

## Chapter III: Arkadia: the Land of the Arkadians

The name of the region was Ἄρκαδία, or Ἄρκαδίη in the Ionic dialect.<sup>1</sup> This name was, as already noted, derived from the name of its people, the Arkadians: Ἄρκαδ-ες > Ἄρκαδ-ία. Arkadia was thus the land of the Arkadians, or in the apt formulation of Roy: “Arcadia was not in the first instance a geographical concept, but a human one; it was the land of the Arkadians.”<sup>2</sup> That this is true is shown, for example, by the habit of describing a given site not as ‘in Arkadia’, τῆς Ἄρκαδίας, but as inhabited or owned by Arkadians. Herodotos, for example, describes Mantinea as Μαντινέη ἢ Ἄρκαδων,<sup>3</sup> and Tegea is described in the same way, as Τεγέη ἢ Ἄρκαδων.<sup>4</sup> Xenophon even has a reference to πᾶσαι αἱ πόλεις τῶν Ἄρκαδων.<sup>5</sup>

### 1. The Geographical Concept of Arkadia

Nevertheless, it is certain that by the Classical period ‘Arkadia’ had developed into a geographical concept as well. Thus Thucydides writes about Arkadia as a part of the Peloponnese,<sup>6</sup> and he clearly thinks of Arkadia as a separate region,<sup>7</sup> as does Herodotos.<sup>8</sup> Herodotos and Thucydides also describe individual communities as being located ‘in Arkadia’.<sup>9</sup>

---

1. See e.g. *CEG* II 824.2, and Hdt. 1.66.

2. Roy (1968a) 20.

3. Hdt. 4.161.2.

4. Hdt. 7.170.4. A similar way of expression is found in Thuc. 5.67.1: Ἄρκαδων Ἡραιῆς, where the simple city-ethnic would have sufficed. In the Athenian speech at Hdt. 9.28, the Tegeans are referred to repeatedly simply as Ἄρκαδες!

5. Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.36.

6. Thuc. 1.2.3: ἢ τε νῦν Θεσσαλία καλουμένη καὶ Βοιωτία Πελοποννήσου τε τὰ πολλὰ πλὴν Ἄρκαδίας.

7. Thuc. 5.29.1: τοῖς ... Μαντινεῦσι μέρος τι τῆς Ἄρκαδίας κατέστραπτο ὑπήκοον.

8. Hdt. 7.202: ἐκ τῆς λοιπῆς Ἄρκαδίας.

9. Hdt.: 6.75: ἢ δὲ Νώνακρις ... πόλις ἐστὶ τῆς Ἄρκαδίας; 7.202: ἐξ Ὀρχομενοῦ ... τῆς Ἄρκαδίας; Thuc.: 5.33.1: τῆς Ἄρκαδίας ἐς Παρρασίους; 5.58.2: ἐν Μεθυδρίῳ τῆς Ἄρκαδίας.

Xenophon thinks of Arkadia as a region<sup>10</sup> bordering on Lakonia,<sup>11</sup> and he describes the Parrhasians as ‘in Arkadia’.<sup>12</sup>

So in the Classical period Arkadia was thought of as a Peloponnesian region subdivided into a number of individual communities.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, a man could be described as an Arkadian from this or that specific community.<sup>14</sup>

The best ancient description of Arkadia as a geographical unit is in chapter 44 of the ‘geographical’ treatise of Ps.-Skylax, composed prior to 368 (it does not mention Megalopolis): ΑΡΚΑΔΙΑ. Μετὰ δὲ Ἕλιον Ἄρκαδία ἔθνος ἐστί. καθήκει δὲ ἡ Ἄρκαδία ἐπὶ θάλατταν κατὰ Λέπρεον ἐκ μεσογείας. εἰσὶ δὲ αὐτῶν πόλεις ἐν μεσογείᾳ αἱ μεγάλαι αἶδε. Τέγεια, Μαντίνεια, Ἡραΐα, Ὀρχομενός, Στύμφαλος. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλαι πόλεις. παράπλους δὲ τῆς Λεπρεατῶν χώρας στάδια ρ’.<sup>15</sup> Here is a description of a purely geographical<sup>16</sup> region, Arkadia, situated in the Peloponnese next to Elis, with a strip of coast along the Ionian Sea, subdivided into several communities of which five are named. Chapter 45 of Ps.-Skylax opens: ΜΕΣΣΗΝΗ. Μετὰ δ’ Ἄρκαδίαν ἐστὶν ἔθνος Μεσσηνή. Accordingly, Arkadia was next to Elis and before Messenia.

This geographical concept of Arkadia is well-documented in the Classical period, but it can be traced back into the Archaic period as well. A mid-sixth-century Delphic oracle quoted by Herodotos contains the sentence: ἔστι τις Ἄρκαδίας Τεγέη.<sup>17</sup> Here Arkadia must be a geographical unit, and Tegea one of the subdivisions of which it is composed. This

10. Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.16: πολλαχόσε καὶ τῆς Ἄρκαδίας; 6.5.21: ἐνεβεβλήκει εἰς τὴν Ἄρκαδίαν καὶ δηοῦντι τὴν χώραν οὐδεὶς ἠθελήκει μάχεσθαι; 6.5.51: ἐκ τῆς Ἄρκαδίας.

11. Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.12.

12. Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.28: εἰς Παρρασίους τῆς Ἄρκαδίας.

13. See for example the Xenophontic expressions: πασῶν τῶν πόλεων ... τῶν Ἀρκάδων at *Hell.* 7.4.36, and τὰς ἄλλας Ἀρκαδικὰς πόλεις at *Hell.* 7.4.38.

14. *IvO* 147.148: Τέλλων Δαήμονος Ἀρκὰς Ὀρεσθάσιος; Hdt. 6.83.8: Κλέανδρος ... Φιγαλεὺς ἀπ’ Ἀρκαδίας, 6.127: Ἀμιάντος Λυκούργου Ἀρκὰς ἐκ Τραπεζοῦντος; Xen. *An.* 4.1.27: Ἀριστῶνυμος Μεθυδριεὺς Ἀρκὰς καὶ Αἰνεΐας Στυμφάλιος Ἀρκὰς ... Καλλίμαχος Παρράσιος Ἀρκὰς; 7.6.40: Εὐρύλοχος Λουσιάτης Ἀρκὰς.

15. Ps.-Skylax 44 (Müller).

16. Note, however, that the curious phrase Ἄρκαδία ἔθνος ἐστί seems to indicate that the human concept is present even in such a dry geographical treatise. Also, the use of αὐτῶν (*i.e.* τῶν Ἀρκάδων) instead of αὐτῆς (*i.e.* τῆς Ἀρκαδίας) points to the conclusion that the geographical concept is closely bound up with the ethnic concept.

17. Hdt. 1.67.4.

seems to show that the geographical concept of Arkadia was in existence in the middle of the sixth century.

In fact, this geographical concept of Arkadia is met with in what is probably our oldest surviving source to shed light on the concept of Arkadia, the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships*.<sup>18</sup> The hexametres on Arkadia are worth quoting *in extenso*:

οἱ δ' ἔχον Ἄρκαδίην ὑπὸ Κυλλήνης ὄρος αἰπύ,  
 Αἰπύτιον παρὰ τύμβον, ἴν' ἀνέρες ἀγχιμαχηταί,  
 οἱ Φενεόν τ' ἐνέμοντο καὶ Ὀρχομενὸν πολύμηλον  
 Ῥίπην τε Στρατίνην τε καὶ ἠνεμόεσσαν Ἐνίσπην,  
 καὶ Τεγέην εἶχον καὶ Μαντινέην ἐρατεινήν,  
 Στύμφηλόν τ' εἶχον καὶ Παρρασίην ἐνέμοντο,  
 τῶν ἦρχ' Ἄγκαίοιο πάϊς κρείων Ἀγαπήνωρ  
 ἐξήκοντα νεῶν. πολέες δ' ἐν νηὶ ἐκάστη  
 Ἄρκαδες ἄνδρες ἔβαινον ἐπιστάμενοι πολεμίζειν.  
 αὐτὸς γάρ σφι ἔδωκεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων  
 νῆας εὐσσέλμους περάαν ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον,  
 Ἄτρεΐδης, ἐπεὶ οὐ σφι θαλάσσια ἔργα μεμήλειν  
 (Hom. *Il.* 2.603–14).

Here we meet the toponym Ἄρκαδίη, which describes a geographical unit subdivided into several communities. If we compare the Homeric description of Arkadia with the one found in Ps.-Skylax, there are both striking similarities and differences. Importantly, both texts treat Arkadia as a geographical unit subdivided into several minor units. The difference between the two texts seem to concern the *extent* of the region, even though there are basic agreements here too:<sup>19</sup> both texts describe the eastern part of the region as Arkadian: Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenos and Stymphalos are found in both descriptions.<sup>20</sup> As we saw, Ps.-Skylax 44

18. The fragments of Hesiod do not attest to the geographical concept of Arkadia in an unambiguous way. The toponym Ἄρκαδίη is completely restored in Hes. fr. 23a.32 (MW); in fr. 163, a periphrasis of Hesiod, we meet the expression ἐν Ἄρκαδίᾳ οἰκεῖν, but we cannot know whether Hesiod actually used this expression.

19. Rhipē, Stratīe and Enispe, of course, were unknown in antiquity, and must be left out of the discussion here; see Simpson & Lazenby (1970) 92.

20. I may also point to a verse of the *Palatine Anthology* (14.73); the verse is from an oracle, which was known to Ion of Chios, but probably dates from the first half of the seventh century (see Hall [1995b] 587–8). In describing the location of Argos, it states that

gives to Arkadia a strip of coast along the Ionian Sea, that is, *he includes Triphylia in Arkadia*. Homer, however, seems to describe Arkadia as a region without a coast, since the Arkadians' possession of ships needs explanation. Willcock comments: "The Arkadians, being an inland people, had no connections to the sea, so Agamemnon provided ships for them."<sup>21</sup> This is surely the right explanation, and the conclusion is that Arkadia extended further west in the day of Ps.-Skylax than in Homer's day. In its geographical extent, then, Arkadia was subject to change.

To conclude: Arkadia was, as a geographical concept, a Peloponnesian region subdivided into several minor units. The concept is already attested in Homer. However, the region was subject to change in respect of its extent. In other words, the borders of the region fluctuated.

## 2. The Geographical Extent of Arkadia

### 1. The Archaic period

The best information on the extent of Arkadia in the Archaic period is provided by Homer, Hekataios and Herodotos. The Homeric *Catalogue of Ships* lists Pheneos, Orchomenos, Rhipe, Stratie, Enispe, Tegea, Mantinea, Stymphalos and Parrhasia as inhabited by Arkadians.<sup>22</sup> Rhipe, Stratie and Enispe are otherwise unknown. The *Parrhasie* of Homer is taken by Simpson & Lazenby as a reference to the area west-northwest of the later Megalopolis and is thought to include sites such as Lykosoura and Trapezous.<sup>23</sup>

According to Stephanos of Byzantion, Hesiod described Πάλλας as a son of Lykaon.<sup>24</sup> This Pallas is obviously the eponymous hero of Pallantion. Lykaon was a key figure of great and long-lasting importance in

---

its inhabitants live between Τίρυνθος ... καὶ Ἄρκαδιης πολυμήλου. The part of Arkadia west of Argos was the eastern plain which contained Stymphalos, Mantinea *et al.* Thus, this verse proves that the plain was considered part of Arkadia in the early Archaic period.

21. Willcock (1978) *ad Il.* 2.614.

22. Hom. *Il.* 2.605–8.

23. Simpson & Lazenby (1970) 93.

24. Steph. Byz. 497.8: Παλλάντιον, πόλις Ἄρκαδίας. ἀπὸ Πάλλαντος, ἐνὸς τῶν Λυκάωνος παίδων, ὡς Ἡσίοδος (= Hes. fr. 162 [MW]).

Arkadian traditions.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in the mid-fourth century the numerous sons of Lykaon provided the mythological material that was used to create and cement links between the different communities absorbed by Megalopolis.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, we may in general assume that the existence of a son of Lykaon carrying the eponymic name of a Peloponnesian community amounts to a near-proof that the community was Arkadian. It is, however, a little difficult to evaluate the significance of an attestation in the Archaic period of an eponym of a community among the sons of Lykaon. Does it mean that the community already existed? In general, such an eponym was used to affirm the existence of a city.<sup>27</sup> Thus we may suppose that an eponym was normally created in order to supply an existing entity with an identity, and sometimes such an eponym was artificially created, a procedure to which the Classical Arkadians were not averse.<sup>28</sup> But it is not entirely impossible to imagine that a community at its foundation would be named after an important mythological figure, in which case the existence of the ‘eponymous hero’ can precede the existence of the homonymous town. This is, after all, the case with cities named after gods or heroes, such as Herakleia, Heraia, Poteidaia, Poseidonia, Apollonia, etc.<sup>29</sup> But, if such a Lykaonic eponym carries a name closely related to the name of a known historical community and if there is no reason to suspect that the community’s name is secondary then we may take the Archaic eponym as an indication that the community existed and was Arkadian. The sons of Lykaon are regularly held to be a group of mythological figures whose names are related to the names of towns in this way,<sup>30</sup> and it can be accepted that they are just this. So, the Hesiodic fragment can be considered proof that Pallantion existed<sup>31</sup> and was Arkadian in the Archaic period.

---

25. Dowden (1992) 74–5.

26. Roy (1968a) 236.

27. Dowden (1992) 74.

28. In general, see Nilsson (1951) 63–80; for Arkadia in particular see *ibid.* 78–80, and Roy (1968a) 226–7.

29. Jost (1985) 72; Burkert (1985) 136, 144.

30. Dowden (1992) 74–5; *RE* XIII: 2248.

31. In fact, several Archaic temples have been found at the site, see Hejnic (1961) 40; Jost (1985) 198–9; Østby (1995a).