

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Nottingham		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Department of Classics & Archaeology		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Transforming Sparta: Changing perceptions of an icon and shaping management, education and popular representations		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2003 – present		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Chrysanthi Gallou Prof. Stephen Hodkinson Dr Lynn Fotheringham	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Associate Professor Professor in Ancient History Lecturer in Classics	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 02.01.2005 – present 01.09.2003 – 31.08.2018 01.09.1999 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2013 – 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>UoN's Centre for Spartan and Peloponnesian Studies has shared critical revisionist archaeological and historical interpretations of ancient Sparta and its territory (Laconia) with policy makers, secondary teachers, HE and the wider public. Impact has been achieved in four areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. influencing heritage policies in the modern city of Sparta and informing the strategic vision of the city's History, Archaeology and Heritage Community Centre and global outlook through research-based public engagement and academic consultancy;</li> <li>2. transforming secondary school teaching and learning in Australia and the UK through accessible research publications and influencing new teaching materials and the OCR textbook;</li> <li>3. transforming HE teaching and learning globally through influencing the structure and content of modules and student critical thinking and research;</li> <li>4. changing public perceptions of Sparta and its history in the UK, Greece and the US through mass media, in particular popular literature and online debate.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Since 2003 archaeological, historical and reception-focused research published by leading members of the UoN's interdisciplinary Centre for Spartan and Peloponnesian Studies (henceforth the 'Centre', founded in 2005 and globally unique in its focus) has challenged a widespread, often heroised image of ancient Sparta as an exceptional, militaristic, austere and quasi-totalitarian city-state – in both academic and popular works.</p> <p><b>Gallou's</b> archaeological research on Bronze Age predecessors of Classical Sparta and its perioikic towns (<b>3.1, 3.2</b>) de-emphasises the disruptions that supposedly led to Classical Sparta's exceptional status. Her research highlights socio-political and cultural continuities, reconstructing a more accurate image of the socio-political conditions during the Late Bronze Age and the transition to the Early Iron Age, consonant with the range of cultural norms on the rest of the mainland, and contextualising the later period more clearly within long term developments (<b>3.1</b>). The broadening of geographic and temporal focus provides a reminder that a variety of revisionist stories about Sparta and perioikic Laconia can be told, in addition to the standard ones about fifth-century military exploits. Hodkinson's research has led worldwide revisionist interpretations of Classical Sparta, focusing especially on the relationship between Sparta's military and civic elements, its alleged exceptional and quasi-totalitarian character (<b>3.3, 3.4</b>), and comparative analysis of helotage exploring the potential for and limits on helot agency (<b>3.6</b>). <b>Hodkinson</b> emphasises the variety of regional socio-economic activities and places them within the range of Greek norms. Hodkinson's AHRC-funded research on reception reveals the contingent political and intellectual roots of current standard modern interpretations of classical Sparta through comparison with other ancient Greek city-states and with societies at other historical times and places (<b>3.4</b>), and examines the way in which Sparta has been appropriated as a comparative model in modern political and intellectual thought (<b>3.5</b>). <b>Fotheringham's</b> research focuses on popular representations of Sparta in the 20th–21st centuries, exploring reasons for the popularity of the standard image of a militaristic Sparta, particularly within the ideological circumstances of the comics industry and military fiction (<b>3.5</b>). She exposes the way the heroised standard interpretation in popular consciousness is sustained by uncritical omissions and contradictions of problematic aspects</p>		

of Spartan society, such as the exploitation of the helots, in those novels, films, comics and popular history books that present Sparta in a positive light. Her recent research maintains this emphasis on range by demonstrating how the graphic novel *Three* uses layered narrative, characterisation and paratext to present a more historically nuanced view of Spartan culture (3.7).

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. **GALLOU, C.** 2020. *Death in Mycenaean Laconia. A Silent Place*. Oxford (9781789252422)
2. CAVANAGH, W.G., **GALLOU, C.** & GEORGIADIS, M. eds. 2009. *Sparta and Laconia from prehistory to premodern* (BSA Studies 16). London [It includes own chapter, "Epidaurus Limera: the tale of a Laconian site in Mycenaean times", 85-93] (9780904887617)
3. **HODKINSON, S.** & POWELL, A. eds. 2006 *Sparta and War*. Swansea [with Hodkinson's own chapter, "Was classical Sparta a military society?", 111-162] (9781905125111)
4. **HODKINSON, S.** ed. 2009. *Sparta: Comparative Approaches*. Swansea. [Part V is a debate on Spartan exceptionalism between Hodkinson and M.H. Hansen, 383-498] (9781905125388)
5. **HODKINSON, S.** & AND MACGREGOR MORRIS, I. eds. 2012. *Sparta in Modern Thought*. Swansea [It includes chapters by **Hodkinson** ("Sparta and the Soviet Union in U.S. Cold War foreign policy and intelligence analysis", 343-92) and by **Fotheringham** ("The positive portrayal of Sparta in late-20th-century fiction", 393-428)] (9781905125470)
6. **HODKINSON, S.** 2003/2008. "Spartiates, helots and the direction of the agrarian economy", in S.E. Alcock & N. Luraghi, eds. *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia*, Washington, DC, 238-75 (9780674012233); revised version in E. dal Lago & C. Katsari, eds. *Slave Systems, Ancient and Modern*, Cambridge, 285-320 (9780521881838)
7. **FOTHERINGHAM, L.** 2019. "Doing justice to the past through the representation of violence: *Three* and ancient Sparta", in Mickwitz, N., Hague, I. & I. Horton, eds. *Contexts of Violence in Comics*. Routledge, 17-33 (9781138484504)

### Selected grants that underpin the research conducted

- I. PI **Hodkinson**, *Sparta in Comparative Perspective: Ancient to Modern*, AHRC Standard Grant (18263/1), (Sept 2004 – Mar 2010): £346,938
- II. PI Cavanagh, Named Post-Doc **Gallou**, *Prehistoric Laconia*, The Antonini-Georgiadis Fund, Greece (RL1835) (Jan 2005 – Dec 2011): £122,400
- III. PI **Gallou**, *The Chamber Tombs at Epidaurus Limera, Laconia*, Harvard University, The Selby White-Leon Levy Foundation for Archaeological Publications (grant no. n/a) (Mar 2007 – Mar 2009): £7,361.38
- IV. PI **Gallou**, *Prehistoric Laconia*, Institute for the Study of Aegean Prehistory (grant no. n/a) (Jan 2007 – Nov 2007): £10,094.44
- V. PI **Hodkinson**, *Sparta in Comparative Perspective: Ancient to Modern*, Harvard University, Loeb Classical Library Foundation (grant no. n/a) (Feb 2012 – May 2012): £21,755

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact of this ICS has four strands:

#### 1. Influencing heritage policies and decision-making in the modern city of Sparta

Despite being the site of one of the two most important city-states of Classical Greece, Sparta is not a popular tourist destination because its limited physical remains allow little engagement with its glorious past. The Centre's revisionist findings regarding cultural continuity from pre-classical Sparta and Laconia (3.1-2), militarism (3.3-4), misappropriation and distortion in Sparta's popular representations (3.5, 3.7) have had a profound shaping influence on the City of Sparta's strategic vision concerning heritage policies and management. As the Mayor of Sparta testifies, these have transformed the Municipality's decision to increase heritage infrastructure "as a heritage resource and an income generator" (A). The transformation of the Municipality's strategy occurred at multiple levels. Starting in 2019, consultancy by the Centre led to a strategic partnership that helped the Municipality to "identify new aspects of Sparta's ancient history to focus on in our public engagement" (3.1). Between May and November 2020, the joint organisation of the 'Sparta Live!' lecture series of 14 webinars, in partnership with the UK Embassy to Greece and with the participation of key historical fiction writers, graphic novelists, publishers and academics, empowered the Municipality to participate in, manage and steer the public debate around its history and heritage, something unseen

elsewhere in Greece, and “to carefully and consciously position ourselves in relation to rife misappropriations of Sparta’s heritage” (cf. 3.4-5, 3.7). Mitigating against these negative consequences is vital for how locals view their past and cultural heritage and important to the Municipality in how it counters the city’s image as isolationist. Through the series, which attracted large audiences (1410+ individual logins some of which representing school classes, households and associations) spanning 22 countries and five continents, the City gained international reputational benefits and cultural world attention (A).

In 2020, the City of Sparti signed a MoU with the UoN (B), becoming the first Greek municipality to establish a formal relationship with a foreign university with the aim of improving and promoting local heritage protection and marketing. This partnership sets a precedent in the Greek tourism context. The Centre’s academic research, outreach activities and consultancy has had a major influence on the City’s decision to set up a History, Archaeology and Heritage Community Centre to responsibly curate and promote Spartan heritage locally and globally (A). The setting up of the Community Centre has been delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, but a concrete programme of activities (including continuing education and professional training in experimental archaeology, summer schools, tourist summer camps, heritage guides and marketing material) impacted by UoN research, has been prepared and a decision has been made to allocate a separate building in the city to host the Centre and provide space for engagement activities. The Mayor of Sparti (also ex-Deputy Minister of Finance in Greece) stresses the Community Centre’s major importance as an “income generator... at a time when national and EU opportunities for cultural heritage funding are facing serious cuts, and as a result local communities struggle to make most of their heritage resources” (A).

## **2. Transforming secondary school teaching and learning in Australia and the UK**

Hodkinson’s research (3.3-6) and delivery of new teaching resources have significantly impacted on secondary education in the UK (from August 2013) and Australia (from 2015), countering popular misconceptions and misappropriations within the world’s two major courses on Sparta: (1) in the UK, the OCR AS/A-level unit, *Politics and Society of Sparta*, taken by 1,000+ students p.a. in the Classics AS/A-level (August 2013 until 2017); and 1426 students in the new Ancient History A-Level (since 2017) (C1); (2) the Spartan Society unit in the New South Wales (NSW, Australia) Higher School Certificate taken by 3,000 students p.a. (D1, D2).

In the UK Hodkinson’s work has significantly influenced learning resources for the new Ancient History A-level’s Sparta ‘depth study’. His reader’s comments on the Sparta chapters in the OCR/Bloomsbury course textbook led to 72 changes (C2). “His peer review helped ensure the component represented reliable, accurate and up-to-date analysis” (Bloomsbury Senior Commissioning Editor) (C3). An OCR examiner and teacher of QMC, Basingstoke states, the precision of the information on Sparta at war (3.3) “has been very useful...to confirm/build on [students’] understanding of source evaluation” (C4). As advisor to the depth study’s sourcebook, LACTOR 21 Sparta, Hodkinson’s advice was “instrumental in forming the structure of the volume” (Preface; C5). Hodkinson’s impact on the book and therefore on teaching of Sparta in UK schools consisted in improving the selection and interpretation of sources, as the sourcebook editor states (C6). A teacher of QMC, Basingstoke states, “it has helped [students’] confidence and security in understanding a complex topic” (C4). As the first-ever Sparta sourcebook, it is also used internationally at both secondary and tertiary levels, with 821 sales to July 2020, including 570 in N. America - one copy is often used by a number of students/teachers (C7).

In NSW, which in numerical sense is the area with the largest student numbers in the ‘Spartan Society’ unit in Australia, Hodkinson’s publications and teaching resources have transformed teaching and student learning (D2): “I have been using [his] research to provide myself with a university level understanding of Spartan society... The average achieved in the HSC exam...is significantly higher than the rest of the state...a result of [his] thorough research” (teacher, NBSC Balgowlah Boys); [His research] is valuable in enabling students to explore more deeply some of the long-standing generalisations and distortions (the so-called Spartan Mirage) that have characterised Spartan scholarship for so many years” (Immediate Past President, NSW History Teacher’s Association) (D1). His ‘Transforming Sparta’ article (published March 2015) (D3), commissioned for the HSC syllabus by the

Macquarie journal *Ancient History: Resources for Teachers*, has met a particular need for an accessible revisionist account of Sparta “as a means of engaging students and teaching them to think critically” (teacher, Ascham School) and to gain “a wider understanding of the different perspectives and approaches” (student, Shore Grammar School) (D2). His publications are recommended by the President of the NSW Professional Teachers' Council (D4) and frequently cited in the NSW History Teachers Association study days (D5). One (3.6) was selected for quotation in the Catholic Secondary Schools Association's August 2017 practice Ancient History exam, sat by 4,200 students across the sector, for “framing an explicitly historical question in language accessible to 17-18-year-old students” (Exam Convenor) (D6).

### **3. Transforming teaching and learning in HEIs worldwide**

Within HE, Hodkinson's revisionist research has transformed teaching and learning on Sparta globally, influencing curriculum content and enhancing student learning. Evidence of its influence since August 2013 has been received from 27 HEIs (E) spanning 5 continents and 16 countries. To quote one Virginia academic, “his writings have had a revolutionary effect...on the teaching of all responsible scholars in North America” and one from Nanjing, “In China...his publications...have influenced these scholars' research and their teaching”.

Several academics testify how his research has influenced the design and content of curricula in Classics: “Both of my courses on Sparta are informed and inspired by [his] many publications” (Edinburgh); it “shaped the design of the course as a whole” (Dartmouth); “heavily influenced the way I teach Ancient Greek History” (Trento). Similar comments were received from teachers from other HEIs such as Corfu and Trinity College Dublin. And beyond Classics: “your publications have been very important for my recent updating of the course on Political Anthropology” (Russian State University).

HEI teachers highlight the major influence of Hodkinson's own writings and his edited books (cf. 3.3-6) on student tutoring and learning as “an important pedagogic tool” (Winnipeg): “the way you have made your own and other scholars' work so easily accessible has been a great help in tutoring students at various levels” (Bergen); “[His] publications have helped my students think more critically about the ways in which information can be extracted from ancient sources” (Reading). Similar comments have been received from Aalborg, Leicester and Corfu. PhD students have remarked on how “pivotal for the aims of [their] studies” (Napoli) his work has been; “[it] gave me some clues to read more critically the papers and books of modern scholars” (Madrid). At Nanjing, the impact of *Sparta in Modern Thought* (3.5) extended beyond the curriculum as it was selected for discussion by the graduate student reading group in World History in 2014.

One innovative influence is the pedagogic impact of the graphic novel *Three* for which Hodkinson was historical consultant (see 4a below), providing “a model for how scholarly work can be presented...in a compelling fashion” (Dartmouth). Testimonies from academics highlight *Three's* significant impact on student learning: “wonderfully effective as a counter to the more troubling depictions that [students] encounter in Frank Miller's *300*” (Christopher Newport); “the many realistic details gave [the students] a more concrete feeling for the milieu” (Colorado); used it “to flex their critical muscles” (San Diego).

### **4. Shaping public perceptions through popular and mass media**

The Centre's influence on diverse popular and mass media has shaped public perceptions of Sparta, generally dominated by an oversimplistic emphasis on a heroised Spartan militarism. It has done so both by promoting an appreciation of historical complexity, by engaging with creators to influence popular culture representations and by exposing readers to varying and revisionist stories about Sparta (3.3-7).

#### **a. Post publication impact of consultancy for Kieron Gillen's graphic novel, *Three***

*Three*, a graphic novel set in 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC Sparta, for which Hodkinson was academic consultant, was published in serial form in October 2013-February 2014 and in a collected trade edition in April 2014. Its back matter includes a ‘Conversation’ between Gillen and Hodkinson. The trade edition has gone into a second printing. A Greek edition was published in November 2019. It has been a success with readers receiving a strong 8.4/10 review score on *ComicBookRoundup* (F). Both editions have received positive reviews (G). *Three's* historical accuracy is highlighted by comics industry critics (“an ideal example of an absolutely professional work that harmoniously balances between imagination and fiction on the one hand and accuracy on the other”, *EfSyn*). Its revisionist take on Sparta, grounded in

Hodkinson's research (cf. 3.3-4, 3.6), has had a strong impact on readers, countering the normal excessive focus on martial prowess and neglect of helot agency. It has also become an alternative reference point to '300', which presents an idealised militaristic Sparta that ignores aspects of the historical record that undermine that image, such as the Spartan economy's reliance on, and domination of, helotage, thus "*telling a more nuanced story of what life in Sparta was like*" (Matthew, GoodReads) and showing "the slavery that enabled the freedom of the Spartans" (Loki, GoodReads). Reviews also show how *Three* has expanded readers' knowledge of Sparta and of academic research: "*If there's anything that your work changed in me is a new fondness and respect for extreme research for art's sake*" (FernanAyuso's message to Gillen). They also benefited from the 'Conversation' section: "*my understanding of Three and Spartan history was changed and enhanced by the academic discussion published at the back*".

The impacts were augmented through talks to practitioners and public audiences by **Hodkinson** and Gillen, and by **Fotheringham** (3.5, 3.7). Practitioners at *ComicsForum2014* and *AthensCon2019* applauded the innovation brought to their field through the academic consultancy on *Three* and its benefits to improving industry perceptions of Sparta: "*historical research has had a positive impact on the representation of Sparta*". Reader feedback valued how academic research contributed "*a sense of clarity, detail and plausibility*" and how it "*set problems for the story, but in solving them, made the work stronger and richer*". Feedback also showed that *Three* and the talks were a transformational 'Sparta 101': "*I knew the bare minimum about Sparta before reading 'Three'*"; "*Honestly hadn't heard of Helots before – and I did a history degree*"; "*A far better understanding of the slavery system in Sparta*" (G).

Finally, Hodkinson's consultancy had a significant impact on Gillen's career trajectory, giving him first-hand mentoring in the historical skills needed for his next project, his hit series *The Wicked & the Divine*, covering 6000 years of cultural history. "*While fiction is not history, I try and bring that complexity to my thinking about a period...All of that was born of my engagement with Stephen Hodkinson's research during our collaboration on Three*" (F)

b. Countering misappropriations of Sparta by hate groups online

The Centre's research played a key role in the success of the November 2017 launch of the U.S. website *Pharos: Doing Justice to the Classics* at Vassar College, which documents and responds to appropriations of Greece and Rome by hate groups online. *Pharos'* first three posts focused on the use of Spartan military symbols by Alt-right protestors. **Hodkinson** and **Fotheringham** contributed their views to the second post, *Scholars Respond*, "*most of which*", to quote *Pharos'* Director, "*is derived from the work of you and your collaborators at the [Centre]*" (3.3-5, 3.7) (H). Hodkinson's feedback on the draft post "*saved [the website] from many errors and mischaracterizations*". The third post, *This is not Sparta*, cited Hodkinson's "*more balanced readings*" of the role of the military in Spartan culture (3.3); and a fourth, September 2018, post on *The Oath Keepers 'Spartan training program'* cited his challenge to the authenticity of Leonidas' alleged 'MOLON LABE' response to Xerxes at Thermopylae (3.3). Both the second and third posts also cited the graphic novel *Three* (see 4a above) as a work "*which should be required reading for any fan of Snyder's film [300]*". Site analytics show the international reach of *Pharos'* *Sparta* posts. Within two weeks of its launch, the site had been visited over 5,000 times by users from 48 countries. By July 2020, the Sparta posts that and **Fotheringham** consulted on had 4,663 views, ranking them "*among the most visited on the site*" (I).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. Letter from the Mayor of Sparti confirming influence on the City's heritage policies
- B. Memorandum of Understanding signed between the UoN and the City of Sparti
- C. Dossier of testimonies to impact on secondary school teaching & learning in the UK
- D. Dossier of testimonies to impact on secondary school teaching & learning in NSW, Australia
- E. Dossier of testimonies to impact on teaching & learning in HEIs worldwide
- F. Letter from graphic novelist Kieron Gillen confirming influence on graphic novel *Three*
- G. Dossier of testimonies to post publication impact on the graphic novel *Three*
- H. Letter from the website *Pharos* Director confirming impact on website content
- I. *Pharos* readership data 27-22-2017 to 31-07-2020