

# THE ELEIAN *ASYLIA*

## AND THE POLITICS OF THE ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL PELOPONNESE

GRAEME BOURKE

εἰ γάρ, ἥς πάντες εὐχόμεθα τοῖς θεοῖς τυχεῖν, καὶ πᾶν ὑπομένομεν ἰμείροντες  
αὐτῆς μετασχεῖν, καὶ μόνον τοῦτο τῶν νομιζομένων ἀγαθῶν ἀναμφισβήτητόν  
ἔστι παρ' ἀνθρώποις, λέγω δὴ τὴν εἰρήνην (Polyb. IV.74.3)

A thesis in Ancient History submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales

January, 2008

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Greg Stanton and Assoc. Prof. Iain Spence, and to Prof. Greg Horsley, Alan Treloar, Terry Roberts and Monika Gentner, all of the University of New England. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Stanton, whose careful reading has saved me from a multitude of errors and who has offered constant encouragement. I also wish to thank the academic and administrative staff of both the School of Humanities and Dixson Library at UNE, along with my fellow-students at Mary White College and in the School of Humanities. I will always remember the hospitality in the Peloponnese of Mr. Nick Vournazos and his family and friends.

I thank those who provided me with financial support by means of the Australian Postgraduate Award, the J.H. Bishop Postgraduate Scholarship for Classics and Ancient History, the Maiben Davies Postgraduate Scholarship for Greek and the Nicholas Vournazos Postgraduate Travelling Scholarship. I am also thankful for the assistance of the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the British School at Athens, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the Greek Archaeological Service.

I have benefited greatly throughout this enterprise from the unfailing personal support of my mother Nellie, brother Paul and son Patrick. Without the sacrifice, patience and encouragement of my partner Rhonda, it would not have been possible to complete this work.

## Contents

Abstract.....	v
Abbreviations.....	vi
Maps and Figures.....	vii
 INTRODUCTION.....	 1
 PART I: HELLENIC HOLY LAND.....	 12
1. The <i>asylia</i> of the Eleians.....	13
2. The Eleian <i>manteis</i> .....	44
3. The Eleians Overseas.....	68
4. Olympia and the Archaic Eleian <i>koinon</i> .....	93
 PART II: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ELEIA.....	 118
5. Eleian Chronology to the Synoikism of 471 B.C.....	119
6. Pisa.....	145
7. The Synoikism and Democracy of Elis.....	174
 PART III: THE ELEIANS AND THE LAKEDAIMONIANS.....	 210
8. The Eleians and the Lakedaimonians to the Peace of Nikias.....	211
9. The Causes and Course of the Eleian War.....	234
10. The Results of the Eleian War.....	270
 CONCLUSION.....	 306
 APPENDIX: The Peloponnese in the Early-Fifth Century B.C.....	 310
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 345

## ABSTRACT

When the Lakedaimonians invaded Eleia in 402 B.C. they transgressed a sacred inviolability that their ancestors had declared early in the Archaic period. They were prepared to do so because by this period a dominant faction at Sparta placed the pursuit of an oligarchic political agenda above religious scruple.

Modern scholars cast doubt upon the evidence of several ancient texts that Eleia was sacred and inviolable, but their arguments are unconvincing. The importance of the Eleian *manteis*, the links of the Eleians with the oracles at Dodona and Siwah and their management of Olympia further support the view that Eleia was considered a holy land. Supposed wars between the Eleians and the Pisatans in the early-sixth century were actually civil disturbances of the late-sixth and early-fifth centuries that culminated in the Eleian synoikism and democracy of 471 B.C.

In the fifth century, the Lakedaimonians intervened against democracy elsewhere, but at first respected the *asylia* of the Eleians. In 402 B.C., however, they invaded and dismembered Eleia, and the oligarchic political entities that replaced it became their dependent allies. By obliging the Eleians to fight in the Korinthian War, furthermore, the Lakedaimonians compelled them to forsake their inviolable status.

## ABBREVIATIONS

References to journals and other modern works are abbreviated according to Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A. (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Oxford, 1996), supplemented by the ‘Notes for Contributors and Abbreviations’ in *American Journal of Archaeology* 90 (1986) 381-94. References to Classical sources are generally abbreviated according to the practice of the former work, with the exceptions that, apart from the names of a few well-known authors, latinised spelling has not been adopted and English translations of Greek titles have been preferred to Latin ones. The following additional abbreviations appear:

- BMCR*     *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*
- IACP*     Hansen, M.H. and Nielsen, T.H. (eds), *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis* (Oxford, 2004)
- Moretti     Moretti, L., ‘Olympionikai, I vincitori negli antichi agoni olimpici’ in *Atti della accademia nazionale dei Lincei* 8.8 (Rome, 1959) 53-198

## MAPS AND FIGURES

(following the page indicated)

Map 1	The region of Eleia and its neighbours .....	11
Map 2	Southern Epeiros .....	92
Map 3	The probable coastline of Kastro Rogon and vicinity, c.2500 B.C.....	92
Map 4a	Paleographic reconstruction of the lower Acheron valley, 433 B.C. ....	92
Map 4b	Paleographic reconstruction of the lower Acheron valley, A.D. 1996.....	92
Map 5	The region of Eleia, showing the districts and principal communities .....	173
Map 6	The Peloponnese.....	233
Fig. 1	The plain of the Peneios near Elis .....	43
Fig. 2	Zakynthos from Chelmoutsi headland.....	43
Fig. 3	Eleian silver drachm from Olympiad 95.....	67
Fig. 4	<i>IvO</i> 64, officials sacred to Zeus for Olympiad 188 .....	67
Fig. 5	Kastri and the Acheron valley.....	92
Fig. 6	North-west from the Preveza-Ioannina road.....	92
Fig. 7	Confluence of the Kladeos with the Alpheios.....	173
Fig. 8	Olive grove near Olympia.....	173
Fig. 9	North from the temple of Athena near modern Skillountia .....	173
Fig. 10	North from Mt. Lapithos.....	173
Fig. 11	Inscribed seat for a Lakedaimonian <i>proxenos</i> .....	233

(all photographs, author)