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SPARTAN IDENTITY AND ORESTES' "REPATRIATION"

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ABSTRACT - This study will examine how the transferal of Orestes' bones from Tegea to Sparta led to the appropriation of an identity which is traced back to the pre-Doric past and will discuss the significance it held for the Spartans and their city. Much of the hero's power resided in the bones; for that reason it was essential that a city or sanctuary have possession of the bones. The aim of this study is to make evident that the "repatriation" of Orestes was not associated exclusively with the external policy of the city.

KEYWORDS - Orestes; Spartan identity; House of Agamemnon

One of the ways of coping with the collective memory is the creation or the appropriation of particular identities, which are dated back to the distant past and serve the purposes and benefits of the present. People gain understanding of the present through experience, knowledge about the past and, all the way round, these memories are often used for the social identity to be justified, explained, legitimized or even censored. Moreover, the accommodation, maintenance, or rejection of collective memory are considered as strategies of memory or forgetfulness, which have always been important means in coping with the conflict between social groups for the purpose of gaining control and authority¹.

In this study we intend to show how the transferal of Orestes' bones from Tegea to Sparta led to the appropriation of an identity – traced back to the pre-Doric past – as well as the significance of this identity for the Spartans and their city. We will also examine other cases of this Spartan endeavor to connect its past with the house of Agamemnon and appropriate this particular identity. There are different opinions in the scholarship regarding the relation between Spartan politics and the transferal of Orestes' bones². The majority of scholars

¹ Le Goff 1988.

² See also Patterson 2010: 14-42, who quotes different opinions of scholarship regarding the significance of the transferal of Orestes bones for Sparta's external policy. Some scholars consider that by the bones of Orestes incident Sparta announces a change in its foreign policy; see for instance Dickins 1912: 21-4; Wade-Gery 1954: 565-7; Leahy 1958; Jones 1967: 44-5; Jeffery 1976: 121-2; Huxley 1979; Forrest 1980: 73-6, 79-83; Murray 1980: 247-8; Hooker 1989: 130-1.

consider the transferal of Orestes as a clear propagandistic action. However, we agree with the view that cynical assessment of ancient religious practices is in many cases unhistorical, and we should beware of falling prey to an anachronistic “propagandistic fallacy”³.

According to Herodotus⁴, in the mid-sixth century⁵, Sparta engaged in a series of wars with the city of Tegea, and, suffering humiliating defeats, enquired of the Delphic oracle, and the Pythia⁶ responded to them that “they must bring home the bones of Orestes, son of Agamemnon”⁷. When they were unable to discover Orestes’ tomb, they sent once more to the god to ask where he was buried and they were provided with some puzzling clues. Although they could not at first find his bones, even after the oracle provided clues of their whereabouts (somewhere in Arkadia), the Spartan Lichas serendipitously discovered the location and stole the bones through trickery. The Spartans then buried them in the agora of Sparta⁸. Ever since then, according to the historian, they were far superior to the Tegeans whenever they met each other in battle, and they had subdued most of the Peloponnese.

Once the worship of named heroes is established in Greek cities⁹, a new phenomenon appears: the translation of a hero to a different site. The power of heroic bones accounts for the fact that the hero could be transferred from one region to other. Several instances are recorded of a community acquiring bones in order to strengthen its political position relative to that of its neighbors or allies.¹⁰ However, regarding the incident of Orestes bones, it is important to take into consideration the fact that other poleis ignored Sparta’s supposed political or hegemonic claims based on Orestes¹¹. Therefore, it is improbable to consider that the transferal of Orestes bones would have given Spartans not only the power to defeat Tegeans, but also hegemonic rights in the Peloponnese.

It is commonly known that identities are associated with religious faith and are sometimes actually based on the latter. In Orestes’ case, the significance of religion is shown by the role of Delphi and the oracles that it gave to the Spar-

³ Morris 1993; Boedeker 1993: 166.

⁴ Hdt. 1.67-68.

⁵ All dates given are BC.

⁶ On Pythia, see Fontenrose 1978: 196f; Flower 2008: 222-226; Connelly 2007: 72-81.

⁷ Hdt. 1.67.2.

⁸ Paus. 3.11.10: ἀνάκειται δὲ καὶ Δήμου τοῦ Σπαρτιατῶν ἀνδριάς μεγέθει μέγας, καὶ Μοιρῶν Λακεδαιμονίοις ἐστὶν ἱερόν, Ὀρέστου δὲ τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος πρὸς αὐτῷ τάφος κομισθέντα γὰρ ἐκ Τεγέας τοῦ Ὀρέστου τὰ ὄστᾱ κατὰ μαντείαν θάπτουσιν ἐνταῦθα.

⁹ Discussed by Antonaccio 1993: 46-72. See, also Snodgrass 1982: 112; Huxley 1983: 7-9.

¹⁰ See Ekroth 2009: 125.

¹¹ Huxley 1962: 67-8.

tans. The Oracle of Delphi¹², by the end of the seventh century, was, with very little doubt, an increasingly crucial institution for a wide circle of Greek cities and for their new foundations that were spread out across the Mediterranean world. The Oracle of Delphi soon began to acquire fame and prestige and to attract powerful and wealthy clients from distant parts of Greece. Cities as well as individuals began to consult it. It had acquired some pan-Hellenic reputation by 700; Sparta¹³ brought constitutional reforms to Delphi for approval perhaps in the early seventh century¹⁴. It had been consulted by kings in the East and by tyrants in mainland Greece, as well as by communities and individuals on issues as diverse as constitutional reform, war, land allotment, oaths, purification, and the avoidance of famine and many more issues¹⁵. From the sixth century onwards, it became the most popular of Greek oracles, attracting clients from all Greece and beyond. The Oracle of Delphi had great moral power and its oracles, functioned as divine validation conferred on the polis' practices. In this way, oracles seemed to give a religious privilege to the cities, as well as to their leaders. Every city sought the "peculiar glamour" – the religious anointment and political power conferred by heroes' remains because their bones were a vital physical link to the past¹⁶.

¹² On the Delphic Oracle in general, see Parke and Wormell 1956; Fontenrose 1978; Scott 2014.

¹³ Sparta has often been highlighted for its close connection with the Delphic Oracle. For an analysis on Sparta's connection with the Delphic Oracle, see Scott 2014: 56-7.

¹⁴ According to Parker 2002: 163 Spartans loved oracles, more perhaps than did the citizens of any other Greek state, and granted them an unusual importance in political debate. Oracles of every kind had all on occasion had their influence.

An important example of the role of Delphi on the politics is the so-called Great Rhetra of Sparta. Plutarch (*Lyc.* 6); Tyrtaeus (*fr.* 3ab Diehl), which Plutarch quotes, also says the rhetra was bestowed by Delphi, though not on Lycurgus; Wade-Gery 1958: (n.2) 55-56 thinks that it was from this fragment of Tyrtaeus that Aristotle and Plutarch got the idea that the rhetra was an oracle; but for Plutarch the word *rhetra* itself meant a god's pronouncement. The rhetra is considered to have been an oracle in origin by, e.g. Busolt and Swoboda 1926: 46; Huxley 1962: 121 n. 283; Forrest 1963: 179; cf. Oliva 1971: (n. 1) 71-2; Cartledge 1980: 100. Wade-Jery 1958: 37 (n.2), 62 denies that the rhetra was in origin an oracle; Jeffrey 1961: 147; Fontenrose 1978: 271; Lévy 1977: 88-9; Cartledge 1980: 100; Cartledge 1987: 103, 111 consider the rhetra a genuine document of the first half of the seventh century dressed up in the guise of the Delphic oracle.

¹⁵ Scott 2014: 63.

¹⁶ Several instances of a community acquiring bones in order to strengthen its political position over that of its neighbors are recorded. Other cases of bone removals are: Tisamenos' from Helice to Sparta (Paus. 7.1.8), Rhesus' from Troy to Amphipolis (Polyaenus *Strat.* 6.53), Pelops from Euboea to Olympia (Paus. 5.13.4), Hector's from Troy to Thebes (Lycoph. *Alex.* 1194-5, 1204-5; Paus. 9.18.5), Arcas' from Maenalus to Mantinea (Paus. 8.9.3-4), Minos from Sicily to Crete (Diod. 4.79, 1-2), Alcmena from Thebes to Sparta (Plut. *Mor.* 577e), Hippodameia's from Midea to Olympia (Paus. 6.20.7), Orpheus' from Libethra to Dion (Paus. 9.30.7), Aristomenes from Rhodes to Messene (Paus. 4.32.3), Hesiod's from Naupactos to Orchomenos (Paus. 9.31.6; 9.38.3) or from Ascrea to Orchomenos (*Suda* s.v. τὸ

The city of Sparta by means of transferring Orestes' bones, had taken possession of a valuable "relic". Given the huge size of Orestes' bones¹⁷, which indicate the hero's supernatural power, it can be assumed that the transfer had the effect of boosting Spartan morale. The transfer and the simultaneous erection of Orestes' tomb in the agora prove their intent to claim his origin. In this way, the Spartans invented a new myth, which, alongside with the myths of the return of the Heracleidae, built a bridge to the heroic past of the Greeks, from which the Dorians as newcomers had been excluded¹⁸. Thus, the Spartans reinvented themselves as descendants or successors of the royal house which had once reigned over the Peloponnese in the heroic era. To this royal house Menelaus had indeed also belonged; he had reigned over Sparta in a previous time and his nephew Orestes had succeeded him as a king at Sparta¹⁹.

Sparta's connection with Agamemnon can already be found in the Homeric epics. The tradition preserved in the Homeric epics seems to be reflected in the Herodotean text. The word ἐπαγαγομένουζ²⁰ indicates a process of return to Sparta. Sparta sought to deflect the resistance of Argos via the appropriation of the fundamental hero of Argos²¹, Agamemnon. For this action to be successful, legitimization needed to be drawn from the Delphic oracle. A justification for this action is required. Although Homer generally situates Agamemnon at Mykenai, a passage from *Odyssey* which describes him as running into a storm off Cape Malea, the southeastern most point in the Peloponnese²², has suggested to several commentators the existence of an alternative early tradition whereby, on his return from Troy, Agamemnon makes not for the Argolid but Lakonia. Such an earlier tradition would certainly explain why it is that, in a vain attempt to appease Achilles' wrath, Agamemnon is able to offer him seven cities between Lakonia and Messenia²³, and it may also account for rather anomalous situation in the *Catalogue of Women* where Agamemnon, rather than Menelaos, is named among those seeking the hand of Helen as some sort of "proxy-suitor"

¹⁷ Ἡσιόδειον γῆρας; Tzetz. *Vit. Hes.*; Procl. on Hes. *Works and Days* 631).

¹⁸ For the size of the bones, see Huxley 1979: 145-148.

¹⁹ Hall 1997: 56-60; Huttner 1997: 43-58.

²⁰ Welwei 2004: 223.

²¹ Hdt. 1. 67. 2.

²² In the Homeric epics, Agamemnon is located at "well-built Mykenai", though he also holds sway over "many islands and all of Argos" (Hom. *Iliad* 2.108); the *Catalogue of Women* describes him as ruling over "Argos of the broad expanse" (Hes. fr. 195 Merkelbach/West). Wathelet (1992) has shown how the word "Argos" may at different times designate the town, the Argive plain, the Peloponnese or the whole of Greece.

²³ *Od.* 4.514-20. Does this "slip" reflect a tradition that Agamemnon was actually on the way home to Lakedaimon, where perhaps he shared the kingship with Menelaos? See West 1988: 224-5. For a different interpretation see Nilsson 1932: 71-3.

²⁴ Hom. *Il.* 9. 149-153.

for his brother²⁴.

One may also wonder why the seven cities that Agamemnon promises to Achilles are in Messenia, as mentioned in the *Iliad*²⁵. The answer is that this is probably due to a reflection of a previous tradition which displayed Agamemnon as the king of Sparta or the southern part of the Peloponnese in general. In addition, in the fourth book of the *Odyssey*²⁶, when Menelaus narrates his adventures after the fall of Troy, there is a reference to the Agamemnon's correlation with the wider region of south Peloponnese. This reference might be relevant to the tradition according to which Agamemnon was also the leader of Laconia; as a result this policy places the leadership of Sparta in the Peloponnese back to Homeric times. Therefore, one could argue that this was an endeavor to appropriate an identity derived from the royal house of Agamemnon. Consequently all the above-mentioned factors served the purpose of strengthening the Spartan political supremacy over Argos.

Panhellenic poetic traditions attest the Pelopid association with Lakedaimon: Stesichoros, Simonides and Pindar all locate Orestes and his family in the neighborhood of Sparta²⁷. It seems unlikely that these poets varied the mythical topography merely to gratify one city's (supposedly) newly declared Achaian claims. Boedeker underlines that "rather than looking for *ad hoc* reasons why a given poet should associate Orestes with Sparta, it is more in keeping with the evidence to conclude that, according to a widespread tradition, not only Menelaos but other Pelopids as well were at home in Lakonia."²⁸

A text which attests this endeavor is Stesichorus' *Oresteia*. In this work, Stesichorus went considerably beyond the bare outlines of the story as sketched in the *Odyssey*, and seems to have made use of a poem by Xanthus²⁹, of whom almost nothing but this is known³⁰. Bowra interprets this work of Stesichorus in political terms. He argues that the shaping of the myth may nonetheless be largely his own and has a character which suits Spartan claims and ambitions in the early sixth century BC, when they were extending their control over Arcadia and the relics of the Argive kingdom of Pheidon. To justify itself, it revived that

²⁴ Hes. fr. 197 (Merkelbach / West).

²⁵ Hom. *Il.* 10. 144-154.

²⁶ Hom. *Od.* 4. 512-520.

²⁷ For Stesichoros (fr. 39 *PMG*) and Simonides, see schol. ap. Eur. *Or.* 46; Pind. *Pyth.* 11.16, 31-7; *Nem.* 11.34. For further testimony and discussion see Pfister 1909-12: 76-7; Nilsson 1932: 68-73; Bowra 1961: 112-15, all of whom find in these passages evidence of Sparta's attempt "to change and reshape the myths in its own favor" (Nilsson 1932: 68). Kiechle 1963: 44, however, disagrees with Bowra on the idea of a Stesichorean innovation in this matter.

²⁸ Boedeker 1993: 167.

²⁹ For further see Bowra 1961: 82.

³⁰ Athen. 12. 512f.

the house of Pelops had once reigned from Sparta over the whole of the Peloponnese. These means were used deliberately to supersede the claims of Argos, which were based on the possession of Agamemnon's capital and the heart of his kingdom, by other claims based on descent and ancient rights. A good example of its methods may be seen in its treatment of Tegea. Having failed to subdue Tegea in war, it brought it into an alliance, and part of the procedure consisted of finding the bones of Orestes at Tegea and bringing them to Sparta³¹. With the bones of Orestes in its possession, Sparta could point to its symbolic descent from Agamemnon³².

Stesichorus (and Simonides) in his *Oresteia*³³ placed the home of Agamemnon in Lacedaemon³⁴, though Homer³⁵ placed it in Mycenae³⁶. Pindar³⁷ has Agamemnon die at Amyklai while his son Orestes seems to be a Lakonian by birth³⁸. Pausanias (who follows the Homeric location) refuses to accept the local Lakonian tradition that Agamemnon's tomb was situated at Amyklai³⁹, though in fact excavations at Agia Paraskevi near Amyclai have brought to light a shrine whose inscribed dedications identify it as that of Agamemnon and Alexandra (Kassandra). The difference between the versions of Pindar and Stesichorus probably illustrates the growth of legend. Pindar is more precise in that he names not a district but a town, and Stesichorus does not seem to have reached such a point. His main concern was to detach the murdered king from Argos, and he did this by placing the palace and the murder in Lacedaemon⁴⁰. This was clai-

³¹ Hdt. 1. 68.

³² Bowra 1961: 113.

³³ On Stesichorus' work see Davies and Finglass 2014: 157-161; 482-511.

³⁴ Schol. Eur. *Or.* 46: Ὀμηρος δὲ ἐν Μυκίηναις φησὶ τὰ βασιλεία του Ἀγαμέμνονος, Στησίχορος δὲ καὶ Σιμωνίδης ἐν Λακκαϊδαίμονι.

³⁵ Hom. *Od.* 3. 304.

³⁶ Bowra 1961 argues and the transference looks like a deliberate innovation of Stesichorus. See n. 21. For Stesichorus there is indeed a tradition, suggested by the *Marmor Parium* and accepted by Bowra (1961: 107-19), that he visited Sparta; like many accounts of early Greek poets, however, this story very likely derives from passages in the poet's works that were later understood as biographical. See West 1969: 147-8, where Stesichorus *P. Oxy.* 2735.22-6 is read as a direct address by the poet to a Spartan prince; West concludes unnecessarily that Stesichorus must have performed this poem in Sparta itself. In any case we should not assume that an archaic poet would accept local innovations in a myth at the expense of his own aspirations to Panhellenic status.

³⁷ Pind. *Pyth.* 11. 32. According to Boedeker 1993: 167 Pindar's testimony at least appears unmotivated by any special relationship to Sparta; none of his victory odes is even composed for a Spartan triumph.

³⁸ Stes. fr. 39 Page; Scholiast to Euripides, *Orestes* 46; Pindar, *Pyth.* 11. 24, 47; *Nem.* 11. 44. See West 1969: 148-149; Malkin 1994: 31-32.

³⁹ Paus. 3.19.6.

⁴⁰ Bowra 1961: 113.

med to be his home, and here he must have come to his end⁴¹.

There is another important point to be made about the way Agamemnon came into play in the Spartan expansion. It was not through an appropriation of his bones but by a manipulation of myth, especially by Stesichorus, whose *Oresteia* may have helped to create a "Spartan" Agamemnon⁴². So firmly entrenched had the "Spartan" Agamemnon become by the fifth century that Pindar not only accepted this association with Lacedaemon but narrowed it down to Amyclae⁴³ and he did so for no other reason than that it had become accepted tradition by that point⁴⁴. The cult of Agamemnon that developed at Amyclae may have reflected that village's desire to promote an antiquity that belied its newcomer status in the Spartan synoikism⁴⁵.

Stesichorus in *Oresteia* called either Agamemnon or Orestes (although more probably Orestes)⁴⁶ βασιλεὺς Πλεισθενίδας, just as in the *Nostoi* he applied Πλεισθενίδας to either Menelaus or Agamemnon⁴⁷. The place of Pleisthenes in the genealogy of the House of Atreus is certainly awkward. There is no room for him in the descent Tantalus, Pelops, Atreus, Agamemnon, and it is not convincing to argue that Pleisthenes was the father of Agamemnon but died young, and so Agamemnon was called the son of Atreus⁴⁸. It looks as if Πλεισθενίδας implied some other, alternative descent for Agamemnon which was superseded by the more popular Homeric version. Ibycus, who was irresponsible in matters of mythology, calls Agamemnon both Πλεισθενίδας and Ἀτρείος παῖς⁴⁹, but that is a light-hearted acquiescence in confusion. Pleisthenes may well have been a son of Pelops and had his own place in tradition outside the Homeric scheme, but, when he appeared as the father of Agamemnon in Stesichorus' *Oresteia* it was probably because of the poet's desire to avoid any associations with Argos and the name of Atreus. The latter was not merely a discreditable ancestor; he had no standing at Sparta, and his grave was at Mycenae⁵⁰. If Spartan interests

⁴¹ Bowra 1961: 114 considers that in saying this, Stesichorus condoned and assisted the Spartan propaganda of his period.

⁴² Patterson 2010: 42.

⁴³ On Amyclae, see Cartledge 2002a: 90-91.

⁴⁴ Pind. *Pyth.* 11.31-32. See Phillips 2003: 313-314, cf. Hall 1999: 55-59.

⁴⁵ About Amyclae and its incorporation by Sparta see Cartledge 2002a: 92-93.

According to Patterson 2010: 43 what allows for such acceptance by Pindar's time would have also allowed for the other claims that the Spartans had made, and for this reason as well, Tegea would eventually have followed suit and acknowledged the basis of Sparta's claims to hegemony in the Peloponnese.

⁴⁶ Davies and Finglass 2014: 506.

⁴⁷ *P.Oxy.* 2360, col. ii. 4.

⁴⁸ Hes. fr. 98 R.

⁴⁹ Fr. 3. 31.-32 D.

⁵⁰ Paus. 2.16. 6.

demanded a glorification of Agamemnon, some other father than Atreus had to be found, and Pleisthenes supplied the need.

There are some notable incidents that indicate the significance of the Achaian identity for Sparta. Herodotos recounts how the Spartan king Kleomenes was barred from the temple of Athena on the Athenian acropolis on the grounds that it was forbidden for Dorians to enter; his reply to the priestess was that he was not a Dorian, but an Achaian⁵¹. Half a century earlier, the Spartans had “repatriated” the bones of their former Achaian king, Orestes in order to achieve victory in their long-standing dispute with Tegea⁵². According to Hall⁵³, this accords fully with the tradition that the Achaians had occupied Argos and Sparta prior to the arrival of the Dorians and that the Danaoi of Argos were local Achaians who had adopted the name of the leader Danaos⁵⁴. Before the Persian invasion of Greece, the Spartans sent an embassy to Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse, seeking assistance. Gelon accepted, but only on the condition that he would assume the supreme command of the Greek defense, to which the Spartan envoy Syagros exclaimed, “The Pelopid Agamemnon would wail greatly if he learned that the Spartans had been robbed of hegemony by Gelon and the Syracusans”⁵⁵. The Spartan kings sometimes found it convenient to forget their descent from Heracles and to boast of their descent from Agamemnon. For this, some manipulation of tradition was indispensable and in it, Stesichorus had contributed. If the Spartans could persuade the other inhabitants of the Peloponnese that Agamemnon and Orestes had ruled in Sparta, they had done something to assert their claim to be the real descendants of the Achaean kings who had been the overlords of a united Greece⁵⁶.

Besides the fact that the Pelopids were by no means new to sixth-century Lakonia, other reasons also argue against interpreting the translation of Orestes primarily as externally directed propaganda for Spartan hegemony. First, there is no evidence to suggest that the cult of Orestes, if indeed he had a continuing cult, was directed toward outsiders⁵⁷. Then too, it is most unlikely that the Te-

⁵¹ Hdt. 5.72.3: ὦ γύναι ἀλλ’ οὐ Δωριεύς εἰμι ἀλλ’ Ἀχαιός.

⁵² Hdt. 1.67-68. See also Hooker 1989: 131; Malkin 1994: 26-32. The Spartans on more than one occasion actually used the Delphic oracle as authority for the removal of the relics of a foreign hero to Sparta, and followed up this translation by claiming the sovereignty of the country and the hero’s support in conquering it. See further Parke and Wormell 1956: I. 348.

⁵³ Hall 1997: 60.

⁵⁴ Paus. 7.1.57.

⁵⁵ Hdt. 7.159: ἦκε μέγ’ οἰμώξειε ὁ Πελοπίδης Ἀγαμέμνων πυθόμενος Σπαρτιήτας τὴν ἡγεμονίην ἀπαραιρήσθαι ὑπὸ Γέλωνος τε καὶ Συρηκοσίων.

⁵⁶ Bowra 1961: 113.

⁵⁷ For a definition of cult, see Antonaccio 1993. Boedeker 1993: 167 refers that elsewhere Antonaccio reports a possible externally directed political meaning for the cult of Menelaos at Therapnai victory over Messenia as well as suggesting a role for the Menelaos cult in the

geans would have accepted Sparta's leadership on the grounds that it had stolen a hero's bones from them. Such relics were powerful, and a city that possessed them would not want them to fall into enemy hands⁵⁸. Had the Spartans stolen the bones of a hero they honored, the Tegeans would surely not have meekly accepted the domination of their thievish neighbors⁵⁹. But the bones of Orestes, according to Herodotus, were not even known to exist in Tegea before Lichas removed them⁶⁰. Possession of Orestes might give the Spartans the power to defeat Tegea, but there is no reason to think it would have given them a right to hegemony in the eyes of non-Spartans⁶¹.

The transferal of Orestes' bones could be seen as a part of the Spartan endeavor⁶² to connect itself with the House of Agamemnon, but this does not mean that it could lead Sparta to the leadership of Peloponnesos. Besides the fact that other poleis have ignored Sparta's supposed political or hegemonic claims based on Orestes⁶³. However, it is crucial to underline that Orestes' bones "repatriation" is not in any case to be considered as a wholly political action, setting aside the religious emotion, because this would place the fact out of its historical and social context. The "repatriation" of Orestes' bones stood for the appropriation of an identity that is dated back to a "glorious era", and, at the same time, it accommodated an identity related to the Heraclids as well⁶⁴.

context of Spartan competition with Argos in the eighth century.

⁵⁸ For such examples see Kearns 1989: 46-8; Nagy 1990: 178.

⁵⁹ Similarly, Leahy 1955: 32: the bones of Teisamenos, if "stolen" from Helike, would presumably promote "not a ready acceptance of alliance but either protestations at the sacrilege or demonstrations of the falsity of the claim."

⁶⁰ Centuries later, it is true, the Tegeans could show Pausanias an empty tomb outside their city, identifying it as the one from which Orestes had been stolen (Paus. 8.54.4), but this explanation is likely to stem from the famous story in Herodotus.

⁶¹ Boedeker 1993: 167.

⁶² Sparta with the bones could prove its relative connection with Agamemnon. Other aspects of these politics are the foundation of hero cults, the erection of monuments, and the existence of vases depicting the members of Atreidai (for the distribution of these scenes see Prag 1985), and the poems glorifying Menelaus, Agamemnon and Orestes contain important features that greatly influenced the Spartans.

⁶³ Huxley 1962: 67-8.

⁶⁴ I would like to thank Professor Daniel Ogden for his comments on a previous draft of this paper.

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