bene. We cannot of course know how closely he followed either. See Musti and Torelli 1991, xvi–xxvii.

8 Another prominent comment on the lack of information regarding Messenia appears in Pausanias'

discussion of the hero(in)es associated with the sanctuary at Andania (4.33.6).

9 Paus. 4.2.1. All translations are my own.

10 Pausanias' unusual use of the verb ἐπιλέγομαι to mean 'read' here recalls Herodotus' usage. See Jones 2001, 34.

11 Drexler 1965, *s.v.* Messene; Larson 1995, 157.

12 Paus. 4.1.1–2.

We cannot know for sure where Pausanias found this information, but he must have had access to sources within the region itself. Pausanias models himself on Herodotus.¹³ He ascribes his authority to his extensive personal experiences and on-site investigation. This is not merely a rhetorical trope; without falling into the trap of equating autopsy with perfect knowledge, or suggesting that Pausanias offers unmediated access to epichoric sources, it is certainly the case that, whether we can prove that on-site research informs any one specific passage or not, the *Periegesis* is generally a product of personal travel, inquiry, and autopsy, and these affect its perspective.¹⁴

Travel also shapes the structure of the work. The ten books of the *Periegesis* describe the southern and central Greek mainland with each, more or less, dedicated to a different region.¹⁵ This framework, then, necessitates that a certain amount of time – so to speak – is spent in each region of Greece; thus, the small villages and outlying sanctuaries receive attention alongside the major poleis and panhellenic sites, and no region can be left out if the coverage is to be systematic. It is for precisely this reason that Pausanias' account of Messenia exists, and this is why Pausanias must record what he can about the eponym Messene, since such information is part of the standard genealogical material with which he begins each region.

The bulk of the *Periegesis* is taken up in itineraries through each region. These linear paths offer the reader encounters with the sights and traditions of Greece, one after the other. But in fact, there is a tension between the overall structure of the work, which assumes strict separation between each region and its neighbors, and the itineraries, which are concerned with the details of each place on the ground and where such demarcations might not be so clear. As Elsner observes, this collocation of geographical and textual divisions has phenomenological implications:

These borders, as felt by the traveller on the actual land and as announced to the reader by the text, [...] mark not merely lines on a map, but boundaries and thresholds in the *experience* of Greece. They delimit places not simply topographically, but as areas of culture, of race, of identity.¹⁶

13 This aspect of the text has been extensively documented. For details and bibliography, see Hawes 2015, 337–340.

14 The credibility of Pausanias' claims to autopsy was an important feature of his rehabilitation as a reputable author (most notably in Habicht 1985). More recent approaches have rather emphasized the literary aspects of the work (e.g. Hutton 2005; Pretzler 2007) and its reflection of cultural norms and ideological perspectives (e.g. many of the essays in-

cluded in Alcock, Cherry, and Elsner 2001). Such approaches complicate our understanding of Pausanias' relationship to the material he describes without of course undercutting the validity of his on-site observations. For attempted reconstructions of Pausanias' methods, see Jones 2001; Pretzler 2004.

15 The reality is, of course, rather more complicated. The best discussion on the structure of the work as a whole appears in Hutton 2005, 68–82.

16 Elsner 1992, 13. Italics are in original.

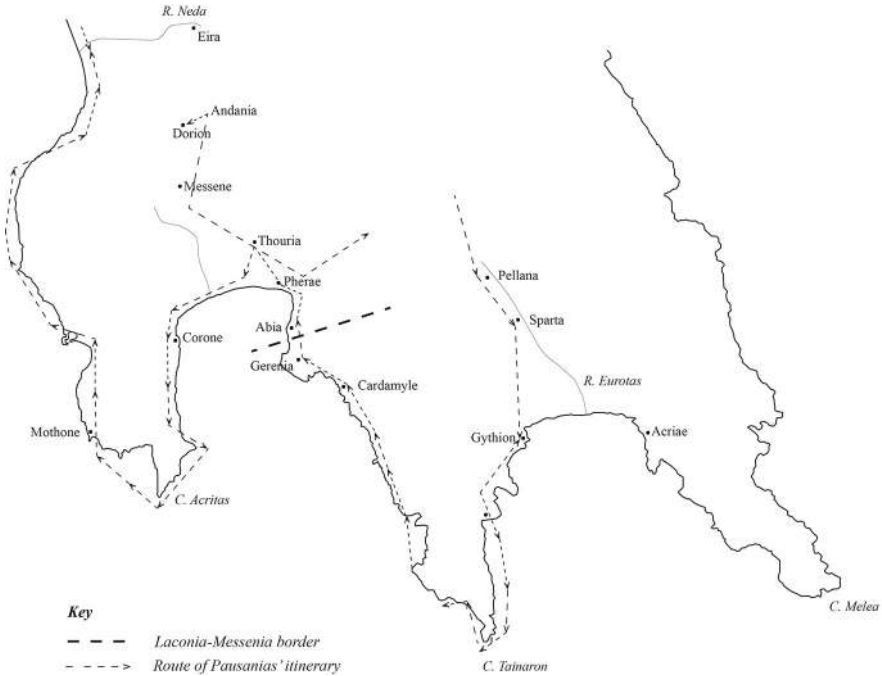


Fig. 1 Itineraries through Laconia and Messenia, *Periegesis* books 3 and 4.

When Pausanias disputes the border between Laconia and Messenia in the western Mani, the tension between geographical and textual integrity is palpable.¹⁷ This border was long contested and territory – notably the Ager Dentheliatis and the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis – changed hands several times in the Hellenistic and early Imperial periods.¹⁸ The border in Pausanias' time was the Choerius river, and he uses this to divide his third book – on Laconia – from his fourth – on Messenia (see Fig. 1). But in his account of the free Laconian poleis of the western Mani in the final chapters of book three, Messenian views begin to edge in, so that this area is marked out as notable on account of its ethnic porosity. In essence, Pausanias suggests that the current geo-political border is too far to the north to correspond to an essential cultural divide between the Laconians and the Messenians, and he makes this point not by *telling* the reader this, but by *showing* her: as she reads, the reader 'travels' towards and through the area in question, experiencing a textual simulation of contesting voices.

17 Thus, Shipley 2006, 38: "[Pausanias] is working with a model of land division that purports to make political reality conform with ethnic identity, and identifies certain changes [i.e. along the frontier be-

tween Messenia and Laconia] as violations of that code?"

18 See Cartledge and Spawforth 1992, 138–139; Luraghi 2008, 16–27.

Here are the relevant excerpts from the final chapters of book three:

The inhabitants of Thalamae say that the Dioscouri were born [on Pephnus, a nearby island]. ... The Messenians say that this land was once theirs, and so they consider that the Dioscouri belong more to them than to the Lacedaemonians.

Leuctra is 20 stades from Pephnus. I don't know the reason for the city's name. If, as the Messenians say, it is indeed from Leucippus, son of Perieres, then, I think, this would be why they worship Asclepius above all other gods, since they consider him to be the son of Arsinoe, daughter of Leucippus. ...

I know that the following happened in the territory of Leutra, towards the coast, in my own time. Wind pushed fire into a forest, and many of the trees were burned. The area was laid bare, and a statue of Zeus Ithomatas was found to have been set up there. The Messenians say that this is evidence that Leuctra was once part of Messenia. But it would be possible, if the Lacedaemonians have lived in Leuctra since ancient times, that *they* worshipped Zeus Ithomatas.

Cardamyle, which is included by Homer in the gifts promised [to Achilles] by Agamemnon, has been under the control of the Lacedaemonians at Sparta since the Emperor Augustus separated it from Messenia. ...

The city which is now called Gerenia was in the Homeric epics called Enope. Its inhabitants are Messenians, but it belongs to the league of the free Laconians. Some say that Nestor was brought up in this city, others that he came here as an exile after Heracles took Pylos. Here in Gerenia there is the tomb of Machaon the son of Asclepius, and a sanctuary. ... There is a statue of Machaon standing upright and wearing a crown on his head, which the Messenians call in their local dialect, *kiphos*.¹⁹

With notable regularity, Pausanias gives space to Messenian perspectives on the Laconian side of the border. In doing this, he emphasizes the preponderance of Messenian religio-mythical features there: Leucippus and Nestor were undeniably Messenian heroes (two of the few undisputed ones, in fact, as we shall see), and Zeus Ithomatas – despite Pausanias' skepticism – one of the few paradigmatically Messenian gods.²⁰ That Asclepius and the Dioscouri were Messenian were chancier claims, but could nevertheless be justified.²¹ Highlighting Messenian views within Laconian territory creates a

19 Paus. 3.26.2–11.

20 For his cult as a key element of Messenian identity both before and after liberation, see Alcock 2002,

143–144.

21 The Messenian claim to Asclepius and his family is discussed below.

suggestive ideological undercurrent to what is ostensibly a straightforward topographical description. The reader experiences these places as oriented towards the cultural network anchored across the Messenian border.

We can identify an even subtler example of Pausanias' biases at work in his identification of the sites of the seven cities "near the sea and bordering on sandy Pylos" that Homer has Agamemnon offer to Achilles in his attempt to placate him (*Il.* 9.149–153). When another geographer, Strabo, sets out to identify the locations of these cities, he describes a situation of uncertainty and dispute:

Of the seven cities offered to Achilles, I have already spoken of Cardamyle, Pherae, and Pedasus. Some say that Enope is Pellana, others that it is a place in the vicinity of Cardamyle, and others that it is Gerenia. Some identify Hire as a place on the mountain that is near Megalopolis in Arcadia, on the road leading to Andania (the one which I said is called Oechalia by Homer); but others say that Hire is now Mesola, which is on the gulf between Taygetus and Messenia. Aepeia is now called Thouria, the place I described near Pherae. It is sited on a high ridge, from which it got its name. ... Regarding Antheia, some say it is Thouria, and that Aepeia is Methone; but others say that Asine, which lies between the two, is the most likely of all Messenian cities to be described "rich in meadows" [i.e. the epithet of Antheia, *Il.* 9.151]. In the territory of Asine, on the sea, is the city Corone, and some say that this city was called Pedasus by Homer.²²

Strabo's ambivalence here is a useful point of contrast with Pausanias' approach since Pausanias, by contrast, identifies each of Homer's place names with a single location and mentions no disputes over such attributions. I set out the relevant identifications in Table 1. But of course, this table somewhat skews Pausanias' mode of presentation, for he does not discuss these identifications in a single passage as Strabo does. Rather, as in the examples of Cardamyle and Gerenia in the passage from the end of book three quoted above, he simply notes the Homeric connection when his narrative reaches the appropriate place. Thus, a reader like me wanting to identify all seven cities needs to hunt through Pausanias' third and fourth books and map the resulting data accordingly. Given the evidence of Strabo, we must recognize that Pausanias' seemingly straightforward identification of these cities is in fact the result of a particular interpretative stance. Two consequences of his decision to present the cities in this way would not be apparent to the casual reader of the text, working through it in a hodological manner, and yet they would nonetheless color her understanding of what she had read.

²² Strabo 8.4.5.

Homer (<i>Il.</i> 9.149–153)	Pausanias	Strabo
Cardamyle	Cardamyle 3.26.7	Cardamyle 8.4.4
Enope	Gerenia 3.26.8	Pellana / place near Cardamyle / Gerenia 8.4.5
Hire	Abia 4.30.1	Near Megalopolis / Mesola 8.4.5
Pherae	Pherae 4.1.4; 4.30.2–3	Pherae 8.4.4
Antheia	Thouria 4.31.1	Thouria / Asine 8.4.5
Aepeia	Corone 4.34.5	Thouria / Methone 8.4.5
Pedasmus	Mothone 4.35.1	Methone 8.4.3 / Corone 8.4.5

Tab. 1 The identities of the seven cities offered by Agamemnon to Achilles in Strabo and Pausanias.

Firstly, as we have seen, Pausanias identifies each city categorically. This gives the impression of Messenian consensus on the Homeric passage; in fact, as Strabo showed, most of the Homeric toponyms had several claimants within Messenia. The absence of any hint of disagreement in Pausanias' account strengthens his projection of a unified Messenian polity under the hegemony of Messene; in fact, such unity was much less apparent on the ground.²³ Secondly, whereas Strabo's locations take in Pellana (in Laconia, east of the Taygetos mountains) and Eira (on Messenia's northern border, identified with Hire), Pausanias' cluster tidily around the Messenian gulf (see Fig. 2). Identifying them in this configuration adds implicit weight to the idea that the second-century border is too far to the north. Pausanias' itinerary around the gulf encounters the cities in the same order that Homer listed them. The book division – corresponding to the contemporary border – thus seems to arbitrarily separate into two distinct groups those places forming a tight linguistic and conceptual cluster in the epic. If these seven cities belonged together in Homer, then Cardamyle and Gerenia, now lying in free Laconian territory, should not be detached from the other five.

23 Several poleis within the region had at various times asserted their independence from Messene (e.g. Abia, Pherae, and Thouria were independent members of the Achaean league from the early second century), and alignment with Lacedaemon is evident in Imperial Thouria and Cardamyle (see Luraghi 2008, 26, 37–39). Nonetheless, Pausanias only once suggests disagreement between Messenians, at 4.32.2, over a minor detail. On this passage,

see Luraghi 2008, 326–327. For further evidence of Messenian heterogeneity, see Spencer 1995, 289 (on subtle gradations apparent in archaeological evidence); Alcock 2002, 152–155, 164–167, 171–173 (on divergent memories); Luraghi 2008, 300–323 (on strategies for displaying prestige amongst the elites of Roman Messene). On the general phenomenon of diversity in Roman Greece, see Alcock 2002, 68–73; Jones 2004.



Fig. 2 Locations of the seven cities offered by Agamemnon to Achilles, according to Pausanias.

The observable phenomenon that travel and on-site investigation create knowledge makes a virtue of individual subjectivity: Herodotean-style rhetoric makes the possession of unique information and discriminating judgement products of personal experiences in the wider world. Such knowledge cannot be transferred to another person *tout court* (since the mechanisms that produce it are necessarily individualistic and empirical) but it can be communicated. Pausanias' mode of communicating his knowledge – a series of itineraries – simulate the sensations of travel so that the reader, too, encounters these places in a linear manner.²⁴ Yet her accumulation of knowledge through this process is controlled at each point by the set itineraries that Pausanias has created. She 'sees' only what Pausanias shows, and does not register what he does not mention. Her 'path of knowledge' through the *Periegesis* is not so much a 'real journey' as a matter of literary fact. What is put before her eyes does not change; yet, subjectivity remains at play. For even within this set narrative itinerary she might chose to hunt back and forth, putting

24 Here my approach to Pausanias parallels Michael Scott's description of a reader working her way through Strabo: "Literary constructs of space differ fundamentally from physical ones, since they unfold in a linear fashion as part of a narrative. [...] [The] reader is forced to discover parts of that construct as he travels along with Strabo in his *periplous* journey around the *oikoumene*. Learning is hodological; it is

a process, a journey. Our perspective as readers alternates as Strabo moves in his own spatial perspectives from bird's-eye cartographical description, through mythological and historiographical landscape, to join us as he travels himself around (some of) these regions [...] He learns as he moves through space, just as we do [...]" (Scott 2013, 157).

clues together in different ways. She might create a cumulative map of Homer's seven cities, for example, or her personal affiliations might drive her to resist Pausanias' philo-Messenian biases and to recognize that his highlighting of Messenian perspectives in the western Mani is no objective account of topographical fact. Because Pausanias 'shows' rather than 'tells', only through the experience of reading – that is, traveling along the paths that his itineraries offer – does the reader glean knowledge for herself.

3 The paths of exiles

Two compelling anxieties shaped the myth-making of post-liberation Messenia: the desire to promote a Messenian culture identifiably distinct from that of Laconia, and the desire to afford this culture the dignity of a long lineage. Within a culture in which authenticity and authority were rhetorically aligned to antiquity and originality, the 'break' in Messenian culture through the period of Lacedaemonian control posed a real problem. As Pausanias observes when his itinerary encounters the tombs of two prominent Messenian heroes at *Sparta*, stable political power is a prerequisite for the effective memorializing infrastructures that protect local knowledge:

The disasters which the Messenians suffered and the period of their exile from the Peloponnese have consigned to obscurity many of their early traditions, even now that they have returned. And because *they* no longer know these traditions, anyone who wishes may lay claim to them.²⁵

Whether – and how – Hellenistic Messenians could actually possess accurate knowledge of their pre-Lacedaemonian culture raises practical questions of cultural transmission. Of the two starkest possible responses – that successive generations of enslaved and exiled people carefully cultivated and passed on ancestral knowledge, or that in fact the Messenian past and the traditions of the region were deliberately invented *tout court* at the point of liberation – Pausanias holds optimistically to a version of the former.²⁶ He identifies several mechanisms through which the Messenians might have preserved earlier knowledge intact, and it is to these 'paths of knowledge' that I now turn.²⁷

25 Paus. 3.13.2.

26 Variations on these positions were put forward through the twentieth century by historians of ancient Messenia. For discussion, see esp. Alcock 1999. The work of Susan Alcock and Nino Luraghi (referenced throughout this chapter) has led debate in more productive directions by stressing the inventive power of cultural memory and the opportunis-

tic fluidity of collective identity.

27 In this chapter I am concerned only with Pausanias' assessment of the transmission of Messenian culture, not with the actual processes through which this might have been achieved. Alcock 2002, 132–164, examines the historical and archaeological evidence for opportunities within pre-liberation Messenia for the cultivation and communication of com-

Surprisingly, Pausanias says almost nothing about the activities of the helots – the enslaved population of the region – under Lacedaemonian control.²⁸ Rather, after Aristomenes' defeat he focusses on the various communities beyond the south-western Peloponnese who identified as Messenian exiles. As Pausanias tells it, it was almost entirely *external* agitation which brought about the expulsion of the Lacedaemonians, and the new Messenia was the product of the diaspora's uniform sense of identity and purpose:

After winning the battle at Leuctra, the Thebans sent messengers to Italy and Sicily and to the Euesperitae and they summoned to the Peloponnese Messenians from every other place where they might be. And the Messenians gathered faster than anyone might have expected, driven by a desire for their ancestral land, and by a lasting hatred of the Lacedaemonians.²⁹

Pausanias observes that, despite almost three centuries in exile – longer than any other Greek community – the Messenians preserved their ancestral traditions to a remarkable degree:

In this period they clearly lost none of the customs of their homeland, nor did they relinquish their Doric dialect: still today they preserve the purest Doric of all the Peloponnesians.³⁰

Here is Pausanias' first solution to the problem of Messenia's antiquity: a spectacular feat of trans-generational conservation by a scattered diaspora. This tidy narrative of knowledge preserved 'on the road' has obvious ideological advantages, not least because it offers a vision of how something authentically 'Messenian' might have survived untainted by Lacedaemonian influence. It invests preservative power not in physical spaces, material objects, or the institutions of the polis, but in the ephemeral, everyday phenomena of habitual customs and language within a community of people.

To be integral once more, then, the polity needs these exiles back in their 'proper' territory. But the people also need the land: Pausanias notes that Messenians of the diaspora won no victories at Olympia and yet, "when the Messenians returned to the Peloponnese, their luck in the Games returned too."³¹ Pausanias' second solution for the

munal memories. Luraghi 2008, 202–208, offers an assessment of the emergence of a distinct and unifying sense of Messenian identity in the region in the classical period which is narrower in focus and which stresses the role of *perioikic* communities.

28 See Asheri 1983, 39–41; Figueira 1999, 219–221. The helots are mentioned briefly at 4.23.1, and there is an account of their revolt at 4.24.5–7. Pausanias' general silence regarding the helots parallels the general absence of the centuries of Lacedaemonian

domination from the commemorative landscape of the region. Luraghi 2008, 219–227, argues that this characterizing of the exiles as the true descendants of the old Messenians and the core of the new polity (to the detriment of helot and *perioikic* populations) was the general Theban-Messenian position.

29 Paus. 4.26.5.

30 Paus. 4.27.11.

31 Paus. 6.2.11.

preservation of knowledge exploits this sense of the power of place via comments regarding the conservative capacity of objects buried in the ground. This motif bolsters the significance of the return of the exiles by having them encounter and recognize some aspect of Messenian culture, which had evaded the grasp of the Lacedaemonians. The most prominent merging of these epichoric and exilic lines of reasoning appears in the founding narrative of Messene. The influx of the exiles as a new population of Messenians is paralleled by a return of Messenian heroes: at the ceremonies marking the foundation of Messene, Epaminondas and the Thebans summon back the region's heroes to reside once more in the territory (*ἐπεκαλοῦντο δὲ ἐν κοινῷ καὶ ἥρωας σφισιν ἐπ' ἀνήκειν συνοίκους*³²); in the case of Aristomenes, the celebrated hero of the Messenian wars, they relocate his tomb from Rhodes.³³ But this spatial logic of exile and return operates in tandem with a story that stresses the importance of the new city's fixed location:

Epaminondas thought that it would be difficult to build a city which would withstand a Lacedaemonian attack, and was at a loss as to where this city might be sited. For the Messenians refused to live again at Andania or Oechia, since they had suffered disasters there. ...

Epiteles [an Argive general] was ordered in a dream to go to the place where yew and myrtle had grown on Ithome, to dig in its midst, and to rescue an old woman: she was shut up in a bronze chamber, worn-out, and almost dead. The next morning, he went to the place indicated and dug up a bronze urn. He took it straightaway to Epaminondas, explained about the dream, and urged him to remove the lid and look within. Epaminondas ... opened the urn and found within it sheets of tin, rolled exceptionally thinly.³⁴

Inscribed on these sheets are the mysteries of Andaria. Here writing has both conceptual and material aspects. Conceptually, writing affords support for cultic traditions; materially, writing exists as a precious object. These sheets of tin appeared earlier in Pausanias' account, being buried by Aristomenes.³⁵ There they are described obliquely as "something kept hidden" (*τι ἐν ἀπορρήτῳ*). An oracle foretells that, if these should be preserved safely, then the Messenians would again recover their land. Aristomenes, knowing this, and aware that defeat by the Lacedaemonians is imminent, buries them secretly on Ithome. Only with the retrieval of the texts three centuries – and seven chapters – later does the reader learn what exactly was the mysterious "something" whose preservation was so important. The effect of strategic ignorance in Pausanias' narrative

32 Paus. 4.27.6.

33 Paus. 4.24.3; 4.32.3.

34 Paus. 4.26.6–8.

35 Paus. 4.20.4.

mirrors the function of the texts themselves: they are physically in Messenia through the period of Lacedaemonian control, but the knowledge that they contain is only activated when they are recovered and read.

In both this oracle and an earlier dream,³⁶ the foundation of the new Messene is depicted metaphorically as the revivification of an old woman. Here political change is rendered paradoxically as ancient continuity: Messene is neither a new city nor a colony of Thebes. It is an ancient site inhabited once more by its proper population: immigrants who were not immigrants read texts long unread to found a new city to be home to a culture that is transplanted – yet local – to its new – native – soil. In Pausanias' account, Messenia's legitimacy is vouchsafed by the only mechanisms available to it: residence within the soil, and journeys out of and back into the region. These epichoric and external mechanisms are foils to each other: when the returning exiles' paths cross the tracks of the departing Aristomenes, the new Messene comes into being, and, crucially, the intervening centuries are lithely papered over.

These mechanisms reveal once more the false dichotomy between the stable existence of knowledge in textual form, and the ephemerality of knowledge gained through travel. For, in the case of the rites of Andania, these texts do not exist without their readership. In effect, only through the experience of being read are they activated as objects of knowledge.

4 Homeric paths

My final 'path of knowledge' again concerns the (re-)activation of texts. This time I am concerned not with secrets inscribed onto tin, but with the manifest authority of Homeric epic.

The period of Lacedaemonian control coincided with the flourishing of a panhellenic literature that made some Greek myths prominent beyond their local community and which served as a supra-regional mechanism for their future transmission. We have seen that Messene and Polycaon were practically invisible within this material; Pausanias believes that their descendants ruled for five generations, but he cannot name them.³⁷ With the next dynasty, however, he is on firmer ground. Over six chapters³⁸ he narrates Messenian myth down to the time of the return of the Heracleidae. The major figures in this account can be gathered together into a single genealogy (Fig. 3).

Pausanias' account is exceedingly tidy, and he presents it – remarkably – without mentioning any points of dispute over names or relationships. When we look closely

³⁶ Paus. 4.26.3.

³⁷ Paus. 4.2.2.

³⁸ Paus. 4.2.4; 4.3.2.

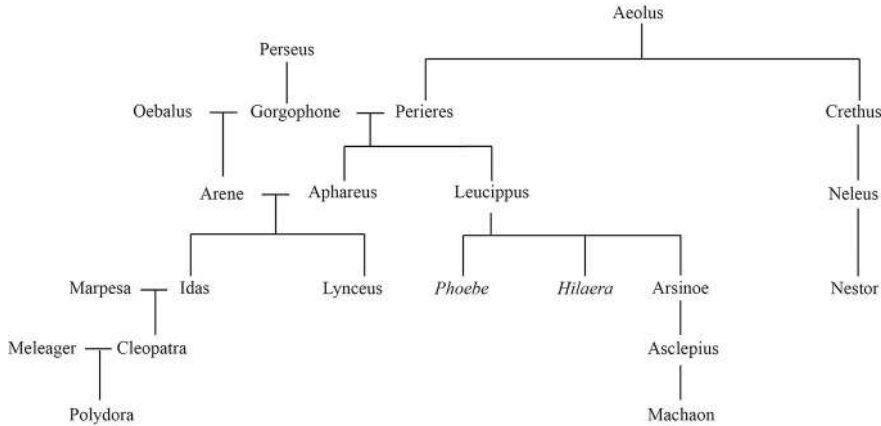


Fig. 3 Trans-Messenian mythic genealogy, after Pausanias 4.2.4–3.2. Figures in italics are not mentioned in this passage, but are well-attested elsewhere in the literary tradition.

at the genealogy it produces, we find that Pausanias has fashioned his Messenian myth-history by recounting the stories associated with the family of Aphareus (which Pausanias places at Arene) and taking care to tie in the other prominent Messenian dynasty, that of Neleus at Pylos.³⁹ We can find independent textual support for almost every element of Pausanias' genealogy; indeed, the Apharetidae and the Pylians are two rare examples of Messenians with prominent roles in panhellenic myth. Homer's 'sandy Pylos' was localized on the Messenian coast from at least the time of Pindar, who calls its ruler Nestor "Messenian".⁴⁰ Arene was much more obscure geographically,⁴¹ but Aphareus' family achieves renown in several ways. Homer preserves the genealogical significance of his son, Idas: Cleopatra, his daughter with Marpessa, is the wife of Meleager⁴² and versions of a story alluded to by Homer, in which Idas challenges Apollo for Marpessa, appeared in Simonides⁴³ and Bacchylides⁴⁴, and on the Chest of Cypselus.⁴⁵ Meanwhile,

39 All of the figures Pausanias mentions in this part of the account are clearly related genealogically to one another with the exceptions of Melaneus and Oechalia (4.2.2–3), whose significance will be discussed below, and Lycus and Caucon, who introduce the mysteries to Andania (4.2.6). Caucon also has a role in the later story of Messene, being recognised as the figure in Epiteles' dream who gives instructions for the retrieval of the hidden texts (4.26.8).

40 Pind. *Pyth.* 6.32–36. The Messenian location was not uncontested. Homer also describes Pylos as near the Alpheus river, suggesting a site in Elis. Despite

Strabo's notable dissenting voice (8.3.7), the Messenian site was generally accepted as Nestor's homeland in antiquity (see Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970, 82; Visser 1997, 522–531; Allen 1921, 75–79). Pausanias places Nestor in Messenia but accepts the Eleans' argument that it is their Pylos that is mentioned at *Il.* 5.544 (6.32.6) and reports (6.25.3) their interpretation of the problematic *Il.* 5.397.

41 Paus. 5.6.2.

42 Hom. *Il.* 9.555–564.

43 563 PMG.

44 *Fr.* 20A SM.

45 Paus. 5.18.2.

Lynceus' sharp eyesight was proverbial.⁴⁶ Both brothers are killed in a fight with the Dioscouri (Pindar *Nem.* 10.55–74, among others, has this story).⁴⁷ The cause of their dispute is sometimes the Dioscouri's abduction of the Messenian Leucippidae Phoebe and Hilaera, a scene well-represented in Greek art.

Pausanias' tidy account, then, capitalizes on the fact that these parts of Messenian myth existed in textual form. But the pattern of preservation is instructive: Messenian stories are not told – and thus preserved – for their own sake. Rather, these Messenian heroes appear where they intersect supra-regional traditions: Nestor and his sons join the expedition to Troy; the Leucippidae find fame in their abduction by the Dioscouri; Idas and Lynceus take part in the Calydonian boar hunt⁴⁸ and the voyage of the Argo.⁴⁹ Preservation by virtue of intersection is also apparent in Messenian genealogical connections. Few of those who appear in the genealogy in figure 3 belong exclusively to Messenia; aside from Aphareus, Leucippus, and Neleus, and their immediate offspring, the family tree shifts quickly from the prestigious supra-regional *Stammväter* Aeolus and Perseus to the Calydonian line of Idas and Marpessa and the Argolid line of the Neleids. Note that without Arsinoe (the third daughter of Leucippus, to be discussed in a moment), the line of 'exclusive' Messenians quickly ends.

Recognizing the importance of these points of intersection has crucial implications. Pausanias' account of this period of Messenian myth-history leaves us with the distinct impression that Messenia's public, trans-regional mythology diverges little from what can be found in earlier texts. Certainly, Pausanias adds little to this archive. He supplies only one minor detail not attested elsewhere: that Idas' daughter Marpessa, like her own daughter and granddaughter, committed suicide on the death of her husband.⁵⁰ Pausanias is an author notoriously enamored of diverging and obscure mythic trivia; yet in this instance he reveals no hint of a more extensive tradition available locally. Mythical knowledge 'on the ground' seems coextensive with – and, we might suspect, largely derived from – the literary archive.

Where the Messenian tradition *is* extended, it is done by exploiting opportunities proffered by this archive. In his account of Pherae, Pausanias adds another branch to the trans-Messenian genealogy that he had traced earlier:

They say that the founder Pharis was the son of Hermes and Phylodameia, daughter of Danaus. They say that he had no sons, just a daughter, Telegone. Homer gives the descendants of Telegone in the *Iliad*: Crethon and Ortilochus

46 Pind. *Nem.* 10.61; Ap. Rhod. 1.153–5; Palaephatus 9.

47 On sources for the deaths of the Apharetidae, see Gengler 2003; Sbardella 2003; Drexler 1965, 97–100. For the various genealogies that connected Leucippus, Tyndareus, and Aphareus (in some sources they

are full brothers, elsewhere half-brothers), see Gantz 1993, 180–181; Fowler 2013, §13.2.

48 Apollod. 1.8.2.

49 Ap. Rhod. 1.151–2; Hyg. *Fab.* 14.

50 Paus. 4.2.7.

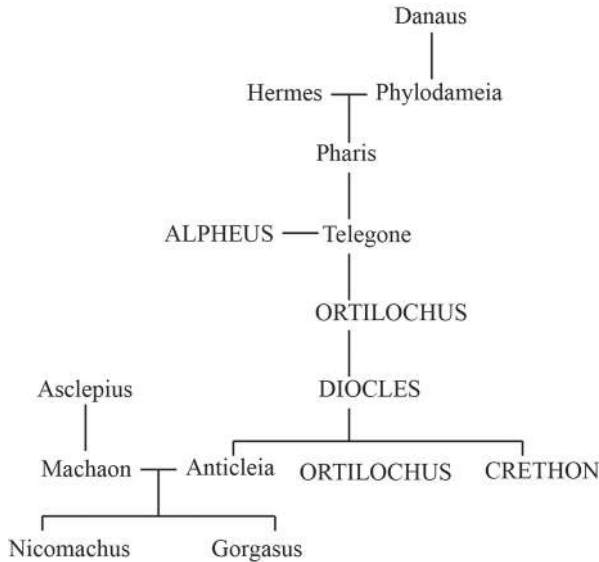


Fig. 4 Mythic genealogy of Pherae, after Pausanias 4.40.2–3. Figures in upper case also appear in *Iliad* 5.541–560.

were the twin sons of Diocles; Diocles himself was son of Ortilochus, son of Alpheus. But he does not actually mention Telegone, who, in the Messenian account bore Ortilochus to Alpheus.

I heard this further information at Pherae: as well as his twin sons, Diocles had also a daughter, Anticleia, and her sons were Nicomachus and Gorgasus, whose father was Machaon, son of Asclepius. They remained at Pherae and inherited the kingdom after Diocles died.⁵¹

Here Pausanias reveals quite clearly the two composite sources for this lineage: the male line comes from Homer and women are added by the Pheraeans as ‘pegs’ to connect into other traditions (see Fig. 4). To begin with the former: the four generations beginning with Alpheus appear in the *Iliad*. This genealogy is given as Aeneas kills the brothers Ortilochus and Crethon and thus seemingly ends the dynastic line.⁵² Their father, Diocles,

51 Paus. 4.30.2–3. Pausanias spells the name of this city Φαραΐ (hence its founder is Pharis/Φάρης). Elsewhere, including in Strabo and Homer, it is spelt Φηραΐ. I use ‘Pherae’ throughout this chapter for consistency.

52 Hom. *Il.* 5.541–560: ἔνθ’ αὐτ’ Αἰνεΐας Δαναῶν ἔλεν ἄνδρας ἀρίστους / υἷε Διοκλῆος Κρήθωνά τε Ορσίλοχόν τε, / τῶν ῥα πατήρ μὲν ἔναϊεν εὐκτιμένη ἐνὶ Φηρῇ / ἀφνειὸς βιότοιον, γένος δ’ ἦν ἐκ ποταμοῖο / Ἀλφειοῦ, ὅς τ’ εὐρὸν ῥέει Πυλίων διὰ γαίης, /

ὅς τέκετ’ Ὀρτίλοχον πολέεσσ’ ἀνδρεσσιν ἄνακτα· / Ὀρτίλοχος δ’ ἄρ’ ἔτικτε Διοκλῆα μεγάλθυμον, / ἐκ δὲ Διοκλῆος διδυμάονε παῖδε γενέσθη, / Κρήθων Ὀρσίλοχός τε μάχης εὐ εἰδότε πάσης. / τῶ μὲν ἄρ’ ἠβήσαντε μελαινῶν ἐπὶ νηῶν / Ἴλιον εἰς εὐπωλον ἄμ’ Ἀργείοισιν ἐπέσθη, / τιμὴν Ἀτρεΐδης Ἀγαμέμνονι καὶ Μενελάῳ / ἀρνημένω· τῶ δ’ αὖθι τέλος θανάτοιον κάλυψεν. / οἶω τῶ γε λέοντε δῶ ὄρεος κορυφῆσιν / ἐτραφέτην ὑπὸ μητρὶ βαθείης τάρφεισιν ὕλης· / τῶ μὲν ἄρ’ ἀρπάζοντε βόας καὶ ἴφια

is described as residing in Pherae and being descended from Alpheus, which “flowed through the land of the Pylians.”⁵³ In the *Odyssey*, Telemachus visits Diocles in Pherae *on route* from Pylos;⁵⁴ a generation earlier, Odysseus had stayed with the elder Ortilochus “in Messene”: it was there that he received his famous bow and quiver from Iphitus, son of Eurytus.⁵⁵ These allusions suggest that Pherae was an integral node in the Homeric network of heroes; indeed, that Odysseus visits Ortilochus to reclaim flocks lost in an earlier raid implies a fuller set of stories now lost. Again, it is their intersectional quality which ensured that these tidbits of the Messenian past survived to be rediscovered: the story of Odysseus’ bow and quiver brings Ortilochus into the ambit of the Ithacaean story; Telemachus’ journey across the Peloponnese makes Pherae a waystation. In a very real sense, it is only through engagement with a world of traveling heroes that these Messenians won lasting renown. Indeed, the deaths of Ortilochus and Crethon – and, almost more importantly, their genealogy – are recorded *precisely because* the pair left Pherae to fight at Troy.

What Homer gives the later Messenians is largely names, not stories. From suggestive references, Imperial Pherae reasserted the heroic luster of its past, yet there is no suggestion in Pausanias that these particular names were targets for further invention. The figures *added* to the Homeric lineage turn out to be of greater local importance. Pherae traces its eponym Pharis to that standard *Stammvater* Danaus, and uses his daughter Telegone to connect these to the Homeric genealogy (as Pausanias notes, Homer had not named the mother of the elder Ortilochus). The addition of Anticleia (found only in Pausanias) to the end of Homer’s genealogy affords opportunities in other directions: as sister to Ortilochus and Crethon, she continues the line after their deaths at Troy. As mother of Nicomachus and Gorgasus, she links the otherwise obscure heroes of Pherae’s healing sanctuary into the whole genealogical network. As wife of Asclepius’ son Machaon, she is a local node in the trans-Hellenic network of sanctuaries of Asclepius and, via Asclepius’ alternative Messenian genealogy, she connects Pherae to the trans-Messenian family tree mapped above (Fig. 3). Let’s look at this mechanism in more detail.

The dominant tradition, supported by the sanctuary at Epidaurus, made Asclepius the son of a Thessalian heroine, Coronis. But Hesiod provided a variant parentage for

μηλα / σταθμούς ανθρώπων κεραΐζετον, ὄφρα
καὶ αὐτῶ / ἀνδρῶν ἐν παλάμησι κατέκταθεν ὄξει
χαλκῶ· / τοίω τῶ χεῖρεσσιν ὑπ’ Αἰνείαο δαμέντε /
καππεσέτην, ἐλάτησιν ἐοικότες ὑψηλῆσι.

53 The unstable location of the kingdom of Pylos in Homer is noted above.

54 Hom. *Od.* 3.488–490.

55 Hom. *Od.* 21.15–19. It must be noted that, in a notorious geographical problem, this meeting is also described as taking place “in Lacedaemon” (Λακεδαίμονι, 21.13). Pausanias glosses the passage as meaning that the meeting took place in Pherae (Paus. 4.1.4.)

the god by naming Arsinoe, daughter of Leucippus, as his mother.⁵⁶ Leucippus' other daughters, Hilaera and Phoebe, exist in myth only to be abducted by the Dioscouri (see above). Arsinoe has no role in that story; *she* exists seemingly only to give birth to Asclepius. Pausanias reports a "fountain of Arsinoe" at Messene,⁵⁷ but nothing else about her. Nevertheless, the city certainly exploited the Hesiodic variant to enhance the prestige of its Asclepeion.⁵⁸ More relevant to our study is how the claim that Asclepius was Messenian created a different way of reading Homer's geography, which in turn allowed for – or, one might say even say, 'required' – the transplantation of other heroes connected to him.

The Messenian Asclepius brought with him – so to speak – two sons. In the Catalogue of Ships, his sons, Machaon and Podaleirius, lead men from "Tricca, craggy Ithome, and Oechalia, city of Eurytus".⁵⁹ In keeping with their claim to Asclepius, the Messenians could produce locations for these place names to rival the better-known Thessalian sites. Ithome was, of course, the mountain above Messene, Tricca a ruined village somewhere in the hinterland,⁶⁰ and Oechalia the present-day Carnasion.⁶¹ Messenia also had physical relics to support this reading: Machaon's tomb was at Gerenia (the free Laconian city whose Messenian identity Pausanias stresses, as noted above).⁶² His remains were brought 'home' by Nestor, who in the *Iliad* tends his wounds in a 'neighborly' fashion.⁶³

Pausanias reviews the various claimants for "Oechalia, city of Eurytus" across Greece and declares the Messenian Carnasion the "most likely" (μᾶλλον εἰκότα) given that the bones of Eurytus are there, displayed along with the bronze urn in which Epiteles had discovered the rites of Andania.⁶⁴ Pausanias includes the arrival of Eurytus' parents Melaneus and Oechalia in his myth-history of the region; they are given the land for their city by Perieres.⁶⁵ Quite notably, however, although this two-generation lineage is chronologically located within Messenia's past, it is not connected into the trans-Messenian genealogy that we have been tracing in any way; nor is there any hint of how the further stories of this family were understood to have impacted the region, or how the sack

56 Hesiod *fr.* 50 M-W [=Paus. 2.26.7] confirmed in part by schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 3.14 [= Hesiod *fr.* 51 M-W]. Pausanias' reporting of this variant in book two is notably skeptical: he declares it "the furthest from the truth" (ἤκιστα ... ἀληθής), suggesting that it was invented by Hesiod, or interpolated into his work, to suit Messenian interests. He offers no skeptical remarks in book four, however. On Asclepius' various birth stories, see Gantz 1993, 71–72; Fowler 2013, 76.

57 Paus. 4.31.6.

58 This complex dates from the first half of the second

century BC. Its bold iconography reflects Messene's political ambitions: see Themelis 1994, 29–30; Sineux 1997, 15–18; Luraghi 2008, 282–285; Muth 2007, 183–185.

59 Hom. *Il.* 2.730.

60 Paus. 4.3.2.

61 Paus. 4.2.2–3.

62 Paus. 3.26.9–10.

63 Hom. *Il.* 11.597–598; Paus. 4.3.2.

64 Paus. 4.2.3; 4.33.5.

65 Paus. 4.2.2–3.

of Oechalia by Heracles (the subject of a lost epic by Creophylus, who placed the city in Euboeia) was localized. The transplantation of Eurytus is thus obviously a move necessitated by the need to claim Oechalia in order to then claim Asclepius and his sons. Certainly, there is nothing necessarily Messenian about this hero. That said, it reveals a notable textual coincidence. There are two passages in Homer which have Eurytus' name and that of his city in close proximity to the names of Messenian locations. We have already seen the first of these: Odysseus receives his bow and quiver at the house of Ortilochus "in Messene" from Iphitus, son of Eurytus, who has traveled there from Oechalia.⁶⁶ In the second, another traveler from Eurytus' Oechalia, the singer Thamyris, is killed at Dorion, in the district of Pylos.⁶⁷ Pausanias mentions both these passages in his Messenian book.⁶⁸ These passages do not of course place Oechalia – or Eurytus – in Messenia, but they do offer an association ripe for exploitation for those in pursuit of Messenia's past.

Pausanias' account reveals one way of creating a coherent trans-Messenian genealogy out of the fragments of it available in the existing archive. What we cannot know, of course, is how his tidy arrangement corresponds in its details to the bricolage pursued by any particular community at any particular time within Messenia itself. The unique survival of Pausanias' account of Messenia means that his version is *the* version of Messenian genealogy. We get to see what he shows us. In this instance we can look behind his account, tracing some of the machinations that transformed one archive – exploitable passages from Homer and Hesiod – into another – the 'complete' Messenian lineages of the *Periegesis*; but we cannot know what alternative pasts also existed.

Once more, of course, we see knowledge emerging from the interface between the stability of texts and the fluidity of travel. Pausanias' 'traveling narrative' requires him to add to the 'overview' of Messenian myth he gives in the first chapters of book four; the view also from Pherae, where local concerns added new nodes to the Homeric genealogy. Pharis, Nichomachus, and Gorgasus lacked the mobility that allowed their relatives to win renown in Homer. Epic captured the heroic web woven from the intersecting paths of heroes who intervened in each other's stories and whose families became intertwined. Homeric and Hesiodic epic kept these heroes traveling by making them part of a textual tradition that extended across the Greek-speaking world, so that every Greek community encountered the same set of – now canonical – stories. But Pausanias' local heroes are beneficiaries of a very different narrative tradition, one that offers a frozen

66 Hom. *Od.* 21.5–41.

67 Hom. *Il.* 2.591–601. Kirk 1985, 216, suggests that the identification of Homer's Oechalia in Messenia "may [...] have developed from confusion engen-

dered by this very passage". He notes that Hesiod (*Ehoëae* fr. 59.2–3, 65 West) places the story not at Dorion, but on the Dotian plain; that is, in Thessaly.

68 Paus. 4.1.4; 4.33.7.

peek at a configuration of this lineage a millennium later. They survive because they became caught up in a text – Pausanias’ – which brings narrative attention to their specific locale.

5 Conclusion

William Hutton has argued that Pausanias’ account of Messenia should be understood not only on its own terms, but within the ambit of the entire *Periegesis*. The care with which Pausanias assembles his work suggests that he “envisioned at least some members of his audience reading the text from beginning to end, rather than diving into it and out of it in random intervals, as most modern readers are wont to do.”⁶⁹ Such readers, he argues, would notice pertinent parallels and points of contrast as they went. Thus, at a macroscopic level, the victory of the Romans over the Greeks narrated in book seven (the fourth to last book) is the mirror image of the victory of the Messenians over the Spartans narrated in book four.⁷⁰ This observation would open up further correspondences: “the reader sensitive to context” would read Pausanias’ forceful account of the ruins of Arcadian Megalopolis⁷¹ in antithesis to his earlier description of the flourishing of Messene.⁷² Hutton’s final correspondence is the most pertinent to our study. The *Periegesis* ends abruptly, with a description of a ruined Asclepion at Naupactus. The sanctuary was founded by a certain blind man, Phalysius. He miraculously regains his sight after opening a sealed tablet, and he reads its contents. This final story, Hutton argues, should put the reader in mind of both the earlier revelation of the bronze tablets recovered at Messene and her own role as reader of a text filled with the knowledge of the past. Thus,

Pausanias seems to be claiming that his text of revelation and discovery can help to restore something that the Greeks have lost: a clear vision of their rightful place in a world where they have become gradually more peripheral and unexceptional. The mysteries of the Great Gods of Messenia have their counterpart in the mysteries of Hellas that Pausanias has revealed to his readers. The sort of redemption that the Messenians enjoyed, which is denied to the Greeks at the end of Pausanias’ account of the Achaean wars, is finally granted in some small

69 Hutton 2010, 425.

70 Hutton 2010, 429–436. The idea that Pausanias’ narrative of Messenian subjugation and liberation offers a model for Greeks under Imperial rule has also been developed elsewhere. See Langerwerf 2008,

199–204; Elsner 1992, esp. 15–20; Auberger 2000; Casevitz and Auberger 2005, x–xii; Musti 1996, 27.

71 Paus. 8.33.1.

72 Hutton 2010, 445–446.

degree to those Hellenes and phil-Hellenes who make it all the way to the end of the *Description of Greece*.⁷³

At first sight, this would seemingly cohere with my argument through this chapter, that Pausanias finds narrative utility in the capacity of texts to maintain knowledge in stable, atemporal forms until such time as it is reactivated by the reader. But considered in another way, it runs counter to it. For, as readers, we are autonomous travelers. Perhaps Pausanias did indeed envision a readership who would read his every word in the order that each appears and appreciate the text finally as an object of revelation and political resistance; perhaps he did not. Certainly, he offers no clear programmatic statements that might shape his readers' approach: he shows rather than tells. Perhaps a reader working through the entire *Periegesis* in order would encounter the ruins of Megalopolis in book eight and cast her mind back to the construction of Messene in book four; perhaps, given the surfeit of detail and digressions in the intervening chapters, she would not. Perhaps she would make some other quite unpredictable association; perhaps she would have resorted to skim-reading by this point in any case. For this is how it is with readers: we fall short of the ideal; there's no telling which paths we will choose to take in our reading, nor indeed which paths are even possible.

Tracing 'paths of knowledge' through Pausanias' account of Messenia reveals not just the mechanisms that created, encoded, and preserved knowledge, but a tolerance towards the idiomatic – even tendentious – styles of reading that afforded these mechanisms their authority. Pausanias' Messenians do not merely find letters scratched onto tin; they recognize these writings as the mysteries of Andania and understand their recovery as analogous to the resuscitation of the dying old woman of Epiteles' dream. Only by reading them in this way can "something kept hidden" take its place in the story of Messene; and only by reading them in this way can Messene's founding take place at this place. Likewise, Pausanias' Messenians do not read Homer to witness the emotional turmoil of Achilles' μήνις; they dip into it hunting for proper nouns that might be Messenian heroes and Messenian cities. They approach Homer as I have approached Pausanias: as a textual archive full of documentary material, evidence for the past. Moreover, the apparent success of such conclusions justifies the style of reading that created them. When I extract from Pausanias' words charts that map Agamemnon's seven cities or the genealogical traditions of Messenia as if Pausanias means to be quite clear on these matters, I am not creating my own text – for that remains stable – but I am finding my own path through, seeking whatever past which can be recovered through it.

73 Hutton 2010, 453. Prefigured in important ways by Porter 2001, 91–92.

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