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THE SHRINE OF ASPRACHOMA NEAR MYCENAE
AND ITS DEDICATIONS FROM THE PERSIAN WARS

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Approximately one kilometer north the citadel of Mycenae, Enyalios and other gods received dedications in an ancient ἱερόν at the site known today as Asprachoma. The sanctuary complex was excavated in the middle of the last century, and while the results were never fully published,¹ enough has been made public to allow a brief description of the site. The sanctuary complex consists of a “main temple” and a gamma-shaped auxiliary building defining a central court. The “main temple” itself, situated on the western edges of the excavations, takes the form of a simple ναός ca. 8.5 m long by 4.7 m wide, oriented North-South. The remains consist of the foundations and socle, built for the most part of roughly and irregularly hewn limestone blocks. The temple’s primary entrance faces south, the threshold consisting of three larger, well cut, and closely fitted limestone blocks. The center threshold block has a round cutting placed at the center of the doorway, perhaps to be associated with a central column or the bolting mechanism for the temple doors. A somewhat smaller limestone block just west of the westernmost threshold block displays a small rectangular cutting in the northeast corner of its upper face. The floor of the cella is made of what appear to be large pebbles packed into earth or clay and covered with plaster. In the northern half of the cella, two large limestone foundation blocks mark what was no doubt the spot of a cult statue. Aligned with this foundation, a door opens in the east wall of the cella, as in the temple of Apollo at Bassai.²

Outside the main entrance of the ναός, fronting the western end of the southern façade, sits a large limestone block with a long, rectangular cutting in its upper surface, perhaps to receive an inscribed στήλη of some sort. Some five meters south of the building and roughly aligned with the main entrance, lies another rectangular foundation (3.82 m × 2.37 m) made of large limestone blocks running N-S, identified by the excavator as the foundations of the temple’s altar, oriented to the east.

Further to the east of the “main temple”, the auxiliary building(s), built in a fashion similar to the main temple building, form a reverse gamma – the “corner piece” being a roughly square structure with rectangular “aisles” abutting its western and southern walls. This corner, excavated the year before the rest of the cult complex, yielded two inscribed bronze dedications: a) the fragment of a bronze shield inscribed τοὶ Ἀργεῖοι[ι τοῖς] | θεοῖς ἀπὸ β[ασιλέως] | Πύρρο[υ],³ and b) the left cheek-guard of a bronze helmet engraved ENYFAΛΙΟ.⁴

The “Eastern aisle”, a portico some 3.5 m wide, stretches South from the square building for some 14 m. Five column bases were excavated *in situ*, and “in front” of the portico, i.e. to the west, were found the remains of two other altars, “sans doute plus anciens”.⁵ Outside the eastern wall of the portico was found a mass of iron spearheads and σαρωτήρες as well as a middle proto-Corinthian aryballos, likely originally offerings in the sanctuary. Excavation of the “Northern aisle” (12.14 m × 3 m) revealed poros paving slabs, many still *in situ*, on the western end. To the South, four rectangular poros bases, perhaps for trophies,⁶ fronted the northern aisle.

¹ *Ergon* 1965 (1966) 68–71; G. Daux, *BCH* 90 (1966) 782 and *BCH* 91 (1967) 653–657 with figs. 9–13.

² F. A. Cooper, *The Temple of Apollo Bassitas*, vol. I (Baltimore 1996) 218–228. Compare the more conventionally aligned, and later, temple of Alea at Tegea, which also had two cella entrances similarly arranged: N. J. Norman, *The Temple of Alea at Tegea*, *AJA* 88 (1984) 169–194, esp. 187–190. More recent observations in E. Østby, *Recent Excavations in the Sanctuary of Alea in Tegea* (1990–1993), in K. A. Sheedy, ed., *Archaeology in the Peloponnese: New Excavations and Research* (Oxford 1994) 39–63.

³ *SEG* 23.186.

⁴ *SEG* 23.187.

⁵ Daux (1967) 657.

⁶ The suggestion of Mylonas, reported in Daux (1967) 657.



Photo by author

Several lines of evidence suggest that the earliest activity at the ἕρον of Asprachoma dates to the seventh century at least. The proto-Corinthian aryballos and the dentillated decorative rim of the helmet fragment both fit well with such a date, though “antiques” were often considered fitting dedications in temples.⁷ Daux claims that the script of the helmet decoration belongs to the fifth century, but the letter-forms do not necessarily require such a date⁸ and a case for a sixth century dedication seems equally strong.

After the Argives destroyed Mycenae in the early 460’s, the shrine at Asprachoma would have fallen under their tutelage, receiving dedications until the third century BC at least⁹ and likely for much longer.

⁷ A well attested phenomenon, a famous and extreme instance being the foundation deposit of the archaic Artemision on Delos, which contained Orientalizing, Geometric, and Mycenaean works of art. See E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (Chicago 1964) 287–288, with references. Another instance has come to light on Kynthos, with the excavation of the completely un-plundered ἄδυτον of a small temple containing, among other things, a carved bead dating to the Bronze Age. See ‘Inner Sanctum Discovered’, *Archaeology* March/April 2003, page 12; *Anistoriton: Archaeology News*, vol. 7, September 2003, Section A033 has photos of some of the finds.

⁸ Cf. the table of letters in L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (= *LSAG*), rev. ed. (New York 1989) 151.

⁹ R. Tomlinson, *Argos and the Argolid* (London 1972) 209, suggests that Argos controlled Mycenae and the sanctuary at Asprachoma from the seventh century onward, a proposition explicitly contradicted by Diodoros 11.65, which attests vigorous Mycenaean independence from Argos until the destruction of the late 460’s. For discussion of the exact date of the (historical) Mycenaean destruction and related chronological difficulties, see Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, 104–105 and W. K. Pritchett, Diodoros’ Pentekontaetia, in *Thucydides’ Pentekontaetia and Other Essays* (Amsterdam 1998) 163–171. G. Forrest, Themistokles and Argos, *CQ* 10 (1960) 222–229 and R. Willetts, The Servile Interregnum at Argos, *Hermes* 87 (1956) 495–506 provide discussion of the tumultuous generation between the disastrous Argive defeat at Sepeia (Hdt. 6.76–83) and the destruction of Myce-

The Argive cult of Enyalios may have been transferred to Asprachoma after their conquest of Mycenae. Such a supposition would explain why Pausanias saw no statue of Enyalios in Argos, despite evidence for his earlier worship and statue there.¹⁰ The sanctuary at Asprachoma had likely fallen into ruin by the second century CE, as had so many ἱερα.¹¹

But this shrine's importance to late Archaic and early Classical Mycenae is best illustrated by a fragment of an inscribed plaque discovered by the custodian of the site.¹² A photo of a joining fragment of the same inscription has been published in the *Praktika tes Archaologikes Hetaireias*.

Max. preserved height 0.17 m; max. preserved width, 0.15 m; thickness, 0.02 m. Letter height, 0.01–0.015 m; line spacing, 0.01–0.015 m. Mykenai Museum Inv. no. 1445. Date: first quarter of the fifth century, most likely ca. 479 BCE and in any event before 468 BCE. Revised by me June 20, 2006.

M. Mitsos, An Inscription from Mycenae, *Hesperia* 15 (1946) 115–119 = *SEG* 11.298, with corrigenda in *Hesperia* 16 (1947) 88 + *Praktika* (1955) Plate 80b = *SEG* 22.260.

Fragment A	[. . . . c. 12–15] τοὶ ἱερομνάμονες [. . . c. 10–12 . . .]σεας· Σφοραδεὺς ἀσ[σ]- πίδα, ρυνίαν, ἀρό[ν]τιον· Βύτιος ἀσπ[ιδ]- 4 [α . . c. 6–8 . . ἀσπίδα(?), ρυ]νίαν, ἀφόντιον· [ὁ δεῖνα ἀσπίδα, ρυ]νίαν, ἀφόντιο[ν·] [ὁ δεῖνα ἀσπί]δα, ρυνίαν, ἀρό- [ντιον· . . c. 11–13. . .]ος ἀσπίδα, ρυν-
Fragment B	8 [ίαν, ἀφόντιον, ἀσπίδ]α· Μίκον ἀσπίδα [ρυνίαν, ἀφόντι]ον, ἀσπίδα· Λ [.] α- [c. 2–3 ρυνίαν, ἀφόντιον, ἀ]σπίδε δύο. <i>vacat</i> [τ ο ἰ ν ι κ ᾶ σ] α ν τ ε ς [ἐ ν τ ῶ ι π ο λ ἑ μ ο ι] .

1 [τάδε ἀνέθεσαν ?] Mitsos; 2 [τοὶ ἐς Περσῆ· Λυ]κίας Mitsos; 3 Βύτιος Ἄσ. . . Mitsos; 6 ἀρό[ν] Mitsos; 7]ες ἀσπίδα ρυν[ί] Mitsos; 11–12 supplevit Gonzales

... The minders of the sacred things [(dedicated these things? ... -]seas Sqradeus: sh[ield, leather helmet, javel]in; Butios: shiel[d ... (?) – leather hel]met, javelin; [So-and-so: shield, hel]met, javeli[n; So-and-so: shie]ld, leather helmet, jav[elin; ...-]os: shield, leather hel[met, javelin, shiel]d; Mikon: shield, [leather helmet, javel]in, shield; L[.]a[- helmet, javelin, two s]hields, having bee[n victorious in the war].

For all matters not touched upon in the following commentary, see Mitsos.

Letter forms:

Omicron – peculiar to Mycenae, formed by drilling a round hole into the stone or a simple dot punched in metal, also found on an archaic dedication to Enyalios (*SEG* 23.187) from the same sanctuary.

nae by Argos, likely in 468/7 (Diod. 11.65). For a concise overview, see R. Sealey, *History of the Greek City States* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976) 254.

¹⁰ Paus. 2.20.8–9 and Plutarch, *Mul. Virt.* 245c–f both tell of an Argive victory over the Spartans in 494 BCE after the defeat at Sepeia, in thanks for which the Argives set up a cult statue of Enyalios (ἰδρύσασθαι τὸν Ἐνυάλιον, Plut., *loc. cit.*). For a skeptical review of the tradition, see F. Graf, Women, War and Warlike Divinities, *ZPE* 55 (1984) 245–254; cf. M. Pizzocarro, Profilo di Telesilla, famosa poetessa d'Argo, e guerriera, *Annali dell'Istituto universitario orientale di Napoli* 15 (1993) 89–103, esp. 91–98. An Archaic dedication inscribed το(ῶ) (Ἐ)νυαλί(ο)ῦ ἱερά (*SEG* 11.327, cf. W. Vollgraff, *BCH* 58 [1934] 138–156), found on the Argive acropolis, indicates that Enyalios received honors on the Aspis by the sixth or seventh century. See Jeffery, *LSAG*, 168, no. 2 with Plate 26.

¹¹ See W. K. Pritchett, *Pausanias Periegetes*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam 1999) 195–222.

¹² Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 115, with Fig. 1.

Commentary:

Fragment A

See Mitsos for a physical description of the larger fragment.

Lines 1–2:

The opening words of this inscription would have no doubt begun with some formulation of the usual dedicatory ‘the ἱερομνάμονες dedicated y to z’, or declared ‘these things are sacred property of the god(s)’, with the ἱερομνάμονες listed subsequently.

Mitsos’ restoration [τοὶ ἐξ Περσῆ...] derives directly from *IG* IV 493, “since we do not know of any other *Hieromnemones* from Mycenae”. One wonders, however, why they bothered to so qualify themselves. See below for discussion of local ἱερομνάμονες

Mitsos read the doubtful character before the initial *epsilon* as *kappa*, producing]κεας. The traces of the initial preserved letter, two slanting strokes converging to the left in the upper portion of the letter, are clearly more consistent with *sigma*, producing]σεας, an ending compatible with common names such as Mnaseas, Lyseas, Thraseas, etc. Mitsos explained the subsequent Σφοραδεύς as a “name of one of the political (?) sub-divisions of the Mycenaeans”, derived from the Doric word variation for garlic, σκόραδον. While this is possible, none of the other ἱερομνάμονες listed, e.g. Butios or Mikon, bear such a qualifier. A nominative proper name for one of the ἱερομνάμονες is also possible, viz. similar attested names, Σκορδίας of *IG* V (1) 63 and the implied Σκόρδος of *IG* IX (2) 597, although this would leave the preceding -]σεας sadly unaccounted for. Less likely on internal comparative and chronological grounds would be a patronym in -ευσ, from a nominative form Σκόρδαυς (or Σκορδίαυς), as genitives of this sort are first attested significantly later (see C. D. Buck, *Greek Dialects* [New York 1927] 81) and none of the other ἱερομνάμονες appear to carry a patronym.

ασ{σ}- the second *sigma* at the end of the line, taken by Mitsos as a mason’s error, may be an early example of *sigma*’s frequent gemination before mute consonants; see L. Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions*, vol. I (Berlin and New York 1980) 527–531, esp. 530.

Lines 3–4:

The restoration at the beginning of the line [πίδα, ρυνίαν, ἀφό], while not as certain as before, still seems most likely. *Pi* – The straight vertical break to the right of ἀσ- likely represents the line of the stroke for the left leg. ΑΣΠ[. . .] are undoubtedly the first characters of another ἀσπ[ίδα, rather than an unparalleled qualifying name of some sort. If so, this creates an anomalous situation in line four. After the final alpha of ἀσπ[ίδα, space for ca. 11 characters intervenes before the certain *qoppa* and *upsilon* of ρυ]γίαν. Are we to imagine another ἀσπίδα before ρυ]γίαν? This supposition leaves 6–8 characters for a dedicator’s proper name, but would leave Butios with a single shield dedicated. A qualifying adjective indicating size, material, or ethnicity is not beyond the realm of possibility after the first alpha of line 4, though unparalleled in this (short) document. On the whole, the name of another of the ἱερομνάμονες seems somewhat more likely.

Lines 4–7:

These lines likely contained the proper names of three, or perhaps four, other ἱερομνάμονες. The name of line 7 ends in -ος. This individual did not, in all likelihood, carry a second designation, as there are insufficient letter spaces available after the very certain [τιον...] at the beginning of the line. A similar argument holds for the name of lines 4–5. The horizontal stroke Mitsos took as the upper bar of an initial *epsilon* is actually an artifact of damage to another idiosyncratic Mycenaean *omicron*, small like that at the end of line one, but nevertheless clearly discernable.

The discovery of the second fragment allows us to establish that the last preserved letters of ll. 6 and 7 were in fact the final characters of those lines.

Fragment B:

The second fragment (ca. 11.5 cm wide × 7 cm high), like the first, is also broken on the left and bottom edges, and preserves ca. 1–3 letter spaces fewer than Fragment A. It has suffered damage to its inscribed surface, with two roughly parallel gouges, perhaps from a disk tiller or similar agricultural machine, running from upper right to lower left through the first two preserved lines of the fragment (lines 8–9). Four inscribed lines are partially preserved, the fourth having letters significantly (ca. 25–30%) larger than most letters in the previous lines of the document.

Lines 8–9:

]αμικονασπίδα. In view of two shields dedicated later in these lines and in line 10 (see below), the initial *alpha* of line 8 probably belongs to another ἀσπίδ]α. The faint vertical after *iota* in that line most likely forms part of Μίκων,

or perhaps of the first *kappa* of Μί[κ]ιον, another of the ἱερομνάμονες. ἀσπίδα – the stone has been badly gouged and scraped in this area, but the following traces survive; *sigma* – the left points of the converging strokes; *pi* – the two verticals intersect a straight horizontal break where the stone has flaked away above the line of the horizontal stroke; *iota* – bottom of vertical; *delta* – the bottom tip is preserved. The letter would be rather small, like that of Σφοραδεύς in line 2. Λ[.]α- is likely the beginning of our last proper name. Attested Peloponnesian and Doric names such as Λαφάναξ (*IG V* 1.1133), Λάφαρχος (*SEG* 39.411), Λααρχίδαας (*IG IV*²[1] 103), etc. highlight the many possibilities, though if we restore another ϕυνίαν, ἀρόντιον before the two shields, the individual's name would be relatively short.

Line 10:

A very worn and partially chipped cutting, according well with the uppermost stroke of a *sigma* produces ἀσπίδε δύε, necessitating a complete re-assessment of Mitsos' interpretation of this inventory as the ritual "retirement" of public arms, on which see below.

Lines 11–12:

[τοὶ νικάσ]αντες | [ἐν τῷ πολέμοι]. As noted above, the preserved letters are consistently larger than the average characters in lines above, perhaps indicating an emphatic end to our dedicatory inscription. As we know of no Mycenaean military activity after the battle of Plataiai, it is possible that these dedicated arms are from that conflict. See below for further discussion of the shrine's history.

These two fragments of a slightly longer original document record dedications of shields, leather helmets, and javelins by individual members of the college of ἱερομνάμονες, "minders of the sacred things", at Mycenae. Despite the discovery of the second fragment of this inscription in 1955, to the best of my knowledge, no composite text or commentary on the expanded document has been presented. The new fragment, while confirming some details of Mitsos' original reconstruction, also suggests that significant revision to the interpretation of the *editio princeps* is necessary. Most importantly, the new fragment establishes that each ἱερομνάμων did not dedicate a "set" panoply of shield, helmet and javelin, *viz.* line 10 – ἀσπίδε δύε and the proposed reconstruction of lines 3–4 and 6–9. This has several consequences. First, without the shield-helmet-javelin "formula" for each dedication, the approximate line length of 27–29 letters established by Mitsos loses some of its certainty, although the restoration proposed here requires a similar number of spaces e.g. in lines 9 and 11. More importantly, the lack of a fixed formula also makes the proposition of a ritual dedication of the old public arms¹³ of the Mycenaeans much less likely. The new fragment also establishes that the ἱερομνάμονες apparently lack patronyms or phyle/phratry-designations.¹⁴

The term ἱερομνήμων appears in a variety of contexts.¹⁵ The sacred delegates to the Amphictyonic Council that met at Delphi bore the title (*ID* I, no. 10). Closer to Mycenae, the term appears frequently in various inscriptions documenting the administration of the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus, where it seems clear that the fiscal and infrastructural oversight exercised by the board of ἱερομνάμονες required subdivision into various groups, e.g. one sub-group of ἱερομνάμονες are specifically charged with oversight of the outfitting and construction of the baths in the sanctuary (*IG IV*²[1] 116, ll. 8–11). Ἱερομνάμονες appear in three other archaic documents from the immediate vicinity: an archaic inscription from Mycenae (*IG IV* 493), a curious archaic inscription from Tiryns (*SEG* 30.380), and a fifth century dedication from the Argive Heraion (*IG IV* 517).¹⁶ In the last instance Argive officials dedicate votive objects to the goddess as a group, a good parallel for our document. The archaic inscription from Mycenae attests a college of

¹³ Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 117.

¹⁴ Cf. Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 117–118 with note 4.

¹⁵ Arist. *Pol.* 1321b 34–40; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, S. Georgoudi, and V. Pirenne-Delforge, Personnel de culte: monde Grec, in *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, vol. 5 (Verona 2005) 43–47 provide a concise discussion and survey of the evidence, which is primarily epigraphic.

¹⁶ The ἱερομνάμονες of the Heraion appear in *IG IV* 516, 521, 530. Argive ἱερομνάμονες are also mentioned in two late fourth century Argive decrees: R. Stroud, An Argive Decree from Nemea concerning Aspendos, *Hesperia* 53 (1984) 191–216 = *SEG* 34.282 and 283.

ἰαρομνάμονες, dedicated to the local cult of Perseus,¹⁷ who are to act as judges in certain circumstances. The ἰαρομνάμονες attested at nearby Tiryns seem to perform financial and administrative functions.¹⁸

The fifth-century ἰαρομνάμονες at the Argive Heraion number four, one from each Argive φυλή and Mitsos assumes a similar number at Mycenae.¹⁹ But the ἰαρομνάμονες of our inscription appear to be seven or possibly eight, a number precluding a membership of a single individual drawn from each of the φυλαί. Two from each φυλή would be a neat solution, dispensing with the assumption that we are dealing, at least in part, with officials “belonging to divisions smaller than the *phyle* (phratries?)”.²⁰ Given the analogy of the Epidaurian ἰαρομνάμονες, it seems unnecessary to identify the Mycenaean ἰαρομνάμονες attested in the inscription from Asprachoma and those mentioned in the earlier, Archaic inscription from this site. Each document probably records separate, or at least differently constituted, boards of Mycenaean ἰαρομνάμονες with distinct duties and oversight.

Why, in the inventory from Asprachoma, do these ἰαρομνάμονες each dedicate arms and armor in their own names? A dedication by each official might suggest these objects carried special prestige, enough for each member to want his name forever associated with them. The nature of the dedications themselves also raises questions, as light helmet, shield, and javelin are the emblematic panoply of light-armed troops, while sanctuary dedications featuring victories over Greek or similarly outfitted enemies typically consist of the heavy shields (ὄπλα) and breastplates (θώρακες) of more heavily armed, and therefore more prestigious, opponents.²¹ Moreover, as Mitsos notes,²² we know of no Mycenaean military ventures between the Persian invasion of 480/79 and the city’s destruction by Argos in the early to mid-460’s. Her small size and enmity with her much more powerful neighbor led her to rely on the Spartans in military matters,²³ which led Mitsos to interpret these sets of arms as a ritual retirement of state-issued gear, a view more tenable before the discovery of the second fragment. As noted in the commentary above, the second fragment’s deviation from the dedication “formula” of shield, helmet, and javelin by at least two, and perhaps as many as three or four individuals, makes this proposition substantially less likely. The practice of warriors dedicating the weapons they used in a particular war or battle is not attested before the Hellenistic period.²⁴ Billot has made the attractive suggestion that the arms dedicated at Asprachoma were weapons taken from the Persian army²⁵ after the hard-won victory at Plataiai and displayed as spoils within the sanctuary grounds. The entire plaque bearing the inscription would have been relatively small and certainly light enough to be mounted on a wall alongside the dedicated arms. Such a dedication would have been

¹⁷ Perseus had an eponymous spring within the citadel of Mycenae (Paus. 2.16.6), while his ἡρώων lay outside the city walls on the road to Argos (Paus. 2.18.1).

¹⁸ See N. Verdélis, M. Jameson, and J. Papachristodoulou, Ἀρχαϊκὰ ἐπιγραφὰ ἐκ Τίρυνθος, *AE* 1975, 150–203, esp. 163, 169–172, and 194–195; H. van Effenterre, *Nomima*, vol. I (Rome 1994) no. 78; R. Koerner, Tiryns als Beispiel einer frühen dorischen Polis, *Klio* 67 (1985) 455–456 discusses the ἰαρομνάμων of Tiryns and his functions.

¹⁹ Though our knowledge of the organization of Mycenae at the level of φυλή and phratry is practically nonexistent and extreme caution therefore warranted. Herodotos’ account of the tribal “reforms” of Kleisthenes of Sikyon (5.67–68) should serve as a warning against assumptions in this realm, especially in light of the upheavals of the 460’s (see note 9 above) and the Hellenistic period. Cf. Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 117–118, note 4.

²⁰ Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 117–118.

²¹ W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* (= *GSW*), vol. 3 (Berkeley 1979) 240–295 discusses captured armor and the practice of displaying σκῦλα within sanctuaries. See also, more recently, A. H. Jackson, *Hoplites and the Gods: Dedications of Captured Arms and Armor*, in V. D. Hanson, ed., *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (New York 1991) 228–252.

²² Mitsos, *op. cit.*, 117.

²³ Diodoros 11.65.2–4.

²⁴ Pritchett, *GSW*, vol. 3, 249–252.

²⁵ M.-F. Billot, Sanctuaires et cultes d’Athéna à Argos, *OpAth* 22–23 (1997–1998) 21, n. 112. The composition of the dedications makes her alternative suggestion of an Argive dedication after the destruction of Mycenae or Tiryns less likely, as either city would have provided hoplite spoils sufficient for seven or eight ἰαρομνάμονες. On the battle, see Hdt. 9.19–75; W. K. Pritchett, *New Light on Plataea*, *AJA* 61 (1957) 9–28 deals with the battlefield topography.

completely normal and especially appropriate as Enyalios, god of the War-Shout, received votives there from an early date.²⁶

The differing composition of each official's dedication becomes somewhat more comprehensible under this scenario. While the spoils of the open battlefield at Plataiai itself most properly belonged to the Spartans, Tegeans, and Athenians who had fought south of the Asopos, the subsequent assault and sacking of the Persian fortified camp, which involved the entire Greek army, would surely have provided a rich trove of weapons and armor for all the allies. Herodotos (9.70.3) explicitly mentions the common stock of loot established after the capture of the Persian fort, and that Pausanias, acting as ἡγεμών, oversaw the distribution of the loot to the various contingents of the Greek army (9.80–81).²⁷ But Herodotos' description of the camp booty collected does not focus upon the Persian weaponry and armor, mentioning only the Persians' gilded short swords (9.80.1–2), which, along with the Persian armlets and necklaces, are the only σκῦλα explicitly mentioned.²⁸ On the division of loot, the historian simply explains "each group got what was fitting and appropriate for them", a criterion that would take account both of numbers of a contingent and perhaps the role played in the battle.²⁹ The portion of this loot allotted to the 400 hoplites from Mycenae and Tiryns would presumably have been relatively small, since the Mycenaeans could only have participated in the storming of the camp. This circumstance might account for the varying content of the dedications of each of the ἰαρομνάμονες, if we wish to see these helmets, shields, and javelins as part of the officially allotted spoil from the Persian camp at Plataiai.

Identifying precisely which contingent of the Persian army originally bore these weapons presents difficult challenges. Herodotos claims that Mardonios chose to retain the entire contingents of the Persians, Medes, Sakai, Baktrians, and Indians, but other, unnamed contingents were chosen as well (Hdt. 8.113).³⁰ Persian and Median infantry, famously, did not wear helmets, but cloth tiaras (Hdt. 7.61–62). Some of Mardonios' cavalry contingents were apparently equipped with javelins (9.49.2), but Herodotos' description of the Sakai, Baktrians, and Indians in the Catalogue of Forces (7.61–86) does not match our inscription well,³¹ all being armed mainly with bow and arrow. Persian and Median cavalry forces carried the requisite helmet, shield, and short spears (7.61 and 84),³² but also carried bows and wore expensive metal scale armor, like that of Masistios, son of Siromitres, the Persian nobleman cut down by the Athenians in an early skirmish on the lower slopes of Kithairon (Hdt. 9.20–24).³³ In any event, it seems doubtful that many

²⁶ See note 4, above.

²⁷ Pritchett, *GSW*, vol. I (1971) 94, note 9, cites Timoleon after the allied Sicilian victory over the Karthaginians at Krimisos as another example of a ἡγεμών controlling distribution of battlefield spoil. "A thousand breastplates and more than ten thousand shields were brought to Timoleon's tent. Later, some of these things were set up as votives in Syracusan temples, others were distributed to the allies, and some Timoleon sent to Korinth, bidding that they be dedicated in the sanctuary of Poseidon ..." (Diod. 16.80–81).

²⁸ Herodotos uses the general word λεία at 9.80.1 to describe the booty of the Persian camp. On the differing terminology of war spoils and the procedures for public and private dedications, see Pritchett, *GSW*, vol. 1, 53–100 and vol. 5 (1991) 68–202.

²⁹ Hdt. 9.81, after relating the tithes sent to Apollon at Delphi, Zeus at Olympia and Poseidon at Isthmia, continues ... ταῦτα ἐξελόντες τὰ λοιπὰ διαιρέοντο, καὶ ἔλαβον ἕκαστοι τῶν ἄξιοι ἦσαν, καὶ τὰς παλλακὰς τῶν Περσέων καὶ τὸν χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον καὶ ἄλλα χρήματα τε καὶ ὑποζύγια. Diodoros (11.25.1), after reporting the victory over the Karthaginians at Himera, says that Gelon distributed the prisoners to the army "according to the number of those who campaigned" and the historian uses much the same language when describing the partition of loot after Plataiai (11.33.1). R. W. Macan, *Herodotus: the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Books* (London 1908) 765, suggests "this principle may have been combined with a consideration of services rendered, the proportion of dead, and so forth".

³⁰ A. M. Bowie, ed., *Herodotus, Histories Book VIII* (Cambridge 2007) 204–207 discusses Mardonios' choices and their equipment.

³¹ On the Catalogues, see W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography*, vol. 4, *Passes* (Berkeley 1982) 264–267 *contra* O. K. Armayor, Herodotus' Catalogues of the Persian Empire in Light of the Monuments and the Greek Literary Tradition, *TAPA* 108 (1978) 1–9.

³² In the late fourth century, Persian cavalry apparently relied primarily upon javelins for attack: Arrian, *Anab.* 1.15 and 3.15. See Macan, *op. cit.*, 696.

³³ Valuable Persian and Median scale corselets would presumably have become part of the common store of loot, although Pausanias (1.27.1) claims that the Athenians obtained Masistios' splendid armor as battlefield spoil.

cavalrymen would have been among those trapped and slaughtered within the Persian fortified camp. It so happens that Masistios also led a mixed tribal contingent from far northeastern Anatolia, around Kolchis, all armed with a simple helmet, shield, and short spears or javelins (Hdt. 7.78–79),³⁴ and the commander's presence at the battle may indicate that these unfortunates perished on the banks of the Asopos as well.

Despite Pausanias' pious efforts as ἡγεμών, Herodotos clearly indicates that oversight and enforcement of the official protocols regarding loot does not seem to have been systematic or overly rigorous in the aftermath of the battle. The Tegeans, we are told, were the first to enter the breach in the wall made by the Athenians' assault and Herodotos notes that the Arkadians looted Mardonios' tent and took for themselves the brazen manger of the royal horses and did not add it to the common store of loot (9.70).³⁵ Likewise, after the battle was over, the helots tasked with stripping the camp and the Persian dead apparently made off with many valuables, purportedly selling them to Aeginetan merchants (9.80.2–3). We know from other sources that individual soldiers could and did engage in private looting, outside the purview of the ἡγεμών.³⁶ "Private looting" of the dead by individual soldiers of Mycenae might account more neatly for the varying dedications and with such a valuable haul of booty to be shared, Pausanias would hardly begrudge individual Mycenaean a few barbarian helmets, shields, or short spears. But whether these dedications were officially allotted or obtained through the initiative of the ἰαρομνύμονες themselves would have had little import for the citizens of their polis. Little Mycenae could not lay claim to special items like the manger of the royal horses or the tent of Xerxes himself,³⁷ but the dedications adorning the shrine at Asprachoma would remind her citizens of their contribution to the battle that effectively ended the Achaemenid threat to the Greek mainland.

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³⁴ The Moschoi, Makrones, and Mossynoikoi were armed with wooden helmets, shields, and small spears with long points, not dissimilar to the later eyewitness description of Xenophon, *Anab.* 4.8.3 and 5.4.12–13. The Mares bore "woven helmets", hide shields, and javelins. The Kolchians, Alarodioi, and Saspeires all carried wooden helmets, rawhide shields, small short spears, and daggers or short swords.

³⁵ Following the chronology of Herodotos' narrative, this clearly occurred before the order of Pausanias to gather the loot in common, cf. Macan, *op. cit.*, 762.

³⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.4–5 tells how seven Athenians were killed and one captured while raiding for loot far from their camp, going after individual plunder (κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας λείας).

³⁷ The Tegeans dedicated to Athena Alea the finely decorated bronze manger from the royal tent (Hdt. 9.70); O. Bronner, *The Tent of Xerxes and the Greek Theater*, *University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology* 1/21 (1944) 305–311, proposed that the Athenians got the royal tent as loot from Plataiai and displayed it near the Theater of Dionysos in Athens until it began to rot, whereupon Perikles had built the Odeion, "in imitation of the tent of Xerxes" (Paus. 1.20.4). See M. Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Cambridge 1997) 218–242 for full and skeptical discussion of the literary and archaeological evidence on the Odeion.