McDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

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with contributions from
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4. The 'Rome Catalogue' (Ch.4)
5. Pottery catalogue to accompany Chapter 12
6. Catalogue of Byzantine to Early Modern pottery to accompany Chapter 13

Additional appendix on CD:

7. Table of artefact density and visibility measurements for Thespiai City (Ch.3b)

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Preface

John Bintliff & Anthony Snodgrass

The work of the Boeotia Project in the years 1985 and 1986 was made possible by the generous support of several institutions and individuals. The main financial sponsors were the British Academy and the British School at Athens, while the two participating institutions, the Universities of Bradford and Cambridge, contributed generously with more than 25 travel grants for student and senior participants and the hire of two University vehicles. By arrangement with Professor V. Lambrinoudakis, two students from the University of Athens also joined the Cambridge group in 1985.

To explain: the 1985 field season proceeded in two stages: from 14 July to 5 August, a team from the University of Cambridge operated in the rural territory to the west and north of ancient Thespiai, halting its coverage as soon as it reached the apparent edge of the built-up city area; then, from 6 to 28 August, a team from the University of Bradford took over, with the more intensive survey of the city itself. This team covered approximately half of the urban area that year, and completed their task in the 1986 season.

The senior teams were notably extended by the participation of Professor B.E. Davies (Earth Sciences), Cliff Slaughter (Sociology), Dr. John Hayes and Dr. W.G. Cavanagh (pottery study); John Hayes continued to work tirelessly on the Thespian (and other) material for several seasons thereafter. Much later, the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at Cambridge (not yet founded at the time of the original field-work) entered the picture, with the encouragement of its successive Directors Graeme Barker and Cyprian Broodbank and the crucial decision to publish this volume, and with the provision of an exemplary type-setter and text editor in Ben Plumridge, to whose services we are endlessly indebted. Finally, without the support of the Ninth Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Thebes, both at the time in facilitating our field-work and ever since in providing continuous access to our finds, none of this work would have been possible.

To the wider archaeological community, and especially to all those named above, we owe profound apologies for the long delay in producing a final report on this work. In mitigation, over the past 30 years all the main authors have published a whole series of interim treatments of the city and territory of Thespiai and allied topics, as consultation of the bibliography at the end of this volume will show. But a yet more important point is that the passage of time has seen the emergence of a whole array of technical aids to field-work, of methods of recording and of computation of results, which were not yet available 30 years ago and which have transformed the preparation and presentation of our data.

At least equally important has been the recruitment, some years on, of an added team of experts, from a wide range of origins and a variety of specialisms, to strengthen the study of our results. Besides the contributors of Chapters 6 to 14 below, in their entirety, as well as to parts of earlier chapters, these include teams from two major institutions, the Università di Roma Tor Vergata under the direction of Prof. Margherita Bonanno Aravantinos, and the University of Ljubljana under Prof. Božidar Slapšak. Our account has been vastly enriched by their contributions.

Finally, the expansion of the original Boeotia Project to cover a series of other Boeotian cities and their territories, from Hyettos to the north to Tanagra in the east and Koroneia to the west, has made possible a range of preliminary comparative assessments of the Thespian data. We hope that this range of factors will go some way towards compensating for the lack of promptitude in presenting the results.

We end by paying tribute to the teams of students, beginning with those from Bradford who,

under Carl Heron and Paul Spoerry, carried out the gruelling work of the city survey itself, and going on to those from Rome and Ljubljana who are, at most, named only in passing in the pages that follow. Their contributions will not be forgotten.

We have not assigned author names to Chapters 1 to 5, since each of them is essentially based on collaborative writing. But the primary text of Chapters 1 and 3 was compiled by John Bintliff, of Chapters 2, 4 and 5 by Anthony Snodgrass, with a major input to Chapter 4 by Božidar Slapšak, and with the entire management of the survey databases, and the design of the graphics throughout by Emeri Farinetti, while many of the pot drawings were digitized by Jenny Doole. Finally, in 1985 as in each previous season, Annemarie Snodgrass, besides taking part in field-walking, oversaw the domestic base on which the entire project depended.

Chapter 1

Introduction: the survey of the city of Thespiai

The Boeotia project, initially a joint venture by the Universities of Bradford (John Bintliff) and Cambridge (Anthony Snodgrass), later Durham and Cambridge, and sponsored by the British Academy and these three Universities, carried out its first field season in 1979. The team was initially based in the village of Mavrommati, intermediate in location between the ancient cities of Haliartos to its north-west and Thespiai to its south, and probably close to the ancient border between their territories. It was natural to commence intensive field survey in the immediate environs of the village, then to proceed radially outwards, to include those two city sites. This rural prospection occupied us through to 1984, during which time the field teams had reached Haliartos and the environs of Thespiai in the northern and southern directions respectively. Eastwards we were limited by permit constraints to a small expansion, but during the same period a major extension westwards was achieved through the complete survey of the non-mountainous sector of the Valley of the Muses (preliminary summaries in Bintliff 1985; Bintliff and Snodgrass, 1985a–b).

It was the latter sector which first faced us with the complete survey of a major (11 ha) 'urban' site, the second-order settlement (*komê*) of Askra. In 1982 and then further in 1985, Askra was surveyed at two levels – first, field by field, then through placing a formal rectangle of 30 by 10 m within each field as a sub-sample. Learning from this first experiment helped us to design an improved scheme in the course of the 1985 season, when two separate teams tackled the much larger urban centres of Haliartos (*c.* 36 ha surveyed, almost the entire site), and Thespiai (179 ha, including extramural areas) (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988; Snodgrass and Bintliff 1991). In subsequent years this core survey-zone in south-western Boeotia was to be expanded, notably to include a large area in the southern hinterland of Thespiai city, the subject of the first of our final monographs (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007, henceforward *Testing the Hinterland*) (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2). But during the years 1989–1992, in order to check whether developments in other parts of Boeotia were comparable, we opened up a new survey window in the northern borders of Boeotia, carrying out rural survey around the ancient city of Hyettos and a complete survey of the town itself (around 30 ha) (Bintliff, 1997c) (Fig. 1.3).

Processing of the survey finds and revisits to most sites occupied us until 1997, when full-team fieldwork formally ceased. The rapid development in the methodology of survey interpretation and the sheer size and complexity of our database led to a lengthy delay of ten years before the first final publication; throughout this period, however, we were able to publish a continuous series of articles outlining our ongoing evaluations. From 2000, John Bintliff's appointment to Leiden University and the requirement to provide annual field-training in Classical Archaeology for his students led to a new programme in Boeotia, the Leiden Ancient Cities of Boeotia project (annual reports in *Pharos*, the journal of the Dutch Institute at Athens, vol. 8 (2001) to present; see also Bintliff *et al.* 2008). Božidar Slapšak joined this 'Boeotia 2' project with his staff and students from Ljubljana University, with particular expertise in geophysics, architectural survey and air photography. This second project carried out research in new areas of Boeotia, first conducting a total survey of the ancient city site of Tanagra (around 30 ha in its Late Roman enceinte, perhaps twice as large in its Classical Greek heyday) in the far east of the province, as well as large areas of its territory, then commencing a total urban survey at the city of Koroneia (*c.* 34 ha), in the centre of the region. This revival of fieldwork has been very informative for the writing-up of the original Boeotia project, as it has shed light, through fieldwork innovations, on our older data, and enabled us better to understand other Aegean survey results (see Fig. 1.3).

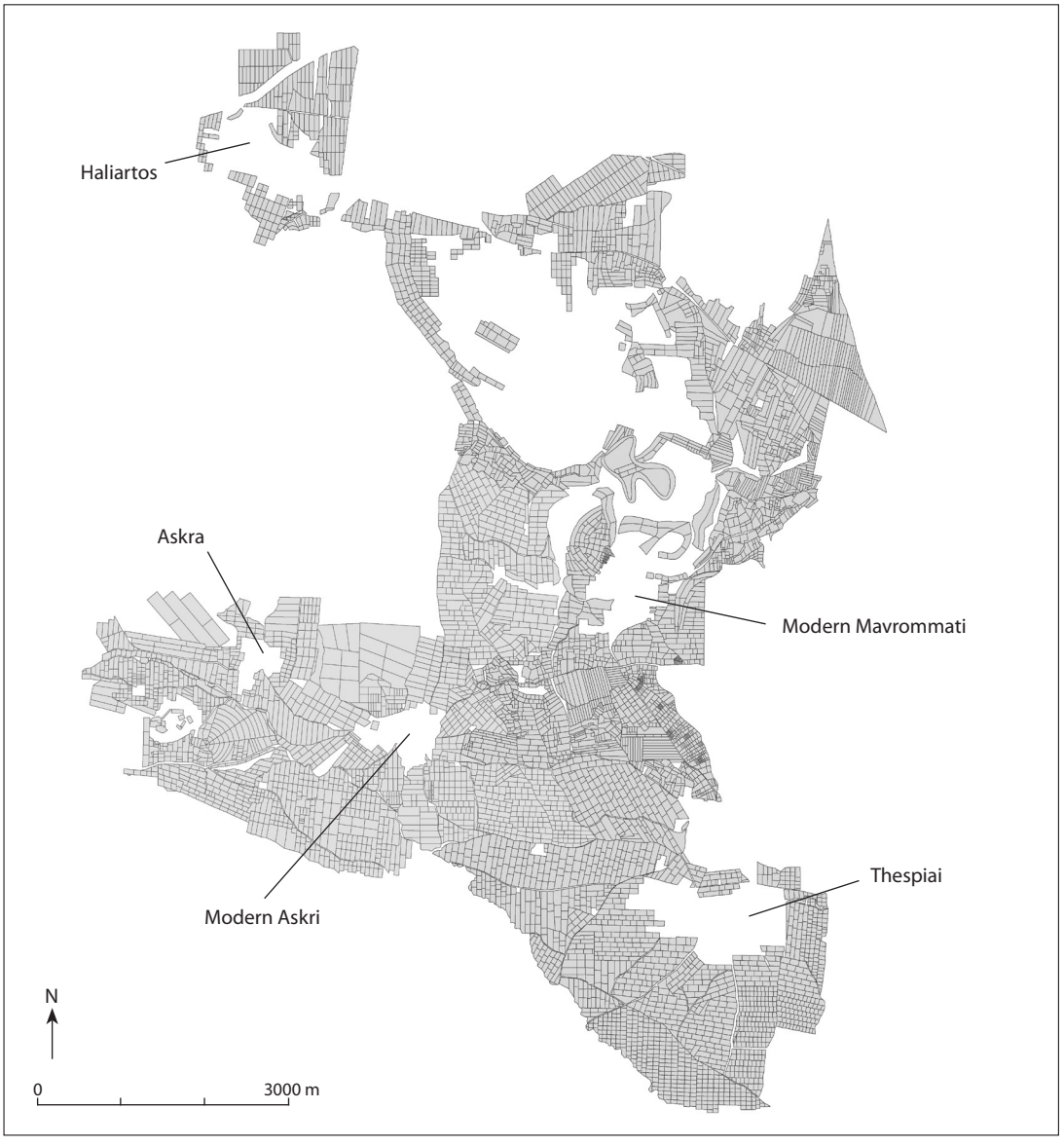


Figure 1.1. *The off-site, rural transects covered by the end of fieldwork in south-western Boeotia. The ancient cities of Haliartos, Thespiai and the village-town of Askra, together with their modern settlement replacements, form several of the blank 'holes' in this cover. The first two ancient city-sites were surveyed by an urban gridding procedure, Askra through a combination of field-by-field study and dispersed rectangular units (compiled by Dr. Mark Gillings).*

A more direct benefit for the older project has been the invaluable assistance that the Ljubljana team has given with the revisiting and writing-up of the original Boeotia project. Božidar Slapšak (Fig. 1.4) has been particularly active in adding to the evidence from the rural and urban survey at Thespiai: his geophysical results from the city of Thespiai (see Chapter 4, pp. 192–6), though fruitful, did not match the truly remarkable town-plan that his team revealed at Tanagra. But an intensive re-mapping of architectural surface finds by the Ljubljana team, following earlier recording by the 1985–1986 city survey team leaders and by Bintliff and Snodgrass on several occasions up to 2001, has revolutionized our knowledge of the development of the town (see Chapter 3 below, Parts (ii) and (iii)). In addition, a small team from the University of Rome, Tor Vergata, directed by Professor Margherita Bonanno Aravantinos, with assistance from Dr. Lorenzo Gentili, has in collaboration with us produced a commentary on the surface architectural finds at Thespiai, as well as discovering new fragments (see Chapter 4, Part (i)).

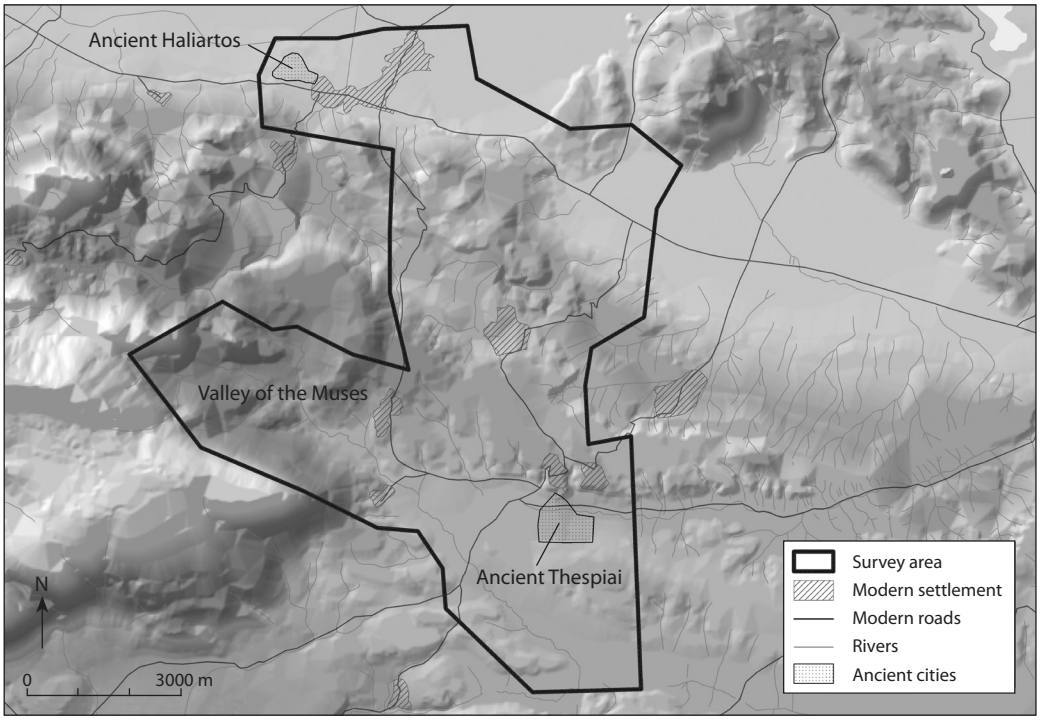


Figure 1.2. *The overall location of the surveyed area in south-western Boeotia, with ancient Haliartos and Thespiai marked (compiled by Emeri Farinetti).*

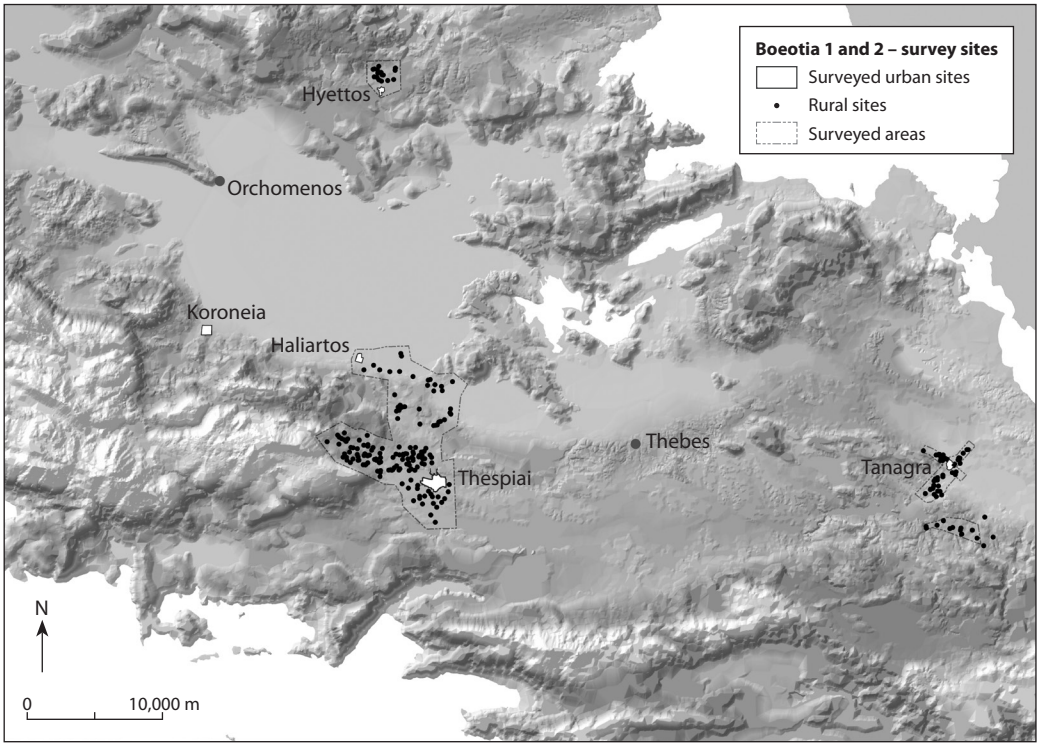


Figure 1.3. *The rural and urban areas surveyed by the original and the more recent Boeotia Projects (GIS by Emeri Farinetti).*

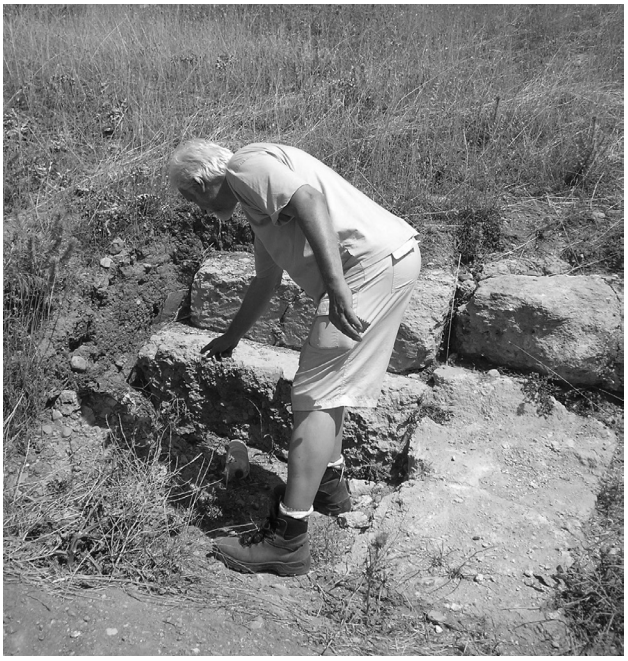


Figure 1.4. *Božidar Slapšak inspecting a section of the probably Hellenistic extension wall of Thespiai, exposed in a sand quarry north of the Kanavaris stream.*

Even more recently, a project of 2013 to widen the east–west (Thebes) road that runs north of the river Kanavaris, and hence divides what we take to be the original city and the projected ancient extension, has opened up a narrow but very long swathe of land some 10 m wide and half a kilometre long. Here the Ephorate has been busy monitoring and then excavating a series of exposures and monuments (Fig. 1.5). This last-minute intervention, during the final stages of preparation of this volume, has provided exciting new evidence from excavation, and we are privileged to be able to include (Addendum to Chapter 4 below, pp. 196–8) a short account of these finds from our colleagues at the Thebes Museum.

The present volume, our second monograph to arise from the original Boeotia Project, contains the data and analysis from the 1985–1986 surface survey of the city site of Thespiai, together with a catalogue and interpretation of the architectural pieces scattered across its surface, recorded and studied between 1985 and 2009. Besides the narratives of the development of the city found in Chapters 3 and 4, there are contributions on the documentary sources and the later history of the site, as well as individual chapters by period specialists in ceramics and numismatics.



Figure 1.5. *Part of the rescue excavation of the Thebes Ephorate of August 2013, showing what appears to be a sector of the Classical or early Hellenistic wall, connecting the city extension north of the river Kanavaris with the older city and enceinte south of the river. Modern Thespies village is just visible behind.*

Chapter 2

The site of ancient Thespiai and the early travellers

The site of Thespiai, bereft of most of its monumental structures and lying a little way off the main routes of travel from Athens, both northwards to Thessaly and Macedonia and westwards to Delphi, was as slow to be firmly identified by the early visitors to Greece as it was to win the attention of their successors, the archaeologists and excavators. Of the well-known writers of the great age of rediscovery of ancient Greece some, like C.R. Cockerell, John Cam Hobhouse, F.A. Chateaubriand, F.C.H.L. Pouqueville or J.L.S. Bartholdy, were to pass it by completely: a common route, for the 'voyage pittoresque' as for the 'Grand Tour', was one that took in Attica and the Cyclades, often the Peloponnese, but nothing more of mainland Greece, before passing on to Asia Minor. Even those who did visit Boeotia often made the journey between its two principal towns, Thebes and Levadhia, in a single day, without making the short detour southwards to Thespiai.

By far the earliest witness whose account of the site survives is the Anglican clergyman George Wheler (1650–1724), though his narrative, like Homer's, bears internal traces of the fact that he had had forerunners in the same undertaking. He came to the site in March 1676 and we owe his visit, indirectly, to an unpremeditated departure from his planned itinerary. Together with his travelling companion for some months past, Dr. Jacob Spon of Lyon (1647–85), Wheler had left Athens (as they both thought, for the last time) on 29 February of that year, bent on a homeward journey overland, through central and northern Greece. So they retraced their earlier steps along the natural direct route, past Thebes, the southern shore of Lake Kopais and Levadhia. But they had set out too early in the year, before the winter snows had cleared, and at the *khan* of Tourkochori, near the border of Boeotia and Phokis, they received news that the passes further north along their route were still snowbound. Spon at once resolved to abandon the journey and make his way southwards, across the flanks of Parnassos, to take ship from the Gulf of Corinth: Wheler decided to tarry a while. Both their subsequent accounts (Spon [1678] 1724, ii 51; Wheler 1682, 330) mention a feature which had captured their interest earlier, on their outward journey: the fact that Lake Kopais, though fed by more than one major river, appeared to maintain its general level by being drained through underground passages at its far north-eastern extremity, of which they were told but which they had not had time to visit.

Left alone by his companion on 9 March, Wheler set out on a clockwise circle which took him, by way of Atalanti, round to these underground passages, the *katavothra*, which he thought (1682: 465) 'may well be reckoned among the greatest Wonders of the World'. He then continued southwards and, on coming again upon the main route which they had already twice traversed, decided to make a detour: instead of following the same road yet again, he crossed it, to explore the country immediately to the south. He was to write in the Preface of his account, published four years after Spon's, that 'I found I had many useful Observations omitted by him', and this final, solo foray gave an excellent opportunity to add to these. Crossing the range of low hills which lines the main road on its southern side, he made directly for the village of 'Rimokastro' (Erimokastro, modern Thespiés) which, from its hill-top vantage-point, looks down on what was then the much more evident site of some ancient city. Noting its mixture of Greek and Albanian inhabitants, Wheler went on to write (1682: 470) that

> 'about this place and just under the Mountain are so many and great Ruins that it hath made some to suppose this place to have been the ancient *Thespia*: But I am not of their opinion. I think rather it was the ancient *Thisba*, as I shall

> have occasion by and by to conclude, shewing by most probable testimony, where the old *Thespia* was'.

Who were these 'some' who had made what in fact was the correct identification? We do not know; but there is a possible clue from another contemporary English traveller. Francis Vernon, together with his companions Sir Giles Eastcourt and Bernard Randolph, had apparently sailed together with Spon and Wheler on the outward journey from Venice as far as Zante (Zakynthos), where they split up. A much later publication of some of Vernon's note-books, with his copies of Greek inscriptions, adds the information that his now separate party had then landed on the coast of the Corinthian Gulf and travelled overland, via Thespiai and Thebes, to Athens: this was in late August 1675, little more than six months before Wheler's visit (Meritt 1949: 213). We do not know whether Vernon had found inscriptions at Thespiai and it was not until late January 1676 that Wheler and Spon finally reached Athens; but Wheler is likely to have heard there of the earlier itinerary of the other party, and perhaps of the village of Erimokastro as the accepted location for the site of Thespiai (hence his otherwise unexplained choice of it as a destination to make for). Among other possible authorities, Archbishop Meletios (1661–1714: see pp. 9, 10–11, 14) can hardly have visited Thespiai so early as this. The Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi had traversed Boeotia on a southward journey in 1668, but he was not one to make antiquarian detours: he covered the 30-mile journey by the direct road from Livadhia to 'Istifa' (Thebes) in five hours (see Cheiladakis 1991: 149).

In any case, next day Wheler did not directly address the question of identifying the ruins below, but instead rode a few miles westwards, passing on the way some lesser ruins at the localities which he names *Phria* (about a mile from Erimokastro) and *Spatharia* (a mile further), to reach the village which still retains the name of Neochori, just at the foot of the easternmost extremity of Mt. Helikon (1682: 471). Here he climbed to the ruined church above the village and found an inscription (later recorded as *IG* vii.1862) which begins with the words 'The sons of the Thespians..'. On this evidence, he identified the not very extensive traces of ancient and later settlement above Neochori (later to be registered in our survey as Sites 'NEO 1', '2' and '3') as the ancient Thespiai.

Later that day, he turned eastwards again and, this time, passed through the site in the plain below Erimokastro, 'which they now call only Castri': yet, strangely, he omits all mention of the feature from which this name must have come, the late antique wall-circuit, so prominent in the descriptions of later travellers. He does however tell us that 'Rimokastro is divided into three little knots of houses, two upon the hill and one below': in other words, that the ancient site on the plain was also that of a still inhabited village or hamlet. This can evidently be identified with the larger of the two concentrations of Ottoman-period pottery found by our urban survey, lying south of the river, due east of the *Kastro* and towards the eastern extremity of the Classical site. Here, he writes, 'there are many ruined Churches, with Fragments of Inscriptions about them. Amongst which, I found a Stone in the Wall...' (1682: 471). His description of this stone matches the one later recorded as *IG* vii.1831, bearing the (only partially visible) signature of the great fourth-century BC sculptor Praxiteles. Wheler was learned enough to know that Praxiteles had executed more than one famous statue at Thespiai; and the logical implications of this second find were enough to draw from him the concession that the place must have lain within the 'territories' of Thespiai, but not more. He still clung to the identification of the site with 'Thisba' (which for much of antiquity was in any case a city subordinated to Thespiai), and reinforced this by his journey the following day (1682: 472) to the shore of the Corinthian Gulf which, he persuaded himself, could be reconciled with the description by Pausanias (ix. 32. 2) of the situation of the coast, relative to Thisbe. He was never to visit the actual site of Thisbe further to the west: instead, he turned eastwards, to work his way back once more to Athens, and his travels were soon to end: less than a dozen further pages find him concluding his account, safely home in Canterbury.

Wheler's observations on this final foray, notwithstanding his errors in identification, retain much value for their authenticity and early date. His location of Thespiai at Neochori won some currency, being adopted (according to Kruse 1826: 33) by the noted German geographer Konrad Mannert (1756–1834). His work, both in the original and in a French translation, was used by Jean Baptiste Bourgignon d'Anville in compiling the sheets of his Atlas (d'Anville 1743–86) that were devoted to Greece, as d'Anville tells us in the separately published *Analyse de la Carte intitulée Côtes de la Grèce* (1757). But, interestingly, d'Anville does not appear to have followed Wheler in his placement of Thespiai and Thisbe: his most detailed map '*Graeciae Antiquae Specimen Geographicum*' (d'Anville 1762), despite its small scale, correctly locates Thespiai well to the east of Helicon and Ascra, and Thisbe similarly at or near its true site. This reinforces Wheler's own suggestion that his locations ran counter to the majority view.

Some 125 years elapse before we find another account to match or excel that of Wheler in reasoning and detail. This interval of course witnessed intellectual developments more important than the mere passage of time. The entire phenomenon of the Enlightenment, with its insistence on accurate, lucid, dispassionate description, and the artistic intervention of the Society of Dilettanti in Italy and Greece, with its equal concern for visual accuracy, had each run much of their course, transforming (among many other things) travel writing. In place of the omnivorous and sometimes uncritical curiosity that had motivated Spon and Wheler, with their frequent anecdotes of human encounters, a new and more scientific treatment of nature and the works of man had come to prevail.

The first name that can claim to exemplify these developments is that of Richard Chandler (1738–1810), Rector of Tilehurst near Reading, who was in fact a major figure in the activities of the Society of Dilettanti just mentioned. Rightly respected for his accounts of his more extensive journeys in Asia Minor, Chandler also spent 15 months, between August 1765 and November 1766, travelling in Greece (Chandler 1776).

Against such a background, his account of western Boeotia comes as a sad disappointment. It involves little actual autopsy: part of his Chapter 64 (1776: 256–9) reads as a mere paraphrase of Pausanias, while much of the rest depends on the reports of Wheler. He approached the region by sea, sailing eastwards along the coast of the Gulf of Corinth and so passing from the shore of Phokis to that of Boeotia, calling in at a series of harbours. It is doubtful how far, if at all, he personally ventured inland from this coast: his map (1776: Frontispiece) does little to dispel the impression of vague, second-hand information, supplemented by distant views of the unmistakable landmark of Mt. Helikon. Uncertainty as to the exact locations of Thisbe and Thespiai is reflected his identification of their ancient ports, which he knew must have been among those at which his ship called. He recognizes Creusa, the port of ancient Thespiai, in the little roadstead of 'St. Basilio' (*Agios Vasilios*), which lies in a lateral inlet on the east side of the Bay of Livadostro: the more important harbour of Livadostro itself, just to the west, is assigned to Thisbe. These determinations were bound to affect his location for Thespiai; and here, remarkably, he turns Wheler's evidence against Wheler himself. In the closing days of his lone journey through the region, Wheler (1682: 473) had spent a night at the 'cold harbour' of Agios Vasilios, proceeding inland next day in the direction of Plataia, that is roughly north-eastwards. After an hour or more on the way, he had passed the actual town of 'St. Basilio', where he noted the remains of an ancient site. This site Chandler, apparently without visiting it, now proceeds to identify as ancient Thespiai. This in turn necessitates a different identification for Wheler's own 'Thespia' at Neochori and, in a footnote (1776: 257, n.1), Chandler offers one: 'it seems to have been Coronea' – a geographical error much more substantial than Wheler's, since Coronea lay on the far, northern side of Helikon.

Noting in passing the partly fictional but enormously popular *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis* of the Abbé J.J. Barthélemy (1716–95), who himself never visited Greece but in his posthumously published work (Barthélemy 1822–24: iii, 242) had brought his hero briefly to Thespiai, we may turn to the opening years of the nineteenth century which, for Thespiai as for Greece as a whole, saw an exponential increase in the frequency and number of learned visitors. We begin with the Cambridge polymath Edward Daniel Clarke (1769–1822), whose *Travels in various countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, published in 1818, had brought him to Thespiai in December, 1801, close to the dates of the first journeys of Dodwell and Leake (see below). On the 8th of that month, Clarke had ridden north-westwards from the village of Plataná, close to the site of ancient Plataia, all the way to Neochori, where Wheler had placed Thespiai (1818: vii, 102). The later part of this journey took him through the locality called Lefka, a place-name which we hear for the first time from him, but which his description clearly identifies with the true site of Thespiai (and so with Wheler's 'Thisba'). Noting that the area is 'covered with immense fragments of marble and stone', he realizes that he must be at the site of a major ancient settlement: but which? Here, unfortunately, Clarke is misled (1818: 112). He mentions an alternative spelling of Lefka as Leftra, which leads him easily to the conclusion that this is the site of ancient Leuktra. Lefka in fact meant simply 'poplar' in contemporary Greek and had no necessary bearing on the ancient name of the site; while the toponym of Leuktra, given to the site of a famous battle, may anyway have applied only to a locality in the rural territory of Thespiai, rather than to a settlement of any kind, let alone a major one. But Clarke, like Chandler before him, was now embarked on a collision course with those who identified this site as that of ancient Thespiai or, in Wheler's case, Thisbe: and the same consequences followed.

In Clarke's case, he had to travel only a little further before finding a conjectured location of his own for Thespiai: this was to be in the ruins at Phria, the locality which Wheler had reached about a mile westwards from Erimokastro (see p. 5), and for which he had declined to give an ancient identification. (Clarke

found this place to be *two* miles west of Lefka, which fits with the fact that the main focus of ruins at Lefka was towards the eastern end of the plain). But Clarke had taken care to proceed first to Wheler's favoured 'Thespia' at Neochori, where he spent the night. Finding it quite inadequate for identification with a major city, he writes, in a perceptive anticipation of the methods of modern survey archaeology (1818: 113), that 'there is not a trace even of the ancient pottery whch is always found upon the site of antient cities' and concludes (114) that 'not a vestige remains of the antient city'. Realizing that he can nevertheless not be far from the vicinity of Thespiai, he turns back to the journey of the previous day, and settles provisionally on Phria.

The traces of settlement here may have been much more extensive in the time of Wheler or Clarke than they were in 1984, when we recorded what must be the same location in our survey as 'Site PP 16'; but they can never have compared with those visible at Clarke's supposed satellite settlement of 'Leuctra', and Clarke was evidently not comfortable with his proposed identifications. He ends his account with the words: 'it must be evident that the situation of Thespia, although nearly that which Wheler has assigned for it, has not yet been satisfactorily ascertained' (1818: 116); and the truth is that his most valuable contribution, for our purposes, had been to show that the true location for ancient Thespiai, though evidently already mooted before the time of Wheler's visit in 1676 (see p. 5), was still open to fundamental challenge as late as the end of the year 1801.

But the matter was to be definitively settled by the next two visitors, Edward Dodwell (1767–1832), a gentleman of private means, and William Martin Leake (1777–1860), an officer and later Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery. Their journeys run in a closely parallel rhythm: Dodwell had passed directly along the main road through Boeotia in 1801, without turning off to Thespiai, while Leake had paid a first brief visit to the site on his mapping expedition, apparently together with Colonel Squire and Mr. Hamilton, in 1802; Dodwell then made the detour to Thespiai in March 1805, Leake again following less than a year later with his more extended visit. The comparison of their accounts is enlivened by consulting Leake's own annotated copy (held in the library of the Faculty of Classics at Cambridge) of Dodwell's book, by some margin the earlier of their two accounts to be published (1819). Both had approached the site by the same route, which differed from those of Wheler or Clarke in coming neither over the hills from the north nor from the south-east, but up the valley of the Kanavari river from the east, the natural approach from Thebes.

Dodwell's account is the briefer of the two and suffers in other ways from a comparison between them, but the salient point is that both writers are of one mind in their conclusions, and reach these by broadly the same methods. Dodwell repeats Clarke's toponym for the location, but not his deduction from it (1819: i, 255):

> 'A small village called *Lefka* is seen in the vicinity, the inhabitants of which, in tilling the ground, find a great many small copper coins of Thespeia. I bought several of them...'

As for its identification, he had already concluded that it was 'probably Thespeia' (1819: i, 253, also giving the alternative ancient spellings). He comments that 'the walls, which are almost entirely ruined, enclose a small circular space, a little elevated above the plain, which probably comprehended the Acropolis.' This 'elevation above the plain', designed to reinforce the interpretation as an acropolis, applies only to the southern extremity, where the ground outside the circuit also rises: there is little difference in elevation between the interior and exterior of the circuit, here or elsewhere. Dodwell goes on to note a few of the same features that Leake was to describe more fully: 'There are the remains of some temples in the plain; their site is marked by some churches that are composed of ancient fragments' (in few cases, at Thespiai anyway, is it likely that the churches stood on the actual *site* of a temple). He continues: 'in one of them is an imperfect inscription mentioned by Wheler' (here he draws the stone naming Praxiteles, still only partly visible, which Wheler had earlier seen). With another stone, a 'badly executed' (Leake indicates his disagreement) relief with a horseman that is inscribed 'To Alexander the Hero' (later published as *IG* vii. 1823), he unwisely speculates that it may commemorate the restoration of Thespiai by Alexander the Great: here Leake writes dismissively in the margin of his copy, 'a common heroic monument'. He visits the Church of St. Charálambos, where he notes much the same monuments that Leake was later to describe. Dodwell's description ends with the sage observation that 'the soil is fertile and has risen considerably above its ancient level. Some valuable antiquities and inscriptions might no doubt be found here with little trouble and expense'.

Dodwell's account suffers from a fair number of other historical and geographical errors, such as placing the peak of Cithaeron to the north, rather than the south-east, when seen from Thespiai (duly underlined by Leake). This casts doubt on the strictures of his own which he offers on two of his predecessors

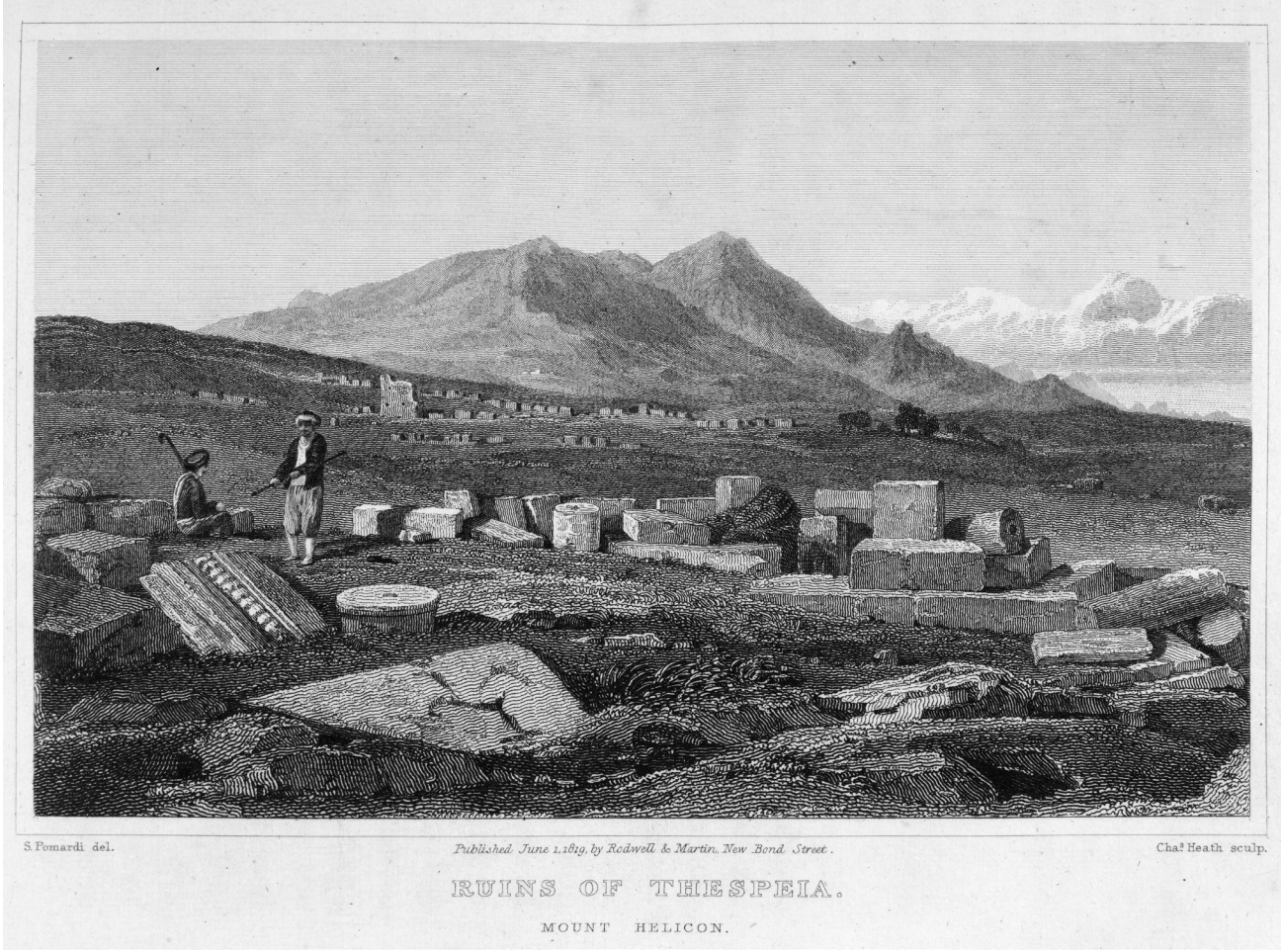


Figure 2.1. *Engraving entitled 'Ruins of Thespeia' (from Dodwell 1819, facing p. 256).*

(1819: i, 256, n.1): 'It is necessary to put future travellers upon their guard against the Geography of Meletius, which is a mass of errors.' He goes on: 'Meletius will have it that *Kakosi* is Thespiae and D'Anville is equally mistaken in supposing it to be *Neochorio*'. Dodwell had evidently not noticed, as Leake was to do, that Meletios (1661–1714) had been precisely the source for the earliest objective evidence for the *real* location for Thespiai, by citing inscriptions from Erimokastro which named the ancient city (Meletios 1807: ii, 341: see below, pp. 10–11). But it is true that Meletios has in effect a 'double entry' for Thespiai: after correctly situating '*Thesptis polis*' at 'what is commonly called *Erimokastro*' he proceeds, on the next page, to locate '*Thespeiai*' at Kakosi, the village which lay on the actual site of Thisbe, well to the west (he wrongly believed ancient Thisbe to be on the coast at Aliki), and to give a description of what is probably that site (Hobhouse, Byron's erstwhile travelling-companion, was another traveller who, in a long footnote, evinced difficulty in handling Meletios' text hereabouts: 1813: 277–83). As for d'Anville, whatever he may have written somewhere (Dodwell cites no reference), we have already seen (p. 6) that his actual map of ancient Greece reflects no such supposition as this about the location of Thespiai.

Yet Dodwell makes a unique contribution by giving us the earliest engraving of the actual site at Lefka (1819, facing p.256, usefully reproduced in Roesch 1965, pl. xx). Captioned 'Ruins of Thespeia', it is clear and detailed (Fig. 2.1): a view looking westwards from a point which can still be precisely located (the ruined foundation in the left foreground is marked to this day by a heap of ancient blocks, Site 34 in Chapter 4). It includes the upstanding remains of a Byzantine apsidal church, which partly survive today, in the middle distance to the left (Site 36 of Chapter 4); and, most valuably of all, the unmistakable line of the fortification wall of the *Kastro* behind this, running across the scene from right to left and then returning, on a

roughly parallel line behind, down the hill from the left. The eastern peaks of Helikon are portrayed, in the main accurately, in the far distance. This is a precious visual record, worth many words of description, of a monument whose days were numbered.

Dodwell seems to harbour no misgivings about the identification of the site, which again has implications when he moves on to Neochori. Perhaps in deference to Wheler, he feels it necessary to find an alternative name for Wheler's mistaken identification of a place 'where ancient traces may be seen' (here Leake pencils the word 'none' in the margin, echoing Clarke's negative findings). He concludes that it is 'probably Askra', an identification that was to fare no better than Wheler's.

Leake, although his account was not to be published until 1835, had as we have seen paid a first visit to the site in 1802; his second, extended one of 1806 is easily our most valuable account of the site. Two and a half hours' ride from Thebes found him in sight of 'a verdant plain containing the sources of the [Kanavari] river'; then he ascended 'the height which rises from its northern side', on which stood Rimokastro and its neighbour Katzikaveli (modern Leondari). He goes on:

> 'In the middle of the vale, immediately below Rimokastro, are extensive ruins of an ancient town, undoubtedly Thespiae, the founders of which seem to have chosen the site for the sake of the sources of the Kanavari. Such a low situation... must have been inconvenient in any kind of warfare...' (1835: ii, 478–9).

Leake turns first to the wall-circuit which Dodwell had drawn:

> 'The only remains of military architecture are the foundations of an oblong or oval inclosure, built of very solid masonry of a regular kind. It is scarcely half a mile in circumference; but all the adjacent ground to the south-east is covered, like the interior of the fortress, with ancient foundations, squared stones and other remains, proving that if the inclosure was the only fortified part of the city, many of the public and private edifices stood without the walls.' (479).

So far, this exemplary account has already given us a description of the natural setting of the site, a correct identification for it, a reasonable explanation for its location and a description of its most prominent feature which brings out, by a cautious and conditional deduction, the salient fact that the city extended far beyond the wall-circuit – specifically, in a south-easterly direction, where the main Roman and later nucleus, rather than that of Classical Greek times, lay. It was perhaps beyond the powers of an observer at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even Leake (who, as we shall see, was alert to chronological factors in interpreting the site), to make the further deduction that the date of the 'inclosure' had been of a later period than that of the greatest extent of the city.

Leake next tells us that

> 'The place is called *Lefka*, from a village of that name no longer in existence, but the ruined churches of which still remain to the number of five or six. When I visited these ruins in 1802, there were still three inhabited cottages at Lefka, but these are now' [that is, in February 1806] 'deserted and ruined. In the time of Wheler the village appears to have been nearly of the same size as Rimokastro or Kaskaveli' [compare p. 6 above]

The toponym Lefka, unrecorded by Wheler but now evidently in general use (Leake gave short shrift to the '*Leuka* = Leuktra' equation), is here applied specifically to the modern village on the ancient site. It was not a replacement for Wheler's name of '*Castri*', which was to survive (in the form *Kastro*) until long after Leake's time: rather, 'Castri' applied to the ancient wall-circuit, 'Lefka' to the contemporary village which lay at a short distance to the east. Leake, in combination with Dodwell who had (surprisingly) found Lefka inhabited less than a year before, provides a uniquely precise date for the abandonment of these last remains of settlement in the plain. The inhabitants were presumably absorbed into the (by now much larger) villages of Erimokastro and Katzikaveli on the hill-top above.

Observing that the Kanavari 'flows along the North side of the ruins' (480), Leake then turns, as Wheler had, to the ruined churches 'to the number of five or six'. They contained 'remains of cornices, ceilings, architraves, columns and plain quadrangular stones, all of white marble', proving that there had been a major Classical site, 'one of the most considerable in Boeotia', in their vicinity. Rather than simply taking on trust the identification of this site with Thespiai, which had long had currency (though not with Wheler, Chandler or Clarke), Leake advances proofs of his own, based primarily on epigraphy. First, although he himself could no longer find any inscriptions on the site which named Thespiai or the Thespians, he quotes in full two examples from Erimokastro, seen and transcribed much earlier by Meletios (1661–1714), the former Metropolitan Archbishop of Athens, which

had done so. These inscriptions, although now lost and evidently already missing in Leake's day, were later to enter the record as *IG* vii. 1841 and 1860, along with 2001, also copied by Meletios, which did not name Thespiai but which Leake *was* able to see and draw *in situ* (1835: ii 481, pl. xv, 75), thus vindicating the authenticity of Meletios' other sightings. (A later and fuller edition of his universal *Geography* had recently been published in Venice, and it is this version (Meletios 1807) which Leake is known to have possessed and used.)

Next, Leake reports (as Dodwell had) that he was able to purchase 'several coins of Thespiae… not very common in other parts of Boeotia', in the two villages on the hill above. Then he confirms (481–2) that the figure given by Pausanias (ix. 26.2–4), 50 stades or about 9 km, for the distance from the mountain of the Sphinx (the modern Fagá, a definite identification) to Thespiai, works out correctly for this site – here Leake makes an uncharacteristic slip, because that is actually the distance that Pausanias gives from the Sanctuary of the Kabeiroi to Thespiai; but the correspondence is nevertheless tolerably close from either starting point.

Leake is able to make a rough correlation between the description of Thespiai by Strabo (ix. 2.5 and .25) as one of the two Boeotian cities still flourishing in his day – that is, just before the beginning of the Christian era – with the date of some of the inscriptions that he himself had seen, belonging to Roman Imperial times. He too locates and draws the stone naming Praxiteles which Wheler had earlier seen (Leake's pl. xvii, 77: later fully published as *IG* vii.1831), correctly noting that this is 'more ancient than the others'. He finally (483) visits the church of Agios Charálambos, which stands outside Erimokastro on the west (Leake mistakenly writes 'east') and the fame of whose cult, he suggests, may explain the increasing local primacy of that village: here there are frescoes and, again, ancient stones within the church or built into its walls and he transcribes the inscriptions of three of them (Leake's pl. xvi, 73 and xvii, 78–9: they were the future *IG* vii. 1866, 1916 and 2130). Leake ends as he had begun, with a brief view of the contemporary scenery: apart from some vineyards on the plateau to the north, there is 'scarcely a tree or shrub to enliven the view' (484), a description in great contrast to the landscape both of today and evidently (as Leake notes) of antiquity also.

If some of the liveliness of the earlier writers is missing from Leake's narrative, the compensating gains are enormous. In the space of seven pages of text, he gives us an account which his successors would find it hard to improve upon, combining precise description of the present with reasoned and well-informed deduction about the distant past. Leake relates his account to that of Wheler at several points, drily pointing out his false identification of 'Thisba' (1835: 479, n.1) and later alluding to Wheler's inland journey from 'St. Basilio' (504, n.1), but not to the false edifice built on it by Chandler (see p. 7): indeed, there is no reference to Chandler, Clarke or Dodwell in his account of the site. Leake also differs from Wheler when he tackles the ancillary problem of the site of Keressos, the separate acropolis or refuge of Thespiai, which makes two conspicuous appearances in ancient history, but without any clear indication of its relation to the city itself. Where Wheler had chosen the hill-top behind Palaiopanagia in the lower part of the Valley of the Muses, for Keressos, Leake (490, 500) eventually concludes that 'it is by no means improbable' that Keressos was the true identification for Wheler's mistaken 'Thespia', at Neochori. Neither supposition has since been proved right or wrong.

During the decades that elapsed between Leake's first visit in 1802 and the long-delayed publication of his *Travels in Northern Greece* in 1835, a series of other more or less learned visitors, many of them his fellow-countrymen, followed in his steps and in some cases anticipated him in print. Dr. Henry Holland, who had meanwhile published (Holland 1815) his own much more cursory *Travels*, was one of these. He states in his Preface (iii), with anxious deference, that 'Had I previously been aware that Major Leake had intended to publish his 'Researches in Greece', I should scarcely have had courage to commence my own work'; and, in return, several of Holland's observations were to be cited in Leake's later publication. Holland paid a brief visit to Thespiai during the winter of 1812–13, approaching by Dodwell and Leake's route along the Kanavari valley (1815: 402). He found only two of the ruined churches, producing his own sketch of Wheler's Praxiteles inscription (neither Dodwell nor Leake being yet in print), and otherwise 'no individual remains of any importance'; the main interest of his account is to show that by this date, less than a decade after Dodwell and Leake's time, there was evidently no longer the slightest question about the ancient identity of the site.

A more significant figure of this time was Sir William Gell (1777–1836), artist and former travelling-companion of Dodwell, who copied inscriptions at Thespiai; he also published what was effectively the first modern guide-book for travellers in Greece (Gell 1819). It consists of terse itineraries, measured by travel times of Leake-like precision, with brief descriptions of the more interesting stopping points. One of these journeys (1819: 118–20) brings the reader from *Kakosi* (Thisbe) to *Erimokastro* in just 3 hours, 21 minutes, pausing at the latter village to examine the ruins

of Thespiai. On the wall-circuit, whose shape Dodwell had described as 'circular', Leake as 'oblong or oval', Gell prefers to say that 'it seems a regular hexagon, and the mound occasioned by the fall of the wall is perfect' (119). These obscure words perhaps add a little to our picture of the appearance of the wall in the early nineteenth century; the description would fit an enceinte composed of straight stretches with towers or buttresses at the angles, and such a plan may yet prove to be hidden under the tumbled rubble of today. Gell could only explain the small area that it contained by appealing to the parallel of Mantineia, where a much larger but similarly shaped *enceinte* survived. He goes on to say:

> 'Its defence seems to have been the marsh in which it was situated. The fountain is to the north and the stream runs [ultimately] into the plain of Thebes'.

Gell is the first writer, but by no means the last, to describe the immediate environs of the wall-circuit as a 'marsh': compare Phillipson 1950: 507, relating to the years 1928–1934. Some of Gell's visits may have been in winter, but it is worth mentioning that our own informants in modern Thespies still record the tradition that the motive for the final abandonment of the ancient site had been the then waterlogged state of the ground and its unhealthy consequences for the inhabitants. Gell's *Itinerary* was much read and his observations influential, surfacing again in later writers. Pending the publication of Leake's works, other visitors to Thespiai at this time tended to fall back on Dodwell, usually citing him with approval, as did F.C.H. Kruse (a historian and geographer rather than a traveller: 1826: ii, 602–4).

But the truth was that, short of scientific excavation of the site, Leake and his predecessors had left little positive that the visitors in the remainder of the nineteenth century could contribute. The heyday of the 'picturesque' travel account, as of its earlier counterpart the 'voyage littéraire', with their preference for a letter or diary form and their poetic adornments, was now over – public appetite for them had been exhausted by repetition – and it found perhaps its last major exemplification in the two huge volumes of the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier (1782, 1809). Leake had started a trend for sterner and more focused descriptions. At Thespiai, the main changes to come from now on were to be negative ones, in the progressive spoliation of the remains that is reported in the later accounts. The plain around Castri and Lefka might now be empty of human habitation, but it was the scene of intensive cultivation by the inhabitants of the two modern villages on the hilltops above, whose numbers were not dwindling (Erimokastro in the 1830's boasted 70 houses, Kaskaveli (as it was now spelled) was somewhat smaller).

The deliverance of Greece from Ottoman rule, to which Leake and others had looked forward with more hope than expectation, the establishment of an independent Greek state and the installation of a Bavarian prince as King Otto I in 1832, had a profound effect on the careers of the next two significant visitors to Thespiai, Ludwig Ross (1806–59) and Heinrich Ulrichs (1807–43). Ross acted from 1834 to 1836 as head of the newly founded Archaeological Service of Greece, then from 1837 to 1843 as the first Professor of Archaeology at the University of Athens until his perceived arrogance towards his Greek colleagues brought his enforced withdrawal from the scene, to a Chair at Halle. Ulrichs, primarily a philologist, also taught at the University of Athens until his early death. Both represented the new German learning and an important result is that we have, for the first time, writings that reflect an intellectual standing at least on a level with that of Leake.

Ross had the privilege, but also the burden, of accompanying the young King Otto and Queen Amalia on several of their journeys through their new kingdom. The very energy of the pair – they climbed several of the highest mountain summits of Greece – meant days of hard riding and hurried visits, interspersed with impromptu public appearances. Their most extended visit to the ruins of Thespiai took place on 14 September 1834, a day when the royal party rode from Kokla (Plataia), by way of Leuktra, where they encountered heavy rain, on to Erimokastro where they temporarily sheltered. When the rain stopped, they visited the ancient site. Ross comments on the 'circular form described by the ruins of the fallen wall' and speculates that 'Thespiae probably incorporated, at the time of its last flourishing under the Romans, a substantial further extension eastwards from the wall-circuit' – yet another unsuccessful attempt to reconcile the wide extent of the ruins with the small capacity of the fortification (Ross 1848: 20–1). The party proceeded that night to Thebes, but 11 years later another royal progress brought them back to Erimokastro by a journey of some interest, along the 'high level route' over Mt. Helikon (Burn 1949), starting from the monastery of Hósios Loukás to the west (Ross 1848: 197–8). On the way, Ross noticed the site above Palaiopanagia which Wheler had identified as Keressos and approved his choice. It is worth noting that on the very next day the party first rode, and finally drove by carriage, the entire distance from Erimokastro to Athens – almost 100 km.

The more painstaking travels of Ulrichs were published in two volumes (1840, 1863): the first volume reports briefly on a journey through Boeotia in 1837, while the second, posthumous one contains a long section devoted to Boeotia (pp. 1–113, with pp. 82–101 focused specifically on the territory of Thespiai), being a digest of a series of journeys between 1838 and his death five years later. Ulrichs gives an especially valuable account of the wall-circuit of the *Kastro*. He followed Gell in describing it (1863: ii, 84) as a 'regular hexagon', and closely examined its structure. The lower courses were 'well-preserved, built of large squared blocks', but on this footing, he inferred, there had been a superstructure of mud-brick, whose collapse had given the whole monument the misleading appearance of an earth rampart (compare p. 12 above). Like the more observant of his predecessors, he noted that the evident traces of the city spread far to the east, outside the circuit: Ulrichs estimated their extent at three times the diameter of the *Kastro*. But he did not come any nearer to explaining this disparity: instead, in an eccentric reading of the passage in Thucydides which refers to the Theban destruction of the wall of Thespiai in 423 BC (iv.133.1), he inferred, from the absence of a definite article before the word 'wall', that the destroyed fortification had been, not a wall running round the city but the wall of this same *Kastro* (1863: ii, 84, n.7; though he went on to admit, from the evidence of Xenophon (*Hellenica* v. 4. 41), that at times there had really been a fortification round the whole city). The explanation, obvious enough to later generations, that the *Kastro* was a later construction and that its 'squared blocks' had been re-used, was not yet apparent.

Where Leake had put the number of the ruined churches of Lefka at 'five or six', Ulrichs went on to enumerate the six that he could see, together with three major springs, the *Megáli Vrísis* ('great spring') under the Church of St.John; the *Vrísis tîs Itiâs* ('spring of the willow'), which he locates only by its two willow-trees (1863, 85); and the *Varváka*, further east, opposite the village of Kaskaveli. Recognition of these landmarks today is hampered by the despoliation of the churches and the fact that the springs (like the river Kanavari itself) no longer run perennially as they did two centuries ago; but aided by the local survival of toponyms.

The Church of St. John, the only one of the six whose dedication was remembered in Ulrichs' day, has now vanished but its position, in agreement with Ulrichs' location of it 'a little to the east' of the wall-circuit, must be marked by a small, almost square foundation (*c.* 3.00 by 2.50 m) of ancient blocks and by the small pillar (itself composed of ancient blocks) with an icon of St. John the Baptist (Site 32 of Chapter 4). This must take with it the 'great spring': although no spring is visible in this immediate vicinity today, a tributary ravine does enter the Kanavari, only 150 m away to the north, from this direction. In his second church ('nearby') Ulrichs recorded two inscriptions (the future *IG* vii. 1839 and 1849): but the latter is stated in *IG* to have come from 'the fountain *Dendra*' ('trees'). This can be confidently identified with Ulrichs' 'Spring of the Willows' and may have been seen as the main source for the Kanavari: a later visitor, Vischer (below, p. 14), was told by one of a group of women he met washing their clothes in the river that *Dendra* was her name for the Kanavari itself. Fortunately the name *Dendra* is remembered to this day and applied to the spring, with a rebuilt wall dated by an inscription to 1897, which lies roughly mid-way between the Church of St. John and the third spring, *Varvaká*, whose name and location also survive.

Ulrichs' 'brick building, further uphill' [from the 'Spring of the Willows'] must be the structure, still visible today but evidently not recognized by him as a church, which had featured in Dodwell's engraving (above, p. 9). Ulrichs' third church seems to be the larger 'Makri Ekklesia', further eastwards, which still shows the most extensive visible walls: not far east of it again is the *Varvaká* spring, now dry, again with a still surviving fountain-wall, bigger and older than that at *Dendra*. It does indeed lie precisely opposite Kaskaveli as Ulrichs says. Of his fourth church, we know only that it lay close by; his fifth and sixth, even supposing that their foundations were still visible today, are too vaguely located in his account to be placed on the map.

The location of a very important further spring, yet one apparently nonetheless unmentioned by Ulrichs, is detectable in the built cistern in the middle of the north side of the wall-circuit of the *Kastro* itself: see Chapter 4, pp. 154, 188–90. Here again, a fairly deep channel runs northwards across the fields in the direction of the Kanavari. This too was evidently once a major source of running water, and we recall Gell's aside (1819: 119; see above, p. 12) that the 'fountain' for the wall-circuit was to its north.

Another intermittent member of the (mainly German) royal entourage, C.A. Brandis, visited Thespiai in these same years, apparently on his own. He came by a new route, south-eastwards across the hills from Mazi above Haliartos; but his cursory passage through the site, by the light of the setting sun, offers no other interest, apart from his strange impression that the ruins of Thespiai had survived 'unscathed' (1842: 238) – not a view that some of his predecessors, let alone his successors, could share.

His contemporary Ludolf Stephani came in 1842 as near as the village of Vayia, a few kilometres to the north-east, where he saw the Thespian inscription, later *IG* vii.1830, and inferred (probably rightly) that it had been relatively recently carried there from ancient Thespiai, but did not proceed to its source (Stephani 1843: 74).

In May of the same year, 1842, Thespiai was visited by yet another noted German scholar who was an older contemporary and friend of Ross and Ulrichs, F.G. Welcker. Welcker (1784–1868), a figure of high repute in the Classical field, held a Chair at Halle where Ross later came: he was already in his 58th year at the time of his journey and, by the time that he had seen his account through to publication, he was in his eighties (Welcker 1865). There is much to be said for the view (Roller 1988: 149) that Welcker represents a throw-back to an earlier phase of travel (he had even once been a protégé of Goethe himself at Weimar): his use of the diary form is one sign of this. His approach was by the now common route from the battlefield of Leuktra, a site made more famous by his younger friend Ulrichs' recent discovery (1839) of the Theban victory monument of 371 BC, across the last low hills, to descend to the plain of Thespiai at its eastern end. Welcker is merely following his predecessors with his opening observation that, coming from this side, 'one would believe oneself to be already within the city, but for the fact that only after a long distance does one come to the wall, which can be surveyed in its entire extent' (1865: 33). But his is the first account to take as its theme the ongoing despoliation of the site: only a couple of days previously, he was told, three statues had been found and destroyed, and he could see around the wall-circuit 'holes which I at first ascribed to art-loving Englishmen', but which proved to be the work of villagers, merely seeking building-blocks for their houses. Here, if we needed it, is an explicit contradiction of the judgment of Brandis, only three or four years earlier.

The Swiss traveller Wilhelm Vischer (cited above, p. 13) came in May 1853 and echoed the puzzlement of his predecessors over the disparity between the wide extent of the city and the small compass of the wall-circuit. He found the walls 'stand[ing] out little above the fertile soil', reflecting a rather different picture from Gell's evaluation of a generation earlier (Vischer 1875: 553).

From this point on, there were evidently diminishing returns for learned visitors to the site, and the frequency of published accounts diminishes accordingly. The German visitors of the late 1830s and early 1840s – Ross on his second journey, Ulrichs, Brandis, Stephani and Welcker – could have used Leake's works, but show scant signs of having done so (though Ross sent copies of his publications to Leake). In contrast, Christopher Wordsworth, nephew of the poet and Bishop of Lincoln, felt that even in listing his bibliography 'the writer cannot mention these works of Colonel Leake without expressing his obligation to them' (Wordsworth 1839: xii). But Sir Thomas Wyse (1791–1862), English Minister in Athens, who stayed at Erimokastro in the October of – probably – 1858 (see Roller 1988: 169–70 for the date of his Boeotian journey) is the first visitor to arrive, explicitly, 'Leake in hand' (Wyse 1871: 66, 69). He seems not to have troubled to visit the main site, commenting only on the changes to be seen, since Leake's time, at the Church of St. Charálambos outside the village (68). In Wyse's day, a prominent concern here and elsewhere in Greece was now the danger of brigandage, which features frequently in his account: the notorious Dilessi murders (Jenkins 1961) had occurred by the time that his niece saw his papers into posthumous publication. Charles Lenormant left his only visit to Thespiai until the closing weeks of his life – a lunch break on an excursion of 22 October 1859, when he encountered villagers offering to sell him 'for almost nothing… vases, terracottas and charming antiquities', a further sign of the local exploitation of the site and, it would now seem, of its accompanying cemeteries too (Lenormant 1861: ii, 385). R.R. Farrer's *A Tour of Greece: 1880*, finally, is notable for containing only our second engraving of the neighbourhood, showing the church of Agios Charálambos (Farrer says that it has 'two or three good bas-reliefs built into its walls') on a hillock outside Erimokastro with Helikon behind; but for nothing else: he remarks that 'the village is graceful but contains no ruins' and seems unaware of the site nearby, invisible in his engraving (Farrer 1882: 102–3).

The age of the travellers was over. Before we turn to its sequel, a melancholy one in the case of Thespiai, we may review the attainments of the previous two centuries. First, the correct identification of the ancient Thespiai, although evidently suspected in the years before Wheler's visit of 1676 and reinforced soon after by the unnoticed evidence of a little-regarded authority, Archbishop Meletios, remained contested until, in the opening years of the nineteenth century, it was put beyond further argument by the authority of Dodwell and Leake, and by the clinching evidence which the latter had unearthed in the confused pages of Meletios. The more intelligent observers all noted the small compass of the still surviving wall-circuit by comparison with the visible traces of the city, and offered a succession of different explanations for it: all were in different degrees mistaken but the notion,

originating once again with Dodwell and Leake, that the fortification served as some kind of internal acropolis was a step in the right direction, lacking only the dimension of chronology (cf. pp. 16–17 below). Some 30 years after Leake, Ulrichs offers us the only account which stands beside his in careful description, and indeed marks an advance on it in the enumeration of visible remains. The gradual destruction and dispersal of these remains, noticed from the time of Welcker's visit of 1842 onwards, has left us today with only a shadow of what the early travellers saw. It is striking and regrettable that not one of these visitors found it worth their while to print even a sketch-map of the visible remains of Thespiai. But they had done much to serve what has been an abiding aim of Classical Archaeology, the reconciliation of material remains with documentary history.

Such a background was to have a discouraging effect on the excavators, Greek or foreign, who in the course of their almost ubiquitous discoveries in Greece, over the next century and more, might otherwise have been expected to extend these to ancient Thespiai. It was by chance that, in 1882, P. Stamatakis came to make the most important single discovery at or near the site: the monument and collective burial (*polyandrion*), soon shown by A. Kirchhoff (1887: 141) to have been set up for the Thespian soldiers killed in the victory of the Boeotians over the Athenians at Delion in 424 BC. The commemorative statue of a lion had come to light, 'some 1100 metres to the east of the ruins of the city' (by which Stamatakis evidently meant the then still-standing walls of the *Kastro*). This is a substantial distance, perhaps somewhat understated in Fossey's reference to a location 'a little to the East of the settlement' (1988: 137), echoed in the more recent description by Low, 'close to the eastern gate' (2003: 104). The partial exploration of this locality by Stamatakis was continued, a generation later, by perhaps the most noted of Boeotian excavators, A.D. Keramopoullos, who had seen the potential value of Kirchhoff's identification of the *polyandrion* for the dating of its associated pottery (Stamatakis 1883; Keramopoullos 1912, 1920; see also Schilardi 1979). A by-product of this find was the location nearby of a pre-existing city cemetery of Archaic and later date, and of a probably ancient road running through it. Sir James Frazer, in the fifth volume of his monumental commentary on Pausanias, gave a full account of the site, which he visited in 1890 and 1895. He was able to include Stamatakis' find but, in the aftermath of of P. Jamot's activities (see below), could record little else that was new and much that was now lost (Frazer 1898, v, 141–2). He comments tartly that 'archaeologists have made short work of most or all of these churches', but goes on to indicate other possible culprits by recording 'a good many traces of recent excavations', most of which were assuredly not archaeological ones.

No comparable discovery has been made at the site since 1882: the few excavations of small plots, in or around the city, have followed the precedent of Stamatakis in being occasioned by chance finds made in the course of cultivation (Gallet de Santerre 1953: 219; Andreiomenou 1988; with many other brief reports of chance finds handed in by conscientious local farmers, most recently in *ADelt* 49 (1994) [1999], B1, 290–1; 51 (1996) [2001], B1, 286; 52 (1997) [2002], B1, 393; 54 (1999) [2005], B1, 329–30; 55 (2000) [2009], B, 406–7; 56–9 (2001–2004 [2011], 205). The great contribution of the site of Thespiai has been not to archaeology, but to epigraphy and, through it, to Greek and Roman history. Karl Keil had long since produced his first collection of Boeotian inscriptions (Keil 1847). The entries for the territory of Thespiai in *IG* vii already, by 1892, ran to over 500, many of them collected and copied, after exhaustive searches, by H.G. Lolling in the years 1885 and following (Dittenberger 1892: Preface, v: the removal of these inscriptions to Thebes is recorded under no. 1887). Numerous further inscriptions were to be published over the next century, amply confirming the identification of the site; some years ago, the yield of inscriptions from the city site and its neighbourhood alone had grown to about 1400 (Fossey 1988: 138), and new ones continue to come to light (see e.g. Piteros 1989). The only monograph devoted to the city (Roesch 1965) is essentially an epigraphic study; the late Paul Roesch had also worked for many years on the preparation of a corpus of Thespian Inscriptions which has now seen the light of day posthumously, in an electronic edition (Roesch 2007/2009).

This epigraphic richness was to prove fatal to the most substantial of Thespiai's standing remains, the wall-circuit or *Kastro*. In the years 1888–1890 inclusive, the French epigraphist Paul Jamot, who had worked elsewhere in central Greece, excavated at several locations within the ancient city, as well as elsewhere in its territory. He published the briefest of reports on this activity (Jamot 1891; Homolle 1891 b; [Jamot in] Homolle 1891 c), devoting his main attention thereafter to a few choice inscriptions and sculptures. But during his third year of work he conceived the idea, based on his observation of the visible stones in its make-up, that the destruction of the *Kastro* would yield the richest harvest of all (as indeed it did). He began this work already in the 1890 season and was able to add 132 new inscriptions to his tally (1891b: 449); for his final season of 1891, having enlisted the

help of the archaeologist A. de Ridder, he was emboldened to declare that

> 'This year, the aim is to demolish completely the fortifications at Erimokastro, composed in large part of ancient materials' (Homolle 1891b: 449).

This unabashed avowal of destruction, as the culminating goal for an established project on the part of an academic institution, seems to have generated none of the shudders then that it does today. In a separate communication of May 1891, the then Director of the French School at Athens had relayed much the same information, but with a vital epithet added, announcing it as the demolition of a *Byzantine* fortification (Homolle 1891a: 280). This new designation for the wall, closer to the truth than those of his predecessors, along with the 250 further inscriptions that were to be added by that year's operations ([Jamot in] Homolle 1891c: 659), would have been enough to reconcile the listeners to its fate. Indeed, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres was soon to show its gratification: a brief notice of the following year announces the award of a medal to Jamot (*Comptes-Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions* 20 (1892), 152–3). Had Jamot published plans of the fortifications and of his activities in general, had he related more of his inscriptions to their contexts, had he even promptly published the inscriptions themselves (many of which were left to absorb the energies of generations of successors, notably of André Plassart who was still working on them more than 65 years later), then a more lenient judgment might be possible for us today. To do justice to Jamot, he had also made important finds outside the city, notably in the Valley of the Muses, and he had identified, inside the *Kastro*, the site and foundations of one sanctuary, which he believed was the small city Temple of the Muses mentioned by Pausanias (ix. 27, 4: [Jamot in] Homolle 1891c: 659; Müller 1996: 179–82); but this was to be his only lasting contribution to the topography of the urban centre itself.

But Jamot could have provided a more precise answer to a question which had long detained the earlier travellers: what had been the date of the wall-circuit? (Writing as late as 1935, K. Fiehn could still surmise that it was 'probably built by Agesilaos' – that is, during the wars of the 370s BC: Fiehn, 1935, 40). The laborious cataloguing of Jamot's inscriptions by his heirs, in many cases with their approximate find-spots and -dates, makes possible some conclusions here. On the face of it, the building of the *Kastro* should post-date the latest of the inscribed stones used for its construction. A search through the list for those recorded as having been detached from the walls in 1890 or 1891 throws some light: from a vital footnote in one of several later publications by A. Plassart (Plassart 1926: 390, n.1), we learn that all the inscriptions which he records there with the provenance '*Kastro*, 1890' and '*Kastro* 1891' were in fact recovered from the fortification itself. It is immediately clear that some of these inscriptions are of Roman Imperial date; among the latest of these is a statue-base with an inscription eulogizing a figure whom Plassart could identify as Vettius Florius Praetextatus, a Roman notable who was appointed *Proconsul* of the province of Achaia by Julian the Apostate and who is commemorated in near-identical terms all over Greece. Plassart duly notes its provenance as '*Kastro*, 1891' (Plassart 1926: 448–9, no. 85). Vettius served in Greece in the 360's of the Christian era: he rose to even higher things at Rome before his death in the 380's, but the absence here of any mention of his later titles indicated to Plassart that the inscription is of earlier date than that: between the years AD 361 and 369 is perhaps the safest guess. At all events, the walls should belong after that date; and this is confirmed by the evidence from our survey of the city site, showing a unique density of occupation in the area that they enclosed during the lifetime of the 'Late Roman' pottery phase, extending to the sixth century AD. Two other inscriptions perhaps tell us a little more: also found built into the wall ('*Kastro,* 1890') were an inscribed statue-base for Constantine the Great (Plassart 1926: 455, no. 99) and part of another ('*Kastro*, 1891') honouring his sons Constans and Constantius II (455–7, no. 101, inv. 502 only). Constantine had died in 337, and his sons' joint rule ended in 350: a considerable lapse of time would seem likely, before the destruction of statues of such prominent figures became acceptable – even under the duress of military threat – at the hands of a presumed Christian community.

Fossey (1988: 136–7) warns of the possibility that the *Kastro* could have embodied a late re-building of earlier walls: the line of argument that we have been following cannot be brought to bear on this hypothesis. But we can state that our own efforts to trace the only historically attested earlier walls, those of Classical Thespiai, have achieved some results: they show every sign of having enclosed a very much larger area, just as could have been predicted from the extent of the Classical finds; and they follow an entirely external line, which at no point can be seen to come into direct contact with the smaller circuit of the *Kastro*. A slim possibility remains that the Classical Thespians might have had a fortified internal acropolis as well as a city-wall; but their recourse to the 'external acropolis' of Keressos (see p. 11) tells against this.

The weight of evidence overwhelmingly suggests that it was the population of the Late Roman city,

living in what was no longer a fortified settlement, threatened by repeated insecurity and much reduced in numbers (though not so reduced that they could all live permanently within the 12 ha of the *Kastro*) who chose to construct this walled refuge some time between the late fourth and the late sixth centuries AD, taking as materials not only the carved and inscribed monuments of their forerunners, but also squared blocks which may well have been originally used for the Classical city wall. There is much attraction in the suggestion made recently by A.W. Dunn (2006: 48–9), that this and other constructions might be connected with the activity in the field of fortification, undertaken in Greece by Justinian and documented, with explicit mention of Boeotia, by Procopius (*de Aedificiis* iv. 2. 23–4; see also below, p. 188). In this particular passage, Procopius says that Justinian 'renewed' fortifications which had become derelict through age, though elsewhere he credits him with having also 'built many forts'. That the Thespiai fortification had already fallen into disrepair by the 530s AD is not impossible: if so, its first construction would be best dated to the late fourth century. But the passage should perhaps not be pressed as far as this and, for the closely parallel structure at Plataia, Aravantinos *et al*. (2003: 301, n.63) reject this conclusion.

The site of Thespiai had one surprise to spring, from a much earlier period of the past. The prehistorian Carl W. Blegen was among the first to detect, in 1920, the presence of prolific Neolithic sherds and even some figurines, with a thinner scatter of Bronze Age pottery, in one particular location of the ancient site, the low hillock or *magoula* lying some way to the north-east from the *Kastro*. Blegen later introduced his younger colleague John L. Caskey to the site, and Caskey and others later led excursions there with students from the American School of Classical Studies in Athens (Caskey 1951: Bass 1959). Fig. 2.2 is a photograph of 1924, taken by Dorothy Burr Thompson and showing women from the hill-top villages laundering clothes at the Ottoman-period fountain (Site 49 in Chapter 4 below). Whether by chance or not, accidental finds of Neolithic axes and other tools in 1951 apparently led to the mounting of a brief excavation there in 1952 by Chr. Christou (Cook 1953: 119–20; Gallet de Santerre 1953: 219): the location is then named as *Strongylion*.

This striking extension of Thespiai's record back into earlier prehistory makes some amends for the



Figure 2.2. *Photograph taken at the Varvaka fountain by Dorothy Burr Thompson in January 1924 (American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Dorothy Burr Thompson Photographic Collection).*

progressive destruction of so much of its Late Antique and later history. In the twentieth century, as part of the official government policy of giving villages new but historic names, Erimokastro was in 1934 renamed as Thespies and its main thoroughfare commemorates the heroism of the ancient city's soldiers at Thermopylai ('Street of the 700 Thespians'); while Kaskaveli was given the name of Leondari, apparently in honour of the discovery of the lion monument at the *Polyandrion*. In 1970, a new building in the village of Thespies, where already some of the inscriptions from the ancient site were stored, was opened as a Museum to house the continuing chance finds handed in (Ioannidou 1974).

Circumstances have made of the site of ancient Thespiai, which Dodwell had considered so promising, a deeply disappointing location from the traditional viewpoint of Classical Archaeology: compare the verdict of Fossey (1988: 136) 'There can be no site in Boeotia more depressing than Thespiai'. It is difficult to think of a parallel in Greece where a city, which at least in Hellenistic times was 'of the first rank' (Roesch 1965: 138–9) and which was to enhance its standing yet further under Roman rule, has met with such a fate. It was clear to us that, while the site was clearly going to be less than hospitable to any kind of archaeology, only by using new methods altogether could a possible way of improving this situation be found.

Chapter 3(a)

Interpreting the density and period map series: methodology

Introduction: the site in its setting

It is appropriate to begin with relevant aspects of the physical geography of the landscape in the environs of the city of Thespiai (Fig. 3.1), so we here offer a brief overview of the geology, geomorphology and topography of this small district in south-western Boeotia.

If the central and western regions of the province of Boeotia are dominated by high crystalline limestone mountains, and their ancient erosion products compressed into flysch rocks, the eastern are more typically composed of plateaux and rolling low hill-land of Tertiary-Pleistocene marine and freshwater sediments, separated by valleys and a few plains filled with alluvial-colluvial (slope-wash) deposits. Thespiai lies at the western border of the eastern landscape type, and within a few kilometres the Valley of the Muses leads into the heart of the Helikon limestone massif, the start of the western landscapes. Fig. 3.1, taken looking in a north-westerly direction, illustrates this well: in the middle distance to the right of the image, steep cliffs in Tertiary-Pleistocene conglomerates lead up to an extensive plateau of softer sediments in the same geological series, a continuation of the eastern Boeotian landscape of hill and plateaux which runs from here eastwards, through Thebes, to Tanagra in the borderlands of Attica. In the foreground, the road running up towards the camera will lead on to a matching plateau of similar geology: this forms the landscape studied in our previous monograph, the inner southern hinterland of ancient Thespiai. To the far left, the outlying peaks of the predominantly Mesozoic hard limestone massif of Mt. Helikon rise in waves with a westerly trend, separated by folds of softer flysch sediments. In mid-photo, a wide valley separates the two Tertiary-Pleistocene low uplands and in that sector, immediately below the modern villages of Thespies and its close neighbour Leondari lies the extensive predecessor town of Thespiai, the city of Greco-Roman antiquity. The village seen perched on the cliff edge is modern Thespies (previously Erimokastro), whilst modern Leondari village (formerly Kaskaveli), is just out of view on the next hill-top to the right. In the following image (Fig. 3.2) this eastern neighbour, Leondari, can be seen, separated from Thespies only by a deep valley cutting into the plateau.

The geological map of south-western Boeotia (Fig. 3.4, digitized by Emeri Farinetti), marks the city survey grid in yellow. River and major colluvial (slope-wash) deposits are pink, hard limestones are light to dark grey and orange, their associated mountain flysch rocks are purple, whilst the Tertiary-Pleistocene marine and freshwater series are in a light green hue. Piedmont slope-wash is shown in light blue colour.

At first sight the lowland which we saw in the first photo, stretching from west to east between the two north and south plateaux and the heights of Mt. Helikon further west (Fig. 3.3), would give the impression of having been created by a major river emanating from Mt. Helikon to its west. The geological map could give the same impression, with a pink alluvial strip, if of very narrow proportions, running from the Valley of the Muses through the city site and the River Kanavaris depression, then north-eastwards into the Theban Plain. But although the chief perennial stream of this whole district does indeed drain eastwards from the Valley of the Muses (the closest part of the Helikon range) and is today called the River Askris, it makes an abrupt diversion, almost a reversal of its course, to the south-west, to occupy a river-valley on the far side of the southerly plateau (whose survey was covered in our previous monograph, *Testing the Hinterland*), thus by-passing the city site altogether. Instead, the drainage of the city site is in fact carried



Figure 3.1. *The site of ancient Thespiai (the green area of cultivation in the middle distance), seen from the south-east, with the village of modern Thespies on the ridge beyond it.*



Figure 3.2. *View across the ancient city, eastern sector, into the Kanavaris valley, with the village of Leondari on the plateau edge behind.*



Figure 3.3. *Archival image of field teams in 1985 counting sherd density in the alluvial valley of the Kanavaris, just north-east of the Magoula (shown in middle distance).*

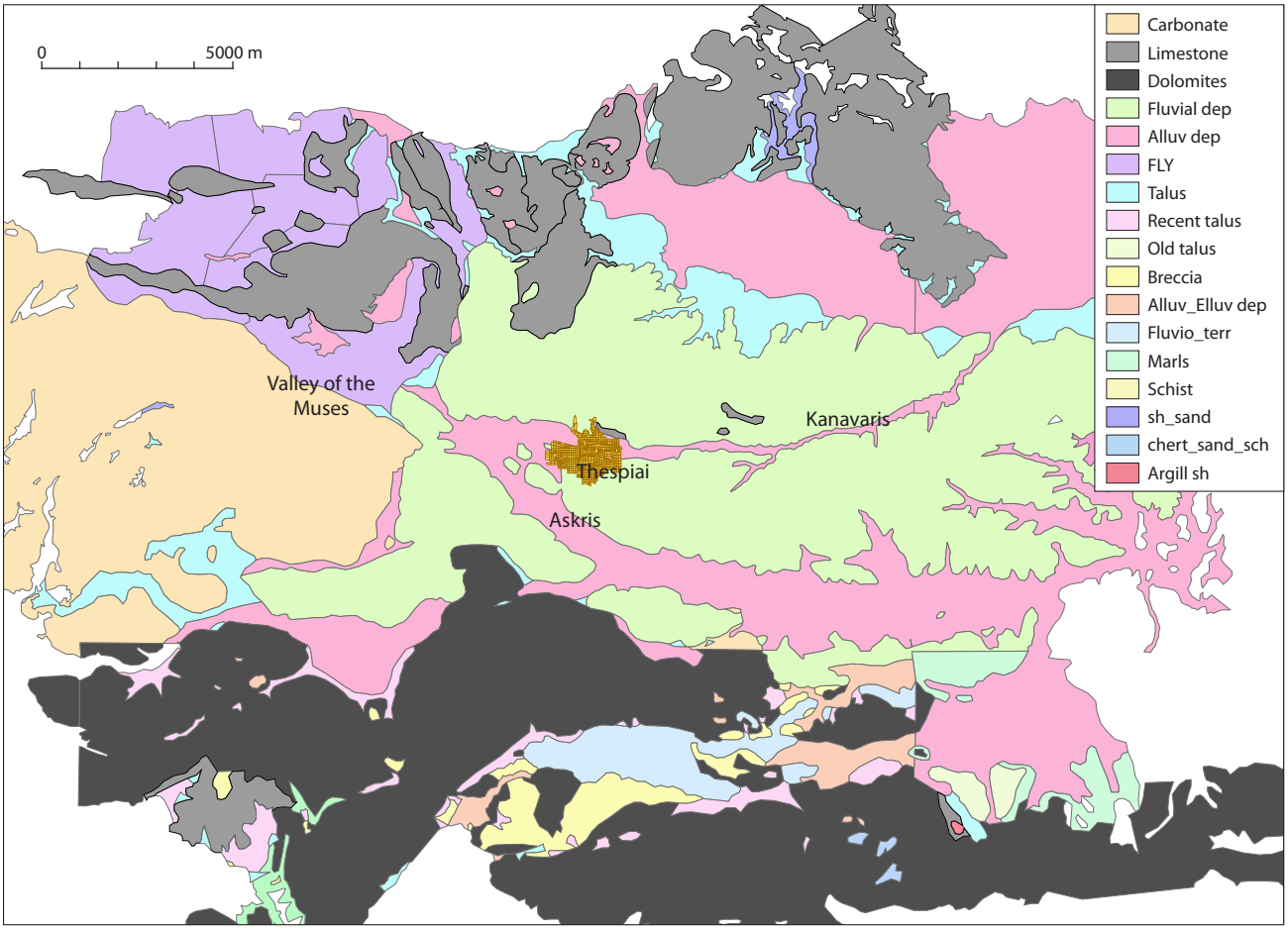


Figure 3.4. *(above) Geological map of south-western Boeotia.*

out by a stream of tiny proportions (Fig. 3.5), the Kanavaris, which actually rises within the area of the ancient city, below modern Thespies village, and flows eastwards into the Plain of Thebes. It has however been suggested that, in remote geological time, the Askris did indeed once discharge eastwards down the Kanavaris valley, but was redirected by tectonic activity into an opposing, more southerly course. This accounts for the divergent paths of the alluvia on the geology map (Fig. 3.4), as well as the continuous alluvial expanse also shown on this map, connecting the small alluvial Kanavaris and the much larger Askris valleys. Even today, when one stands at the city site and looks westwards, no clear change in elevation marks the nearer plain drained eastwards by the Kanavaris and the further, western plain drained by the Askris. The next two photographs (Figs. 3.6 and 3.7) show this imperceptible watershed from a point east of the diverted Askris and west of the springs of the Kanavaris.



Figure 3.5. *The tiny dimensions of the Kanavaris stream near its sources within the ancient city locality.*



Figure 3.6. *(above) The watershed between the Askris and Kanavaris drainages, facing eastwards toward Thespies village.*



Figure 3.7. *(right) The view from the same point as Fig. 3.6 but facing westwards toward Helikon.*

The original core area of the ancient city occupies an extensive zone south of the Kanavaris stream, ascending gently from its lower valley floor through a small plateau, on which lies the *Kastro* (earthwork traces of the Late Roman fortification), to the rising slopes which will reach the higher, soft-rock plateau to the south. It soon became clear during our surface survey that the town did not reach this higher plateau. North of the river, the city survey ran to the steep cliffs underlying the high plateau to the north and up the two deep valleys which punctuate its rim, to the west of the village of Thespies, and between Thespies and its eastern neighbour Leondari. Conditions for survey in and around Thespies village were naturally very difficult, and a rapid perusal of visible soil areas between and around the houses did not reveal significant evidence for occupation of this hilltop location, although the customary continuous scatter of 'off-site' Classical tile and sherds was met with, as in all areas within several kilometres' radius of the ancient city. Intensive survey in the northern zone beyond the Kanavaris was also hindered by the clear evidence of considerable hillwash or colluvium below the cliffs, concealing surface finds. Nevertheless, large areas of this sector were still available for extending the survey grid, and here the evidence suggested that the zone north of the river was only periodically a focus for settlement, more commonly acting as a burial zone for the main settlement south of the river. As we shall see, the recent work by the Ljubljana team has added nuances of detail to this conclusion, but not to the overall picture.

The oldest urban community, in Archaic to early Classical times, appears to have been confined to the areas lying south of the Kanavaris stream. This rivulet arises beside the city, from underground springs: hence its shallow valley will always have been much as today, with no possibility of high floods threatening the adjacent town (unpublished research by Dr. Renato Sabatini, Rome). In its original extent, therefore, the ancient city had a low-lying topography, abundantly supplied with fresh water, yet not at risk from river flooding. What it lacked, however, was a strong position, defensible against external enemies. In this respect it resembles other Greco-Roman towns we have studied such as Tanagra, Haliartos or the lower town at Hyettos (and its neighbour Orchomenos, under study by the German Institute at Athens). Not surprisingly, the Classical sources record several conquests of Thespiai, the repeated demolition of its city walls and, most tellingly, of the recourse by its citizens to another place in its territory, *Keressos,* which was a more secure refuge in such times and an obstacle to enemy cavalry access. We are increasingly confident that Keressos lay just a few kilometres away, in sight of the ancient city, on the ridge-top of the rugged Pyrgaki hill on the north side of the Valley of the

Muses, where a large fortification has been revealed after a total burning of the hill by a great fire in the summer of 2007.

Choosing the methodology of the Thespiai city survey

In 1982 we had conducted the first surface survey on one of our urban sites, the village or second-order settlement of Askra in the Valley of the Muses. In 1985 we carried out further detailed surface collection at Askra, before undertaking the survey of the genuine cities of Haliartos and Thespiai, completed in 1986. In terms of discovery, the exact location of Askra was uncertain and was found through standard rural field-walking, as a large settlement (*c*. 11 ha) in the centre of its enclosed valley, without parallel in the entire district. Haliartos was a long-identified rocky hill on the edge of its modern successor town. Thespiai was known to lie in the extensive fertile valley and hill-land south of the modern village which now takes its name from it, but its extent and the exact location of its nucleus were unknown.

The first task, then, before applying an urban survey strategy at Thespiai was to identify a location likely to be in the heart of the ancient town, from whence an expanding grid of surface recording could search for the maximal boundaries of the city. The western European Travellers of the nineteenth century (see Chapter 2) had observed a series of ruined churches, of indeterminate age, a Late Antique irregular fortification, the *Kastro*, and the final occupational period of an Early Modern village (sometimes referred to as *Lefka*) at the ancient site. In the final years of the nineteenth century, the *Kastro* fortification was dismantled by Jamot, a French epigraphist, in order to extract the numerous inscribed blocks which had been used in its construction as *spolia* recycled from older buildings and cemeteries.

Although the *Kastro* was no longer an obvious feature on the ground, inspection of a recent air photograph (Fig. 3.8) soon revealed its location. The wall



Figure 3.8. *In this aerial photograph, the Late Antique* Kastro *fortification is recognisable as a small anomalous polygonal field boundary, circled, directly south of the village of Thespies, the more westerly of the two villages shown.*



Figure 3.9. *The western edge of the* Kastro *is still marked by a low curving bank.*

had been reduced to a low bank (Fig. 3.9), but the rural farm tracks in this area retained their former respect for its earlier height and, in contrast with the straighter tracks elsewhere, encircled a striking polygonal block of fields. On the ground, stretches still containing jumbled architectural blocks could be located, and the whole circuit was subsequently easily recognized (Figs. 3.10–3.12).

At this first stage of our survey planning, it was still entirely unclear how large the city itself might have been, since the *Kastro*, at no more than 12 ha, was obviously in the nature of a 'fort' which, on analogy with similar Late Roman enclosures elsewhere, would have contained on a permanent basis the ecclesiastical and military authorities in charge of the town, and acted as a temporary refuge for the surrounding populace in this time of large-scale insecurity. But at least this gave the urban survey a clear focus within the city, from which the town's borders could be probed. In actuality, the field teams observed very substantial density differences in the surrounding landscape, with an apparent increasing fall-off as one moved outwards from the *Kastro* in all directions. It was therefore decided to estimate where the density



Figure 3.10. *Spolia in the southern wall's construction debris.*



Figure 3.11. *The* Kastro *earthwork, middle distance, running east–west; seen from the north.*



Figure 3.12. *View of the ancient city site from the modern village of Thespies, looking south, with the* Kastro *outlined in red and the Kanavaris river marked by arrows.*

decline was most dramatic and where densities typical for the open countryside were reached, using previous field-walking north and west of the city as a guide, and so to define the outer edges of the city survey grid.

Starting well to the east of the *Kastro* with our first survey units, in what were likely to have been extramural open fields, and moving in towards the *Kastro*, we hoped to be able to detect a threshold of higher values of surface sherds marking the maximal borders of the town proper. In the summer of 1985 therefore (Fig. 3.13), the field teams opened up a series of grid units well to the east, at a point where it seemed that 'non-site' levels were characteristic. The deep north–south block thus created was the springboard for a westward expansion of the survey grid, extended progressively towards the *Kastro* and passing into the built-up area, aiming for what proved to be the densest surface debris in the interior of the *Kastro*.

By the end of the 1985 season the eastern half of the town's expanse had been gridded, as well as the *Kastro* itself. Moreover, in order to test whether the city had extended across the small Kanavaris stream which divides the central *Kastro* sector from the hills to the north, most of the trans-Kanavaris fields had also been surveyed, up to the foot of the steep cliffs on which the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari perch.

In 1986 the urban survey was completed with a roughly equal area of transects placed mainly to the western side of the *Kastro*, extending to sectors where 'off-site' or 'extramural' levels of sherd densities became characteristic. The grid had thus been extended to the east, west, south and north, until the field teams considered that 'off-site' densities had become typical, maintaining the process until supposedly rural areas were reached. This was to allow the definition of the town's edge to be analysed from the urban survey itself. Problems were encountered in the north, however. Here it was observed that considerable slope-wash from the steep slopes below the modern villages concealed large areas of the surface archaeology, so that pre-Modern activities in this zone were often obscured. Although transects were carried up the two side valleys running around the hill of modern Thespies village, little material was visible here either; nor did a rapid search of the hill-slopes themselves reveal such density of finds as to suggest that the city had run up on to the area of contemporary Thespies village. A prominent recess in the hill-side between these two side valleys was also transected (shown as a protuberance between the two 'horns' of valley survey in the preceding figure), but once more vegetation and hill-wash produced no significant artefactual material.

One location within the ancient site, apart from the *Kastro* which had been all but demolished by Jamot, had been not only known, but visited almost annually in the decades before our survey. Just north-east from the *Kastro*, a low hillock fronts directly on to the flat small alluvial valley of the Kanavaris river – the Thespiai *Magoula* (Figs. 3.14–3.16). Its remarkably rich Neolithic ceramic finds had led to regular visits by researchers from the foreign Schools in Greece. George Bass, on leave from the Korean War, even recorded figurines found during these visits (Bass 1959). Owing to the special character and form of the hillock (which is actually a low natural hill with a rich top layer of Neolithic occupation), we decided to treat this as a separate survey locality, and made collections of finds both from the hill as a whole and from its western and eastern halves separately. In the chronological maps for the city, we have displayed the finds from the Magoula hillock proper as an inset box, to make their origin clear.

During the gridding of the city site, observations were made regarding architectural pieces (Fig. 3.17) and the condition of the surface sherds. In later years the whole area was revisited several times over by Anthony Snodgrass and John Bintliff, to record the fragments of structures that were of architectural or other significance, with detailed mapping and a photographic record. These visits were used as the basis for the more thorough inspection of the central areas by an Italian architectural team in 2002–2003, and for the more widespread recording carried out most recently (up to 2008) by the Ljubljana team, one of whose main goals was the discovery of traces of the ancient city walls, *in situ* or removed elsewhere. Limited tests using geophysics were made by Chris Gaffney and Carl Heron, on standing Late Antique ruins in the eastern city; and soil chemical analysis was completed by Professor Brian Davies (Bradford University) on the *Kastro* and areas immediately outside it (Fig. 3.18). These scientific investigations will be summarized later in this volume.

In 1982, when Askra served as our first 'urban' survey project, no Aegean examples existed as possible models for the appropriate methodology. Therefore, as with our rural survey methods, we studied older large-site models from American projects. The best-known of these was the monumental survey of the unparalleled 'megalopolis' of Teotihuacan in Mexico, carried out by R. Millon and R. Whallon in the 1960s (cf. Millon 1964). This had created an overall grid of the city, with detailed surface artefact counts and collection complemented by precise recording of standing architecture.

As noted in the preceding Boeotia monograph (*Testing the Hinterland*), we had already learned from

practical experiment over the first three years of the Boeotia Project that sampling approaches to surface sites, based on spot circles or skeletal strips, were unreliable for obtaining representative finds (cf. Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985). The solution chosen by 1981 was one of contiguous grid units, generally 30 by 10 m in size and subdivided into 4 one-person blocs of 7.5 by 10 m: this had proven effective for small as well as larger rural sites of up to 1 or 2 ha or more, such as villas, but would have been too time-consuming to apply as a uniform system to the study of urban sites (which we later came to define as around 10 ha and over – cf. Bintliff 1997).

The 'village-town' site of Askra was naturally subdivided by field-walls into a series of large fields, so for our first urban study there in 1982 it was decided to use each field as a sampling zone. Then, to provide a control on the possible problems of using units of such variable size to collect sherds from, a more elaborate further analysis of the site was undertaken in 1985. Most fields were now given a 'standard' 30 by 10 m micro-sample block placed inside each, giving us two windows of very different scale into each sector of the ancient site. Since in general, both here and at later urban sites where we repeated this approach of using a larger and a smaller, 'nested' sample, similar amounts of finds were kept from the two sizes of unit, we believed that we could fruitfully compare the results of the different sampling scales to test for contrasts in the periods represented.

In 1985, immediately after the improved Askra survey, we modified this method at Haliartos and then at Thespiai, by attempting to make the larger units regular in size wherever feasible. These were now preferentially set at the size normal for our rural field-walking, 60 by 50 m, which we termed 'Transects'. The 'nested' small units of 30 by 10 m, placed within the Transects and now termed 'Samples', remained at their former size. The intention was to make the study unit as far as possible comparable from one urban site to another. The use of these two size units also made possible a direct comparison with our rural survey data, since the urban Transects were of the same size as our typical rural field-walking units, while the urban Samples were similarly of the standard size for the gridding of rural sites.

As noted earlier, we had no idea at this stage as to how large Thespiai would prove to be, and were more than surprised at the number of Transects required to reach what the field teams considered to be the ancient open countryside on all sides of the settlement. In total, 606 units were to be recorded at the Transect, large-scale level, which served as the basic mapping unit for the city. (On the grid map Fig. 3.13, only this level of study is displayed). The numbered Transects come to slightly less than this total, since by mistake five Transects were covered twice (see again Fig. 3.15): in the north, Trs. 2027 and 2086 and, in the north-west, the following pairs were duplicates: 104/2135, 105/2134, 106/2133 and 107/2130. As it happens, these unintentional overlaps were to prove a source of real insight when we came to analyse the city data in later years: significant differences in the method of survey of the same blocks of land have revealed invaluable experimental information on survey techniques, to be presented later in this chapter.

The precise mode of field operation within the city grids was as follows. For the larger, Transect units, the modal size aimed at was 60 by 50 m. First, we had found in previous rural field-walking that this was of a size to allow a reasonable speed of movement without sacrificing local variations in find density recording; secondly, it was small enough to avoid the risk of team members losing their sense of direction (in the 1980s, still determined by compass, combined with fixed points locatable on the 1:5,000 Greek Army Geographical Service maps). The dimensions were set by a typical team of four students spaced 15 m apart (4 x 15 = 60 m-wide transects), walking a stretch of 50 m (the Transect length), usually running N–S unless local conditions called for E–W or non-cardinal alternatives. A fifth member, the supervisor, marked out the Transect and entered the grid details into field-books, as well as drawing the grid unit on to copies of the 1/5000 map. The supervisor measured, by pacing, any variation in the Transect's dimensions from the ideal size, and noted unusual topographic or land-use details, architectural finds, as well as aspects of content and condition of the surface ceramic scatters.

Although in our first publications we had suggested that the width of field of vision of the field-walkers was 5 m, subsequent experience has led us to reduce this to a more realistic 2 m. This was the basis that we employed for the purposes of calculation in our first Boeotia volume. Each walker in the line counted the density of the scatter in his/her field of vision by using a manual 'clicker'; then, while these values were being collected by the supervisor at the end of the typical 50 m-long Transect, the team-members were asked to estimate the average visibility of the soil they had traversed, on a scale of 1 to 10. The supervisor, a staff member with considerable field-survey experience, compared the different figures with the visible local conditions, if necessary modifying student estimates. A standard 60 x 50 m Transect would therefore yield four density counts,

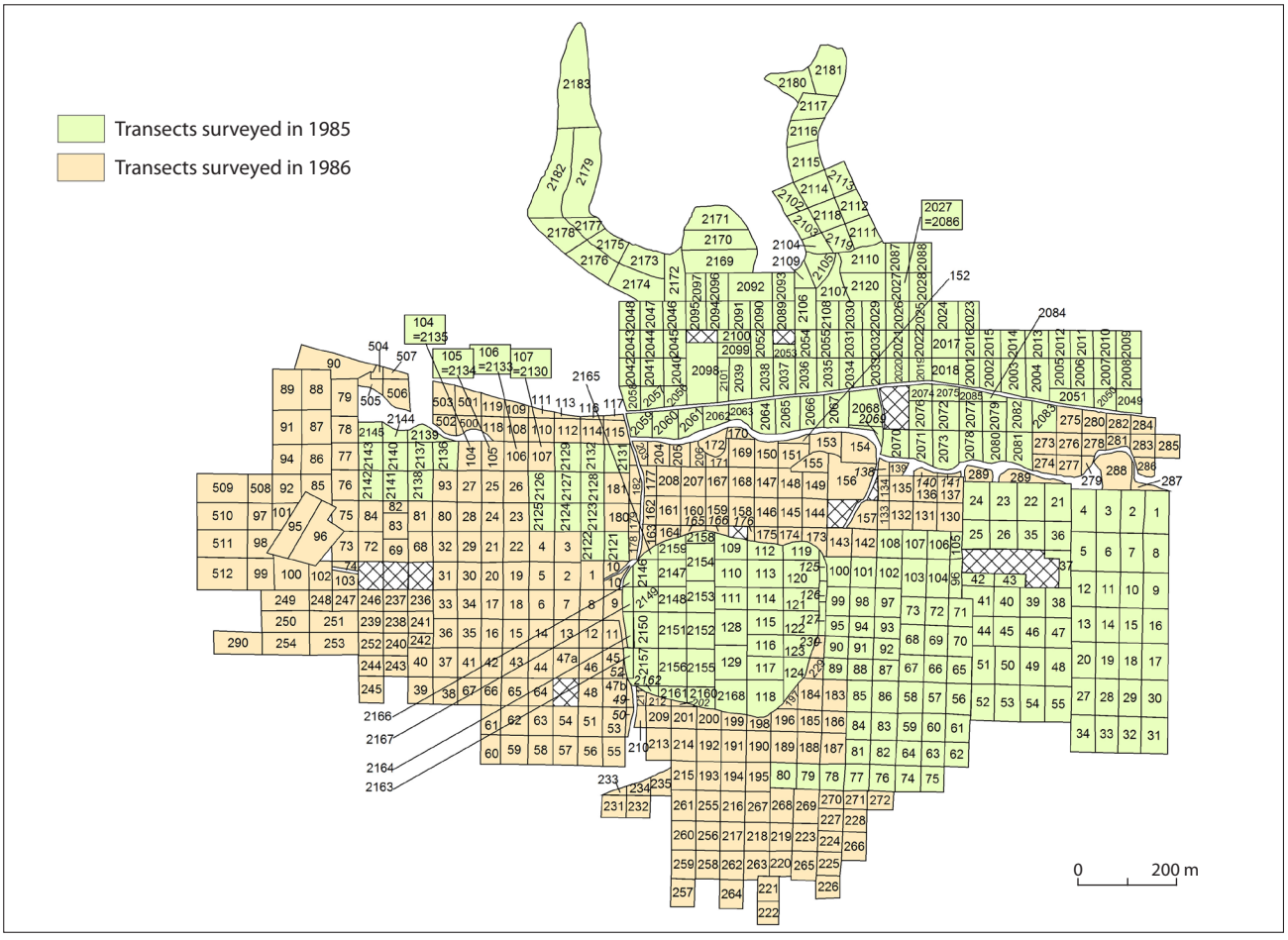


Figure 3.13. *The progression of the Thespiai city survey. The two summer seasons are differentiated by colour, while the (discontinuous) grid numbers indicate the order in which successive units were studied. The* Kastro *is marked by an irregular polygonal shape in the grid's centre, north of which can be made out the path of the Kanavaris stream (GIS by Emeri Farinetti).*



Figure 3.14. *View of the Magoula from the east.*



Figure 3.15. *The city site seen from modern Thespies village, looking south-east. The Magoula hill is outlined in red, the river Kanavaris marked by arrows.*



Figure 3.16. *Thespiai Magoula: oblique aerial photograph taken from the east, showing its location relative to the* Kastro *(just to its left) and the twin modern villages (right) (courtesy Darya Grosman).*



Figure 3.17. *Coffered roof fragments from a major structure west of the* Kastro, *at the time of discovery (archival image from the 1980s).*



Figure 3.18. *Professor Brian Davies taking soil samples for trace element chemical analysis (archival image from the 1980s).*

which could be combined as follows to obtain a density for the whole transect in counts per hectare:

Each of four walkers saw 50 by 2 m, to give a total of 400 sq. m. of each grid. Their counts were modified by the visibility correction (for example, a soil visibility set at 5, that is 50 per cent, would cause counts to be doubled). The total for 400 sq. m. would then be multiplied by 25 to create a count per hectare, visibility-corrected.

Sometimes a large uniform field, or the availability of extra field-walkers, allowed wider Transects, which were extended normally in units of 15 m; likewise smaller units could be covered with fewer walkers. Very rarely, local conditions reduced the team to one walker traversing a field.

Once the Transect density had been read, a collection of sherds for the whole unit was made by all the team combined, wandering over its entire surface. This followed our demonstration from earlier seasons that sherd collections from a small percentage of the surface of a unit suffered from systematic under-representation of certain periods (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985). It remained true that our density-counts were still made on a limited basis, being confined to just over 13 per cent of the Transect's area. A total count of each unit, however, would not only have been too time-consuming, but also very difficult to accomplish without risk of double-counting through overlapping walking-swathes on a large area. A degree of control could be exercised through the total counting that we carried out in the smaller, 'nested' Sample units across the site; as we shall see later, the density maps of the city from the two recording systems turned out to be almost identical at the overall level of the site.

As noted, these smaller units were based on the standard rectangular units that we had deployed for smaller, rural sites since 1982. The Sample was usually 30 by 10 m, subdivided into four one-person blocks of 10 by 7.5 m dimensions. One person counted the total density for each of the four sub-units, but the collected sherds from all four were then amalgamated, owing to the difficulty of bagging and documenting so many small collections. As with the Transects, local conditions or the availability of students sometimes led to Samples consisting of less or more than four sub-units: the rectangle was then diminished or enlarged in person-units of 10 by 7.5 m.

Whilst the 'model' study unit at Thespiai was the Transect of set size, and its nested Sample also with a determined size, it proved impossible to implement this across the entire area of almost 2 sq. km (180 ha) surveyed in the city grid. First, since almost the whole area was under continuous cultivation, practical difficulties could limit the ideal grid scheme. In high summer, crops sensitive to heavy student boots, such as the delicate cotton plant, meant

that some areas could only be entered by a single team-leader for a limited transect or, if the relevant farmer was present, not entered at all. High stands of maize might make normal transecting impossible, and ground visibility all but zero. Additional preventive hazards which appear in the field-notebooks include rabid dogs, aggressive snakes, and intense irrigation sprays. Fortunately, the areas concreted over for industrial buildings, field huts or pumping stations for irrigation were small. Areas which were completely inaccessible are shown cross-hatched on the grid-plan Fig. 3.13. More serious gaps in the total information-cover can be seen, however, on the maps and table that follow. Even if a unit was laid out, it was often possible, for any of the reasons noted above, only to make a sherd-density count rather than to collect sample finds, or else to take just a 'grab sample'; in rarer cases neither a density-count nor collection proved possible. The largest source of bias lies in the high number of Transects where it was not possible or, in the cases of small or problematic units, not desirable to create a nested Sample unit (just over one-half of Transects possess one). As can be seen, these gaps in our data are heavily localized: in particular the zone north of the Kanavaris has far patchier and less complex data than that south of the river. In the subsequent analysis, allowance will as far as possible be made for these inherent weaknesses in cover and their effects evaluated for the overall picture.

Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by local circumstances on our ideal sampling scheme, we would draw attention to the efficiency and speed with which the teams operated in producing a detailed surface survey of this very large urban area. In 1985–86, while separate teams were working elsewhere in the region, notably carrying out the urban survey at Haliartos, two small teams of 5–6 students each (including a team-leader) completed the Thespiai grid survey in the course of two summer seasons, each of around one month's duration.

Here it is our pleasure to record our gratitude and admiration for the relevant teams and their leaders, Carl (now Professor) Heron and Paul (now Dr.) Spoerry, who led the survey under our direction. Their careful field-books, sprinkled continuously with humorous comments and cartoons, have provided the fine detail of day-to-day operations, necessary to elucidate queries arising from the data-bases, as well as much amusement and good memories (Fig. 3.19).

One recollection, shared between the notebooks and our own vivid memories, is that of the 'Hounds of Thespiai'. In those days, when dogs in rural Greece were almost never treated as pets, allowed in the home or kept on a leash (in contrast to the gilded pooches on parade in Athens' Kolonaki Square), their main function in the countryside was to guard houses and sheep-folds. Apart from the violent barking which was the first form of custodianship, few ventured physical aggression unless one really intended to break into private property. To these rules of behaviour, comforting for the nervous student on field survey in Greece for the first time, the Mad Dogs of Thespies were a permanent exception. Once the field teams were in place in the lowlands of the ancient city each morning, only a few minutes of suspicious calm would elapse before a distant belling from the top of the Thespies village hill above us would announce our detection by the Mad Dogs. They would immediately pour down the hill-side towards us at a great pace, then charge at the two teams. There never seemed to be an intention to stop short and make fierce gestures: rather, one got the repeated impression that large pieces of student were believed to be on offer to the under-fed mongrels. Only a Classical education offered daily security against the presumed threat: forming a circle, the field teams would present their steel-tipped sets of 2-m ranging poles to their would-be attackers. Wonderfully, after ten minutes of the ensuing stand-off, the Mad Dogs would slink off, but one could never be sure that an unexpected reprise might not occur later in the morning.



Figure 3.19. *Carl Heron (left) and a field team, with one of the impressively versatile Ford Transit minibuses on which the Project relied in the 1980s.*



Figure 3.20. *Kalliopi Sarri (left) and visiting expert Catherine Perlès studying Neolithic surface finds at the Magoula. The Kanavaris valley runs as a green zone across the picture in middle distance and the outliers of Leondari village appear on the hilltop in the distance.*



Figure 3.21. *View of the city wall extension from the north, looking towards the Kanavaris and the most westerly sector of the 'Old Town' beyond it.*



Figure 3.22. *The Theatre hollow cut into the cliffs underlying modern Thespies village, taken from the west.*

During and after the survey seasons in the city of Thespiai, several ceramic specialists joined in the study of the finds. John Hayes amazed us with his ability to comment on almost every surface sherd from Archaic through to Early Modern times; Oliver Dickinson with the assistance of Kalliopi [Popi] Sarri (Fig. 3.20) covered our Neolithic to Late Bronze Age pieces; Anthony Snodgrass dealt with the very rare Protogeometric to Geometric finds. More recently, the collection of Iron Age to Hellenistic pieces has been re-evaluated by Vladimir Stissi (University of Amsterdam), the Roman to Late Roman finds by Jeroen Poblome and Philip Bes (Leuven University), and that of Medieval to Post-Medieval by Nassos Vionis (University of Cyprus); their comments are to be found in later chapters of this monograph.

As a result of the two seasons of urban survey, we were in possession of a very fine-detailed database of 14,433 sherds, collected from 606 large grid units (the Transects) and 316 nested small grid units (the Samples). As noted, then and in later years surface architectural finds were plotted and recorded: these will be treated in the next chapter of this volume (Chapter 4).

The ensuing part of this chapter will deal, first, with technical properties of the data-base and specific features of the notebook record which help us with the interpretation of the survey. In particular, the density-measurements are a vital element in our estimates of the maximum borders of the city, although these alone have proved to be inadequate, requiring as they do a more elaborate spatial analysis and the use of the chronological distribution maps.

Most recently, a re-analysis of the site's architectural debris by Božidar Slapšak's Ljubljana team has brought essential corrections to our older perceptions of the urban plan. The next two illustrations (Figs. 3.21 and 3.22) mark the most striking of these discoveries – the probably Hellenistic city wall extension north of the Kanavaris stream, and the nearby Theatre.

Chapter 3(b)

Interpreting the density and period map series: the analysis

Before we can deal with the details of the density and chronological distribution of the surface ceramic finds from Thespiai, it is of some importance to discuss in full how urban surface survey method varies from project to project in Greece, and what strengths and weaknesses can be revealed in our own application of it to the city of Thespiai. One of the critical failings of many Aegean survey projects has indeed been a poverty of experimental observations, and of analytical comparison of methodologies. The pioneer Athens conference on Mediterranean survey, whose proceedings were published by Keller and Rupp (1983), has been followed by the impressive Populus Project, a five-volume series coordinated by Barker and Mattingly (1999), for a volume of which JLB was co-editor (Bintliff and Sbonias 2000); a volume on a geographically wider, European scale (Bintliff, Kuna and Venclova 2000); and by a further Mediterranean-wide edited review of surveys by Alcock and Cherry (2004). These overviews, however, while providing invaluable information on many projects and some summary statistics, have failed to establish a central body of practical understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of particular procedures in the practice of regional field survey and in the interpretation of its results. In contrast, individual projects have investigated important related issues such as the effects of erosion on surface assemblages (James and Mee 1994), and the relationship of surface collections to underlying deposits when excavated (Cavanagh, Mee *et al.* 2007).

We mentioned earlier in this chapter that, in 1982, no suitable intensive survey publication of an urban site existed in Greece, to act as a model for our work at Askra, and subsequently at Haliartos and Thespiai. Since then, most regional survey projects have had to deal with large settlement sites, yet no analytical overview of the particular methods for surveying town-sites has yet been attempted. Two published collection of essays, however (Vermeulen, Burgers *et al.*(eds.) 2012 and Corsi *et al.*, eds. 2014*),* at least present a useful range of urban survey projects to allow us to see what has been recent practice in the survey of 'large, complex sites'. One of us (JLB) has attempted a first critical review in the latter volume of methods deployed in Mediterranean urban survey and what we can learn from them for future projects at large multi-period sites (Bintliff 2014).

A similar weakness has been observed with smaller rural sites, where the habit of adopting 'off the shelf' systems of analysis, utilized by earlier projects, has prevented a deeper consideration of how the choice of techniques affects the results (Bintliff 2008). If this might at first sight look like an attempt to privilege our methods as the ideal by comparison with other projects, our current retrospective examination of the Boeotia Project's database from 1979 to 1989 in fact prompts as much concern about the inadequacies of our approach as any desire to promote its advantages. Indeed the order in which we have chosen to publish the final volumes of the Boeotia project is driven by the decreasing quality, as we go back in time to the earliest years of fieldwork, of the data we have available. So the first volumes will cover those districts and major sites where our methods were the most exact, the field methods most intensive, and our ceramic collections the fullest. We hope to learn from these higher-quality databases how to make the most of the thinner and less reliable results from the early seasons in Boeotia. Even in the case of the most recent years, however, the reworking of results that takes place as we prepare the data for final publication reveals many problems, which in part reflect our lack of awareness, at the time of survey, of many aspects of past landscapes and data collection.

Data recovery and diagnosticity

As previously mentioned, the large town site of ancient Thespiai was divided into a grid of 606 basic study units, usually of 60 x 50 m dimensions (the *Transects*), comprising in all an area of around 180 ha. Within around half of these, an inner rectangle was laid out, usually 30 x 10 m: these were the *Samples* (see Table 3.1). Our experience since 1979 in Boeotia had persuaded us that a total coverage of the surface, rather than sample units separated by unstudied terrain, was the ideal (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985). On the other hand, it has to be admitted that, although the collection of sherds was carried out over the entire Transect, the actual recording of density was based, for reasons of time, on a series of parallel, individual walker-based strips, 15 m apart, representing only about 13.3 per cent of the surface. Analysis of densities, however, is most valuable for identifying trends rather than micro-variations, since the incalculably variable land use and taphonomic history of each square metre of a settlement site with 8000 years of continuous activity must surely create a complexity of ceramic contexts that is beyond our ability to interpret without total excavation. In any case, the placing of a second level of testing, nested within the large continuous study units, was envisaged as a control Sample, to help us to see whether more intensive counting and collection, in a 10 per cent fraction of a Transect, produced radically different density and chronological data. In the Samples, the small size of the area meant that each of four walkers could make a total count of a quarter of the Sample (7.5 x 10 m). The sherd collection, however, was for practical reasons merged for the whole Sample. The four separate density counts for each Sample, too, were merged for the purpose of our analysis, since we finally concluded that, as with the Transect densities, general localized trends were more valuable than the inevitable micro-scale fluctuation. There is a notable degree of variation between each sub-unit of the Samples, and between Samples as a whole and the Transects in which they are embedded. For those interested in studying these variations, the complete data are available in the appended CD database to this volume. Some general comments on the relationship of Transects to Samples will be made later in this chapter, but it is worth reflecting on the almost 'fractal' nature of these four levels of record (Lewin 1993).

Given the degree of complexity, in each small sector of a long-lived ancient urban centre, which we predict, it is only to be expected that the measured properties of different spatial scales of the town would vary from one another; rather, it would be surprising if equal densities or identical assemblages of dated finds were to be found at the three levels of Transect, Sample and sub-sample. Yet the question remains: how are we to manage this variability? The answer depends entirely on what we want to know. In the first place, a picture of the city as a whole can be derived from the entirety of the Transect grid data, allowing us to map the changing density of accumulated artefact disposal and occupational foci. Here a central question is whether the material counted via the larger Transects, and dated from all over their expanses, gives a clearer (and ideally more reliable) picture than the counts and dated sherds from the smaller, isolated Samples. Although we recorded density for a yet smaller unit, at the sub-sample level, in the final analysis we have not been able to find a suitable reason for focusing on this. Such a small unit (7.5 x 10 m) would approximate to no more than one or two rooms in a standard Classical house, whereas the Sample, at 300 sq. m, is on the scale of a house/household (Ault and Nevett 2005), and might be seen as a meaningful area of focused activity within the city as a whole. Later in this analysis, we shall investigate the comparability and differences of the density and chronological information as between Transects and Samples, which can lead to recommendations for future urban surveys.

The preceding and following tables and figures summarize the properties of the City survey database. Of our key study unit, the Transect, a high percentage possesses dated ceramic collections and an even higher proportion has density data. In contrast, little over half of the Transects were given nested Samples, though almost all of these latter have dated assemblages and density data. Regrettably, the absent Samples are concentrated to the north of the Kanavaris river, with a lesser series of gaps in the west of the City. This was primarily due to crop conditions and, in the far north, to the poverty of recorded data. Clearly our knowledge of such sectors is less full as a result, and we must be more cautious in evaluating them.

The 1985 survey produced 7555 sherds for the registered database, that of 1986 a further 7065, making an urban database of 14,620 potsherds. The

Table 3.1. *Statistics for the Thespiai Sampling Scheme. Total number of Transects = 606. Total number of Samples = 316. The lower line makes it possible to compare the total number of Transects with relevant data against the total Samples with the same data available: thus, for example, there are slightly over half as many Samples as Transect units with pottery collections.*

	Pot kept	Pot not kept	Density data taken	Density data absent
Transects	524 (87%)	82 (13%)	589 (97%)	17 (3%)
Samples	300 (95%)	16 (5%)	316 (100%)	0

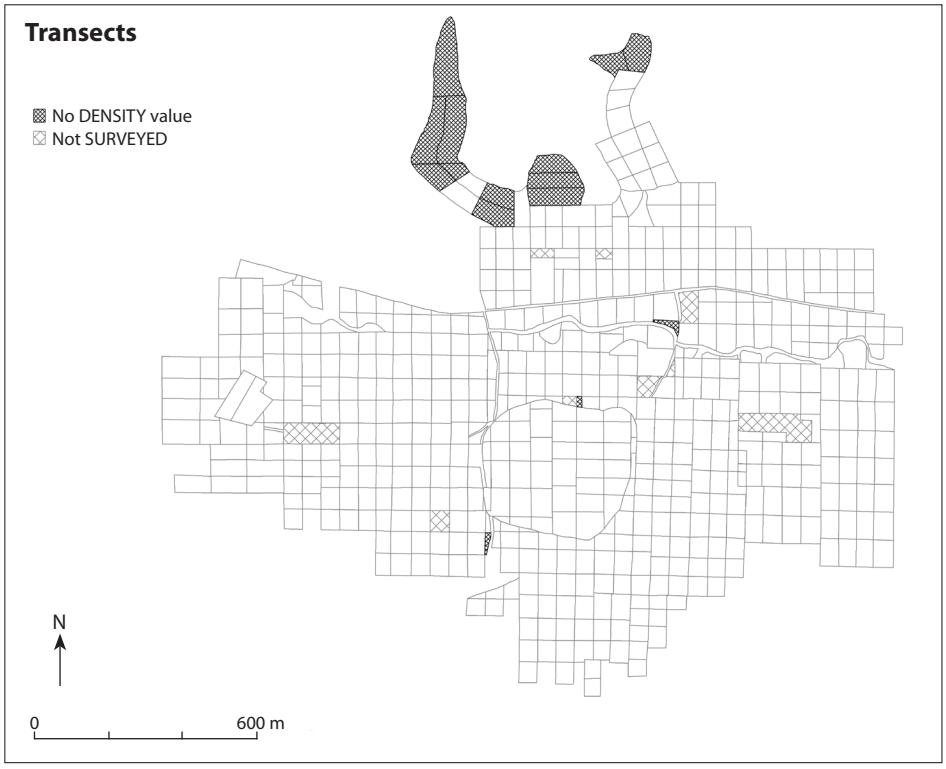


Figure 3.23. *Map of Transects, with those lacking density data shown in grey.*

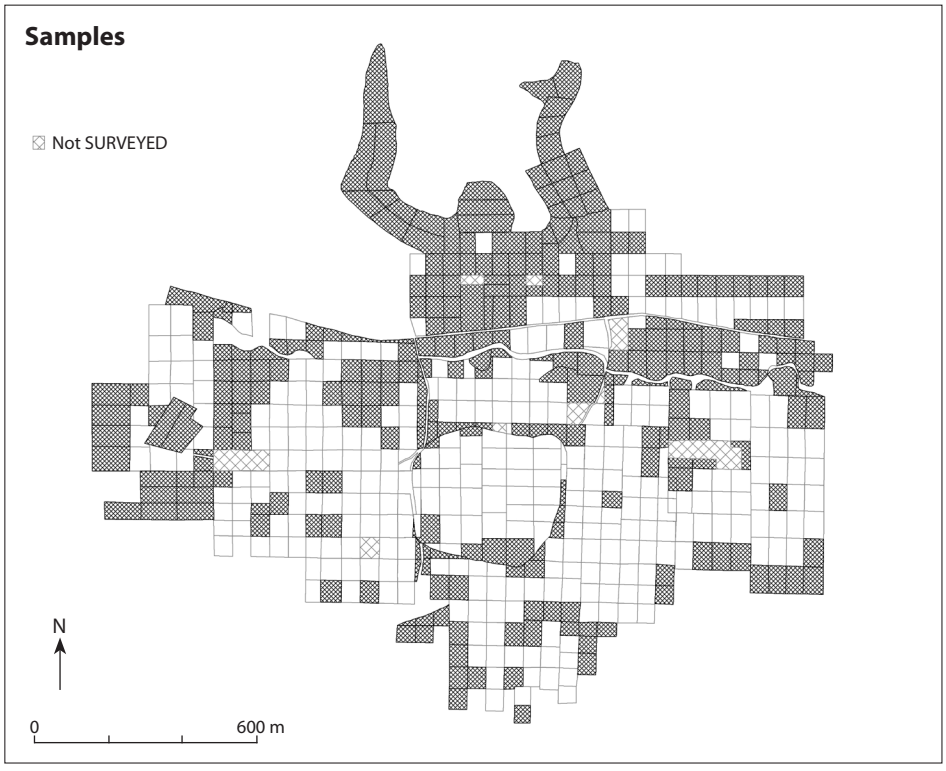


Figure 3.24. *Map of Samples, the grid units in white showing where Samples were taken.*

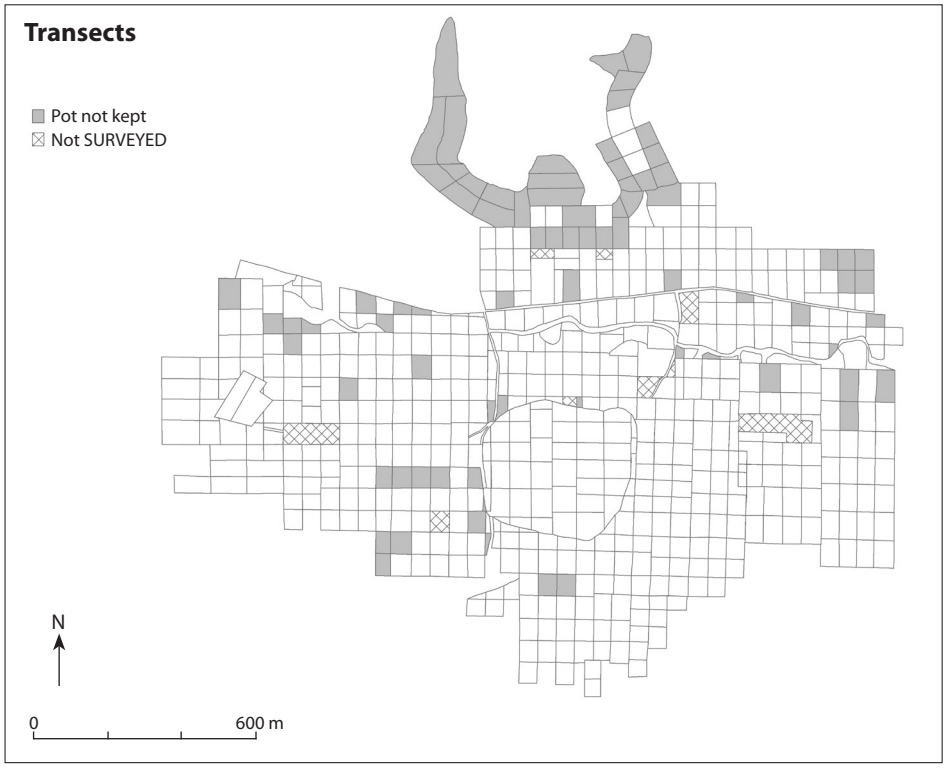


Figure 3.25. *A record of the Transects without ceramic collections, shown in grey.*

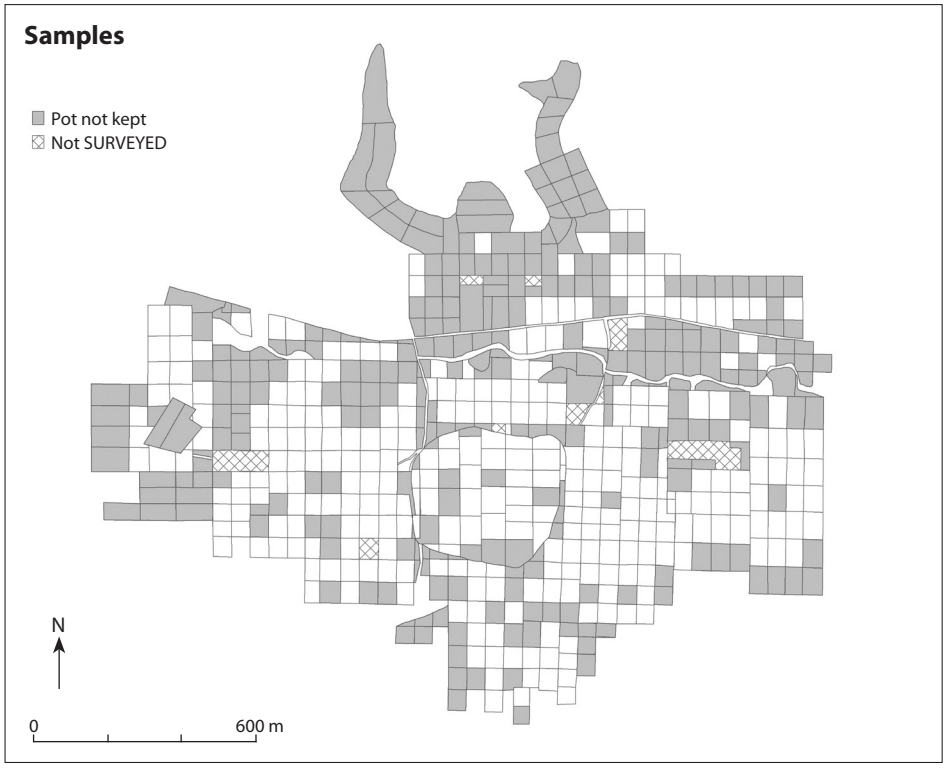


Figure 3.26. *A record of the Samples without ceramic collections.*

Table 3.2. *Distribution of sherd counts, as between Transects and Samples.*

	Transects	Samples	Ratio Tr/Sa
1985	4960	2595	66%/34%
1986	3770	3295	53%/47%
Total	8730	5890	60%/40%

distribution between Transect and Sample collections is shown in Table 3.2.

The differences between the two years in numbers are not great, but their distribution is contrasted. In 1985 collections from Transects were twice as numerous as those from the Samples, whereas in the following year the division was almost equal. This is because it was in the 1985 season that almost the whole area north of the Kanavaris was surveyed, where standing field crops and elsewhere hill-wash and low find-densities prohibited or discouraged setting samples. Fortunately, the overall totals bring Samples up to 40 per cent of the whole, a reasonably comparable size of collection for making direct comparisons with Transect finds when both were made in the same locality.

In the four accompanying figures, the 606 large Transect units form the basis of all the images. In the first image, Fig. 3.23, only a small number of Transects lack density data. Since all Sample units provided density data, the second image, Fig. 3.24, is in effect a map showing the distribution of the Samples (the grey-shaded units are Transects without a nested Sample). In the third image, Fig. 3.25, we see that, again, only a small proportion of Transects are without ceramic collections. The fourth image, Fig. 3.26, shows the Sample units where ceramic finds were collected and, since this was true of 95 per cent of them, their distribution is only slightly less than the total spread of Samples seen in the previous Sample density map (Fig. 3.24).

Summary pie-charts: initial considerations of their significance, with charts and keys in chronological order

The pie charts in Figs. 3.27 and 3.28 and Tables 3.3 and 3.4 raise different issues about the 1985–6 city Survey. The student teams were instructed to collect from a Transect or Sample a representative assemblage of sherds. Since, to judge by reviewers' comments, we appear to have been insufficiently clear on this topic in the Project's first volume, *Testing the Hinterland*, we should clarify what was meant by this at the time. In first instance, 'likely diagnostic' sherds were primarily 'feature' pieces, i.e. rims, handles and bases, and then other pieces, including body-sherds, with distinctive decoration or finish. We were, however, already aware of the possible limitations of this list, so that a considerable number of additional body-sherds were collected on the strength of their variable colour, fabric, size and degree of coarseness or fineness. Philip Bes (Chapter 12) has usefully calculated that, whereas excavated assemblages might yield 80 per cent body-sherds to 20 per cent feature sherds, our surface finds are closer to 50/50 per cent.

In retrospect, we had neglected to identify pot types likely to suffer discrimination on grounds of their poor manufacture, small size, or those subtle distinctions from better-known types that are presently seen as specific to certain neglected eras. At best, we might expect that the relatively large size of our total collection, and the wide criteria allowed in collecting it, might yield some isolated examples of such problem pieces, and indeed we shall later argue this to be the case. Here, though, our argument would be that our ability to pick out these rarities was commoner than our original design might lead us to expect.

On the other hand, one might ask to what extent a focus on body-sherds, as opposed to feature-sherds, alters the chronological and functional evidence from a particular survey unit collection. In a recent experiment at the Boeotian city of Koroneia (cf. Bintliff, Slapšak *et al.* 2012), total artefact collection on a large scale was compared with a typical feature-sherd-biased collection from the same grid units. Mark van der Enden (Leicester University) (in Bintliff, Slapšak *et al.* 2012: 33–5, 59–63), with the specialist assistance on pottery identification of Vladimir Stissi (University of Amsterdam) and Philip Bes (Leuven University), concluded that no significant extra information was gained from the body-sherds in the major historical periods, which was not achieved from the more informative feature-sherds – *provided that the collection was sufficiently large*. In the case of periods with poor manufacture, preservation or identification, however, such as prehistoric phases on a site with dense historical material, then these were rare enough on the surface to require especially careful search for such pieces, whether feature- or body-sherds. A second caveat concerned cooking-ware, which appears to be under-represented in many surveys, by comparison with frequencies known from the excavation of historical sites. Here the advice to student collector teams was to single out coarse wares in each grid unit, regardless of shape, in order to achieve a better proportion of such forms.

Such experiments certainly need to be repeated, but given the similarity of the Thespiai surface material to that from Koroneia, we can suggest that the large 1985–86 collection may be a reasonable reflection of the nature of the surface finds for the historical phases of the town, cooking-wares excepted; but

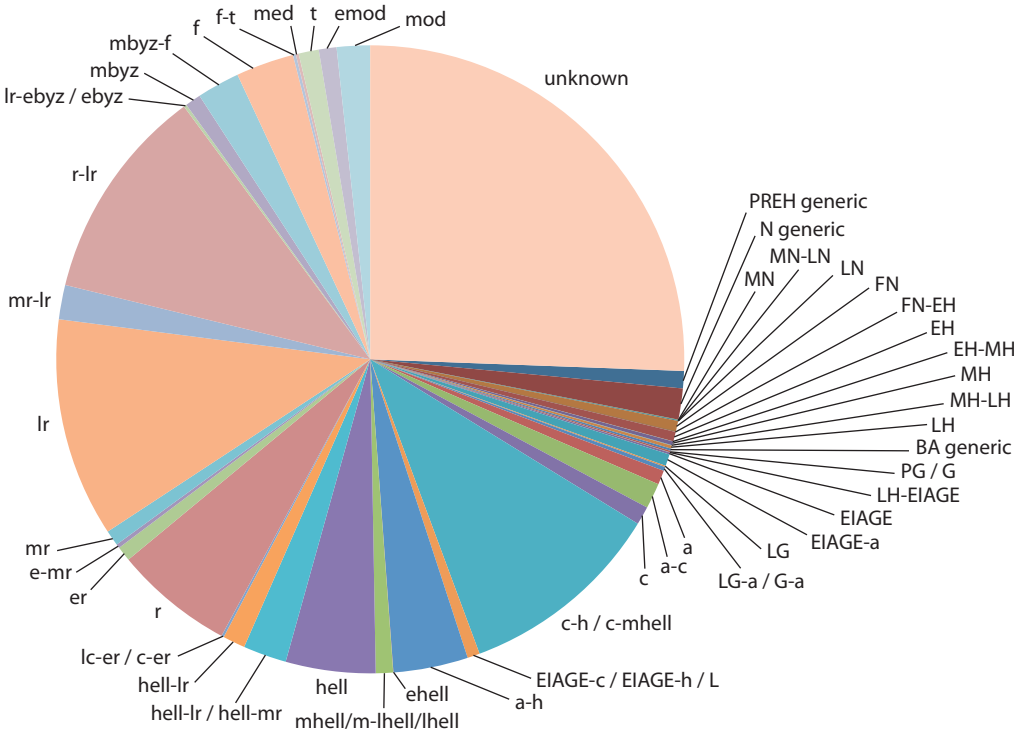


Figure 3.27. *Pie chart of the City Transect Sherd database. Abbreviations: PREH = Prehistoric, BA = Bronze Age, N = Neolithic, H = Helladic or Bronze Age, EIAGE = Early Iron Age, PG = Proto-Geometric, G = Geometric, a – Archaic, c = Classical, c-h = Classical to early Hellenistic, h = Hellenistic, r = Roman, h-r = late Hellenistic to early Roman, med = Medieval, byz = Byzantine, f = Frankish, f-t = Frankish/Late Byzantine or early Turkish, t = Turkish, mod = Modern; e/E, m/M, l/L and F before period terms are respectively early, middle, late and Final.*

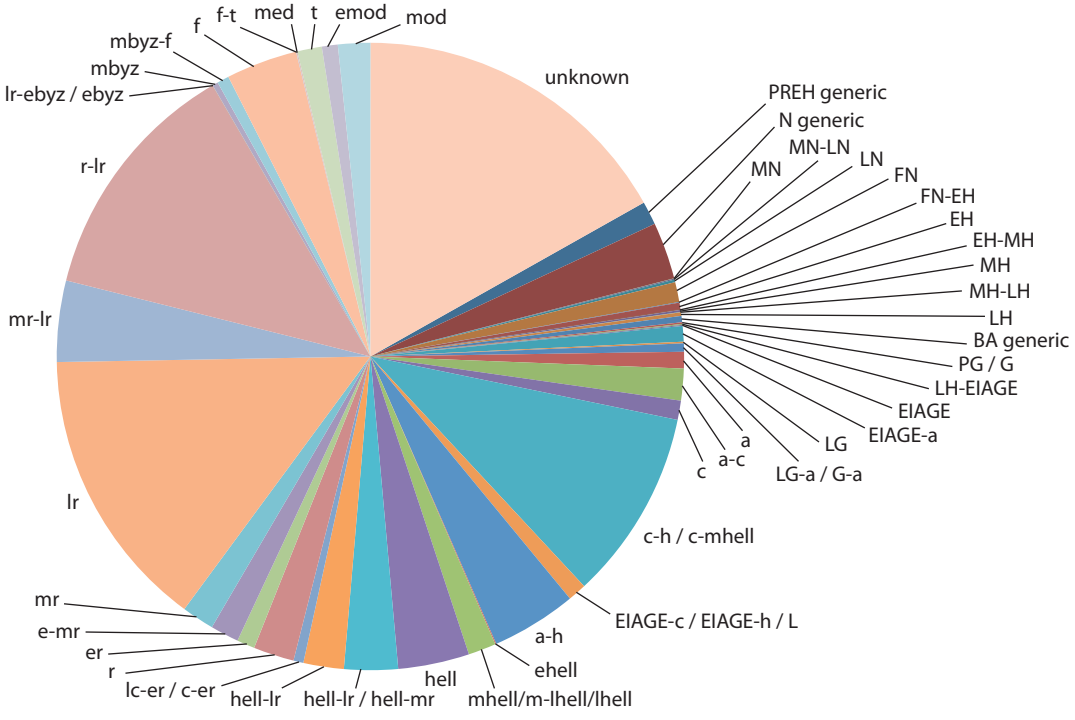


Figure 3.28. *Pie chart of the City Sample Sherd database (abbreviations as above).*

Table 3.3. *The Transect data expressed numerically.*

PREH generic	78	**a-h**	337
NEO generic	140	**ehell**	1
MN	2	**mhell/m-lhell/ lhell**	78
MN-LN	0	**hell**	405
LN	4	**hell-r / hell-mr**	196
FN	50	**hell-lr**	101
FN-EH	0	**lc-er / c-er**	11
EH	43	**r**	538
EH-MH	1	**er**	67
MH	17	**e-mr**	18
MH-LH	2	**mr**	70
LH	14	**lr**	989
BA generic	10	**mr-lr**	155
LH-EIAGE	7	**r-lr**	972
PG / G	1	**lr-ebyz / ebyz**	13
EIAGE	9	**mbyz**	71
EIAGE-a	53	**mbyz-f**	193
LG	6	**f**	262
LG-a / G-a	18	**f-t**	13
a	64	**med**	13
a-c	115	**t**	91
c	83	**emod**	80
c-h / c-mhell	927	**mod**	150
EIAGE-c / EIAGE-h / LG-c	56	**unknown**	2244

Table 3.4. *The Sample data expressed numerically.*

PREH generic	71	**a-h**	258
NEO generic	172	**ehell**	3
MN	1	**mhell/m-lhell/ lhell**	84
MN-LN	3	**hell**	215
LN	8	**hell-r / hell-mr**	162
FN	60	**hell-lr**	122
FN-EH	2	**lc-er / c-er**	30
EH	22	**r**	123
EH-MH	0	**er**	54
MH	6	**e-mr**	86
MH-LH	1	**mr**	98
LH	11	**lr**	856
BA generic	19	**mr-lr**	245
LH-EIAGE	5	**r-lr**	745
PG / G	3	**lr-ebyz / ebyz**	0
EIAGE	3	**mbyz**	17
EIAGE-a	47	**mbyz-f**	36
LG	5	**f**	215
LG-a / G-a	25	**f-t**	1
a	50	**med**	3
a-c	96	**t**	74
c	58	**emod**	48
c-h / c-mhell	576	**mod**	98
EIAGE-c / EIAGE-h / LG-c	56	**unknown**	986

that it probably under-represents the prehistoric and proto-historic (Protogeometric to Geometric-Archaic) periods. We shall later present additional data to support the latter proposition.

The pie charts show that some 50 phases can be identified at the city (including some 'overlap' classifications spanning two distinct periods: c-h, r-lr, mr-lr). The high degree of diagnosticity deserves mention here. A strikingly low proportion, only some 20 per cent, of the total of potsherds collected and entered, remained undatable. A further small percentage of the pottery brought back by field teams was discarded before or after washing, and is thus missing from these statistics. Much of this 'thrown' material proved to be natural stone, or tiny fragments lacking any features to allow of dating. As noted earlier, the retained collection included large numbers of sherds brought in despite their being undecorated, and of body-sherds and others not immediately seen to be highly diagnostic. The overall success rate shown can be put down to some remarkable circumstances. First, Boeotian ceramics are unusual when compared to many areas of Greece, in being of very good clay and mostly very well-made. We have encountered no landscapes where high lime content in the soil, or intensive hand cultivation, have resulted in sherds veneered with obscuring deposits or crushed into uniformly tiny fragments, as survey colleagues have reported from Lakonia and the Ionian Islands respectively. Secondly, we were extremely fortunate to have the long-term services of a team that included that unique genius in Mediterranean ceramics of Classical to Ottoman times, Professor John Hayes, who made the preliminary analysis of all material from Geometric through to Modern times; for Prehistory, the richly experienced Dr. Oliver Dickinson (Durham) has been more recently assisted by Dr. Kalliope Sarri (Athens), who has specialized in Boeotian prehistoric finds for many years. For the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic finds, John Hayes' identifications have recently been considerably refined by Professor Vladimir Stissi (Amsterdam). Likewise for Early to Late Roman material, re-study has been in the hands of Dr. Philip Bes and Professor Jeroen Poblome (Leuven). For the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, additional follow-up analysis to that of John Hayes was provided by Dr. Nassos Vionis

(University of Cyprus). Between them, this array of experts managed to achieve an invaluably high rate of identification for our collection, with only minimal discard before the catalogue was made, and a low rate of undatable entries. A third reason for the high level of ceramic recognition is that for the vast bulk of our finds, those of Archaic to Late Roman age, each city territory in Boeotia appears to have produced the majority of its own ceramics. Through study of fabrics and inclusions, as well as changes in technology, it proved possible to date Thespian sherds through creating 'surface assemblages', where well-dated shapes linked by fabric and technique allowed our specialists to set up dating criteria for body-sherds, even if the forms might remain similar across periods. On the other hand, as Philip Bes stresses (Chapter 12), the majority of 'dated pieces' in fact can only be assigned to periods of some length, and often to combinations of adjacent periods.

In the reading of the pie-charts that summarize find numbers per period (Figs. 3.27 and 3.28), a fundamental problem is at first sight the lack of quantitative guidelines from previous publications, to assist us in interpretation. We can however begin by applying some qualitative considerations.

First, we can expect that the Prehistoric and Protohistoric periods at Thespiai (that is, all the phases in the first group that are abbreviated in capital letters) will be poorly represented in the City survey. After all, in every part of the grid where they were observed, these phases were overlain by the heavy activity that emanated from a large town over a period of at least 1200 years. We shall however show that the city site was probably never more than a village or cluster of hamlets at any stage of prehistory: this naturally reduces its debris already to a very low density, by comparison with the subsequent and overlying urban phases. Moreover, in some of the prehistoric eras the pots were neither of a high quality nor readily diagnostic, which exacerbates the problems of evaluating the first 6000 years or so of occupation (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999). The relatively small proportion present can thus to a notable extent be attributed to under-representation of the earliest phases of the site's stratigraphy on the surface of a large historical town, especially when we consider that the periods concerned, Early Neolithic to LH (Mycenaean), covered some 6000 years, compared to the less than 3000 years of subsequent Iron Age to Early Modern occupation. It remains to be demonstrated later how far we can nonetheless overcome this bias to interpret the scale and spread of the prehistoric settlement period by period at Thespiai.

The representation of the Byzantine to Ottoman village(s) on the site, with around 7.2 per cent of the material to cover a period of only some 800 years, is almost the same as the total prehistoric (average 7.4 per cent). The explanation must be complex. Given that prehistoric activity over a period of some 6000 years has to be compared with one of little more than 800 years for these Medieval to post-Medieval phases, it is from one point of view the relatively respectable sherd numbers in the latter case that might cause surprise. Yet on the other hand, this was the final phase of occupation, so that the archaeological layers from which this material is being exposed are those nearest to the surface. Further, the material is often highly visible and distinctive to field-walkers, through the common use of glaze. Thirdly, the recent date of these wares allows them to be better preserved, as they have suffered less damage through the later occupation activities to which all earlier phases have been exposed. But finally, the wide extent of the village (with two foci close to each other) seems to indicate that, at least in the Byzantine and Frankish periods, the community was of some size, though in Ottoman Turkish times it would seem to have contracted. Fortunately, archives provide confirmation of the likelihood of shrinkage of this village on the ancient site during the Ottoman era, when the bulk of the population resided in the hill-top locations of the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari. Nonetheless, even if we can later venture some conjectural estimates for the size and demography of the Medieval to post-Medieval villages, a direct comparison with the corresponding prehistoric villages, for the reasons given earlier, remains problematic. We shall have to be very cautious in analysing these remote eras at Thespiai. Nonetheless, a tentative hypothesis might be that the site was more populated in these historical eras than at any time during prehistory.

In between these 'village' epochs falls the Greco-Roman city. Very roughly, some 63 per cent of the finds belong to its various phases, with an imbalance of 36 per cent Roman to Late Roman compared to 26 per cent Late Geometric to Hellenistic. These figures are consonant with the evidence from our ancient sources, that the city of Thespiai was a major regional urban centre with a large territory or *chora*. What those sources do not tell us, however, is of the changing urban demography between these two eras of roughly equal length, the lifetime of the 'Greek' city from *c.* 700 to 100 BC and the (ceramically designated) period of 'Roman rule' from then to AD 600 or later, although we do have rather indirect evidence for the population of late Classical Thespiai (Bintliff 1997; *Testing the Hinterland*: 143–51). Since, as we shall see, the Roman town overlay parts of the Greek city, and did so for a period of some centuries, we might predict that, in

those areas at least, the underlying urban deposits of preceding Greek age would suffer under-representation. In contrast, in areas where the extent of domestic settlement in the two major urbanized eras did not overlap, a stronger representation of one or the other period, Greek or Roman, might be predicted.

With non-domestic contexts, however, the situation might be expected to be more complex: with a large and long-lived city, the concerted evidence of the entire Greco-Roman world would lead us to look for very extensive and dense extramural cemeteries extending in all directions from the city walls or boundaries. Although excavations at some urban sites (e.g. Kenchreai: Rife *et al.*, 2007; Rife 2012) have shown that, over the millennium or more of ancient Greek towns, burials might be cut into or located over older graves, there is equally clear evidence for lateral expansion of extramural cemeteries over time. One might hope therefore that Thespiai's city cemeteries might provide a better balance of surface finds from the Greek and Roman eras respectively. As for extramural sanctuaries and industrial areas, no easy predictions can be made, although in the former case, until the dominance of Christianity in Late Antiquity, there is plentiful evidence, excavated and textual, from other ancient towns for continuity of cult at major shrines. Here again, continuity at intra- and extra-mural sanctuaries might privilege Roman over Greek deposits in terms of pottery, unless the locality was extended horizontally over time.

A final observation should address the differences between the period representation of the Transects and of the Samples. A likely reason for any notable discrepancy is the fact that the Samples are poorly represented in the outer reaches of the city grid, with the exception of the eastern sector south of the river Kanavaris. When we come to examine each period, it will also be possible to investigate whether any conspicuous differences emerge within those sectors where both Transects and Samples are present. These could reflect real divergences arising from the two differently scaled methods of collecting surface pottery. In fact however, the slight prevalence of 'generic Greek' sherds in the Samples is balanced by a slight bias in favour of the 'generic Roman' in the Transects, though the differences are very minor. As we shall see, it seems likely that the domestic zones in these two eras do have contrasting distributions, whereas extramural cemetery zones may show much continuity. Thus, while the overlap between Greek and Roman domestic zones varies geographically, according to the differences between the sectors of the city, the overall lack of a dramatic difference between the Transect and the Sample statistics (but see below) must be due to the operation of several counterbalancing factors. A map-based study of period statistics is needed here, enabling us to test directly the impact of different periods on the surface pottery in *different* zones of the city; this we shall present in the next section, through the procedure of Sector Analysis.

One further and, in our view, highly significant aspect of our researches into survey methodology concerns our attempt to find an indirect way to approach the question of sample size for collecting on large, multi-period sites. We have discussed this elsewhere (Bintliff 2012; 2014) but a brief summary is appropriate here. As we can never know what statisticians would call the 'original population' from which we are sampling in surface survey, an alternative route lies through internal analysis of the data themselves. One reason for our adopting a two-scale sampling approach at several cities was the uncertainty as to how far the area covered affects the material found, for any locality within the town. At Thespiai, since we collected roughly equal amounts of sherds from the larger and smaller units, it was possible to compare their data directly. Interestingly (cf. Figs. 3.34 and 3.35, p.53 below) while the density counts for pottery differed by little, the period maps produced, from the large and small samples respectively, showed irregular variation across the town. Some periods looked the same, but for others it looked as if different cities were being presented. On the advice of Martijn van Leusen (Groningen University), we tested whether divergent or convergent maps for each period were primarily a result of sample size, and this proved to be the right explanation. As the total number of sherds collected rose per phase, so the maps from small and large samples grew more alike. We can at least hypothesize that the numerical point at which the period maps are brought into agreement, regardless of sampling basis, might be a working guide as to how much material we might need to collect in future, from complex urban sites with an equivalent range of phases. That borderline figure for Thespiai was 600 sherds, meaning that a large site might need that number at least *for each occupation phase*, to allow a reasonable confidence in the spatial representation of the original distribution. For a city with as many phases as Thespiai, this would indicate a minimum total collection of more than 16,000 sherds (our actual sample was a little smaller); but even that would be unrealistic, assuming as it does that all 27 major periods are numerically equally present in the collection. Clearly any complex site will have a small number of phases that dominate site use, or at least the surface assemblages; and, notoriously, these can all but submerge periods of slighter evidence, especially in the oldest and deepest levels of

the site. The implications of these tentative estimates require serious future study.

In conclusion, the pie-charts can be taken to show that the two methods of sampling the city of Thespiai produced remarkably similar sets of figures for the levels of human activity in the main periods at the town locality *as a whole*, whether for Prehistory, for the prime Greco-Roman era from Archaic to Late Roman, or for Frankish/Late Byzantine and Turkish times. No striking differences stand out. Only a more localized analysis can hope to reveal the spatial trends in the occupation of the city.

In the crudest terms, the picture is one of a low population throughout prehistory; a more elevated, but still less than urban level for the post-Roman period; and, in between, two major urban phases, the 'generic Greek' producing some 26 per cent of all sherds and the 'generic Roman' some 36 per cent. Thus the Roman phases, for instance, might be thought to mark a slight demographic rise. But the next step, of breaking down the global statistics by geographical sector across the city and evaluating the critical role played by taphonomy, reveals such an inference to be altogether too simplistic.

The sector analysis

To investigate, at a very general level, how the dated ceramics from the urban survey were distributed across the gridded area, we created ten divisions of roughly equal size, corresponding to natural or artificial zones (see Fig. 3.29). The Late Antique *Kastro* (5) was one of these. The trans-Kanavaris zone we split into an eastern (8) and a western (3) half, the latter being linked to the recent discovery of the wall extension north of the river, with its course running partly within this sector. On the south side of the river, we set apart an inner ring of N, S, E and W blocks (4, 6, 9 and 2 respectively) from an outer ring of blocks to the W, S and E (1, 7 and 10). As we shall see, there is good reason to believe that these last three outer blocks were primarily extramural, with cemeteries and other activities represented within them, while the inner blocks are argued to be domestic and public occupation areas. This made 10 sectors in all. The special sample collection from the prehistoric Magoula in Sector 4 was included with the general finds from transects in this area and wider but related samples.

Within the pottery classification, a significant number of the catalogued finds are assigned to a cross-period bracket, rather than to a single period (compare again Chapter 12). But for our analysis here, it will prove more helpful to amalgamate the pottery into very broad phases – essentially Prehistoric, Greek, Roman, Late Roman and Medieval to post-Medieval – which render such internal uncertainties irrelevant. The very broadest dating brackets – such as 'Archaic to Roman' – are simply left out of the analyses altogether, as having no value for the present purpose. We have chosen to separate off the Late Hellenistic to Mid-Roman era, *c*. 150 BC to AD 400, from that of Late Roman, *c*. AD 400 to 650, because they are known to represent very different political and economic regimes in Greece and the wider Roman world. The preceding period, Proto-Geometric to Hellenistic (that is, essentially to mid-Hellenistic) seems at first sight to be disproportionately long by comparison (*c*. 1050 to *c*. 150/100 BC), but in reality we can be sure that urban life in Thespiai could only have become a reality during the later Archaic or sixth century BC. The eras come down effectively then to, in order of chronology, 400–450 years (Greek), 500–550 years (generic earlier Roman) and 250 years (Late Roman). Given that the last-named is also the last urban phase of the city, so that its debris will have sat heavily on those of all earlier periods, its comparative shortness will be more than made up for by the advantage of surface abundance in sherd availability.

In the histogram and tables that follow (see also Table 3.6) we see the breakdown, for each of the ten sectors, by these key four long phases, (using just the 'Merged' combination of Transects and Samples). The data for each individual sector are also available in Appendices 2 and 3 and, in a simplified form, later in this chapter (pp. 65–139; Table 3.6, p.83). For ease of reading, the five sequential phases are shown for each Sector in chronological order from left to right. Some general comments are in order. For *Prehistory*, Sector 4 scores far above the rest. This is almost entirely because it includes the Thespiai Magoula and its surroundings, by far the largest prehistoric focus in the entire site. This is also the result of an intensive collection of finds on the Magoula for special study of its Neolithic sherds and the exceptionally rich exposure of Neolithic cultural deposits on the surface. The other sectors show a lower but mutually comparable level of prehistoric finds. The 'Magoula effect' excepted, one is struck by the almost ubiquitous incidence of prehistoric finds over the site and by their fairly even levels of representation, even though these remain well below those of all the subsequent historical eras.

If we repeat the earlier comparison with the other non-urban phases in the life of Thespiai, the *Medieval to post-Medieval*, Sectors 8, 9 and 10 stand out as the main contiguous block of transects containing the bulk of the sherds of this era. Later, strong grounds will be found for arguing that this Medieval dominance in the eastern sectors reflects the presence in this area of a pre-Modern village, with two separate foci.



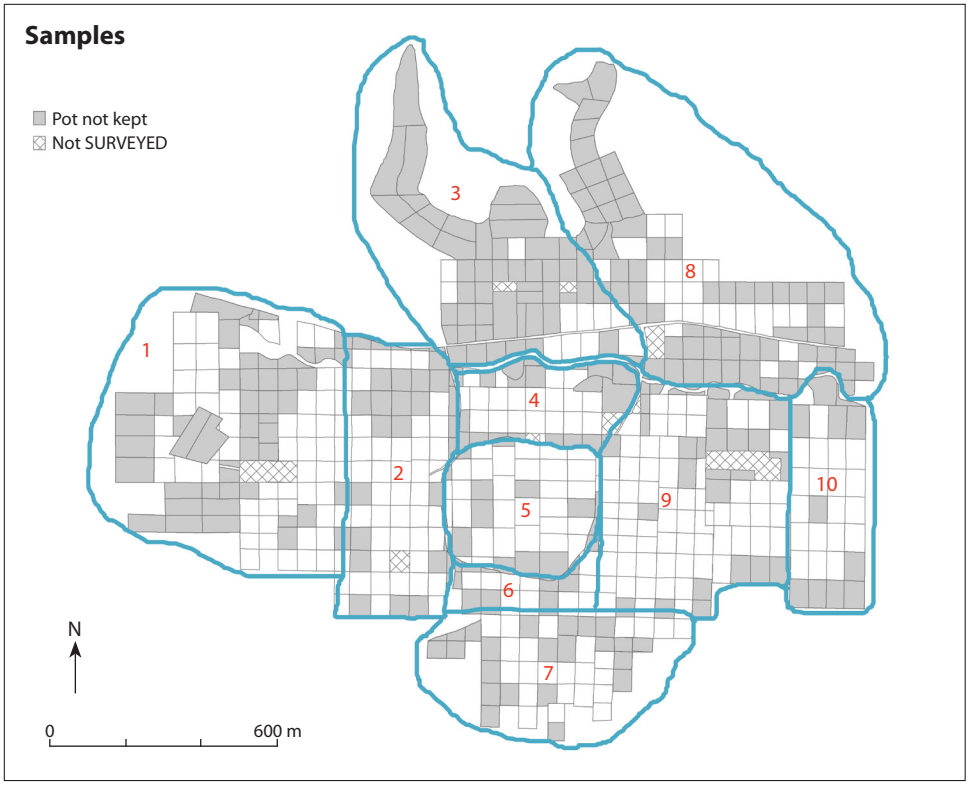


Figure 3.29. *The numbering of the Sectors, with the Transects (above) and the Samples within them (below).*

The vast bulk of the finds however derives from the three long phases of urban occupation at Thespiai, the broadly 'Greek' (Protogeometric to Hellenistic), the broadly 'Roman' (transitional Late Hellenistic/Early Roman to Middle Roman) and the Late Roman (with Roman-to-Late Roman). Already, the sector analysis reveals divergences between these three main phases in the spread of finds. For the 'Greek' era, Sectors 1 and 2, the far west, easily lead all others. By contrast, there are surprisingly low counts for Sector 5, the *Kastro*, considering that this yielded the highest density concentrations for the whole site. In an overview of the whole city site, then, the histograms for the 'generic Greek' era give the image of a bowl (Fig. 3.30), with the highest values at the edges on all sides (Sectors 1 and 2, to which we can add 10 where, if the Medieval village is set aside, the Greek finds are the highest of the ancient periods, then in lesser values 7, 8 and 9, followed by the group 3 and 6) and the lowest in the centre – that is to say the *Kastro* (Sector 5) and Sector 4 immediately north of it. A reading of the spatial pattern based purely on these statistics would place the core of 'Greek' era activity well out to the west, followed by the outer eastern and finally by the outer northern and southern zone. It is the central block, formed by the *Kastro* with its northern and southern neighbours, that is Sectors 4 and 5, that emerges as a 'sink' of reduced Greek activity debris.

But comparison with the earlier and later Roman figures on the histogram brings out a complementary and illuminating pattern. What we find is, first, a repeated predominance of later over earlier Roman. (Later, in our period-by-period discussion, separate distribution maps will be used for each of these periods, and the assumptions tested accordingly).

In any event, the key concentration this time, in both phases of 'Roman', is in the *Kastro*, Sector 5, followed at some remove by Sector 9 immediately to its east, and then by Sector 4 immediately to the north. This group of 'generic Roman' is clearly the inverse of the 'generic Greek', with a core in the *Kastro*, at the centre of the grid, then the next highest levels in its immediate surroundings. As a result, in striking contrast to the distribution for the 'generic Greek' era, the 'generic Roman' seems to form a convex rather than a concave shape, with declining values from the *Kastro* outwards in all directions.

In terms of a comparison between the earlier (which includes Late Hellenistic) and the later eras of Roman times, the 'merged' histogram Fig. 3.30 shows that in the three key Sectors 5, 9 and 4, the Late Roman is notably dominant over the Early, whereas there is more balance in the other Sectors. This seems to argue for a progressive concentration of activity towards the centre of the town over time.

An issue that has already arisen is that of suppression through overlay by material from later periods. This might arise again in respect of the final era, the Medieval to post-Medieval: are there signs that the activity in this period affected earlier phases in the collection statistics? As noted, there are definite foci of Medieval finds in the far east of the site, beginning with the peak in Sector 9, followed by lesser peaks in Sectors 8 and 10. In the case of 9, Roman finds are high, but we shall see that this large Sector, when the finds are mapped by grid units, can be readily divided into a western, inner urban focus of ancient activity and an outer area where the post-Roman material is largely concentrated. For Sector 8 across the Kanavaris, Greek finds slightly outclass those of the post-Roman phases, so that the latter activity is at a lower level of impact on the landscape here. In Sector 10, the far east, it is possible that the dominance of post-Medieval has suppressed earlier, mainly Greek material, but the finds are comparable to those for the post-Medieval in 8. The largest focus of Medieval to Post-Medieval will then be in Sector 9, with lesser adjuncts in 8 and 10.

More convincing are the effects, already noted, of the 'Roman' occupation on the underlying 'Greek', leading to the general inversion of values observed earlier. The centre of the grid seems to combine a sharp drop to lower 'Greek' values with a peak of 'Roman' values, with the reverse occurring as we move to the outer sectors of the site. The 'Roman' core also forms the densest block in terms of overall sherd counts.

From this preliminary discussion of the sectors of the city site, some tentative conclusions can be drawn. We have already made advance reference to the total counted densities of pottery in the field, to be presented below, and to the insights to be derived later from the period-by-period map analyses. In Prehistory, activity is spread across the whole of the gridded area, but at a level of density that is low, at least as testified by the dated collection, with the sole exception of the sector enclosing the prehistoric Magoula, which stands out as a clear focus. In the 'Greek' era, although the absolute number of dated pieces is not far below that of the following 'Roman', finds are more concentrated away from the central sectors of the grid, especially towards the west (Sectors 1 and 2). The reverse image offered by the 'Roman', dominant in the site core (Sector 5) and the inner east (Sector 9) and inner north (Sector 4), but subordinate to 'Greek' in the rest of the site, forms a striking pattern. One exception to be highlighted is that of the Roman matching the Greek in Sector 3 across the Kanavaris, a complex area with changing land use over time, as we shall see.

The roughly 800 years of the total 'Roman' era here mapped can be expected to have had a powerful

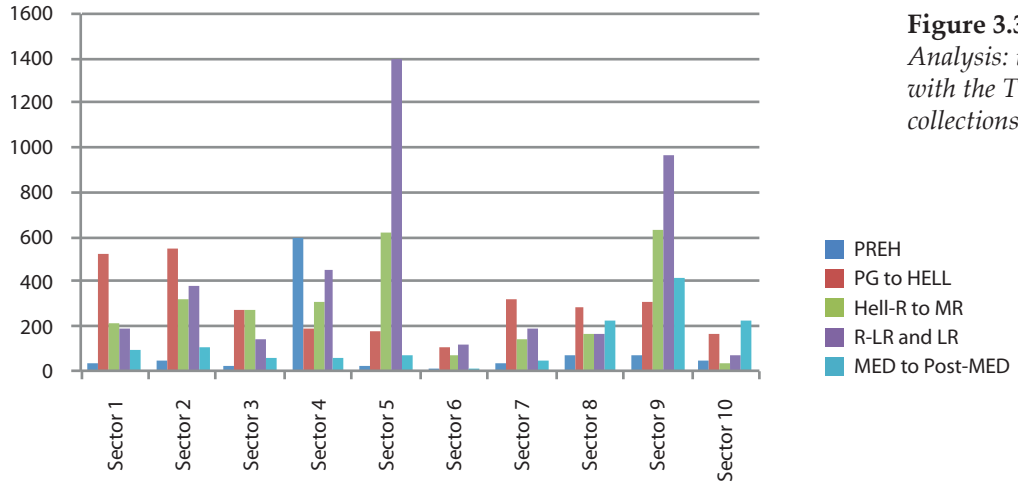


Figure 3.30. *The Sector Analysis: the sherd data-base with the Transect and Samples collections merged.*

suppressing effect on any area where permanent 'Roman' public and domestic zones overlie those of the their underlying 'Greek' public counterparts. But it is a reasonable hypothesis that the 'Roman' town was essentially concentrated in sectors 4, 5 and 9, that is the *Kastro* and its immediately adjacent zones to the north and to the east. In every other part of the site, apart from an equal representation of the Early and Late Roman periods in Sector 3, the 'Greek' finds come out as being very much higher than those from the Early Roman occupation, as well as distinctly higher than the Late Roman.

Since this generic 'Roman' core zone is also the sector of greatest overall surface pottery density, the whole of this smaller zone can plausibly be seen as urban in character. The much larger area where 'Greek' finds dominate, however, with the overall densities generally decreasing in proportion to distance from the *Kastro*, may include extramural activity zones, where ceramics are being deposited in connection with the expected ring of town cemeteries, with possible industrial areas, or with suburban sanctuaries and perhaps even semi-rural extramural settlement. That some 'Roman' finds usually accompany the 'Greek' in these more peripheral sectors, if at lower levels, might indicate a continuity of such activities on a much diminished scale. These are reasonable inferences, both from the absolute decline in numbers, and from the inferred over-representation of 'Roman' through the factor of overlying deposits.

Most importantly, the reduced spatial extent of dense 'Roman' finds appears to indicate a general and drastic reorganization of human activity across the gridded area between these two successive eras, with a distinct and coherent spatial logic. Judging purely on the basis of the find-statistics, one might suggest that the 'Greek' city lay in the western part of the grid, with significant secondary foci in its remaining outer sectors. But such a ring-form, with lower levels in the grid core and its immediate adjacent sectors to north, south and, notably, east, would embody an urban layout so curious as to demand an alternative hypothesis. The 'Roman' distribution is, by contrast, more coherent, with a peak in the *Kastro* and the adjacent sectors just listed and lesser activity further out, on all sides. Since the 'Roman'- dominated sectors are also those with the highest surface density overall, it seems possible and indeed likely that this centre-east zone had also been part of the 'Greek' city, but that the later superimposition of a smaller but exceptionally dense occupation here produced such a massive débris of pottery as to cause a major under-representation of 'Greek' finds. If supporting data from other sources were to reinforce this hypothesis then, instead of two successive towns of similar size, with their centre of gravity shifting eastwards between the two eras, leaving a problematic 'empty' zone surrounded by 'Greek' finds in the centre-east, we could postulate a much larger 'Greek' town whose 'Roman' successor contracted to occupy only certain sectors of its predecessor. As we shall see, this second explanation is almost certainly correct, thus underlining the crucial importance of the effects of successive occupations on surface finds.

The post-Roman finds, finally, seem also to offer a clear and distinctive spatial signal of their own. One part forms a strong block in the far east of the site, on both sides of the river Kanavaris, in Sectors 8, 9 and 10. This we shall be able to identify later as the village(s) of Erimokastro/Lefka, extensive in Byzantine-Frankish and again in later Ottoman times. Elsewhere, this era forms a low level spread in all the other Sectors of the survey grid. These finds are argued to be primarily the product of Medieval and post-Medieval off-site rubbish disposal, associated initially with the villages in

the plain and then later with the nearby modern village of Thespies on the hill-top above, and with the major junction of the east–west and north–south-running road network here. Once more, the relatively high level of post-Roman finds has surely benefited from the fact that they represent the last phases of occupation and of other concentrated off-site activities on the city site, as well as from the factors of high recognizability and lower attrition of post-Roman ceramics mentioned earlier. The absolute numbers of these post-Roman finds, in relation to the size of the contemporary village populations depositing them, must also represent a considerably elevated ratio, by comparison with that of the surface finds to the far more populous Greco-Roman communities of the ancient city.

The question of sample size in urban survey

Equally fundamental issues arise when we turn to the question of the optimal size for an urban survey ceramic collection, a question puzzlingly not so far addressed in field survey. A theoretical solution could be stated in simple (but misleading) terms: one should merely collect a sufficiently large number of pottery fragments, to cover the likely range of periods and types of occupation in each collection unit. But it was immediately clear, at the time of embarking on the city survey in 1985, that there was no practical way of putting this policy into practice. For at that time, no one yet understood what were the parameters of an ancient city surface assemblage, such as would allow of an estimate of the size and properties of the sample needed to represent those parameters. The problem indeed has hitherto remained unresolved, since for Greece there have not been published experiments in urban survey, comparing the data produced by varying collection methods. One has only to list some of the relevant variables, in order to see why this thorny topic has not been tackled:

1. How many periods are there to sample? *For the city as a whole, we might have a reasonable guess at the answer from other evidence; but we can hardly know this in advance for each sector of a city.*
2. If we are to recover fair samples of whole assemblages, then how many pot forms and functions need to be represented, for each period and for the totality of periods? *No one to our knowledge has collated such data, although it has now become possible to do so.*
3. If we are to measure relative deposition per phase of occupation, to see which periods generated greater or lesser activity within the city under study, how large a sample would be needed in order to achieve reliable comparisons? *The answer is unknown, but we can at least show that small samples are very unreliable for this purpose.*
4. Cumulative occupation, rebuilding, weathering and plough damage, all affect the survival of sherds; but some periods either have better-made pottery, or use it in greater quantities per head of population. Earlier phases will naturally suffer attrition through longer exposure to such damage. *We do not yet know how this can be calculated for a long sequence of occupation, but we have argued elsewhere for a general tendency towards a reduction in numbers, and/or in diagnostic potential, over time* (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999).

In 1985–86, well aware of our ignorance on these questions, we simply resolved to make a very detailed, large and varied surface collection, including two levels of collection unit, so as to allow us to compare data at contrasting scales of observation. Fortunately, even at this enhanced level of recording, we were able to complete the surface collection, with small teams, in two short seasons; even more fortunately, the material brought back proved almost entirely worth cataloguing and, in the vast majority of cases, datable to a single phase, or at least to one of two adjacent phases, with around 19 per cent remaining undatable (see p. 41). The questions just raised must be addressed by exhaustive examination of the data that we collected, allowing for all possible sources of bias, and if possible attempting to compensate for such imbalances. Some (unintended) re-sampling can also be used to gauge what effect sample size has on the data-base; while comparison between Transects and Samples provides two further sets of data, collected within different parameters, for much of the city's surface. Finally, the surface survey can be correlated with the independent evidence of historical sources for the settlement, the fairly abundant traces of surface architecture, and the occasional 'windows' offered by official and unofficial excavations.

Making a virtue out of error: lessons from duplicated collections

Convincing proof of the significance of the filtering effect exercised by a collecting team arises from a fortunate accident. In the course of the two seasons in which the city of Thespiai was surveyed, collections were, by mistake, taken from five Transect units twice over (Fig. 3.31). In preparing the city for publication, it was necessary to decide which year was preferable for display on the period maps, since to combine the two collections would be potentially to create an anomalous

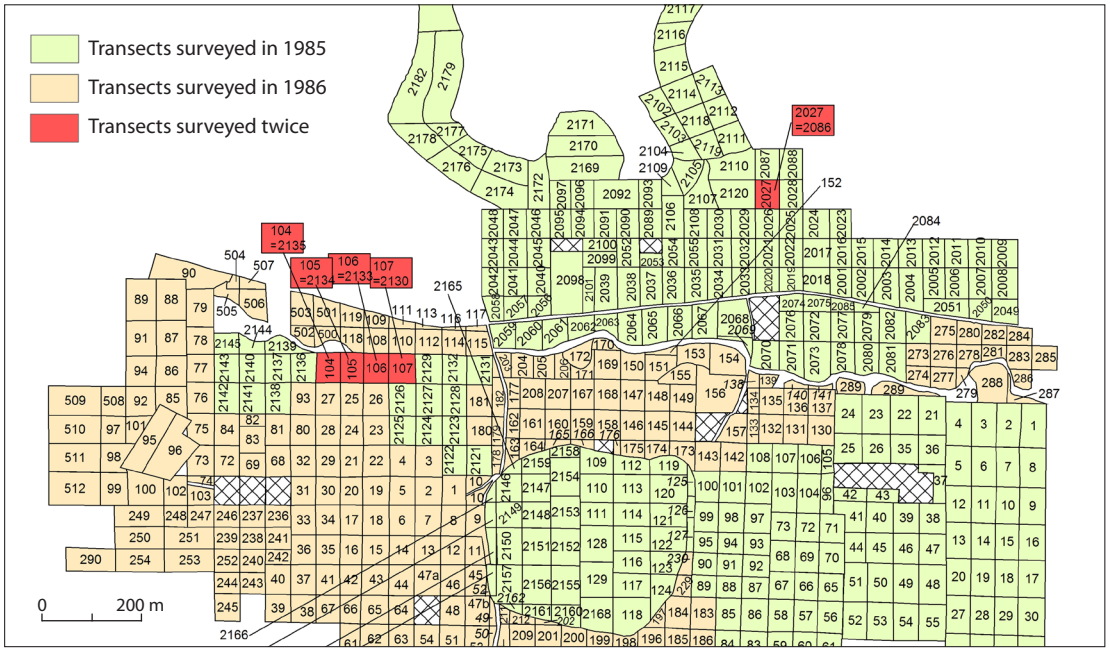


Figure 3.31. *Location of the five units inadvertently surveyed twice.*

'high' of values for these five units. In the first year, the team were unusually miserly in collecting and a total of 42 sherds was recorded from four Transects (2135, 2134, 2133, 2130), whereas Transect 2027 with ten sherds was accidentally re-collected the same year, with almost three times as many sherds gathered (as Transect 2086, with 29 pieces); in the second field season, greater enthusiasm produced 125 sherds from the same four initial Transects (not including the finds from Samples, also laid out in three of the five cases in 1986). Strikingly, the re-collection in both years multiplied the Transects assemblage by a factor of three. When the period ranges of the two collections were compared (Table 3.5), the result was quite startling:

Table 3.5. *Chronological dispersal of the duplicated collections from 1985 (bold) and 1986 (plain), with total sample size indicated. Each group represents the same unit of the city. (Definite and possible finds listed; undiagnostic omitted.)*

Transect/ Sample	PREH	NEO	FN	FN–EH/EH	MH	LH/LH–EIAge	EIAge–a	a	a–c	a–h	c–h	c	h	h–r	r	r–lr	mr–lr	lr	post-roman	byz	t	e mod	mod
TR 104 (n=40)		3	1							3	3		4	2	1	4	1	5		1		1	
SA 104 (n=27)			2			1			1	4	1		1	1		4	1	6					2
TR 2135 (n=5)															**1**	**2**	**1**						
TR 105 (n=28)			1						1	5	4					1							3
SA 105 (n=31)				1					1	7	3		1			3		4	1		1		2
TR 2134 (n=8)										**1**	**2**		**3**	**1**									
TR 106 (n=28)										1	5			1				1					4
SA 106 (n=27)			1				1	1	3	1	3	1				2		1				1	3
TR 2133 (n=10)										**1**	**5**		**1**	**1**									
TR 107 (n=29)		2								2	5		1	1		1							2
TR 2130 (n=9)								**1**			**2**			**2**									
TR 2086 (n=29)	**1**		**1**	**12**	**3**		**1**		**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**						**2**					
TR 2027 (n=10)												**1**								**1**		**2**	

the difference in sample size expanded, beyond all expectation, the restricted range of phases originally recognized. (Note that we created a double numbering for the twice–sampled units).

Not surprisingly, the most commonly represented periods, the Greek and the Roman, appear in both series: in fact, in all but Transect 2027 the smaller sample has *only* Greco-Roman material. The latter adds three post-Roman pieces. It is in the prehistoric and the post-Roman eras that an otherwise deeply obscured occupation history comes to light.

The first thing to note is that, on the second occasion, three of the five duplicated Transect units now yielded both prehistoric and post-Roman finds. The other two added either the prehistoric or the post-Roman eras to the previous sample collection. We recorded 23 phase-attributions in all, so it follows that the smaller collection series, with an average of just over 8 dated sherds per Transect, could hardly reflect all the potential phases. On the other hand, this failure extends to 13 of the 23 phases, which suggests that something else is required to explain what happened. The enlarged Transect collections, on average about three times the size of the original, tended to detect the prehistoric and the Medieval; although in one case (Tr. 106), a combination of the enlarged Transect and the Sample collections, to produce an overall total almost four times greater, was required before both the prehistoric and the Medieval finds were revealed.

We earlier noted that prehistoric activity, outside the Magoula locality, is very thin and very dispersed. By comparison with the immense quantities of Greco-Roman ceramics, of much harder fabric and more readily diagnostic, the detection of these 'needles in haystacks' (Bintliff and Howard 1999) would require larger samples than we often took. The instruction to field teams to seek variety will have helped to enhance the recovery of these periods, whose absolute representation on the city surface seems to have been statistically very small, except in the vicinity of the Magoula. The Medieval and post-Medieval sherds, by contrast, are well-made and commonly quite recognizable, so that the same bias will not be present in those Transects that lie directly over, or close to, the two clearly identified Medieval village foci in the far east of the grid. Elsewhere, across much of the city grid, an apparently thin, 'off-site' type of activity in post-Roman times may rather have suffered, at least in the small collections, from a purely quantitative suppression, by the vastly more numerous Greco-Roman sherds. We have already observed that the proportion of post-Roman finds, at 7.2 per cent, is dwarfed by that of Classical Antiquity (63 per cent of the total finds).

The relatively large data-base that we have gathered for the city of Thespiai allows us to quantify the relationship between the sample size and the recognition of those periods which are rare across the city as a whole. It is of great interest to see whether any broader patterns emerge, to refine these observations, on the correlation between sample size and the appearance of such rarer period finds. We can, of course, also be sure that there were actual contrasts in past behaviour across different parts of the city, so we should not expect to find such phases everywhere, or in the same frequencies. The aim of the exercise is merely to test the proposition that, below a certain definable sample size, there is a systematic tendency for rare periods to be absent from the collections. Since urban survey methods have not proceeded to the stage of general experimental guidelines on the collection of representative samples, our conclusions may be of help for our own and others' surveys of urban sites.

The following chart (Fig. 3.32) shows the frequency of prehistoric occurrences plotted against the size of the grid collection. This chart illustrates the rarity of prehistoric finds, in absolute numbers and even in occurrence, until the unit collection totals reach significant levels, as they do to the left side of the graph. Problems clearly arise where the unit collections are on the low side.

The next chart, Fig. 3.33, focuses only on those smaller unit collections where the total numbers of sherds collected ranged from 30 (on the left of the chart) to a mere 1 (on the right). At this scale, it is also possible to compare directly the relative size of both components. It will be seen that the majority of the unit collections, at this lower level, lacked prehistoric finds altogether. (The database for all these charts can be found in Appendices 2 and 3 on the attached CD).

Naturally we cannot set out from an assumption that every unit would have contained prehistoric material. Once the collections have been made, we can only test statistically the proposition that the size of total collection probably forms a key determinant for the incidence of prehistoric pottery. The overall impression given by these charts is that, in unit collections from 30 to 50 sherds upwards, the prehistoric material is probably represented as present in a reasonable proportion; but that, below that level, such sherds are rare and consistently at low levels. This is in close agreement with the preceding case-study of the duplicated collections, suggesting that unit collections with less than 30 dated sherds could well be too small for the detection of prehistoric finds.

An additional element needs to be added for the undatable pieces. These account on average for some 20 per cent of the city collections, thus raising further

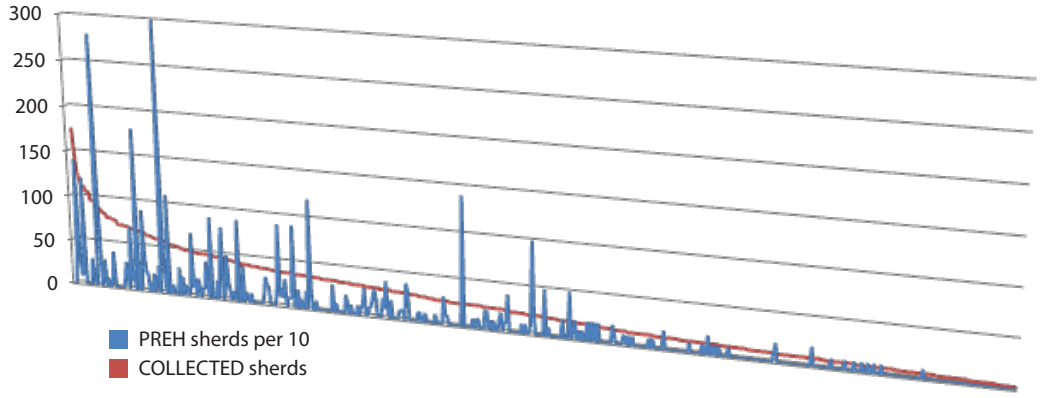


Figure 3.32. *Chart showing the overall correlation between the size of collections from each city unit (in red, collected sherds) and the associated numbers of prehistoric sherds (blue lines). (Graph based on the catalogue of collected sherds). The left-hand scale records the numbers of all sherds, whilst the blue prehistoric finds use the same scale, but at one-tenth of the values: thus 100 total sherds in red would correlate with 10 prehistoric sherds in blue.*

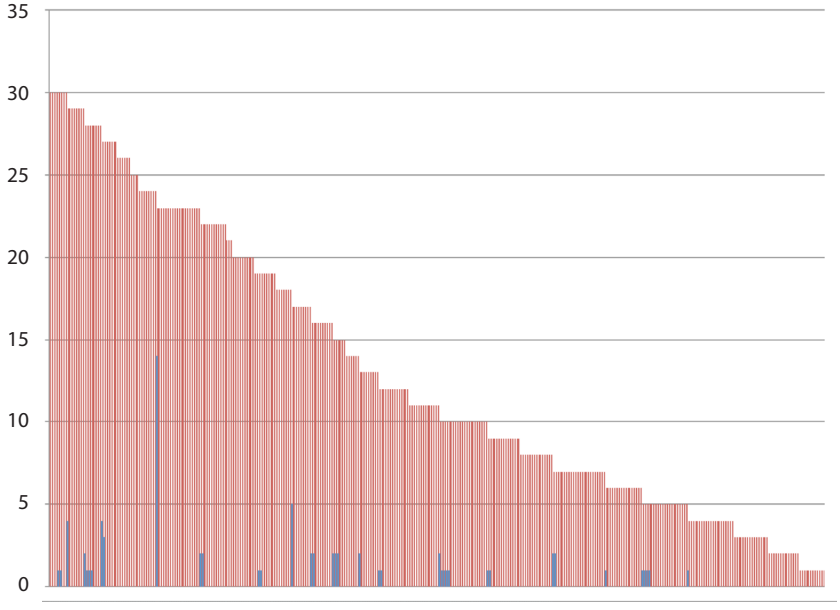


Figure 3.33. *Histogram drawn on the same basis as the preceding chart, plotting the correlation between the occurrence and absolute number of prehistoric sherds (in blue) against the total of all sherds (in red), with total collection sizes ranging along an axis from right (1 sherd total) to left (30 sherds), each vertical column in red representing one unit of collection. This chart gives the individual detail of finds for each unit.*

the notional minimum for effective collection. It must be borne in mind, however, that this is a statistic derived from a specific ancient city, with a particular combination of density and periods, and in part from our retrospective analysis of just two small areas of that city. Where a sampling strategy is being planned for other projects, the above can form no more than a rough initial guideline, which will require adaptation to the different properties of their own data.

Investigating the structure of the Greco-Roman city

We have already used the summary chronological statistics for the ten separate Sectors into which the urban survey grid was divided, in order to make a first evaluation of the 'surface stratigraphic' effects across the site. Although we were able to sketch broad patterns of differential land-occupation by chronological phases, in terms of significant spatial variation over time, we could offer only hypotheses as to the nature of the activities leading to ceramic deposition in each sector. It is now necessary to seek a more thorough and accurate interpretation of the use of space across the total survey grid and, in particular, to try to identify the boundaries of the built-up areas that constituted first the Greek, later the Roman town.

The next step in our analysis begins with the *Visibility-corrected Density Maps* (Figs. 3.34 and 3.35):

We can now compare the density map for the Transects (Fig. 3.34) with that for the smaller Sample units nested within them (Fig. 3.35), although certain parts of the city either lacked Samples or, if they had them, lacked information on density (usually as a result of land use conditions). From the fuller, in fact almost complete, Transect map the heart of occupation emerges, at least cumulatively over the long time span of the site's use, as lying in and near the Late Roman *Kastro* at the centre of the image. Beyond this, a clear zone of very high density values runs from the NW to the SE on either side of the *Kastro*, and directly north as far as the river Kanavaris. At a slightly lower level of density, there is an extension across and north of the river, largely in the central part of the trans-Kanavaris zone. Beyond this obvious set of three denser zones, the other units demonstrate a falling-off that roughly correlates with distance from the *Kastro* – predictable enough, if we provisionally consider that the latter marks the location of the civic centre in both the Greek and the Roman eras. The gradient is not, however, perfectly symmetrical. Thus, towards the eastern edge the fall-off is more gradual than that towards the western and southern edges, while to the north there are patches of anomalously high values in the trans-Kanavaris units. The field teams who carried out the survey in 1985–1986 broke off when they felt they had reached a point at or beyond the edge of the city, so that the two lowest levels of density, marked by shades of light green, reflect their perception that these areas are reaching an 'off-site' level by reference to the city. Units with these densities do indeed eventually mark all sides of the Transect map. A tiny patch of high density at the far western extremity actually reflects the proximity of a rural villa site, THS 4, published in the *Testing the Hinterland* volume: pp. 66–8, 260–6.

The Sample Density Map (Fig. 3.35) agrees well enough with the larger data-base provided by the Transects, at the overall level of trends in values, but naturally provides less information on the smaller scale. It would suggest that, for gross trends over large surface sites where average visibility is high (50 per cent or more), a grid of small discrete units (here, typically 300 sq. m) provides as good a picture of the density variations as a continuous grid of larger units (here typically 3000 sq. m). This contrasts with our experience in the rural territory of Thespiai (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 23), where, when a grid was put down on a small site and its surface freshly sampled, a density was achieved on average 2.5 times higher than that yielded by normal field-walking across the same site. Clearly the urban survey, where each walker had to cover a 50 by 2 m strip in the Transects, or a 7.5 by 10 m strip in the Samples, generated comparable levels of attention to the land surface, while in rural field-walking, speed and attention were respectively higher and lower when no site was thought to be in the vicinity, but shifted to the same levels as urban survey once site sampling was initiated.

On the other hand, as soon as one focuses on smaller areas of the city, differences of detail emerge as between Transects and Samples. For example, a comparison of the coloured density codes for the far southern or far eastern grid units, or for the parallel rows of grid units in the south-centre of the trans-Kanavaris blocks, reveals considerable differences between values for Transects and their nested Samples. Here it would be a reasonable response to have more confidence in the Transects, as representing variability over the city as a whole and even for each sector. This would be a reflection of the narrower interval between Transect recordings. The advantage of the Samples, usually located in one corner of a Transect, recording densities and collecting sample sherds from a total coverage of a 10 per cent sample, was the total cover for the density count and find collection; the typical 30 by 10 m unit being divided equally between four walkers, each assigned 10 by 7.5 m. These Samples, however, typically lay 40 m apart from each other. The typical Transect procedure, on the other hand, involved four walkers following parallel swathes, 15 m apart, over the long axis of each unit (usually 50 m), counting and collecting from their 2-m-wide swathe of vision. Logically, the resultant coverage of 400 sq. m, sampling the whole Transect at fairly close intervals, should better represent the range of variation over the unit and, by extrapolation, over the city surface as a whole, by comparison with the 300 sq. m of the Sample sub-unit set within a Transect, documenting total activity in a focused 10 per cent of that unit.

It is important to bear in mind that, with a survey grid approaching 180 ha in area, our aim is to analyse the development history of the city as a whole, and of its major quarters. From the evidence of excavated urban sites in the Greek world, we know that Greek cities comprised a majority of domestic zones, together with a sizeable minority of public spaces and communal buildings (Bintliff 1997). A unit of 3000 sq. m (that is, our typical grid Transect) would probably, on the evidence of other studies, contain several domestic houses. A Greek house was typically within the range of 200 to 300 sq. m in area, with all but the most regularly planned cities containing smaller and larger examples (Jameson 1990; Cahill 2002). Up to ten houses might the lie within a single Transect unit, while one or parts of only two examples from the same cluster could

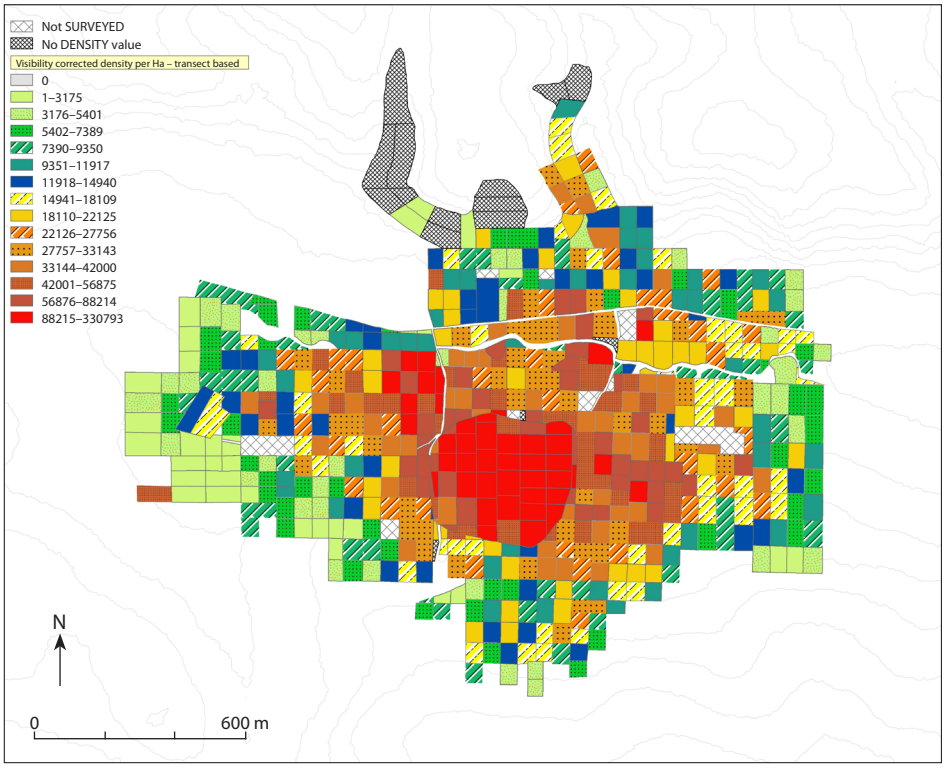


Figure 3.34. *City density map, visibility-corrected, with Transects colour-coded according to sherd numbers per hectare.*

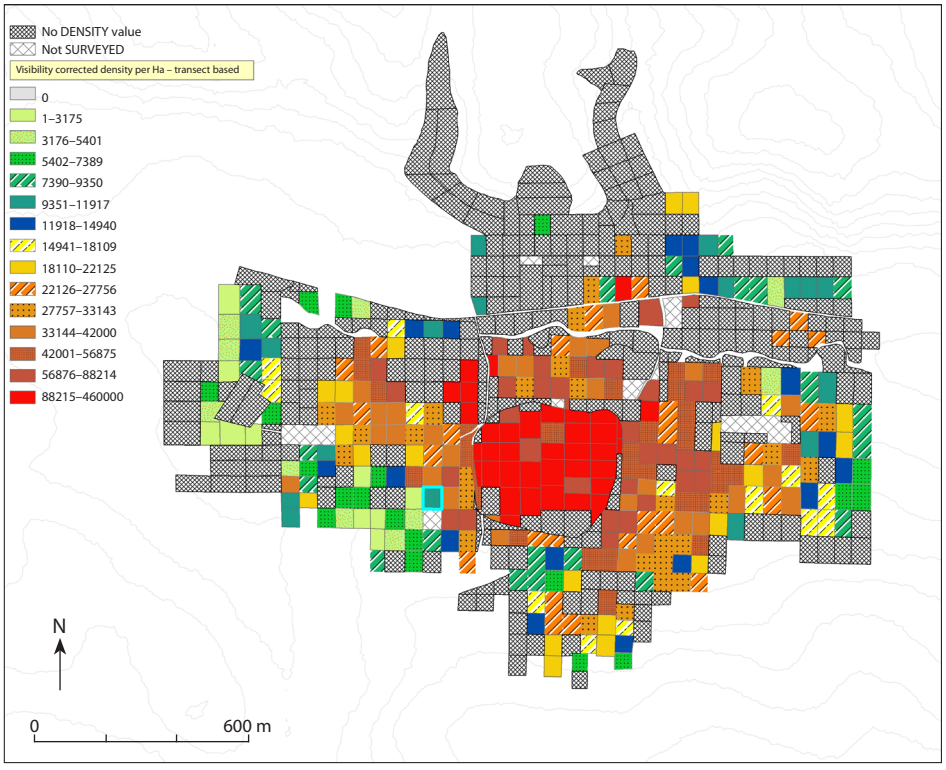


Figure 3.35. *Sample Density map, visibility-corrected and colour-coded according to sherd numbers per hectare.*

be accessible to an embedded Sample. By Hellenistic and Roman times, excavations show a greater polarization with a rise in urban mansions, which could sometimes occupy a whole city *insula* formerly filled with numerous family homes (Bintliff 2010c). Here, a Sample would still be more likely to overlie a modest house, but might also land on a small part of a wealthier urban *domus*. As for public zones, a sanctuary complex, or part of an *agora* or *forum* with a *stoa*, would probably account for at least a whole Transect. In reality, given the rigid imposition of our grid and its use, wherever possible, of a formal north–south orientation, it is likely that Transects, in many parts of the city, are sampling a mixture of land-uses: the concentration of public spaces and communal buildings at set foci, such as the *agora*, is known to have been supplemented by suburban sanctuaries and open spaces. Some specific urban facilities, such as gymnasia, *stadia*, theatres and baths, are indeed more likely to be suburban than central.

We expect then that the archaeological record for a large Greco-Roman city has 'fractal qualities', by which we mean that parallel variation is likely at every spatial level. Not only will the entire urban site, over its long existence (Early Neolithic to early nineteenth century AD), have witnessed discontinuous land use in separate sectors, as the town's population waxed and waned; but within each quarter, variation in use of particular private and public plots must also be expected. Finally, each home, communal monument or public space will have witnessed local variation in activity, potentially detectable through differential construction and artefactual disposal patterns. To all this planned variation can be added the taphonomic variability, created by the burial or revelation of earlier phases by later ones, by different post-depositional agricultural usage, or by the effects of erosion and deposition generated by natural geomorphological processes.

It is in any case very common to find that the Transect density count – an amalgamation usually of 4 (rarely of 1, 2 or 3, less exceptionally of 5) walked transect strips, multiplied up to the total Transect area – is composed of quite a range of individual values (the figures are available in Appendices 2 and 3). This reflects the internal variability in each Transect unit. Thus, if the Sample can be said to resemble one of the strips within the Transect, the detailed variation *between* Transects and Samples corresponds closely to the internal variation in the several values averaged out *within* the Transect figure. At yet another spatial level, the Sample figure too is composed of 4, sometimes 5, individual counts, often showing a similar degree of variability. It is the more striking, therefore, not only that the map of 594 transects (excepting the 12 that lack density counts) still allows a relatively clear zoning by density, as presented above; but also that the less complete Sample record (316 units, all of which had density information), broadly conforms to the same trends.

Yet the review of the evidence so far appears to raise problematic contradictions. The customary four Transect densities show variation from each other, as do the four achieved for the Samples; and the two sets of figures, whether individually or when averaged out for the total Transect or Sample, are not closely comparable for any one grid unit where both are available for the same locality. Such a conclusion will seem less surprising, however, in the light of the comments we have just offered on the likely variability in the use of space and the history of each city plot.

By contrast, at the level of both the ten Sectors and of the gridded site as a whole, the overall trends and relative values are very compatible. Over the whole city, on both the Transect and the Sample scales, a gradient can be seen with similar density levels at comparable distances from the focal point of the *Kastro*, in all directions. Despite the complex history of land use on the city site, it is the changes on the largest scale of human occupation that seem to stand out clearest, whether the averaged Transect density or the averaged Sample density is used as a base.

The next stage of our investigation is to embark on the interpretation of these density levels, appearing as they do to observe spatial trends on a larger scale. We can take as a starting-point the discussion in our previous volume, where we recorded an impression (*Testing the Hinterland*: 196), gained from an earlier study of the rural-urban boundaries on the western side of the city, that ran as follows:

- The border zone of density, between the genuinely urban sector and the city 'halo', could be set in the region of 8000 to 10,000 sherds (visibility-corrected) per hectare;
- The city halo was set in the bracket of 6000 to 8000;
- The transition from city halo to rural off-site was set in the 5000s.

('Halo' denotes a concept developed in the course of the Boeotia Survey (cf. Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988) and subsequently adopted by several other intensive surveys in the Mediterranean, whereby a sector surrounding a surface site is distinguished from the core occupation zone by its lesser, but still relatively high density of pottery débris, deposited through factors such as weathering, or the traction of artefacts out from the site in the course of land use, rubbish disposal, burials, or garden/yard activity).

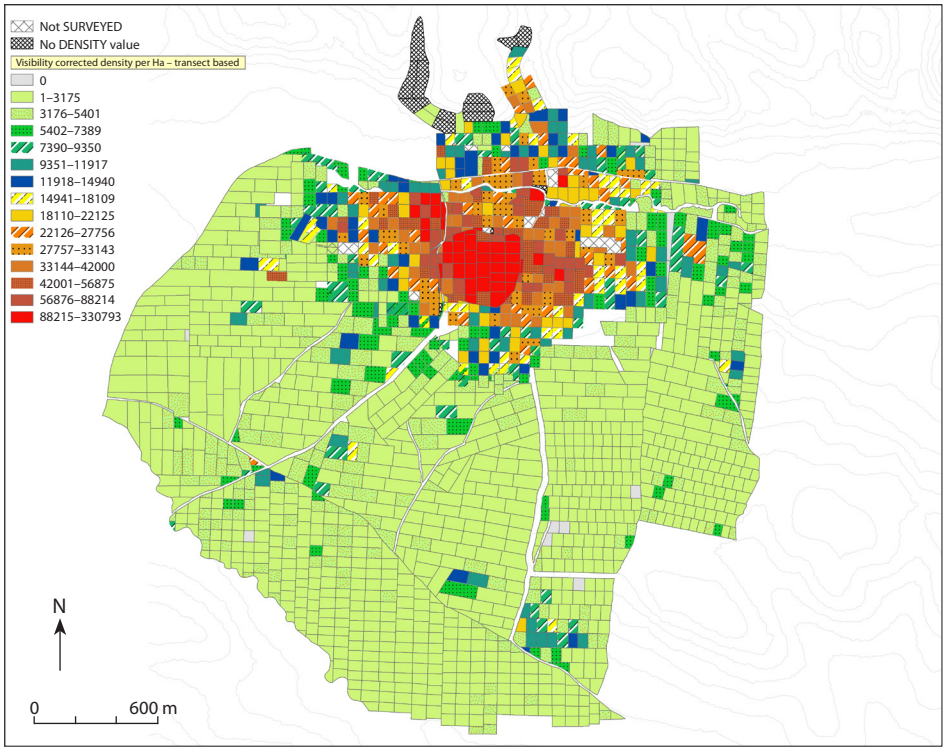


Figure 3.36. *This map (drawn by Phil Howard from his own calculations), amalgamates the densities recorded in the current volume's urban survey grid with those of the off-site material from the 'LSE/THS' rural sector, published in* Testing the Hinterland. *It will be seen that, both to the south-west and to the east, the continuous boundary around the 5400 mark spills well out from the city grid and into the rural zone. Most of the unusual density peaks outside the city proper are associated with rural sites.*

The suggestion that the beginning of the rural 'off-site', or the open countryside beyond the 'suburban halo', is marked by the range from the 5000s downwards, in fact fits very well the new density maps for the city itself, as it corresponds with the two lightest green shades of coding, found in the units at all edges of these maps (Figs. 3.34 and 3.35). In empirical terms, the threshold of 5400 reflected a zonation surrounding the city core, concentric to a peak of values in the Late Roman *Kastro*, with minor extensions to the south-west and the east (see Fig. 3.36). This zone, from 5400 per hectare upwards, we classify as the urban inner halo, with a transition to the built-up core still to be confirmed. This inner halo, in fact, as we can now see through combining the city grid densities with those from the rural survey at the same scale, extended in some areas beyond the city grid.

Yet in every other case in Boeotia where we have covered the entire range of density counts, from city core to wider rural landscape, we have found that the city, especially through the practice of urban manuring of rural estates by city farmers, reaches out intrusively into its inner agricultural hinterland or *chora*, as an outer halo; and this is clearly true of Thespiai (Fig. 3.36). From our previous study of the landscape lying immediately adjacent to the west, south and east of this city grid, we had recorded that the off-site densities progressively decreased from this level with their distance outwards from the city of Thespiai. This generated an average, for the first 2–3 km from the city, of a remarkable 2350 sherds per hectare (visibility-corrected). In effect this creates, beyond the inner halo of suburban activities, a different kind of 'urban impact zone' that continues, at gradually decreasing levels, throughout the rest of this particular rural survey zone. Technically speaking, therefore, a 'normal rural off-site level' is something not found in the overall picture of the first 2–3 km, at least from this Boeotian town. The working hypothesis is, then, of a densely occupied core zone or City, an intense city halo or suburban impact zone, and a zone of declining impact to a radius of anything up to several kilometres' distance – the last being almost entirely created by urban manuring.

The immediate difficulty is that, apart from the last, outermost zone of 5000 sherds per hectare and less, where the study of the adjacent rural landscape

in our previous volume has demonstrated both settlement and urban manuring generated by farmers commuting from the town, the other, higher figures come without any reliable guide to any reading off of functional categories. The designations of suburban halo, transitional outer city and inner city are merely hypotheses, lacking empirical justification. So the first analytical problem is how to equate our density zones with the expected distinction between a continuously built-up area of domestic and public buildings, and the outer suburbs. Within the latter must be included very extensive cemeteries. Those found so far in the vicinity of Thespiai (and published in *Testing the Hinterland*), are all small and must be seen as rural or semi-rural. The more extensive cemetery surrounding the Polyandrion or public war grave and lining an important ancient road leading eastwards from the city, is an exception, lying at the very eastern extremity of the LSE/THS rural survey zone, and will be discussed later in this chapter (pp. 87, 99). In addition to extramural cemeteries, we might expect, from our knowledge of other ancient Greek cities, to find industrial areas, suburban sanctuaries and perhaps public buildings such as *stadia* and gymnasia. To these last must be added another feature in the shape of the recently rediscovered theatre – extramural at least for some periods, depending on its chronological relationship with the extended city wall. There could well have been suburban dwellings too.

A second major problem relates to the fact, obvious already from our earlier discussion of the chronological make-up of the surface finds within each Sector, that the total density maps are a composite of several periods. Crucially, we cannot apply the overall trends on the density maps to any one single phase, even the most widespread – the broadly Greek – or the densest – the generic Roman. The Medieval to post-Medieval also has its clear impact, as noted earlier, on densities in the far eastern sectors of our grid. Two questions therefore require further thought: first, even if our zones of density are defined by significant density threshold boundaries, can we read functional zones into these? Secondly, given the cumulative quality of the densities, is it anyway a mistake to expect them to yield any clear, single zonation of infrastructure, whether based on function or on other criteria?

Re-reading the maps

Since the Sample density map agrees very well, in its broad trends, with the much fuller Transect density map, discussion can be focused on the latter (Fig. 3.34). The colour-coded divisions marked on this map were created by using a helpful facility in the Excel programme, which divides a distribution of values into equal-sized bands of entries – in this case, into groups with the same number of grid units. Using the new density map as a base, and in the attempt to attach functional zones to these density groups, we experiment (Fig. 3.37) with a city shown as defined by two borders, an outer one set at >5402 sherds (visibility-corrected) and a slightly smaller core zone set at >9351. The inner and higher threshold might be relevant to the search for a true urban core, for which a criterion lying within the 8000–10,000 range was earlier suggested. The lower threshold was intended to mark approximately the point setting off the inner urban halo, or 'suburbs', from the rural territory. There is, however, no great physical distance between these two boundaries, a fact which already makes one doubt whether the levels selected are very informative for the urban/suburban distinction for which we are searching. As just noted (p. 55 with Fig. 3.36), the boundary at the south-western and eastern ends of the urban grid shows no immediate end to the >5402 spread, because that density continues further into the adjacent countryside on these sides (compare Fig. 3.37).

Our textual sources, reinforced by inspection of the period maps for the city at each period, already make clear that the population of Thespiai remained substantial, continuously through from Archaic to Late Roman times.

Nearly all the grave-clusters so far identified from the surrounding rural survey zone on the east, south and west sides of the city grid are Classical in date, marking small family groups in a semi-rural context. The exceptional, and larger, Polyandrion cemetery also lies in a clearly rural context, lining a major road at some distance from the city wall to its east. It is already clear that we have yet to locate where the vast majority of the citizens of Thespiai were buried. On the basis of near-universal Greco-Roman practice, we can assume that the city edges are marked by extensive peripheral zones of graves, since for much of this long era intramural burial was virtually forbidden (with rare exceptions for 'heroes' and benefactors). It is therefore a helpful exercise to begin with some estimate, however speculative, of the number of graves we should expect to find: a major area of the immediate extramural suburbs of the city must in any case have been required for its long-term burial needs. Based on our previous estimates of the approximate size of the Classical city, and its inferred reduction in population to some 47 per cent during Late Hellenistic to Late Roman times (see below, slightly modified from the 40 per cent estimated in *Testing the Hinterland*: 144, 149, 153), some conjecture at least for the number of burials is possible.

The earlier figures given for the city population were based on a first estimate of the size of the occupied

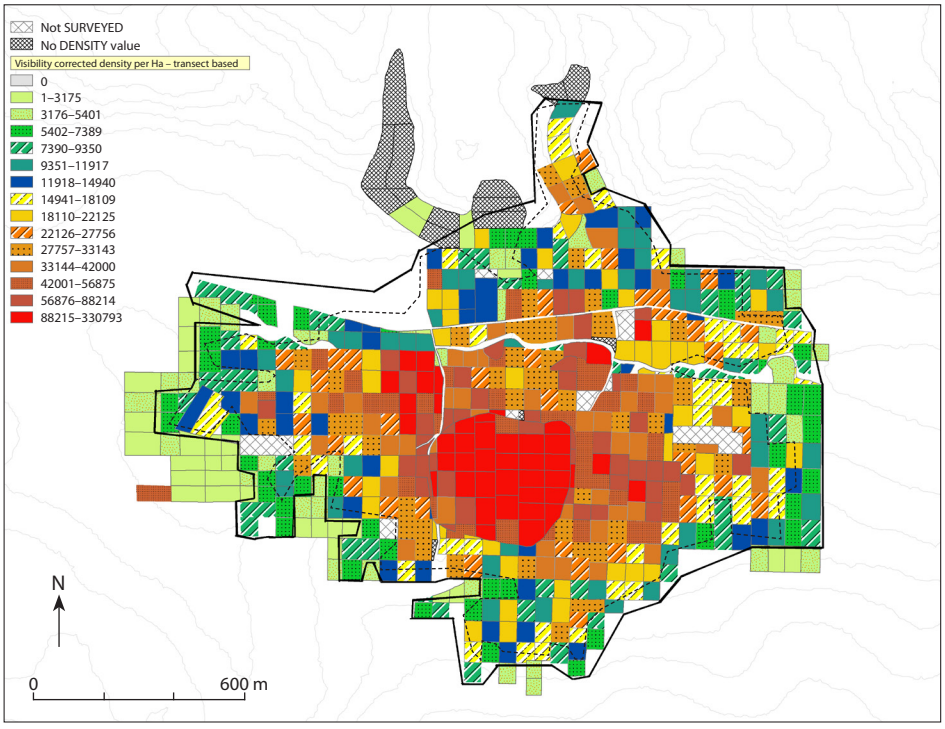


Figure 3.37. *Tentative boundaries drawn round the city, an outer one set at >5402 sherds per hectare (visibility-corrected) and a slightly smaller core zone set at >9351.*

area, the very calculation that we are here in the process of reviewing. We need to anticipate here our detailed analysis presented later in this chapter, since an approximate, provisional idea of the size of the town is now required, so as to infer an equally hypothetical size of population buried around its periphery, as a first step to interrogating the maps for functional sectors across the ancient townscape.

If the city was a major urban site from Late Archaic times to near the end of antiquity, that is from *c*. 600 BC to AD 400, we have further argued that before and after this, in Geometric and Early Archaic times and also perhaps in the final era of Roman to Late Roman, the city was much smaller. The textual and surface evidence for a Medieval and Ottoman village or villages within the area of the city grid will complicate matters; the archaeological evidence is clearly focused on two adjacent peripheral sectors, towards the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of our grid where, as our previous sector analysis has made clear, they contribute significantly to the total sherd density. For post-Medieval times, we have also noted what appears to be pre-Modern, off-site rubbish disposal affecting north-western parts of the grid, which must derive indirectly from the early Modern village of Thespies, lying outside the city grid to its north, and probably directly from roadside dumping.

A subsidiary question arises as to how far the inhabitants of the Medieval village in the eastern city might have been affected by knowledge of ancient cemeteries, in the positioning of their own domestic and funerary spaces. Would they have avoided such zones? There is actually evidence for a possible counter-tendency. On the basis of ceramic analysis by John Hayes and particularly by Nassos Vionis, we shall be arguing that some kind of community survived in the period between the final phase of the ancient city and the earliest Byzantine village occupation on its eastern borders. Furthermore, since churches in Late Antiquity are often founded at places with earlier Christian associations or links with local martyrs of the Roman era, these might have become foci for subsequent post-Roman settlement, in the Early Byzantine era of the seventh to early ninth centuries AD. In the case of the more southerly village focus, the possibility even exists of a link with an earlier pagan religious location, with the discovery in this vicinity of an inscription recording a reconstruction under the Emperor Domitian of a structure of public, possibly sacred, nature (Schachter and Marchand, 2012: 292–4, # 5). This was found close to the large church known as the *Makri Ekklesia*, now shown to have Early Christian beginnings, which itself lies at the heart of this more southerly Medieval occupied area. That the Byzantine village(s) must indeed lie

in or close to ancient cemetery zones is independently suggested by the ceramic evidence, increasing the force of this general hypothesis. In the case of the more northerly Byzantine focus, across the Kanavaris stream, the role of the *Makri Ekklesia* may be taken over by the restored Byzantine chapel of Agios Athanasios, overlying predecessors which go back at least to the tenth century and probably, again, to Early Christian times.

The following list of three time-ranges should account for the vast bulk of burials (the estimated city size derives from the conclusions of the current volume, and the formula for deriving possible population from the occupied area is based on the estimates adopted in Bintliff 1997).

Archaic to the end of Early Hellenistic (*c*. 600–150/100 BC):
450–500 years, with four generations to a century, the population for a city rising from 57 to 72 ha in extent, thus of an average size of *c*. 65 ha, is *c*. 8125 = 154,000 burials.

Late Hellenistic to the end of Middle Imperial Roman (*c*. 150/100 BC to AD 400):
500–550 years, four generations to a century, the population for a city of the size of 34 ha is *c*. 4250 people, cumulatively requiring some 89,250 burials.

Late Roman (*c*. AD 400–650):
250 years, four generations to a century, population for a city of the size of 30 ha is *c*. 3750 people, cumulatively requiring some 37,500 burials.

Thus a crude estimate of the grand total of burials from the city, covering only its main eras, would come out at a staggering figure of *280,750*. But to judge from excavations of cemeteries elsewhere it is clear that, in the long term, urban cemeteries do not simply expand horizontally. New graves are regularly cut into older, and built tombs in particular are often reused long after the time of their construction: compare the recent study of the Roman cemetery at Kenchreai (Rife *et al*., 2007). But if a large fraction of this total could have been compressed into a vertical stratigraphy, there are nonetheless limits to the capacity of a cemetery to pack successive generations into the same patch of ground. We must surely suspect that a majority of these burials were made in adjacent patches of earth, however closely packed horizontally. But account must also be taken of Ian Morris's widely accepted argument that, for long periods of antiquity, a significant proportion of the population may not have received formal, marked burial at all (Morris 1987: 93–109). Nonetheless, however conjectural and susceptible to further adjustment these figures are, it is reasonable to conclude that, in well over a millennium of flourishing urban occupation, Thespiai should have generated very extensive peripheral cemeteries. The preceding rough calculations might yield a more conservative conjecture of between 100,000 and 180,000 burials from these eras. The use of all the urban fringes must, over time, have been required for such vast numbers: this will have included a ribbon development of burials along roads leading out into the countryside, but here our knowledge of where these were located is limited and inferential.

To the north, examination of the hills above the ancient city has shown only few and sporadic signs of ancient burial in and around the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari. Further north again, rural survey in the direction of the villages of Mavrommati and Vagia (to be published in a future volume) again located typical small Classical rural cemeteries, scattered amongst Greek and Roman estate centres, in the same manner as those to the south, now published in *Testing the Hinterland*; we were able to show that several of the latter were located near likely ancient access roads from the city. To the west of the city, small Classical cemeteries were once more noted in our survey, within the agricultural landscape, running up fairly close to the edge of the city grid (and also to be treated in a future volume). The occasional rock-cut tomb has been observed in the hill-scarp that separates the broad plain of the Askris river valley from the plateau to its north. East of the ancient city, finally, rural survey revealed Greco-Roman estate centres, a few of which may have included associated family burials (see again *Testing the Hinterland*, especially pp. 49–50, 210); while subsequent reinvestigation of the area of the Polyandrion or war memorial cemetery (see this volume, pp. 56, 87, 97, 99), also lying in this eastern rural sector, has brought to light a more extensive area of associated Classical burials, lining a major road running roughly eastwards.

None of the burial evidence outside the city grid, therefore, begins to do justice to the very large extramural cemeteries that we must expect to find outside the ancient city walls or beyond the built-up area. On the other hand, despite our estimate (*Testing the Hinterland*: 145–6) that the residents of the city formed far and away the majority of those farming the inner landscape or *chora* outside the town, it is possible that some of these may have nevertheless chosen to bury their dead on their estates, as if they had been permanent rural inhabitants. Even though the small cemeteries located by intensive survey are only a sample of the original total, however, it remains impossible for these to have contributed significantly to the immense total of burials that we need to find. A clear implication of this whole discussion is that a very sizeable cemetery area must lie *within* the city grid that we are analysing, probably on

all sides of the inner core. The burials thus have to form a major element concealed within our density map.

We can now review the other significant implications of such a conclusion. In the provisional zoning of density (Fig. 3.34), we outlined a city core, an inner halo, and the outer halo (light green densities), which merges into the wider countryside outside the city survey grid. We noted the restricted depth of this 'outer halo' within the city grid, while in the other direction (Fig. 3.36), its values grade smoothly into the adjacent countryside of the LSE/THS and other rural survey areas, on all sides. It seems to follow that the very extensive areas of urban periphery, which we require for accommodating so huge a number of burials, can only lie *within* the inner halo boundary. To reinforce this suggestion: if we now have to look inside the inner halo boundary for the cemeteries, we shall have to compress the core zone of urban occupation into a smaller circuit of higher density, thereby expanding the width of the suburban periphery to a degree appropriate for encompassing wide sectors, as long-term extramural burial zones for the city.

Yet one further difficulty intrudes at this stage of our investigation. The overall, undifferentiated density map for the city is inevitably affected by the changing foci of activity, shown clearly in the Sector analysis maps, during the era of Greco-Roman urbanism. We may then seek further for a city edge, on the assumption – yet to be tested – that the domestic and public urban core should always stand out, by having a higher level of density than surrounding areas of suburban burial and other activities. But, crucially, if the occupied area shifted horizontally *within* the long period of Greco-Roman urbanism, no single city 'boundary' can stand as a durable feature. To work from undated density-values alone is inevitably to amalgamate periods whose foci of artefact deposition were all the time being displaced horizontally. Additionally, even if we seek to define city edges for shorter sub-periods within the overall urban time-span, there will surely be residuals, contradictions and other anomalies, caused primarily by quirks of local occupation history.

That these factors are of major importance is shown by the hypotheses already presented from the Sector analysis. There is considerable pottery deposition generated by the post-Roman villages in distinct (and fortunately peripheral) sub-areas of the city grid, but we have also suggested that the western sector of the city is largely abandoned for occupation from Late Hellenistic/Early Roman times onwards, with a consequence that the subsequent, longer period extending to Late Roman is concentrated in the central and inner eastern sectors. As an initial approach, we may see whether further analysis of the density map will allow us to define the main zones covered by the spread of the built-up area at its maximum: many of our suburban cemeteries should then lie outside these. Even then, we should have to acknowledge that, if the town shrank or was merely relocated laterally during the long Greco-Roman era, its associated cemeteries might also be relocated. Unless that relocation took place entirely outside the maximum built-up area, this further complicates our analysis. If the town had shrunk, for example, new cemeteries could be laid out in abandoned domestic or public zones of the former urban area, and this might be very hard to detect from surface survey alone. In the analysis that follows we shall attempt to take account of, and preserve a balance between, all these considerations.

When we return to inspect the density map with these factors in mind, the next clear break in the city density pattern, in the higher range, that can be presented as a potential new boundary for the city core, is that at the density division for 22,126 sherds per hectare (visibility-corrected) and over (Fig. 3.38). It seems wisest, given the earlier warnings about period overlays, to look first for such general trends, before turning to the residuals.

A solid, east–west-running rectangular shape emerges: one of its boundaries can be seen on the line of an interruption to the grid on the north-western side, at the Kanavaris stream; another, at the eastern end, cuts across short of the rectangle of Transects, four units wide and running north–south, that forms the easternmost extremity of the grid; while to the north, there is a clear extension over the Kanavaris in the central sector. There then remain some outliers beyond the main nucleus, formed by a few contiguous units or in some cases by singletons, of the same minimal density value. An initial proposal might be that these represent extra-urban, possibly non-domestic Greco-Roman activities, whether extramural cemeteries, sanctuaries or industrial areas of contemporary date; alternatively, they could derive from other periods. We can in fact at once propose that two of the most prominent of these residuals, that lying to the north-east beyond the Kanavaris and that located in the far east but south of the river, have to a large extent been raised to this density through being the locations of the two main foci of the Byzantine-Frankish and Ottoman village(s). On the hypothesis that the other residuals, whose total extent is in no case large, mainly represent cemeteries, these would then be merely peaks in the deposition of the surrounding units, which now covers a wide area of putative inner halo, lying between 5402 and 22,125 sherds per hectare. Taking the 9351 limit as the start of the core involves only minor spatial change from the now preferred limit of 22,126; the latter, however,

not only forms a clearer density-bloc, but allows more space for suburban features such as the cemeteries, and is our final choice for the city core boundary (Fig. 3.38).

We discuss elsewhere the major discovery by Božidar Slapšak's team in 2006, of a city extension wall north of the Kanavaris (see further Chapter 4, and Fig. 3.39 for its probable course). We shall argue, on a variety of textual, archaeological and topographical grounds, that this was a later, probably Hellenistic, addition to an earlier Classical city wall confined to the sector south of the river. The problem of relating this boundary to the surface ceramic finds is not eased by the previous map, since the 'urban level' sector just identified appears to straddle this probably Hellenistic extension of the city wall north of the Kanavaris, with an area within and an area outside it but immediately to its east. If however, as we shall suggest, full urban occupation of this large area flourished only briefly, before being retracted with the city's shrinkage by the end of the Hellenistic era, then part at least of this area, known to have been enclosed by the wall, may have contained some initial domestic settlement, without reaching full urban occupation. It will however be our contention that the trans-Kanavaris zone as a whole was a major area for burials for a much longer part of the life of the Greco-Roman city. Thus the majority of the high-density areas shown north of the river in the latest density map (Fig. 3.38), with the exception of the post-Roman village nucleus to the east, would represent city burial areas. Fig. 3.39 reflects a degree of uncertainty in the case of the northern extension, where a possible cemetery area overlaps with the claimed urban expansion. If we are correct in thinking that this expansion may have taken place in a zone previously given over to cemetery and other extramural use, and later returned to such use, this clash will be a real one. Justification for these provisional models will come from our detailed examination of the archaeological and textual evidence in this and other chapters. A novel refinement to this map has also come from the occurrence of burials in the road-widening rescue excavations of 2013, presented as an Addendum to Chapter 4.

Not all urban areas, however, would necessarily yield dense ceramic cover. One would expect an *agora* and other public spaces, such as a gymnasium or a theatre, to have generated less rubbish, quite apart from being kept cleaner, by comparison with domestic quarters. So, to provide an overall working model for the core of the ancient city, it may be safer to draw a simple elongated oval along the lines noted above. We shall later argue that this also approximately represents its fortified area for much of the Classical Greek era. We must then accommodate a planned extension to the town, north of the Kanavaris, at some point protected by a new enclosing wall. We shall be arguing that this urban expansion should be dated within

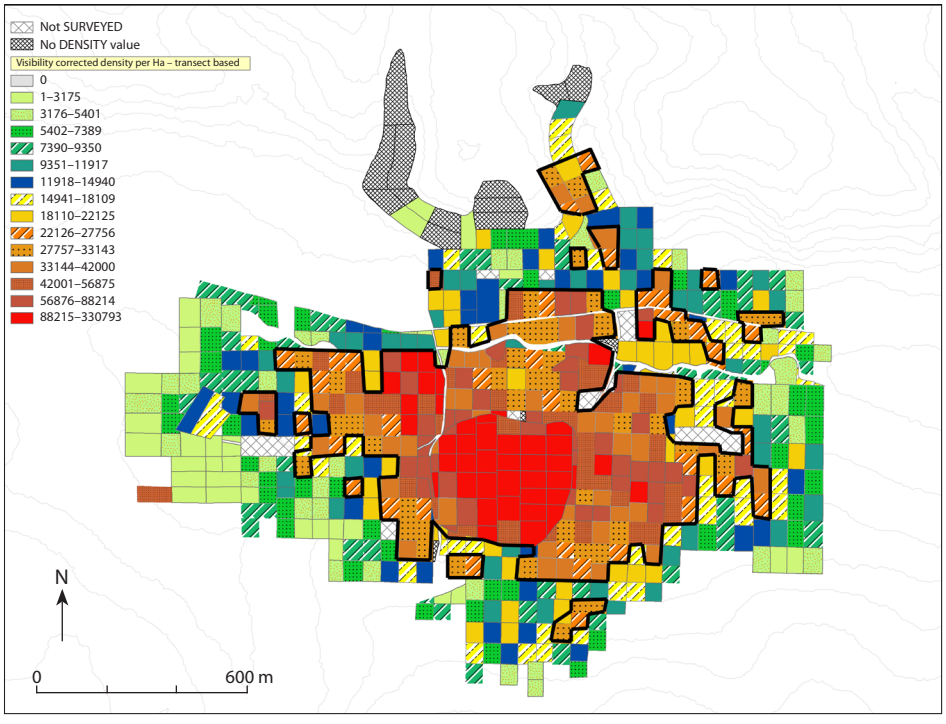


Figure 3.38. *A further tentative boundary drawn round the city core, set at >22,126 sherds per hectare (visibility-corrected).*

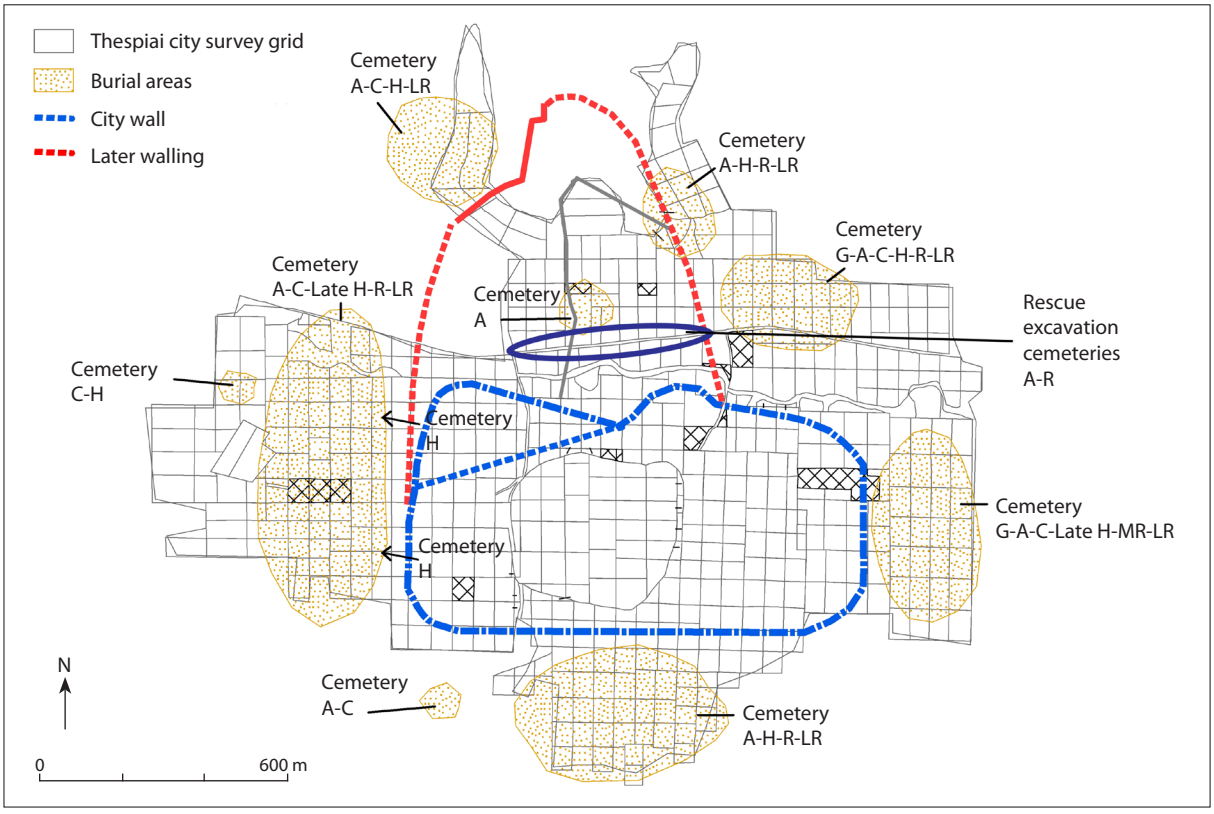


Figure 3.39. *The approximate locations of proposed cemeteries (pink shaded zones) and the reconstructed lines of the earlier (blue dashed lines, two options) and later (red line) city fortification walls. The dates of the dominant finds from the cemetery zones are added, to suggest the main periods of burial use. Cemeteries are identified through a combination of survey surface ceramic finds and topographic survey based on tombstones and graves. Within the northern wall extension, the thin grey line marks the area with sufficient sherd density to suggest possible domestic as well as cemetery use. Key: G = Geometric, A = Archaic, C = Classical, H = Hellenistic, R = Roman, MR = Middle Roman, LR = Late Roman.*

the limits of Late Classical, on the one hand, and Early Roman Imperial times on the other; in purely domestic terms, however, the main occupation here could have been limited to the Hellenistic period.

One approach that can provide evidence as to where the cemeteries lay is the use of the notes in the field- and pottery-books, which give suggestions, from the survey teams and the pottery specialists respectively, as to possible burial zones. Here, though, we must take account of one awkward fact, widely acknowledged in respect of Roman to Late Roman urban cemeteries. The evidence of excavations suggests that the commonest contents of Roman graves will not be distinguishable, among surface finds, from those generated by domestic areas. This covers not only grave-gifts, but also the widespread appearance of tiles from tile-graves, generally found on the surface in a broken condition, and reminiscent of roof-tiles. For the urban cemeteries of the preceding Archaic to Hellenistic periods, in general they too generate limited, yet occasionally diagnostic evidence of their character, to distinguish them from contexts of domestic finds. For the Late Roman period, it is a fact well known from excavated cemeteries that the average burial has minimal gifts or none at all, partly in response to the Christian view of the provision of household items with the deceased as unnecessary.

In the survey since conducted by one of us (J.L.B.) at another Boeotian city, Koroneia, during the seasons of 2008 to 2010, rather similar evidence can be reported. A series of cemetery localities and one sanctuary, of likely or definite Geometric to Hellenistic date, were found ringing the conjectured city wall; but the continued use of these sectors for burial during the subsequent Roman to Late Roman life of the town was only established with certainty on the strength of tombstones and a stone sarcophagus, since the dense ceramics of these phases and in the same locations could not be distinguished from urban domestic rubbish deposited outside the city wall.

A very similar problem besets urban survey, at least for the Roman period, with regard to sanctuary sites. The experience of excavation at Corinth led Bookidis (2003: 255–6) to a conclusion on sanctuaries, which recalls that just reached on burials. She noted that the changes in dedication practice from Classical to Roman times led eventually to deposits that look very like domestic assemblages. The distinctive Classical and Hellenistic markers, such as the very common figurines and miniature vessels, now yield to rarer finds of glass, coarse ware, lamps and, in very rare cases, statues for Roman sanctuaries.

Thus when the Thespiai survey teams surveyed the outer zones of the city grid, no major swathes of special pottery were observed for any of the Greco-Roman phases, although some more localized evidence was noted, either then or by the ceramic specialists later on, pointing to suggested burial and/or sanctuary locations. In the surrounding countryside, it was possible to identify a small but significant number of Classical cemeteries, running right up to the edges of the city grid, from small concentrations of high-quality fine wares, especially *kantharoi* and other shapes associated with excavated graves of the same age, often in excellent preservation with fresh breaks. The *kantharos*, as Mulder (2012) has shown, has a high but not exclusive association with burial and sanctuary contexts and is in general much commoner in Boeotia than in other regions of Greece. But little such material was seen around the edges of the city itself. This is the more surprising when we consider the immense numbers of graves expected around the city, compared with the much more limited scope for rural burial in connection with estate centres and the small number of such isolated burial sites actually found.

The conclusion is both worrying and gratifying. On the one hand, city excavations warn us not to expect distinctive surface finds for either cemeteries or sanctuaries in Roman to Late Roman times. But it remains to be explained why the presumably extensive extramural Archaic to Hellenistic cemeteries at Thespiai did not proclaim themselves as such, either during field-walking or in the subsequent study of the finds. This is not to say that these two sources of identification generated no funerary evidence: indeed, we shall shortly see that they did. It was rather that the burial and/or sanctuary indications were confined to limited if widely scattered localities, insufficient to represent cemetery zones of the order predicted from our population estimates.

The apparent contrast with our relative success in locating rural cemeteries is certainly illusory. The several rural burial clusters south of the city, published in *Testing the Hinterland*, were identified in the way described. Yet later revisits to this landscape still revealed new graves that had not been apparent in the original walking of the same fields. This is balanced by a similar appearance, in other parts of the Thespian *chora*, of new small farm sites during revisits. Conversely, revisits to known sites have shown repeated instances of their changed size or complete disappearance – a phenomenon well-known from Italian survey practice. Graeme Barker has referred to sites 'that go on and off like traffic-lights' (Barker 1984: 287). In the rural landscape, changing land-use can systematically obscure small grave groups, as it can family farms, especially in a territory like that of Boeotia, where carpets of off-site material of contemporary date can often cover every field with potsherds. It is the chance disruption caused by seasonal cultivation or erosion that generates new deposits, and brings out the small features that set them apart visually to field-walkers. It can readily be shown that, at any one time of survey, other graves and farms are temporarily 'invisible': only over many years of revisiting might one hope to achieve a substantially more comprehensive map of sites of this size and nature.

How then will this apply to the suburbs of a city like Thespiai? Here we may be observing a phenomenon similar in some respects, but with added complications. The suspected grave areas are sporadic, and usually of generic 'Greek' date (Geometric to Hellenistic), swamped by a far greater mass of contemporary ceramics. In this case, density measures are defective for cemetery recognition, since we predict a major contribution from Roman to Late Roman burials, whose finds will evidently have little to differentiate them from domestic deposits. In the far east of the city, additional debris from the extensive Medieval village foci will have obscured the surface finds of the relatively remote Classical Greek period; while we have had reason to suggest that the central part of the trans-Kanavaris sector, that enclosed within the probably Hellenistic extension wall, may have passed into domestic and/or public use, in between phases of earlier and later reservation as a burial zone.

For such models, based only on surface finds, independent confirmation is very welcome. Božidar Slapšak's careful examination of sections and pits, in various locations of modern disturbance within the city, have brought to light vital new 'three-dimensional' information to aid us (see Chapter 4, pp. 183–8). For the present purposes, we can record that actual burials of Roman to Late Roman date have come to light in the trans-Kanavaris area, whereas deposits seeming to represent more domestic activity are confined to the Hellenistic era: this is confirmed by the dating of a possible coin hoard emanating from

this locality (see Catherine Grandjean, Chapter 14, ## 5 and 6). At the western extremity of the grid, south of the river, our hypothetical boundary between the Classical to Hellenistic fortified area and the contemporary extramural cemeteries has been reinforced by the Slovenian team's discovery of a built grave very close to the putative wall-line. Finally, the suggestion that the large temple whose foundations were uncovered within the *Kastro* by Jamot in 1890 is of probable Archaic date (Müller 1996: 180–2), and may very well therefore have been located in the contemporary *agora*, wins unexpected support from two much more recent discoveries nearby. In 2008, again within the *Kastro*, were found both a fragmentary Classical inscription (Schachter and Marchand 2012, 278–80, no.1) recording a decision by the *pentekostológoi* of Thespiai; and, in a recent agricultural pit, a much later inscribed sherd, presumably from an offical measuring vessel, documenting the activity of an official of the *agora* (Schachter and Marchand 2012, 295–9, no. 6: see also Chapter 4). Finally, the cumulative archaeological evidence for the city circuit-walls south of the river, to be discussed later, offers independent confirmation of the likely inner limit to extramural cemetery zones. Taken together, these do something to reinforce confidence in the provisional map of the functional areas of the city.

Last but not least, the 2013 rescue excavations (Chapter 4, Addendum, pp. 196–8) offered detailed, if localized, proof of burial zones either side of the modern main road, in the southern part of the later extension zone of the city. As noted above (p. 61), the small far west and far larger inner western cemeteries in the previous figure can now be linked with the newly excavated central group of graves of late Archaic through to Roman age. Towards the east of this trans-Kanavaris sector, a group of Roman to Late Roman graves (## 356 – A41 – 357 in the Report) was found in what must be the vicinity of the eastern extension wall, perhaps inside it, while nearby and further west a large cist-tomb of third century BC date (# 358 – 359) is more likely to lie inside that wall. Where the western extension wall heads south, across the modern road, to its join with the original city wall south of the river, the wall itself was excavated, but unfortunately failed to yield dated stratigraphy. But associated in its close vicinity were finds of Hellenistic and Roman date, which may well be linked to the varied grave types visible immediately by the wall here. The intersection of large walls here might well be indication of a gate, compatible with the alignment of the tombs recorded not far to the west. Settlement traces on a small scale emerged in the eastern half of the extension sector, of late Hellenistic and Roman date, lying between the road and river and undoubtedly within the extension walls (# 363). In the western half, in significant contrast, a massive concrete foundation (#43–373), extending below the present-day water level, suggests to us a major Roman funerary monument. A similar, if smaller, foundation was recorded by our architectural survey in the area of the large far eastern cemetery south of the river (Chapter 4, Site 50).

We would suggest that, besides confirming our cemetery maps at several points, the finds lying within the extension walls, and especially those close to the putative western 'gate', show that at some point this area was invaded by burials, and that this perhaps began as early as about 200 BC. In Roman times, slight domestic occupation evidently existed in its eastern half, while the west was in use for burials.

Preliminary observations on the distribution of finds

During the field survey, the two teams made provisional observations on the character of the material they encountered, in terms of period, type and quality of ceramics. As these first thoughts have now been superseded by the exhaustive analysis of the finds and their distribution, we shall mention here only one aspect of this contemporary feed-back, which relates to notes made by team-leaders on the state of the sherds or their geomorphic context.

The categories 'Weathered' [W], 'In' [I], 'Out' [O] and 'Slope-wash' [SW]

This series of categories relates to sporadic observations made by the field teams on the condition of the finds in certain Transects and Samples. They were recorded, at the time, as part of the effort to locate the boundaries of the city. The category 'weathered' was thought to indicate a possibly extra-urban location for the Transect in question. 'Out' indicated thin finds and poor preservation, leading to a more confident designation as extra-urban, while 'In' referred to denser finds, in better condition, that were thought likely to come from inside the city. The value of these spontaneous comments from the field can only be assessed against the real densities now available, and other criteria. Even well within the city, the conditions in a given individual field may lead to weathering and apparently thin finds, arising from its recent history of land use; while recent disturbance could cause an outlying cemetery zone to generate a dense focus. This map (Fig. 3.40), more even than the others, is offered merely as another source of potential information, for comparison with the definitive, period-by-period

maps and with other complementary data, notably that of the architectural survey (Chapter 4).

The remaining category is the easiest to discuss: the slope-wash ('SW'), from the zone at the bottom of the escarpment to the north of the city grid. During the survey, it became clear that much of this zone had been obscured by post-antique hill-wash, producing no finds of significant density or diagnostic quality for collection. It can be seen, however, that of the two horn-shaped valleys flanking the hill with the modern village of Thespies on top of it, the eastern one had clearly received far less than the western in the way of recent fill and produced some above-average sherd densities – in one Transect, even at a level equivalent with our 'urban' density. When studying the period maps, however, we must always bear in mind that the quality of the surface data from the north-western extremity, across the Kanavaris, ranges from the very poor to the non-existent.

This trans-Kanavaris sector displays a fringe of possible extramural finds of category 'O', and several inner areas of possible intramural finds ('I'). Interestingly, the same central and eastern zone of intense activity north of the river, already highlighted in the previous maps, emerges as the strongest for intramural ('I'). On the other hand, areas closer to the theatre, which lies in the re-entrant between the two 'horns', were surprisingly not seen as 'In', apart from a small area to the far west where Božidar Slapšak's later investigation of the surface has also revealed much material: here the factor of slope-wash may again have intervened. South of the river, the extramural classifications for the far east, south and west are broadly reinforced; but the cluster of Transects with very poorly preserved finds from just west of the *Kastro* is a conspicuous anomaly, and must presumably represent the effects of local land use taphonomy if they are to retain their status as intramural. But in general these observations, made as they were in connection with the search for the city's limits, were not extended to locations that lay deeper within the presumed city area.

As we shall see later in our detailed analysis, the observations leading to the exclusion of the far eastern and far southern extremities of the gridded area from the city proper are in agreement with our current final view. But a more nuanced interpretation should now be taken in respect of the northern and western sectors, which were at first also seen as extramural: we shall now argue that they moved successively in and out of the intramural zone, a view compatible with the presence of material pointing to a non-urban context.

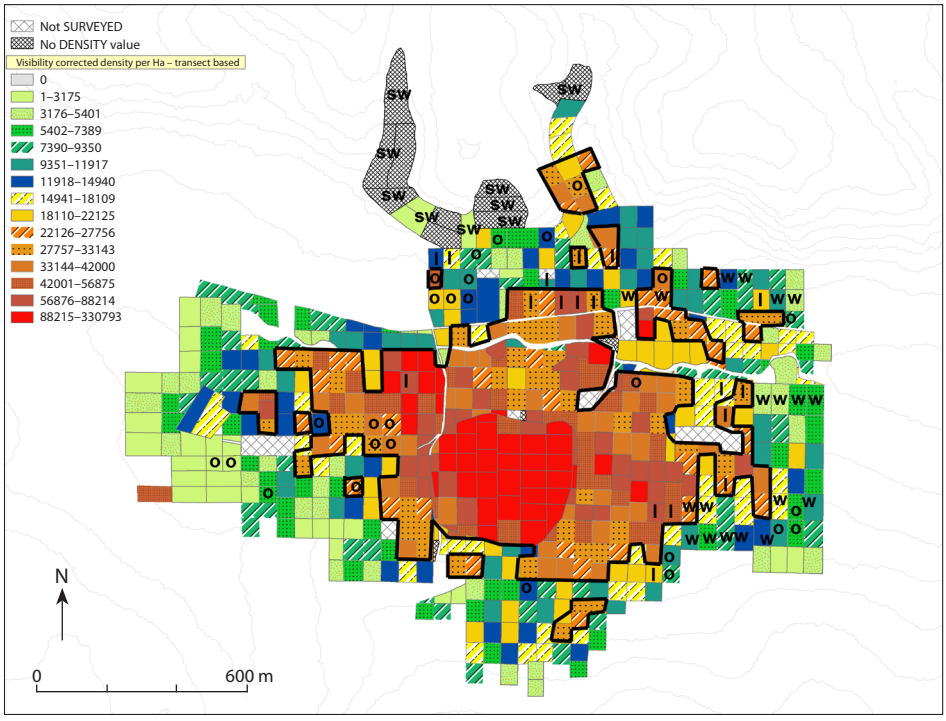


Figure 3.40. *Overall density map of the city, indicating localities where the field-walking teams recorded the surface finds as being 'weathered' ('W'), or in a condition that suggested an origin within ('I') or outside ('O') the city, or as being heavily obscured by slope-wash ('SW').*

Chapter 3(c)

Interpreting the density and period map series: the final period maps

From the late 1980s onwards, we have made use of provisional, phase-by-phase distribution maps of pottery, though at first only the data from the Transects were available. Already from these, clear evidence emerged of radical changes, from period to period, in the areas intensively 'used' at Thespiai. The maps presented here, 'final' although minor corrections are always possible, preserve roughly the same trends in the shape and size of the city as when we published them in 1988 (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988). The most prominent shifts remain as they were 20 years ago: a shrinkage from the late Archaic, Classical and Early Hellenistic town and a general gravitation of focus towards the centre and east in Early Roman times, with a continuation in Middle Roman. Now, however, we suggest that despite apparent expansion, the Late Roman era witnessed a slight further contraction.

Before this, for the millennia of prehistoric agriculture, nothing more than hamlet or village-level life can be suggested; after the end of the Late Antique city, again, there is a return to village life, with a clear (and, it now seems, double) focus of Medieval and post-Medieval times in a village to the east. The approximate size of the earlier Classical town now stands at around 57 ha (56.548), whilst the late Classical or Hellenistic enlargement created by the extended enceinte across the Kanavaris (around 40 ha) brings the enclosed area to about 96 ha (96.1343). Since, however, part of the newly fortified area is taken up by the steep slopes running up to the modern Thespies village, together with a small area within that hilltop settlement, and since it has become questionable how far domestic activity appropriated the gently rising ground within the new extension, between the Kanavaris stream to the south and the lower end of the escarpment to the north, the maximum built-up area must lie somewhere in between the two figures given above. In *Testing the Hinterland* (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007), taking only the general concentrations of Classical sherds as a basis, we had reached a maximum figure for the urban area of Archaic to Hellenistic times at 95 ha. It seemed likely that detailed study of the finds could reduce this figure slightly: in fact we shall argue in this volume that the maximum extent of the built-up city of late Classical to Early Hellenistic date was around 72 ha.

A central issue remains the fate of the peripheral urban cemeteries, consequent on the changes in the size and location of the urban domestic sectors with the transition from the Greek to the Roman eras of occupation. With the shifts in the city's focus marking Early and Late Roman, especially when contraction in the built-up area occurred, we might indeed predict a parallel migration of the extramural burial areas. Yet it is also a possibility that traditional burial zones remained attractive for reasons of religion, sentiment or merely land-use. Božidar Slapšak was the first to propose that the boundaries between the Classical and early Hellenistic city and its extramural sector may have survived as symbolic zones, even after the withdrawal of dense settlement from large areas of the town in post-Classical times, and even assuming the total neglect of the original Classical city-wall, after its historically attested demolitions, and probably of its later extension too. To test this hypothesis, we need to identify several cases where plausible Classical and Hellenistic peripheral burial sectors can also be seen to attract those peripheral Roman to Late Roman concentrations that are argued to represent burials. This challenge, as we shall see, produces a positive result.

With the coming of Christianity, excavations throughout the later Roman world have shown that new attitudes to burials begin to prevail. It becomes permissible to continue to use pagan cemeteries, as well as burying in and around churches. Although these latter often lie near traditional burial areas, the

increasing tendency to locate them within the settlement will have encouraged the growth of associated cemeteries. For our Medieval and post-Medieval village, traditional funerary customs in Greece would suggest a graveyard associated with a church. The information from our two village foci is supportive, since the northern focus is associated with the small chapel of Agios Athanasios, whose origins seem to lie in an Early Christian foundation. The southern focus, thanks to the research by Božidar Slapšak, is now known to be linked with an Early Christian, then Middle Byzantine church. Test excavations in connection with repairs to the Athanasios church revealed extensive associated burials; but none were recorded in our own clearing of the southern Makri Ekklesia church, although a major late Antique cemetery is found immediately to its east.

After these preparatory words, we can turn to the renewed exercise of analysing the Thespiai nucleation period by period and, with the 'urban' phases from Archaic to Late Roman, looking in particular for the urban edge. The chief aim of this discussion is to see whether we can isolate the specific contribution *each* major period makes to the overall density map, and hence bring us closer, in each phase, to distinguishing the zones of active habitation from those of likely peripheral burial. The density and clustering of each phase, and its relation to the overall density map, provide the main period emphases.

The data collected from the two scales of observation are available separately, as Transect and Sample maps in Appendices 2–3. In each of these, the units shaded grey are those where, respectively, Transect or Sample collections were lacking. We shall present here, for reasons of space, only the series of 'Merged' maps, in which Transect and Sample data are combined. Although these maps are potentially misleading, in that only about half of Transects incorporate Sample finds as well, we consider that their value, in allowing us to gain an impression of all our data for a given phase, is enough to overcome this. In the 'Merged' maps, only those units are shown in grey where *neither* of the two methods of collection took place. As argued earlier, only at a certain size of sample can these different maps be used independently, as likely to be representative of the city in any particular period. Below this level, many phases are left with a quite different appearance, as between the separate collection techniques.

It should be explained that, when the various ceramic specialists recorded the finds collected from the city grid, they assigned chronological and other details to each piece. But to gain an overall picture of activity over the site by means of integrated maps, it is necessary to adopt broader dating categories. This means the loss of much finer detail, quite apart from the problem, typical of survey analysis, that a large proportion of the finds are assignable only to one of two (or more) successive periods, rather than to a single phase. The complete databases for the city grid pottery are also provided in the Appendices, with technical descriptions for each piece and the original, specific dating for it, and then a column called 'Date for Map', where pieces are grouped into more practical chronological phases, for the purpose of the maps that we shall shortly begin to analyse. In a minority of cases, our individual period ceramic specialists differed about the date of particular sherds: the numbers of sherds displayed on the period maps will not then correspond exactly with the period sherd totals that they give in their chapters. The entry in the 'Date for Map' column, the source used for the final period maps, was the result of adjudication by the editors as to the most likely attribution.

Each map was created by Emeri Farinetti, on the basis of a defined list of 'Briefdate' terms to be employed. Since, as we have seen, this necessarily required making simplifying assumptions. We also publish the full list of date labels used for each map, showing how those labels were converted into map symbols. Even so, the number of maps we have had to produce is extremely large: without such simplification of the data-bases, neither complete publication nor a manageable synthesis would be feasible.

A final point of note: a special additional survey was made of the Magoula hill, the core of the Neolithic site. As this was most comparable in intensity to the smaller-scale Sample collections, we have displayed the resultant finds as an inset box on the Merged maps to follow, and on the Sample maps in Appendix 1. They should thus be taken to supplement, not duplicate, the data on the respective 'Merged' maps and those in Tables 3.3–3.4 (p. 41).

The prehistoric sequence

Early Neolithic (and 'Early Neolithic?') (Fig. 3.41)
Early Neolithic is found only in the Magoula formal Samples; it was also noted in that locality by much earlier visitors (see Chapter 10, pp. 269, 279).

Our own finds of this period, however, all fall into the 'possible' rather than the 'definite' category.

Middle Neolithic (and 'Middle Neolithic?') (Fig. 3.42)
The Merged map shows finds clustering tightly within the Magoula core where the Samples were carried out, with a small collection from the handful of Transect units covering the wider Magoula hillock and its immediate surroundings.

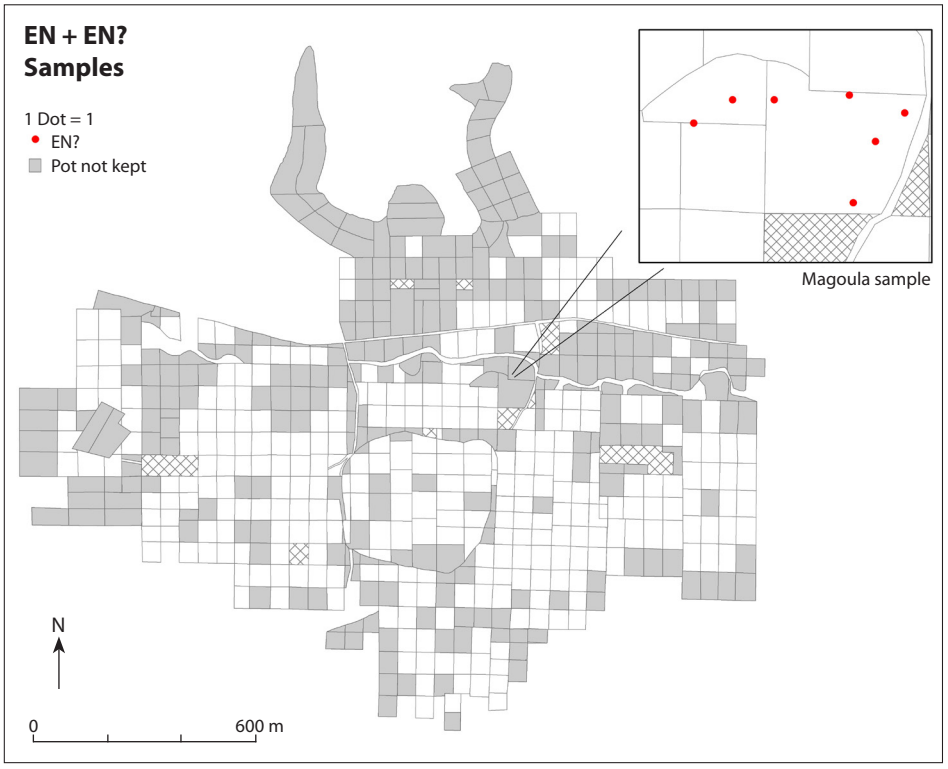


Figure 3.41. *Distribution of Early Neolithic (and 'Early Neolithic?') sherds.*

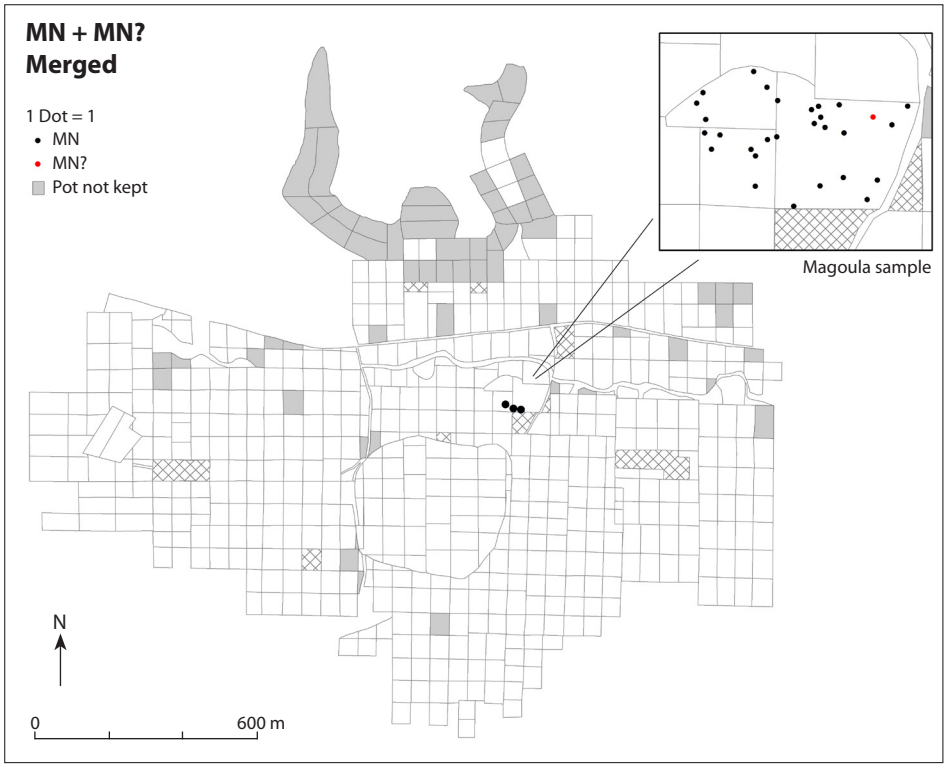


Figure 3.42. *Distribution of Middle Neolithic (and 'Middle Neolithic?') sherds.*

Late Neolithic (and 'Late Neolithic?') (Fig. 3.43)
Yet again, the finds are clustered almost entirely on to the Magoula hillock and its slopes. The picture resembles that of the Middle Neolithic. Three pieces of Middle to Late Neolithic date also occur on the Magoula hill and are not illustrated here.

Nonetheless, two definite LN pieces from the far west of the city introduce novelty, anticipating the distribution of the following phase, Final Neolithic, a development that we shall discuss under that period.

Final Neolithic and Final Neolithic/Early Helladic (and 'Final Neolithic?' plus 'Final Neolithic/Early Helladic?') (Fig. 3.44)
This map shows both the Final Neolithic pieces and also two rare sherds placed at the overlapping border between the successive phases of Final Neolithic and Early Helladic, many pieces from which are similar in style and fabric, but show a clearer break, for the group as a whole, from the preceding Early/Middle/Late Neolithic ceramics.

The Merged, summary map for FN, shows that the Magoula has remained a minor focus, but only alongside new foci in the far east, the far south and the outer west of the city, with another more diffuse spread to the north-east across the Kanavaris stream. The *Kastro* at the centre of the later site and its environs to the north and the east have thin finds, but there is an almost continuous scatter of individual pieces connecting all the foci. It is likely that this thin cover, from what later became the core of the Greco-Roman city, results from the fact that these zones produced the largest quantities of sherds of those latter periods, making it a lucky event when one of the rare prehistoric pieces, not always recognized as such by field-walkers, was picked up. Equally, it is suspicious that clusters in the south, west, east and north-east coincide with Greco-Roman cemetery zones, so that surface finds may have been disturbed by burial activities of historical date. Further, these cemetery areas probably had little historical settlement activity nearby to conceal prehistoric pottery.

As to the representative quality of these maps, we should state our provisional belief that they offer merely a small sample, qualitative rather than quantitative, of a much wider and commoner activity spread across the grid in Final Neolithic and Early Helladic times.

Neolithic (and 'Neolithic?') (Fig. 3.45)
This is merely a generic category, consisting of finds that cannot be more closely dated. The map again shows a dense clustering within the Magoula hillock and its slopes, but we have a wider yet very thin scatter of finds from the outer zones of the survey area. Given that this category can include anything from EN to FN, we note that the majority of the sherds are probably restricted to the EN–MN–LN range, when the Magoula was almost the exclusive source of finds. The continuous trickle in the outer, mostly western grid units would then be of FN date, perhaps with some LN contribution. The effect of these generic pieces is thus further to enhance the signal importance of the Magoula settlement – not so surprising when we consider that it may represent as much as 3500 years of continuous settlement. The poverty of inner city finds, as earlier noted, most likely reflects the swamping effect of the historical phases.

The Neolithic era: general discussion
The overall picture, for the greater part of the Neolithic era, is one of a distribution strikingly restricted to the locality of the Magoula, followed by a dramatic change in Final Neolithic and the early part of Early Helladic, when settlement appears to be dispersed widely over the city grid, while retaining a reduced presence at the original Magoula locality. Only a couple of LN or 'Neolithic' sherds indicate that there was earlier wider activity, on both sides of the Kanavaris stream.

K. Sarri however has pointed out to us (*pers. comm.*; see also Chapter 10) that a risk arises here from the differential diagnosticity of the material: MN and the early LN phases (LNIA) are normally only recognized when we have decorated sherds: its plain or coarse forms are much less well known. By contrast, the LN/FN to EHI material is almost always coarse, but well recognized because of its relative profusion in our area. Whether or not this issue would make much difference to the final result, it is a factor that we must take into account. It means, for instance, that MN coarse ware is probably being counted in with the generic Neolithic. Nevertheless, the generic map does nothing to contradict the period-specific Neolithic sherd distributions.

But there are yet other dangers in accepting this view uncritically. The Magoula hill appears to have fresh Neolithic levels very close to its surface, liable to disturbance by current land use, and as a result has always been a gold mine for visiting prehistorians. Either the locality was largely exempted from major use for much of antiquity (with the interesting exception of the Roman era) or, perhaps more likely, its original upper levels have been stripped away for agricultural purposes, its settlement deposits having been rich in minerals and potential chemical fertilizer. Although we shall see evidence, from the inset boxes showing the Magoula Sample in later eras (cf. above, p. 66), for continued deposition at the Magoula in most

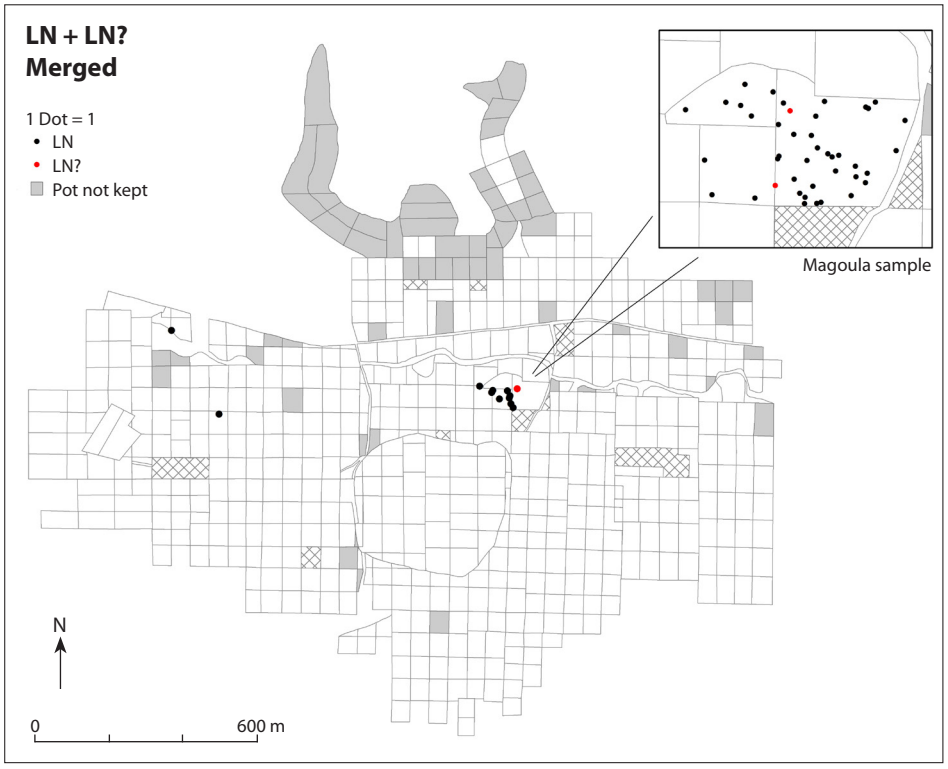


Figure 3.43. *Distribution of Late Neolithic (and 'Late Neolithic?') sherds.*

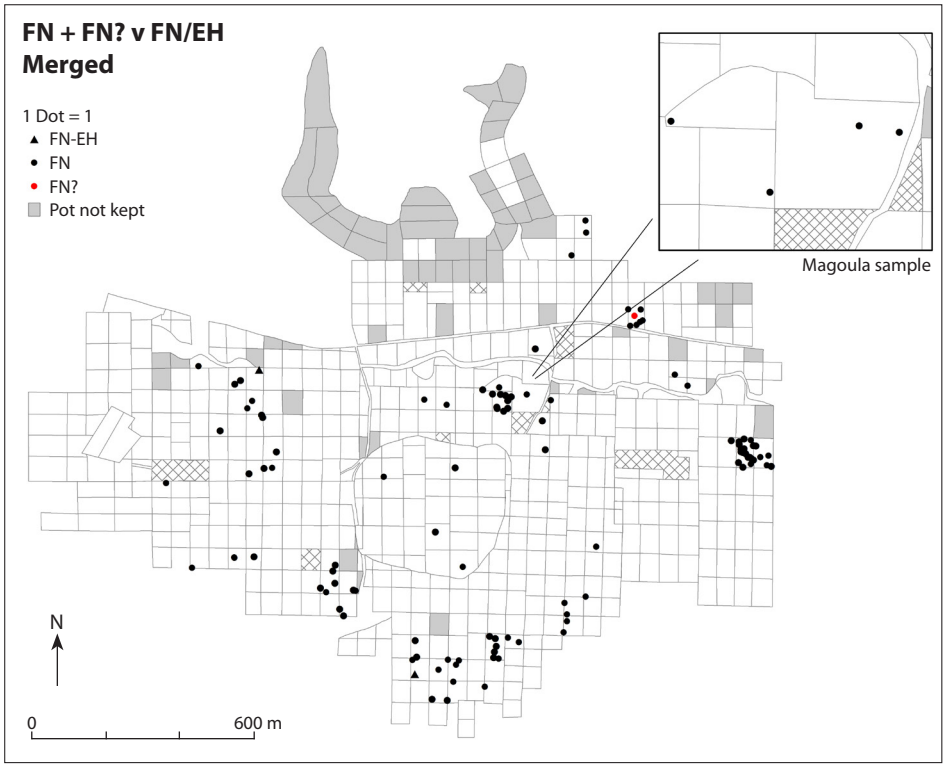


Figure 3.44. *Distribution of Final Neolithic, 'Final Neolithic?' and Final Neolithic/Early Helladic sherds.*

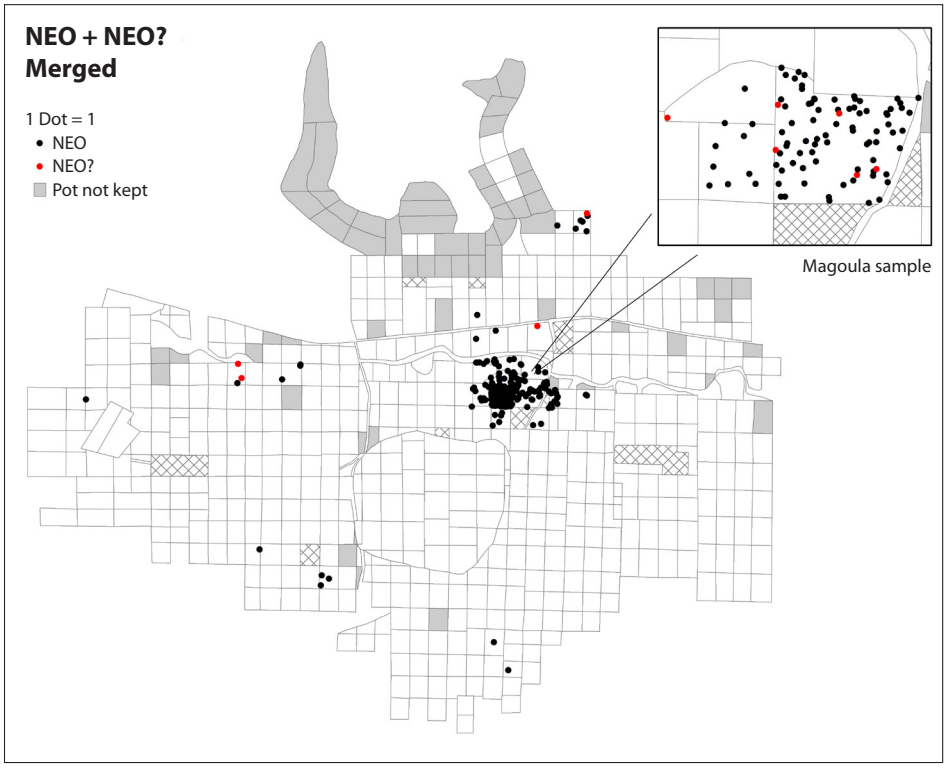


Figure 3.45. *Distribution of generic Neolithic (and 'Neolithic?') sherds.*

of them, it is never dense (except in Roman times). This factor has clearly enhanced the surface collection from these earliest phases. The widely observed phenomenon, whereby Roman-era constructions stripped away deeper, older levels for use in monuments, might also be considered to account for the puzzling poverty of finds here between the Neolithic and that period.

Let us take an alternative hypothesis: that there also existed other foci of Early to Late Neolithic activity elsewhere within the city grid. The density of post-prehistoric sherds, in nearly the whole of the rest of the grid, is such that small numbers of prehistoric sherds would be at risk of being missed altogether in the samples taken. We already published our thoughts on this notion in the 'Hidden Landscape' paper (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999). Some support for this view, in the specific case of the city, can be found first in our analysis of the duplicated units in the north-west of the city grid (see pp. 48–51), where it was the less common periods – Prehistoric and Medieval – which came and went with the expansion and reduction of the numerical size of the samples collected. This pattern was reinforced by a total correlation, from the entire city data base, of prehistoric sherd recovery against sample size. On the evidence so far considered, then, absence or near-absence of pre-Final Neolithic in the wider City need not prove real absence of activity. The positive control, however, comes about through the comparison with the last phase of the full Neolithic, the Final Neolithic. Here, despite the equally low overall numbers, the clear existence for dispersal, even with the more limited data from the Samples, over a wide range away from the Magoula, seems to reveal a new pattern of landscape activity.

The view of Vitelli and Perlès (Perlès and Vitelli 1994, Perlès 2001) is that, for the earlier and greater part of the immensely long Neolithic era, pottery was made on rare occasions and designed primarily for the social context of eating, whereas in Late to Final Neolithic times, a more typical wide range of cooking and storage wares makes its appearance. The implication would be that the relatively numerous Neolithic sherds at the Magoula locality nevertheless represent what was later to become only a fraction of the domestic pottery assemblage. If we take this theory into account, the numbers from there will be further enhanced thereby. By contrast, the coarser nature of much of the subsequent Late to Final Neolithic and Bronze Age non-fine pottery will tend to reduce its capacity for survival in the plough-soil, as well as its likelihood of recognition. P.Sarri comments (see Chapter 10) that these wares are coarse but well-fired,

not so brittle as to be completely destroyed; yet that nonetheless their often small and fragmentary survival and nondescript appearance causes their presence to be missed (cf. Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999). If the foci of these later prehistoric periods were less nucleated, and shorter-lived, than the Magoula hamlet, their debris, at any given point in the landscape, will be that much less dense by comparison. We have already suggested that the Magoula may have been partially stripped of its later levels during intensive recent, and perhaps also ancient, land use of this prominent hillock: certainly the overburden of Greco-Roman finds seems unusually slight compared with almost all other parts of the city grid, enhancing the appearance of prehistoric activity at the Magoula, compared with that outside.

The longevity of a nucleated village, or at some times a hamlet, at the Magoula can readily be accounted for in terms of human ecology. It has been argued that early, pre-plough farming took the form primarily of hoe- based garden agriculture in well-watered soils (Sherratt 1980; Johnson 1996; Perlès 2001); live-stock numbers remained low and required limited grazing, until the local adoption of Secondary Products (milk, cheese, yoghurts, textile production) and of the ard plough. Recent research shows that this linked package of innovations was diffused or independently adopted at varied times during the Neolithic, Copper and Early Bronze Ages of Europe and the Mediterranean (cf. Evershed *et al.* 2008), but the Southern Aegean evidence points to the Final Neolithic–Early Bronze Age era as critical for its full-scale local implementation (Bintliff 2012, 50–2). The Magoula rises beside a very well-watered, if narrow, band of river soil where the perennial Kanavaris stream originates from underground springs, and we may assume that crops were grown in and around this environment. Clearance of surrounding woodland on the higher, rain-fed hills to the north and south of the Magoula might have been limited to the lower ground, with the higher water-table land for plant cultivation and limited grazing land beyond.

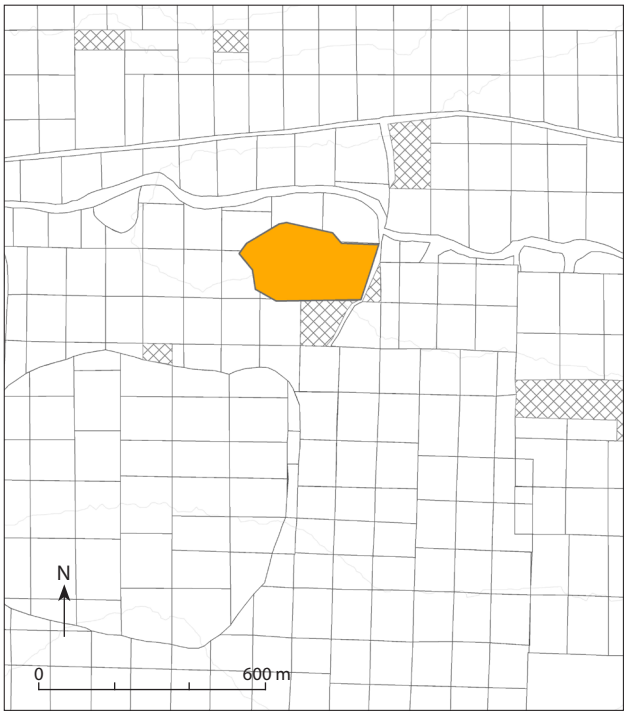


Figure 3.46. *Estimated extent of the Neolithic settlement on the Thespiai Magoula.*

We have roughly estimated the size of the Neolithic settlement, lying entirely within the yellow block in Fig. 3.46, at some 12,500 sq m, or no more than 1.25 ha. This small community, absolutely typical in size for Neolithic villages in Greece (Perlès 2001), represents at the most 100 people or so. The widely accepted model for Thessaly sees such small face-to-face communities exchanging partners, through exogamy, with five or six other regional villages (Bintliff 1999a; 2012, Ch.3). It has been suggested that in the conditions of southern mainland Greece, less favourable for early farming, a large demographic pool could also have been maintained by larger settlements which relied more on endogamy: a village such as Kouphovouno in Laconia, 4 ha in size, could be an example (Cavanagh and Mee 2007). We could therefore propose that the smaller Thespiai Magoula would have been in regular communication with neighbours, of which just one confirmed case has so far been found in the district – at our Site VM 4 in the Valley of the Muses. From another of our surveyed prehistoric villages, at Palaeokarandas – Askris Potamos, 2 km south of Thespiai (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 84–94), just one definite MN sherd and a second possible one of generic Neolithic date were recovered in a site of considerable size by Early Helladic times (*c*. 2.5 ha). The evidence may perhaps suggest another partner here, in a comparable location but in a different cardinal direction; this site too lies on moist river soils, this time beside the larger Askris river.

Early Helladic (and Early Helladic?) (= Early Bronze Age) (Fig. 3.47)

The overall distribution, seen in the Merged map, is comparable to the previous map for FN plus FN–EH in its wide scatter of finds, except that the distribution is thinner across the city as a whole, at the same time as being much stronger, once more, at the Magoula locality. There are roughly as many 'possible' as

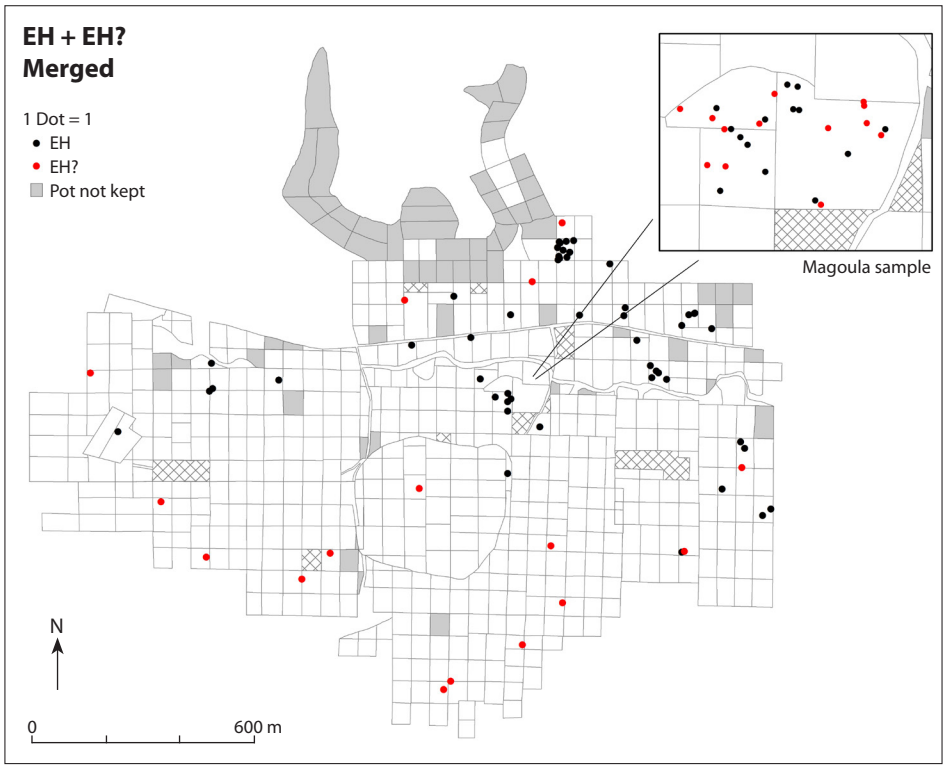


Figure 3.47. *Distribution of Early Helladic (and 'Early Helladic?') sherds.*

'definite' EH pieces, although the areas where this is critical, in the south and south-west, are both strong in FN. We should bear in mind that the duration of EH was around 1100 years, FN perhaps even longer, but that finds of EH I and EH III are far rarer on the Greek Mainland than those of EH II, which perhaps reflects in the first case a difficulty in recognition, in the second a period of genuine population decline (Bintliff 2012, Chapter 4). As the total find numbers for the two periods are not too different (when the 'possible' finds are included), we might hypothesize that the balance of nucleated versus dispersed activity for EH may have swung back significantly in favour of nucleation after FN times, without losing the appearance of widespread low level settlement and/or burial finds.

We have argued elsewhere (*Testing the Hinterland*: 130–1) that the FN and EH eras were characterized by a dual settlement system of regularly spaced villages or hamlets, with a dense pattern of shorter-lived farms around and between them. This view, deployed to explain the finds made in the countryside of the LSE/THS sector south of the city, may now be extended to cover the 180 ha of the city grid itself. The fact that Early Helladic material is in general better represented in the periphery than in the centre of the grid probably reflects its numerical swamping, in the city core, by finds from later periods. As noted above (pp. 48–51), experimentation with the total data-base shows that the apparent presence or absence of prehistoric material is not governed merely by the real original density of activity, but is also affected by the filter of the sample size of each collection in the city grid. What we gain from the Early Helladic and the closely related Final Neolithic/Early Helladic maps is the impression of wide dispersal compared to the previously very focused Magoula nucleation. This wider scatter may possibly include smaller settlement foci (family farms?) and larger foci (multiple-farm hamlets?). Given the likelihood that the numbers found are merely a tiny sample of the likely prehistoric sherds still present over the city grid, and an even smaller sample of those once present (for the logic behind this assertion, see the arguments in Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999), it remains difficult to estimate the true scale of settlement-size that these two sets of maps represent, apart from the apparent revival of the Magoula village.

As noted earlier, some 2.5 km south of the Magoula a further nucleated EH settlement was discovered, at the Palaeokarandas-Askris Potamos locality, reaching an area of around 2.5 ha. Moreover, between the Thespian Magoula and this southern village we discovered a series of small ceramic and

lithic foci with a mere handful of artefacts (as with the city finds), but again mostly FN to EH in date. These we have interpreted as representing dispersed farms and activity foci in the open landscape (*Testing the Hinterland*: 129–31). As such, they complement our reconstruction of the FN–EH landscape at the city site.

The 'sample fraction' (compare *Testing the Hinterland:* 37), that is the percentage of total recorded finds per unit that was actually collected, is very low within the city area. Emeri Farinetti calculates this as follows: the sample fraction statistic, using the total of the Transect, Sample and Magoula collected sherds against the expected presence of sherds, calculated on the basis of the visibility-corrected density values corrected for the area, comes to 0.2815 per cent of the estimated total present on the surface.

So, even were we to assume that prehistoric sherds survived as well as historical-period pottery, we could make a reasonable case for multiplying the recorded finds by about 350, in order to achieve a more realistic distribution. In fact, however, the survival of prehistoric sherds is adversely affected by the combination of several factors: their often coarse fabric, their taphonomic suppression through the massive overlay of historical levels, and the taphonomic under-representation brought about by the additional millennia of anthropogenic and natural weathering processes, to the point where the available pool of prehistoric finds is at a far lower level than the historical. The only factor which slightly adjusts the balance is the fact that the Final Neolithic/Early Helladic period as a whole covered some 2500 years, as long as the main historical occupation period of the city and of its village successor.

The main point that we can confidently establish is that the 'break-out' from the single, isolated hamlet at Thespiai Magoula, with its remarkable longevity, did not take place before the Final Neolithic at the earliest (the odd find from outside the Magoula excepted). This would then coincide with the Aegean impact of the ard plough, traction animals and the Secondary Products Revolution, which led to the centrifugal colonization of a wider landscape, away from previously favoured patches of wetlands and into the interfluves, in Sherratt's classic (1981) formulation. The Final Neolithic and Early Helladic expansion, into the dry-farmed Neogen and colluvial soils of the gentle slopes within the later city grid, is consistent in time and also congruent in space with events in the area immediately to the south of the city. Here, the higher hill-slopes and the Neogen plateau beyond, studied in *Testing the Hinterland*, witnessed dispersed, small-scale Final Neolithic to Early Helladic finds, interpreted as a combination of small farms and off-site agricultural activity. The equal interest in the dry-farmed colluvial soils, across the Kanavaris river to the north, is worth noting, as these are heavier than the Neogen *rendsina* soils which dominate south of the river.

The notes from the field- and pottery-books picked out a small focus of 'PRE- or PROTO-HISTORIC' finds in the western sector of the grid. This could possibly be linked with the Early Helladic focus now localized here, although a slight focus of Geometric to Archaic was also then noted as being present.

Middle Helladic (+ Middle Helladic?') (Fig. 3.48)

The 'EH–MH' finds, whether classed as transitional or more loosely generic, are confined to one piece near the Magoula, so we might add it to a discussion of the half-dozen or so purely MH pieces from that general area. K. Sarri comments that genuinely transitional EH/MH is very rare in Boeotia (as for example at both the major sites of Eutresis and Orchomenos, although it is better represented in Thebes). For MH proper, the Magoula area is poorly represented, as a minor cluster only, by comparison with two more numerous concentrations across the Kanavaris stream to the north. These three foci apart, there are just three definite or possible MH pieces from the remainder of the city area, very widely dispersed and all single finds.

The clear novelty lies in the two significant Middle Helladic clusters across the river to the north, one central and the other at the north-eastern extremity. Two further observations can be added to reinforce the north-eastern cluster of Middle Helladic: first, the generic 'Bronze Age' finds (see below) show a group here; secondly, the notes from field-walkers identified a 'Prehistoric' focus here.

In interpreting these finds, once again, we have to be wary of the sampling factors. If all prehistoric finds from the city site represent a mere fraction of the original assemblages, then a cluster still visible could in reality have been very dense. Elsewhere, collections of just one or two sherds lie within the difficult realm of small sample statistics: a single sherd could be a genuine 'loner', or one of a hundred that might potentially be recovered by applying a 'hoovering' technique to the same sample unit.

No unmistakable trend is revealed, but we believe that over time, from Early Helladic through the transitional era into Middle Helladic, a shift can be detected in which the widely dispersed landscape of farms and hamlets contracts into rather few and small nucleated settlement forms. These are not periods for which we have readily recognisable chronological sub-divisions in our material; but a working hypothesis would be that, around the beginning of Middle Helladic, the city site saw a nucleation into three closely spaced sites, one at the Magoula locality and

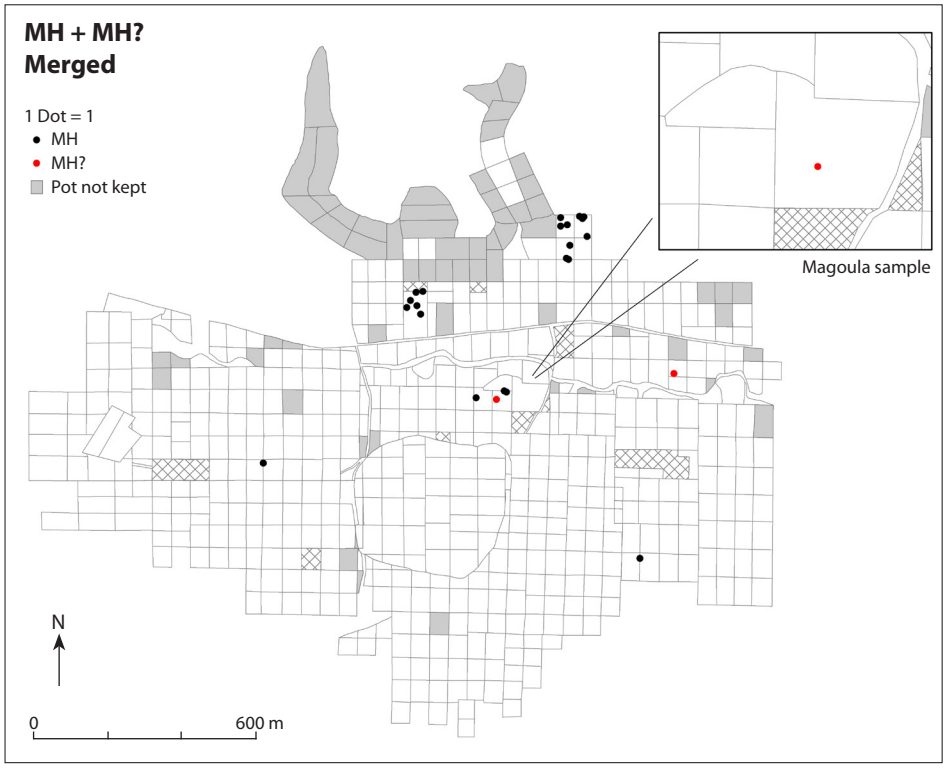


Figure 3.48. *Distribution of Middle Helladic (and 'Middle Helladic?') sherds.*

two across the river. They are spaced at an interval of some 200–300 m apart from each other, thus conforming to the formal definition of geographers for a multiple-hamlet system, that each unit remains in 'hailing distance' of its neighbour(s).

It might of course be that one or more of these clusters is a separate cemetery. But until near the end of Middle Helladic, graves on the Greek mainland tend to be located intramurally or close to settlement edges. The Magoula site had been a focus of occupation for millennia, and the north-eastern cluster had predecessors in FN, and far more clearly in EH times. The almost complete loss of the much more widely dispersed activity of those eras, and the apparent crystallization into a multiple-hamlet mode of settlement, do seem to mark a re-ordering of the landscape, a trend that may have begun before the end of EH. But, for consistency's sake, those few more isolated finds of Middle Helladic should still be classed as potential farms and/or burials, if on a very small scale.

These tentative conclusions once again agree well enough with the wider evidence gathered from the rural landscape of the LSE/THS sector to the south of the city. Here a dispersed Final Neolithic – Early Helladic settlement pattern, grouped around the known hamlet and village at the Magoula and Palaeokarandas respectively, largely vanishes in the Middle Helladic era, with a retraction into the Palaeokarandas village and the hamlets within the later Thespiai city, the Magoula included. Here too, however, there are limited traces of the continuing use of a few non-nucleated locations in the wider countryside, perhaps for farming or burial.

Thespiai may be comparable with multi-focal Middle Helladic settlements such as Argos (Pariente and Touchais 1998; Bintliff 2010a), and could represent a single community made up of several kinship groups. As a final warning: for a period of just 400–600 years' duration, when compared with the 2000 or more covered by the Final Neolithic and Early Helladic maps, a considerable reduction in the quantity of data, regardless of the number and size of settlements, is only to be predicted.

Late Helladic (+ Late Helladic?') (Fig. 3.49)

The transitional Middle–Late Helladic finds are so few in number as to make any analysis unreliable: here K. Sarri observes that this is a typical picture for this transitional period in settlements. But the single definite transitional piece from the earlier north-eastern cluster of Middle Helladic, followed by an absence of Late Helladic, is enough to suggest that this early

focus of activity lasted into the former era and was then abandoned. A possible transitional piece from the Magoula area is the only bridge between the relatively strong foci there in both Middle and Late Helladic.

With Late Helladic, however, there is a clear sense of change. The finds from the Magoula and its wider surroundings might be seen as a widely dispersed hamlet which, from analogy elsewhere, should include peripheral cemetery areas. While, on the one hand, there is a high proportion of merely 'possible' finds, on the other we must allow for the usual high level of bias against prehistoric finds on complex sites. On this last issue, it might be countered that sherds of the Middle and Late Helladic eras will be neither as coarse, nor as easily damaged by subsequent millennia of wear, as those of the later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age but we must allow for the following factors. First, any ceramics from 3000 years ago or earlier will, at least in the case of Thespiai, have been subjected to the damage and interference from the 1200 years or more during which a populous town occupied the same location; this will surely greatly reduce the chances of such pieces even lying on the current soil surface, let alone being recognized as worthy of collection. Painted wares are likely to have suffered partial or total loss of their decoration from such treatment. Secondly, since the pre-urban villages of Thespiai were far smaller than their Greco-Roman urban successor, their ceramic debris will, from the outset, have been relatively slight when compared to the vast quantities of the latter's waste material, and we have seen that our sample fraction is low enough to make any prehistoric phases highly susceptible to sampling errors whereby they elude collection.

In any case, the finds that were detected suggest that, apart from the Magoula focus, the previous north-central and north-eastern foci are not maintained: rather, we see a return to the wide scatter of single finds, but now with one small cluster in the far east of the map. On the next map, we attempt to give a possible extent for the Late Helladic hamlet (Fig. 3.50, the black outline). If we merely add up Transects with LH definite and possible finds in this area, their combined extent comes to 4 ha or thereabouts, with much additional ground between the find groups, so far, lacking in finds.

In theory such a wide area might have accommodated at most a few hundred inhabitants, but given the low density of finds this must be far less, and surely it would be too small to be considered a demographically self-sufficient settlement: it would have depended on networking with other nucleations

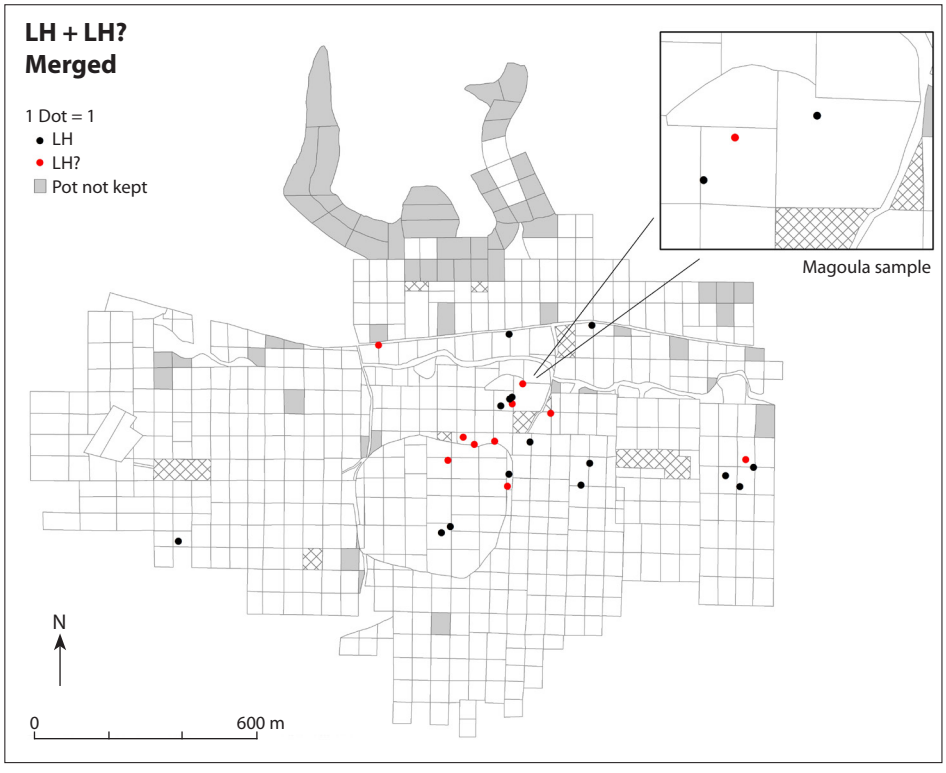


Figure 3.49. *Distribution of Late Helladic (and 'Late Helladic?') sherds.*

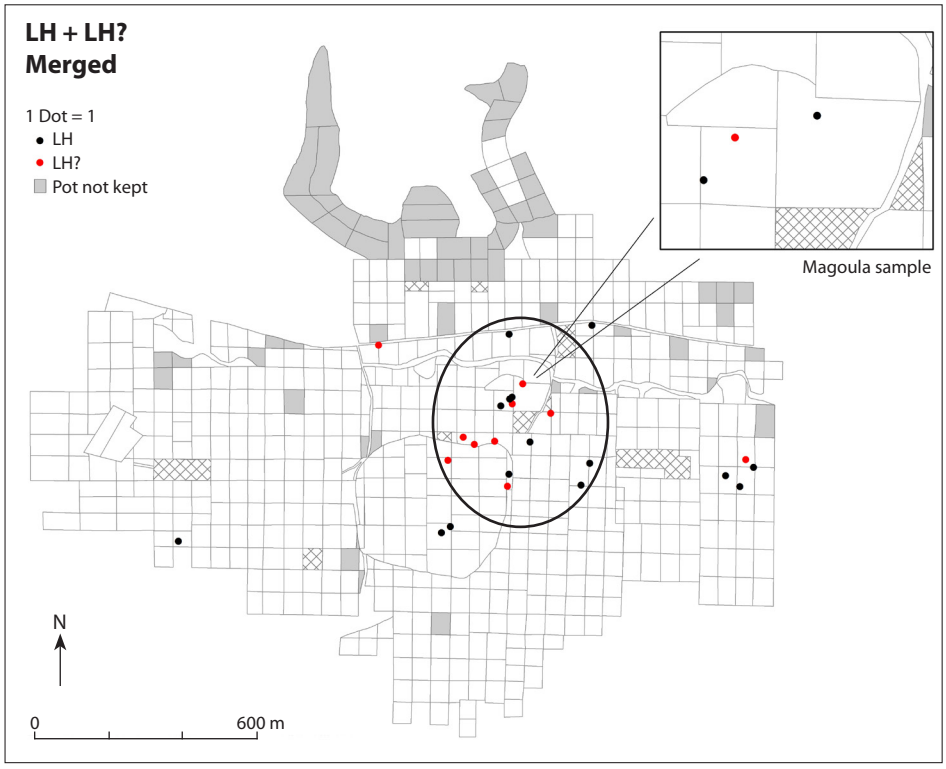


Figure 3.50. *Estimated extent of the Late Helladic hamlet.*

in the district, such as Site VM 4 in the Valley of the Muses and, perhaps, Haliartos and Eutresis further afield. In this, the era of Mycenaean civilization, the already long-standing settlement at Thespiai makes a curiously unimpressive showing: for a possible explanation in political terms see Chapter 5, pp. 199–200.

Yet again, the question of representativeness arises. The primacy of the Magoula locality, if we allow for the factor of the sample fraction (cf. p. 73), must be real enough. The absolute numbers of finds from the actual Magoula itself, however, as was already clear in the Middle Helladic distribution, are low, with stronger evidence coming from a wider zone round the rim of the hill and on both banks of the Kanavaris. While this could represent a genuine settlement form, it is perhaps more likely that this 'concave' pattern has arisen from the removal of the post-Early Helladic layers from the hill itself. Beyond that, the scattered isolates leave us with the usual alternatives of either taking this pattern at face value, or assuming a multiplier of several hundred at least for these finds, based on the ratio of collected sherds to total density. As a further warning, many grid units fall below the putative 'visibility threshold' or minimal size of sample needed to allow prehistoric sherds to have a good chance of being collected (see again p. 48).

Of course, the length of time for the transitional and Late Helladic periods is, in total, perhaps half that for the Early Helladic. At the same time, the spread of finds seems too wide for simple halo and off-site activity around the Magoula village; and it is anyway to be doubted whether manuring into the topsoil, during the Bronze Age, would allow good preservation of datable pieces (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 1999). All this points to buried settlement and/or cemetery contexts for the Middle and Late Helladic sherds mapped. One could even suggest that the overall settlement pattern represents a very limited resumption of that combination of a degree of nucleation with a dispersal of satellite farms across the surrounding countryside, that had characterized the Final Neolithic/Early Helladic era.

Even if the duration of the Late Helladic era was only about two-fifths of that of Early Helladic, a simple comparison allowing for the different lengths of the periods will still show Early Helladic to advantage, as the era of the denser activity level, whether at the Magoula nucleus or in the wider city area. But the 'visibility threshold' argument, in particular, urges caution in accepting that this reflects the reality: it should be no more than a working hypothesis. We shall be in a stronger position to test this hypothesis

as our final publications spread spatially, around the several other districts of Boeotia that we have surveyed. We can however make a first comparison with the rural landscape immediately to the south of the city grid, the LSE-THS survey sector published in *Testing the Hinterland*. Here, in an area of 5.2 sq. km between Thespiai and the prehistoric nucleation of Palaeokarandas, we recorded very little Late Helladic and even less Middle Helladic activity, especially by contrast to Final Neolithic/Early Helladic; but not a total absence either. A possible model might consist of two hamlets, 2 km apart, Thespiai Magoula and Palaeokarandas (the latter seems to remain a significant nucleation in LH), with a thin scatter of satellite farms over the intervening countryside. The relatively sparse Late Helladic finds from the nucleus at Thespiai hardly seem to form an adequate basis for that enhancement which we would expect, if it represented the formalization of a significant political entity and its territory within the larger world of the Mycenaean palaces at Thebes and Orchomenos (compare pp. 75–6).

Fortunately, the monograph of our colleague Emeri Farinetti (Farinetti 2011) offers new insights into the spatial realities of Thespiai's relationship with known larger Mycenaean centres in Central Greece. From her calculations of 2.5- and 5-km walking catchments (employing GIS cost-distance analysis – Fig. 3.51), it is clear that the major LH site of Eutresis,

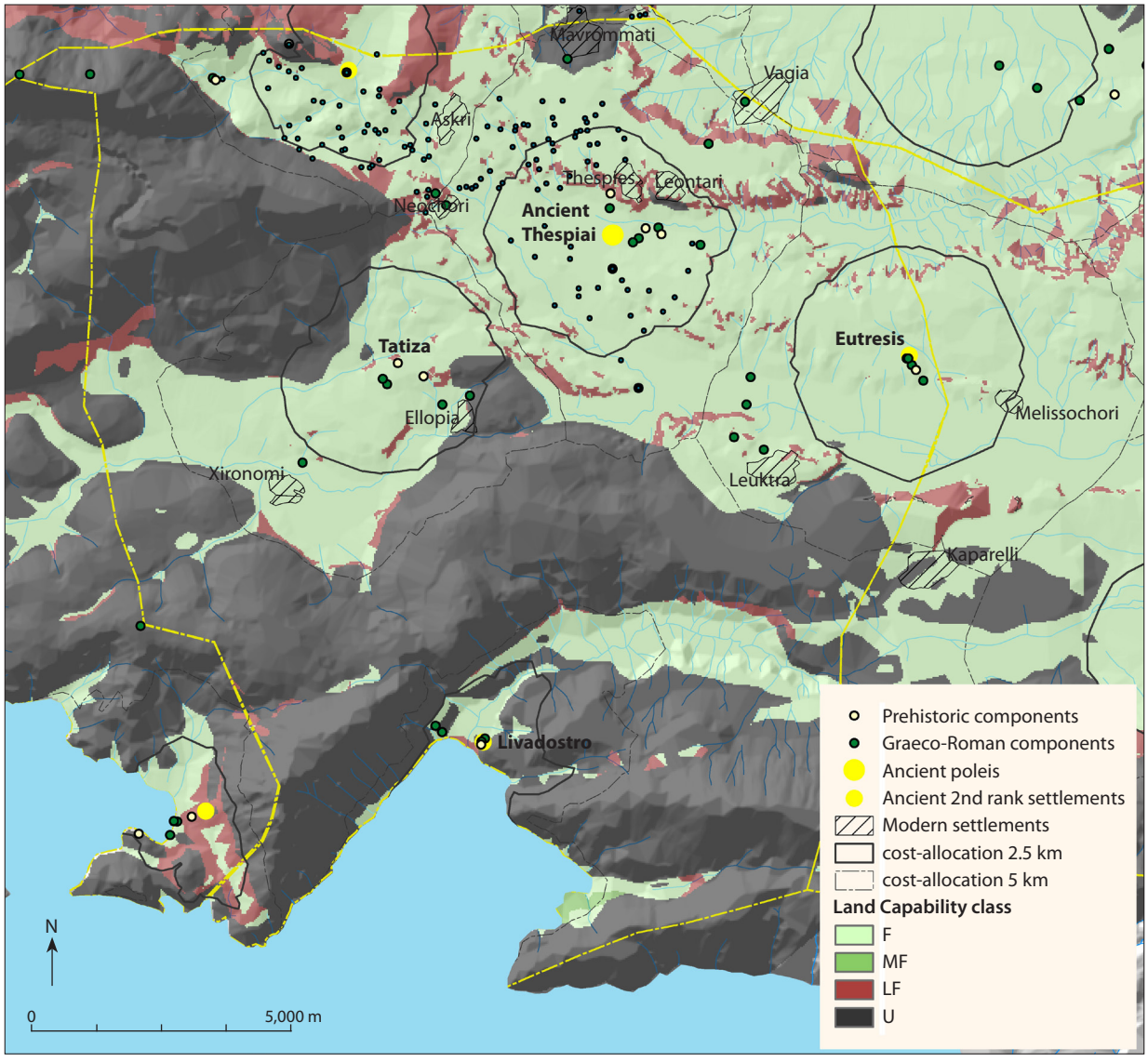


Figure 3.51. *Half-hour and one-hour walking distances, indicated by concentric polygons, around major sites in south-western Boeotia (Farinetti 2011: 164, Fig. 8).*

to the east of our city location, has a natural one-hour / 5-km radial border with Thespiai (a likely maximum for the exploitation of territory by an agriculturally focused community); the same will hold true for Haliartos to the north-west, which lies off this map. Thus within the settlement zone of Thespiai no significant LH centre is known; we have merely hamlets and farms. In this same distinct settlement district, apart from the small nucleus at Thespiai, there is the further minor nucleation at Palaeokarandas a mere 2 km to its south, and another small focus to the west at site VM4, just west of modern Askra village and some 6 km distant. The apparent subdivision of territory into smaller units here suits the small scale of the agglomerations. We can conclude that the rise of major palatial centres at Thebes – a settlement estimated at 33 ha – and, most probably, at Orchomenos, had no very intense impact, at least in positive terms, on the outlying rural landscapes, whether in stimulating population rise, settlement hierarchies, or a greater production of surplus agricultural products.

Moreover, even neighbouring Eutresis may mislead, by reason of its extensive Mycenaean defences. This secondary centre, with a circuit wall enclosing 21 ha, may have contained a far smaller zone of dense occupation (3.5 ha, after Goldman 1931: 68). If Goldman's assessment is correct, the fortifications must have been designed to shelter a dispersed regional population, rather than a single large community.

Bronze Age (and 'Bronze Age?') plus Bronze Age all (and 'Bronze Age all?')

The first map (Fig. 3.52) shows the generic Bronze Age sherds that were not definable within a narrower phase, the second (Fig. 3.53) combines these with all finds in the series of Bronze Age period maps just discussed. These maps reinforce a number of observations earlier made. In the 'generic' map, the Magoula locality is barely a focus, and there is a clearer emphasis on the small cluster in two grid units to the far north-east, best linked (according to our more precisely dated finds) with the Early Helladic and Middle Helladic periods. The very thin but widespread pieces elsewhere across the grid are probably mostly from the dispersed EH phase and, to a lesser degree, from the more limited scatters in LH beyond the Magoula locality.

The combined Bronze Age map underlines these trends with a far larger data-base. Perhaps the other important addition that the generic Bronze Age finds make to our picture, even if a good proportion of them can be given a plausible date, is to add some body to the thinner but more closely dated finds, so reinforcing

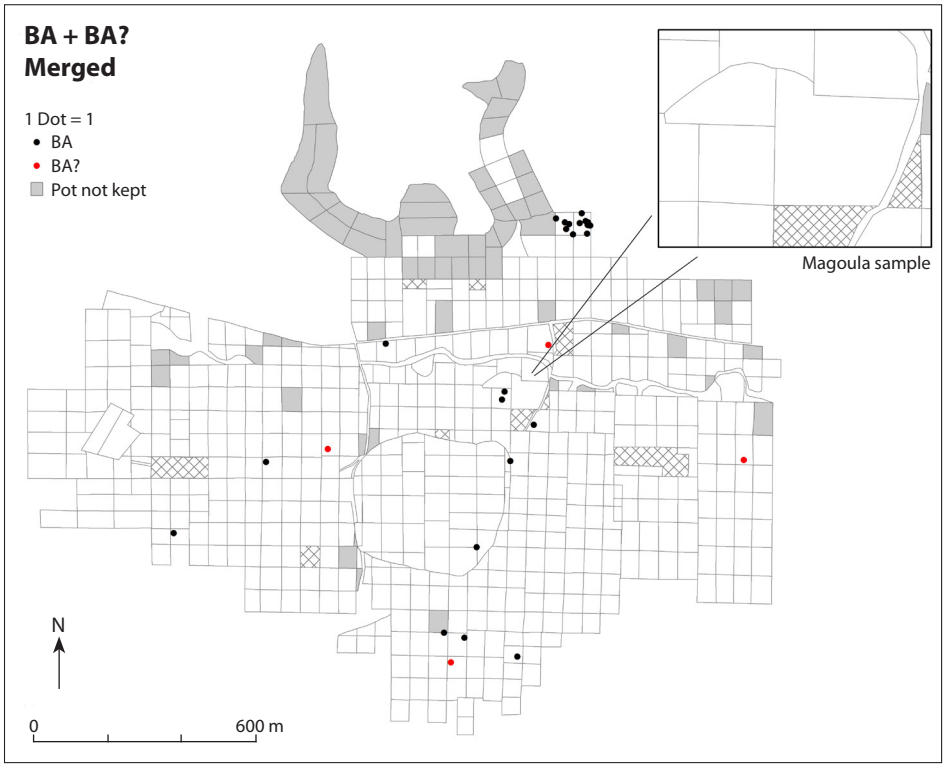


Figure 3.52. *Distribution of generic Bronze Age (and 'Bronze Age?') sherds.*

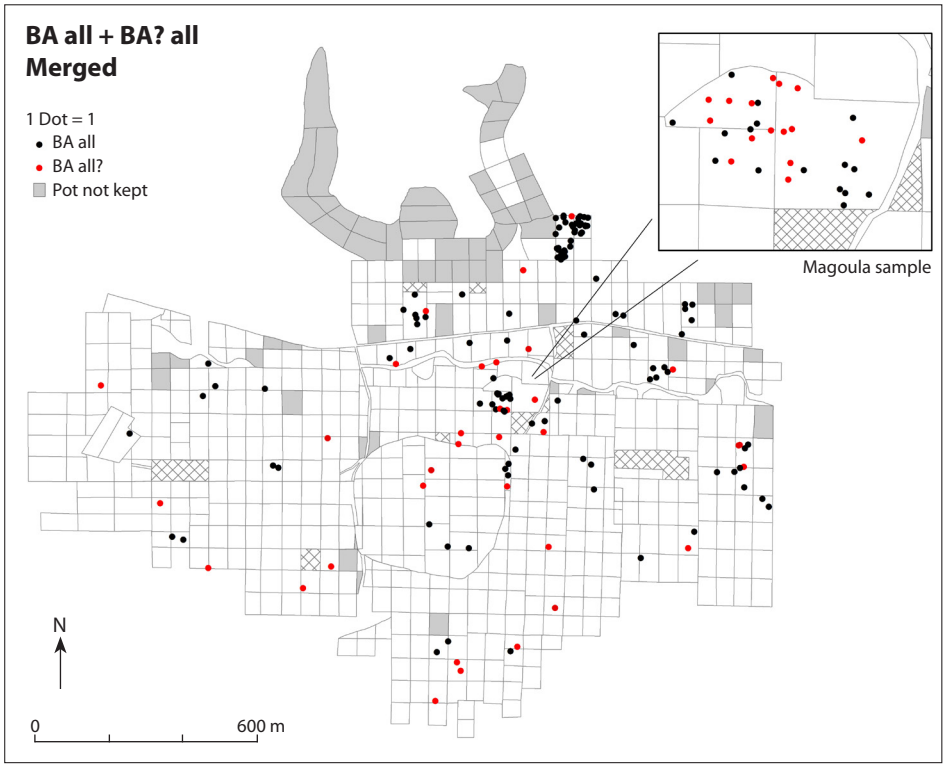


Figure 3.53. *Combined distribution of generic and more closely-dated Bronze Age sherds.*

the pattern of a 'taskscape' of dispersed prehistoric activity all across the later city area. The poverty of finds in the later city centre is, as always, considerably affected by the dense overlay of historical material.

Prehistoric (and 'Prehistoric?') plus Prehistoric all (and 'Prehistoric? all')

The generic 'Prehistoric' sherds (those that could not be more closely dated) show a wide spread (Fig. 3.54), but the dominance of the Magoula is clear-cut with, in second place, the focus in the north-east of the map. The Magoula finds must be primarily Neolithic, with lesser contributions from the Bronze Age, especially the EH; the northern cluster we have seen to be mostly created in EH and MH times. The remaining scatters seem essentially FN, with lesser contributions from EH and LH. Once again, the generic Prehistoric gives valuable reinforcement to the trends seen in the plots of the sub-phases, in terms of both pattern and numerical representation.

The combined generic and specific Prehistory sherd map (Fig. 3.55) is, equally clearly, a summation of all the trends we have seen in the generic and period-based Bronze Age and the generic Prehistoric find distributions. Even the inclusion of the scatters of all prehistoric finds from the city centre area merely reflects their rare and random survival, amid the massed sherds of historical date.

Lithics (Fig. 3.56)

This category consists essentially of small tools and processing chips in obsidian and chert, which must be largely of Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age date. The pattern suggests a natural concentration at the Magoula, deriving from the dominant Neolithic settlement, and the far more dispersed scatter from the Bronze Age eras. Given the absence of any concentrations outside of the Magoula area, one is tempted to date most of the recovered lithics in the wider city area to the FN and EH eras too, although stone tools were still in less prominent use throughout the MH and LH periods. But the extreme difficulty that many field-walkers have in seeing stone tools should warn us against expecting too much, from surface finds dominated by astonishing quantities of ceramics. The rich Neolithic surface of the Magoula, with low-level historical overlays to cope with, made the recognition of lithics there a far easier task.

The prehistoric periods: summary

The general picture offers three successive modes of activity within the site of the later city. First, for an

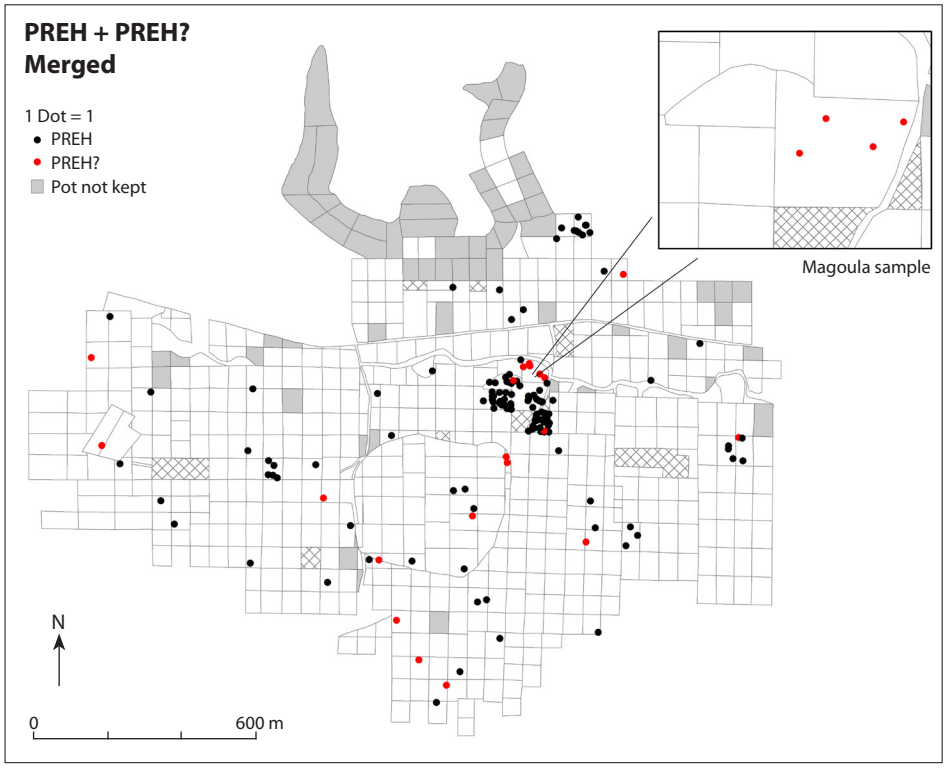


Figure 3.54. *Distribution of generic Prehistoric sherds.*

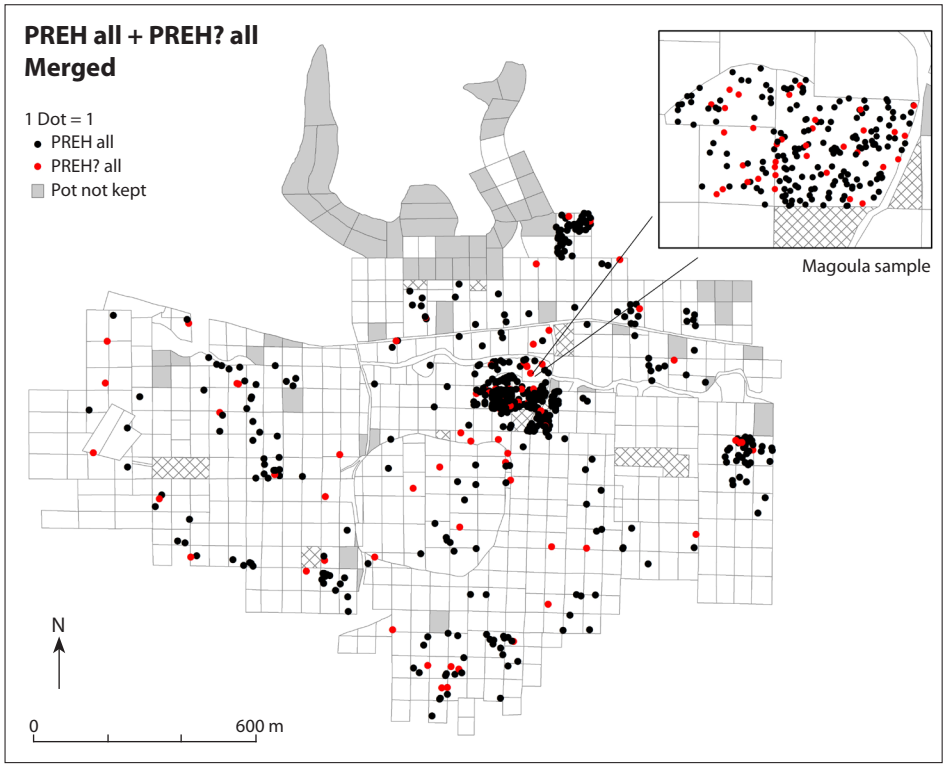


Figure 3.55. *Combined distribution of generic and more closely-dated Prehistoric sherds.*

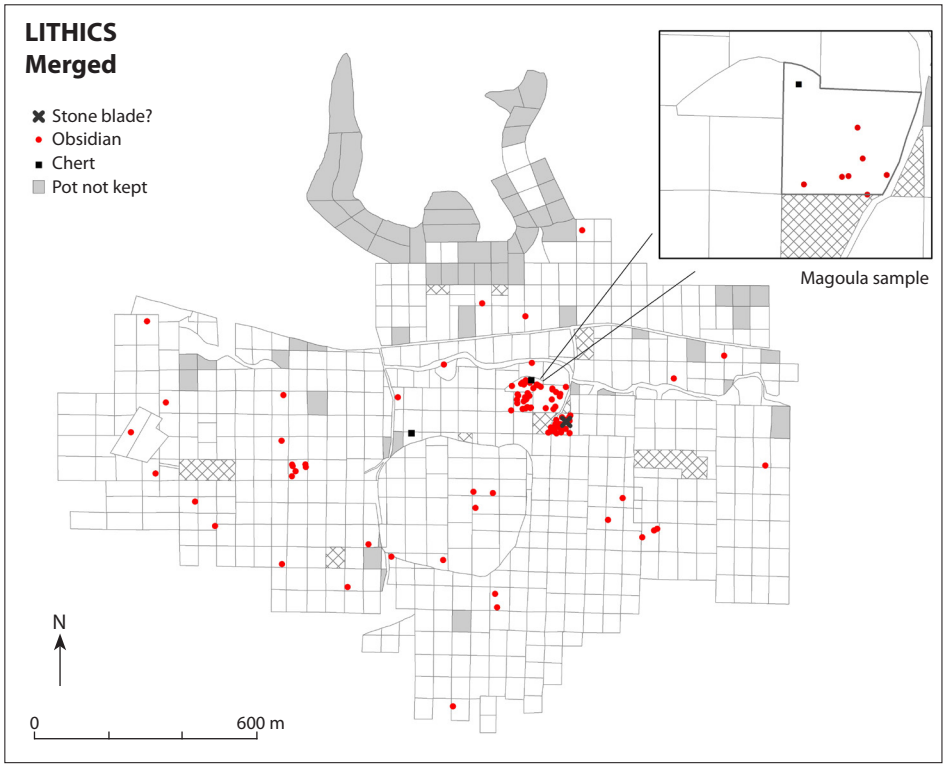


Figure 3.56. *Distribution of lithic finds: obsidian and chert.*

extremely long period (the span from Early to Late Neolithic potentially covers 2000 years), the Magoula hillock contains a nucleated hamlet with rich ceramic deposits. The area of dense finds, confined to some 1.25 ha, conforms to the small dimensions of typical Balkan Neolithic tells and suggests that the inhabitants would have numbered no more than a couple of hundred people at the most and probably less (Perlès 2001). Inter-marriage with other contemporary villages and hamlets would have been necessary for demographic health and survival. By comparison with Thessaly, where villages were rather close to each other, further south in mainland Greece they appear to have lain further apart (compare Bintliff 2012, Chapter 3): our local evidence conforms to this pattern, with Site VM 4, lying some 6 km to the west in the Valley of the Muses, forming the nearest contemporary site so far confirmed. This pairing, incidentally, closely parallels and anticipates the later, long-term pairing of a village in the Valley and a town at Thespiai.

In the Final Neolithic and Early Helladic eras, the explosion of dispersed human activity over the entire area of the city survey can be linked to the similarly widely dispersed and contemporary deposition of finds recorded in the LSE/THS survey district, the immediately adjacent countryside to its south. Although the Magoula may have remained a small settlement in FN and grown back to a hamlet in EH, we have interpreted the wider scatter as reflecting shifting farmsteads and graves, over a period of possibly 2500 years.

In Middle to Late Helladic times, a pronounced tendency to settlement nucleation is detected, with several focal localities within the city survey grid: in both Middle and Late Helladic, the general vicinity of the Magoula forms one of these; for Late Helladic the pattern perhaps suggests a single dispersed hamlet in the wider Magoula sector, with lesser activity or settlement foci in the overall city grid. The emphasis on kin-groups within larger nucleated communities, found more widely in Middle Helladic Greece and detected in tumulus burial groups and in other cases of multi-focal settlements (most notably Argos), invites comparison with the hypothetical pattern for Thespiai. This deserves further investigation, especially since such horizontal differentiation appears to be a factor in the ensuing growth of a vertical social differentiation, with the emergence of leading families in the final Middle Helladic and earlier Late Helladic phases (Wiersma 2013). Yet our clusters seem more appropriate to distinct family groupings and no more. Nonetheless, slight Middle Helladic traces elsewhere on the grid, and a clearer dispersal of Late Helladic

finds, are interpreted here as likely evidence for a few rural farms in the former period and a stronger revival of satellite farmsteads in the latter.

To translate these tenuous finds into relative population estimates would be unjustified: the most that could be said is that the relatively short duration of the Late Helladic phase, taken together with the distribution of its material around the Magoula, barely hints at a Mycenaean hamlet no larger than its Neolithic and Bronze Age predecessors: so far, none of our estimates exceed a couple of hundred inhabitants, at the most, for any prehistoric phase. For the Final Neolithic/Early Helladic period, the density of contemporary satellite farms is especially difficult to calibrate, given the period's immense length and the likelihood that much of the generic 'Bronze Age' and 'Prehistoric' material should be added to that formally dated to this era. The multiple hamlets and fewer rural sites of the Middle Helladic era point to a smaller total population than that of Late Helladic, with its evidently more focused central hamlet, together with a minor re-expansion in rural activity, but the differences are slight. Once again, such a pattern would agree with that of the LSE/THS sector to the south.

Given the relatively slight distances involved in movement within the city grid, the 'friction of distance' factor, according to which rural farms might have been found more profitable than village residence, can hardly lie behind the expansions and contractions of activity traces. If the Neolithic restriction to the Magoula went together with a form of early hoe-farming, concentrated on 'garden-culture' in and around the Kanavaris valley, the subsequent Final Neolithic/Early Helladic expansion, into the entire surrounding landscape, nevertheless calls for more than merely eco-technological explanations. The local adoption of traction-drawn ard ploughs, ox-carts and the secondary products of herd animals, must admittedly be a prime reason for the visible taking in of a wider landscape, much of which was at that time suitable only for dry farming. Yet the Magoula remained a mere 10 to 15 minutes' walk from the outermost edges of the city grid; so that attitudes to land-holding may, we think, have been equally relevant to the suspected change in settlement and land-use. According to the generally accepted interpretation of the dispersed pattern of small settlements in the Early Bronze Age, seen equally in Crete, the Cyclades and the Greek mainland, it was dominated by apparently relatively short-lived farms of family size, in use for generations rather than centuries. Families then moved on to a different area, cultivating fresh or previously fallowed land to obtain higher yields. Such a system would imply plentiful availability of land and an absence of fixed-plot ownership. A social elite, if one existed in this era, would exercise its control over labour and surplus rather than land, since the former was a limited resource, the latter not. We are led the conclusion that populations would have been low, relative to carrying capacity.

The returning emphasis on nucleation in Middle and Late Helladic takes two forms. In Middle Helladic, the several foci could perhaps represent either kinship groups, or families clustered around a small-scale leader on the model of the 'Big Man': multiple burials within a tumulus elsewhere have been seen as an argument for the latter alternative. But there is continuing debate amongst prehistorians as to whether the MH era on the Greek mainland was characterized by any form of social stratification (at least until the latter part of the period, with the development of complex tumuli, *tholoi* and Shaft Graves; cf. Bintliff 2012, Chapter 6). Sporadic rural finds may indicate that hamlet settlement did not exclude the adoption of occasional farmsteads nearby. An alternative interpretation, for both Middle and Late Helladic, could be that such finds mark rural burials, on land cultivated by inhabitants of the nucleated settlements, but this is harder to equate with the excavated evidence indicating intramural, or communal extra-mural, burial as the norms in both eras. We would therefore tend to assign these scattered rural finds either simply to farms, or to farms plus family graves.

The slightly larger spread of finds for the Late Helladic hamlet, with its equally slightly enhanced satellite activity, is unlikely to represent the smallest form of spatially defined 'community' that is recognized and exploited in the contemporary palatial archives: defined groups of people in specific locations, with duties but also with private economic roles (Halstead 1992). Nonetheless, by this stage some concept of private and public land holding could, we suggest, have existed, even in such small settlements. The available ceramic evidence can hardly represent a community so enlarged as to require intensive cultivation of all the land available, on every side, between itself and the next nucleated site (in each case several kilometres distant, as our wider survey suggests). Rather than land-shortage, therefore, we believe that it was some socio-legal régime of this type that operated in favour of a primarily nucleated residence for the farmers of the area.

The relatively short duration of the Middle and Late Helladic periods combined – probably less than 1000 years – and the scarcity of finds from these periods, make a direct comparison with those of the preceding phases, as an indication of population

Table 3.6. *Breakdown of find numbers, per Sector, of the four generic phases.*

Merged	PREH	PG to HELL	Hell–R to MR	R–LR and LR	MED to Post-MED
Sector 1	30	529	211	186	88
Sector 2	43	550	326	383	108
Sector 3	24	268	271	142	57
Sector 4	593	189	311	453	57
Sector 5	22	179	619	1392	67
Sector 6	3	111	64	119	10
Sector 7	39	315	138	187	48
Sector 8	72	289	169	171	220
Sector 9	70	305	636	965	413
Sector 10	41	166	39	66	225

dynamics, hard to achieve. The dispersed settlement of the Early Helladic era itself, if we are correct in postulating for it many small, short-lived settlements, is equally hard to evaluate. It is therefore worth while returning, for a closer look, to the issue of sampling at the city site. Table 3.6 repeats the findings of the Sector Analysis (see pp. 44–8) for the varying percentages, per Sector, of the four main clusters of periods across the surveyed city area.

A clear trend is visible. Sector 4 shows a major anomaly of high prehistoric finds that is almost entirely due to the material from the Magoula locality. The remaining nine sectors fall into two contrasting classes, in respect of their representation of prehistoric material: the sectors closest to the Magoula have the most density of prehistoric finds, by comparison with that of the outer zones, the elevated Sectors being in order 4, 8, 9 then 2, 7 and 10. Despite the highest density of later occupation in the inner zones, this might suggest that activity was especially connected to the original settlement core at the Magoula.

We have already (pp. 48–51) presented the evidence from the small number of grid units surveyed twice in successive years, showing the effect exercised by sample size on the representation of prehistoric and other less common periods, with fuller collection favouring the discovery of more prehistoric finds. Comparison of the two years showed the total count of sherds, collected from the five grid units together, changing from 42 to 239, a factor of difference of 5.7. Still more decisive was the jump in the representation and subsequent recognition of prehistoric material: from zero to 31 sherds! We also found that, simultaneously and quite independently, a different factor may also be in operation, with its own filtering effect: once the global density of finds from the dominant periods rises above certain absolute levels, it significantly reduces the collection of lesser periods. On these data, if for the sake of argument we were to assume that prehistoric finds were roughly equally spread across the city grid (always excepting the special locality in Sector 4), then a location within the core of the later city, as opposed to the extramural sectors, will have cut the 'visibility' of prehistoric sherds by over 50 per cent.

Putting all this together, we would argue that the size of a sample collection of sherds, on a multi-period site, is one critical filter in the recognition of lesser periods. Not that this is a geometrical progression: it is simply that small samples may miss such periods altogether. But to this a further filter can now be added: this is, that the enormous rise in the density of sherds, as we enter the core area of an ancient city, changes the underlying balance of finds of different periods from that observable in the immediate extramural zones, so that the chances of lesser periods being picked up are systematically reduced. When one studies the occurrence of prehistoric finds on many medium to large Greco-Roman settlements, it is a common observation that their distribution gives a sporadic, apparently almost arbitrary impression, apart from the occasional rich locality which has either survived later burial, or been more recently revealed through the stripping of surface soil. At Thespiai, the prehistoric richness of the Magoula locality is probably the result of the operation of both factors.

It is probably not going too far, however, to propose that the total population of the locality of the later city of Thespiai was never, at any point in farming prehistory, on a scale greater than that of a village. This would imply that, even in times when 'central places' or perhaps state centres existed within Boeotia as a whole, Thespiai was not one of them: rather, it would have been a rural satellite to larger sites in this part of west-central Boeotia. It is interesting that other towns since studied in the course our Project, namely Tanagra and Koroneia, have a similar disjunction between a prehistoric existence as a rural village or hamlet, lying between major contemporary settlements, and a later rise to the status of a city-state, beginning from the borderline of history in Late Geometric to Archaic times.

Elsewhere in the wider surveyed areas beyond the city grid, we have a possibly larger Bronze Age hamlet 2 km to the south (at Palaeokarandas); another sizeable settlement some 6–7 km to the west (at Askra in Early Helladic, then in Middle and Late Helladic times at nearby Site VM 4); and finally a major Bronze Age site at the later city of Haliartos, almost 10 km

to the north-west. Beyond our research zone, the well-known prehistoric site of Eutresis lies 7 km to the south-east. The leading question is how far, if at all, these neighbouring nucleations could be seen as exercising political power over the Thespiai village communities.

Current discussions of settlement hierarchies in Early Bronze Age Greece include Thebes as a central place; but, at well over 15 km from Thespiai, Thebes is rather too distant to be seen as a centre able to control, in Early Helladic times, such a large territory as that would imply. For Middle Helladic times, there is less ground for belief in regional centres. Only in the mature Mycenaean era might rural Thespiai be expected to fall under the control of a palatial centre. As argued in Chapter 5, the available evidence suggests that the locality of Thespiai may have belonged to the territory of the palace of Thebes at this period. That local affairs at the hamlet/village level were mediated through a secondary, non-palatial centre such as Eutresis or Haliartos seems a possibility.

The flourishing of Mycenaean civilization in the Late Helladic III phase depended on a general expansion of population in the landscape, if one generally focused on towns, nucleated hamlets and villages rather than, as in the Early Helladic, in farm sites. The city survey area and the landscape around it conform to this model in at least one respect, with nucleated foci round the Magoula on the city site, at Palaeokarandas 2 km to its south, and at Site VM 4 and Haliartos to the west and north-west respectively. But in the intervening countryside there are few examples of other, lesser foci of activity, assumed to be farms, together with the even rarer sites of presumed military or religious function, for example on the exposed Pyrgaki hill above Askra. There is in fact no evidence, from the dangerously small city survey sample, that activity in Late Helladic showed a genuine increase over that for Middle Helladic. Our suggestion of a multi-focal hamlet cluster for the earlier period and a small, more focused hamlet for the later does not, therefore, carry any implication of a rise in population, at least in this locality. In any case, the different form of settlement proposed for Early Helladic makes the contrast between it and either of these successor-periods a misleading one, as earlier noted; while the longer period for the deposition of finds also affects any comparison. In our view, however, not even the Early Helladic data suggest a significant population on the later city site. This conclusion is supported when we look at the denser, yet still quite extensive, Bronze Age evidence from the nearest larger villages of Palaeokarandas and Askra/Site VM 4, forming a contrast with that from Thespiai. It could be countered that Palaeokarandas has no notable later historical finds to limit sample recovery; but the Bronze Age material at Askra does indeed suffer massive later swamping from Greco-Roman and other, slighter finds.

The picture remains one in which the later city of Thespiai exemplifies continuous, small-scale rural occupation over millennia of prehistory, without demonstrable major population fluctuations. The changes registered seem rather to reflect the manner in which populations were distributed across the landscape, influenced first by technological and later by socio-political factors. The rise of the first culture based on true regional centres, those located in Mycenaean Thebes and Orchomenos, shows a surprising lack of visible evidence for any stimulus to growth on the part of Thespiai.

Two provisional comments might finally be made. On the one hand, current reappraisals of Aegean landscape archaeology emphasize the diversity of pathways taken in different regions, even in different smaller districts, in the longer term (Dickinson 1982; Bintliff 1997a; Cherry and Davis 2001). Perhaps the Boeotia Project, when publication of all the areas surveyed is complete, may be able to attest to a genuine rise in the numbers and size of Late Helladic sites; but alternatively it may be that, for remoter districts, palatial authority was content to exploit existing resources rather than increase the productivity of its territory, and so was less of a stimulus to growth. Certainly, as pointed out in Chapter 5, there is a clear absence of Mycenaean fortification in the Thespiai district, to say nothing of the large fortified central places at close intervals, such as we find in the Mycenaean heartland of the Plain of Argos (Bintliff 1977; Marzolff 2004). Those centres which do exist in south-western Boeotia are also further apart (Eutresis, Haliartos), perhaps implying a less developed political and economic landscape. In the light of a recent tendency to see the Mycenaean palace-states as balancing a state economy against a major private economy (Halstead 1992), such regional contrasts appear less surprising.

If Thebes controlled as large a territory as the Linear B tablets from its palatial administration indicate (Dakouri-Hild 2005), then it will have relied on a cumulative wealth in manpower and food production from its rural dependencies. All the more interesting that its supposed rival power in the west of Boeotia, Orchomenos, undertook an immense reclamation project in Lake Kopais (Iakovidis 2001), in order to increase its far less favourable natural resources and smaller territory (on which see Farinetti 2011, especially Chapters II.3.4, II.3.12).

Needless to say, the listing of 'Thespeia' in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, at *Iliad* ii 249, seems wholly incompatible with the minor hamlet of actuality revealed in our archaeological survey; the passage as a whole is better understood as referring to cities of importance in the eighth century BC, in or close to Homer's lifetime: compare Fossey 1997 for further discussion.

The historical Greek periods

Merged Late Helladic–Early Iron Age, Early Iron Age, Protogeometric and Geometric (Fig. 3.57)
Early Iron Age–Geometric/Archaic, Late Geometric, Late Geometric/Archaic, and Geometric/Archaic (Fig. 3.58)
Since there are so few closely dated pieces from the Early Iron Age, we can begin by discussing these two related distribution maps together. Only one definite Protogeometric sherd, from a Transect some 150 m east of the *Kastro* (this from an era that extended from *c*. 1050 to 900 BC), does duty for this most fugitive of periods. Even with our previous suggestion that the area around the Magoula had formed only a dispersed hamlet or small village in the Late Helladic period, the evidence for some level of continuity through this era is of the weakest kind.

Within the broader Early Iron Age – extending from *c*. 1050 to 690 BC and covering the Protogeometric, Early, Middle and Late Geometric ceramic phases – the only other sub-phase which can be separately distinguished is that of Late Geometric, roughly the period 750–690 BC. The scant LG finds (11 sherds in all) are still found around the Magoula, but also in the later *Kastro* (the focus of the Classical city centre), with two further pieces from just outside and south-east of the *Kastro*, which might be added to the emerging core zone. The rare pieces from the outer south-western, eastern and north-eastern grid units are in locations later to become regular extramural cemetery zones for the city.

Even for the much broader grouping of 'Geometric', *c*. 900–690 BC, just two definite pieces are plotted and one possible; but significantly they come from the Magoula vicinity and the same far eastern locality just noted for LG. Wider still, and fortunately more fully represented, is the category termed 'Early Iron Age' (Fig. 3.57), made up of pieces which could belong anywhere in the three centuries from Protogeometric to the end of Geometric. Once more, a potential group appears around the Magoula and *Kastro*, especially to their east, with singletons in future burial zones in the far west, south and (again) the far east; but several

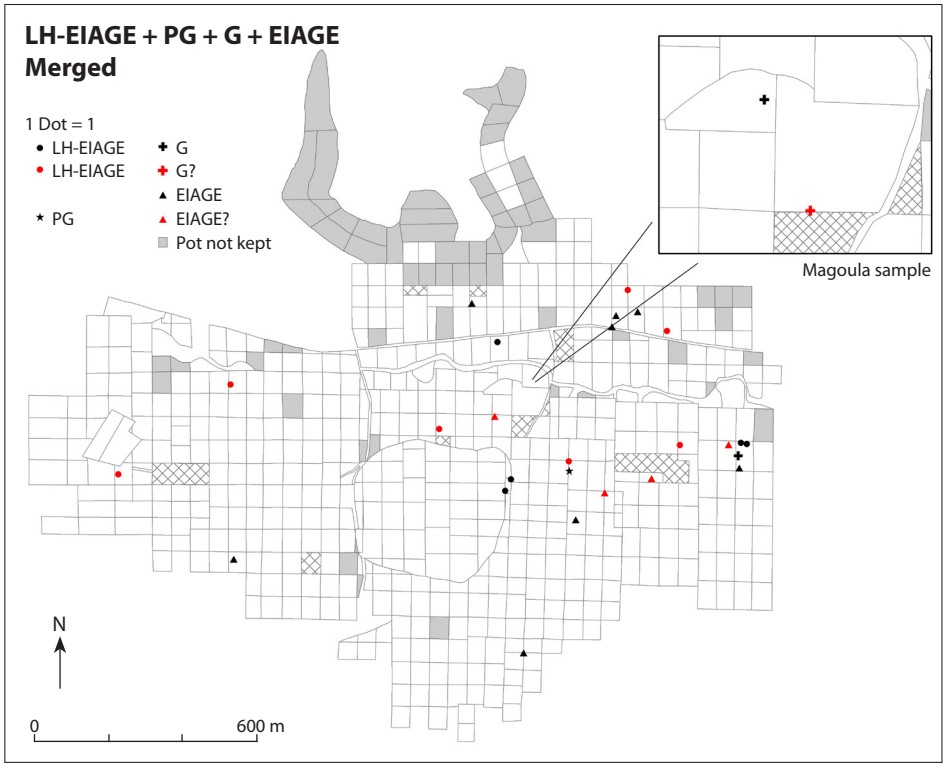


Figure 3.57. *Combined distribution of Late Helladic / Early Iron Age, Early Iron Age, Proto-geometric and Geometric sherds, together with 'possible' finds.*

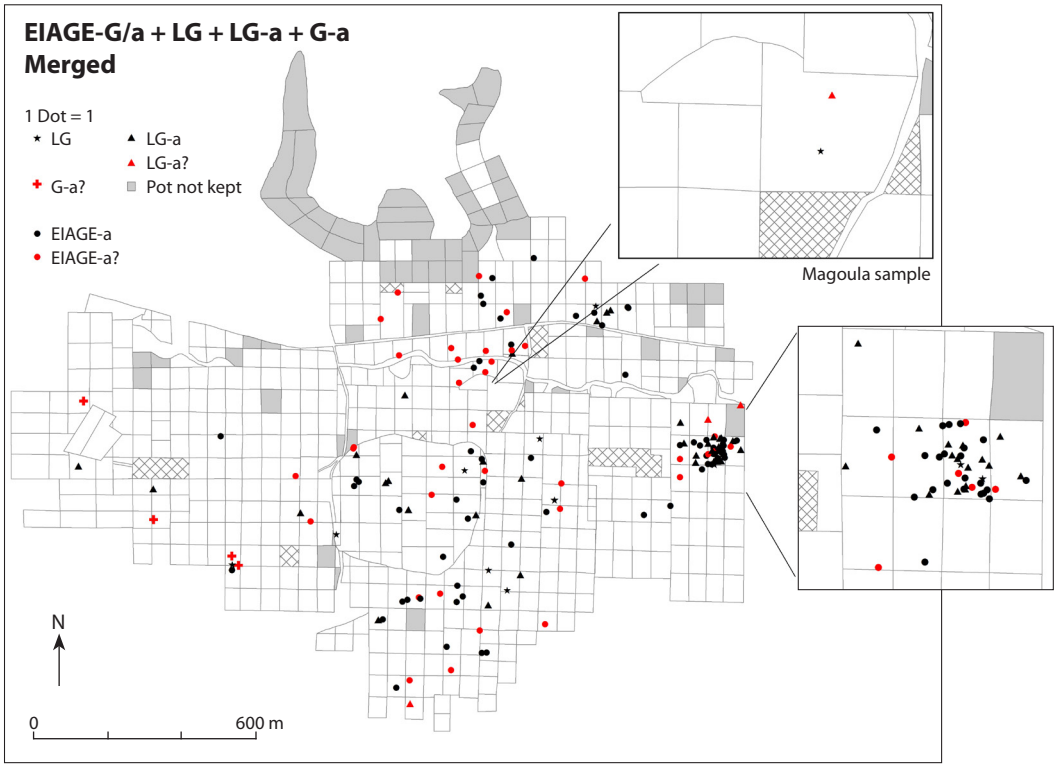


Figure 3.58. *Combined distribution of Early Iron Age / Archaic, Geometric / Archaic and Late Geometric / Archaic sherds, together with 'possible' finds.*

pieces also appear across the Kanavaris stream, in the later cemetery zones to the north and north-east. The eastern scatter also appears once again.

A vaguer category still is the 'Late Helladic to Early Iron Age' (Fig. 3.57), which has quite a few pieces, but unfortunately covers a very wide chronological swathe. The core zone from the *Kastro* and Magoula eastwards is marked, as also the later cemetery zones in the outer west, north-east, and east. Two final groups cause different problems, as they cross over from the pre- and proto-historic phases so far discussed into the following, early historical phase of the Archaic (*c.* 690–500 BC). These are the 'Early Iron Age to Archaic' and 'Late Geometric to Archaic' (Fig. 3.58). Taken together, these groups already sketch in almost all of the later Archaic to Classical city, from the core zone which runs from west of the *Kastro* through the *Kastro* units; and again from the Magoula vicinity southwards, as far as the grid units immediately south of the *Kastro*. At the same time, they significantly fill out the area of later cemeteries, to the north-east and (possibly) north, to the east and south. As yet however activity remains sparse in the areas west of the *Kastro*, as far as the later peripheral western cemetery zone.

The limited numbers of finds for the post-Bronze Age and pre-Archaic eras make any clear interpretation problematic. In fact, the positively datable finds from the end of the mature Mycenaean (LH III B) to the start of Late Geometric amount to precisely two! It is also clear that, by comparison to the Archaic, there is as yet no sign of a solid block of urban occupation. We could imagine (cf. Snodgrass 1991a) either a model in which a core village expands in size from Protogeometric times into Archaic within the Magoula-*Kastro* area and its immediate east, in which case the peripheral finds would merely anticipate their later role as cemeteries; or, preferring the 'Thucydidean' model, we could posit a town developing through the synoecism or merger of a series of close-spaced small rural communities, eventually to form a fairly solid built-up area of public and private structures by the end of Archaic times or early Classical times, when a defence wall finally enclosed it (see pp. 90–92). The relative distance of the small outlying areas of finds from the scatters in the later city core make more sense if we see the former as separate hamlet-plus-burial localities. The far eastern cluster of finds, especially, and the lesser focus in the outer north-east zone, might well mark favoured areas of burial (and perhaps of settlement too?), at a distance from the finds in the later central core of the city. The eastern cluster is not too far from the rural cemetery further east along the

Thebes road, known to have been in use already in Archaic times, into which the Classical public monument or *Polyandrion* would be inserted for the city's war dead. These comments are echoed in the ceramic chapter by Vladimir Stissi (Chapter 11).

We are inclined to favour this dispersed hamlet model, notably exhibited in the equivalent pre-Archaic finds from Athens, Corinth and Argos, as well as elsewhere. When, as in these latter, better-documented towns, the town grew into a contiguous settled core area, the outlying hamlets reverted to purely funerary functions. This model would also require that any burial practised in association with the core hamlet would have been banned, once the formal boundaries of the built-up town had been defined, no doubt at some point in Archaic times, and definitively once the city wall was constructed.

The scale of the Early Iron Age settlement is obviously hard to estimate. For sure, the usual overlay of Classical Greek and Roman limits the chances of Early Iron Age material appearing on the surface; as with the prehistoric finds from earlier millennia, we can safely assume that the numbers we recover are but a fraction, not only of those currently on the surface (using the percentage approach explained earlier), but also of the far greater proportion that will lie buried under the stratigraphy of the historical city. As Vladimir Stissi (Chapter 11) comments, it is quite likely that some PG lies hidden within the broader categories of 'EIAGE' and 'EIAGE-a' sherds (more than 220 pieces in all); while the commoner 'LG-a' is also likely to include a substantial proportion of LG (eighth-century) material. These considerations make plausible a denser occupation than our maps might suggest.

Nonetheless, we find it difficult to reconstruct more than a series of small villages or hamlets, scattered widely over the later city area and beyond into the later cemetery zones. Vladimir Stissi, responsible for the dating of the pottery of this whole period, comments that the closely dated pieces are most likely to emanate from burials. The PG and G pieces are far too few to make much of this insight, but by LG times the wide distribution of such pieces would on this view suggest that, at least by the eighth century BC, when it has widely been argued that south Mainland Greek populations rose – if not as dramatically as once believed (Morris 1987, 156–9) – Thespiai had burial zones across the later city core and in all its later major peripheral cemetery sectors to the south, north-east and east – by implication, still accompanied by domestic structures. The dispersed hamlet-small village model could be related to separate kin-groups, possibly associated with leading men or *basileis*. Hesiod, living in nearby Askra at the close of this period, is widely taken to be referring, in his *Works and Days* (39) to the aristocrats of Thespiai as 'bribe-devouring *basileis*', signifying a clearly oligarchical power structure by the end of the Late Geometric. The model we propose might just be the spatial manifestation of such an oligarchic political structure for the town. But the Hesiodic citation would further hint that, by this point, Thespiai must in reality have been a more populous centre than even our LG and LG – A finds indicate, if it was able to control Askra and the Valley of the Muses as well as its own inner *chora*.

Archaic (and 'Archaic?') and Archaic–Classical (Fig. 3.59)
The striking fact is that the full shape of the city, as recognized from the overall Density Maps seen earlier (pp. 51–4), now emerges for the first time.

But there again arises the general problem already encountered earlier in this chapter (see especially pp. 56–9), that of separating out domestic and public occupation from burial and other extramural activities. There is, too, a further complicating factor that now appears for the first time: the demonstrable occurrence of urban manuring activity, heavily focused on the generic 'Archaic–Classical–Early Hellenistic' period (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 23–37). In theory, this might already in Archaic times have created an urban 'halo', stretching out from the built-up area into the surrounding landscape beyond the city survey grid. Yet the numbers of dated Archaic sherds here mapped are relatively limited. Our argument, following Wilkinson (1989), would be that a vigorous regime of urban manuring is a sign of pressure on the land, which hardly suits the Archaic era. Rather, it should be associated with the problems of food and population that came to a head at the time of the demographic peak in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic eras (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985; Bintliff 1997). In our view, then, the Archaic finds are very unlikely to demonstrate systematic agricultural manuring. Waste dumping within and around domestic areas, on the other hand, is actually predicated on the assumption that it was *not* being collected and carted out into the fields of urban farmers. Thus, on the Merged map for the Archaic period, the borders between the occupied areas and the burial zones of this era might well be fringed by waste-disposal haloes.

We return now to the point initially made. It is to be expected that, during the two-century-long Archaic phase, a general transformation of the city would have occurred (Snodgrass 1987–89: 62–4). On the model of other nascent city-states, this would include the more formal structuring of space into the domestic zones, the public sector of *agora*, sanctuaries and civic buildings, and the world of the dead – the cemeteries now

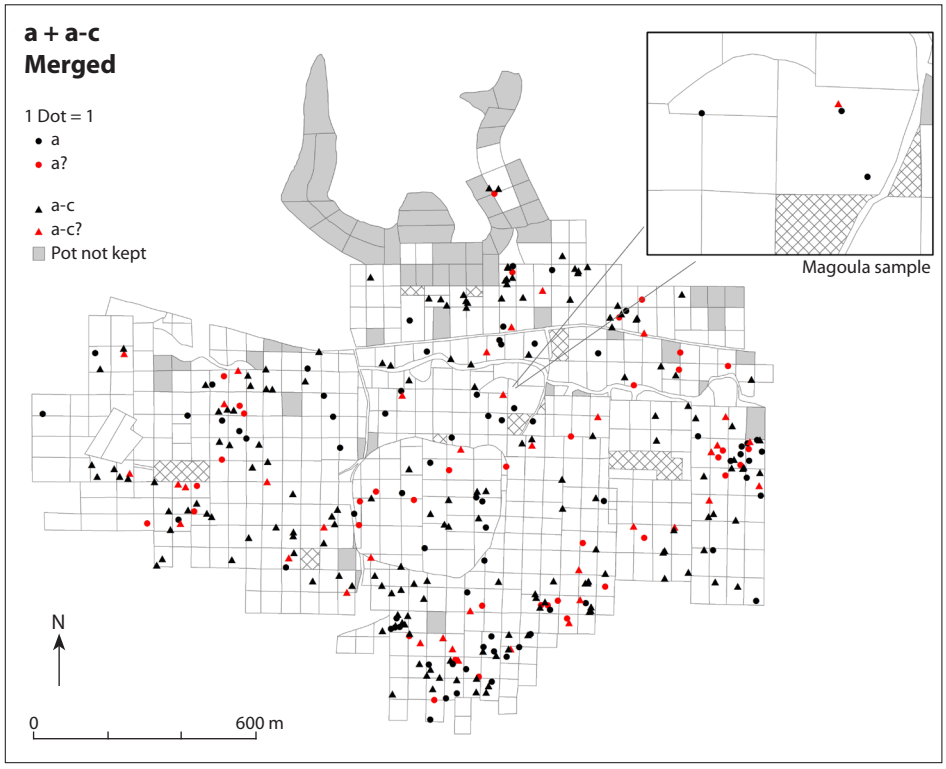


Figure 3.59. *Distribution of Archaic and Archaic / Classical sherds.*

banished beyond the formal boundaries of the town, whether or not this was marked by a fortification circuit before the end of the Archaic era (Hölkeskamp 2004). The historical sources would suggest that during this period, between *c*. 700 and 500 BC, a city of some importance arose at Thespiai (see Chapter 5, pp. 202–4). Nonetheless, the general evidence from city origins elsewhere in the Aegean would suggest that a city wall proper would be unlikely until the very end of Archaic times – as opposed to a refuge wall round an acropolis, something which anyway, in the particular case of Thespiai, did not arise before Late Classical times at the earliest.

We have earlier used the total sherd density maps to suggest where the Classical city of Thespiai ended and the 'countryside' began, in effect bringing all but the very outermost edge of the city grid into non-rural functions. Since then, examination of the immediately preceding periods has suggested that the origins of many, possibly all the later extramural cemetery zones of Classical times can be traced back to a series of small dispersed hamlet-cemeteries of the Geometric and Archaic phases. By the end of the latter phase, in any case, it seems more than likely that a town would have been put in place, with formal cemeteries banished to its fringes.

How far can the Archaic maps flesh out or confirm these expectations? It will probably be generally agreed among specialists (compare Catling (1996)) that the domestic and coarse wares that make up the preponderance of Archaic pottery suffer, like those of the Geometric period, from problems of recognition: even the minority fine wares, when worn, may go unclassified. On the other hand, the general increase in human activity at this time, abundantly documented by rural and urban surveys and excavations in southern Greece, should greatly enhance the sheer quantity of discarded pottery in our site deposits and hence improve its chances of being identified and collected, regardless of any under-representation.

As already noted, the Archaic map agrees in showing a shape which matches quite well the extent of the 'urban' level of density discussed earlier (pp. 51–4). There is a clear structure. The later core of the city, in the *Kastro* and to its east, is surprisingly thin, but then this thin scatter slowly builds up on all sides, centrifugally, until we encounter clear clusters in the known historical cemetery areas in the south, west, east, north and north-east. In the earlier discussion, we already picked out certain peripheral sectors as lying outside the likely built-up area of the historical Greco-Roman city, suggesting that they should

be cemetery zones: these outer groupings of Archaic material largely fall within them. If, in Geometric times, the burials had been grouped around small domestic foci as suggested just now (p. 87), these may have undergone a degree of formalization during the Archaic era. Cemeteries may not generate such massive cumulative deposits over time as do domestic housing areas, and graves may show more respect for earlier interments than the rebuilding of houses permits. But since burials, by their nature, involve the deliberate interment in the subsoil of those artefacts actually placed in the grave, we may still expect them to produce locally enhanced, and significantly more diagnostic, surface finds, such as we have in these localities. Vladimir Stissi's examination of the Archaic to Early Classical finds across the city grid (Chapter 11) has confirmed the likely cemetery concentrations on the urban periphery; while added finds can now be included from the line of the modern east–west road north of the Kanavaris, where the recent Ephoreia excavations have indeed uncovered cemetery finds from the Archaic through to Roman period (Chapter 4, Addendum).

One other observation is not to be neglected. As already pointed out, there is rather little Archaic material recorded from the core of the Classical and Roman to Late Roman community, the probable setting for, successively, the *agora,* then the Forum, and finally the fortified Late Antique *Kastro*, together with the zone immediately to its east where the rest of the Roman to Late Roman community will be found to be concentrated. In these two areas, the distorting effect that the dominance of Roman to Late Roman finds exerts on the material of earlier periods, already repeatedly noted, will once again have operated with the Archaic finds. Less easily accounted for, however, is the relative poverty of Archaic material in the area immediately west of the *Kastro*, which in our view most probably lay within the Classical city wall. A possible inference here is that only in Classical times was this zone progressively in-filled with domestic settlement.

Archaic/Classical (and 'Archaic/Classical?')

On the same map (Fig. 3.59) we display the more prolific material which can belong to either period. The finds offer a broad distribution, but it is even clearer that a broad band, running from east to west through the *Kastro* and the zone immediately to its north – that is, most of the inner part of the survey grid – is thinner in finds than the peripheral zones of the grid.

A comparison with the preceding, purely Archaic distribution shows a significant increase in the numbers of finds. This may in part be accounted for simply by the inclusion of finds which may belong to either one of two successive periods, as well as the (probably fewer) genuinely transitional sherds. In any case this spread, even more than its Archaic predecessor, brings out a ring-like shape for the densest clusters, which in the absence of further evidence could mislead one into imagining a 'O'-shaped town ringing the *Kastro* on all of its sides, with only a small peak in density in the far eastern extremity of the grid. Yet it is precisely in these lower-density areas of the *Kastro* and its immediate vicinity, especially on the eastern side, that the proposed core of the late Archaic and Classical town lies.

We have argued that, from the Archaic period onwards, these outer zones are especially devoted to a ring of cemeteries, lying in every direction outwards from the town, whose built-up area will lie predominantly in the central sectors, with their thinner finds. But there are now other urban activities that can be expected to be carried out beyond the town proper, suburban sanctuaries, craft establishments, scattered suburban homes and market gardens as well as rubbish dumps.

We may have here the counterpart of the explanation just used for a different feature of the Archaic maps: namely, the enhancement in quantity and quality of the pre-Classical and other extramural cemetery finds, by comparison with the those from the domestic and public zones of the city, which then suffered perhaps 12 centuries of direct over-building and overlay of cultural débris. The pre-Classical periods are also particularly affected by the factor of sherd quality, in that our poorer knowledge of coarse and domestic wares, compared to that of fine wares, privileges the latter: this is less true of the Classical, Early Hellenistic and most (but not all, see *infra*) Roman wares.

If the area to the east of the *Kastro* still appears impoverished, we can now see some infilling from the *Kastro* westwards, especially to the south-west, as well as to the south. Across the Kanavaris, the spread is now impressive over most of the grid units: this is noteworthy as probably representing primarily cemetery material, in an area whose western and northern parts will be temporarily converted to domestic and other secular uses by the Hellenistic era, if not before, as we shall be discussing later. Notable, too, is the high ratio of 'definite' to 'possible', compared with the other peripheral cemeteries: this supports the funerary interpretation, and also suggests that this area had less interference, from domestic or cemetery finds of later historical eras, than was often the case elsewhere.

In summary, the early nucleated city, not yet defined by a fortification-wall, is best delineated,

through the filters of taphonomy and ceramic diagnosticity, by its surrounding burial areas. In the core of the built-up area, by contrast, a combination of the immense density of later finds and discriminatory taphonomy and weathering, has acted to play down the evidence from this phase. Nonetheless, the progression from the vestigial Protogeometric, through the intervening phases, to the Archaic and Archaic/Classical shows a continuous and undeniable trend towards more and more widespread human activity over these centuries. By the dawn of the fifth century BC, in our view, a scatter of small hamlets has grown into a single coherent nucleation.

This observation is reinforced by the notable development in the far west of the city area, where significant Archaic and transitional finds mark the fairly abrupt rise of what we have argued to be a major extramural north–south cemetery zone, in an area without many earlier finds. In the recent rescue excavations which cut through the northern extremity of this zone, graves of this era were found, along with those of high Classical and Hellenistic times.

A rise in population, even if only to a level well below the peaks to be reached in later periods, can also be inferred. Here it is worth revisiting the evidence, summarized in *Testing the Hinterland*: 131–2, from the city's territory immediately to the south during the pre-Classical phases. Only a small number of the rural sites – a combination of rural cemeteries, farms and perhaps sanctuaries – produced definite evidence for Geometric or Archaic activity. Inclusion of the 'possible' finds for these categories would enlarge this number several times over, but these are questionable attributions. The Askris Potamos/Palaeokarandas village, further south again, is almost certainly occupied in Archaic times and perhaps slightly earlier.

Classical and 'Classical?' (Fig. 3.60)

The density of finds is still not high and, once again, tends to be concentrated in the outer sectors, except for a focus within and just outside the north-western *Kastro*, which is not readily explained. One potentially relevant factor here is that the civic centre of the ancient town lay in this general vicinity, including what may have been its main temple, already in place from later Archaic times (Chapter 5, p. 203). A higher than usual density of fine, and hence recognisably Classical, pottery might therefore be expected within this sector of the survey grid.

The map shows a continuation of the wide spread already observed in Archaic, incorporating almost all the domestic, public and burial zones that we have

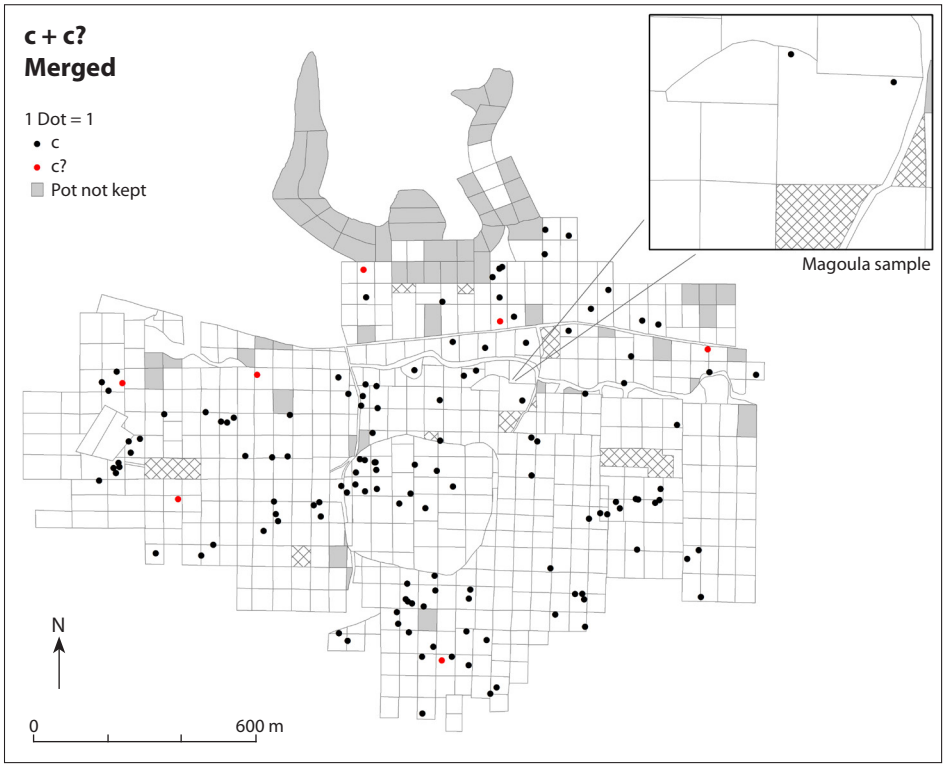


Figure 3.60. *Distribution of Classical (and 'Classical?') sherds.*

hypothesized. Only the outermost eastern sector is strangely neglected in this distribution, losing its cluster of finds from Archaic times: this could perhaps mark merely a change in the popularity of the burial areas over time. Vladimir Stissi, in discussing the Classical finds (Chapter 11), again confirms that the nature of the material recovered points to a ring of cemeteries.

The heavy overlay of material from the built-up Classical city has repeatedly been cited as a cause of under-representation in the earlier occupational débris. But now, despite a further 900 years or so of urban life still to come, the case, based on both historical and archaeological grounds, for setting the demographic peak of the town and its territory in the Classical Greek era would lead us to expect material of the fifth and fourth centuries BC to be a common element throughout intra- and extra-mural grid units. But the clear diagnostic category of 'Classical', as applied to fine wares, is not matched by a similar precision in the case of most coarse or domestic wares. It is now widely held (compare Vladimir Stissi, Chapter 11) that many everyday wares saw little development between Classical and earlier Hellenistic times (*c.* 500–150/100 BC), with this relatively static situation possibly extending not only forwards into the Hellenistic wares, but perhaps also with continuities extending back into the less fine wares of Archaic times.

It will by now be clear why the Classical maps on their own cannot be used to define city edges or functional zones. The patchiness of the finds, the well-attested, varying employment of similar pot forms in domestic, cemetery or religious contexts, the prevalence from this period of radial manuring activity, using urban refuse spread out into the countryside – all these combine to warn us that the functional zoning is something that can only be unravelled by a wide range of evidence from different approaches.

Classical/Hellenistic (and 'Classical/Hellenistic?'), with Classical/Middle Hellenistic (Fig. 3.61), plus Archaic/Hellenistic (and 'Archaic/Hellenistic?') (Fig. 3.62)

Given the very selective nature of the finds that can be precisely dated to the fifth and fourth centuries BC, we may fall back on the far fuller data available for the longer period, extending from Classical through to a mature phase of the Hellenistic era ('C–H'). The end point for the application of this term is not clearly defined, nor are the everyday wares of the last 100–150 years BC so well-known as those of the preceding centuries: they include significant material of Roman origin or style. Currently, however, Vladimir

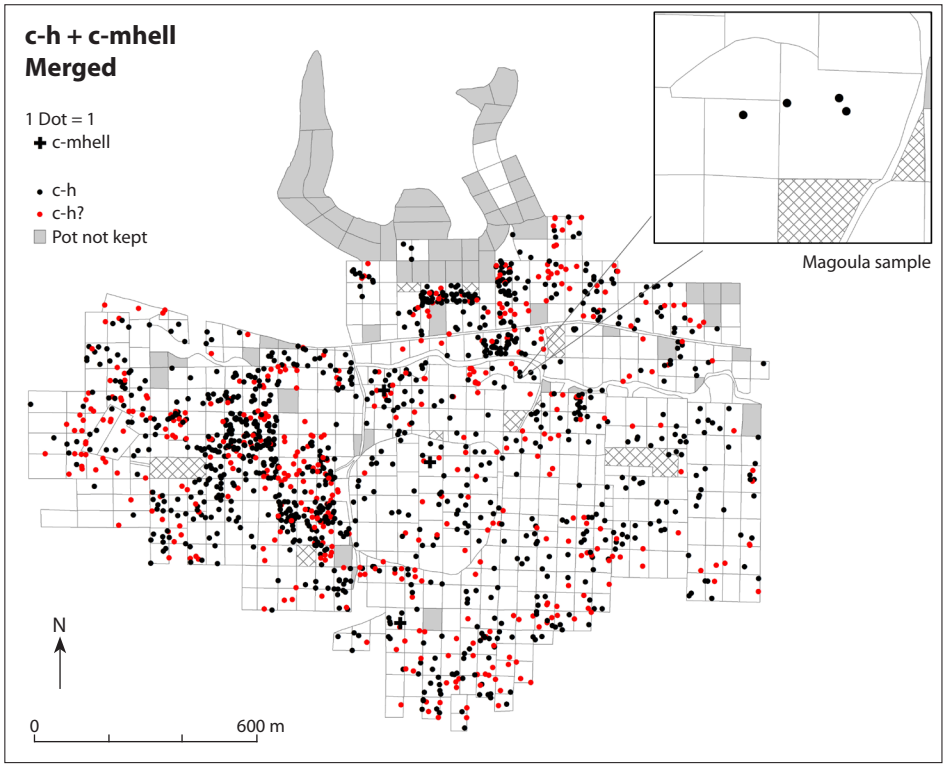


Figure 3.61. *Distribution of Classical /Hellenistic and Classical / Middle Hellenistic sherds, together with 'possible' finds.*

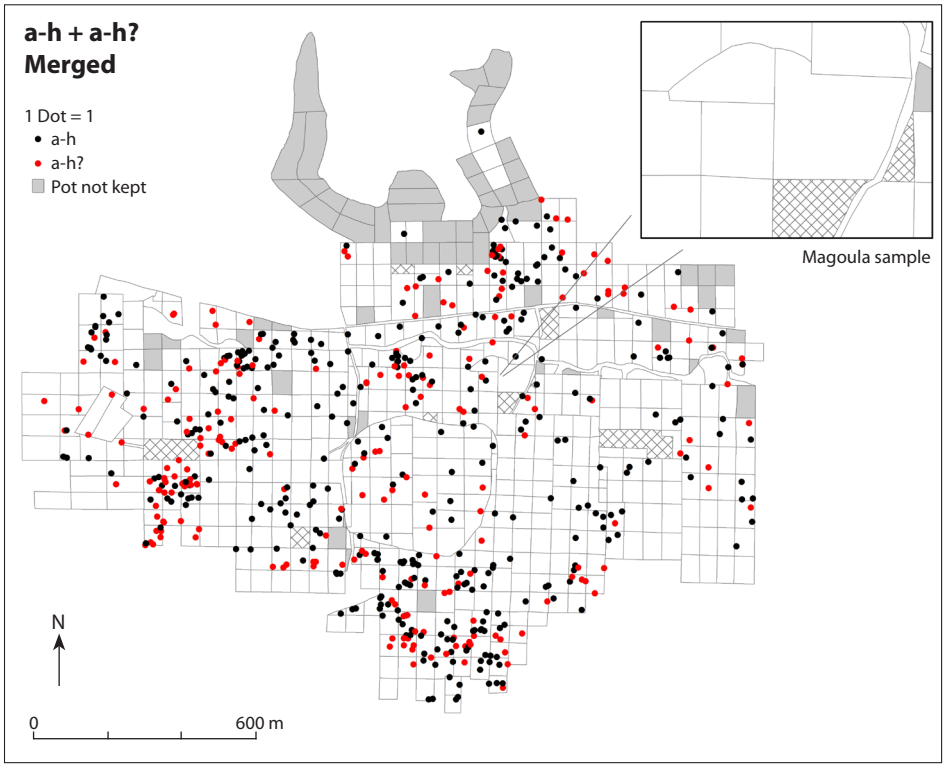


Figure 3.62. *Distribution of Archaic / Hellenistic (and 'Archaic / Hellenistic?') sherds.*

Stissi suggests that perhaps 90 per cent or more of the finds assigned to 'C–H' belong within the range of Classical to the end of the Middle Hellenistic, *c*. 500 – 150/100 BC, with a small amount spilling over into the ensuing, Late Hellenistic phase. The even longer period covered by the 'Archaic–Hellenistic' finds can also be usefully studied in connection with C–H: here the starting point is *c*. 700, and the most likely end point again *c*. 150/100 BC.

From the start of the Classical period, for the first time, we need to take detailed account not only of the historically attested city wall, but of the fortification-wall now discovered by Božidar Slapšak, north of the Kanavaris: here we reproduce, as Fig. 3.63, the functional map discussed earlier (Fig. 3.39). The indications of the western, far northern and eastern lines of the latter are based on discoveries within, and in the outskirts of, modern Thespies village. But for various reasons we believe that, until the late Classical and Hellenistic eras, the attested city wall of Thespiai, constructed some while before 423 BC and destroyed more than once by its Theban enemies, lay entirely south of the river (see Chapter 4, Part ii). What we believe to be a section of this older wall was located in 1987, running just north of the Magoula on roughly a north-east to south-west line. From here on we restore, conjecturally, the remainder of the Classical city wall as forming a rough rectangle: the issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. A large, probably Archaic temple, excavated by P. Jamot in 1890, and with it very likely the Archaic *agora*, lie at the heart of the *Kastro* enceinte (see p. 90; Chapter 5, p. 203).

The new wall line north of the Kanavaris is very clear in its western course. When its line is extended to the south, across the river, it points directly to a place where we had postulated, on the evidence of scattered wall-blocks, that the older circuit-wall, after running roughly east–westwards, made a radical change in direction southwards. If instead one follows the line of the new trans-Kanavaris wall in the opposite direction, northwards, it ascends the western side of the hill on which modern Thespies village stands, turns at a hillock that forms the highest point in the village, then descends the slope again, parallel to the valley separating Thespies village from its eastern neighbour Leondari. There is no certainty about the route of its eastern 'leg', once it leaves the vicinity of the village, nor about its return junction with the wall south of the river; but the evidence suggests that it ran in the general direction of the Magoula, joining up with the older wall at the eastern end of the latter's most visible stretch, but well short of its eastern corner.

The dating of the cross-river extension relies primarily on the ceramic evidence. The finds from the original city survey show considerable activity north of the river, extending from prehistory to early Modern times. As earlier noted, large areas of the trans-Kanavaris zone were at first believed to be extramural for the entire Greco-Roman period; the quality and quantity of some of the material led to the suggestion of burial and/or sanctuary use in these periods. In addition, a hamlet of Medieval and Ottoman date was postulated, around the Agios Athanasios church east of the centre. The observation made at that time (see p. 64), that colluvial obscuring of surface finds had taken place on a large scale in the northern and north-western parts of the sector, limited the utility of the urban survey in such terrain: hence the repeated appearance of the grey-shaded, 'non-collection', units at the northernmost extremity of the city grid. For prehistoric and Geometric times, we have argued for habitation, as well as burial, in this trans-Kanavaris sector. Indeed, even the subsequent period maps, extending from Classical/Hellenistic to Late Roman, do not in themselves provide any clear evidence to rule out domestic occupation in the Greco-Roman period, although closer study of the Archaic to Classical finds (Chapter 11) indicates likely burials right across this zone. It is only by the application of several aspects of the record, including analysis of the structure of the density maps and the observations of the field- and pottery-teams, that a strong working model of the functional history of each sector can be created.

But the historical sources may also be put to use in reconstructing the history of this trans-Kanavaris zone. On several occasions in Classical times, down to the time of the Theban hegemony in the earlier fourth century BC, Thespiai was attacked, and its town walls destroyed more than once. On two of these occasions, the citizens are recorded as having withdrawn, in the absence of a strong acropolis of their own, to a refuge called Keressos, safe from cavalry attack and in general much more defensible than their city. It seems clear that this refuge was in the territory of Thespiai, but at a distance from the city itself, which had to be abandoned when the move to Keressos was made. The hill on which Thespies village stands, whether before or after its enclosure within the circuit of the

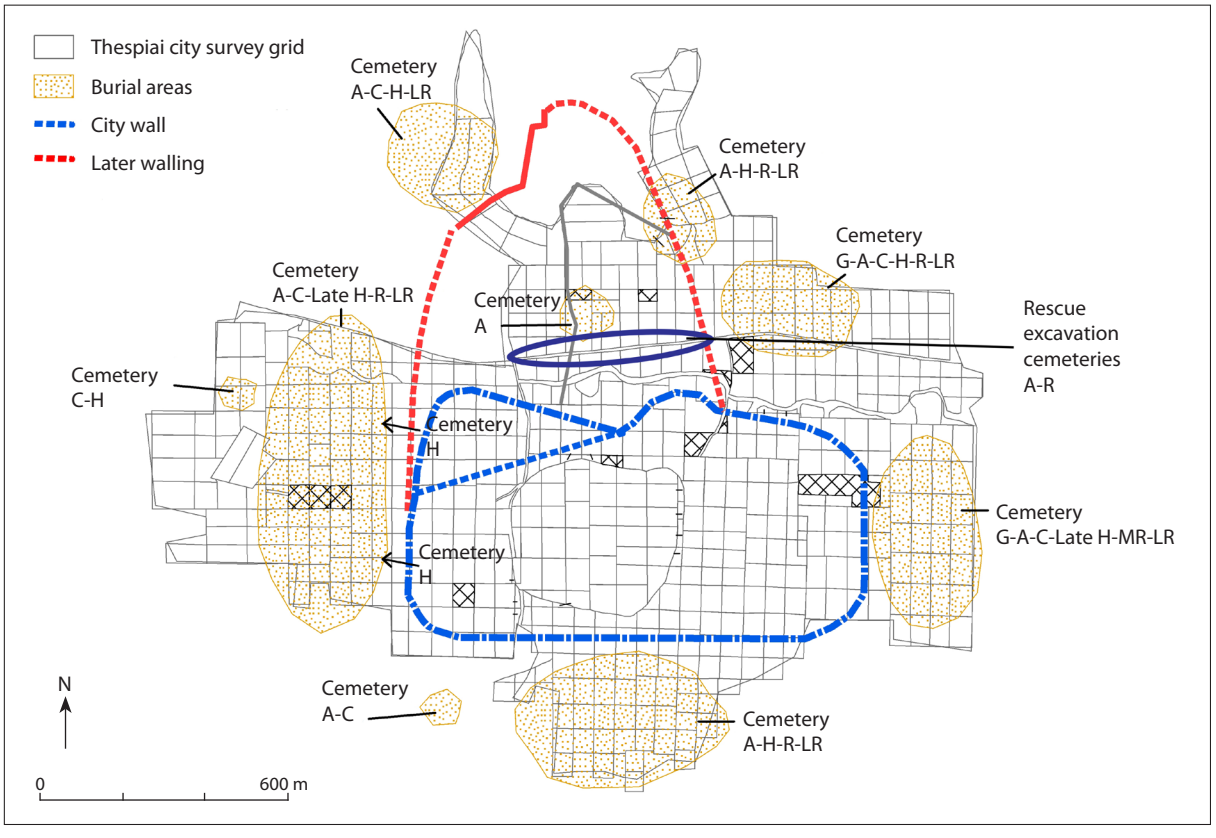


Figure 3.63. *Sketch map (repeated from Fig. 3.39, p.61) showing proposed locations of cemeteries, together with the earlier (blue) and later (red) fortification walls*

city walls, cannot in our view be a possible candidate for identification with Keressos: its position is so close to the town and its cemeteries that it would have been seen as a conventional acropolis for the city. Other Greek cities may indeed have acropoleis at a distance from their lower towns: Corinth is a famous example, and Thisbe in Boeotia another. Yet these are always in some way integrated into the defensive plans. Had the Thespians used the village hill in these emergences, it would have been no great task to extend their city walls in this direction. This is what was eventually done: presumably, it took place after the last known use of the Keressos refuge in 371 BC. The abiding problem is: why did the Thespians not fortify this hill, so close to their town, at an earlier date?

Military logistics may provide an answer. The hill of modern Thespies village is most defensible towards the city below to its south, through a steep cliff-slope; it is neither greatly elevated, nor difficult of access, from the high plateau extending behind it to the north. On its east and west sides, steep-sided valleys protect it. The inadequacy of the hill-top area to shelter the whole urban population on its own demanded the linkage to the main fortification; yet the weak protection from attack on the north side, and the fact that the most difficult approach was actually on the side facing the lower town, left the defenders of this acropolis with many problems. As noted below, it was only from the fourth century that new, more powerful siege engines became widespread, enabling long-range bombardment from adjacent heights into walls and city-interiors (Ober 1987). No wonder, then, that the inhabitants for long preferred to develop the fertile, well-watered and well-routed locality on the north bank of the river, at the expense of incorporating it into a convenient stronghold for themselves against their enemies. Recent fieldwork within our project has indeed located a very likely candidate for Keressos on the Pyrgaki hill in the Valley of the Muses, to be presented in a subsequent volume.

Whether or not this particular identification can stand, we can set the new trans-Kanavaris city wall extension after 371 BC, when Keressos is last recorded in use, and indeed after the end of the Theban hegemony a decade later, which gave the Boeotian cities their first opportunity for some time past to recover their freedom of action. Presently, Alexander's destruction of Thebes, in 335 BC after the battle of Chaironeia, did even more to further the assertion of autonomy by individual Boeotian cities. It is also in the Late Classical period that documentary and archaeological sources agree in positing an unprecedented (and never yet repeated) level of population in Boeotia. All these considerations favour either a final Classical or an early Hellenistic date for a likely enlargement and re-planning of Thespiai on expansive lines. Perhaps not coincidentally, this is also argued to be the period when Tanagra was totally reorganized on a Hippodamian plan (Roller 1974; 1987), with a major associated re-fortification. Even more suggestive is the recent evidence from the city of Plataia (Konecky, Aravantinos and Marchese 2013), where an Archaic to high Classical circuit of limited area, surrounding the low acropolis, is replaced, during the final Classical decades after the end of the Theban hegemony, by an enceinte enclosing a vastly greater area. Significantly, only part of this enlargement appears ever to have been completed, the grandiose scheme of urban growth being checked in mature Hellenistic times. This led to the subsequent construction of a new inner wall, in between the outer and inner south extensions of the town. Božidar Slapšak's team's aerial photographs at Haliartos, to be included in a later Boeotia Project Volume, have for the first time revealed that, at a certain point, this town too received a plan on the Hippodamian model, exemplifying a different aspect of this wave of urban re-configuration in the Boeotian cities. At another of our urban survey sites, at ancient Hyettos in northern Boeotia, three seasons of geophysics by a team led by Apostolos Sarris have likewise revealed a regular grid-plan covering the Lower Town (unpublished research reports 2013–2015), though we have yet to date this development. Finally, Klaus Fittschen (2002) has suggested that the north Boeotian town of Orchomenos received its large uphill extension after 335 when, with the destruction of Thebes, this city planned a major extension to the upper ridge of Mount Akontion. The extension appears to have been incomplete: Fittschen suggests that the swift revival of Thebes caused such expansive acts on the part of its neighbours to cease, or to run out of funding. Here the parallels with Thespiai are especially close: the original settlement of Orchomenos too was low-lying, at the foot of a steep hill and, with the advances made in siege missiles by the fourth century, it became increasingly open to threats from the high ground above it. The new long walls ran up Mount Akontion to the summit, where a massive keep offered a major obstacle to incursion along the flat ridge beyond, while the same walls prevented the taking of higher ground overlooking the core of the city. As at Thespiai, it is clear that the area of this extension housed few buildings.

A *terminus ante quem* for the extended wall of Thespiai can, on several grounds, be set in the second century BC. The local evidence at Tanagra and Plataia would place the changes there at a date well before this – the mid- to late fourth century BC, according to Roller and Konecny respectively, while the evidence from Haliartos, destroyed by the Romans in 171 BC and essentially abandoned thereafter, must precede that date.

More relevant locally is the fact that, at Thespiai, the ceramic evidence from the city south of the Kanavaris now begins to show a radical and permanent retraction in the core of domestic and public activity from the Late Hellenistic age, between about 150/100 BC and the beginning of the Christian era – something not easily compatible with a move to expand the protected area.

A further factor is that, although the Roman hegemony over central Greece, from the time of the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC) onwards, might seem to have made the fresh building of fortifications appear increasingly superfluous, especially on the part of cities like Thespiai which had voluntarily sought alliance with Rome, the refurbishing of existing ones might still become necessary. Cities like Thespiai might find themselves at odds with their neighbours, or with larger powers hostile to Rome; and in fact the traces of several re-buildings can be detected in the mud-brick stretches of the extended wall. There is an unexpectedly late confirmation of this, in one final historical reference to a fortified Thespiai, in the course of the First Mithridatic War (88–85 BC): Mithridates's general Archelaos, advancing from Athens through Boeotia 'like a torrent' (Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* xi. 4), found resistance only in Thespiai, which he was forced to besiege, evidently at some length (Appian, *Mithridateios* 29). Presently the opposition of a smaller Roman army under Q. Bruttius Sura, marching southwards from Macedonia, forced Archelaos to retreat. The necessity for a siege is proof that Thespiai still had usable walls; the speed of Archelaos's initial advance is clear evidence that these walls were already in existence, not improvised from scratch; and the fact that the Thespians afterwards voted a statue and a gold wreath to Bruttius (or Braetius) Sura in gratitude (Roesch 2007, i 40–1: no. 34) comes close to proving that the siege had been unsuccessful and that the walls had held out for long enough: the days of mass-flight to the refuge of Keressos were long gone. The end of the fighting in Greece, in 86 BC, at last put an end to Boeotia's sufferings from large-scale warfare.

The pottery collections made in the last few years by the Slovenian team (see Chapter 4, part (ii)), around the new walls north of the river and on a building site in the west-centre of the newly enclosed extension, indicate probable non-domestic use of the area in Archaic times and earlier, and possible domestic activity in the Hellenistic era of the third–first centuries BC, according to the provisional evaluation of Vladimir Stissi. Early Roman Imperial finds are absent from these localized contexts, while definite burials in the sector were recorded from Late Roman times. But to complicate the picture there is the theatre, seen by Pausanias (ix. 27. 4) in the later second century AD and located beyond all doubt on the central hill-slope below Thespies village, near the apex of the triangle created by the new fortification (see also Chapter 4, pp. 174–82 for the contribution by Uroš Kirn).

Finally, the recent rescue excavations along the modern road to Thebes just north of the Kanavaris (see pp. 63, 196–8, and now Charami *et al*. 2014) have added precious new evidence for the funerary use of the trans-Kanavaris sector. A limited area of domestic features in the east-centre of the excavated strip, of late Hellenistic to Roman date (# 363), shows that non-funerary activity inside this zone did continue – which is not surprising when we consider the Roman-era use of the theatre in the northern part of the extension, and the possible location of the 'Italian' gymnasium in this district (see Chapter 4, p. 183; Chapter 7, p. 237). If, however, we accept the likelihood of a gate in the western extension wall, and a major tomb and some domestic walls running in a straight line from here to the east, then it is very possible that the modern road had an ancient forebear; the domestic traces might then be connected to a major route, rather than indicating that the extension zone remained part of the built-up area of an enlarged city. Within the fortified area were excavated a well-built cist tomb with a paved floor, dated to the third century BC, and a massive concreted pebble foundation, plausibly the base for a major Roman funerary monument (a similar but smaller foundation was identified in our earlier architectural survey, Chapter 4, Site (50)). These two discoveries confirm a progressive contraction of the city boundaries, by Late Hellenistic times, back to their original confines south of the Kanavaris.

For the moment, a provisional reconstruction would run as follows:

1. In an early phase of urbanization, perhaps in the later Archaic phase of the sixth century BC, to judge from other cities of southern Mainland Greece, the several dispersed hamlets of earlier centuries, to both north and south of the river, coalesced into a single agglomeration. This lay south of the river, forming the rough rounded oblong shown in the earlier plan (Fig. 3.63). The trans-Kanavaris area remained in use, but now only for extramural cemeteries and perhaps also sanctuaries, whereas the earlier Geometric foci had perhaps incorporated domestic as well as funerary use. Excavations and surveys at other cities, along with historical sources, all suggest that besides sepulchral and sacral zones, such areas might also contain industrial features and gardens.
2. At some point in the era after the end of the Theban Hegemony around 338 BC, yet most likely

before the Third Macedonian War of 171–168 BC and the subsequent shrinkage of the city, a town extension wall was laid out north of the river, enclosing a hill at the southern end of the modern village of Thespies and, for the first time, creating an acropolis adjacent to the city. To judge by the ceramic finds from the western and central parts of the new enclosure, this vicinity may have enjoyed domestic and other uses during Hellenistic times. The evidence includes a suggestion of burial incursion, on the western side, from perhaps around 200 BC, but the rescue excavation of the Ephoreia in the south-central area indicates probable revival of burial revival a little earlier, by the mid-third century BC. We shall shortly see how the finds from the 1985–86 urban survey might fit in with this evidence, but it appears likely that some non-funerary use of the trans-Kanavaris zone continued into the Early Roman Imperial era. But the eastern part of the newly enclosed sector we consider to have remained in use, throughout historical antiquity, primarily for burial and/or extramural sanctuary purposes.

3. In the final Hellenistic period and during earliest Roman Imperial times, the city shrank and, at least by Early Roman times, this extension apparently lost its (perhaps never more than partial) domestic activity, already apparently lying outside the official boundary of the town. The theatre, however, remained, apparently in active use till at least the second century AD. Whatever its origins, its conversion to stone would be expected to date to late Classical or Hellenistic times, as in other Boeotian towns (Chapter 4, pp. 182–3). Such a date would also fit well with the creation of an extended fortification, reaching beyond and enclosing this monument. Perhaps the most convincing evidence for the reality of the stone theatre, despite the lack of remains at the actual site, is the abundant evidence of stone seating recorded and collected by Stamatakis (Chapter 4, p. 160).
4. Probably from Middle Hellenistic times onwards, and extending right down to Late Roman times, extramural activity including burial was revived in the former urban extension. It is surely significant that, when the new enceinte of Late Antiquity, the *Kastro*, was created, it marked a return to the western core of the Late Hellenistic to Late Roman occupied zone, south of the river, and on the suspected site of the Classical *agora*. No use whatever was made of the Hellenistic acropolis fortifications, despite the obvious tactical advantages of the hill-top over the weak strategic location on the gentle slopes of the *Kastro*.

We can now proceed with the main discussion of the period, noting to what extent the detail of the urban survey supports or challenges this long-term reconstruction. The Transects, Samples and Merged maps for this generic 'Classical/Hellenistic' age cover finds of fine, medium-quality and coarse wares from the early fifth century down to, most likely, around 150/100 BC. In his first study of our material, John Hayes recognized a subsequent Hellenistic ceramic phase in Boeotia, 'Hellenistic/Roman' or Late Hellenistic to Early Roman, then conventionally dated between *c*. 200 BC and AD 200 and strongly represented in the city site of Thespiai. This again includes non-fine wares as its chief component and was therefore, at the very least, a good guide to the location and density of activity during the Late Roman Republic and the early centuries of the Roman Empire. As an external check on this broad chronology, the fact that this 'Hellenistic/Roman' is virtually absent at another of our surveyed towns, Haliartos, destroyed in 171 BC, pushes its initial development in Boeotia down into the middle years of the second century BC at the earliest, so anticipating more recent research that shifts the Middle to Late Hellenistic transition to the second half of the second century BC.

The maps for Classical/Hellenistic (Fig. 3.61) and Archaic/Hellenistic (Fig. 3.62) have, beyond their different densities, a broadly similar appearance, but a problematic one. If we begin with what we consider to have been the core areas of the city, both before and during this period, there is a wide but by no means dense cover of finds within and to the east of the *Kastro*, without any clear foci. Further to the north towards the Kanavaris, the deposition becomes denser. Then, immediately to the west of the *Kastro*, an extremely dense spread starts to appear on the Classical/Hellenistic map, but at the expense of thinner patches to the north-west and south-west. If this covers the urban core, then it contains some remarkably divergent densities.

Let us next turn to the putative extramural sectors. We have very strong deposition in the further west, which we have indicated (p. 90) as a long-standing, north–south-running burial zone; but no clear gap can be observed here between this and the intramural western suburbs. North of the Kanavaris, the dense central cluster fits well within the supposed lines of the (at least partly contemporary) extension wall, yet the western half of the extension has comparatively few finds in comparison. Further to the east, there is a slightly less dense spread running continuously to the eastward limit of the grid, which may represent a combination of material from Classical graves (throughout) with that from the temporary domestic and public expansion of the city north of the river in Late Classical and/or Hellenistic times. More important, a provisional dating of

the finds revealed in January 2008, in the cross section at a building site for the small modern factory here (Chapter 4, p. 171), by Vladimir Stissi, assigned them essentially to the Hellenistic period, extending perhaps down into the first century BC but no later. The other, less dense but still numerous Classical/Hellenistic finds lying further to the east and, probably or certainly, outside the new wall, should be primarily from burials.

When we return south of the Kanavaris, the strong concentration in the far south of the city grid should represent extramural burial, but the finds from immediately outside the later *Kastro* wall to its south-west are better explained as a part of the general occupation zone stretching from here westwards. In the far east finds are thin, surprisingly so in the light of the contemporary off-site scatters in the countryside, found to be especially dense in this direction from the city (see again Fig. 3.36). But this echoes the finer-detailed, if thinner, evidence for the Classical period proper, where it seemed that this area, an important focus in Early Iron Age and Archaic times, had fallen out of favour. Yet here, in the outer fringes of the grid where the finds were considered to be non-urban, the samples collected, though hardly impressive, are rather too heavy for manuring debris: we suspect a continued funerary use of this rectangular block of units at the eastern extremity. Though this is far from demonstrable, it is worth noting that much further to the east, a roadside Classical cemetery was revealed in the course of the excavation of the state war grave or Polyandrion, well off the city grid map.

More circumstantially, a few Transect collections, usually with collections of Archaic to Classical fine ware of unusual quality and in good condition, were picked out in the initial comments of the field walkers and ceramic specialists as likely cemetery material: the three strongest clusters of these lay precisely in the far western, the southern, and here in the far eastern extremities of the grid. Finally, the recent fieldwork by our Slovenian colleagues, deliberately undertaken without use of the surface survey as a guide, has independently confirmed a funerary use of many of the areas which we had postulated as extramural burial sectors (see Chapter 4, pp. 183–8).

A distribution map for the elaborate Classical to Early Hellenistic drinking cup called the *kantharos* is potentially helpful here (Fig. 3.64). This shape was especially popular in Boeotia, less common elsewhere, and appears to have been primarily associated with cult and burial; but it is also found in domestic contexts where it probably had a ceremonial and/or ritual significance (Mulder 2012). If we compare it to the hypothetical infrastructure of the Classical town, we see that most finds are indeed in the peripheral funerary areas; but there are lesser but not insignificant numbers of *kantharoi* within the city, including the area of the *agora*, the

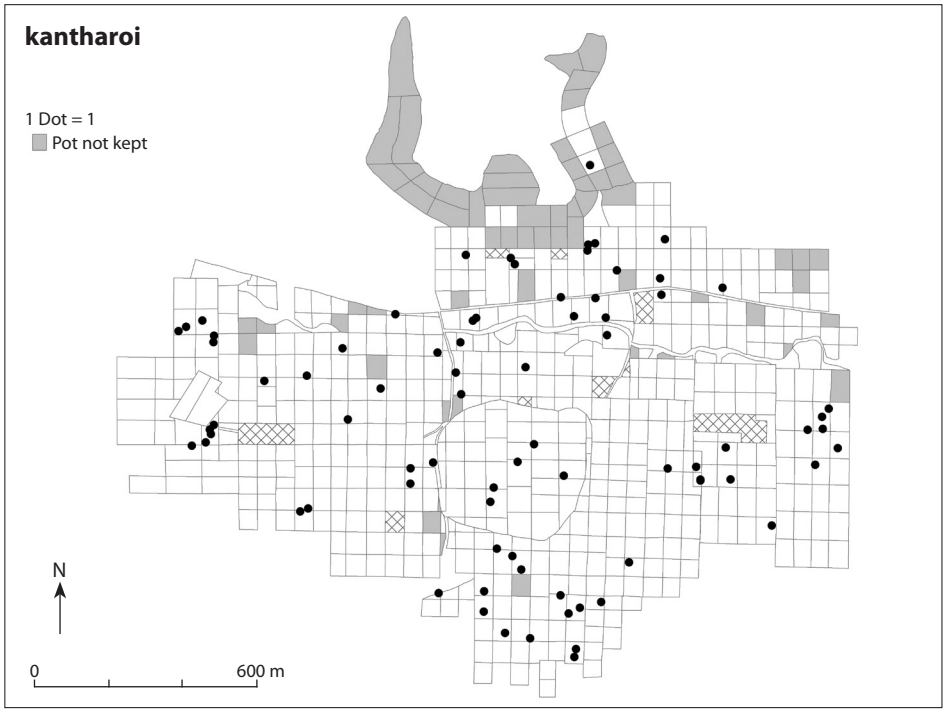


Figure 3.64. *Distribution of kantharoi within the city grid.*

later *Kastro*. This at any rate does nothing to undermine the other evidence for locating the cemetery zones.

If a map were to be drawn of the Classical city, based only on Figs. 3.60–3.62 and without any additional information, its likely boundaries would exclude the *Kastro* and most of the areas to the east of it, along with much of the far east and the far west of the trans-Kanavaris sector; the city itself would be concentrated immediately to the west, north and south-west of the *Kastro*, extending to the limits of the city grid in these directions, and extending also to the central and eastern zones across the Kanavaris. It would thus include all the densest zones of Classical/Hellenistic finds, even though in our view only the inner parts of this vast zone were actually part of the built-up area of the city; the comparable densities in the outer parts would represent extramural burial, and perhaps sanctuary, use, at least until the trans-Kanavaris sector was taken in with the building of the new extension wall.

A series of arguments, centred on taphonomy, can be combined to explain why such a pattern would be misleading. As a first point, the Classical Greek *agora*, probably to be located within and perhaps slightly beyond the *Kastro*, would no doubt have been kept relatively clean and free of domestic debris. This argument certainly finds support in the results of our (not yet published) urban survey of the city of Hyettos: here, the *agora* – located by the earlier discovery of an inscription (Etienne and Knoepfler 1976: 151–76) – is associated with a similar zone of relatively low finds, despite lying at the heart of the town. At Thespiai, this part of the city had, by Late Roman times, become a fortified enclosure with a different range of uses – military, industrial, if also religious – as well as being the focus of densest human activity in the entire town. There is no reason to think that then the maintenance of a clean public space would any longer have a high priority, which in itself would tend to deflate the surface counts of the earlier Classical/Hellenistic era.

It is time to bring out certain key chronological factors by reintroducing our earlier Sector Analysis (pp. 44–8, Figs. 3.29–30 and p. 83, Table 3.6). Here we showed the swamping effect of the diminished Roman and Late Roman town on the relatively thinner spreads of Archaic/Classical/Hellenistic material in the *Kastro* and to its east.

There remains the abiding problem of the difficulty in identifying an adequate provision of cemeteries for the Greco-Roman city. The contrast with the rural sector is, as we have seen, not an absolute one, and at earlier stages there have been a few definite hints, from the field teams and the pottery specialists, pointing out localities in the survey grid where graves and/or sanctuaries might lie. Even if some of our postulated burial areas have escaped such recognition, the overall scale of the suggested cemeteries must fall, in total, very far short of the expectations raised by our earlier rough calculation (pp. 56–9) of the theoretically possible numbers of burials.

This remains a disturbing anomaly and at this point we cannot provide any clear answers. It is however worth investigating some possibly relevant factors. One clue might lie in the fact that a strong contrast exists between the last two cumulative 'merged' maps, that for the Classical and that for the Classical/Hellenistic finds. The former shows much the more balanced distribution of sherds between the supposed urban and extramural sectors: the latter has a much higher overall density, but the distribution, very uneven in several respects, does show a higher representation in some (but not all) of the putative burial zones. If, as we have argued, burial finds would tend to preserve diagnostic wares better than the invariably disturbed and often overlaid domestic contexts, then this is a surprising outcome, for the Classical map depends more heavily on clearly diagnostic pieces. Other questions also relate to burial taphonomy: are the typological distinctions, between the pottery actually from inside the graves and that left on the ground above and around them in the course of funerary rituals, of a kind likely to be reflected in the surface finds? Is the depth of graves below the land surface related to the complexity of the tomb, so that the more elaborate tend to lie below the plough-soil and are thus hardly ever touched by cultivation? The recently excavated examples around ancient Tanagra, and the few recently exposed tombs now recorded by Božidar Slapšak's survey team, at least suggest an affirmative answer to this latter question.

One other element might be considered. The likely area for urban peripheral cemeteries is also that most liable to have been affected by urban manuring and rubbish disposal. As the study of the rural sector to the south of the city showed (*Testing the Hinterland*: 23–37), this latter was an activity heavily concentrated in time, within the broadly Classical to Hellenistic Greek period. Now our examination of the putative burial zones around the city perimeter has shown that, here too, there is an invariable predominance of 'Greek' material, though with a substantial minority of 'Roman' and, in some areas, of Medieval and Ottoman finds. Is it possible that a close juxtaposition of urban manuring and extramural cemeteries has 'contaminated' the burial débris on the city outskirts and made its appearance less distinctive? The main objection to this surmise is that cemetery areas tended to remain, for long periods, sequestered from agricultural use: indeed in the rural sector, where the off-site density is anyway much lower and the pockets of fine ware

indicating burials are that much more visible, we turned to this very factor to explain the fact that cemetery sites often exhibited a density *lower* than that of the surrounding off-site scatter.

Yet we need not imagine that the extramural cemeteries formed unbroken blocks, of such an extent as almost to cut off access to the city. Moreover, there is the anomaly already commented on (pp. 91, 97) that the Classical/Hellenistic finds are surprisingly thin at the eastern extremity of the grid, especially when compared to the great clusters in the west, north and south; but that, just beyond the limits of the city grid in this direction, the manuring densities found in our rural survey were exceptionally high. Our view that this burial zone remained in use for much of antiquity, but at a much lower level than that of the other city borders, would imply that this zone at least could have seen some intermingling of cemeteries with rural life.

This view finds support from our belated realization, in August 2007, that the Classical monument and burial-ground for the city's war dead, the Polyandrion, which is placed 'a little to the East of the settlement' by Fossey (1988: 137), in fact lies so far beyond the urban zone that even the eastern sector of our rural survey did not quite reach it: the distance from the north-eastern corner of the *Kastro* circuit is 1100 m. What is important here is that the monument, whose exceptional status might otherwise be thought to explain its unusual location, was also associated with a larger cemetery, flanking the course of a major road running eastwards. This may be an exceptionally far-flung location for a city cemetery, but it is instructive in two different ways. First, it shows that the spread of urban burial can be expected to reach a distance of up to a kilometre into the rural territory. Secondly, it provides a clear instance of the juxtaposition of a cemetery with a focus of agricultural activity, in the form of the large Classical rural Site LSE 1 nearby. The spatial definition of this cemetery, rather than being evenly two-dimensional, was evidently a linear one, forming a ribbon that cut through the farm-land. There is every reason to expect that similar patterns would occur closer to the city. But even where cemeteries did not directly flank roads, they would be made up of a series of discrete areas rather than long, wide, unbroken blocs. Between the grave zones must have lain arable fields, heavily manured in the Classical/Hellenistic era and, if close to the city, perhaps also places of simple waste dumping in Roman times. Additional support comes from just at the edge of the opposite, western end of the city grid, where we discovered in rural survey a broadly Classical cemetery, the 'Thespiai West Cemetery' (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 84).

Data gathered since 2000 in our survey at another Boeotian city, Tanagra, may offer striking confirmation of this model. Fig. 3.65 shows a pattern of extramural density at Tanagra similar to that found in the survey of the city and its southern approaches at Thespiai.

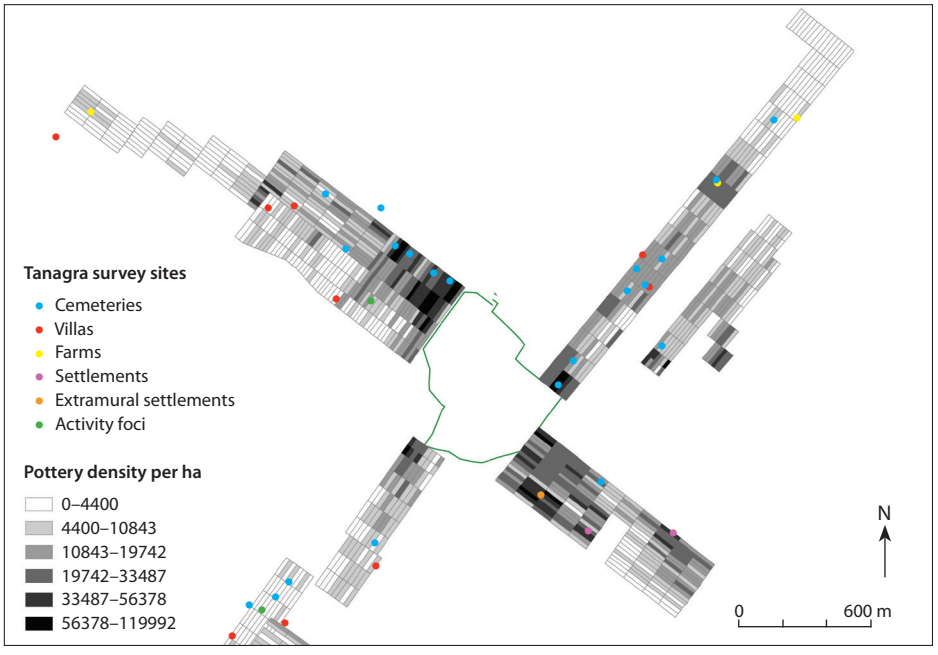


Figure 3.65. *A sector of the survey in the territory of Tanagra, showing the sherd densities decreasing radially from the ancient city.*

Heavy deposition of off-site finds extends for almost 2 km out from the Late Roman city wall; but within this zone, the blue dots mark definite or likely cemeteries of broadly Classical age (although the two marked closest to the north-east of the Late-Roman city-wall are now believed to be, rather, sanctuaries). Subsequent transects from the northern and western territory located further grave clusters. It is clear that such high overall 'periurban' densities cannot represent merely the cemeteries, since they cover several square kilometres. We can add that the relative ease of locating graves at Tanagra arises from the notorious history of (mostly illegal) excavation around the city, primarily carried out in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, in the search for figurines (Higgins n.d.: 27–31, 39–62). From contemporary accounts, it is clear that the landscape surrounding the ancient walled town was densely filled with cemeteries over wide areas: it is thanks to the dumping of unwanted fine-ware pottery around the thousands of graves that were then dug up that we can recognize so many of them in survey. It is a fair generalization, from both the Tanagra evidence and that of the Polyandrion area at Thespiai, that Boeotian suburban and rural cemeteries lay in dispersed groups around the cities, most densely in the immediate vicinity of the town walls, decreasing in density with distance, until they reappear as small clusters linked to discrete rural estates. They are interspersed with farmed areas, spread with sherds representing the ancient manuring which was most intensely focused in the inner *chora* of Classical Boeotian towns.

Thus the intense agricultural fertilization, through manuring, of Classical times, between and around the cemeteries, may well have had a strong impact on the surface evidence from these extramural foci. But a significant contribution must also have been made by the extensive urban grave zones. These could rise and decline in popularity, as indicated by shifting foci of suspected burial material between periods; but quantities of disturbed grave goods, with perhaps an added element of pottery from grave-side rituals, must inescapably be present in the material. This explanation leaves unanswered the problem of reconciling this model with the purely 'Classical' maps, whose distribution, again usually of finer wares, runs more evenly across the whole urban zone. The issue can profitably be revisited when we consider the maps of the later historical eras, below.

We have long argued (since Bintliff and Snodgrass 1988a, in fact), that survey sites can be broken down into a core, a halo and, in certain periods, an off-site zone of impact that can stretch to much longer distances. To the built-up core of the Classical–Hellenistic city of Thespiai must now be added a massive off-site carpet, of many square kilometres, in its surrounding countryside. The inner halo, we have already suggested, ran through or between the peripheral cemeteries; but how far did it run beyond them? Fig. 3.36 extends the city grid maps, at the same density levels that we have been using so far, but into the wider hinterland of the city.

We shall presently revisit the conclusion, established in *Testing the Hinterland*: 23–37, that the dated off-site material for the area shown contains only minimal contributions from periods other than the generic 'Greek'; so we can be fairly certain that the spread of higher density grades, above the light green, around the city core must be essentially due to Classical–Hellenistic ceramic disposal. The area revealed is much larger than that we have assigned to peripheral cemeteries, and should define a wider zone of burials, gardens, and maybe occasional habitation (we well know that survey does not reveal every small farm in a given season). This band extends significantly beyond the city grid. A final comment is that the addition of the possible Archaic material (Fig. 3.62) to the Classical–Hellenistic map would bring little modification to this general picture, apart from the much higher density found in the far eastern burial zone, which points to a decline in the use of this locality after Archaic times.

It remains to give an estimate of the maximum size of the city, including its partially settled northern extension, to represent the period from the later Classical to the earlier Hellenistic, *c*. 400 to 150/100 BC. This is also the period for which ancient sources indicate that the *polis* of Thespiai, town and country, achieved its largest population (*Testing the Hinterland*: 143–51). The vastly greater body of data from the urban site – freshly re-dated ceramics, inscriptions, architecture and historical research – has enabled a far more thorough analysis than that presented in the first Boeotia monograph. There we estimated a maximum built-up area of 95 ha, with a reduction in Late Hellenistic and Early Roman times to 42 ha and a slight recovery in Late Roman times to 48 ha.

We can now reduce all but the first of these figures significantly. The peak of expansion as far as the walled zone still covers some 98 ha, close to our older figure; but when account is now taken of the zone most likely in actual occupation, this will reduce our total to an area of some 72 ha, and we shall shortly be lowering the figures for the two subsequent urban phases by a similar amount. On the customary calculation of around 125 people per hectare for the total urban area (cf. Bintliff 1997b; *Testing the Hinterland*: 144), we arrive at a maximum city population of some 9000 people. If, however, we reduce the city walled zone to its extent *before* the postulated late Hellenistic

extension, we are left with a mere 57 ha, which would work out at around 7125 people. These empirical figures from the ceramic survey need to be brought into confrontation with the historical sources discussed elsewhere in this volume (Chapters 5, 6).

The Thespian citizen army figures for the early fifth century BC already suggest a total population of at least 12,000 (Chapter 5, p. 203). Since both the Archaic city and its countryside appear to be less densely occupied than they were in the Classical and earlier Hellenistic era, the figure for this phase, at the transition from final Archaic to early Classical, must allow for subsequent increase in population to the much higher levels accepted for the later fifth and especially the fourth century BC. In fact, the numbers for each period become fully credible only if, as is likely, Thespiai then already controlled a wider territory than its own discrete *chora*, covering not only second-order centres such as Askra and Eutresis, but also Chorsiai, Siphai and Thisbe which, especially later, are all known to have functioned as independent *poleis*. Askra, from our preliminary estimate (subject to revision), may have covered some 10 ha in Classical times; for Chorsiai and Siphai, around 1.7 and 3 ha respectively have been suggested; for Eutresis perhaps 16.5 ha; while Thisbe was a substantial town at around 47 ha (Bintliff 1997b; Hansen 1996: 83, 103, 112; Fossey (ed.) 1981: 12 for a slightly higher figure than Hansen's for Chorsiai). Adding these estimates for Classical times to that for Thespiai itself, we reach a minimum urban coverage of some 135 ha, of which Thespiai would represent 42 per cent. It must be added, however, that additional villages in the territories of Thespiai and Thisbe may await discovery, not least in the extensive areas most distant from either centre, such as the valley where the modern villages of Ellopia and Xeronomi lie. Indeed, recent rescue work not far from there, near the abandoned Medieval and Ottoman village of Tatiza, suggests a community of some importance. We perhaps should allow for an additional two or three villages of perhaps 3 ha each, increasing the hypothetical total to 144 ha. The density of small farms, documented in our survey of Thespiai's southern hinterland, is too slight to demand any increase in our totals to allow for their populations, given the undoubted margins of error for the towns and villages. Since we do not have the same detailed evidence for the satellite cities, caution is necessary; but it does look as if, at all times when these other centres are recorded as being under Thespian control by our ancient sources, Thespiai's city population needs to be multiplied significantly.

On the view that early fifth-century Thespiai had yet to reach its full 57 ha maximum, the population of approximately 7000 suggested for this general era might need to be lessened still further if we allow for population growth from the time of our earliest source in 480/479 BC; we might also hypothesize that its satellites were less populous at this early date. If Thespiai proper were really contributing only some 42 per cent of the total army muster, this would predict a population of some 5250 for the city itself. If we apply this estimated, historically derived early fifth-century total to the old Classical city south of the river, we find that some 76 per cent of the later urban area would have been occupied by this date. We must allow for the many uncertainties in all these estimates, but the results of the calculations, still sensibly less than those implied by the full extent of the mature Classical cities, seem to be of a reasonable order of magnitude.

The League constitution recorded by the 'Oxyrhynchus Historian' soon after 400 BC suggests that Thespiai would be able to muster a total army of some 4200 men, which on customary formulae would imply a total population of around 21,000 (including women and children and an average of one household slave per family). If we now allow for the full 57 ha for Thespiai and the full estimated Classical extent of its satellites, the total of 144 ha might house approximately 18,000 people. When we consider that the League's muster is prescriptive, dealing in round numbers and on a very general scale rather than recording those actually present, then any need for adjustment is easily explained.

Rather similar figures have been calculated for the earlier Hellenistic era, notably from an ephebic or new citizen recruit list of around 250 BC which, with others of the same era, suggests an average annual enrolment of some 70 young men into the middle and upper class citizen militia (cf. Chapter 6, pp. 221–2). This figure might yield a total of around 19,000 inhabitants, but there is ample room for error in extrapolating from such small numbers: the fuller series of lists shows considerable variation from year to year. By this date, we suspect that the extended *enceinte* of Thespiai will have been created and partially occupied, increasing our built-up area to 72 ha. We do not so far have evidence of a parallel expansion for Thisbe, the largest of its satellites, so probably we should retain the area figures for the other towns, to give a total of 159 ha or perhaps around 19,875 people – very close again to the historical estimate. The outstanding richness of the public and private (especially funerary) epigraphic records from Hellenistic Thespiai are also consonant with a period of prosperity (Chapters 5, pp. 213–4 and 6). The evidence of coinage (Grandjean, Chapter 14) also points to the Classical to Early-to-Middle

Hellenistic era as the period of maximum coin use, especially the third century.

Satisfactory as this might seem, a problem emerges immediately. The re-founding of the Boeotian Confederacy in Hellenistic times gave each of 16 poleis of the League its nominal independence; in theory, therefore, Thespiai possessed only Askra, Eutresis and maybe a village or two lying between it and Thisbe, yielding an 'urban' area of, at the most, some 108 ha, which might imply some 13,500 inhabitants – only just over two-thirds (71 per cent) of the estimate based on the contemporary recruitment lists. But there are very good reasons to believe that Thespiai had in fact regained control over Thisbe and its other urban satellites: this was true not only for Early Imperial times (Müller, (Chapter 7, p. 234) but, according to Denis Knoepfler (2000, 2001, 2002), was a corollary of its earlier status in holding a full 1/7th share in the composition of the Confederacy, with the same rank as Thebes and Tanagra. To sum up the topic of urban demography, we suggest that the population of the town rose from *c*. 5250 in late Archaic–Early Classical times, through *c*. 7125 for the Late Classical period, to reach an unparalleled peak of *c*. 9000 people by Early Hellenistic times.

We cannot leave this 'Classical to Hellenistic' period without making brief reference to the series of catastrophes that the city suffered in this time, at the hands of its various enemies (Chapter 5), from the slaughter of its hoplite force at Thermopylai in 480 BC and the subsequent Persian sack, to the forced depopulation of the city after the battle of Leuktra in 371. Unfortunately survey archaeology has its strength, not in the field of short-term events and processes, but in Braudel's *moyenne durée*, extending over periods of several centuries at least, (Snodgrass 1991; Bintliff 2010). This is why even such major disasters usually remain hidden from the surface record, with its wider chronological scale (see also V. Stissi's comments in Chapter 11). But as we have also observed elsewhere (Chapter 5, pp. 214–7), what is remarkable is that the city appears to have recovered so relatively quickly, renewing its prosperity after these severe setbacks. In time, we find the city lending money to Athens in 229 BC and a rich female private citizen providing a large sum to the town of Orchomenos a decade later. If such glimpses of Thespian wealth are confined to the dominant upper class of the city, the growing international appeal of the Mouseia festival, controlled by Thespiai in the Valley of the Muses, is likely to have brought broader public benefits, especially after its elevation to the select group of Panhellenic 'stephanic' festivals in the 220's (Müller 1996 and Chapter 7 in this volume). These benefits materialized in the monumentalization of the Muses Sanctuary, probably in the later third century BC (Osborne in Chapter 6, p. 224).

A striking example of the converse state of affairs is that the most prominent adverse episode that *is* reflected in the surface record, shortly to be described under the ensuing eras, so far lacks any clear historical causation sufficient to account for its severity.

Early Hellenistic (and 'Early Hellenistic?'), Middle Hellenistic (and 'Middle Hellenistic?') and Late Hellenistic (and 'Late Hellenistic?') plus Middle–Late Hellenistic (Fig. 3.66)

Historians were long accused of neglecting the Hellenistic era in favour of the Archaic and Classical periods, and the same charge has been more justifiably laid against the study of its ceramic assemblages. But whereas current academic trends, driven not least by contemporary concerns with multiculturalism and globalization, have led to a vigorous surge of interest in Hellenistic history, the same cannot be said of ceramic studies in the period, which remain something of a 'Cinderella' field. Some useful, as yet unpublished recent research by Mark van der Enden explores the effects of this limitation for the classification of Hellenistic pottery, in respect of this and other Aegean survey projects (2008). Differentiation between the domestic and coarse wares of the Hellenistic era – apart from some 'type fossil' forms, mostly of the Late Hellenistic sub-phase – is still at an early stage, with the bulk of finds assignable only to the broad cross-period category 'Classical–Hellenistic'.

In our case, the 'Early Hellenistic' and 'Middle Hellenistic' are both classifications based on special fine wares, of which clearly very few indeed were recognized: the finds are all single, and occur in areas of varied context. As often noted, Greek fine wares in general change more frequently, and so provide closer dating, than their accompanying domestic and coarse wares. But in reality the latter will always provide the bulk of the assemblages, and some of them show little change, from the Archaic right through into the Late Hellenistic era. So in making a map of the finds clearly datable to this short era, between the outer limits of *c*. 323 and 150/100 BC, we have to make do with the smallest tip of an iceberg. In fact, the finds for 'Early Hellenistic' and 'Middle Hellenistic' (Fig. 3.66), whether taken separately or together, are simply too thin for anything substantial to be said about them.

In 'Late Hellenistic', however (grouped on the same map), we have a relatively short phase which has become far better known in recent years, and our map has a somewhat better spread of finds, enough to invite analysis. In Fig. 3.66, we have added in an outline that separates off the denser scatter of Late Hellenistic

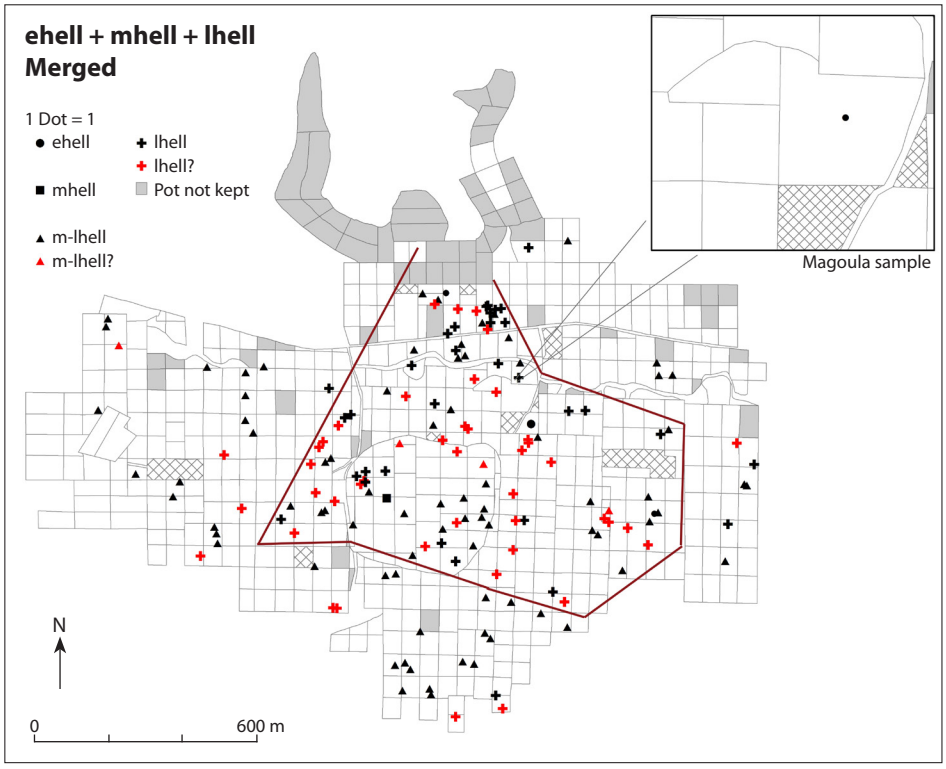


Figure 3.66. *Distribution of Early, Middle and Late Hellenistic sherds, with an added outline defining the area of denser scatters.*

sherds, excluding only some isolates. The period is clearly focused in a coherent block, running from a small western extension to the *Kastro*, a wider spread to its east, and an extension up to and across the Kanavaris in the central sector of the grid units there. Outside this block, the few finds in the outer west, south, north-east and far east, can mostly be assigned to the continued use of established cemetery zones there. The few remaining pieces from between the core area and the peripheral cemetery zones might be seen as 'urban halo' (rubbish dumping, market gardens, semi-rural habitation, shrines etc.). But, with a relatively small number of sherds, weighted towards special and more easily identifiable types and covering a rather short phase of at most 150 years, it is difficult to divide such a map, even hypothetically, into discrete functional zones, the traditional cemetery areas excepted. The especial importance assigned to this phase is as marking a decisive contraction of the built-up town, in the final century-and-a-half of the millennium.

Despite the difficulty imposed by these limited data, however, one category still appears to be informative: the small oil flasks or *unguentaria* from our survey, which appear to be datable essentially to the Middle to Late Hellenistic era (Fig. 3.67). Although also used in the home as ointment and perfume containers, they have a special role in burial rites and gifts, not unlike that of the *kantharos* in the preceding era. Perhaps the best comparison for their distribution would be with a later map for 'Hellenistic to Roman' times (Fig. 3.74) where we have constructed a hypothetical urban infrastructure plan that we infer to be valid too for the immediately preceding Late Hellenistic era. Within the shrunken town, finds are mostly focused in the *agora* area, where these items could perhaps have been especially used in ceremonial or ritual activities. Beyond that core zone, *unguentaria* are especially common in the peripheral southern, western and northern cemetery zones. A scatter midway between the burial and occupation areas, the areas that we have just suggested might belong to 'urban halo', may also, given the particular role of these vessels in burial rituals, mark the intrusion of some funerary activity into zones which had been part of the built-up area in high Classical times. This is especially possible to the south of the *agora*, and to its west – where we shall shortly see a sign of the same process in the form of a possible Roman funerary monument. Study of the total Hellenistic assemblage by Vladimir Stissi (Chapter 11) also picks out the peripheral cemetery zones we have indicated.

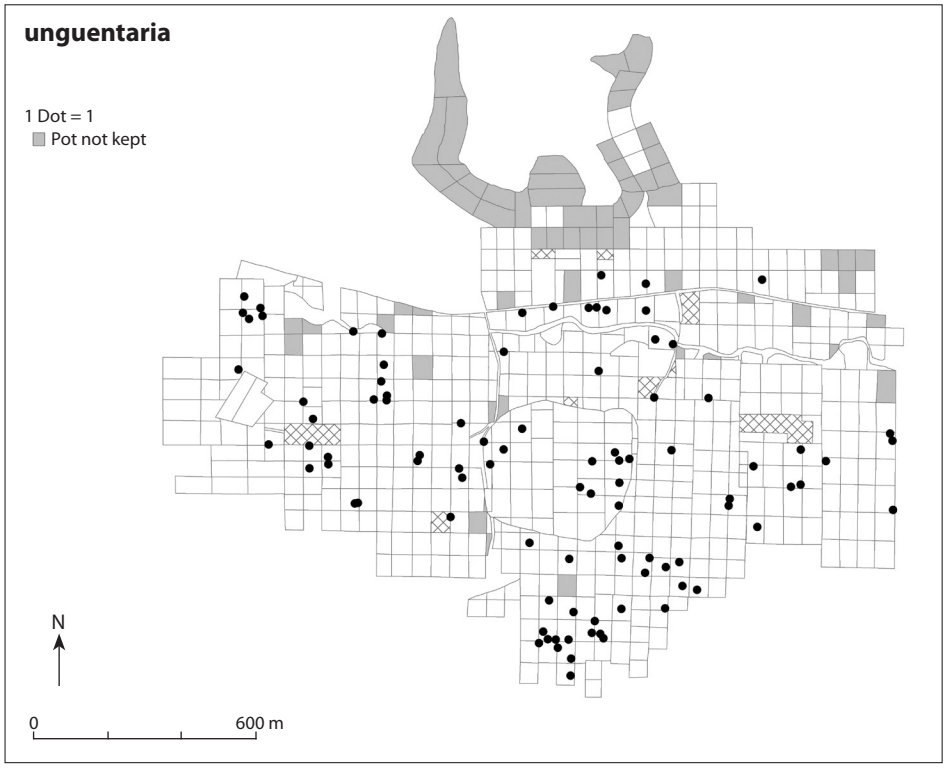


Figure 3.67. *Distribution of unguentaria.*

Thus, whereas the Classical and earlier cemetery evidence came from the periphery of our survey grid, the encroachment of this class of flask, on the western and southern sides of the city, into areas that we had assigned to the urban built-up zone in the preceding period, suggests the beginning of an abandonment of the outer parts of the inhabited area on these sides. This is consistent with the reorientation of the core occupation to the area of the *Kastro* and to its east, a trend that will persist from now to the end of antiquity; and likewise with the evidence from earlier Roman Imperial times for burial in former urban areas, to the inner west and inner north from the *Kastro.*

In the extension zone north of the river, the suggestion of encroachment of burials into parts of this area now find confirmation by Roman times and perhaps even during the Hellenistic era, while the *unguentaria* would suggest a Late Hellenistic spread along the same southern area by the modern road where the recent excavations revealed burials.

Stissi underlines the trend in the city ceramics, with the transition from Classical to Late Hellenistic times, towards a reduction in the range of pot types, a shift to larger-scale production of less sophisticated forms, and a major increase in transport amphorae. He speculates as to whether these changes are signs of a decline in average wealth, and of some reorientation to wider commercial activities, from which élites too may have benefited. These are independent pointers towards the explanation that we shall shortly be offering for the major contraction in urban and rural activity, observable at Thespiai in the final centuries BC and the initial ones of the Christian era.

The remaining ceramic group on Fig. 3.66 is the 'Middle–Late Hellenistic'. As with other overlapping classes, distributions can be helpful in suggesting which of the two periods here combined is more likely to dominate the assemblage. For this group, a distinctly wider spread of finds between the peripheral cemetery zones and the new Late Hellenistic core has been detected: this could point to a predominance in this joint assemblage of the Middle Hellenistic, a period otherwise hard to detect, and thus to a phase before the town contracted from its maximal Classical and Early Hellenistic extent.

At this point it is helpful to move directly to the immediately succeeding period map, that of Imperial Roman, *c*. AD 1 to 300 (Fig. 3.68).

Roman (and 'Roman?') (Fig. 3.68)

This period is taken to extend from approximately AD 1 to 300. Here we are dealing with less specialized

pot forms, more representative of the full range of activities than in some of the phases recently considered, yet still, as Philip Bes's detailed study (Chapter 12) shows, weighted towards fine wares and select types, so probably under-represented numerically: the missing material he believes to lie hidden in the large proportion of generic 'Roman–Late Roman' pottery. In the 'Merged' Fig. 3.68 the city core, as first seen in Fig. 3.66 with its Late Hellenistic focus, reappears, this time more forcefully and with the same foci, especially in the *Kastro* and immediately to its west, within the inner zone to its east, and as a band running from the north-eastern *Kastro* northwards. The outer western cemetery zone is much stronger than in Late Hellenistic times, but this is probably due to the larger number of recognized pieces; that in the far south, by contrast, where the Late Hellenistic was slightly better represented, is now so thin as to be rather uncertain; while the far eastern one has altogether disappeared. North of the Kanavaris, the cemetery area at the eastern extremity, absent in the Late Hellenistic spread, is once again fairly strong; another minor cluster, further north in this eastern sector and most likely beyond the eastern boundary of the city wall extension, is best seen also as burial material. But the strongest deposition is in the central zone, lying well within the line of this wall, and echoing the same feature in the preceding period. The dense spread of finds around the western edges of the *Kastro* continues.

What is most striking, in contrast with the Classical and Earlier Hellenistic distributions, is the sharp diminution of finds in the former outer urban areas, especially in the west and far east of the grid, but also to the immediate south of the *Kastro*. This is marked, first and foremost, by the effective abandonment of the eastern burial zone. A band of increasingly high density does however run from the *Kastro* north to the Kanavaris and across it into the area protected by the city extension wall.

One must bear in mind that the overall total of Early Roman Imperial finds is far lower than that for Classical–Hellenistic times – and this for a period of comparable length. As a subsequent occupation, furthermore, the Roman should have the advantage of overlying the earlier finds and structures, although the further layer of dense Late Roman activity, in the same general areas, will have had some effect on Early Roman sherd counts. It remains clear that, by Roman Imperial times, the city has visibly shrunk in extent and that significant parts of its extramural burial zones have gone out of use. More significant is the fact, evident from the preceding Fig. 3.66, that this change had, to a great extent, already taken shape during the short preceding period of Late Hellenistic, from *c*. 150/100 BC onwards (cross-shaped symbols). Quite independently of the lower sherd numbers, the salient fact is that the picture for the whole period between 150 BC and AD 300, rather than being merely a thinner version of that shown in the Archaic, Classical, or earlier Hellenistic distribution maps, is a radically different one.

Some differences still appear between the Roman map and the Late Hellenistic, and not simply as a result of the increased database. There is slightly more activity in the western cemetery zone; the far eastern cemetery has totally disappeared; the southern cemetery area is more thinly used than before; the far north-eastern burial area across the Kanavaris, by contrast, has come back into use. In the central area of this trans-Kanavaris zone, finds seem to run across the eastern boundary of the city wall extension and it may be that much of this is now cemetery material. This would conform to the discovery, in the new rescue trench to the south beside the modern east–west road, of probable Roman-era burials and a burial monument (see pp. 63, 196–8), also largely within the former city extension sector. But there were probably also other activities in this zone, which seem attested in Roman Imperial times and which would stimulate artefact deposition, mainly in its central zone from the river northwards to the theatre hollow.

These are indicated by consideration of the evidence from the surface architecture and the documentary sources. The 'merged' Fig. 3.68 appears to find support in the comment of Strabo (ix, 2. 25), writing in Augustan times, that Thespiai and Tanagra were the only two cities in Boeotia still to endure, while the rest were 'mere ruins and names'; yet with the significant qualification that even these two were merely 'moderately prosperous'. We must assume that the Greek theatre, located in the hemispherical hollow in the hills and shown on the maps as a rounded northern projection between the two 'horns' of the flanking valleys, was still in active use in Early Roman times, from its mention in the later second century AD by Pausanias (ix, 27.4). Then there is the case of the wealthy Greek member of the élite who paid for a new gymnasium, together with the necessary supplies of oil, for use by the numerous Italian financiers and traders now in the city (*negotiatores*) (Müller 2002, 98, nn. 61, 66 and Chapter 7, pp. 236–8) – in its own right a very important development. The comment is of further interest in that this building may or may not be identical with the 'upper' gymnasium that is mentioned in a second inscription (Müller, *ibid*.). If the city was now contracting, both in its population and in the size of its built-up area, yet the northern area had still to be passed through in order to reach

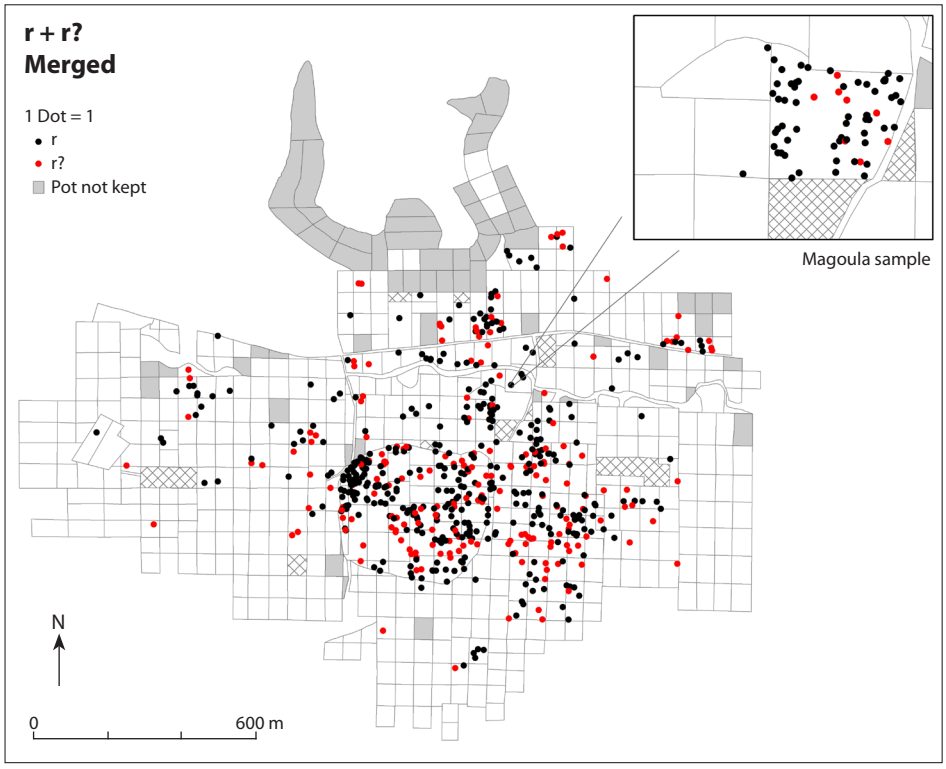


Figure 3.68. *Distribution of Roman (and 'Roman?') sherds.*

the theatre, then the likeliest location for this 'upper gymnasium' might be somewhere on the gently rising ground between the Kanavaris and the theatre, where indeed (at least according to P. Roesch: *IThesp* 136) the second inscription was itself found: see Chapter 4, p. 183). This alternative would be preferable to that of the other area of rising ground, the now apparently 'dead' zone south of the *Kastro*.

Three additional aspects need still need to be considered. First, there is the question where the inhabitants of the Late Hellenistic and Roman town were buried, with, among the inherited areas, little or nothing to show in the far east, limited spreads in the west and south, and by no means extensive finds in the north-east beyond the river. There are attractions in the idea that the contraction in the built-up area, the main feature of the Late Hellenistic and Roman maps, led to colonization of the largely abandoned parts of the former Classical–Hellenistic city by typically suburban uses, among them burials, craft activities or outlying houses. One architecturally interesting discovery could support this idea (Location 18: see Chapter 4, pp. 153–4). Just 150 m or so west of the *Kastro* wall, our survey met with a unique cluster of four large cut slabs, rectangular limestone roofing elements with only partly finished coffered decoration. They had clearly been ploughed up by a farmer and dragged from their original find-spot on to a small ridge at the edge of the cultivated area. An approximate parallel was found in a recently discovered, but undated, coffering block which had been reused as a tomb-cover in the cemetery of ancient Kleonai in the Peloponnese (see again Chapter 4): its conjectured original use was in the roof of a funerary *aedicula*. In our case the presence of four separate blocks suggest a substantial monument. The absolute freshness of our blocks when first discovered, in 1986, indicated that they had only recently been brought to the surface; when taken with their proximity to each other, this suggests that they are not far from their original site. If these inferences are on the right lines, we could be dealing with a monumental Roman tomb monument, set up a mere 100–200 m from what was now the Forum area. This is consonant with our evidence for wealthy Greek and Italian individuals at Thespiai in the Early Roman era and the likely introduction of Roman funerary customs. Parallels nearer to hand may be forthcoming in the suspected funerary monument of Roman date and style, detected within the rescue trench of 2013 beside the modern road just across the Kanavaris – again, not much more than 200 m from the presumed Forum area.

We must clearly entertain the possibility that there had been a major reorganization of the former city, with continuity of use only in its core, in a few of the traditional burial grounds, and at the theatre, but with new uses of space elsewhere. The city extension north of the river may have contained a gymnasium as well as the theatre, both in use, but may also have witnessed a revival of burial, with the encroachment of what had been an extramural activity, not just here but also in areas even closer to the city centre, if our reading of the coffered blocks and the new roadside monument is correct. Whether the clusters of Roman ceramic finds around the coffering blocks and on the line of the modern road across the river mark other burials, sanctuary or residual domestic activity is impossible to judge. But the architectural features clearly imply that both the inner western sector and the strip beside the modern east–west road, no longer formed part of the built-up urban area. The finds in this latter sector give support to the spread of burials through the former city extension, notably in the massive concrete foundation reaching down below the water table (# Ω 43-373 in the report); while the limited building traces at # 363 may have lined a predecessor to the modern east–west road, representing some kind of suburban extramural activity of a domestic or industrial nature.

Relevant, too, is the discovery of the Domitianic inscription, of AD 86 or 87, in the far eastern sector (Schachter and Marchand, 2012: 292–4, no. 5), recording the reconstruction of a building of unknown, but certainly public, use. On the assumption that this too was recovered close to its original location, then here is yet another sector now devoted to non-domestic activity, perhaps most plausibly involving the use of an outlying sanctuary.

One final and notable feature of the Roman Fig. 3.68 is the evidence that derives from the special survey of the prehistoric Magoula. When compared with the Classical, the Hellenistic and the more closely defined later Roman maps, there is an obvious peak in Imperial Roman activity, with minimal deposition of sherds in those earlier and later periods. It is true that the more detailed phases of ER or MR (Fig. 3.75) do not show a parallel spread in this locality, nor do other phases offer any basis for questioning the diagnosticity of the finds. Still, one must infer that there was a major use, conceivably associated with a new temple or other major public building, of this venerable elevated location in the earlier Imperial era. Perhaps this could mark the introduction here of the Imperial cult, if that was not more likely to have been placed in the Forum. Indeed, the limited collections for periods between Neolithic and Roman occupation of the Magoula there may well be a product of the common Roman practice of digging deep foundations for the monuments of this period, thus destroying the occupation layers from the intervening phases. The Magoula hill, as the most prominent elevation within the original city wall, would have made a natural location for a public building in Classical or Hellenistic times, and traces of at least one such structure indeed exist (Chapter 4, Site 30.I and II). If so, the activity did not continue beyond the first centuries of the Empire: no trace of the usually abundant and easily datable Late Roman wares was found on the Magoula.

At this point, however, we must reintroduce what must be a vital corrective to any simple reading of the Late Hellenistic and Roman maps. This derives from the data obtained from the immediate southern hinterland of Thespiai, and published in *Testing the Hinterland*. Figs. 3.69 and 3.70 summarize the contribution made by the sequence of broad generic periods to the very dense off-site scatters characteristic of the landscape around ancient Thespiai.

Remarkably, between 75 and 80 per cent of the off-site scatters proved to be made up of generic 'Greek' sherds, with a very minor contribution from Roman and Late Roman material – and that largely located in the haloes around the rural sites. We have argued that the bulk of this material emanated from the city, in the form of formal rubbish disposal for manuring purposes. Despite the considerable contraction in the extent of the city and by implication in its practice of large-scale rural manuring, so well attested for the preceding population, in Roman and later times, a natural question remains: if the 'Greek' era had now all but ceased, then what would happen to the urban rubbish? Most likely, it was deposited around the city borders and in empty or ruined structures; one thinks naturally of the zones formerly occupied by the large Greek town which now had become disused. This leads us to conclude that in addition to the peripheral cemeteries, including both previously existing ones and new ones located closer to the shrunken town, we can expect to find deposits of urban rubbish, lying between and within these burial zones, and no longer finding its way into the more distant countryside. In the later Fig. 3.75 we have suggested a division of the Roman finds into city core, largely burial zones, and 'city halo' in which sporadic burial, extramural sanctuaries, maybe some semi-rural housing, market gardens and rubbish disposal areas can now be envisaged. In our analysis of the Classical–Hellenistic maps (pp. 91, 98–9 with Fig. 3.61), we found a band of urban halo that included not only the interstices of the peripheral cemeteries, but also a zone extending beyond the city grid and into the

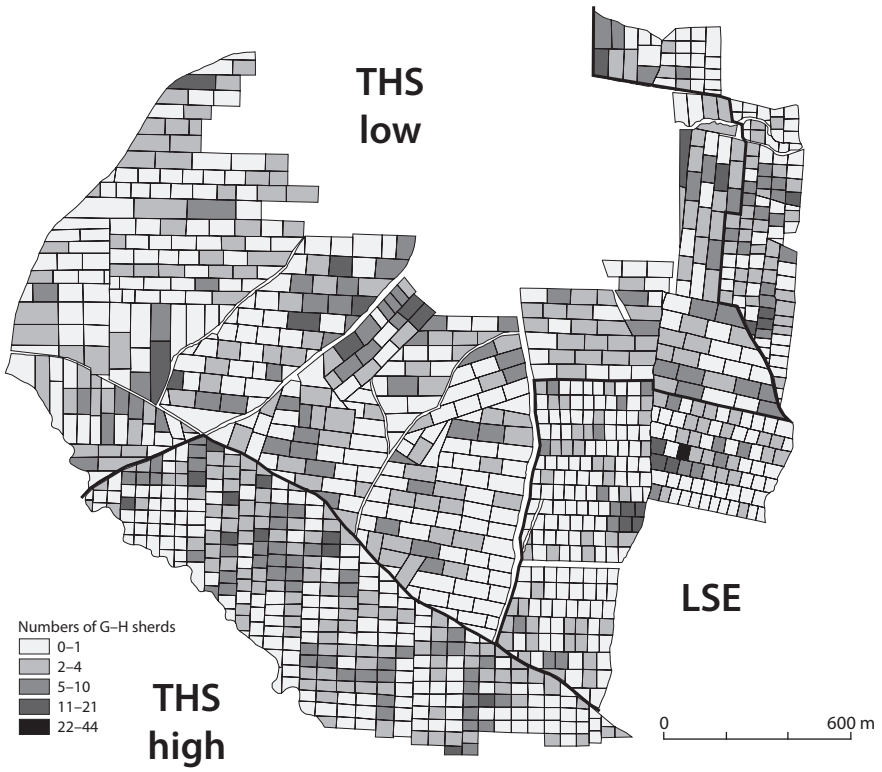


Figure 3.69. *Frequency of sherds per Transect, dated to the very broadly 'Classical Greek' era (Geometric to Hellenistic), from the rural survey area immediately to the south of the city of Thespiai.*

countryside beyond. Since the subsequent, Roman and Late Roman contributions to the off-site material beyond the city grid are minimal, we must accept that the urban rubbish for these 600 or so years was being deposited within the grid and, naturally with the apparent cessation of off-site manuring, at far higher levels than before, when so much of it had found its way up to 2–3 km from the city.

Estimates of the built-up, domestic and public areas of the earlier Roman town will be attempted shortly when we turn to the combined 'Early and Middle Roman' Fig. 3.75, but we can anticipate that discussion by noting that, for the periods of this map, we shall be suggesting a built-up area of some 34 ha. We earlier discussed the densest zone of Late Hellenistic but, for lack of detailed further information, did not try to break this spread up into 'core' and 'urban halo', merely suggesting that this figure should include some 'halo' as well as the city core. It seems reasonable to propose, provisionally, that the town remained of a similar size, as between Late Hellenistic and Middle Roman times. The reciprocal rises and falls, across these two phases, in the use of traditional cemetery zones, which to some extent balance out, would support this. The accepted density estimate of some 125 persons per *total* urban hectare would yield only some 4250 occupants, a huge decline in population, down to less than half of what it had been at the peak expansion of the city in Late Classical and earlier Hellenistic times, when we suggested a figure of approximately 9000 urban inhabitants.

Of documentary sources for population in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, the enrolment records of new army recruits offer the best evidence. As observed elsewhere (Chapter 5, pp. 214, 216; Chapter 6, p. 222), from the late third century BC onwards the numbers of new recruits go into a steepening decline until, by the early second century, they reach figures in the 30s, as compared with the 60s and 70s of a century earlier. Although there could be more than one explanation for this, the visible contraction of the physical extent of the city, between earlier Hellenistic times and the Late Hellenistic phase whose beginning we now date to the second century BC, fully supports belief in such a dramatic drop in population. In other ways, the evidence from coinage (Grandjean, Chapter 14) and the epigraphic record (Müller, Chapter 7) also point

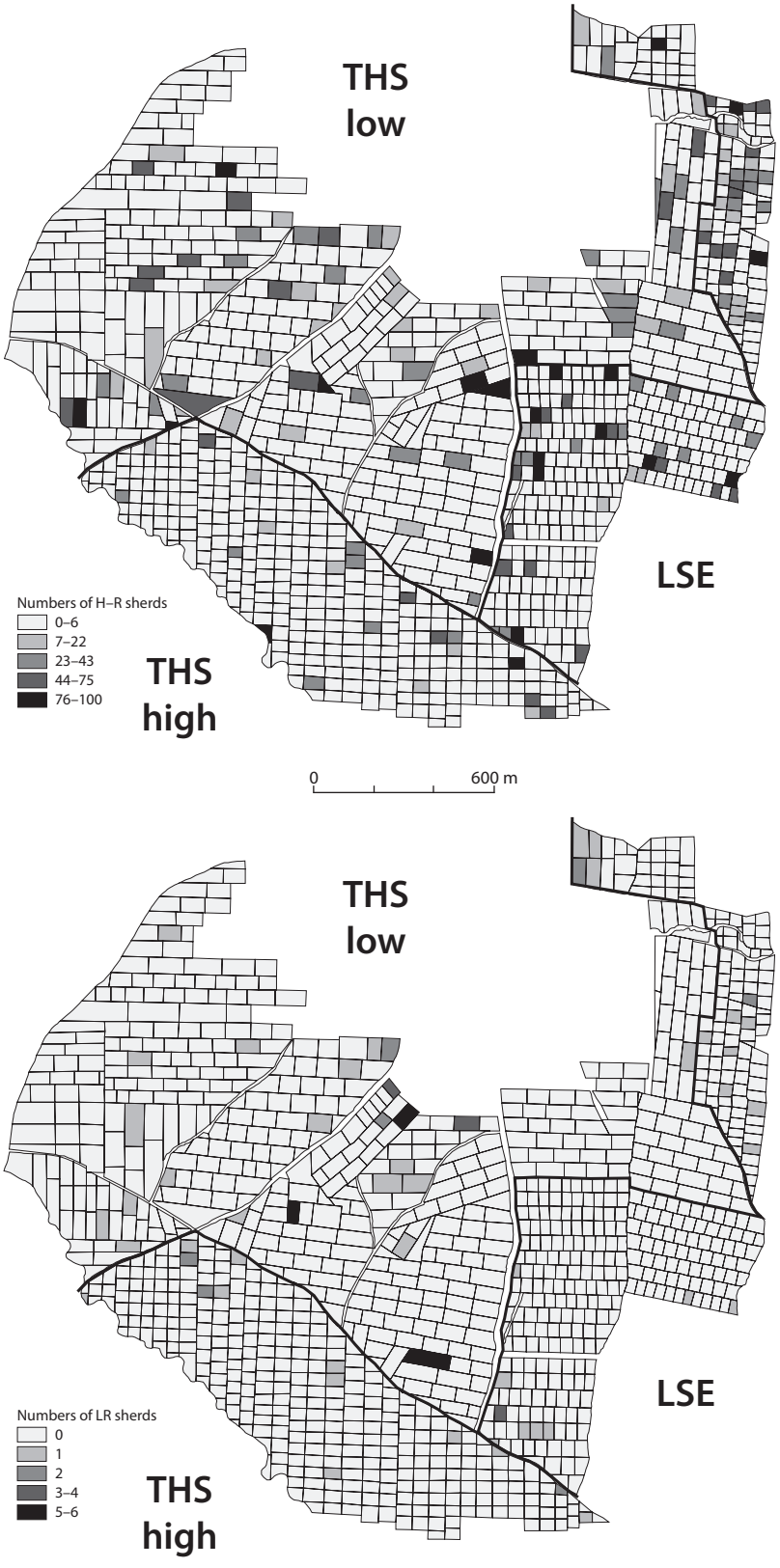


Figure 3.70. *The very much lower counts for the 'Roman' (above) and 'Late Roman' (below) eras.*

to the second century and later as an epoch of decline for the city, giving substance to the (often contested) claims of the ancient historical and geographical writers about the deteriorating quality of life for most people (if not for the élite) in Boeotia.

The account of this period by the historian Polybius is especially problematic (for varying assessments, see Muller 2013; this volume, Chapter 5, pp. 215–18; and Osborne, Chapter 6, pp. 228–9). Polybius launches more than one tirade on Boeotian decline, dating its beginnings from just after the mid-third century BC, reaching a nadir around the end of that century, and improving somewhat in the following one. In the original interpretation of our survey evidence, we found that this gave some support for such a narrative (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985). But since then, Müller's 2013 article has radically called into question the nature of Polybius's Boeotian diatribes, whose historical roots, such as they are, lie rather in developments of Polybius's lifetime (*c*. 200–120 BC). This agrees very well with the parallel, but quite independent, revision proposed by our current specialists for the pottery chronology and, with it, the lower dating for the more drastic changes observed archaeologically in urban and rural life.

In another paper, Christel Müller (2010) has pointed also to some elements that may have contributed both to social disorder and to the decline of the city. From the third century onwards, there are signs of the agglomeration of property and the accumulation of large personal fortunes among leading citizens of the Boeotian towns, arguably at the expense of the class of independent peasant farmers. Moreover, the terms of the Hellenistic Boeotian Confederacy, as with the far larger and frontier-less Roman Empire which succeeded it, gave scope for the rich to purchase and exploit property across the entire federal province, in contrast to the preceding world of self-contained *poleis*, in which extravagant land ownership was relatively rare and lay outside civic norms.

But there was an even greater force for change, one that acted in a more direct way to reduce the population, rural and urban, on the ground: the brutal and relentless impact of Rome on mainland Greece in the second and first centuries BC. Thespiai, it is true, was skilful or fortunate enough to avoid destructive confrontation with Rome, both in the second century and again, in the following century, when she alone in the region took the side of the ultimate victors in the Mithridatic War. But there must have been major collateral damage to the city and its territory whenever Roman armies and their opponents swept across Boeotia, as repeatedly happened in the final centuries BC. We hear that the Roman general Mummius stripped works of art from Thespiai, when it may have failed to take the Roman side in 146 BC (see Chapter 7, p. 232); but under what other forms of oppression did the city suffer? Plutarch, a native of Chaironeia, in his *Life of Antony* (58) recalls hearing how his great-grandfather suffered under Mark Antony's forced grain requisitions, exacted under threat of the whip and terminated only by the news of the Battle of Actium in 31 BC – a reminder that disaster can take many other forms besides the outright hostile sack of a city. There are, for example, epigraphic hints of a second-century food crisis, in Thespiai and elsewhere, after the dissolution of the Boeotian Confederacy in 171 BC (Müller, Chapter 7, pp. 232, 238 and n.2). It is uncertain how far this last change, which unquestionably led to a total reorganization of political, social and economic life in the cities of this region, directly affected urban life; but it too may have been a factor in the general decline of the towns and their hinterlands which is so clear from archaeology.

Finally, we have suggested in previous publications (summarized in *Testing the Hinterland*: 180), that the very high densities of population in Boeotia around 400 BC, indicated by both historical sources and our field survey data, posed an unsustainable burden on the productivity of the land: such figures were never attained again, for the province as a whole, until the late twentieth century. The immense effort that had to be expended in large-scale fertilization of the countryside with urban waste, which has been documented in our off-site mapping in every city landscape of Boeotia that we have surveyed (Haliartos, Askra, Thespiai, Hyettos, Tanagra, Koroneia), and whose prevalence at Thespiai is firmly dated to the generic 'Greek' era, must surely be understood as a response to the need to produce ever more food, for populations swollen to dangerous levels in relation to local carrying capacity. The virtual disappearance of this practice, apart from localized rural site haloes, by Early Roman times, coincides with the decline in town and country populations. It might of course be argued that it was precisely the disappearance of so many mouths that brought about the ending of this intensive manuring activity; yet the preceding situation had in any case been unsustainable in the long-term.

Whatever the exact nature of the conjuncture between an unsustainable agricultural regime, the expansion of a wealthy land-owning class and the disruption caused by a foreign military and later political presence in the region, it seems nevertheless to be a real one, which led to a profound alteration in the way of life of its citizens. This leaves open the question: what became of the 'missing' population? Luuk de Ligt of the University of Leiden has indicated

(*pers. comm.*) first, the possibility that, in increasingly difficult ecological and economic circumstances such as we have just outlined, the poorer farmers may have adjusted through family limitation, a practice well-attested in the studies of historical demographers (Wrigley 1969, especially Chapter 5). This would leave in place a residue of farmers, now virtually all resident in the city of Thespiai, to work the remaining freehold property and the estates of the rising magnates now attested for this city. Secondly, they could migrate to find better opportunities. Here it has been suggested, notably by Susan Alcock (1993: 96–117), that the decline in many southern Greek rural landscapes is a sign, not of overall demographic collapse, but of a specifically rural depopulation, compensated for by migration into the towns on the part of peasants, displaced by the rise of larger and less labour-intensive estates; and especially into a few growing Roman colonies such as Corinth, Patras and Nicopolis. Yet the empirical evidence of the loss in scale of the other urban centres, recorded in surveys for Early Roman times, is more than enough to dwarf the size of the new Imperial foundations (Bintliff 2012, Ch. 13). Alcock herself admits (1993: 97) that the 'nucleation factor' does not fit the case of Hellenistic and Roman Boeotia. But her general hypothesis of rural emigration can be extended, by suggesting that some of the Greek peasants who disappear from the Roman province of Achaia moved much further afield, perhaps beyond Greece – a thesis that must be testable through epigraphic and other source research.

Philip Bes in his review of the Early to Mid-Roman ceramics (Chapter 12) contrasts these cumulative signs of urban contraction and impoverishment with the favourable explosion of imports in exactly these centuries, even while the vast majority of ceramics remained locally or at least regionally made. This surely, if counter-intuitively, highlights the polarization in Greek rural societies, between the displacement of lower or middle class farmer-citizens, with the reduction in their numbers and status, to the benefit of a globalized mercantile class of rich citizens and incoming Italians, in what some have characterized as a previously unparalleled, proto-capitalist economy (cf. Bintliff 2012a, Chapter 13).

Hellenistic Merged (and 'Hellenistic?' Merged) (Fig. 3.71)
This map combines the finds from the whole era, from Early through Middle into Late Hellenistic, that is from the late fourth century BC to around the end of the first. A dramatic change in the city's shape has been documented for Late Hellenistic, so that this

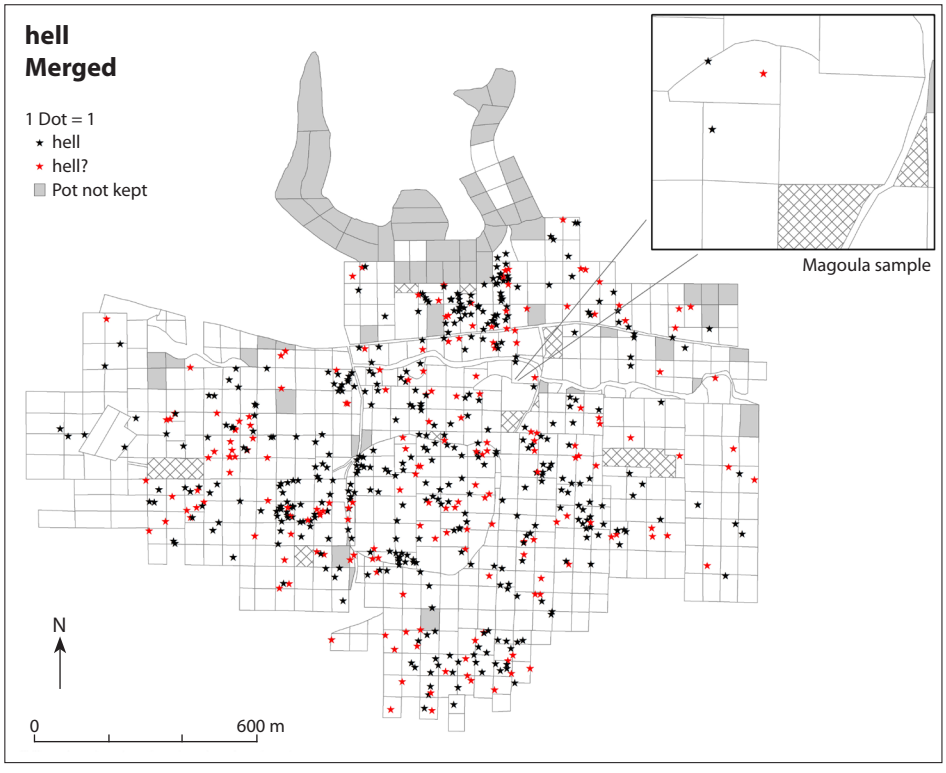


Figure 3.71. *Combined distribution of all sherds from the Hellenistic era (with 'Hellenistic?').*

map displays a combination of the wider Classical and earlier Hellenistic with the more contracted city of Late Hellenistic, somewhat blurring our analysis of the separate phases.

Early Iron Age/Classical/Early Hellenistic and Late Geometric/Classical (and the 'Possible' Finds) (Fig. 3.72)
This map presents several categories of finds, each with a very wide potential range, together covering the entire first millennium BC. It would be expected, therefore, to depict aspects of different occupational phases at the city site. The strongest cluster on the map is the location in the far eastern extremity which as we have seen was a focus, almost certainly for burial, from the Iron Age to the Archaic period, but not for the subsequent C–H phase. The far west by comparison is not strong, but the far south is moderately so, and also the north-eastern sector across the Kanavaris, an area regularly picked out from the Iron Age (and before) down into C–H times, is fairly dense. There is a hint of a heightened band of finds to the north-west and south-west of the *Kastro*. zones that this time are well-represented from the Archaic through to the earlier Hellenistic era and, in the case of the area immediately west of the *Kastro*, still significant into Late Hellenistic times.

Hellenistic/Roman, Hellenistic/Middle Roman and Hellenistic/Late Roman (and their 'possibles')
Figs. 3.73 and 3.74 show two major groups of sherds which, once again, are generically assignable to longer cross-period phases, with a third, more closely dated but fugitive group in 'Hellenistic/Middle Roman'. The most prolific of these phases, 'Hellenistic to Roman', covers the whole era from *c*. 300 BC to *c*. AD 300. This time, the western cemetery area and its surroundings can first be picked out, with a corridor leading eastwards towards the denser area seen earlier, to the west and south-west of the *Kastro*. From the *Kastro*, another dense area reaches north and across the Kanavaris as far as the modern road and beyond; and a further band to the south includes the southern cemetery area. But there is only a smaller extension reaching out to the north-east of the *Kastro*; the eastern extremity is almost empty and the middle zone, between the *Kastro* and this former eastern burial area, is also low in finds. Across the Kanavaris, the remaining areas north of the main road, to the west and east, have very few pieces.

It is likely that any oddities in the distribution, covering six centuries, of the main zones of the H–R finds on this map are explained by the hidden sub-periods that compose it, and which were seen in previous maps. Thus the westerly area, on this showing,

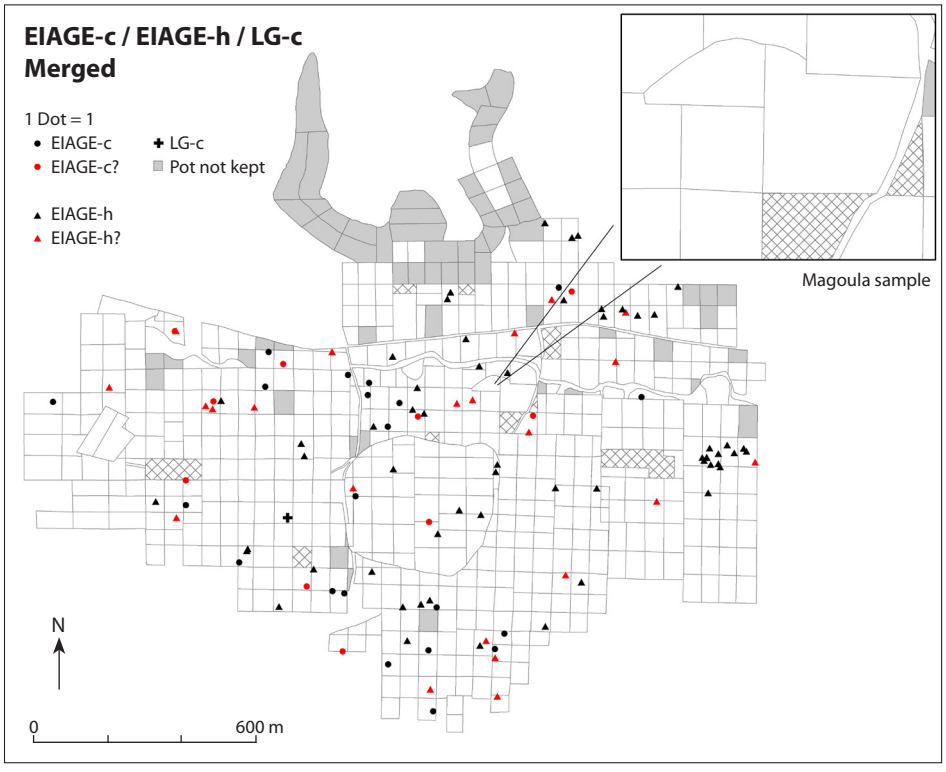


Figure 3.72. *Combined distribution of Early Iron Age / Classical, Early Iron Age / Hellenistic and Late Geometric / Classical sherds, together with 'possible' finds.*

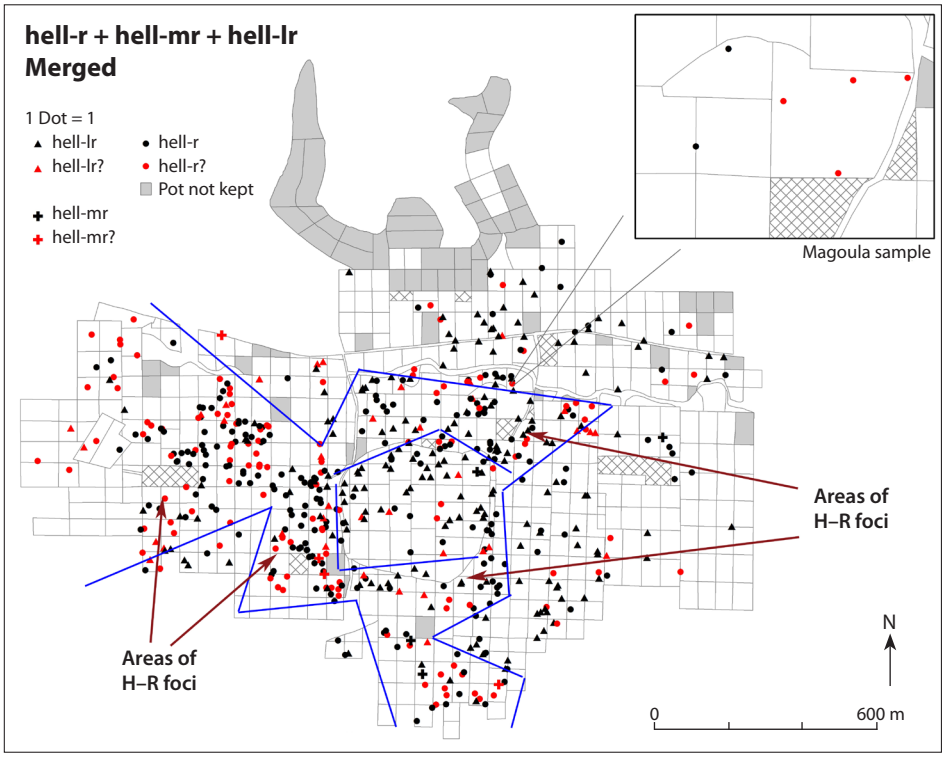


Figure 3.73. *Combined distribution of Hellenistic / Roman, Hellenistic / Middle Roman and Hellenistic / Late Roman sherds, with outlines defining the areas of denser scatters.*

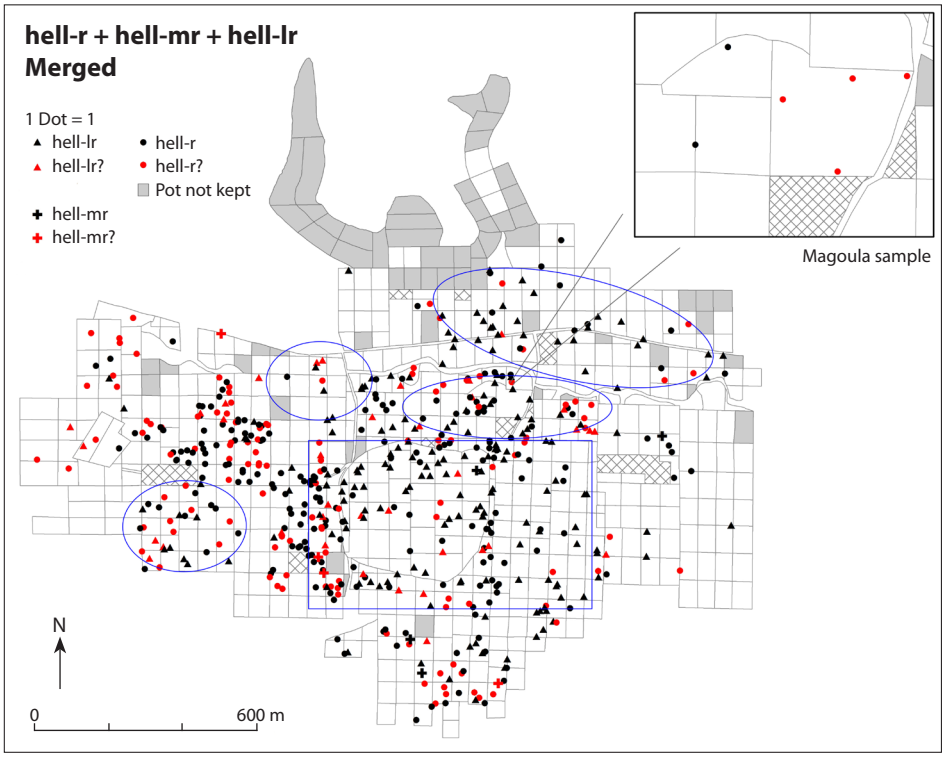


Figure 3.74. *Combined distribution of the same ceramic classes as in Fig. 3.73, with outlines defining the specifically Hellenistic / Late Roman concentrations.*

would be primarily Classical and earlier Hellenistic, and the southern area likewise. The area just outside the *Kastro* to the south-west is part of the Late Hellenistic core, but in its entirety also best paralleled in Classical and earlier Hellenistic times; the same goes for the area to the north, and especially the focus to the north-east, of the *Kastro*. The *Kastro* itself, as we have come to expect with earlier periods, has few finds. Fig. 3.73 outlines the main foci of this period.

Such broad generic groupings tend to be composed of small and poorly preserved pieces; but in this case it seems from the analysis that the material may predominantly be dated to the earlier two centuries of the Hellenistic era, *c*. 300–100 BC, when the city was still at or near its peak, with a maximal urban area and the traditional peripheral cemeteries, but in the centre and east suppressed by later activity.

Certainly the even broader chronology of the generic 'Hellenistic to Late Roman' pieces presents significant contrasts to the preceding distribution just discussed. Once again we have outlined its main foci, in Fig. 3.74, and these foci are generally distinct from the 'H–R' groupings, with the exception of an elongated east–west running band to the north-east of the *Kastro*. The closest parallel is with a map that we shall shortly introduce, that for Late Roman; so the distribution for this phase can then be used in support of the material to be discussed under Late Roman. The finds dated 'Hellenistic to Middle Roman' are too few to deserve analysis.

In conclusion, it appears that the two generic groups that we have discussed, far from representing a balanced mixture of poorly diagnostic finds from periods of 600 and 900 years respectively, are in reality largely dominated by much shorter time-periods, the Early to Middle Hellenistic for the 'H–R' class and Late Roman for the 'H–LR' class. Although it has been suggested by our ceramic specialists (Chapters 11, 12), from purely internal analysis of the finds, that a significant proportion of the Hellenistic to Mid-Roman deposits lies hidden in cross-period assemblages, our spatial analysis, if correct, underlines two wider trends that can be identified: the drastic contraction of the city from Late Hellenistic times onwards, and the dense overlay of well-made pottery across the domestic and burial zones during the final Late Roman centuries of the town.

The Roman and later periods

Early Roman, Early–Middle Roman and Middle Roman (and their 'possibles?') (Fig. 3.75)

With these categories, we revert to more closely identified, but functionally partial assemblages. The finds assigned to the first to fourth centuries AD are mostly drawn from select, well-dated fine wares, with 'ER' covering the first two centuries AD and 'MR' the third and fourth. This leaves the period from c. AD 400 to the mid-seventh century for the final phase, Late Roman.

The less than full functional range of all three of these groups makes it likely that only certain contexts will be picked out, giving a skeletal version of the functional scheme that has been sketched for earlier Roman. The Early Roman sherds cluster in the *Kastro* and in a broad band which runs to its east, but dies away before reaching the former far eastern burial zone. To the north of this, a second east–west-running band of denser finds fills the space between *Kastro* and river, with only a small, central group of sherds extending north of the latter. This spread has a number, but not all, of the features of the 'Roman' map (Fig. 3.68) which covers a rather shorter period lasting to *c*. AD 300, yet it clearly qualifies to be treated as additional material for that phase. The Middle Roman, however, when compared with the Early Roman of the preceding two centuries, adds clusters in the far west and far south, but loses the focus north of the Kanavaris and the modern road. Here we note too the great mortared pebble platform towards the east of the city (Chapter 4, p. 159, Site 50) which is very similar to one found in the 2013 rescue trench beside the main road: both are likely to be bases for Roman monumental tombs. As noted earlier (p. 106), a possible monumental tomb of Roman date lies not far west of the *Kastro*.

Certain features of this map seem to anticipate the Late Roman phase, suggesting for example that some of the peripheral areas recover in popularity already in Middle Roman. Yet the virtual absence of Middle Roman north of the Kanavaris remains mysterious, since both Early and Late Roman have a significant presence there. The infrastructure for this whole period proposed in Fig. 3.74, we suggest, will be found to have many features similar to those for the earlier Roman, Fig. 3.75.

Reasonable though it might seem to conclude that, as in the earlier, Hellenistic use of the then recently fortified area north of the Kanavaris, domestic and public use must have continued, the recent rescue finds from beside the modern east–west road make it clear that, between Middle Hellenistic and Late Roman times, burials have again invaded this sector; while the strong domestic element previously detected seems not to extend beyond the earlier part of Late Hellenistic, not even into Early Roman. We would conclude that the sometime domestic zone of the city extension across the river came later to form a major area for burial, from Roman, perhaps even from

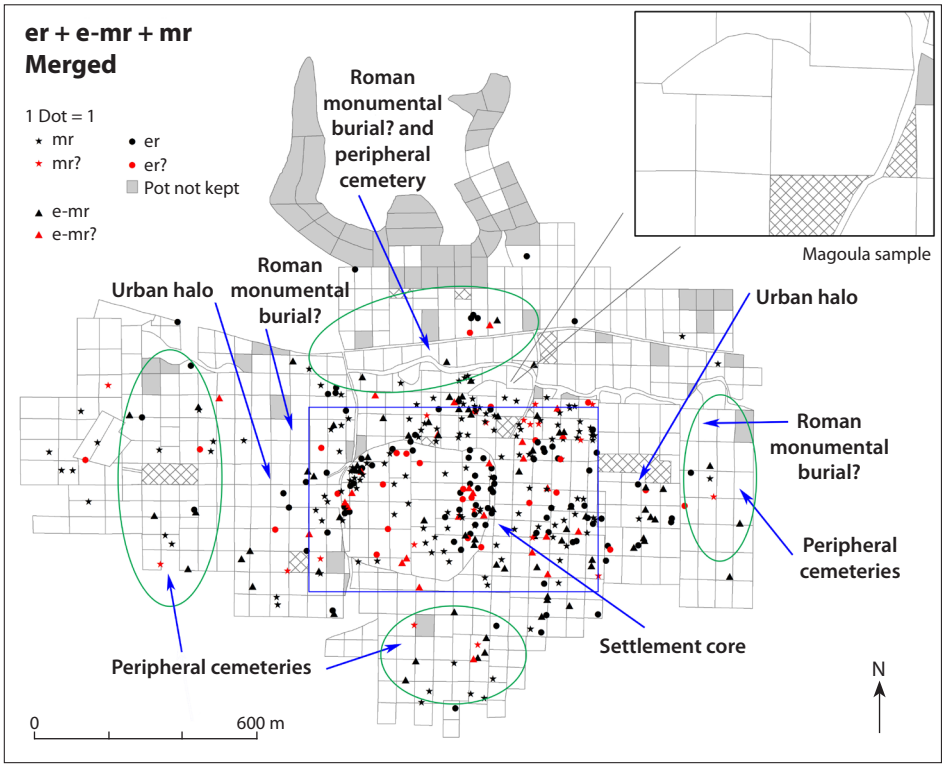


Figure 3.75. *Combined distribution of Early Roman, Early / Middle Roman and Middle Roman sherds, together with 'possible' finds*

Early Roman times onwards, until the end of antiquity, despite the continuing use of the theatre and the possible location of a gymnasium in this sector.

How large was the Early to Middle Roman town? If we subtract the cemetery areas and the likely urban halo, we are left with a rectangle running from the western edge of the *Kastro* eastwards, and covering some 34 ha (Fig. 3.75 again). Yet the striking shrinkage of the city, shown by survey data, seems belied by its relatively positive image in the ancient historical and epigraphic sources. Besides Strabo's comment (above, p. 105), contrasting Thespiai and Tanagra with the decrepit if not ruinous state of the other cities, the plethora of dedications, especially those linked to Rome, often make mention of newly built structures in connection with these cults (Müller, Chapter 7). Since the dissolution of the Boeotian Confederacy in 171 by Rome, the cities increasingly belonged to their wealthy élites, together with the incoming Italian businessmen and important individuals in the Imperial administration with whom they often fraternized. There was certainly wealth in the city, but as in the rest of the early Empire, it was concentrated in the hands of the few, even if they were encouraged to disburse some of it, through euergetism, on public amenities and urban architecture.

Against this background in Boeotian life (see Müller 2002; 2010), the Thespian territory and, from our preliminary results, probably other city landscapes too show a curious emptiness between the disappearance of the many farms and hamlets of the Classical–Early Hellenistic era, and the appearance and gradual expansion, in size and in number, of villas and villa-hamlets from Middle Roman through to Late Roman times (*c.* AD 200–600) (*Testing the Hinterland*: 155–60). This new form of estate is usually seen as the physical manifestation of the concentration of landholding in Greece in the hands of the wealthier class. It remains for us in future volumes to shed light on these curious processes in the wider countryside, but let us for the present assume that the work-force, for a much reduced area of land in use, dwelt in the shrunken towns and surviving villages of the *chora* (which may have for some time excluded Askra), alongside the residences of a burgeoning élite class of indigenous and foreign origin. The important evidence for *negotiatores* ('money-men', cf. Paterson 1998) in Thespiai and Tanagra in this period would seem to rest primarily on commercialization of agricultural wealth, since no other obvious resources were available. It is tantalizing to guess at what a friend of Cicero's was up to when he was 'doing some

business in Thespiai' (Chapter 7, p. 234); while the likelihood that agents of wealthy foreigners (freedmen and slaves) were resident, but acting for absent patrons, also adds to a sharply contrasted picture of the Thespian economy under Rome. The numbers of Italians in the city were enough to support their separate new gymnasium, cleverly paid for (along with the necessary oil) by a local magnate desirous of close association with the new political and economic elite of the Empire, at his own expense (Müller 2002). But the absence of significant rural settlement till the Middle Roman era, and the fall-off in the associated off-site scatters, suggests a severe reduction in the labour force and the area of land in use, by comparison with the preceding eras.

Late Roman (and 'Late Roman'?) (Fig. 3.76)

Here we have one of the most satisfactory of all our ceramic assemblages, full in its range, relatively easy to date and clear in its distribution. The heart of deposition lies squarely within the *Kastro*, with the next highest densities outside to the north-east and east, and a slighter overspill round the western and south-eastern fringes. The tight clustering shown neatly reflects our deduction, from epigraphic evidence, that the fort itself was constructed within this phase (Chapter 2, pp. 16–17). As spelled out there, the evidence for a more exact dating gives us a *terminus post quem* of the late fourth century AD (see also below, p. 188).

Such an imperial initiative would also best explain the form that the fortification evidently took; for although since Jamot's demolition of the late nineteenth century the rampart has appeared as a sub-oval irregular linear heap of earth, rubble and spolia (Figs. 3.8–3.12), earlier travellers had described a more elaborate structure (Chapter 2, pp. 8–13). Gell and Ulrichs in particular portray a regular hexagon, with large cut stone basal layers, to which a mud-brick superstructure was probably added. In confirmation of this, we observed in 2001 (see Chapter 4, p. 145, Site 4.I) a regular stone tower foundation projecting out of the *Kastro*, later excavated by Dr. Aravantinos, which likewise points to a regular planned fortification wall with interval towers.

In the far south, the assumed cemetery area is active, but somewhat obscured by an equally dense east–west-running scatter between it and the *Kastro* to its north. The far eastern sector recovers to a healthier spread, at similar levels to the supposed south cemetery; but here again, a scatter at least as dense occupies the intervening ground to its west towards

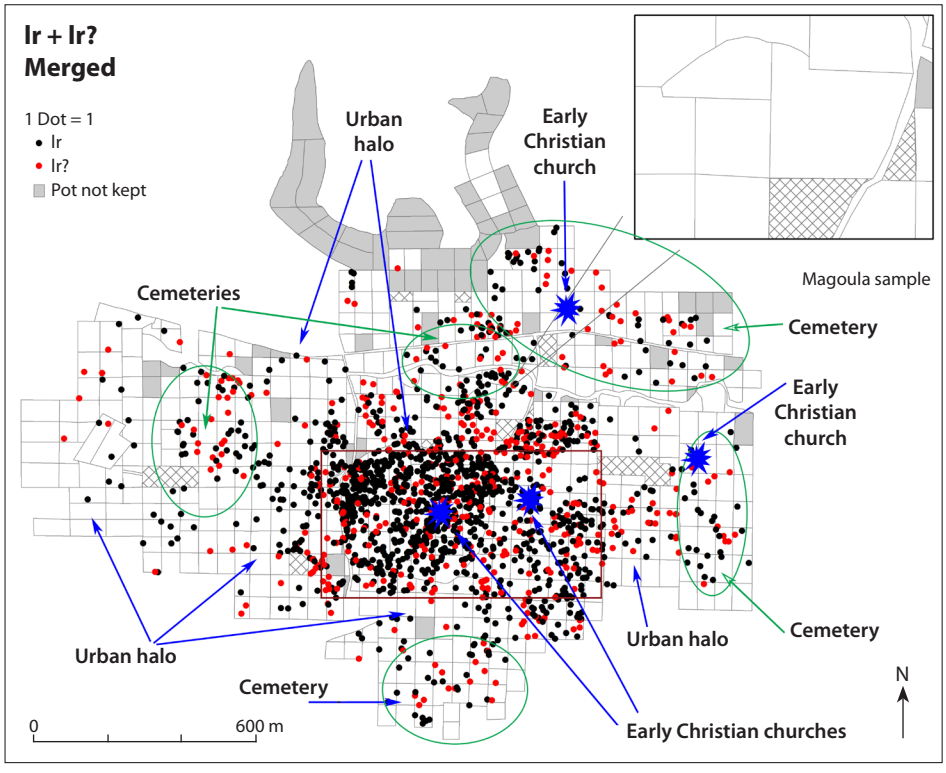


Figure 3.76. *Distribution of Late Roman (and 'Late Roman?') sherds.*

the *Kastro*. In the trans-Kanavaris sector, there is little to the west, but the much denser central spread and a new and separate far eastern focus, together with an intervening cluster in the valley running uphill northwards, can all alike be viewed now as burials. South of the Kanavaris, in the west the story is similar: a dense cluster reappears, showing much activity in the traditional cemetery here, but there are also fairly dense groups separating this from the edge of the *Kastro*, along with thinner scatters to its west, north-west and south.

The 'Merged' map thus provides our best synoptic view of the Late Antique town. It is advantageous to compare it with that for earlier Roman Fig. 3.75, since each in a different way gives the impression of a relatively thriving city. The Late Roman clearly does not match the spatial extent and consistency of the Classical/Hellenistic material, but its massive densities in and to the east of the *Kastro* are still impressive indeed.

Both maps agree that the built-up area is focused on the *Kastro* with an extensive suburb to its east. But only in Late Roman times are all the traditional cemeteries in significant use, in contrast to Early Roman when the north-eastern and far eastern cemeteries had very little activity. This might at first sight be seen to imply some recovery in population as between the two eras.

The probable existence hereabouts of at least two Early Christian churches, one somewhere in the eastern half of the *Kastro*, the other in the eastern suburb just 100 m outside the *Kastro* wall (Chapter 4, p. 145, Site 4A.I and p. 156, Site 36) is hardly a surprise; but the Middle Byzantine churches found in the north-eastern (Agios Athanasios, Chapter 4, p. 188) and far eastern ('Makri Ekklesia', *ibid*., pp. 160–1, Site 51) cemeteries appear to have had probable Early Christian predecessors. The church in the *Kastro* must have found a successor or replacement of Early Byzantine date, in the structure whose lintel block survives at Site 8 (*ibid*., p. 149); while the two outlying churches were to continue to be renovated or replaced, into Middle Byzantine or even Modern times.

Apart from the shrunken but dense core zone and the peripheral cemeteries, we have observed wide swathes of moderately dense sherds and smaller areas with lighter scatters for this era. To comprehend these zones, and with them the delineation of the core and the burial areas, there are two major factors to consider. The first is one that we have had to deal with since the Late Hellenistic Fig. 3.66, and that is our secure knowledge of the change, from this phase onwards until the end of antiquity, in the disposal of urban waste. We have to conclude that, in place of the massive operation of taking a major part of it out into the surrounding countryside for manuring purposes, much of it must have remained within the area covered by our city grid. With the shrinkage of the town, it is more than likely that some house-plots were abandoned: so, too, in this period when Christianity became first tolerated and then imposed, the abandonment and spoliation of many pagan shrines will have followed. The presence of a church in or near the Forum is a symptom of these changes. As with the preceding Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, our working hypothesis is that the urban rubbish, if not placed into abandoned plots within the surviving built-up city core, was deposited in the zone between this core and the cemeteries, and probably also around and between the discrete cemetery plots. It is not at all implausible that some of this dumping was purposely directed on to suburban market gardens, as the reconstruction by Ducellier (*Testing the Hinterland*: 24, Fig. 4.3) of intensive Byzantine village 'infield cultivation' would suggest.

Such considerations would certainly condense the wide spread of Late Roman material into a far smaller occupied area than appeared at first sight; but a second equally important factor needs now to be introduced. David Pettegrew has persuasively argued (Pettegrew 2007) that the high diagnostic quality of Late Roman ceramics enhances their visibility, in comparison with Hellenistic and Early to Middle Roman finds. Thus, a similar level of activity to that of earlier Roman Thespiai will appear far higher in Late Antiquity, especially in the greater density of finds. Finally, we can add to this the fact that the Late Roman settlement is the last urban occupation, deposited above the older historical levels; and, over most of the grid, it suffers no major subsequent disturbance, thus further favouring its exposure on the surface.

These elements could be read as signifying a Late Roman town that was stronger and had revived to the point of re-colonizing areas of the grid, compared with the distribution shown in the 'Roman' map. Even when we allow for a raising of all the density levels, caused by the enhanced diagnosticity, we must still admit that the eastern and north-eastern cemetery zones have resumed significant activity, after almost none in the earlier period, and that the area of the western cemetery in use has expanded considerably. Yet when we try to separate out, as far as possible, the domestic areas, there is actually some further contraction of the urban core, which covers perhaps some 30 ha rather than the 34 of earlier Roman Imperial centuries. This might equate

to an urban population of around 3750. But on the positive side, there is the expansion of villa and villa-hamlet settlement in the city's immediate hinterland, although we have argued (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 160–6) that the villas at least seem to have housed a very small resident work-force.

Here the architectural finds can join with the ceramics to convey a more three-dimensional picture of the contemporary town. As noted above (p. 117) and indicated on the Late Roman map, the *Kastro* enceinte may have enclosed a church of Early Christian age, while further to the east stand three other Christian monuments. One is the prominent stump of rubble, tile and mortar, Site 36 in Chapter 4, certainly from a church of apsidal plan, as determined by a brief and unpublished trial with geophysics. Its exact date, and that of the earlier of the two cruciform apsidal churches further east again, at Site 51 (the *Makri Ekklesia*), remains unclear. The latter (see again Chapter 4, pp. 160–1) lies in an ambiguous location, immediately to the east of an L-shaped space marked as 'not surveyed' on our maps (a dense maize plantation at the time) and just before the last block of transects at the eastern extremity – thus on the very periphery of our Late Roman distribution, and well outside the zone of dense finds (though as we shall see presently, it lies close to the heart of the more southerly of the two Byzantine and Frankish villages). Clearance of recent field-stone dumping, on the part of local villagers, by Božidar Slapšak and his Slovenian team has shown that a large three-aisled church, very probably of Early Christian date, was replaced by a smaller, Middle Byzantine cross-in-square successor on the same site. Across the Kanavaris, and equally closely associated with the more northerly Medieval village stands a second, this time still surviving church, that of Agios Athanasios (Chapter 4, p. 188). It appears, from earlier investigations, that this too overlies older foundations: again, these were possibly of an Early Christian predecessor, although it was not excluded that the first, and grander, church was also of cross-in-square form and so Middle Byzantine.

In general, more Early Christian churches in Greece are erected in the fifth than in the fourth century AD, especially in major public contexts. As paganism was gradually suppressed and its sanctuaries abandoned, destroyed or converted to Christian use, their architecture was frequently recycled as spolia into public and private use (Bintliff 2012, Chs. 15–16), as was conspicuously the case with the Agios Athanasios church. We might expect, then, that the end of pagan worship in the Forum area, with the closing of its pagan temples and the construction of one or more major churches within the recently constructed *Kastro* circuit, would belong to the fifth or sixth century rather than the fourth. The creation of basilican churches on the peripheries of urban centres is also typical for Early Christian practice: they can mark the tombs of local martyrs, who were commonly executed outside the walls of towns, or merely sacralize an existing Late Antique cemetery. We have no records of Thespian martyrdoms, but it is most likely that this marginal church, the *Makri Ekklesia* in local parlance, and the possibly contemporary second church to its north across the river, were features of the Late Roman burial zone.

An intriguing detail is the apparent absence, even at the time of the painstaking traveller H. Ulrichs in 1837 (see Chapter 2, p. 13), of any known dedication for the Middle Byzantine successor church at the *Makri Ekklesia*, in contrast to that of its northerly partner which survives to this day. This is curious, since the abandonment of a Medieval village and its removal to a successor settlement not far away normally permitted the name of the village church's patron saint to be preserved. Settlement on the site of ancient Thespiai is known to have survived into the opening years of the nineteenth century: it would be strange if, little over 30 years later in that century, no memory of the dedication survived this desertion, particularly when the women of the modern hill-top village of Thespies were still visiting the location, to wash clothes at the immediately adjacent built spring-house, into the early twentieth century (Fig. 2.2).

An explanation may now have been given by Božidar Slapšak's clearance work at *Makri Ekklesia*. For an abrupt interruption took place in the development of this church from Early Christian to Middle Byzantine times, through the impact of the Frankish monastic presence. A massive tower, whether built for controlling or for storage purposes (probably both, if we take parallels from other Boeotian Frankish towers (Lock 1986)), was built beside the smaller Middle Byzantine chapel, which may either have gone out of use, or been appropriated for Catholic worship (this latter having been the fate of a church with a rather similar sequence at the medieval village of Agios Thomas near ancient Tanagra (Vionis 2008). Whereas the Agios Thomas church was eventually reconstructed as a Greek Orthodox chapel, if of a now curious tower-like form, after the end of Frankish rule, the *Makri Ekklesia* monuments have remained dominated by the foundations of the monastic tower down to the present day, with no restoration of the church. It seems then likely that it was the Agios Athanasios church which retained the use and memory of the twin medieval villages of Erimokastro

until their final desertion in the early nineteenth century, allowing the other ruin merely to retain the anonymous ecclesiastical tag *Makri Ekklesia*, which for so long distorted our understanding of the site, until the recent clearance operation (see again Chapter 4, pp. 160–1). In the apparent failure to recommission the church after the disappearance of the Catholic monks – perhaps on the grounds of religious contamination? – another factor may well have played a part. The Athanasios church had evidently served as the burial church for both the Middle Byzantine hamlets on the plain, with burials placed into the abandoned aisles of its larger Early Christian predecessor. If the *Makri Ekklesia*, now rejected, had hitherto served as the parish church, the Agios Athanasios church was still there to take its place as a centre of worship for the Greek villagers.

Elsewhere, agricultural activity was found, in April 2009, to have exposed what seems to be a slab-covered chamber tomb of Roman Imperial or later date, just inside the southern wall of the *Kastro*. This tomb may either antedate the building of the wall (Chapter 4, pp. 147–8), or else could possibly be associated with the evidence for a Late Roman church; it is known from other cases that burials were now allowed in church precincts, violating the earlier regulation that required extramural burial in Greco-Roman towns (compare contemporary Argos, with its excavated intramural graveyards: Oikonomou-Laniado 2003). Very rarely, members of the local élite were buried in prominent locations at the core of a city, even in Early Imperial times, as in the *agora* of Argos, cf. Pierart and Touchais 1996); thus, we cannot rule out that the tomb belonged to some unknown notable of exceptional local prestige. This remains, however, the less likely of the two chronological attributions, especially when we consider the location of the central church of Late Roman Thespiai not far off (see p. 117).

Two other elements deserve treatment. First comes the observation that the architectural survey found little or nothing beyond the western fringes of the *Kastro*, apart from pieces of the monumental building of supposed Roman funerary use (see p. 106). In contrast, the area within and to the east and north-east of the *Kastro* offers much in the way of detached blocks, many believed to be of Roman or Late Roman origin, as well as *in situ* remains. Given that the Medieval and Ottoman villages were located far away to the east and, even in the case of the more southerly of the two villages, overlapped only slightly with the Roman suburbs, it was always less likely that Late Roman structures in these western sectors would be systematically robbed away. This would tend to support the notion that the scatters of medium density in the intervening sectors of our grid may be suburban, rather than part of the main occupied area, with a mixture of non-urban uses including cemetery, garden culture, and dumping of rubbish. These we have identified as 'urban halo' on Fig. 3.76.

A second element to reintroduce is that of industrial production. The distribution of ceramic 'wasters' – rejected pieces from the firing process – and iron slag from the surface survey is very informative (Fig. 3.77). From the start, the great majority of the wasters were recognized by John Hayes as being 'Late Roman' in date, a judgment confirmed by the re-study of these finds, with the residue being classified as 'Roman/Late Roman'. There is a notable clustering of finds, neatly enclosed within the boundaries of the *Kastro*, with most of the other finds – as can be seen by comparison with our hypothetical functional map of the Late Roman town (Fig. 3.76) – lying in what we have defined as an 'urban halo' of waste disposal zones mixed with suburban craftwork, gardens etc. Just a few are located in the trans-Kanavaris north-eastern zone, in what we have indicated as a burial sector; but this is an extensive space, and urban rubbish or construction debris could well have lain between discrete cemetery enclosures.

Having housed successively the Archaic and later *agora* and the Early Roman Forum, the *Kastro* area would hitherto have contained, at the most, only a sharply restricted level of industrial activity, especially if this was linked to ceramic or metallurgical kilns. Yet it is hardly possible that this concentrated activity was post-Roman in date, when the *Kastro* had been finally abandoned and the twin Middle to Late Byzantine villages of 'Erimokastro' were growing up far to the east: significant ceramic representation of these phases is absent from the *Kastro*.

In fact, a characteristic feature of Late Antiquity is the installation of pottery and metal workshop production within the core of Roman towns especially in the sixth–seventh centuries (cf. Liebeschuetz 2001: 89 (Clunia in Spain); 297–298 (Gerasa in Jordan)). It is also a feature of the small defended enclosures, with a reduced urban function, of the type of our *Kastro*, as argued for the Isthmia Fortress by Gregory (1993a) and Kardulias (2005). The Late Roman focus of such production suggests a quite new concept of urban space, in strong contrast to the traditional public and sacred functions that we associate with the Greek and Roman city. Vionis (Chapter 8) underlines the important link between the central role of the Church in the Late Antique town and its economic life, industry included.

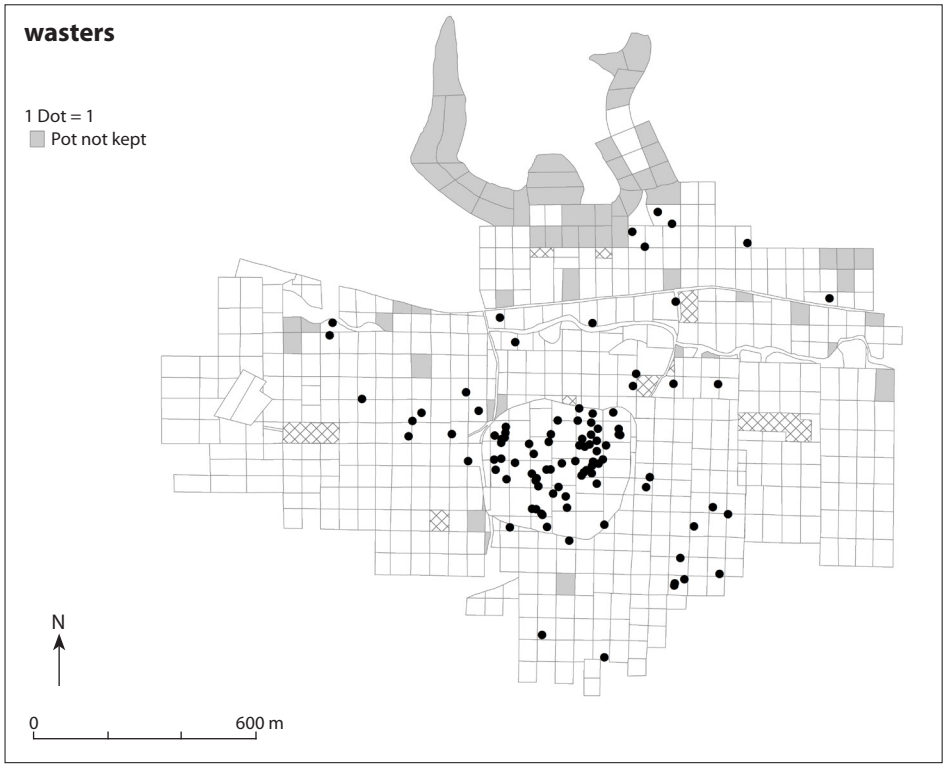


Figure 3.77. *'Wasters' and other industrial debris.*

To conclude, even when we allow for the 'ceramic enhancement' factor, and despite lingering uncertainty as to the kinds of activity that generated the lighter Late Roman scatters in the intermediate sectors between the *Kastro* and the peripheral cemeteries, it seems justifiable to envisage the Late Roman urban community of Thespiai as one which, for all its spatial diminution, continued to retain its vitality.

Middle–Late Roman (and 'Middle–Late Roman?') (Fig. 3.78)

Here we have another cross-phase category, composed of material that could belong in either period. A bias towards the later of the two eras might have been expected, in line with our previous discussion. The numbers of finds are just good enough for trends to be detected but in fact, when we compare the details, this grouping shows closer similarities to that of the earlier (Fig. 3.75), rather than to the Late Roman. This is shown by the sparse evidence from the western, southern, northern, north-eastern and eastern cemeteries, although the revival of the far eastern cemetery to a modest level of use is a Late Roman trend. The shape of the city core, and of the intermediate zones between here and the cemeteries, also tends if anything to mimic the earlier Roman. This is therefore valuable evidence to support the (here) rather thinly represented Middle Roman. It should be recalled, too, that the Early and Middle Roman periods are taken to overlap in time (AD 1 to 300 and AD 200 to 400 respectively); so if the combined data would suggest that Middle Roman phase is most strongly represented on this map, the Early Roman is not necessarily thereby excluded. We can suggest that the additional changes we see in Late Roman, most notably a revival in the evidence from the peripheral cemetery zones, are genuinely traceable from *c*. AD 400 onwards.

Roman/Late Roman (and 'Roman/Late Roman?') (Fig. 3.79)

This is another cross-period assemblage, including finds that are genuinely marginal between earlier and later Roman, yet cannot be assigned to the more closely dated but primarily fine-ware class of 'Middle Roman', as well as finds which are not assignable more closely than to the entire Roman era. One would expect such a map to combine features of the separate 'Roman' and 'Late Roman' maps, and we have just discussed what these two discrete phases have in common or in contrast, making it now feasible to assess their relative contribution to the cross-period maps. If we were correct in arguing that Late Roman is likely

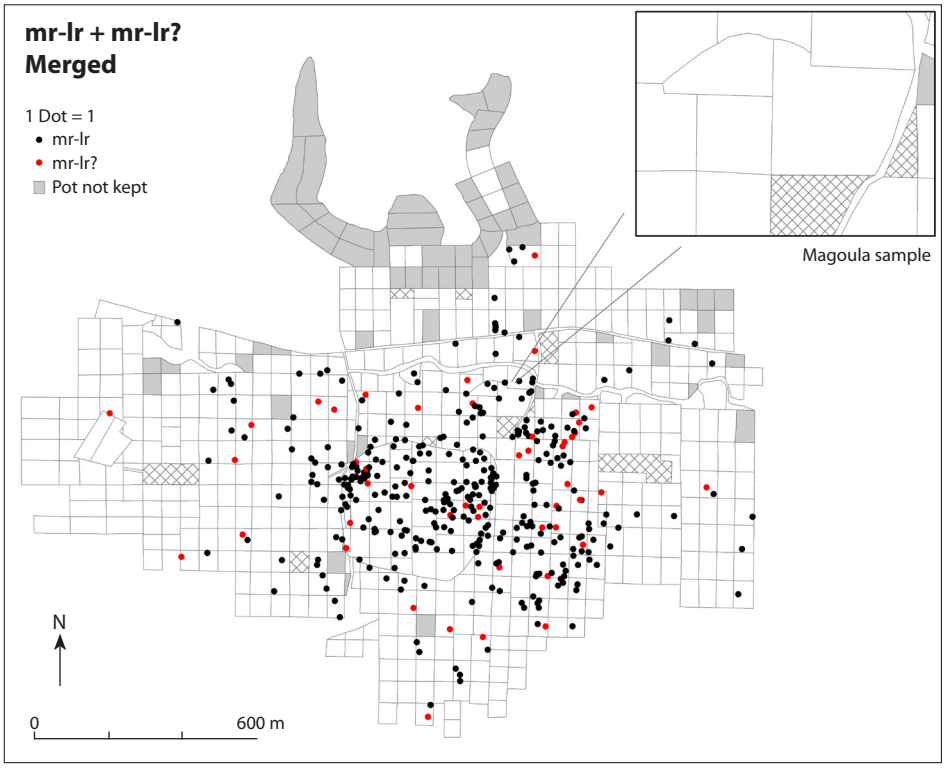


Figure 3.78. *Distribution of Middle / Late Roman (and 'Middle / Late Roman?') sherds.*

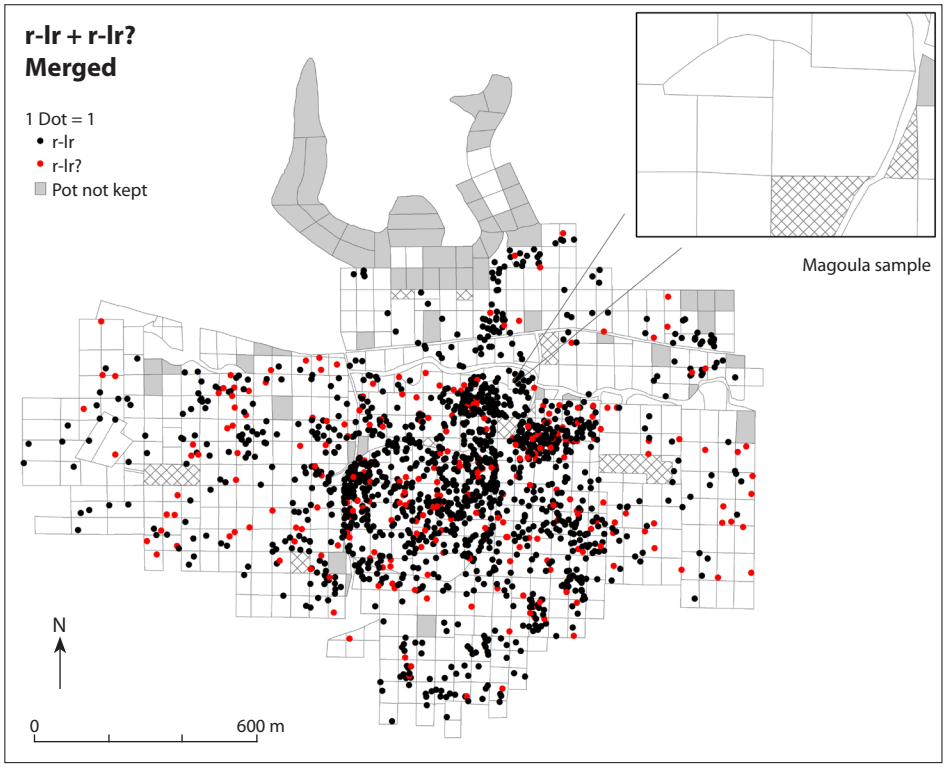


Figure 3.79. *Distribution of Roman / Late Roman (and 'Roman / Late Roman?') sherds.*

to be better represented in the finds through greater diagnosticity, we might predict that the generic Late Roman finds would be the dominant element. In this case, the overall number of finds is decidedly high and the 'Merged' map is clearly far closer to its Late Roman than to its earlier counterparts, once we focus on spatial spread rather than simple density. If, on this basis, much of this material can be added to the more closely dated Late Roman, then the picture of a dense spread of finds for Late Roman Thespiai is further reinforced. The clear increase in rural activity in the southern *chora* between Early (minimal), through Middle (increasing) to Late (maximal) Roman times (*Testing the Hinterland*: 151–66) certainly runs in parallel to developments in ceramic deposition in the city between the first and last phases, but the scarcity of clear Middle Roman attributions obscures what may well have been a parallel sequence throughout. The slight rise in rural populations may well, in fact, act to counter-balance the apparent small decline in the size of the urban domestic core.

Late Roman (–Early Byzantine?) and Early Byzantine? (Fig. 3.80)

This is an intriguing and fugitive category of finds, representing the period from the mid- to late seventh century to the early ninth century AD. In *Testing the Hinterland*, p. 179, we had differed from the published view of our current specialist in Medieval ceramics, Joanita Vroom (cf. Vroom 2003), in suspecting that the development of a later settlement of Byzantine times, on the eastern extramural fringes of the Late Roman city, pointed to some continuity of occupation on the site of Thespiai. Re-examination of the Medieval finds, with some added evidence for Early Byzantine types, by Nassos Vionis in 2007–2008 has allowed us to revise our maps for this period; while consultation of the original pottery records of John Hayes reveals that he too had assigned to this period, tentatively or firmly, a few of the 'Dark Age' sherds now recognized by Vionis.

The numbers involved are very small indeed: there are nine possible pieces assigned to Early Byzantine, and four in an overlapping group termed 'Late Roman – Early Byzantine'. These latter, transitional-style sherds occur in the western cemetery area and on the fringes of the *Kastro*, zones well populated with finds of Late Roman age. Those of the possible 'Early Byzantine' date differ, lying in the north-eastern and eastern cemetery areas, or in the sectors just north and east of the *Kastro* which we have classified as likely to be 'urban halo' rather than city core in Late Roman times. At the same time, the pieces in the east and north-east lie in the orbit of the later double villages of Middle Byzantine times; yet it seems more likely that these widely scattered possible Early Byzantine pieces reflect a low-density activity, in the core zones of Late Roman settlement and burial as well as in areas which are going to be the heart of the next, much clearer Middle Byzantine phase. The possibility that this Dark Age material of the seventh to ninth centuries shows some settlement activity continuing in the Roman town, alongside activity also beginning on the future Medieval village sites, would naturally be an interesting one.

In the spring of 2009, these considerations were sharpened by the closer study of two architectural pieces from within the *Kastro*, one now in the museum courtyard at Thespies, the other still in the field. A specialist from the Byzantine Ephoreia for our region and a contributor to our Project, Michael Karambinis, was able to give a dating for these carved pieces of church architecture. One piece (item # 4A. I, p. 145 in Chapter 4 below) belongs to the period of the still flourishing Late Roman settlement of the fifth–sixth centuries AD; this fits the expectation that a major urban church would have existed within the *Kastro*, to be associated with the Bishopric for the 'Thespienses', recorded in our sources (Koder and Hild 1976: 275). The other piece, however (at Site (8) in Chapter 4), has a remarkable chronology: it should belong to the Early Byzantine Dark Ages, around the eighth to earliest ninth century – thus pre-dating the prominent new ecclesiastical foundations at Skripou and Thebes, of the mid- to late ninth century, and probably forming part of a structure built during the Byzantine struggle to end the Slav occupation of the Boeotian countryside (Megaw 1966: 20–3). The implication is of a genuinely transitional settlement pattern, as hypothesized above, in which some occupation of the former Late Roman town, including the *Kastro*, was maintained, while activity of some kind was also initiated at two other places, one in the trans-Kanavaris zone to the north-east of the former city, the other on its eastern fringes, later to form the cores of two separate villages. We had hitherto seen these finds of Early Byzantine as marking the beginnings of the new settlements; but the possibility cannot be ruled out that they merely indicate a continuing use of the burial zones, while other activities went on inside the Late Roman enclosure. It thus remains unclear at what point the *Kastro* was decisively abandoned, for settlement around the churches in what had been the peripheral eastern Late Antique cemetery zones; but, given the scanty evidence for this phase, we can make no suggestion as to the scale of population, except that it was clearly non-urban in nature and of dispersed village or hamlet character, probably amounting to

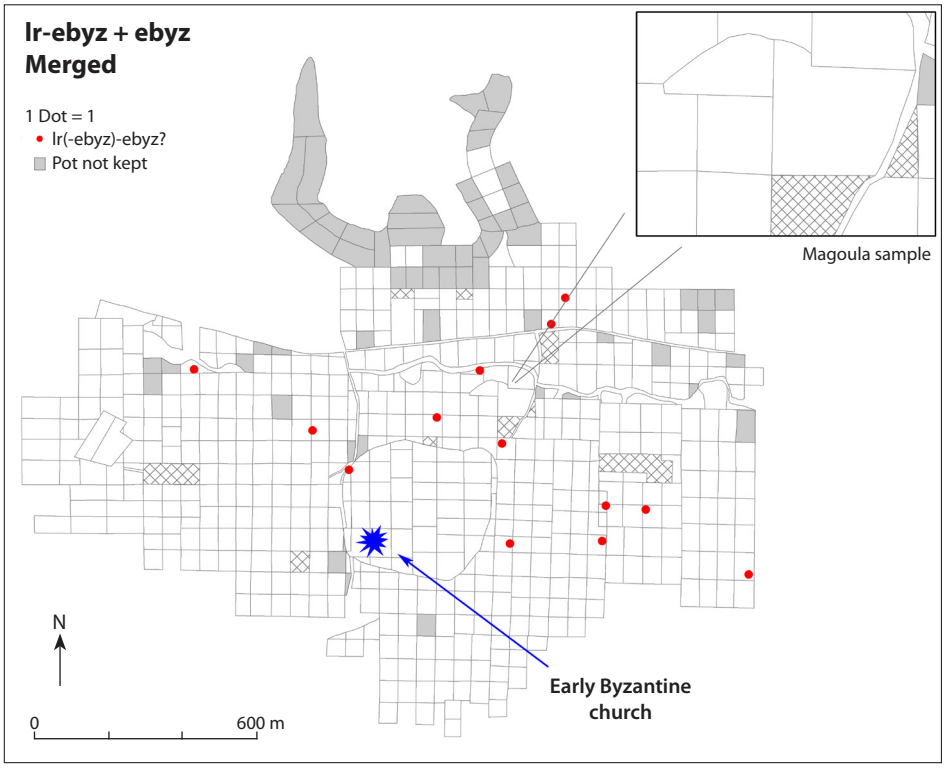


Figure 3.80. *Distribution of 'Late Roman / Early Byzantine' and 'Early Byzantine?' sherds.*

less than 200 inhabitants. To support a claim that such low numbers could reflect settlement locations, it has to be emphasized that research into Early Byzantine ceramics is at an early stage: much of the production of this era awaits recognition on the regional level. We hypothesize that, if the full range of contemporary wares were known for Central Greece, our thin scatter would reveal a denser reality.

Middle Byzantine (and 'Middle Byzantine?') (Fig. 3.81)
The ceramics that represent this era at Thespiai are dated from the tenth or eleventh century on into the twelfth century AD. Now for the first time the twin Medieval villages come abruptly into clear focus, in essentially the shape that they will retain down to the Late Turkish era.

The two centres are distinct, separated by clear space as well as by the river. The more northerly one clusters round the Medieval to post-Medieval Agios Athanasios church, in the trans-Kanavaris sector, and is quite closely focused. Both this locality and that of the other centre lie in areas that had, since prehistory, lain on the very eastern fringe of the settlement, and had often served as a distinct burial zone; we have suggested that they filled this revived role in Late Roman times.

The more southerly Middle Byzantine settlement is the more extensive of the two. The recent clearance of the older *Makri Ekklesia* church by the Slovenian team has shed light on its relationship with that monument, since in Middle Byzantine times this was remodelled into a smaller church, now lying on the eastern periphery of the contemporary hamlet, which it perhaps served as a community chapel. A parallel development may have occurred with the Agios Athanasios church, which lay in the very heart of the northerly hamlet, with a possible Early Christian precursor, which in turn would seem once to have had a Late Antique funerary setting and, to judge from the surrounding burials, its successor too, the smaller Middle Byzantine church, may have formed the main burial zone for the two hamlets.

Christian graves of Byzantine times often match, in their poverty, those of the preceding Late Roman era; and separating the Medieval cemetery zones from the domestic is correspondingly difficult, except by the crude inference that denser finds will indicate settlement. With regard to their location, urban excavations throughout the Mediterranean lands have demonstrated, at least from the sixth century AD on, a rupture with the Greco-Roman norms of extramural burial. Graves now cluster around churches, in both

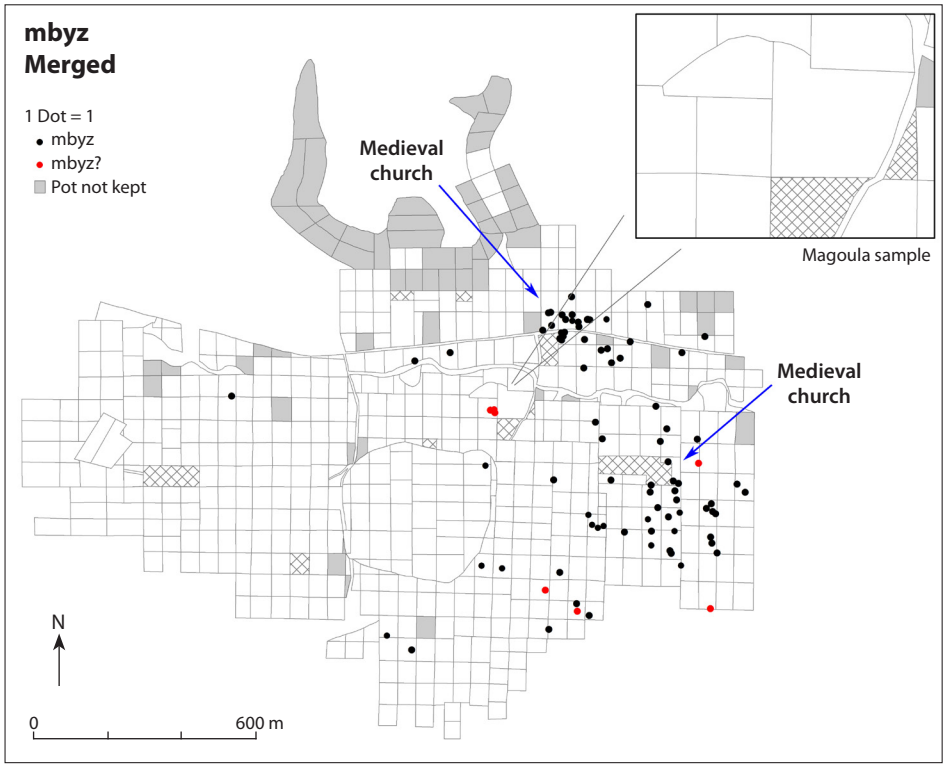


Figure 3.81. *Distribution of Middle Byzantine (and 'Middle Byzantine?') sherds.*

intra- and extra-mural settings (see p. 119). Since the two Medieval and Ottoman villages are, as we shall see, long-lived and extensive, their burials should be numerous. The Late Roman city had of course been a much larger community, but it seems to have used several spatially separated zones for its cemeteries. Our expectations for Medieval times are met with the excavation of Agios Athanasios, revealing an extensive cemetery around the later chapel, whereas *Makri Ekklesia* has so far lacked associated burial evidence.

The thin trails of finds, running away from the two village cores, are thus difficult to envisage as scattered burials: Byzantine and later practice leads us to expect nucleated graveyards, associated with a particular church for one or both hamlets. Nor are these trails likely to mark outlying farms: given that the post-Roman sherd finds are the latest activity at the city site, and that much of this material, at least from Middle Byzantine times onwards, is quite recognisable, the finds in question are too thin to constitute rural sites, unlike their predecessors of Early Byzantine times: as a contrast, the 3-ha Byzantine rural settlement at THS14, nearly 2 km south of the southerly city village, was strongly represented in its surface debris (cf. *Testing the Hinterland*: 75–7). Rather, the sherds in the former urban area are more plausibly traces of the in-field manuring that is attested in Byzantine texts (*Testing the Hinterland*: 23–4). If the maps are showing domestic, burial *and* in-field manure scatters, then it is likely that the actual settlement areas are still really small at this stage. The villages of the next phase, we shall argue, represent perhaps as many as 600 inhabitants between them, with clearer distributional patterns to go on; for Middle Byzantine times, we might suggest perhaps half that number of residents. The off-site scatters, too, become far more impressive in the following period. A point of major importance is raised by Vionis (Chapter 8, p. 248) when he notes that, by the 12th century and on into the following period of Frankish rule, the local bishopric was relocated to Askra-Zaratova in the Valley of the Muses, despite the far smaller size of the community at the latter location, in either era. This step may have been taken for security reasons, although we have seen that Askra and Thespiai had been intimately linked since Archaic times.

Frankish (and 'Frankish?') (Fig. 3.82)

The Crusader conquest of Constantinople in 1204 set in train a rapid process of land acquisition by the leading barons and knights of the Fourth Crusade, whereby mainland Greece was carved up into a series of duchies and lesser fiefs. Thanks to the fortunate

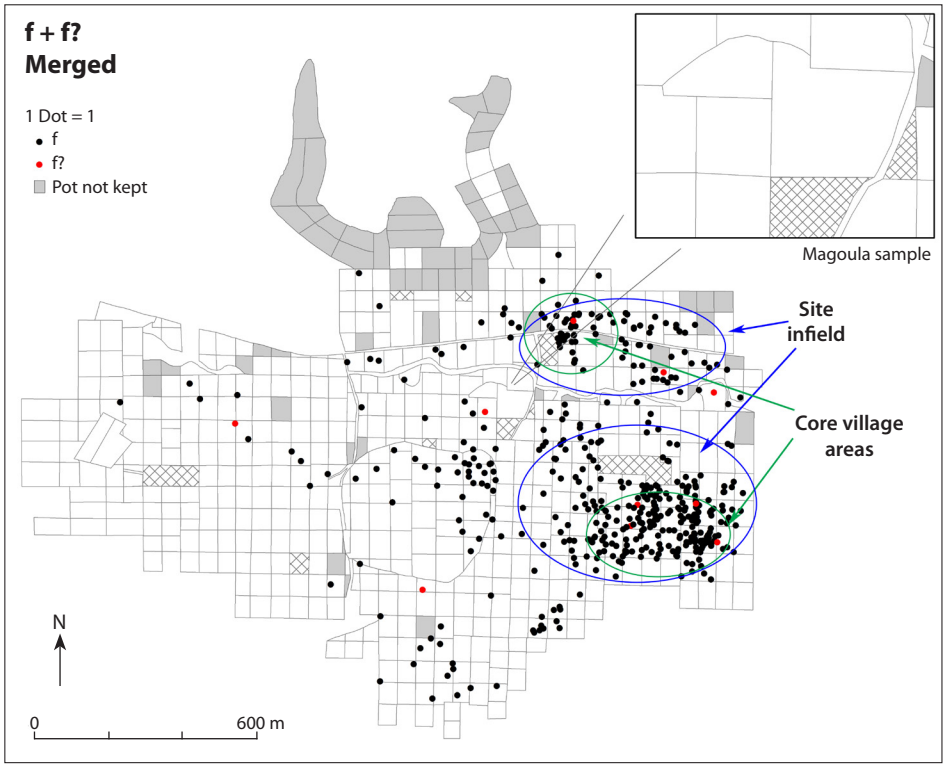


Figure 3.82. *Distribution of Frankish (and 'Frankish?') sherds.*

survival of a papal letter, we know that the village of 'Erimokastro' was awarded as a fief to an Italian-based community of an order of monks called the Premonstratensians (Koder and Hild 1976: 275). This is our earliest reference to the name ('Deserted Castle') by which the predecessor of the modern hill-top village of Thespies was known for the next seven centuries, until the modern era of Classicizing re-naming. It reflects the fact, clearly brought out by the Middle Byzantine map, that the former city centre or *Kastro* had become deserted, forming the etymology for the place name. Elsewhere in Boeotia, for example in the Tanagra region and the city of Koroneia, we have collected evidence for a parallel shift in settlement, away from the Late Roman *refugia* or *kastra* and into new hamlets set in the open landscape (Bintliff, Farinetti *et al.* 2008; Bintliff, Noordervliet *et al.* 2013).

By the earlier Frankish era (early to middle thirteenth century to mid-fourteenth century AD), the 'Merged' Fig. 3.82 gives a full and coherent picture of the northern and southern villages: once again the southern settlement is, in size, much the more significant of the two. But both settlements have now acquired spreads of finds, diffused for some 600 m westwards, into the *Kastro* and past it on both sides. There had already been, in this general direction, a very much fainter scatter of finds in the preceding era; now they have become denser and more widespread, to make credible off-site scatters for the two villages. Just as their haloes and impact on the landscape have grown, so the two villages themselves appear larger. As argued for the Middle Byzantine era, so here we would interpret the picture for the Frankish period as consisting of two settlement cores, with associated cemeteries and cultivation spreads that are not separable within the map.

In some respects, the evidence for village growth and increased intensity of off-site sherd deposition has come as a surprise to historians, who had expected that the arrival of the rapacious Western Crusader lords, with their controlling and exploitative feudal system, would have caused stagnation or even decline in Greek peasant fortunes. The reality seems to have been the opposite: widespread signs of continued growth now seem to be observed generally across Greece (Bintliff 2012, Chapter 19), marking Late Byzantine (for lands still in Byzantine control) or Frankish times. Thespiai–Erimokastro fits well into these recent reappraisals of the Crusader era.

The ancient city had, since Early Byzantine times, effectively reverted to the pattern of non-urban settlement that it had experienced throughout prehistory. But even were part of the supposed 'core' of

Byzantine-Frankish finds to be in reality taken up by cemeteries, there would still be a double settlement, of some aggregate size, to achieve a new peak in Frankish times. Today's wider knowledge of Byzantine and Frankish settlements, from historical sources and archaeology, emphasizes hamlets and villages as the important units of landscape exploitation, taxation and increasingly of feudal wealth. There can be isolated farms and estates, and indeed we have discovered an extensive Frankish-period example lying seasonally under the waters of Lake Hylike at the location of Klimmataria (Bintliff 2012: 420–1, Color pl. 19.1). But at Thespiai we seem to witness substantial sites, with extensions into the off-site, a combination with which we are well familiar. The fertilization of an 'in-field', using household rubbish, on the part of villages of the Byzantine and Frankish period, is supported by two kinds of evidence, and the extensive scale, with considerable deposits up to 600 m west of the villages and lesser finds beyond, is compatible with the large medieval community before us.

Analysis of Byzantine texts has led to a model of an intensively hand-cultivated in-field immediately round the village, with a more extensively farmed and larger area of normal field crops further out. We have been able, building on A. Ducellier's work (see *Testing the Hinterland*, especially pp. 75–7, 285–92), to identify specific large 'haloes' round Late Roman and Medieval settlements, well beyond the range achievable by the unintentional scattering of settlement debris discussed above, and including in some cases wider off-site scatters. The best examples come from larger rural sites, too far from the nearest ancient city for the bigger, urban fertilizing spreads to interfere with their haloes. Let us illustrate this with an example taken from the Tanagra Project: a village at the church of Agios Dimitrios, which is some 6 km from the nearest relevant city, Tanagra itself (*see* Fig. 3.83, *site TS30 and neighbours*). Here the off-site deposition around rural sites (indicated by numbers) is at very low levels, so that almost all the material can be seen to fall within site cores and their inner and outer haloes. Only Site TS 30 itself is Medieval, a Byzantine to Frankish village; the others are farms and villas from the Classical Greek through to the Late Roman age.

Each site has its zone of impact. The scale can be judged from the transects, each 100m in length and 15–16 m wide. Let us focus on the nucleated village at Agios Dimitrios, which is indeed the largest site and, instead of the standard halo of its smaller ancient neighbours, has a wider off-site impact zone. The actual site core, after survey, was found to take up just a small zone around the numbered point; as a result, the greater part of the carpet of sherds, running

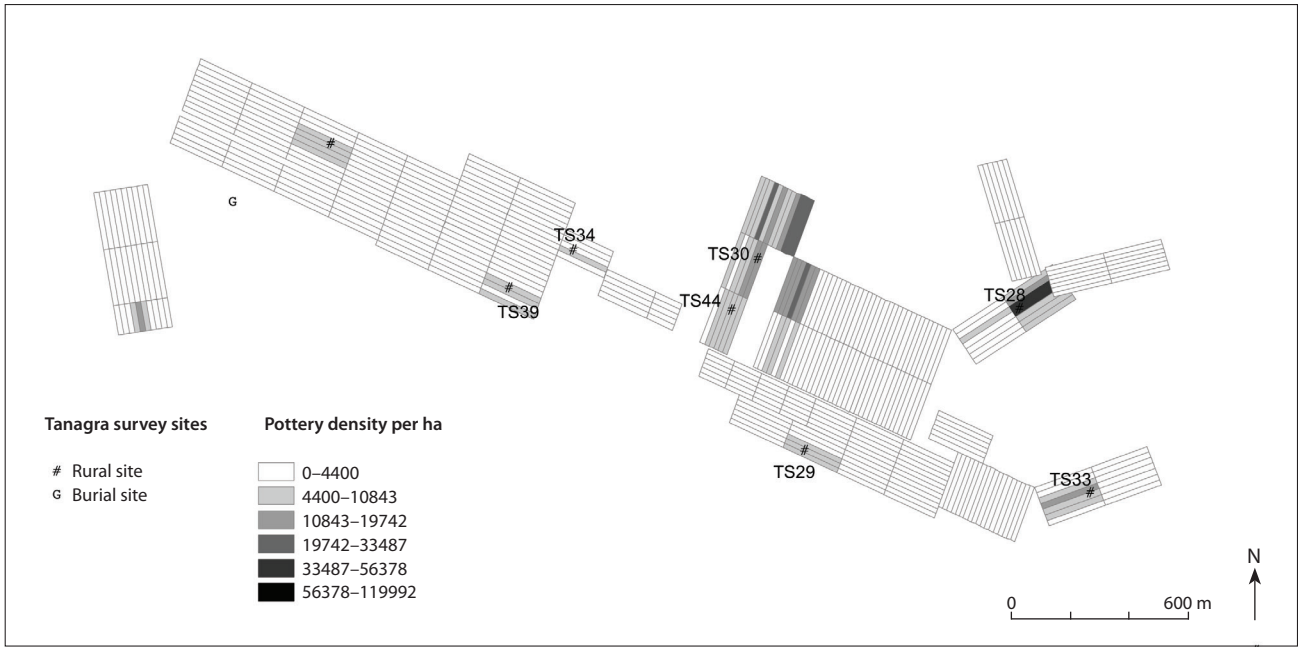


Figure 3.83. *Site TS 30 from the Tanagra Project (right centre), a Byzantine and Frankish village, with other sites of earlier date around it. The field-walking transects are normally 100 m long, and the visibility-corrected densities run from darker shades at 33,487–119,992 sherds per hectare down to white for densities between 4,400 and zero sherds per hectare.*

150 m out from the village, is interpreted as material from in-field manuring.

In the case of the Thespian Medieval settlements, we do not have data for much of their territory lying to the east, before our project's boundaries were reached; but the information for the human impact on the landscape, recovered in the other three directions, is considerable and wide. Analysis of longer-range fertilization in the landscape south of Thespiai showed that this was much practised in Classical Greek times, and we can now see that substantial Medieval nucleations, relative to their smaller size, had a comparable off-site impact; only it is the closer in-fields that are emphasized in the spread of off-site fertilization.

The cores of the two Medieval villages within the city site of Thespiai might fruitfully be compared with that of TS30 at Tanagra: the block of high density at the latter, which comprises core and manured in-field, is more than 150 wide by 150 m long (*c*. 3 ha); from a micro-grid survey of Site TS30, however, we know that perhaps half of the densest area is formed by the site halo and a wider dense off-site in-field; for the true core, the occupied domestic area proper with a church lying near the heart of the site, a size was suggested of some 1.5 ha, far smaller than the Thespiai hamlets.

For the Thespian examples, the analysis is more complex: the much larger 'total site impact zone' formed by the two hamlets is some 600 by 150 m (9 ha) for the northern site and 1400 by 800 m (112 ha) for the southern. The problem for us is to reconstruct the ratio of the inner site-haloes to the occupied cores, for in neither of the Thespian agglomerations is there an obvious cut-off point at which the densest clustering drops unambiguously to a clear intermediate level, before passing into the more obvious dispersed trails and spreads of the outer off-site. Using the insights that we shall gain from the seventeenth-century Fig. 3.86, however, will allow us to recognize the genuine core sectors of the Frankish maps, as there is a subtle differentiation *within* the dense core areas of the two villages (see again Fig. 3.82). If we likewise focus on the densest core of the two Frankish-era Thespian villages, on a first estimate we might propose 3.8 and 6.3 ha respectively for the northern and southern settlements, surrounded by an intermediate site halo, before we reach the far wider but thinner off-site scatters.

One means of estimating possible site population is based on calculations from known ethnohistorical settlement parallels. Thus if we took the figures already proposed from ancient and modern sources for Greek village densities (cf. Bintliff 1997b), an average of some 110 people per domestic hectare would lead to some 165 for Agios Dimitrios at Tanagra, but some 1100 all told for the two Erimokastro villages.

As we shall see, there are some useful population data for the ensuing Turkish period, enabling the conversion of such spatial measurements to real population. In fact, some rather indirect and theoretical calculations would suggest (see further below, pp. 131–4) that, if the case of Erimokastro had been typical, its known village population in 1642, at around 400 people, could have been at a level about 56 per cent of what villages in the region had once reached, at their Early Ottoman flourishing in the mid-sixteenth century. A maximum figure of over 700 inhabitants could then in theory have been possible in the previous century. But in the case of Erimokastro, the double villages had lain abandoned in the sixteenth century, since the Greek population had abandoned the city locality from the end of the Frankish era until the seventeenth century, when the Ottoman population records and our surface survey show their return. These two figures, for Early and Middle Ottoman, one known, the other extrapolated, together with the area of the associated Middle Ottoman settlement, could be used to suggest a more accurate population figure for the areas covered in the similarly flourishing Frankish period, for which we lack population records. Our rough estimate of 1100 inhabitants for the Frankish period, based on surface area, would initially then suggest a joint community perhaps three times larger than its seventeenth-century descendant. Had a sixteenth-century Early Ottoman village existed, we would still expect the Frankish community, during the climactic Medieval era of the thirteenth century AD, to be half as large again as the Early Ottoman one. None of this seems excessively high for the impressive Frankish-era distribution map.

In fact there are reasons to doubt whether either the Greek *polis* or the modern Greek village is the most appropriate analogue for our Boeotian pre-Modern villages, especially from the evidence our Project has collected on the open-plan longhouse pattern, with its wide spacing, typical for the Ottoman-era in Boeotia, including the oldest houses in Thespies village itself (Stedman 1983; see pp. 132–4 below). Evidence from other Boeotia Project sites (to be published in a subsequent volume), such as Upper Haliartos 1-2, indicates that similar long-houses also characterized rural settlements of the Frankish era. Thus we shall shortly present reasons, in the context of the later Turkish-era map, for lowering the typical density of Boeotian pre-Modern villages to some 60 persons per hectare. In that case, our approximately 10 ha of total extent would instead house only around 600 inhabitants, which is very close to the suggestions extrapolated from the Boeotian densities of the sixteenth century AD, another very flourishing period for its villages. The aim of this analysis has of course been to

clarify just how much of the medieval spread is likely to be halo and how much off-site scatter, rather than occupied surface, and it has given some clear results.

Now that we have seen the gross contrast in size between the two Frankish villages, it is satisfying to find that the relative westward, off-site dispersals from the two are on quite different scales. If each village was largely responsible for its own diffused deposition of ceramics, the contrasting density and spread fits their respective sizes. A working definition, by critical land-use scale, for the in-field is as the first 10 minutes' walk from a settlement, which on level terrain would bring one to about 800 m. The dispersal of Medieval sherds outwards from our villages is, as noted, some 600 m for the northern village and 1400 m for the southern (though on largely level ground), but still seems essentially to mark such an intensively cultivated and manured in-field. With TS30/Agios Dimitrios at Tanagra, it seems, the site's smaller population meant that this maximal distance did not have to be attained.

It was the larger of the two hamlets that housed the probable parish church and it was here, too, that the Italian monks, in all likelihood, built their later tower-store for defending and garnering their tithe of the dependent villagers' agricultural produce. The parish church, as discussed earlier, was either abandoned for good at this time, or re-commissioned for the Catholic rite. There are also substantial traces of a wall associated with these features, which might indicate additional monastic buildings. The Agios Athanasios chapel across the river would then perforce have served as parish and burial church for the Orthodox peasantry: a Frankish coin from the graves there provides a circumstantial piece of confirmation.

The 2012–2013 rescue excavations along the main road north of the Kanavaris (Charami, Ekonomou *et al*. 2014) provide significant confirmation for our analysis of the Frankish-era settlement pattern: representatives of the Byzantine Ephoreia uncovered a section of medieval domestic settlement immediately opposite the Agios Athanasios chapel, but to the south, that is on the other side of the modern road. Amongst the structures, a notably large building of over 40 sq. m could be dated to Frankish times through a French coin of the late 13th century. This location lies exactly in the middle of the area identified in Fig. 3.82 as the core of the northern village in this period, focused on the Ag. Athanasios church.

Middle Byzantine/Late Byzantine (Frankish) (and 'Middle Byzantine/Late Byzantine (Frankish?') (Fig. 3.84)

This map displays sherds which could belong to either period, ranging from the middle of the twelfth century to middle of the fourteenth century. Since the Middle Byzantine distribution, as already observed, is in many sectors merely a thinner version of the Frankish, we would not expect to be able to attribute the finds to either one of these two phases. But there are some localities that see expansion in Frankish times, and these zones reappear on this current map. Simple proportionality would suggest that the majority of these pieces belong to the expanded Frankish phase.

Medieval (and 'Medieval?') and Frankish/Turkish (and 'Frankish/Turkish?') (Fig. 3.85)

The generic 'Medieval' finds, covering the whole era from the tenth or eleventh century to the late fifteenth century AD, are so limited in number and definition that the only observable feature is their wide spread: this agrees with the more detailed 'Middle–Late Byzantine' map (Fig. 3.84).

The next chronological phase, Frankish – (early) Turkish, shown on the same map, will as usual include, besides material that is insufficiently diagnostic to assign to either one of these two shorter periods, pieces from a genuinely transitional period, the late Frankish and early Turkish, extending from the mid- to late fourteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. All the textual evidence makes it clear that, in Boeotia, a period of drastic depopulation in the fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries gave way to a remarkable recovery, extending from the late fifteenth to early seventeenth (Bintliff 1995; Kiel 1997). This meant that the lack of a clear ceramic differentiation on our part could potentially pose a serious problem. The demographic evidence just cited made it reasonable to expect almost nothing from the earlier part of this period (Late Frankish), and a major, dense spread of ceramics from the latter part (Early Ottoman). In the event the sherd maps are much thinner than that, with a mere nine sherds from the southerly plains village and two from the general area of the northerly one for this transitional era. In the specific case of the community at the site of ancient Thespiai, however, the survey evidence fully supports the background textual sources.

The original dating of the Thespiai material by John Hayes, with some later re-study of a sample by Joanita Vroom, produced a data-base showing a Frankish/Turkish phase that was richly represented in the areas of the two Byzantine and Frankish villages. But a further, definitive re-study of the Medieval material in 2006–2007 by Nassos Vionis, building on his very detailed research on the deserted village sites found by the Boeotia Survey, led to a re-dating of almost all of what had been classified as 'Frankish/Turkish' sherds to the purely Frankish phase, and in

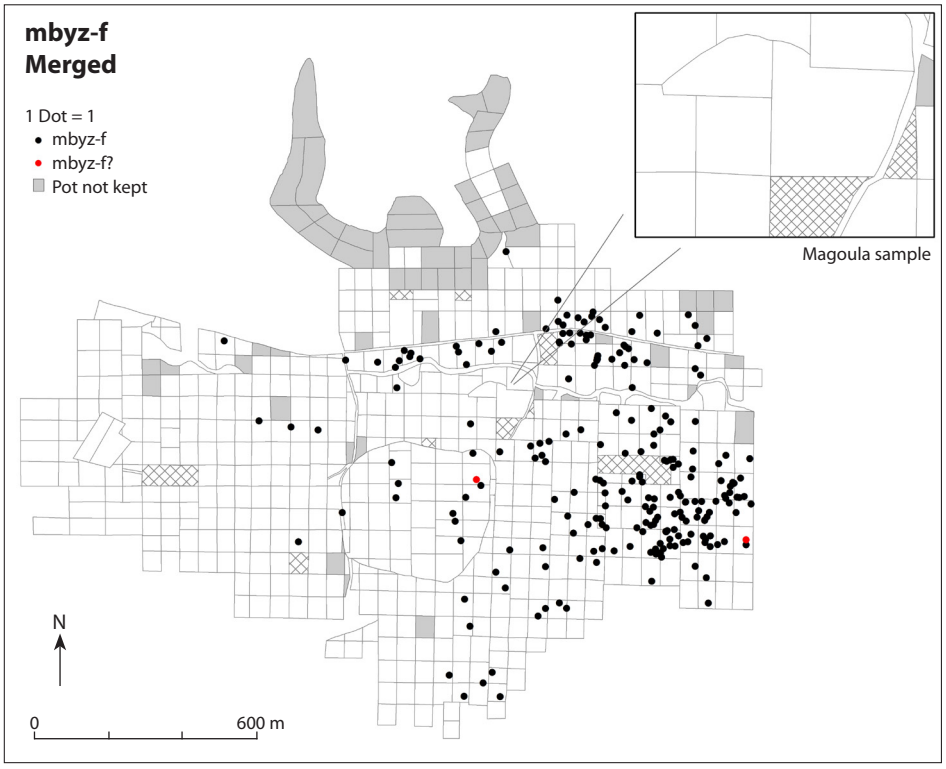


Figure 3.84. *Distribution of Middle Byzantine / Frankish (and 'Middle Byzantine / Frankish?') sherds.*

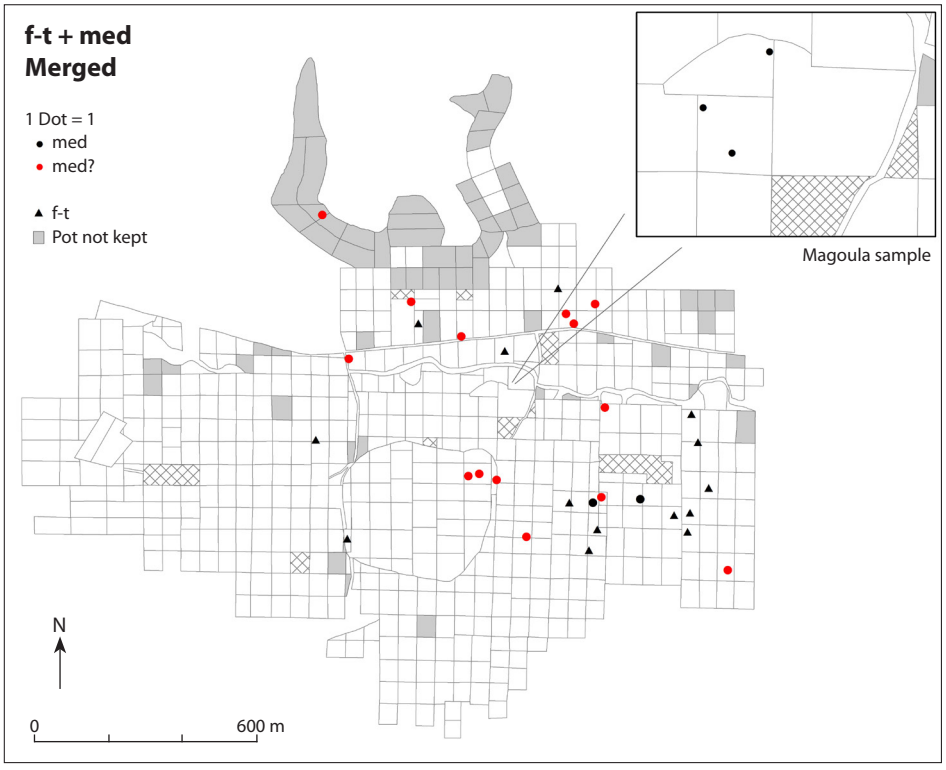


Figure 3.85. *Combined distribution of Medieval with Frankish / Turkish sherds.*

some cases even to a late stage of Middle Byzantine. So little is left, in fact, that we can safely conclude that no significant settlement activity occurred on the ancient city site during this transitional era. The reasons for this are fortunately made clear in our historical sources.

The Ottoman archives are unambiguous (Bintliff 1995): after the mention in a Papal letter (Koder and Hild 1976: 275) of the handing over of the village of Erimokastro to the monastic order of the Premonstratenses from Brindisi in 1212 (see p. 125), no village of this name is present in the Early Ottoman archives, extending down to 1570. Yet Erimokastro reappears in the later Ottoman period tax archives of the seventeenth century, and a settlement on the ancient city site remained in existence until its abandonment, observed by Leake, in the opening years of the nineteenth century. Instead, for the missing fifteenth- and sixteenth-century early Ottoman period, the contemporary tax records show the foundation of the new Albanian settlement of Kobila/Kobili (almost certainly the later Kaskaveli and modern village of Leondari), on the eastern hill-top above the ancient site. Its placing, close to but not superimposed on the Frankish village, is characteristic of the sponsored colonization of Albanians in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and fits well with the apparent near-desertion of the Medieval villages below.

The two modern villages on the hills above the ancient city, Leondari and Thespies, are adjacent but separated by a ravine; it is surely significant that it was the eastern hill, the one immediately overlooking the now largely abandoned medieval villages, which was chosen for this first colonization, rather than the western one on which stands the other, later village, eventually to take over the name of Erimokastro from the Medieval settlement below and only recently re-named as Thespies. This western village, on the evidence of Wheler, included 'Greek' families in the late seventeenth century, when the tax records suggest it had only recently been settled, at the same time as the medieval village in the plain below was re-founded. These Greeks may have been returning descendants of the Medieval population, who had left the ancient site below in the fourteenth century for another location – most likely to merge with the villagers of Askra-Zaratova in the adjacent Valley of the Muses, which greatly expands in size exactly in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries and to which, as mentioned earlier (p. 125), the bishopric of Thespiai-Erimokastro and the plains had long since been displaced. The emptying of the Boeotian countryside and the gathering of the Greek population into larger refuge villages in remoter, often hill-top locations, is a widespread reaction to the continual warfare and plague of the fourteenth century (Bintliff 1995; 2012, Chapter 19). The very limited finds in and around the plains villages then correctly indicate the lack of any permanent settlement, but suggest some kind of low-impact activity for these centuries – possibly seasonal cultivation by the former Erimokastro villagers from their refuge settlement in the Valley of the Muses.

Turkish (and 'Turkish?') (Fig. 3.86)

The material in this category is considered by our ceramic specialists (John Hayes, Nassos Vionis) to belong primarily to the Middle and Late Ottoman phases, extending roughly from the late sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century in date. By the time that the name of Erimokastro reappears in the archives in the mid-seventeenth century as just noted, a more complex settlement pattern is coming into existence, fortunately known to us from the early eye-witness account of George Wheler in 1676, but also indicated by details within the Ottoman records. For the seventeenth century, the Ottoman tax archive sources list both Kobila/Kobili (later Kaskaveli, today Leondari) and Erimokastro (today, Thespies), the two hill-top villages of modern times. But Wheler and his successors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also record a third settlement on the ancient site below: for Wheler, this was just part of 'Rimokastro', but later travellers most often use the name of 'Lefka'. The archaeological evidence does indeed show apparent Ottoman-period settlement at both the Medieval village locations in the plain, although it is notably thinner in finds than in Medieval times, especially the northerly example; together, these locations must have become known as Lefka.

But when had the hill-top 'Erimokastro' been founded, taking over the name of the Medieval village below? Survey around the outskirts of the modern village has not located significant pre-Turkish finds. It seems most likely, from its absence and then reappearance in the Ottoman tax records, that it arose as a foundation in the seventeenth century, after the medieval village of the same name, on the plain below, had suffered apparent desertion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This would fit the probable age of the regular, if dispersed, 'longhouse' settlement pattern noted by Nancy Stedman for the core area of modern Thespies village (Stedman 1983 and, more briefly, 1996). Wheler records a single community of 'Rimokastro' made up of three clusters of houses, one on the plain and two above, with a mixed Albanian-Greek and a slight Turkish element in their population. The survey data from the former village sites in the plain and the Ottoman sources combine to argue that

the disappearance of Greek settlement encouraged re-colonization of the general locality by the fifteenth century, with the foundation of the Albanian-speaking eastern hilltop village of Kobila (modern Leondari). Only in the seventeenth century do the tax records indicate the reappearance of an 'Erimokastro' village, which Wheler presents as having three foci, including the western and eastern hill-tops (he includes Kobila into 'greater' Erimokastro) and the deserted plains village locations. While the survey finds might allow of a late sixteenth-century repopulation of Greek speakers, this community is still absent from the records as late as 1570, indicating a somewhat later return of the likely descendants of the villagers from Frankish times, still attached to their former community name.

The Turkish material, besides registering the reappearance of two small settlements on the plain, in the same localities as before and, once again, with the southern as the more extensive, shows thin scatters again spreading out from the two foci, as in the Medieval era. These could mark either mere rubbish disposal, or perhaps deliberate fertilizing. It is possible that the slight focus in the north-western zone across the Kanavaris could mark waste disposal out of the new village of Erimokastro (Thespies), either as simple dumping or as the deliberate disposal of rubbish on cultivated land. The special historical relationship that we are postulating between the new hill-top Erimokastro village and its roughly contemporaneously re-founded plains satellites at 'Lefka', is supported by the intriguing fact that the modern parish boundary runs diagonally south-eastwards, leaving the bulk of the ancient city site to be exploited by modern 'Thespies'. If Erimokastro/Thespies was in part a re-settlement of the displaced Erimokastro in the plain, Albanian Leondari had largely to make do with a residual, spatially separate and less convenient territory. If the Greek population on the ancient city site had, since Middle Byzantine times, been in ecclesiastical dependency on Askra-Zaratova in the Valley of the Muses, then even after fleeing to the safer refuge of its nearby Early Ottoman successor at Site VM 4 in the fourteenth century, they could well have retained their land-owning rights, thus limiting the territory available for the new Albanian village of Kobila to a distribution east of the city site, as to this day. Site VM 4 certainly takes off in size between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, at a scale that suggests inward migration from elsewhere, and well beyond any reasonable internal growth (Bintliff 2000: Figs. 15–16).

The Ottoman archives also provide information on population size. Here we draw on the unpublished Gazetteer, Bintliff, Kiel, Dunn and Sauerwein (1997) and primarily on Machiel Kiel's transcriptions of the Ottoman tax records for us. He has demonstrated (Kiel 1997) that, whereas the fifteenth–sixteenth-century Ottoman records can be used as reasonable population indices, those of the seventeenth century and later conceal some 25 per cent of the actual resident population. Below, we have modified the numbers to take account of this:

ERIMOKASTRO: first appears as a village in 1642, then reappears in 1646 and 1655, with *c*. 400 (1642) and *c*. 275 (1646 and 1655) people, but is missing from the 1687 registers.

ZOGRA KOBILI/ZAGRA KUBLI: seems to appear first as Kobila, an Albanian *katun* (semi-permanent settlement) of *c*. 75 people, in 1466. In 1506, however, it has shrunk to a mere 25 people: Kiel argues that part of the missing population has left to found another village, Kosta Zogra, newly recorded and with 70 inhabitants. 'Konbili' is next recorded in 1540 and 1570, with respectively 225 and 200 people. In the seventeenth-century records, it is missing in 1642, reappears in 1646 with 140 inhabitants, and again seems to be missing in 1687.

Machiel Kiel (*pers. comm.*) is confident that the absence of Erimokastro from the fifteenth–sixteenth-century archives, leaving the new Albanian Kobili to stand alone, reflects reality; and this is supported archaeologically by the gap, corresponding to this period, in our sherd collections from the plains villages. We have speculated that these village populations had fled elsewhere (to our site VM4, the descendant of Askra-Zaratova, now called Panagia and not far to the west) in the troubled fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries; but they must have retained memory of their former community homes and, we would now argue, the right of cultivation there. The description by Wheler in 1676 now includes both the villages on the hill-tops (modern Thespies/Erimokastro as well as the older Leondari/Kobila/Kaskaveli), as well as a revived village on the medieval settlement site in the plains. The fact that he groups all three together under the name of 'Rimokastro' will help us solve the mysterious variations in the Ottoman tax archives, Erimokastro being a name later confined to the western hill village.

There is a possible explanation for these complex variations, one already hinted at by the dramatic drop in the number of recorded families for the Erimokastro settlement, in the space of the four years between 1642 and 1646. This probably reflects no more than the variable inclusion or exclusion of the other two contemporary villages under the official designation

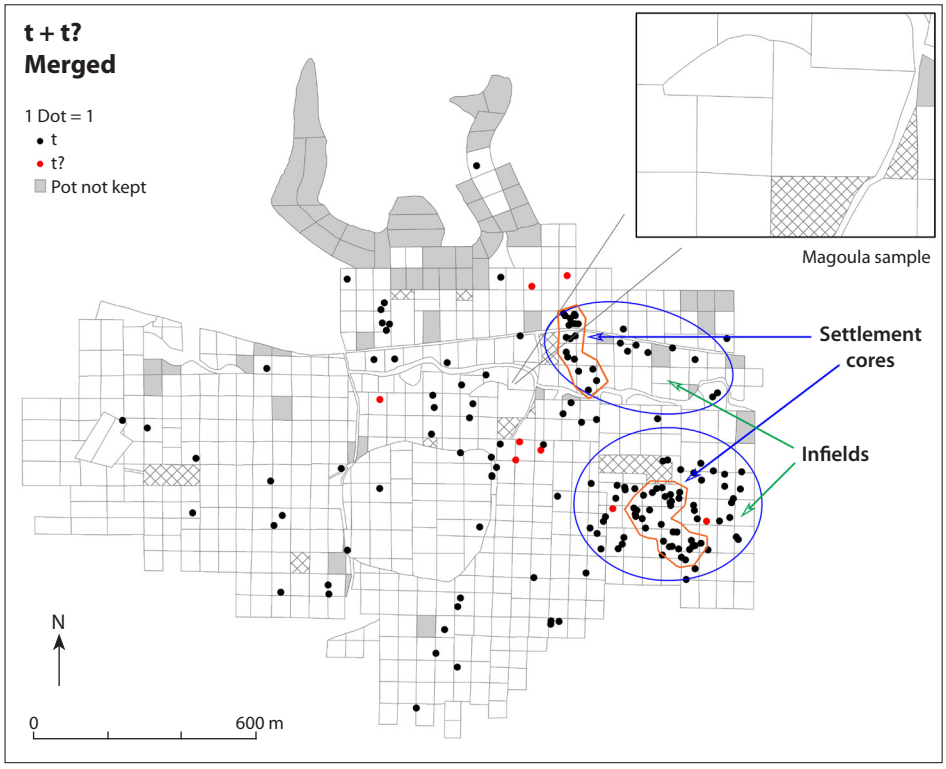


Figure 3.86. *Distribution of Turkish (and 'Turkish?') sherds.*

of 'Erimokastro'. Whereas Wheler seems to know only the name of 'Rimokastro', covering all three settlements, many later travellers explicitly distinguish 'Kaskaveli' and 'Lefka' from Erimokastro. It thus appears likely that, in the record for 1642, Kobila/Kobili was taxed as part of Erimokastro but, in subsequent lists, in a separate entry now lost. This is supported by a close correspondence in the figures: in 1646, Erimokastro is listed with *c.* 275 inhabitants, Kobila with 140, compared with the single Erimokastro figure for 1642 of 400 people. In the 1687 record just one figure is again recorded, of 140 people, which must surely be for Kobila only. The plains village(s), on the other hand, must have continued to be subsumed into the 'Erimokastro' entries in the Ottoman archive since, as noted above, the territory in the plain has, since their final abandonment, been treated as part of the parish of Erimokastro/Thespies down to the present day.

Kobila had clearly been an Albanian foundation, yet a significant Greek population is noted by Wheler for the triad of villages; this, together with the revival of the name of Erimokastro in a new, secondary location and the reoccupation of its original village localities in the plain, hints strongly at the return of a substantial Greek population. We could tentatively suggest that both the hill-top Erimokastro and the revived plains settlements were largely peopled by resettled Greeks, while Kobila remained essentially Albanian. This would imply that, from the 1640s on, resettled Greeks made up some two-thirds of the total population, with most of the remainder living in the eastern hill village of Kobila/Kaskaveli/Leondari. The population of Kobila had stood at around 200 people in 1570, but the figure of 140 for 1687 would imply that the latter had suffered a fairly steep demographic decline.

If the community of Kobila could have dropped in size to as few as 140 people in the late seventeenth century, then it is credible for the two Greek communities of Erimokastro, on the hill-top and in the plain, together to have amounted to the *c.* 275 recorded, well below the 600 we have calculated for the Frankish era.

Here it is desirable to make a brief diversion, as promised above (p. 127), to consider the nature of Early Modern Boeotian domestic housing and its demographic implications. Our researches into traditional housing in pre-Modern Boeotia have identified the single-storey long-house as the dominant village house type from the Medieval era (cf. Sigalos 2004; Bintliff 2012, Ch. 21). The plans of surviving longhouses at Thespies made by Stedman (Fig. 3.87)

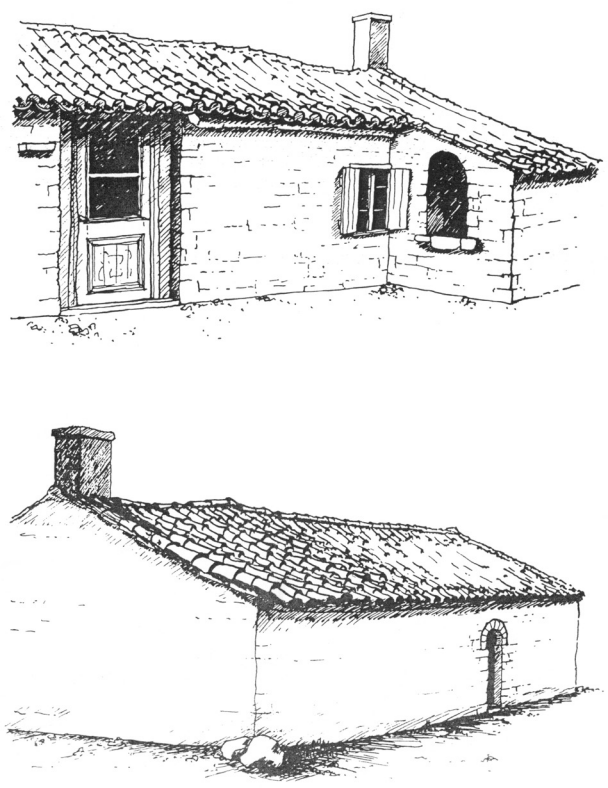


Figure 3.87. *The oldest house in Thespies surviving to the early 1980s, believed to be then some 200 years old. Drawing by Nancy Stedman (1983). The location of this house within the village is shown in Fig. 3.89.*

and the remarkable photograph of around 1890 by French archaeologists shown in Fig. 3.88, agree with the plans of a number of deserted pre-Modern villages surveyed in the course of our Project. The long-houses are dispersed in parallel rows with much empty space between them, undivided and used for open-air activities by their occupants. It seems reasonably clear that, in such communities, the density of population is decidedly lower than 110 people per hectare. It is thus advisable to go for a much lower figure, around a half of that, perhaps only 60 or so people per hectare, a figure lower by a margin of almost one-half than that for the modern villages studied in Messenia (Bintliff 1997 b).

The true spatial extent of the hill-top Erimokastro in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is obscure, but Nancy Stedman, by mapping the surviving traditional long-houses, was able to draw a rough outline of an original village core. This was a small area, comparable to those of the densest core of the two plains settlements (Fig. 3.89: Stedman 1983). It appears as a mere hectare or two on her provisional plan, but this marks only the area where traditional houses remained standing in the early 1980s, and is to be taken as a minimum. But the large bank also mapped to the north and west, if a defence work on the weakest side of the village, would set an upper limit to the extent of the community in the insecure period between the seventeenth and the late nineteenth centuries AD. On a basis around 60 people per hectare,



Figure 3.88. *A photograph, taken around 1890 in the heart of the modern hill-top village of Thespies, and illustrating a very low density of settlement. (Courtesy of the Photothèque, École française d'Athènes).*

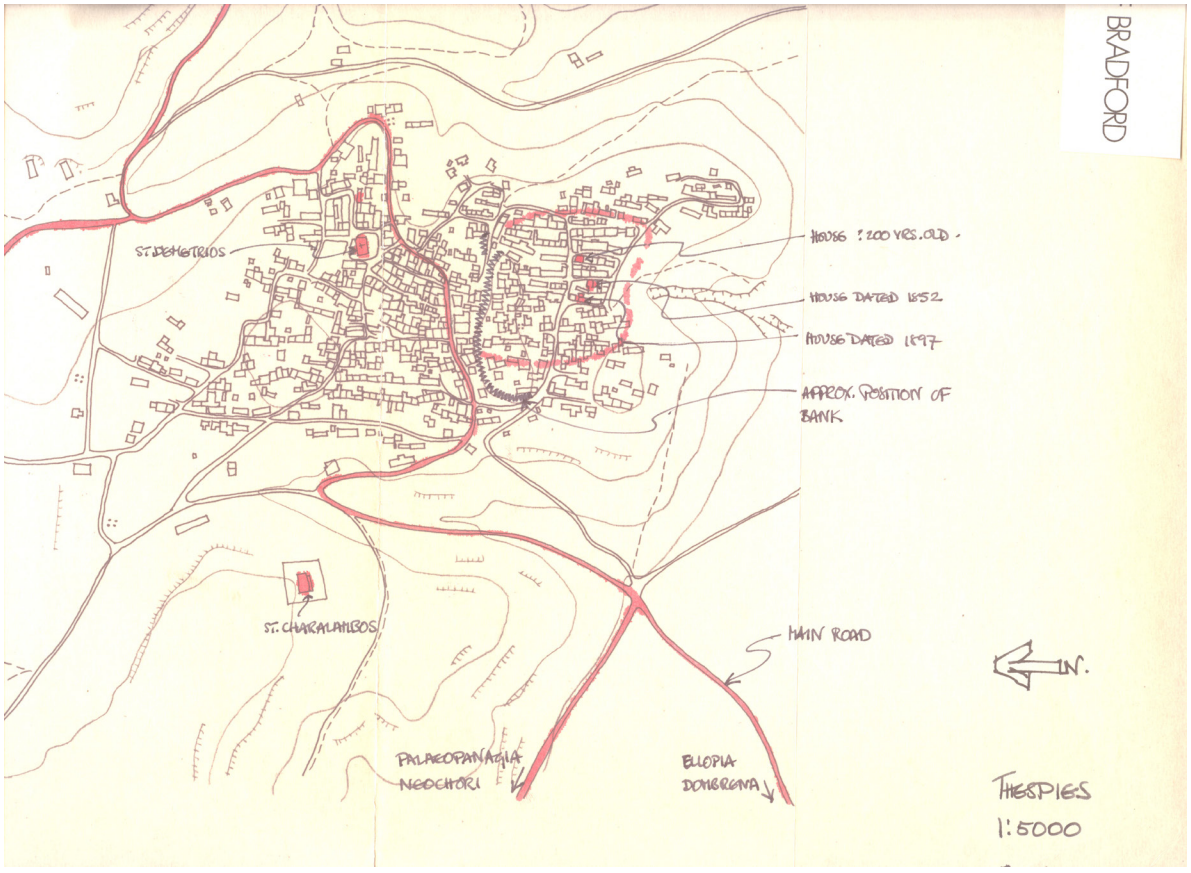


Figure 3.89. *Unpublished plan of Thespies village by N. Stedman (1983) showing the possible original village core and the oldest houses. The one marked '200 years old' is shown in Fig. 3.87.*

this would result in displacing the larger part of the Erimokastro population (excluding Kobila-Leondari) to the two later Ottoman plains villages. Out of a total of 275 people, perhaps a mere 100 or so might have resided in the hill-top community, with the remaining 175 living down on the ancient city site. This would require around 3 ha of domestic space shared between the two plains villages.

As noted earlier, it is not immediately clear where the distinction lies between village cores and haloes on the Turkish-era map; but 3 ha would take up some 10 of the typical survey units of 60 x 50 m, so on Fig. 3.86 we have sought to enclose the densest areas of both villages within roughly that number of units.

The very small scale of each settlement emerges clearly from Wheler's comment (see Chapter 2, p. 6) that, in the late seventeenth century, they amounted to 'three little knots of houses, two upon the hill and one below'. We must suppose that his observation was made from the hill-top, as there still appear to have been two distinct settlements, a few hundred metres apart, on the plain below.

Each of the two hamlets on the plain is bounded by what seems to be a clear in-field halo of intermediate density, separate from the much thinner and wider scatters that we interpret as mere rubbish disposal or light intentional manuring. The small dense spot in the western trans-Kanavaris sector is, we suspect, produced by similar activities, but in this case emanating from the new hill-top village of Erimokastro above it.

The regional picture for Boeotia as a whole indicates sharp overall decline in village populations everywhere, as between the sixteenth- and the seventeenth-century records (Bintliff 1995; Kiel 1997). For example, the Ottoman records for Panagia (modern Palaiopanagia, later still Askri/Askraia), just a few kilometres to the west at the mouth of the Valley of the Muses, give a maximum population of about 1075 for 1570, falling to about 335 by 1642. Although steep decline over this period is so widespread, one additional element at Panagia could well be that of re-location. The seventeenth-century record indicates that the village was sub-divided into some 13 separate serf estates or *çiftliks*. Wheler already notes, a mere

generation later, that the early Ottoman village, 'Old Panagia', at our Site VM 4 in the Valley of the Muses, had been abandoned and settlement re-located to the modern village location at the valley mouth, that is Panagia. Back in the final Frankish–Early Turkish period, Panagia had been considered as a refuge community where the Greek population clustered. A reconstruction in which the families from the original village of Erimokastro, on the ancient site, first migrated here in the troubled final Frankish fourteenth century, then retraced their steps in the seventeenth century, becomes steadily more attractive: especially if, as we have just suggested, only a section of the returning population chose to reoccupy the old Erimokastro, in the remains of the Frankish-era settlements on the plain, while the new hill-top Erimokastro was to grow so fast that it had already become, by the late seventeenth century, as large as its fellow settlements around the site of ancient Thespiai. The break-up of the once large village of Panagia may thus have led not only to the successful foundation of a new village, but also to the resettlement of an old one.

The shift of the Ottoman Balkan rural economy, from a predominance of free villages to a large proportion of serf-estates or *çiftliks*, would have encouraged the relocation of formerly nucleated peasant villages into smaller areas which they directly farmed under the new owners or managers. We can reasonably associate the break-up of the large 'old Panagia' village at Site VM4 into its 13 estates with a physical dispersal of its population, of which only a part would have moved a kilometre downhill to the modern village of Palaiopanagia/Askri. We would now argue that almost 300 villagers returned to their medieval home of Erimokastro, which they may well have been farming at a distance since the late 13th century. The demographic collapse at Palaeopanagia, losing two-thirds of its sixteenth-century size over 70 years, appears less drastic if we counterbalance it with the Erimokastro community: this reduces the decline to 57 per cent, remarkably close to the average decline of Boeotian village size between the late sixteenth and mid seventeenth centuries of 54 per cent (Kiel 1997, Table VII p. 349).

By 1805 Dodwell describes a (now apparently single) 'small village called *Lefka*… in the vicinity' of the ancient site. Leake is more helpfully precise: 'The place is called *Lefka*, from a village of that name no longer in existence… When I visited these ruins in 1802, there were still three inhabited cottages at Lefka, but these are now [that is, in February 1806] deserted and ruined. In the time of Wheler the village appears to have been nearly of the same size as Rimokastro or Kaskaveli' (see Chapter 2, p. 10). So, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the population of the settlement on the plain can hardly have been more than 15 to 20 people.

A final element can be added to the story of the village in the plains. When the Greek Orthodox population re-settled the two hamlets here, as well as re-founding the hill-top village of today, only the northerly Athanasios village church was brought back into commission. This is apparent from the eighteenth-century frescoes, recorded during the conservation work of 1973 (Lazaridis 1977). Nonetheless, the weight of population must gradually have begun to move away to the hill-top site, anticipating the final abandonment of lowland 'Lefka' at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. There followed neglect even of the Athanasios church, leading to an official request for conservation work in the early 1970s. Well before then, a grand cemetery church had been constructed outside modern Thespies on the western slope, and a parish church within the village. Yet as late as the 1920's, village women were still gathering at the spring beside the Makri Ekklesia to do their washing (Fig. 2.2, above p. 17).

Early Modern (and 'Early Modern?') (Fig. 3.90)

By the mature nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which form the period to which these finds belong, we know that all permanent settlement on the ancient site in the plain had been abandoned. Then, as today, there was evidently no dispersed rural settlement outside the two hill-top villages, apart from field houses in temporary agricultural use, and other recorded activities such as the continuing use of the Varvaka fountain building beside the *Makri Ekklesia* (compare again Fig. 2.2), in the far east of the city grid, and of the other springs on the ancient site. The finds should thus be almost entirely generated by disposal out of the two villages, and by other activities centred on them. The general impression given by the maps is one of almost random dispersal, but the tendency, first noted in Ottoman times (p. 131), for a rise in density towards the north-western corner of the grid, the best route of access to and from Thespies village, can again be observed. The pattern is less easy to interpret in terms of human actions. It might reflect a continuation of deliberate fertilization, using village waste, along with casual discard during agricultural and pastoral activities at the sites of field huts and spring sources; or it might represent nothing more than waste disposal. The public removal of village waste in rural Greece is of fairly recent introduction and, even today, is not yet practised universally: the dumping of plastic bags of rubbish or larger redundant objects by road-sides, field edges or at random points in the

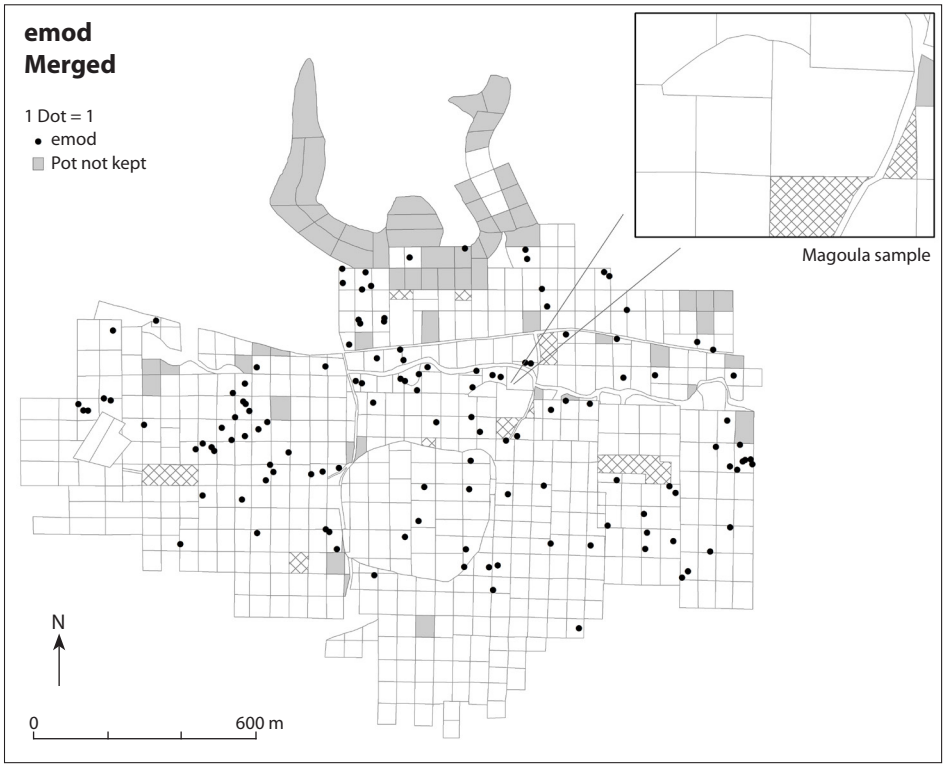


Figure 3.90. *Distribution of Early Modern sherds.*



Figure 3.91. *Random rubbish disposal in a field near Kleidi, eastern Boeotia.*

landscape is still fairly common (Fig. 3.91, taken near the village of Kleidi in eastern Boeotia). We are unable to disentangle these diverse factors in this and the following maps of the Modern era, but they do give an indirect indication of the zones of land-use of the village of Thespies.

Modern (and 'Modern?') (Fig. 3.92)

The densest spread is again in the north-west, now even clearer than on the preceding map. This distribution can be broadly interpreted along the same general lines as those of the previous 'Early Modern' set, that is as off-site material generated by the modern hill-top village of Thespies, lying to the north of the central and western parts of the grid. As we get further away from access to modern Erimokastro, the density generally thins out.

During this period, however, the advent of chemical fertilizers, and the increased reliance on them since World War II, has made traditional manure-fertilization redundant, so we need to turn to other explanations. Increasingly, such contributory factors as those mentioned above may now have become the main explanation for our distribution. Thus 'Modern' sherds could have emanated from the simple dumping of rubbish on the sides of roads and fields, preferable both in terms of available space and of regulatory restrictions on the edges of villages; or from the seasonal use of temporary field huts, sometimes in connection with pump-houses for irrigation or storage, or even for nothing more than siestas during long days in the fields. The ease with which farmers' trucks could indulge in 'fly-tipping' of this kind, combined with pressure to keep waste from the edges of villages, must have created a contrast with pre-motorized behaviour.

The last two maps show an imbalance towards the parts of the grid closest to the village; but another, lesser clustering of 'Modern' finds starts beside the western stretch of the modern tarmac road running across the grid, and then extends further east, down to and across the river. The road-side dumping along this, the main east–west road to Thebes, may have involved people from neighbouring villages too; but the extended deposition further south can only mean that some of the inhabitants of Thespies village adopted the least-effort solution of dumping their waste, presumably on their own fields, in the fairly near vicinity of the settlement.

From the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, communities throughout Greece were encouraged by the state, or themselves volunteered,

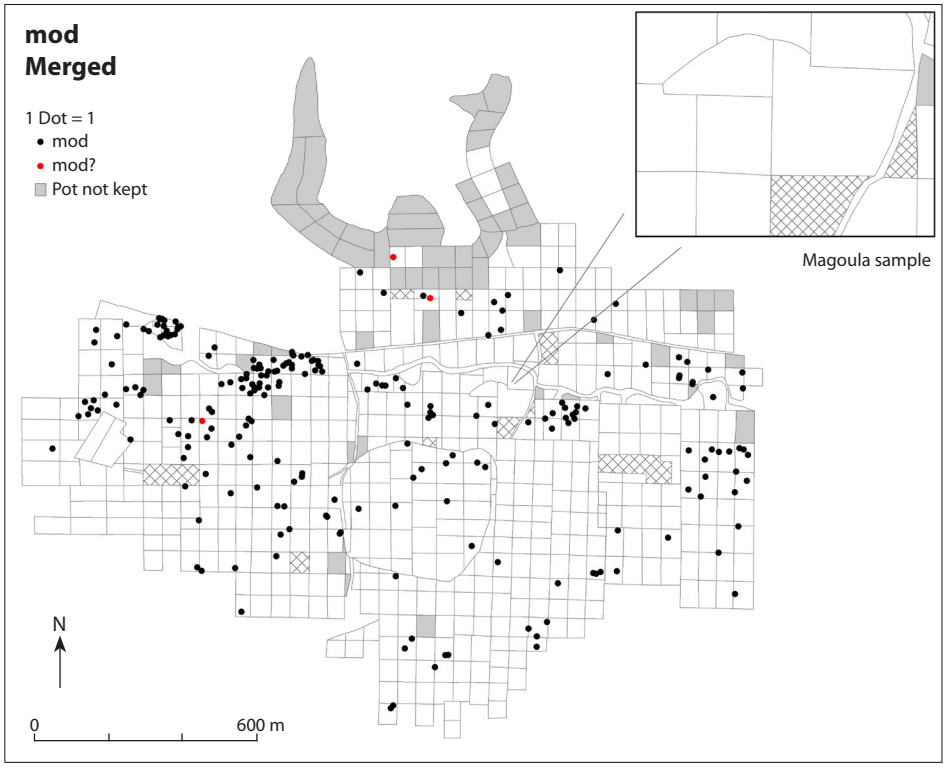


Figure 3.92. *Distribution of Modern (and 'Modern?') sherds.*



Figure 3.93. *Modern community-sponsored monument to the 700 Thespians at Thermopylai.*

to replace village names that were of non-Greek origin, or without Classical associations, with those that would link them to the glorious centuries of independent cities (Alexandri 2002). 'Erimokastro' had retained a local significance while the *Kastro* ruin was still impressive; but this was becoming an increasingly indistinct feature in the landscape after the late nineteenth-century demolition by Jamot, and in any case had no Classical context. By now, the community living above the ancient site was well aware that it had inherited the city and part of the territory of ancient Thespiai, so prompting the appropriate name change to Thespies. Neighbouring Kaskaveli made do with a name of ancient appearance – Leondarion – but chosen with reference to Stamatakis's discovery of a lion monument on the site of the Polyandrion in 1882 (see Chapter 2, p. 15).

Thus the people of Thespies, like other Greek communities, could partake of the distant Classical past, if at the cost of eliding the intervening millennia. The community erected a monument to the 700 Thespians who had died heroically alongside the Spartans at Thermopylai in Lokris, in 480 BC: it stands at a high point looking down on the ancient battlefield site (Fig. 3.93).

But while the 300 Spartans have continued to exercise a world-wide fascination through popular and semi-popular books, not to mention a bizarre Hollywood fantasy film (*300*, made in 2007 but based on a 1998 comic-book series), the unfortunate Thespians who fell on the same occasion have been largely ignored by the world at large. A local businessman of standing has responded to this neglect of his community's 'place in time', by paying for a second monument at Thespies itself, standing above the main road junction below the village and hence more visible to through traffic (Fig. 3.94) (see Bintliff 2013 for discussion of other examples of local communities creating their own sense of identity). The main motive for sponsoring the new memorial is made clear by the inscription, in Greek and English: 'Still verbal history continues for 25 centuries to present the Spartans only. This is offensive for me and I feel the duty to castigate this injustice. It's as if Thermopylae was only a Spartan issue.' It is said that Mr. Liakos-Kelepis' pride in being



Figure 3.94. *The new monument to the 700 Thespians, erected by 'Constantinos D. Liakos-Kelepis. Thespian', at his home village.*

a Thespian went further, in that the warrior's features are allegedly modelled on those of the sponsor.

As outsiders, we can only welcome the fact that the community which owns and cultivates the land of an ancient site, recognizes its historic importance. Yet so far this does not extend to any general recognition of where the city actually lay, let alone to a communal concern to protect the surviving remains on and below the surface. In 2014, when we were returning crates of surface finds to the Thespies Museum, a local school-teacher stopped to ask us if we knew where the city of Thespiai lay, as neither he nor his class had any idea.

A wider issue is that elision just mentioned, of the pre-urban and post-urban phases of community life at the city site, extending indeed to a lack of familiarity with the origin and development of the recent villages themselves. These histories, alternative or complementary to that of the Greco-Roman city, risk total oblivion outside of academia; especially if the incredibly rich, 8000-year-long story of human life in this particular landscape becomes compressed, not just into the image of modern Thespies as the descendant of ancient classical Thespiai, but even into a single episode in national Greek memory.

In this volume we have attempted to populate the city location from the earliest recorded, Neolithic occupation down to the final, observed abandonment of the city site, and beyond it to the birth and recent development of the modern village of Thespies. It is our hope that communicating our results, not just through this volume – intended for an academic audience – but through more accessible publications and local lectures (such as we have given by invitation at Askri and Koroneia villages), and through the Web, can help to re-position modern Thespies into a far longer, more diverse narrative of human life within its immediate setting, and thence to encourage a greater sense of heritage and sensitivity from local communities to known or as yet undiscovered 'ruins in the landscape'.

Chapter 4

The architectural survey

This survey falls into three parts, whose origin should be briefly explained. The first part is a catalogue of those architectural pieces, many in local marble or limestone, which are potentially or actually informative about the structures to which they originally belonged. The second part of the survey relates to the city's fortifications; the third to miscellaneous other discoveries, made mainly by the team from the University of Ljubljana.

This first part has itself been compiled from three main sources. The original field survey of 1985 and 1986, though the teams' notebooks do record occasional architectural observations, could not fully serve as one of these sources: the primary attention of the field teams had to be directed downwards, on to the potsherds, lithics and other small objects lying on the ground surface, while the larger architectural fragments mostly lay in marginal locations that were not likely to be rewarding for the artefact counts, partly hidden by vegetation or embedded in stone-piles and field-banks.

But during the later course of the 1986 season, a first attempt was made by one of us (AMS) to record, in a one-man survey, the more obvious upstanding architectural pieces. 21 locations were recorded, photographs taken and a rough map prepared: any mention of objects as 'Seen in 1986' refers to this survey. It was during the following winter that a new development occurred, in connection with the city's Classical fortification circuit, that was ultimately to give rise to Part II of this catalogue: the first recognition of probable city wall blocks (see p. 165).

Meanwhile, the first, brief survey of 1986 was in obvious need of amplification. Observations over the ensuing years by both the directors of the project, notably in 1995 and 1996, showed that much new material was coming to light in the course of agricultural operations and led to the compilation, by one of us (JLB) in 2001, of a very much fuller, 20-page text, covering a more extended area in greater detail and supplemented by some 80 photographs and by two maps, respectively at scales of 1:1000 and 1:5000. The number of locations at which architectural features were observed rose from 21 to 60; their numbering, from 1 to 51 and then, in more outlying areas, from 'A' to 'I', is followed in all subsequent work. One of the aims of this fuller exercise was to provide the Ephorate of Antiquities with a register of the more important structures with a view to their protection.

Fig. 4.1 below records the locations, recorded at this stage, of architectural features, including those lying beyond the coverage of the next figure, 4.2.

A supplementary revisit by JLB in 2004 was concerned almost exclusively with the recognition of further features potentially relating to the Classical fortification walls, and will therefore be covered in Part II of this chapter: but see also pp. 155–6 for other finds then first noticed.

An important addition to these operations had meanwhile come in the person of Professor Margherita Bonanno Aravantinos and her team from the University of Rome Tor Vergata, who in 2002 and 2003 carried out a more expert re-study of the finds in some 36 of the more central of the 60 locations recorded in 2001, incorporating most of our finds, observing the same numbering system for the sites, and adding further entries under each site in cases where new finds had become visible. This operation was the first to give individual attention to each architectural fragment that merited it, making possible some estimates of the nature, function and date of the occupation of some of the localities within the city.

Part I of this catalogue is thus essentially based on the work of the Rome team: Margherita Bonanno Aravantinos, Luciano Frazzoni, Lorenzo Gentili and Germana Vatta. There are some added items, both in the shape of the earlier finds recorded by ourselves

in the more outlying locations, and in cases of stones that had disappeared between 1986 and 2002. There are also a number of later discoveries, most of them made in the course of the later geophysical or mapping operations of the Ljubljana team, up to and including the spring of 2009. We are deeply grateful to Professor Bonanno and her colleagues, both for undertaking their survey and for making its results available for inclusion here. In Appendix 4, we reproduce the original Rome catalogue, entitled *Tespie: Elementi architettonici e altri materiali lapidei. Survey 2002–2003*. There, illustrations will be found of virtually every item in the 'Rome catalogue', while a few of the additional pieces are illustrated here by the photographs taken by JLB in 2001 and 2004. We owe a personal debt to Lorenzo Gentili for spending time with us to check items in the field, and presenting us with copies of his 2008 doctoral thesis from the same University, 'I capitelli della Beozia', which incorporates study of nearly 20 column capitals of various types from Thespiai, five of them found in the course of this investigation and included in the catalogue that follows.

Here each site will be listed, following the method of the Rome team, by its (Arabic) numeral, and each individual find entry at or around that site by a Roman numeral: when the find is at some distance from the 'core' location, alphabetic letters are used: thus '2 A.I' indicates an object a little way from the original Site (2), while the object '2.I' lies at the core of that site. Column capitals included in Lorenzo Gentili's thesis are listed in the form 'Gentili, # 00'.

The picture here presented is an ephemeral one. The frequency with which individual fragments have appeared or disappeared, within the sequence of these operations, becomes less surprising when one considers that they span altogether some 23 years, during which the intensity of agriculture over the site has steadily risen, along with occasional quarrying or excavating operations, whether civic or unofficial; yet the fluidity of the situation remains the most striking feature. The Ephorate has placed a number of the more delicate finds in the small Thespies Museum nearby for safe keeping: these are marked by an asterisk* in the catalogue below (in the case of

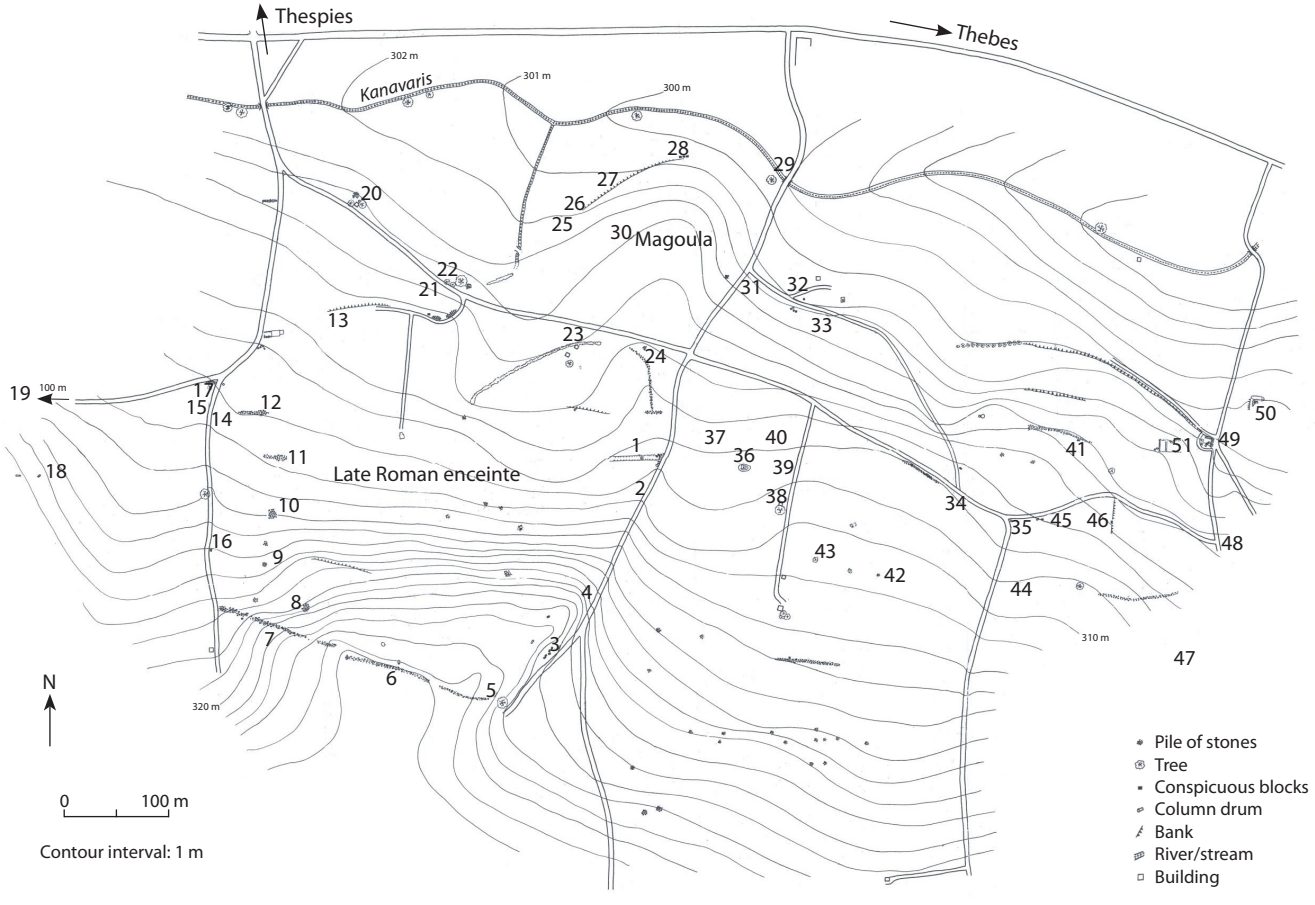


Figure 4.1. *Base map of the city of Thespiai, giving the locations, as recorded in 2001, of architectural features.*



Figure 4.2. *Architectural features from the 'Rome catalogue' mapped on to city survey grid units.*

the Ionic capital 3.IV, the object was taken directly to the Museum of Thebes and is marked with a double asterisk**).

Part I: the architecturally diagnostic fragments

Catalogue of locations (see Fig. 4.4)

Preliminary note: Sites (1)–(7) together with Sites (13)–(16), (21) and (23)–(24), apart from locations (2A) and (4A–4H), are all located on or beside the perimeter of the *Kastro*, the now largely destroyed inner wall-circuit of Late Roman or later date (see Chapter 2, pp. 16–17), which was largely built of reused spolia. It is thus virtually certain that any finds in these locations are, at the very best, in secondary positions, and potentially at some considerable distance from their original placement. In almost every case, here and elsewhere, the more finely worked architectural pieces were accompanied and outnumbered by the large rectangular blocks of conglomerate stone which we associate primarily with the earlier, Classical fortifications and which would have been the natural first choice, as tailor-made material for their own wall, by the builders of the *Kastro* circuit. These will be handled in Part II of the catalogue.

Site (1) This location consists only of a long, straight, fairly deep trench, running for some 50 m from a point on the inner, eastern side of the remains of the *Kastro* fortification, into its interior (i.e. due westwards) before it terminates. Its parallel sides and exact orientation give the appearance of an archaeological trench and for some years we wrongly believed it to be from the 1981 excavation conducted by Dr. A. Andreiomenou: that was in fact located at a cemetery site to the south of the city (our rural site ThS 11: see *Testing the Hinterland*: 70, 269). Dr. V. Aravantinos did however confirm that our trench at Site (1) is also from a (slightly later) excavation, apparently as yet unpublished. When the trench was first inspected in 1986, four cut blocks were visible *in situ* in the base of the trench, about 20 m in from its eastern end and

at considerable depth, forming what must have been the wall of a fairly early building; but by the time of the later operations, the whole trench had become too overgrown to see anything on its floor.

Site (2) lies some 30–35 m to the south of the point where the trench of Site (1) abuts at the *Kastro* fortification. It consists only of the small but well-made marble base, 2.I, some 43 by 59 by 30 cm, resting on the remains of the wall. But there was in 1986, close to this point and also resting on the bank, a drum from a large, unfluted column, with a diameter of 85 cm: by 2001 this had already disappeared. It gains interest, however, from the relative proximity of the even bigger drum 2A.IV, and of the smaller one 2B.I (see below): all three are of similar yellowish limestone and together they are almost the only pieces of column from the entire site whose scale could be called monumental. It is perhaps unlikely that one and the same building would have incorporated three sets of columns with such discrepant diameters.

Site (2 A) is at a different location, some 100 m to the NW and so well inside the *Kastro* enclosure. 2 A.1 is a long, slender section of a Doric column in limestone, 99 cm long but with a diameter of only *c*. 42 cm tapering to 38 cm, incorporating a substantial part of the column in one monolith, with 20 flutes and a small central dowel-hole at its upper end. 2A.II, lying just to the east of 2A.I, is a rectangular basin, hollowed out from a much bigger conglomerate block with one rounded end, some 84 by 50.5 cm by 42 cm height, in such a way as to leave very thick (about 30 cms) sides and base; while 2 A.III, lying just to the south, is a much finer, hollowed-out basin of hemispherical shape in marble, with thinner (*c*. 12 cm) walls and outer dimensions of 40 by 31.5 cm.

2 A.IV, a little south again, observed in 1986 and repeatedly since, is a huge, unfluted column-drum in limestone, with a diameter of *c*. 112 cm and 68.5 cm high, presumably from a temple. There is a central dowel-hole, but also a shallow cutting across a segment of the circumference with two L-shaped clamp-holes and traces of mortar, pointing to a likely reuse involving attachment to a wall. Its great weight makes it likely that it lies not very far from its original location and it will be of added significance if it has any connection with P. Jamot's discovery, not far away within the *Kastro*, of the foundations of a large temple, some 35 m long, and of an Archaic Doric capital (see Chapter 2, p. 16; Chapter 3, pp. 90, 93).

2 A.V (Gentili #66) is a fragment of a small Doric capital, incorporating in a single block, with a total height of 15 cm, the upper extremity of its column; the diameter of the latter, at *c*. 43 cm, might possibly have allowed it to be associated with the column 2 A.1 above, but the surface and fluting are very badly damaged. Its probable date is Late Classical or Early Hellenistic. 2A.VI, nearby, is a battered fragment of another unfluted column, some 53 cm high with a diameter tapering from 47 to 46 cm.

A little way to the north, and still some distance into the interior of the *Kastro*, is Site 2B, on a field-bank at a point almost exactly in line with the trench of Site (1). It is marked by a drum of another large unfluted column, 2 BI, with a diameter of 57 cm and a preserved height of 56.5 cm.

Site (3) is another loose conglomeration of blocks that straddles the fallen remains of the *Kastro* wall, lying some 180 m S-S-W of Site (2) as one follows the wall round in a clockwise direction: it comes just after a fork in the track, where a major branch continues southwards, while the other branch works round to the south-west, briefly following the line of the *Kastro* wall before diverging somewhat from it. The development of a small walnut grove here, shortly before 2001 but now vanished, helped to bring some of these objects to light; but a large marble slab, seen and photographed in 2001 in the vicinity of 3.I, was evidently no longer visible the following year.

3.I lies near the top of the bank that is formed hereabouts by the debris of the *Kastro* wall, and is a large, well-worked corner-fragment in marble, some 75 by 30 cm in its horizontal dimensions and 38 cm thick, from a slightly recessed block (depth of cutting 7 cm): these dimensions will hardly have allowed it to form part of a coffering slab (compare 7.XX, p. 148 below). 3.II, nearby, is a much less well-preserved architectural block in coarser, conglomerate stone, probably re-worked for incorporation into the *Kastro* wall. 3.III* is the uppermost part of an inscribed marble grave-stele, probably of fourth-century BC date, bearing the name ΕΥΦΑΤΑΣ; now transferred for safety to the museum store-room in Thespies village, it was found in 2003 at a point some 50 m west of 3.I and II above (that is, within the interior of the *Kastro*), lying on top of the vegetation in a way suggesting that cultivation had only very recently brought it to light.

3.IV – IX take us further northwards along the field bank that marks the *Kastro* wall and the track running below it. 3.IV** (Gentili # 135) is the most informative of them, the broken central fragment of a small-scale Ionic capital in limestone, consisting of part of the abacus, of the ovolo and astragal mouldings below and one of the corner-palmettes, together with traces of the left-hand volute and of the top of its column. The entire vertical measurement of the block is only 22.5 cm, and the maximum restored diameter

of the column some 32 cm. The date should be early to middle Hellenistic.

3.V lay on the remains of the *Kastro* wall and, like 3.VI, is another indeterminate architectural block in the same conglomerate stone as 3.II above. 3.VII, 3.VIII and 3.IX all come from columns or half-columns. 3.VII, a short distance from the others and inside the *Kastro* circuit, is a rectangular base of white stone, 79 cm in its longest dimension, incorporating in one piece a stepped, semicircular projection with a diameter of 29.5 cm, to act as a base for a column or three-quarter-column, with a circular attachment-hole at the back of the block for fixing it to a wall. 3.VIII and 3.IX are, respectively, a very battered, unfluted marble column-drum with a diameter of 38 cm; and a bigger piece from a half-column in conglomerate stone which shows, exceptionally, very worn flutings, with a height of 67.5 and a diameter of 48 cm, seen in 1986 and 2001.

With **Site (4)**, we move back northwards a distance of some 60 m in the direction of Site (2), to a point before the fork in the track. Its focal point is the significant architectural find 4.1, but this time the 'site' is extended to include the series of outlying clusters 4B–4H, which lie up to *c*. 180 m in a roughly westward direction from this point, covering much of the south-east sector of the interior of the *Kastro*. These internal locations have the value that their finds are not necessarily, nor even perhaps very likely, from the spolia of the *Kastro* wall, so that they have a better chance of reflecting the approximate locations of the structures to which they once belonged.

4.I itself, however, is a short projecting stretch of a well-built wall *in situ*, incorporating some pale limestone blocks, which first came to light in 2001 under the surface of the major field-track that bounds the *Kastro*. It diverges somewhat from the line of the bank which marks the general course of the former *Kastro* wall, and of the track itself, running roughly NE/SW while their approximate course hereabouts is NNE/SSW. The most likely explanation is that this was part of a bastion or tower projecting from the *Kastro* wall. The acute angle made by the two stretches of wall seems to point to the presence of a 'prow-shaped' or 'saw-toothed' bastion of a type attested from the mid-fifth to the seventh centuries AD: see most recently Rizos 2011, with likely parallels at p. 452, figs. 4 and 7. The visible fragment, now only faintly detectable under the dust of the field-track, is some 4.60 m long and 2.30 m thick and incorporates both marble and limestone blocks. We recall the reports of Leake and Ulrichs that the wall, far from being a hasty, improvised construction, was 'built of very solid masonry of a regular kind' (Leake 1835, ii, 479), in 'large squared blocks' (Ulrichs 1863, ii 84: see Chapter 2, pp. 10 and 13 respectively), descriptions which could be applied to this fragment. Similar observations are made about the roughly contemporary, final wall-circuit at Plataia by Aravantinos *et al*., 2003: 299–301, Figs. 9–10.

In this immediate locality were numerous conglomerate blocks of the type that will be treated in Part II, and also several architecturally significant pieces. **4.II**, on the field-bank a little way north of 4.I, is a substantially preserved limestone corner-block, originally some 90 cm by 72 cm after breakage, from a cornice with a partially preserved *cyma reversa* moulding; on its underside there are two small dowel holes. 4.III, a little further north on the same side, is a similar-sized rectangular block, 81 by 70 cm, noted in 1986 and 2001, with a *torus*-shaped moulding along one of its long sides. 4.IV, southwards from 4.I, a substantial chip (height 31 cm) from the surface of an unfluted column in greyish marble, may possibly belong with 4A.II and 4A.IV below. 4.V, a large square block, 97 by 38 by 48 cm thick, on the E side of the track, is in greyish marble and shows two prominent rectangular holes on its upper surface. In this general area, by the fallen eastern wall of the *Kastro*, the Ljubljana team recorded an inscribed tombstone with only one letter of the deceased's name still legible.

The cluster 4A, from the far (eastern) side of the field track and thus not necessarily from within the *Kastro*, contains further architectural fragments. Most interesting is the capital 4A.I*, some 37 by 72 cm, of a small, elliptical column in limestone of about half those dimensions, with an incised Greek cross on one of the short sides of the echinus: height 28 cm. This probably crowned a window-divider in an early Christian chapel and is unlikely to come from the spolia used for the *Kastro* wall: yet it may not be later in date than the wall's original construction, since parallels (see Appendix 4) suggest that it should belong in the fifth century AD. 4A.II and 4A.IV are fragments from larger unfluted columns in grey marble, respectively 30 and 40 cm in height: see under the example 4.IV above, but none of the three fragments survives well enough for an estimate of the diameters. 4A.III* is a very small fragment of a conglomerate slab, pierced by the remains of a hole and perhaps once forming part of some kind of screen. 4A.V is a large fragment in white marble, 1.23 m long, split off from near the edge of a monumental threshold block, with a recess for a door and the partly surviving deeper cutting for the door pivot.

With the small cluster 4B, we move some 100 m westwards from the original site, well into the interior of the *Kastro* enclosure. Here were found two further sections of unfluted columns, one of them (4B.I) a complete monolith, as much as 1.35 m in height but

with a diameter of only 33.5 cm, the other (4B.II) a shorter and stouter fragment with a pronounced taper (height 58, max. diameter 40 cm). With them is a short section of the underside of a finely worked marble cornice (4B.III), 50 cm long and 56 cm high, with a *cyma recta* moulding between two projecting ridges and a dowel-hole on the soffit.

Locations 4C and 4D lie a similar distance further W again, so that the nearest point of orientation is now the pumping-station with an enclosure fence near the centre of the *Kastro*, from which 4C lies some 60 m SSE and 4D a few metres further to the E. Each location produced a large, relatively well-preserved threshold block: 4CI, in marble, is 92 cm long and 52 cm wide, with two small bolt holes on its upper surface, while 4D1, an apparently complete block in grey conglomerate, is longer, wider (138 by 67 cm) and has a more elaborate set of cuttings for doors, hinges and fastening-bolts. In this same area, close to the centre of the *Kastro*, the Ljubljana team discovered a grave-*stele* inscribed with six surviving letters from the middle part of the name of the deceased.

Location 4E lies some way back to the south-east from here, but still well inside the *Kastro*, and produced yet more fragments of small-scale, unfluted column in limestone or conglomerate (4E.I-II, diameters 28.5 and 40 cm), together with a 46-cm-long section of a stepped stone slab (4E.III). Location 4F lies in a field-bank, only about 50 m south of Site 4B above: here was found a triangular section of a marble cornice, some 37 by 56 cm and desperately worn, but with the unmistakable traces of Ionic dentils (4F.I).

Location 4G, strung out along the next prominent field-bank to the west, running north–south and uphill towards the southern edge of the *Kastro*, is a loose agglomeration of some 11 architectural pieces: it begins with four close together (4GI–IV), at a point only some 30 m south-west of 4F. 4G.I, an 80-cm length in limestone of what is probably a door-jamb, has a raised central section along one side. 4G.II, III and IV are three limestone fragments that could be interpreted as coming from a single grave *stele*. 4G.II is a rectangular slab, 51 by 35 cm, with jointing holes on its underside and worn traces of mouldings or sculpture visible above, conceivably from an *akroterion* attached to the top of a *stele*. 4G.III is the broken corner, 46.5 by 46.5 cm, of a deeply hollowed-out block with a right-angled cutting, mostly likely forming a base, while 4G.IV is a much more lightly recessed piece, 32 by 21 cm with a small circular attachment hole in the recessed portion, which could belong to the main body of the *stele* itself. 4G.V, a thin slab fragment 41 by 33 cm, was found a short way to the south of 4G.I–IV.

With 4G.VI we move much further south, to a point quite close to the southern stretch of the *Kastro* wall. This is an interesting, finely worked fragment of a marble Ionic cornice, some 68 by 28 cm, but complete in its cross-section of *c*. 57 cm and very much better-preserved than 4F.I. The front surface presents a full set of five superimposed mouldings with a set of small Ionic dentils at the bottom; the rear side, however, again has two dentils, but on a larger scale, along with attachment-holes, proving that the block was incorporated in two successive buildings in the Ionic order, but of different sizes.

A short way back to the north, 4G.VII, VIII and IX, three more unfluted column-fragments with diameters of 43, 45 and 36 cm respectively, and 4G.XI*, a piece from the wall of a hemispherical stone basin, are less interesting; the column 4G.VIII shows signs of having been reused. 4G.X, finally, is a short section broken off from a moulded cornice, smaller but slightly more elaborate than 4B.III above, 36 cm high by 16 across, with a *cyma reversa* moulding between two smooth bands.

Location 4H is on another field-bank, close nearby to the east, and quite near to the south-east corner of the *Kastro* in the vicinity of Site (3). It produced a fragment of a drum from a fluted Doric column (4H.I), 34 cm high and with six preserved flutes, whose original diameter will have exceeded 65 cm; and yet another fragment of a threshold block (4H.II), 70 by 45 cm, with its raised outer edge and pivot-hole.

We finally return to the *Kastro* wall line with **Sites (5)**, **(6)** and **(7)**, which together account for its entire southern stretch. Site (5), very close to the SE corner of the enclosure, is just south of location 4H and only some 75 m from the nucleus of Site (3), as one proceeds clockwise and slightly uphill round the perimeter. 5.I* (Gentili # 168) is a very small fragment, some 10.5 by 13.5 cm, from a Corinthian pilaster, with vertically springing volute and traces of acanthus leaves executed in shallow relief in fine reddish marble, most likely of Roman Imperial date: it lay on the north side of the bank formed by the remains of the wall, while 5.II*, a fragment from a circular marble table or flat shallow basin, 24 cm in its longest dimension, was opposite, to the south. 5.III*, found a little to the E under a prominent tree, is a substantial fragment from a small cylindrical *cippus* with a crowning *torus* moulding, some 33 cm high and with an original diameter at the *torus* of 24 cm; as with the earlier 3.III, found not far away, its original function had been funerary.

To these items in the Rome catalogue we should add a near-complete block, first found in April 2009, of a further Ionic cornice, preserved with its *cyma recta*



Figure 4.3. *Ionic cornice-block, found in April 2009 at Site (5).*

profile and ten surviving dentils (Fig. 4.3). It lies a little westwards again, close to the find-spot of 5.II on the southern side of the field-bank, with a length measurement of 61 cm (broken) and a height (complete) of 45 cm: the dentils are each 3.5 cm wide and 2.0 cm apart.

Site (6) begins less than 100 m W along the south wall of the *Kastro* with 6.VI and 6.VII, but then extends some 60 m further W again along the line of the fallen wall, to where 6.I–6.V lie. 6.I, noted already in 1986 and 2001, is the most prominent of these pieces, a substantial length of a marble cornice block, resting on smaller stones underneath and dwarfed by an even larger conglomerate wall-block alongside: it measures 78 by 62 cm, with a cross-section (broken) of some 46 cm. Unfortunately it rests with its moulding downwards, but this can be seen to be of Ionic type. 6.II and 6.III, just N of the wall at the same point, are two further pieces of the ubiquitous unfluted columns, with diameters respectively of 42 and 45 cm and in different stone, so not from the same column. 6.IV, a section of a pilaster some 95 cm long and 25 across, is made of the same reddish marble as 5.I: the two could come from the same structure and conceivably the same pilaster, being found no more than 75 m apart. The fine marble architectural block 6.V, 56 by 24 cm, has a rougher finish on its short sides.

6.VI–6.VII lay much further E than 6.I–V, back towards Site (5); 6.VI is a substantial (1.36 m) length of unfluted column with a diameter tapering from 42 to 36 cm, noted already in 2001, while 6.VII is another very small piece of a moulded cornice, only 19 by 16.5 cm, but of a type generally comparable to the larger pieces 4B.III and 4G.X, and perhaps to the corner-piece 4.II, noted above. A little to the north of 6.VI and VII was found, in April 2008, a fragmentary dedicatory inscription* mentioning the (for Thespiai) new magistracy of the Hagnistai (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 284–7, #3).

We should also take the opportunity to mention here yet another startling discovery of April 2009: a Roman rectangular chamber tomb, with stone slabs laid across it and resting on beds of brick, which had simply opened up under the ground-surface of a cultivated field, at a point a few metres to the north-east of 6.V. It thus lies within the *Kastro* circuit, whose construction it most likely antedates by some centuries (compare the conclusions of Flämig 2007: 31–6, on built chamber tombs and, for parallels with Kenchreai, Rife *et al*. 2007), suggesting that the southern or uphill end of the *Kastro* enclosure was reclaimed from a recent burial area or, less plausibly, later incorporated burial use as well. The discovery of other funerary

material not far away (see 3.III and 5.III above), where the finds are not likely to be anywhere near *in situ*, can hardly be used to reinforce either inference.

Site (7) is a very extensive series of elements, again grouped along the line of the fallen wall, but reaching all the way from immediately beside 6.I–V above, at the highest point in the entire *Kastro* complex, to the SW corner of the enclosure, a distance of over 130 m, forming the highest concentration of architecturally distinctive pieces in the entire site of ancient Thespiai. The finds, however, are numbered in the reverse direction, beginning with 7.I near the corner and ending with 7.XXVII a few metres away from 6.I–V. They were already recorded, if in the main only collectively, in 1986 and 2001.

7.I is a large, fine and intriguing fragment from a substantial block that has been cut on the curve, to form a segment of a large circle. Much too big to form part of a column, it is smoothly finished on all sides, with a maximum length of 92 cm between its two preserved, splaying edges; an underneath surface with a width of 48 cm and another preserved, straight inner edge; and a vertical height of 27.5 cm at the point where it is broken off, already showing signs of vertical tapering. A dowel-hole is visible on the underside, while on the uppermost surface are the ends of two channels for double-T-shaped clamps. A restoration of the complete circle, of which this block would then comprise a little over 20°, would give a diameter of just over 5 m and a circumference of nearly 20 m. This is clearly from a basement-block, the surviving trace of a small but fine circular monument: the form of the clamps suggests a date between *c*. 500 and 350 BC.

7.II, with 7.VII from a little further along and also on the S side of the bank, can be classed together as of utilitarian rather than architectural purpose: 7.II* is a small, flat fragment of volcanic rock with parallel serrations, some 14 by 13 cm, from a saddle-quern or grinder, while 7.VII is a somewhat larger fragment of a squarish block in white marble, with a circular depression cut in one face: this must be from a stone basin with squared corners.

Between and beyond these two items, there is a remarkably rich series of architectural elements, most of them in marble. 7.III is a large, near-complete recessed block in fine conglomerate, with its edges in part preserved, measuring 1.13 m by 95 cm, with a vertical dimension of some 31 cm. The detail of the cuttings on its upper surface is preserved well enough to identify it as a seating-block from a theatre or other type of auditorium, very comparable in form to those of the fourth-century BC theatre at Epidauros. 7.IV is a marble block from an Ionic architrave with its three fascias and intervening mouldings, about 98 cm long and 36.5 cm high. 7.V and 7.VI are less distinctive but still substantial blocks, 7.V in the same conglomerate as the seating block 7.III, 7.VI in coarse *breccia* with a preserved socket-hole. 7.VIII is an unusually fine white marble building block, 87 by 58 by 64 cm; 7.IX, also in fine white marble, is a exceptionally long block, presumably from the lintel or jamb of a doorway, 1.66 m by 45 by 31.5 cm; while 7.X is a well-cut threshold block, 66.5 by 63 by 34 cm, with step, cutting for jamb and pivot-hole for door all well preserved.

This sequence of blocks has so far brought us about 50 m from the south-western corner of the *Kastro*, along its southern wall-line, and it is already clear that the finds are of unusual size and quality. This standard is largely maintained as we proceed further eastwards, after a short interruption, with blocks 7.XI–XXII and then, after another short gap, approach the highest ground in the *Kastro* with 7.XXIII–XXVII. 7.XI, noted already in 1986 and 2001, is a monolith from a slim limestone column with much-weathered fluting of Doric type, only 45 cm in diameter and especially badly worn at one end, but as much as 2.20 m in height and with a still detectable taper. 7.XII (3 pieces), XIII, XIV, XV, XVII (2 pieces), XVIII and XIX comprise altogether some ten blocks, substantial and of fairly high-quality white marble, some with surviving clamp-holes and in one case (7.XV) with ledges and mouldings along two edges. One of the two blocks grouped together under 7.XVII was, until it fell over sideways, perhaps the most conspicuous element in the entire *Kastro* circuit, noted often since 1986 (see above, p.24, Fig. 3.10): a large section of threshold or toichobate, some 84 cm long but only 30 cm thick and formerly standing on its edge, with three clamp-holes on its upper face. 7.XVI is the near-complete, square base of a small, probably bronze statue, slightly damaged at one corner, some 59 by 66 cm and 30.5 cm high, with mouldings running round its upper surface and a socket-hole preserved. 7.XX is a recessed end-block, this time recalling 3.I above in its relatively shallow depth (some 11 cm); but its dimensions, with all three edges preserved (90 by 84 by 36 cm), again make it an unlikely candidate for a coffering block. 7.XXI (marble) and XXII (conglomerate) are further architectural blocks, unremarkable apart from the unusual length (1.23 m by 48 by 38.5 cm) of 7.XXI. Hereabouts, too, a broken piece of an inscribed grave-*stele*, with only the last two letters of the deceased's name surviving, was found in the course of their surveying operations by our colleagues from Ljubljana.

Somewhat more informative are the five remaining pieces from the final stretch of Site (7) to the east. 7.XXIII is a relatively complete and well-preserved

corner block from a cornice in greyish marble, 75 cm long by 45 across, with clear surviving *anathyrosis* on its underside and a section of moulding in the Ionic manner preserved at its upper edge; and 7.XXIV is a fragment from another such cornice, with slightly different mouldings, and 7.XXV an indeterminate building-block in *poros* stone, with four clamp-holes. 7.XXVI is a short length of Ionic architrave with the characteristic three fascias, some 35 cm long and 42 cm high, similar in scale and material, but different in detail, from 7.IV above. 7.XXVII, finally, is a fragment chipped from a Doric fluted column, only 24 cm in its vertical measurement, but with only four flutes preserved in a surviving width of 28 cm, so clearly on a much larger scale than 7.XI above. In this part of Site (7), too, the Ljubljana survey team found another inscribed grave-*stele*, this time bearing the name ΕΙΛΩΝΔΑΣ.

This uniquely dense accumulation of sizeable architectural members near the south-western corner of the *Kastro* enclosure is the more remarkable because it lies on or near the highest ground in the *Kastro*, and indeed in the central part of the ancient city as a whole. It also incorporates a remarkably high proportion of blocks in white marble – some 19 out of 28 architectural elements in Site (7) alone, with two others in grey marble. There are probably more blocks of this kind along this 150-m stretch of wall than in the remaining nine-tenths of the circuit put together. There would seem to be a simple explanation for this concentration, in post-depositional terms: here we are in almost the only sector of the *Kastro* circuit where there is no field-track running close alongside the fallen wall. In the centuries before the introduction of the tractor, access with a farm cart, necessary for the removal of heavy blocks, may have been simply too difficult hereabouts. This explanation tacitly assumes that a similar density of large, mainly marble blocks was, until Jamot's destruction of 1890, present all round the other sides of the circuit. We know anyway, from the surviving evidence at Site (4) above, that marble blocks were used in the original construction of the *Kastro* fortification. But if, in addition to the 200-odd inscribed blocks (most of them in marble) that we know Jamot extracted from the wall, there was once this order of density of plain architectural pieces everywhere, then some hundreds of such blocks would have had to be absorbed in modern structures of the past 120 years, or have otherwise vanished. This is not at all impossible.

An alternative hypothesis, perhaps more attractive but now somewhat weakened, would be that these pieces had been brought relatively short distances from their original placements in monumental buildings, in order to be built into the original *Kastro* wall. The principle of economy of effort would suggest that those buildings cannot have stood too far away down the slope. In that case, this generally southern sector would have housed at least two structures in the Doric order (7.XXVII and the much smaller-scale 7.XI) and more numerous ones in the Ionic, with the fairly large-scale cornice blocks 6.I, 6.VII, 7.XXIII–XXIV definitely coming from at least three different buildings, the lengths of architrave 7.IV and 7.XXVI also from different buildings, and the Ionic dentils of 4F.I, 4G.VI and 5.IV not far away to the east. At least one small-scale structure with Corinthian pilasters (5.I, 6.IV) was also present, not to mention a small but high-quality circular monument (7.I); while the numerous unfluted columns (6.II, 6.III, 6.VI) and monumental doorways (7.IX, X, XII) could have been associated with any of the above. Some at least of these vanished structures must have gone back to Classical Greek times.

The western section of the *Kastro* circuit was, by comparison with the southern, relatively unproductive (see Sites (14)–(16) below). The next location to be recorded, **Site (8)**, is not included in the Rome catalogue, but lies within the circuit, some 30 m northwards from the middle of Site (7), where there is a long, low cairn of stones resulting from field clearance. Both in 2001 and again in 2009, this cairn contained a lintel block from an Early Byzantine church, 62 by 43 by 15 cm, decorated with an incised cross between two pairs of plant tendrils (see Fig. 4.4). Its likely date must be placed long after the construction of the *Kastro*: a specialist from the Byzantine Ephorate, Michaelis Karabinis, confirmed this. The effective life of the *Kastro* may thus be extended by several centuries, since fairly close parallels for the piece, from the Theatre Basilica at Messene in the Peloponnese, suggest a dating around the eighth century AD: see Penna *et al.*, 2008.

Site (9) marks another, smaller stone pile, some 50 m north-westwards and down-slope from the preceding, where two marble pieces were among the field stones but have now been taken to Thespies Museum: 9.I* is a fragment with a maximum preserved length of 18 cm, from a delicate slab only some 8 cm thick and carved into a projecting curve at one end; while 9.II* is a small square fragment from an even thinner slab, 4 cm thick and 21.5 cm in its longest measurement, with a rectangular clamp-hole in its upper face. A short distance northwards again, at location 9A, is a badly damaged section of a small Ionic frieze with three dentils just visible (9A.I), 35 cm in its longest dimension: the breadth of each projection, at some



Figure 4.4. *The lintel block from Site (8).*

10 cm, is comparable in scale with those of the even more battered 4F.I above but the appearance of the cuttings, here much narrower, is quite different.

With **Site (10)**, we move northwards another 50 m to a further and larger stone-pile. In a wide circle centred just to the west of this pile were half a dozen small marble pieces, beginning with 10.I some 30 m to the west, the surviving half, only 36.5 by 34 cm, of a carefully worked square base, joined by a delicate moulding to an unfluted column of equivalent diameter and probably no great height. But the underside of the base was later hollowed out in a hemispherical cutting, so that the piece, turned upside down, could form a pedestalled basin, probably for ecclesiastical use. In its original form, it might have been associated with one of the equally small fragmentary vessels 10.II*, III*, IV, V*, also in white marble and found close by. 10.I bis is a more substantial but very battered cornice fragment in limestone, 56 cm in its longest dimension and with *anathyrosis* visible on its back side: a rectangular cutting on the front may be what is left of the groove between two Ionic dentils. With the delicate slab fragment 10.Vbis* and a second small square column-base, 20.5 cm across, found to the east of the stone pile (10.VI*) we return to the very small scale of 10.I. There was perhaps a votive area, open-air or enclosed, in the near vicinity.

Site (11), some 60 m further N again, is yet another stone pile marked by two separate lengths of monolithic unfluted column: 11.I, at 2.30 m, is even longer than the fluted Doric example noted at 7.XI above, and even slimmer (diameter tapering from 35 to 29 cm), while 11.II (noted and photographed in 2001) survives to a length of 1.00 m and, with a maximum diameter of 36 cm, might be from the same set. Other marble architectural fragments, noted in 2001 at this location, are no longer to be seen there.

Site (12) lies not at another stone pile, but at an L-shaped fragment of a field division of relatively recent date, and of a type found in several parts of the *Kastro*: it is some 50 north-north-west from Site (11) and quite close to the north-west corner of the *Kastro* enclosure. Here were found five unremarkable architectural or utilitarian stones: 12.I is a fragment from a conglomerate stone basin, with a hole to allow liquid to escape; 12.II a small piece, 36 by 31 cm, broken off an architectural element with a recessed edge. 12.III is a fragment of a well-head, 49 by 38 cm, with a small part of its circular aperture preserved. 12.IV is yet another length of unfluted column, as much as 1.28 m long and with a slight taper from a 31 cm diameter to what appears to be its upper termination, marked by a fillet; while 12.V is another specimen of a corner, 61 by 39.5 cm, from one of the recessed

blocks noted elsewhere (see 3.I, 7.XX above). In this case, the rectangular recess in the upper face has later been reworked to provide a broader but shallower circular depression.

Site (13) is another extended linear scatter of blocks running round the actual north-west corner of the *Kastro*. The numbering of the finds begins with the scatter of fragmentary pieces 13.I–III at a point some 40 m east of the small field-house with a well shaft converted for mechanical irrigation that stands at the actual corner. 13.I is a fine, though broken, corner-block from a cornice with a moulding comprising a series of seven superimposed elements, preserved to a length of some 58 cm, with its height complete at 29 cm and a dowel-hole visible on its upper surface. 13.II is a hollowed-out block recorded in 1986 and 2001, 59 by 56 by 25 cm externally, with a rounded cutting running lengthwise, to form a stone trough rather than a basin, and 13.III a long block of white marble, 1.13 m by 55 by 34 cm.

The numbered sequence then returns to the field-house just mentioned, where can be seen 13.IV, the smallish and virtually complete base of a column, 46 cm in diameter, of Attic/Ionic type, with its characteristic carved mouldings above and below, made of one piece with a square supporting plinth, 56 by 56 cm: total height, 24.5 cm. With it is 13.V, a very large threshold block, 1.10 m by 59 cm and only 19.5 cm thick, with pivot-hole and setting for door; both were recorded already in 1986 and 2001. To these can be added a length of plain, concave cornice built into the side of a water-tank just beside the house and whitewashed over, seen in 2001 (see Fig. 4.5) and still in place.

With 13.VI to 13.XI, we move progressively further round the perimeter in an anti-clockwise direction until we reach an important track-junction, with Site (17) (see below) lying on the far side of the junction. 13.VI (seen and photographed in 2001) and 13.VIII are fragments of the now familiar unfluted columns with heights of 54 and 35 cm and diameters of 35 and 36 cm respectively; while 13.VII and 13.X are fine, plain limestone blocks, 90 by 49 by 27 cm and 85 by 50 by 45 cm respectively. 13.IX comprises the joining fragments of a well-head, recorded in 1986 and photographed in 2001 but since broken at one end: the circular aperture, diameter 47 cm, is cut through a square block originally measuring *c.* 87 by 87 cm. Its presence here suggests the likely location of an ancient as well as a modern water-source. 13.XI, finally, is the most important of this group of finds, the upper part of another grave-stele inscribed with the name ΕΥΜΑΡΩ, somewhat smaller in its measurements (40 by 37 by 25 cm) than 3.III above and perhaps dating to the third century BC; this will



Figure 4.5. *Fragment of ancient cornice reused in a water-tank, as seen in 2001.*

be published elsewhere, with the other inscriptions found by the Rome team.

With 13.XII to 13.XVII, we return eastwards, past our starting-point, to a location some 100 m to the E of the house and well, where 13.XII, a broken fragment of a threshold block 77 by 59 cm, was found on the outer side of the stony bank formed by the fallen *Kastro* wall; while the similarly placed 13.XIII, from another and more monumental threshold block (90 by 70 cm), returns us to the neighbourhood of 13.I–III. On the inner side of the bank opposite 13.XII, another grave-stele*, inscribed with the name ΠΑΜΦΙΛΟΣ, was seen and photographed in 2001 but has since been removed to safety. 13.XIV is a long, rectangular building block in white marble, 1.23 m by 60 by 33 cm. 13.XV (Gentili # 67) is a small chip, only 24 cm across and 20 cm high, broken off a finely worked limestone Doric capital, carved in one piece with the upper extremity of its fluted column, whose original diameter must have been less than 50 cm. The straight profile of the *echinus*, with its three *anuli*, suggests a date in the early Hellenistic period.

Other finds seen in this vicinity in April 2009, but not appearing in the Italian catalogue, are a circular marble disc, 39 cm in diameter and 8 cm thick; and a large base, broken into two parts, buried in the dense vegetation on the northern side of the fallen *Kastro* wall towards the eastern extremity of Site (13) (Fig. 4.6). Access and measurement were difficult, but it appears to have consisted of a cylindrical pedestal with a squared top: the larger fragment has a surviving height of 49 cm, the smaller and lower one 24 cm, so that the original height will certainly have exceeded 73 cm; the maximum preserved width of the square top is 54 cm, but a width of 57 cm is still present in the lower fragment.

Taken together, the accumulation of finds here echoes, on a smaller scale, that discussed under Site (7) above (pp. 148–9), and it has in common the difficulty of wheeled access to any point in the central part of the scatter. There is not the same profusion of marble blocks here, but the three threshold pieces 13.V, XII and XIII and the plain blocks 13.III and XIV make a fair show of white marble, alongside more delicate architectural members (13.I, IV, XV). The inscribed gravestone 13.XI, together with the second one mentioned just now, will doubtless have been incorporated in the *Kastro* wall on their merit as building-blocks, and give no indication of their original provenance.

Site (14) brings us at length to the western wall of the *Kastro*: it begins not far (some 30 m) from the find-spot of the inscription 13.XI. Here a striking new find of 2002 was the almost complete statue-base 14.I*, 49 cm high with a cross-section of 49 by 46 cm; it appeared to have been freshly unearthed during cultivation. It has the classic, flaring mouldings of egg-and-dart and astragal above with leaf-and-dart below; these run round the front and the sides (where they are not quite so carefully executed), but the back is cut plain and straight, so that its original placement was evidently against a wall. Two faint surviving letters indicate that it was once inscribed. A little further south, among numerous examples of the conglomerate fortfication blocks, the large marble block 14.II, 61 by 65 by 32 cm, and the unfluted column in coarse conglomerate stone 14.III, 64 cm high with a diameter of 38 cm, had been noted and photographed in 2001. But another striking new find is the large *voussoir* 14.IV, 70 cm in its longest dimension and 44 by 33 cm in its widest cross-section, from what must have been a substantial arch of Roman date; its angle comprises only some 15°, so that it must have been one of at least an original 12 such voussoirs. 14.V, finally, is a long, thin threshold block, 1.07 m long by 52 by 23 cm, with a whole series of three pivot- and three bolt-holes drilled along one edge of its upper surface.



Figure 4.6. *Fragment of a base, cylindrical with a squared top, seen in April 2009 just east of Site (13) and near the north-west corner of the* Kastro.

At **Site (15)**, immediately opposite Site (14) on the west side of the track that bounds the *Kastro* enclosure on this side, and about 25 m south of the junction shortly to be mentioned under Site (17), a small fragment of unfluted conglomerate marble column, seen in 2001, was no longer present.

Site (16) lies some 125 m further S along this track on its inner (E) side, bringing us much closer (less than 60 m) to the south-western corner of the *Kastro* enclosure than to the north-western that we have just left. Here the badly damaged fragment of a column-base, 16.I, has preserved measurements of 43 cm by 29, incorporating the lower extremity of a column with a diameter of 34 cm and a dowel-hole visible on its upper surface; while some 10 m southwards, yet another long, thin threshold block with door-check, 1.10 m by 33.5 by 18 cm, with two larger pivot-holes and four small bolt-holes (16.II), had also been noted and photographed in 2001. 16.III is a squarish white marble block, 53 by 48.5 by 48 cm, while 16.IV is a very small fragment of a grey marble basin, only 16 cm in its biggest measurement.

Returning northwards along the track, we come to **Site (17)** which lies in the fork between the track that we have been following, and a major track that branches off due westwards (see under 13.VI–XI and Site (15) above). The importance of this location lies in the fact that, according to information given by the current landowner (a man probably in his seventies), his grandfather found, in the course of digging the well beside the building here, two life-sized statues at a considerable depth: one of them is said to have been formerly displayed in Thebes Museum. The date of the discovery would presumably be either between the wars or shortly after World War II. In 1986 it was also observed that a line of conglomerate blocks, of the type associated with the fortifications, ran for some 6 m along the edge of the track to the N of this building; but the initial hope that these might be *in situ* must probably be abandoned.

Site (18) takes us, for the first time, away from the *Kastro* area and its wall-circuit. From the track junction at Site (17), we follow the westward-running track for nearly 200 m, before leaving it on the S (left) side to climb the low ridge above. On the flat top of this ridge, there is a collection of major architectural elements. 18.I, III and IV are three large, coffered soffit blocks in high-quality grey limestone, recorded during the city survey in 1986 as '3 lovely stones (from tombs?)'. A fourth, outlying block of similar form (now 18.VII), seen some 50 m to the east in 1986, was for some time lost to view, but was then rediscovered in May 2012, following an extension of cultivation nearby (see also Chapter 3, p. 106).

All four blocks are at first glance of very similar design, with two roughly square coffers each. On closer inspection, they differ in many details: a first sign of this is their measurements:

18.I, 1.47 m by 75 cm, 15 cm thick; coffers 38 by 38 cm
18.III, 1.46 m by 72 cm, 9 cm thick; coffers 46 by 37, 46 by 38 cm
18.IV, 1.45 m by 74 cm, 9 cm thick; one coffer 48 by 38, the other much smaller but only initially roughed out.
18.VII, 1.45 m by 75 cm, 16 cm thick; coffers 38 by 38 cm

Some of the differences may be ascribed to the fact that not one of the four blocks was in a fully finished state. This feature is most obvious in the case of 18.IV, but even the two blocks which have raised circles (perhaps ultimately designed to be rosettes?) at the centres of their coffers, 18.I and 18.VII, differ slightly from each other in the treatment of the inner recessed squares around the circles. Nevertheless, these two blocks were probably intended as a matching pair, while the other two, 18.III and 18.IV, resemble each other less closely but are united by their external dimensions and the oblong shape of their coffers. This incompleteness should not be taken as a sign that they were never incorporated into a building: on the contrary, they were evidently designed for one and the same, very substantial and probably public structure, in which however no special attention was devoted to the finer details of finishing. All four are remarkably well preserved and, when they were first seen in 1986, had probably only recently been unearthed.

The pieces remain extremely difficult to date, the more so because of their unfinished state. At any time after the Classical Greek period, this location would have stood clear of the built-up area and close to established burial zones. It is conceivable that we have here an instance of a funerary reuse of elements of an earlier building. In a case recently revealed at Kleonai near Corinth (Morgan 2010, 25–6), on which Professor Torsten Mattern of Trier University provided further helpful details, a single coffered block, much thicker than ours and with three coffers instead of two, but very similar in length and breadth, was incorporated with other spolia in a built tomb of uncertain date. But in that case, it was concluded that the original use of the block had been for an *aedicula*, also probably of funerary purpose. Our structure, with at least four such blocks, was evidently much larger and could theoretically have been built for a variety of different

uses and at different dates; but the most economical hypothesis remains that it was a large built tomb. Many features of our blocks – their carving in one piece with paired coffers, rather than being formed of separate, superimposed coffering, the suggestion of rosette decoration, the general lack of finish – find their best parallels in the Roman Imperial period (for example, the larger examples in the ceiling of the Severan Serapeion at Miletos: Knackfuss 1924, 196–203, figs. 205, 213).

Nearby are found 18.I *bis*, a small fragment of limestone block, 41 by 36.5 by 22 cm, and 18.II, a substantial (height 1.36 m) but broken monolith from an unfluted marble column, with diameter tapering from 34 to 29 cm and with a simple moulding at the upper (smaller) end. 18.V and 18.VI are two well-preserved rectangular marble blocks, respectively 1.28 m by 58 by 25 cm, with two rectangular cuttings at one end, and 1.30 m by 55 by 25 cm with two dowel-holes on the long sides. There are no grounds for associating any of these with the same structure as the coffering-blocks.

Site (19), along with a majority of the remaining locations, lay outside the scope of the detailed Italian survey of 2002–2003: in many cases, this was because the only architectural elements to be seen were the large conglomerate blocks which we connect with the fortifications. This site, however, did produce other architectural material and lies some 100 m further west, along the same track, from the point where we turned off for Site (18), and at the immediate north edge of that track. Here were seen in 2001 a corner broken from a large marble block, internally recessed but much too thick to serve as a coffer; and a fragment of an unfluted column in green serpentine.

For **Site (20)**, we follow this same track back to the point where it left the *Kastro* circuit near its north-west corner (at Site (17) above), then follow the main track almost due north, away from the *Kastro* and in the direction of a bridge over the River Kanavaris and the modern tarmac road beyond. After rather over 200 m, this track merges with a second track that has diverged from the *Kastro* circuit in the middle of its north side. Beside both of these tracks, in the last 75 m or so before they join, are the numerous complete or broken conglomerate blocks that constitute Site (20), particularly on the E edge of the main track and to the NE of the second, around a well; hereabouts, we are seldom less than 100 m from the nearest point on the *Kastro* circuit and this raises the question whether the fortification-wall line of earlier date, which we believe we can trace further to the east (see Sites (25)–(28) below) could have continued through this locality.

For **Sites (21)** and **(22)**, we follow this second track south-eastwards until it reaches the line of the *Kastro* circuit, in the middle of its north side where a branch track breaks through towards its interior, passing on the way not far from 13.XII above. Here, on the fallen remains of the *Kastro* wall, besides another concentration of the conglomerate blocks, there was noted a very small fragment of a white marble cornice (21.I), 21 cm high and 22 across, with a moulding composed of a *cyma recta* and a smooth fascia; and part of the flat base of a huge stone basin (21.II) in rough conglomerate, 1.13 m across and with a thickness of 20 cm. Another inscribed but illegible grave-*stele*, in limestone, was found here by the Ljubljana team in the course of their survey.

On the opposite, N side of the main track is Site (22) with further conglomerate blocks. Here, too, there is a large concrete cistern, the more recent successor of the built structure about to be described, but now also disused and equally heavily overgrown; a visible water channel, however, in the form of a shallow trench, still runs due northwards from this locality, towards the Kanavaris. But just south-east of the junction with the branch track of Site (21), thus on the *Kastro* side of the main track, can be seen a much older cistern, formed of two chambers side by side and built in a combination of stone and tile. It was visible in 1986, heavily overgrown in 2001 and later, but has now been closely explored by our colleagues from Ljubljana (see Part III, pp. 189–90). It is apparently dug into the line of the *Kastro* wall at this point, and may possibly have given access to water from inside the circuit: beneath the built chambers, large conglomerate blocks are visible at a lower level. But if the cistern is of ancient construction, the major water-source hereabouts was clearly in existence for much longer, before and after. Quite certainly it would still have been in operation at the time of the travellers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; indeed, it must have remained in active use until perhaps 50 years ago, as is shown by the modern ceramic pipes which served it and the presence of repairs in concrete to its vaulting. Yet there are difficulties in identifying it with any of the three major springs noted by H. Ulrichs around 1840 (see Chapter 2, p. 13).

At **Site (23)**, a good 100 m further to the east from the point where the side-track breaks through the *Kastro* circuit, there were three fine architectural pieces visible nearby, on the line of the fallen wall. 23.I* is a second, very small but distinctive fragment of an Attic/Ionic column-base, recalling that recorded above at 13.IV but on a somewhat smaller scale and this time lacking the square plinth underneath: it is

only 22 cm across, and the total height, to the top of the mouldings, is only 14 cm. Small though it is, the traces of mortar on the top surface point to its reuse as building material. 23.II is another large recessed end-block, 80 by 49 cm, this time in conglomerate stone, which could have served as a shallow water-basin; while 23.III is a small marble fragment, 26 by 17 cm, with a cylindrical section, broken off from the base or pedestal for a basin.

At **Site (24)**, we reach the north-east corner of the *Kastro*, where the line of the fallen wall bends round, inside (that is, just south-west of) the angle formed by an important crossroads, where the original track that passed Sites (1)–(4) above crosses the one followed for Sites (21)–(23). Here the only feature recorded, apart from the expected conglomerate and limestone blocks, was a small marble column seen in 1986 (perhaps a funerary *kioniskos*?), with its base carved from the same block: height 62 cm, column diameter 26 cm, greatest dimension of base 45 cm; but this had vanished by 2001. Nearby, however, a piece of an inscribed grave-*stele*, with the last four letters of the deceased's name, was found by the Ljubljana team in 2006, just east of the crossroads.

Sites (25), **(26)**, **(27)** and **(28)** all follow the line of a prominent field-bank that runs north-eastwards, from a point where a pump-house stands, 50 m east of the water channel mentioned above under Site (22), to a point less than 50 m from the south bank of the River Kanavaris. At all four locations, only the large conglomerate blocks were reported; the profusion of these, combined with the marked break of slope along the line of the bank, makes up the most convincing evidence for there having been a sector of the earlier fortification running along this line. At Site (28) can be seen three very large blocks that were unearthed together, as a result of deep ploughing, probably in the winter of 1986/87, and first recorded in 1987 (see p. 165).

Site (29), finally, is at the point, 100 m further east again, where the north–south-running track meets the Kanavaris, crossing it on a bridge (since replaced) which in 1986 incorporated one or two ancient blocks: today, these can be seen scattered nearby.

Site (30), in the middle of the field to the west of the farm building that crowns the prehistoric 'Magoula' hill and some 50 m south of the field-bank just described, contained some finds of striking quality. Most notable is the block combining the triglyph and metope of a Doric frieze (30.I), not in marble but in fine limestone: height 53 cm, width of triglyph 34 cm and of metope 58 cm, making a total length of *c*. 92 cm; the triglyph is topped by the usual plain band 9.5 cm wide, the metope by a slightly thinner one 7 cm wide. Dowel-holes are visible on the left side and on the upper surface. The field of the metope has been defaced, at some later date, by a crudely incised drawing of a bell. If this piece came from a temple with the regular two-metope space between columns, it would yield an improbably small inter-columnar space of *c*. 1.84 m, found only in the smallest Doric temples, like the Athenian Temple of Apollo on Delos which had to be squeezed between two existing structures (Dinsmoor 1950: Table at end). More likely, this element came from a building with a three-metope spacing, giving an interval of *c*. 2.76 m; and although later Doric temples occasionally show three-metope intervals, the odds are on this building being a *stoa* rather than a temple: see Coulton 1976, Figs. 16 (North Stoa, Priene) and 28 (Stoa of Attalos, Athens), both with friezes on a slightly smaller but very similar scale; and Fig. 30 showing the contrast between typical temple and *stoa* dimensions. The date will be not earlier than the second half of the fourth century BC. At all events the elevated location, with its unusually good views over the city around it (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 114 with Fig. 8.8), was evidently a favoured one.

30.II (Gentili #68) was found less than 20 m to the east of 30.I, but is unlikely to be directly linked with it: a Doric capital of late Classical or slightly later profile, carved as usual from one block with the uppermost fluting of its column, again in fine limestone; the *echinus* of the capital has a slightly curved profile, set off by four *annuli* from the top of the flutes; the *abacus*, though broken off at two of its corners, was some 42 cm square, with an upper column diameter of 32 cm. These dimensions are too small in comparison with those of the frieze fragment just described to make it possible that they come from the same façade: the column is not even as wide as the triglyph of 30.I. 30.III, found a little to the north of the other two pieces, is unrelated: a limestone block, moulded on its front face only, from the base of an anta, probably for a funerary monument of *naiskos* type: it stands 51.5 cm high, 39 across and 18 deep and, to judge from better-preserved parallels, was probably surmounted by an Ionic half-column. An architectural antefix, reported in 2001 from the stone-pile running between 30.I and the farm building at the top of the hill, can no longer be traced.

Site (31), at a junction due east of the Magoula, contained further conglomerate blocks; and in the supplementary visit of 2004 (see p. 141), JLB noticed

hereabouts a small, freshly unearthed section of unfluted column, now vanished.

Site (32), only some 50 m east of this junction along a lesser track which joins here, is marked by a small roadside shrine of St. John the Baptist, whose supporting pillar itself seems to be composed of ancient blocks. Here, just north of the track, there is a small, Π-shaped structure, the lowest course of whose three walls consists entirely of carefully worked ancient blocks. Only some 3 m long and 2.5 m across, it may mark a foundation for the (evidently very small) chapel of St.John which once stood here and was evidently still there for Ulrichs to see in *c.* 1840; in which case, the stones will presumably have been reused. Around it were several conglomerate blocks, one of which had been deliberately placed on end in the manner of an orthostat (height 1.1 m); a large, round conglomerate slab (diameter 75 cm) that could have served as a column-base; two more sections of unfluted columns in marble or smooth limestone; and, a short distance uphill, two rectangular marble building blocks, the larger 1.05 m by 70 by over 40 cm. All of these look ancient, and all could have been reused in the chapel. The building was also given by H. Ulrichs (see Chapter 2, p. 13) as a locating point for an important spring, the *Megáli Vrísis*; this is substantiated by the fact that another water channel, parallel to but fainter than the one noted above under Site (22), runs northwards from this locality towards the Kanavaris.

Site (33), some 50 m further east along this lesser track, produced more conglomerate blocks and a sizeable marble slab of unknown purpose, first noticed in 2001.

Site (34), a more substantial collection, is at the point some 200 m further east again where this track, after curving round southwards, joins a major east–west-running track at a T junction. Here, along the bank on the south side of the bigger track, were seen in 2001 a series of stylobate or threshold blocks in marble and a well-head with circular aperture which had been put to use in very recent times; but by 2003, only a monolith from an unfluted column, height 78, diameter 27 cm (34A.I) was still visible here. During the supplementary visit of 2004, however (see p. 141), at a point a few metres west of the track junction just mentioned, JLB noticed, besides an accumulation of conglomerate blocks along the S side of the track, the upper surface of a wall running slightly diagonally across the track, composed of mixed types of stone not of a thickness appropriate to a fortification wall. This locality has a further historical importance, in that these fragments seem to be all that remains of the ruined structure which takes up the whole foreground in E.R. Dodwell's engraving of 'Thespeia' in 1805, evidently drawn from approximately this viewpoint (see p. 9, Fig. 2.1): unfluted columns and what looks like a piece of Ionic entablature are clearly visible in the engraving. The significance of the locality is further hinted at by the line of a main road, part of an intersecting and no doubt ancient network, running more or less due west towards the northern part of the *Kastro* and passing the upstanding ruin (Site 36 below) on the way, that is visible on a series of recent Google Earth™ images: it is at this point that the main road diverges from the present-day farm track, to its south.

Site (35) marks yet another junction of tracks, 100 m further east again, where an important track branches off up the hill to the south. Here stands another small roadside *ikonostasis* which, like the one at Site (32) above, has a pillar that incorporates an ancient stone, a section of marble unfluted column, 51 cm high and 39 cm in diameter (listed as 35.II), with a slightly tapered, squarish block on top of it. Here, as at the previous site, some features visible in 1986 and 2001 are now lost. A column capital of late date had already disappeared by 2001, but another length of unfluted column, 86 cm high with a diameter of *c.* 45 cm (35.I), is still to be seen.

At **Site (36)**, some way back to the west and in the middle of a field, only about 100 m east of the eastern wall of the *Kastro*, stands what is now the most conspicuous above-ground feature of the entire ancient site: a massive wall-stump in mortared stone blocks with tile in the interstices, much weathered but still 1.6 m thick and standing to a height of several metres. Since the original city survey of 1985, this has been taken to be a Byzantine church wall, and subsequent resistivity testing confirmed that it is the upstanding fragment of a larger, apsidal structure. In Dodwell's engraving (see above), it is clearly recognisable, standing to a very much greater height, with small apertures visible at two levels. Isolated as it is in cultivated ground, it has naturally served as a dumping ground for the numerous ancient conglomerate blocks unearthed nearby, but also for finer blocks in marble.

A similar accumulation was recorded in 2001 some 35 m north-westwards from the ruin at **Site (37)**, where there were squared marble blocks and a short section of unfluted column.

Site (38), lying in the opposite direction, that is some 45 m to the south-east of the ruined church, produced

something better: a short distance eastwards from the main collection of conglomerate and marble blocks on a large cairn of field stones, to the south-west of an almond plantation, was found 38.I*, a piece from the cornice or crowning block of a monument, 30 cm in height (complete) and 39.3 by 22 cm in horizontal measurements, with a moulding and an inscription in fine lettering, to be published elsewhere with the other epigraphic finds of the Rome team. We have now arrived beside a minor north–south-running branch track which forms a cul-de-sac, ending at a field-house to the south.

Following it in the opposite direction, northwards, we come in *c*. 30 m to **Site (39)**, where yet another piece of unfluted column 37 cm high with diameter of 40 cm (39.I) was seen already in 2001, together with two building blocks, apparently of marble: the larger, 39.II, measuring 72 by 58 by 26 cm, has two square dowel-holes in its upper surface; the slightly smaller 39.III, (visible dimensions 45 by 22 cm) has the interest of being hollowed out underneath into a smooth concave channel, as if for a drain or gutter.

Site (40) lies a similar distance further north again, beside an electricity pylon: here was recorded, on repeated occasions between 2001 and 2007, the unusually well-preserved cornice block 40.I in fine white marble, 69 by 72 cm across and 26 cm in height (complete), not now visible at the site. It projects in two steps, with a *cyma reversa* between two fillets at the top of each. There was also the squared block 40.II, 72 by 58 by 26 cm, with a clamp-hole on its upper surface.

Temporarily by-passing Site (41) which lies in a different locality (see p. 158), we move to **Site (42)** where, in a field-bank well to the east of the cul-de-sac branch track mentioned above, are seen a very large cut marble building block, 42.I, 89 by 75 by 36 cm, with simple mouldings running along each of its long sides; and the curious limestone block 42.II, 71 by 31 by 22 cm, with a circular recess cut in its upper surface, with traces of mortar and brick showing that it had once supported a small brick column. But the location (42A), recorded as an outlier of this site, lies more than 100 m uphill to the south-west of it and is best located from the field house to which the aforementioned cul-de-sac track leads. A long transverse field bank runs along the contour some 60 m to the south of that building. Here in 2003 a complete, exceptionally long marble block was spotted, 42A.I, with a length of 2.52 m and a cross-section of 63 by 32 cm, with a series of clamp-holes visible along its surface. It can only have served as a door-jamb, and for a monumental doorway at that. 42A.II, across the bank on its uphill side, is a smaller, broken piece in *poros* stone, 68 by 28 by 12 cm, with a rectangular raised panel on one if its sides, evidently meant to be visible. 42A.III is a still more fragmentary limestone block of similar dimensions, again 68 cm long, with raised edge and recessed interior. To recall one of the possible inferences made about Site (7) above (p. 149), these substantial pieces (see also 43.II below) lie so far uphill from the main scatter of ruins as to suggest that at least one monumental building stood not too far away. The predominance of Hellenistic and Roman sherds in this sector of the city survey would suggest the possibility that it was constructed at a period when the factor of protection from a fortification wall might no longer have applied.

Site (43) lies downhill again, some 50 m to the west of the original Site (42), much closer to the cul-de-sac branch track and beside a tree. Here there is a small, fine square block, 43.I, carved of one piece with the lower extremity of a column, with a total height of 47.3 cm; the block itself is 25.6 cm high, by 31 by 29.5 cm, with an incised groove forming a frame on each face; the tiny column above (diameter 14 cm, decorated in spiralling relief) was either of early Christian ecclesiastical use, or perhaps a funerary *kioniskos*. 43.II is a huge, essentially complete threshold slab, 1.98 m long by 72 cm wide, with door-checks and a square pivot-hole close to either end. Its presence here inevitably recalls that of the door-jamb 42A.I, less than 100 m away to the south, and reinforces the suggestion of a monumental structure in the area.

Site (44) takes us some distance eastwards, to beyond the major north–south-running track last mentioned in connection with the *iconostasis* at Site (35) above, and specifically to a field some 60 m due south of the *iconostasis*. Here, the only find noted and photographed in 2001, a fragment of a limestone block closely similar to 42A.III above and with a similar raised edge, was no longer to be seen two years later.

With **Site (45)** we rejoin the major E–W-running track, first noted at Site (34) above and forming the important junction at Site (35). The site is less than 50 m east of the latter, close beside this track on its south side: here lies the notably fine orthostat 45.I, 1.13 m high, 88 cm across and 30 thick, with a well-preserved Ionic moulding along its base, seen and drawn in 1986 and found again in 2003. The moulding, with two *torus* elements separated by a *scotia* moulding, is among the finest and best-preserved of the Ionic elements seen on the site.

Site (46) is reached by going some 60 m further east along the same track, then leaving it to turn off into the field on the right, where a prominent field-bank runs at right angles southwards, then eastwards. Here in 1986 was noted a conglomerate block set upright on one of its short ends at the crest of the bank, but since fallen (compare the one still in position at Site (32) above, and others to be reported in a later volume at the site of Askra); where deliberate, this represents a building technique known from post-antique Boeotia. At the same location, some 30 m to the south of the east–west track, was found in 2003 the fragment of a marble block 46.I, only 38 cm in its longest surviving dimension; and a short section of unfluted column in white marble (46.II, height 33, diameter 36 cm), very similar in appearance to, but apparently smaller than, the one earlier recorded under Site (31). There was also an important inscription, recording a dedication made by the magistracy of the *pentekostologoi*, found in 2007 by the Ljubljana team in the course of survey on a field cairn some 80 m south of the track and thus about 140 m south from the *Makri Ekklesia* church of Site (51) below (see Schachter and Marchand 2012: 278–80, #1). An outlying extension of this site was recorded at location (46A), back on the east–west track, just west of where the field-bank abuts on the track: here 46A.I is another length of unfluted column, but in conglomerate stone, again of small size (height 32, diameter 27 cm). Hereabouts, too, was the find-spot of an inscribed cylindrical marble base*, located by the Ljubljana team in 2008.

At the outlying **Site (47)**, some 100 m south of the same track and further east, a small marble column-base seen in 2001 was no longer traceable in 2003.

We now move to an important group of sites clustered round the very substantial remains of the large post-antique church, the *Makri Ekklesia*, (Site (51) below), which is reached by following the east–west track to the point where it ends in a T-junction with a more important track that runs north–south, and then turning left (north) for less than 100 m, in the ultimate direction of a bridge over the Kanavaris. To this group belong Site (41), passed over earlier; Site (48) at the actual T-junction just mentioned; Site (51), the notable scatter of ancient blocks in and around the church, and Sites (49)–(50) in its close vicinity to the east.

At **Site (41)**, lying to the north of the original track, some 100 m west of the church and more or less opposite Site (46) above, a long limestone building block was seen and photographed in 2001, but not recorded later. Not far north of here, in a location not accessible to survey during the 1985 coverage of the area, the Ljubljana team found in 2008 a bilingual building inscription of Domitian's time*, datable precisely to AD 86 (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 292–4, #5). Other marble fragments hint at the presence of a major, perhaps public structure, which is tentatively confirmed by a visible, sub-rectangular crop-mark in the recent series of Google Earth™ images mentioned above (p. 156 under Site 34); but the location, evidently outside the eastern boundary of the Roman city, remains a puzzling one.

At **Site (48)**, beside the actual T-junction mentioned just now, a fine, near-complete block from an Ionic cornice with dentils was photographed in 2001 (Fig. 4.7), but disappeared within the next few years; its style is not closely comparable with that of the front face of the rather smaller fragment recorded as 4G.VI above, from inside the *Kastro*, or with the new piece found in 2009 at Site (5), just outside the circuit. Much further away, in a field-edge some 150 m south-west from this point, the foot or crown of a small marble base with moulding was also seen in 2001 but, once again, not traceable later.



Figure 4.7. *Ionic cornice block at Site (48), photographed in 2001 but now vanished.*



Figure 4.8. *The built wall of the Varvaka fountain (Site (49)) as seen in 2001.*



Site (49) marks the built face-wall of a notable fountain, still well-preserved (though no longer functioning) in the 1980s but now much less so (Fig. 4.8), and assigned to the Ottoman period. It lies on the west side of the important north–south track, with the church of Site (51) almost directly behind it: some undoubtedly ancient blocks are built into its structure, but none is of special interest. It is to be identified with the *Varváka* spring, noted by Ulrichs and other travellers (see above, p. 17, Fig. 2.2).

Site (50) lies on the opposite side of this track from the fountain and the church, and some 50 m further to the north. It consists only of a large, solid mass of mortared masonry, clearly a foundation for some post-Classical structure. Its maximum preserved dimension reaches some 15 m across and a fairly straight western edge (Fig. 4.9) may be an original feature. The feature clearly recalls the smaller but much better-preserved structure at location #43-373 in the Ephorate's excavation trench, described at the end of this chapter (p. 198).

Figure 4.9. *Looking northwards (in 2001) along the western edge of the mass of masonry forming Site (50).*

The church **(51)** itself, finally, offers our last substantial collection of ancient architectural elements and is itself, though ruinous, the most extensive structure to be seen on the whole ancient site. But the full complexity of its history only emerged with the cleaning operation of July and August 2009, carried out by the 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities in collaboration with Božidar Slapšak, on which a fuller report will be published in a forthcoming number of *Arkhaiologikon Deltion* (*Chroniká*). Removal of the many loose stone blocks revealed that the fallen rubble, which appeared to constitute much of its longer, northern and southern 'walls', represented no more than concerted and relatively recent dumping activities, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century. The church had been briefly investigated in 1890 or 1891 by P. Jamot, and it was he who evidently first used the slight depression resulting from his excavation as a place for the disposal of those uninscribed ancient blocks which held no interest for him. His example was later followed by the owners of adjacent fields, with such enthusiasm that the resultant stone rubble 'created' the spurious rectangular building, apparently some 30 m long, that must lie behind the modern name of *Makri Ekklesia* ('long church').

This in fact consisted of two quite separate structures. The extremity of the site, between the western wall and the 'cross-wall' towards the western end, proved to be a separate structure of more than one storey, some 13.3 by 8.5 m on plan; the building, its walls some 2 m thick with a concrete core and standing to several courses, may have been of secular rather than religious use and was evidently later in date than the church to its east. The real church was not after all basilican in plan as we had thought: removal of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century debris revealed two superimposed cruciform, apsidal churches. The later of these, approximately 7.5 m square, is securely assigned by the accompanying pottery to a Middle Byzantine date; the earlier and larger may well be Early Byzantine. The church must be among the six listed by Ulrichs around 1840, probably the third of those that he enumerates (Chapter 2, p. 13), but its dedication seems to have been unknown even then. The proven existence of a Middle Byzantine and later settlement in this locality gives a firm context, at least for the later church. As one would expect, free use of recycled ancient blocks was made in its construction; the locality is also rich in detached blocks which may or may not have once been incorporated in the church.

51.I*, which lay against the inner wall of the church but has now been removed to safety, is a small slice from the same general kind of cornice, in greyish marble, that we have repeatedly noted, if mostly in plainer or less well-preserved fragments (4B.III, 4G.X, 6.X, 7.XXIII, 13.XVI, 21.I above). In this case, the height of the original block is fortunately preserved at 27.2 cm, the broken dimensions being only 22.5 and 10.5 cm; it has a full series of seven mouldings, dominated by a prominent *cyma reversa*. 51.II, found built into the north wall of the small west room, is only just recognisable as being from a column-base: maximum surviving measurement 32 cm. 51.III, towards the south-west corner of the main nave of the church, is a flattish white marble block, 55 and 24 cm in its fully preserved width and height respectively, broken off at the back, but with a carefully shaped convexity in its front face. The possibility that this might have been a seating-block raises the interesting issue of the city's theatre: in 1883, the then Ephor P. Stamatakis records (1883: 68) the remarkable fact that he assembled 150 seating blocks, which he believed to belong to a theatre, from across the entire ancient site: these he collected together at this very location, 'by the Varváka fountain'. Conceivably, therefore, this block is a single survivor of those 150; in any event, it cannot provide evidence for the theatre's location.

51.IV, from the small west room at the opposite (southern) end from 51.II, is a smallish white marble building block, only 59 by 41 by 13 cm, with two square dowel-holes in its upper surface. 51.V, just outside the church to the north, is only a fragment from the end of an Ionic cornice block, but its three preserved dentils are carved to a high standard: the piece measures 41 by 27 by 17 cm, with a width of 6 cm for each dentil. 51.VI was again found inside the church, near the north-west corner of the nave: a rectangular base block, 57 by 43 by 22 cm, with a deep rectangular cutting in its upper face for the erection of a thin *stele*, some 35 by 8 cm, whether funerary or civic.

The remaining blocks were distributed outside the church: 51.VII is an unusually deeply recessed block, 69 cm long by 26 cm, with a maximum thickness of some 22 cm at its outer rim, stepped down to an internal thickness of only 7 cm. 51.VIII, found close to the S wall of the church at its W end, is an exceptional piece: a near-complete white marble threshold block with pivot- and bolt-holes for both its doors, together with elaborate cuttings for both jambs: the overall measurements are 84 by 52 cm, with a thickness of only 18 cm. It seems highly likely that this had been used (or re-used) for the main door of the church. The remaining pieces are less interesting: 51.IX, a piece broken from a marble block, 63 by 43 by 24 cm, further away to the west; 51.X, to the south of the church, a fragment of the drum of a coarse unfluted conglomerate column, diameter 30 cm, with a large dowel-hole in its upper surface; 51.XI, south-east of

the church, another marble block, 73 by 47 by 24 cm; 51.XII, further to the south-east, one last fragment of unfluted column, in the same coarse conglomerate as 5.X, almost as fragmentary and even smaller in diameter (23 cm), with a similar dowel-hole.

Like the *Kastro* wall and especially the very dense concentration of reused blocks at its south-west and north-west corners (Sites (7) and (13) above), this church will naturally have acted as a magnet for reusable building components from earlier structures, over appreciable distances: not to mention such modern operations as Stamatakis's use of this fairly level and accessible location (see p. 160) as a convenient collecting-point for significant stray finds. It is not therefore possible to make any inference as to the original locations of the buildings from which these blocks came.

The remaining localities, **Sites (A)–(I)**, lay further afield from the nucleus of the city, outside the areas covered in 1986 or 2002–2003: only in JLB's more extensive survey of 2001 were they noted as being of potential interest: in nearly every case, this was because of the presence of the conglomerate blocks which form the material for Part II of this catalogue. Sites (A)–(C) lie due west of the more intensively covered area, beyond Site (18) on its flat-topped ridge, and south of the lower-lying Site (19). Site (A) is the furthest to the west, at the point where the westward-running track that passes Site (19) turns sharply southwards, about 100 m further on, and climbs over the crest of the low ridge. Here, besides several conglomerate blocks (one of them exceptionally large), can be seen a built tomb, composed of thick, upright conglomerate slabs, more carefully cut than the putative fortification blocks, which first came to light in 2006 and was examined by our colleagues from Ljubljana two years later (see p. 187). Its date seems likely to be Late Classical or Hellenistic, and its presence here would certainly suggest that the fortification, or at least this western extremity of it, was no longer in operation. Sites (B), just to the east where the ridge rises higher and (C), some 50 m further E again along the ridge, were noted only for further conglomerate blocks.

For Site (D), we move some 400 m uphill and south-eastwards from this locality, to a point between two junctions on the important track which, after running along the western side of the *Kastro* (see under Sites (14)–(17) above), climbs out of the city to the south-west. Here we are in the vicinity of the rural cemetery-site THS 11 (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 69–71, 266–71). Site (D), along with Sites (E), (F), and (I), also in this vicinity, were all noted for the presence of large conglomerate (and occasionally equally large limestone) blocks. All lie in hill-top locations: Site (E) is some 250 m south-eastwards from Site (D) and even more elevated; Site (F), 150 m further east again and beside a different field-track; Site (I), some 200 m to the north-east of Site (D) and a little way downhill along the track that branches off towards the southern *Kastro* wall, to join it at Site (5) above. But if the Classical fortifications ever ran this far up the slope, the cemetery sites of roughly comparable date, 'THS 11' and the one recorded in *Testing the Hinterland*, pp. 114, 118, Fig. 8.6 and 8.17, as '2001 cemetery', lie not far away, to remind us that this was at best a transitional zone at the very edge of the area of habitation.

Site (G) lies nearly 400 m downhill to the north-east of this locality, in an area above the highest point of the *Kastro* and some 70 m east of the important track from which we started out (see under Sites (1)–(4)). Here in 2001 was found a fine marble base- or cornice-block with two rectangular dowel-holes in its visible side. In another field-cairn, a short way north of Site (G) and 150 m south-east from the corner of the *Kastro*, there came to light in the course of the geophysical testing by the Ljubljana team in 2007, the crowning marble palmette of a grave-*stele**, with close stylistic parallels from Boeotia, Attica and Thessaly in the third century BC (Fig. 4.10).

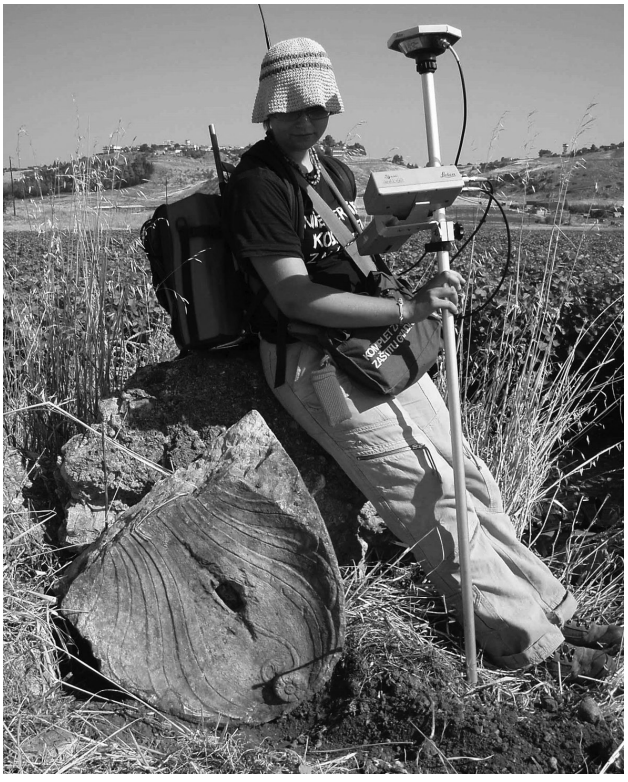


Figure 4.10. *Palmette finial from a grave-stele, found in 2007 near Site (G).*



Figure 4.11. *Two views of a marble slab, forming an upright support for a table or other piece of furniture, found in 2006 at or near Site (H).*

This was not all, for across the track to the west, a continuing field-bank at this same level, above and to the south of the *Kastro*, is very close to and possibly identical with Site (H) of 2001, where 'large cut blocks', several of them not conglomerate but more carefully worked limestone, were reported. Before and after that date, this has been the approximate find-spot of several other stones, including a cylindrical tomb-stone, once inscribed, recorded by the Ljubljana team. A Classical Attic sculpted funerary stele now in the Thespies Museum, according to Charalambos Adam the owner of the land, was discovered here some years ago. Then in 2006 it was found that an inscription of Roman date relating to the cult of Cybele* and the side of a marble table* of uncertain date (Fig. 4.11) which, to judge from traces of mortar still attached to it, had been reused in some later structure, had been brought to the surface by ploughing and then deposited on the same bank.

* * * * *

From this mass of apparently disjointed detail, certain general impressions nevertheless emerge. In topographical terms, it is notable how heavily the material clusters round the wall-circuit and the interior of the *Kastro* (Sites (1)–(16), (21)–(23)): something over 70 per cent of the recorded items are from there. This is partly to be explained by the fact that the ready spoliation of the *Kastro* first became a possibility only some 125 years ago, when its wall was entirely dismantled, whereas spoliation of the rest of the ancient site must have been continuous for more than ten times that length of time: the official attitude to such despoliation has also, of course, become more restrictive in recent years. We have already remarked (p. 143) on the fact that any piece actually incorporated in the *Kastro* wall is certain to be, at the very best, in a secondary location. There are examples (e.g. 2A.IV, 4G.VI, 12.V) where secondary use can be shown to have taken place *before* the likely involvement in the construction of the *Kastro* wall. Then there are the frequent funerary *stelai*, whether inscribed or not, which are found at many points around the *Kastro* circuit and whose presence there, far from giving any evidence for the proximity of cemeteries, simply attests their utility as building blocks. All this weakens the chances of any meaningful reconstruction of the architecture of the Greco-Roman city, during its life of at least a millennium before the building of that wall.

Equally disabling is the lack of dating evidence for the vast majority of these pieces. Yet, as we have set out to show in the initial summings-up of the material from the most productive sites – (7) and, to a lesser extent, (13) and (51) above – some inferences are possible when the quantities of finds allow. Thus it is not without interest to see whether the balance of the Doric and Ionic architectural orders conforms to expectations for a territory traditionally associated with the Doric style, but subject to later changes of fashion. The surviving column capitals, it is true, show three Doric specimens (2A.V, 13.XV, 30.II), all datable within a fairly short span of time in the fourth or third century BC, as against a single, and perhaps slightly later, Ionic one (3.IV) and a definitely later Corinthian pilaster-capital (5.I); the rare fluted columns or column-drums, too, include four examples with Doric fluting (2A.I, 4H.I, 7.XI, 7.XXVII) as against one half-column with what seem to be the flattened flutes of Ionic (3.IX). There are two recognisable column-bases of Attic/Ionic type (13.IV, 23.I). (The Ionic base and capital from the Agios Athanasios church (p. 188) might also be mentioned here). Among the pieces of architrave, too, the only two examples recognized (7.IV, 7.XXVI) have the characteristic three fascias of Ionic to set against the fine Doric frieze-block 30.I.

This brings us to the much more numerous cornices. Here again, we have a decisive prevalence of six or seven clear Ionic specimens, with surviving dentils (4F.I, 4G.VI, 9A.I, 51.V, the new find described above under Site (5), the lost piece from Site (48), and possibly the much damaged 10.I *bis*), as against not a single identifiable Doric cornice. There are, besides, a number of the less distinctive pieces of cornice face whose recurrent features are, in nearly all cases, a series of two or three fascias separated by fillets, sometimes on their own (6.VII, 13.I) but supplemented most often by a *cyma reversa* (4.II, 4G.X, 7.XXIV, 40.I, 51.I) or a *cyma recta* (4B.III) or an *ovolo* (7.XXIII). All these are features more familiar to the Ionic manner than to the Doric, even though this last group of cornices need not be associated with monumental or public structures. If there is, then, a predominance of Ionic in the finds as a whole, the explanation will be at least in part a chronological one: the gradual eclipse of the Doric order, of which Vitruvius (iv. 3. 1-2) is an explicit witness, and its supplanting by Ionic and Corinthian in Roman Imperial times, were things which mere regional tradition could not resist. All this is therefore compatible with a belief that a high proportion of these finds is of relatively late, predominantly Roman, date.

It remains to mention the most prolific category of all, the unfluted columns and drums, of which over 30 examples were recorded. At first sight, their striking feature is that, with the exception of the trio of large specimens from Site (2) and its immediate neighbourhood (p. 144), they are of relatively slender dimensions. If we confine ourselves to the

26 examples with accurately measurable diameters, the average thickness comes out at just under 36 cm, with a maximum figure of 47 and a minimum of 23. This would not, however, preclude their featuring in public buildings: there were several contexts – again, especially in Hellenistic and Roman cities – where unfluted columns of this order of size were regular: *stoas*, colonnaded streets and theatre buildings come to mind. The concentration of these, as of the finds as a whole, in and around the *Kastro* at any rate does not contradict the thesis that this locality was, for much of the lifetime of Classical Thespiai, the location of its civic centre. One or two finds from the *Kastro* wall, such as the block 7.I from a circular monument, or the arch *voussoir* 14.IV, give a hint of something approaching civic splendour, in Classical Greek and Roman times respectively.

Such an inference is perhaps reinforced by another category, surprisingly common in view of its massive scale: the threshold blocks and the rarer doorjambs. Here we are surely dealing with the remains of monumental, public structures. A complete threshold block measuring 1.98 m across like 43.II, or a doorjamb 2.52 m high like 42A.I, can hardly have belonged to private houses; the other threshold blocks, though they do not match these dimensions, are in many cases shown by their cuttings to represent little more than half of the full width of their doorways: thus a piece like 4A.V, whose surviving length is 1.23 m, may have belonged to a doorway even wider than that of 43.II above.

Of the stone basins and larger containers, many of the former in marble, it is difficult to judge with confidence their context of use: many are too fragmentary to assess but, if not designed for public purposes, their often fine materials point to a luxurious level of private use. Only with the small concentration of marble vessels at Site (10) is there any hint of a special context, in this case perhaps of cult.

We end with another obvious topographical observation, whose implication however is today, in the light of the most recent discoveries, somewhat different from what we had previously thought: namely, that every single one of the recorded finds comes from points south of the river Kanavaris. From the time of our systematic survey of the city site in 1985–86, we had been well aware that the surface pottery distribution extended strongly north of the river as well. It was thus clear that some form of urban activity had, at many different periods, taken place on the 'far' bank. But it was a level of activity that had evidently failed to generate a corresponding level of architectural traces, to match the ceramic spread. Even today, after 20 years' further intensive modern cultivation and archaeological investigation, this remains broadly true: there is little sign of that scatter of columns, cornices or threshold-blocks that we have encountered south of the river, even in areas well clear of the *Kastro* wall and its 'magnetic' effects. The character of the occupation of the north bank, we had inferred, must have been dominated by activities – domestic, horticultural or funerary – which simply did not generate many monumental buildings.

Then from 2006 onwards fresh discoveries, especially those of our colleagues from Ljubljana, placed this district of the city in an entirely new light. First and foremost, there was the series of finds delineating the course of a western fortification wall, lying entirely on the north side of the Kanavaris, running from south to north and eventually climbing all the way up the escarpment on which the modern Thespies village stands: it is evidently designed to protect the western flank, at least for one period of its history, of an extensive suburb on this side of the river. In its lower-lying stretch, it was composed of the same kind of large conglomerate blocks which we had identified as likely indications for a Classical fortification south of the river: in its higher reaches, on the outskirts of the modern village, it was apparently built entirely of mud-bricks. The key to this discovery lay in a line of blocks, lying along the edge of a field that lay just outside the 1985–86 city survey grid. This 'new' fortification wall will naturally receive closer study in the next section (pp. 165–83), with an Addendum describing the excavations by the 9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in 2012–14, mentioned already in the Introduction (p. 4 with Fig. 1.5; pp. 196–8).

Secondly, we gave fresh consideration to the passage of the travel writer Pausanias (ix. 27. 4), written probably in the third quarter of the second century AD, which is part of his rather cursory description of the city of Thespiai. After describing the city's most famous cult, that of Eros, he goes on:

'In another place' [or perhaps more simply, 'elsewhere'] 'there is a sanctuary of Black Aphrodite and a theatre and an *agora* worth seeing ...'

Uncertainty centres on whether the Greek word that he uses does, or does not, imply that these three features are in one and the same neighbourhood; and, to a lesser extent, on whether the reference to the *agora* is meant to denote the main civic centre of Thespiai in Pausanias's day, or simply one of several such spaces. After much consideration, we have concluded that there is no precise topographical fix for the three features named: they and one further location, a sanctuary of Herakles, are the only other features to

be enumerated by Pausanias and he is simply saying that they are all at a distance from the Sanctuary of Eros with which he began. The point is important because of a second conclusion resulting from our topographic studies, that there is only one physically possible location for a Greek theatre at Thespiai. This is in the natural, roughly semicircular scoop or recess in the hillside below the modern village of Thespies, that is to say well north of the river and at the very northern extremity of the city survey grid.

Two separate findings, therefore, have launched a radical reappraisal of the significance of this northern extension of the city. First, it housed a theatre, whose existence is attested by other evidence besides the word of Pausanias. Secondly, either this and other components of this urban district were at some point found precious enough to merit the protection of a fortification-wall; or the purely military consideration of fortifying the highest ground in the vicinity, and thereby denying it to an enemy, at that moment came to prevail, and a new urban district later grew up within it. Both explanations could have some validity. What is certain is that, on the one hand, a putative northern fortification for the city of Classical date, with its best-attested stretch running across south of the river and in a generally east–west direction and, on the other, an extensive northern enclave, beyond the river, with its best-attested stretch of walling running north–south are, *as part of one and the same fortification project*, incompatible with each other. The second *enceinte*, assuming that this was indeed the sequence of their construction, would have supplanted at least a part of the northern sector of the first.

All of this leads on naturally to the material of Part II of this catalogue, the putative fortification blocks and the definite *in situ* elements, both of them largely in conglomerate stone, and their distribution across the site.

Part II: the evidence for the city's defences

The material evidence for fortifications at Thespiai, beyond the circuit of the *Kastro*, at first seemed so fugitive as to make it fruitless to search for them. Neither the city survey of 1985 and 1986, nor the first survey of upstanding architectural features in the latter year, brought to light a single stone still *in situ* that could be interpreted as part of an earlier fortification. The small compass of the *Kastro* circuit, not to speak of the epigraphic and ceramic evidence for its late date, excluded any possibility of identifying it as the Classical wall (see p. 168).

Yet historical sources attest that, at least at certain periods in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Classical Thespiai did indeed have fortifications that apparently surrounded the city. We have it on the authority of Thucydides (iv. 133.1) that a city wall here had stood for a substantial length of time before its destruction by the Thebans in 423 BC; and of Xenophon (*Hellenica* v. 4. 41) that Agesilaos of Sparta organized in 378 BC the rebuilding, though in this case it was to prove short-lived, of these same walls after they had apparently been left in a derelict or at least slighted condition for the previous 45 years (see also Chapter 5, p. 210). The building and later restoration of a circuit of walls, regardless of its length of life, that was extensive enough to protect a city of several thousand inhabitants – this was, on reconsideration, an undertaking too great to have left no material trace whatever, and a search should be made for it.

A fresh development during the following winter of 1986/87 helped to focus this search. A farmer, evidently employing a deeper plough than in previous years, ploughed up three very large, roughly shaped conglomerate blocks, near the upper edge of a field lying to the north of the low eminence that forms the Neolithic Magoula, between it and the Kanavaris river. In 1987 we found these three blocks lying, freshly deposited and roughly end-to-end, in the field bank that runs along the south side of that field: they remain there to this day. The biggest of them measures some 1.48 m by 30 cm by 30 cm, the other two being slightly smaller in length and width. These large, unsightly and crudely shaped blocks would have been out of place in a prestigious public building, anywhere above ground level. By the same token, they seem highly appropriate to a defensive structure: a suggestion that gains force from the fact that, in this instance, three of them had apparently been found close together. What is more, the prominent field bank on which they lie today forms a sharp break of slope downwards from south to north, with further single blocks of the same material distributed along its course. These conglomerate blocks soon proved to appear widely over the ancient city site, and we decided to make a separate record of their distribution. Fortunately for our purposes, there is an obvious contrast between these conglomerate blocks, in their composition, size and finish, and the architecturally diagnostic pieces that formed the subject of Part I.

Part II of the Catalogue will include this record, together with the more substantial evidence, later discovered by the team from the University of Ljubljana, of stretches of fortification-wall, in a very different location, that do survive *in situ*. The fact that these stretches make extensive use of the same type of conglomerate blocks is a welcome confirmation of our earlier hypothesis as to their purpose. For Part II



Figure 4.12. *Distribution of conglomerate blocks, potentially belonging to the Classical and later city walls (in red), with the area of the urban survey (yellow shading), superimposed on a vertical air photograph of 1990.*

overall, the debt to our collaborators from Ljubljana is comparable with that due, for Part I, to the experts from the University of Rome Tor Vergata: while almost the entirety of Part III derives from the Ljubljana investigations.

For the isolated conglomerate blocks, the distribution map (Fig. 4.12, prepared by Tonka Šoba of Ljubljana University over the years 2007–2009) already conveys much of the story in its own right. There are many hundreds of these blocks, broken and unbroken, larger and somewhat smaller, scattered across the area of the urban survey grid, and in places beyond it. The heavy concentration, along all the sides of the polygonal outline of the *Kastro*, is the first and most obvious message to be read from the map. This is in no way surprising, since the *Kastro* walls seem to have been entirely constructed, at a date after the mid-fourth century of the Christian era, out of *spolia* taken from the earlier Greco-Roman city. The blocks from the Classical fortification, which from some time after the city's absorption in the Roman province must have lain neglected, provided ready-made material, designed for the same purpose and probably in many cases needing to be brought from no great distance. Yet as we have seen in Part I, the *Kastro* wall also made use of a variety of other types of stone, many of them even more obviously recycled from different and sometimes much earlier uses. Although the Classical city fortifications probably differed in not depending so much on the re-use of older spolia, they too are highly likely to have incorporated other types of stone besides the rough conglomerate blocks: in particular, plain rectangular blocks in smooth, hard limestone or sandstone are sufficiently widespread over the site as to suggest that they too could have featured in the earliest fortification, in the same way as the sandstone found in the extended walls across the Kanavaris (see p. 169). Conversely, there is proof of the use of the large conglomerate blocks for several other purposes besides fortification, notably for the construction of built tombs; while they would have been a natural choice for other uses too, such as for the terracing that would be widely needed on the sloping ground in the southern half of the city.

But the map displays many other features besides this concentration along the perimeter of the *Kastro*. Being based on an air photograph, it brings out the fact that, in nearly all cases, the blocks lie

along the boundaries of modern agricultural fields: this is equally true within the area of the *Kastro* and outside it. Such a pattern results naturally from the discovery of such blocks in the course of cultivation in the interior of the same field, and from their removal to its edges. Since in nearly every case the fields in question are small, the relocation will have taken place only over very short distances. It is true that these field boundaries occasionally follow the line of a modern agricultural track, along which the blocks could theoretically have been transported from further afield: but the motivation for such action is much less obvious than in the case of field clearance. The 'final' distribution of the blocks today will surely not have differed substantially from that of the time of their original re-discovery, itself likely to have fallen within the last century or two.

This final distribution is one that cannot possibly be explained as the result of recycling for the construction of the *Kastro* wall. If we confine ourselves for the time being to the area south of the Kanavaris river, it extends very strongly indeed over a distance of at least 500 m eastwards from the perimeter of the *Kastro*; to the west, the scatter is somewhat less dense and fades out at a distance of about 300 m, although there is a prominent concentration a little to the north-west of the *Kastro*. To the north and south, the character of the distribution is rather different. Due northwards from the *Kastro*, between it and the Kanavaris, there is a clear linear feature running roughly from north-east to south-west: this is the field-bank described just now (p. 165), where the emergence in 1987 of three conglomerate blocks close together, and later of others further along the bank with its abrupt break of slope, gave the first impetus for the idea of connecting such blocks with the Classical fortification. In this unusual case, therefore, we shall be suggesting that the location along a field boundary may more closely reflect a primary location, rather than the normal secondary one, for some of the blocks. Many of the other blocks in this sector lie along the other boundaries of this same large field, or those of its immediate neighbours. To the south of the *Kastro*, where the ground begins to rise quite steeply, the pattern is different again: the blocks thin out, but still persist at a distance of up to 200 m from the *Kastro* perimeter. Of these scattered examples on the high ground hereabouts, at Sites (D)–(I) of Part I, the most that can be said is that they are unlikely to have been brought there from the upper end of the *Kastro,* let alone the lower ground of the rest of the city, and might conceivably point to the line of a wall.

Can this evidence provide any basis for reconstructing the line of the Classical fortification-wall, given that we know such a wall to have existed somewhere on the site? A few fundamental points can now be seen as established: first, there was indeed at least one construction that made copious use of the large conglomerate blocks, existing independently of the *Kastro* circuit and affecting a very much larger area. Secondly, there are strong independent grounds for thinking that this feature was defensive in purpose, both from the suitability of its materials for this purpose, and from the fact of their use for fortification elsewhere on the city site. Third and somewhat less conclusive is the chronological inference that, since hundreds of examples of closely similar blocks were employed in the building of the *Kastro* wall, a wall demonstrably consisting in large part of re-used spolia, the feature in question must have been earlier, quite possibly much earlier, than the *Kastro*.

These conclusions remain somewhat imprecise, especially in topographical terms, and it seems appropriate at this point to turn to the evidence of the ceramic distributions discussed in Chapter 3. Since it is in the later fifth century BC that we can first prove the existence of a city wall at Thespiai, with Agesilaos's initiative of the earlier fourth century being evidently a mere re-building, it is clearly the habitation area defined by the Classical and 'Classical/Hellenistic' pottery distributions that comes into question here. It was partly on this ceramic evidence that the reconstructed rectangular outline, sketched by the dotted blue line in Fig. 3.39, was based: a rectangle incorporating the entire area of the *Kastro* enclosure, but extending decidedly further eastwards than westwards from it; northwards nearly as far as the line of the Kanavaris; and southwards only a short distance up-slope from it. Such a schematic outline is also compatible with the evidence of the conglomerate block distribution that we have just looked at; but there are still problems to be acknowledged and assumptions to be questioned.

First, the issue of recycling and consequent relocation arises in other locations besides that of the *Kastro* perimeter wall. It is now firmly established that, during the later course of Classical antiquity and thereafter, the centre of gravity of the city of Thespiai drifted slowly from west to east: from final Hellenistic to Late Roman times, the main concentration was already within and immediately to the east of the *Kastro*, while the focus of medieval and later settlement lay still further to the east. The denser distribution of the conglomerate blocks, in just these areas, is to some extent echoed by that of the architectural members treated in Part I (see especially under Sites (34)–(51)).

Is it possible that the dense spread of the conglomerate blocks here, along with that of the finer architectural pieces, reflects nothing more than the

spoliation of older Greek structures elsewhere on the site, and that it therefore conveys no information on the topography of their assumed primary use for fortification? The unwieldy size, unsightly appearance and sheer quantity of the conglomerate blocks in the eastern sector constitute arguments against this negative assessment, but they are far from conclusive ones. More convincing is perhaps the observation that, to the west of the *Kastro*, such a line of explanation could in any case hardly hold: the blocks found there, in more modest but still substantial quantities, especially along the westward-running track from near the north-western corner of the *Kastro*, are very much less likely to have been transported from a distance for incorporation in later structures, since this sector was now becoming progressively neglected for habitation. That they are relics of a Classical fortification, dating from a period when it could have formed a line of protection on the northern side of one of the most densely occupied parts of the city, begins to appear a more attractive explanation, at least for this part of the site. Unfortunately, that combination of an abrupt break of slope with a clear alignment of blocks that we found in the field-bank close to the Kanavaris (see p. 165) cannot be fully matched elsewhere on the site: one or other of the two elements is invariably too weakly represented to constitute a convincing wall-line. In a moment, however, we can turn to the evidence from the discoveries of the Slovenian team on the north side of the Kanavaris and later to the findings from their geophysical investigation. Meanwhile, we reaffirm that some kind of Classical fortification wall, in some part of ancient Thespiai, undoubtedly existed.

It remains to address one other hypothesis here, even if it represents only an extreme possibility. What if the Late Antique *Kastro* fortification embodies no more than a rebuilding, on the same line, of its distant Classical predecessor(s)? Is there a possibility that fifth-century Thespiai had also been content with this small fortified enclosure of some 12 ha, and that this was the 'wall of the Thespians' which the Thebans were at pains to destroy in 423 BC, and which Agesilaos, by his re-building of it 45 years later, made into a stronghold to protect both the civilian population and the troops of his Spartan garrison? Such a possibility was indeed hinted at by Fossey (1988: 136–7) and it is by no means impossible that a small part of the Classical circuit had followed this same line. But the idea that the two walls entirely coincided can be dismissed. An inner walled enclave, located in the interior of an otherwise unfortified town but without any of the qualities of natural defence associated with a true acropolis, may not be unknown in the history of fortification, but is hardly something familiar from ancient Greece. In this particular case, the population of Thespiai would have been compressed, for the duration of any emergency, into a space that was perhaps between one-eighth and one-sixth of its normal area of occupation. This would not be an inconceivable hardship; but since about the time of the Persian Wars, the alternative solution of building a wall to surround the whole, or at least a great part, of the built-up area of a city had increasingly prevailed in mainland Greece.

We prefer to believe that the Thespians conformed to that general practice. Their ancestors had chosen a site which, as the community grew to the scale of a city, will have become progressively harder to protect. Their history recorded at least one past occasion when this lack of defensibility had driven them to take refuge in the external stronghold of Keressos and, once the Thebans had for a second time destroyed their walls, they were again to have recourse to that same refuge. In the years between those two emergencies, as long as external pressures did not rule it out, the likeliest response of the city was to do what many other cities were doing and surround all or most of its inhabited space with a fortification-wall.

These hitherto rather theoretical arguments took on a new form in 2006 when the Ljubljana team made its first discoveries in the sector to the north of the Kanavaris. Fig. 4.13 below is an enlargement of a sector lying towards the north-western corner of the map in Fig. 4.12, showing the distribution of the conglomerate blocks, again superimposed on a vertical air photograph. In a field that lay just outside the western limit of the city survey grid, a field-boundary (marked '1a' on Fig. 4.13) was noted, in which the conglomerate blocks occurred so frequently as to constitute an almost unbroken chain. This bank runs roughly north–south and its line can be followed intermittently southwards to near the modern tarmac road (1b on Fig. 4.13), across the road and down to the Kanavaris (1c, 1d), with a single block lying on the south bank of the river (55). Here, the density and alignment of the blocks suggested that, for once, they might not lie too far from their original location; and this was confirmed by one finding in the rescue excavation trench of the Ephorate (see Addendum, p. 198), close to the location marked 1b, where a 17-m stretch of wall in the same approximate line, 3.5 m thick was found, with the added feature of a shorter stretch running at right angles, presumably part of a gate.

In the opposite direction, to the north, evidence was found that extended this inference. First, the recent digging by bulldozer of a sand extraction pit had brought to light two short sections of the upper surface of a wall (at '2a – 2b' on Fig. 4.13), more or less exactly on the line of the field – bank further south: the



Figure 4.13. *Enlarged view of a sector towards the north-west corner of Fig. 4.12: the Kanavaris river is shown by the meandering line running across in the lower part, with the modern tarmac road to Thebes roughly following its line on the north side. The triangle that takes up much of the left-hand half of the figure, formed by this and two other roads, lay outside the area of the city survey grid.*



Figure 4.14. *Google Earth image of the sector between locations 1a and 1b on the previous figure, showing the line of the new wall as a crop-mark crossing the central field, to the west of the field-bank and at an acute angle to it, incorporating evenly spaced rectangular towers and a defensive ditch in front.*



Figure 4.15. *An interpretation (by Darya Grosman) of the crop-marks in the previous figure.*

stretch at 2b, made up of blocks laid end-on in front, with a second row of blocks laid laterally behind them, evidently represented the outer face of the wall, some 1.5 m thick. If the blocks at 2a, a little up-slope and on a slightly different line, marked its inner face, this would give a total thickness of some 5 m, greater than at other points where it was measurable. The materials were again a mixture, combining conglomerate with blocks of the sandstone that forms the bedrock hereabouts; but the north section of the sand extraction pit (2c on Fig. 4.13), with a little cleaning, also revealed the presence of a ditch in front (that is, to the west) of the line of the wall; and this ditch was seen to have been filled with fallen mud-bricks. The wall, therefore, had had a mud-brick superstructure superimposed on a stone foundation.

A very recent Google Earth image of the locality reinforced all this by revealing, after a change in cultivation, the line of the actual wall, as a clear crop-mark, running straight but at a very acute angle to the field-bank, just to the west of it, with a series of rectangular towers on its outer face, set at intervals of very roughly 20 m, with a parallel line further again to the west, undoubtedly marking the course of the defensive ditch (Fig. 4.14): Fig. 4.15 represents an interpretation (by Darya Grosman) of these last features.

These initial discoveries already called for a radical reappraisal of the history of the city's defences. At every period in its development from the Neolithic onwards, the core of settlement at Thespiai had lain south of the Kanavaris river: once it had grown to urban scale, considerations of space alone would ensure that that continued to be the case. Yet here was

a palpable fortification-wall that protected the sector to the north of the river – a sector which did indeed show signs of substantial activity throughout the historical period, but always on a scale subordinate to that across the river to the south. Furthermore, the approximate north–south axis of the new wall was hard to reconcile with the evidence for a putative fortification, forming a northern boundary for the settlement south of the river and running roughly east–west. So if the two systems could hardly have formed parts of one and the same concept for the city defences, then one will have preceded the other. Logical considerations alone suggest that the construction of the new wall would have made little sense without the prior existence of the Classical fortification round the main settlement to the south of the Kanavaris: and there is further evidence to confirm that this was indeed the true sequence.

Meanwhile, the line of the new wall could be followed much further, in a direction away from the main ancient site, to the point where its design and purpose were more fully clarified. Immediately behind the wall-traces revealed at points '2a–2c' on Fig. 4.16, the ground begins to slope very much more steeply as it climbs through a dense conifer plantation: above that again, the gradient remains very steep as it is transected by a bulldozed track, made during the



Figure 4.16. *Recent low-level air photograph, showing the northern sector of Fig. 4.13), with the addition of two further sites, '3' and '4'. (Note also the appearance of a new store-house, lower right).*



Figure 4.17. *The main section of the mud-brick wall (at Site '3' on Fig. 4.16) in the course of cleaning.*

1990s, that runs around the south-western edge of the modern village of Thespies. Here, in the cutting made by the track ('3' on Fig. 4.16), a wall composed of mud-bricks was revealed in the autumn of 2006: cleaning of the section brought out several additional features of its construction. The bulldozer cutting did not run perpendicular to the wall, but cut deeply into it at an angle: local sources inform us that a substantial block of mud-bricks fell into the track at the time of its cutting and was used as levelling material. All this made it difficult to reconstruct the wall's thickness, but it was evidently less thick than in the stretches discovered below at Sites 2a – 2b. Further, unlike the lower wall, the new section on the hill-slope was composed entirely of mud-brick: it was in part founded directly on the conglomerate bedrock (Fig. 4.17, bottom centre and right), in part dug into the palaeosol. The outer (western) face was not vertical but inclined gently backwards, and the wall appears to have been crowned by a covering of tiles. Several different phases of construction, reconstruction and repair – probably three at least – could be detected in the arrangement of the mud-bricks: a general tendency on the part of the bricks to incline down-slope, out of the horizontal, hints at the reason for these measures. At some point, the wall was apparently abandoned and allowed to decay, without any trace of violence, and it is only surprising that so much of its structure survived at this location. Further down the track and outside the line of the wall, the section shows signs of further defences, in the form of ditches and outworks.

An important point is that, by the time it reached this level, the wall had begun to curve sharply round to the north-east, abandoning the more or less straight course that it had followed on the plain below, as if

aiming for a new destination (see again Fig. 4.16). In pursuing this curving course, the wall must have reached the crest of the slope at or near the site marked as '4' on the same figure: here, according to another report from a local source, there once stood part of a wall in conglomerate blocks, destroyed when the modern house at this corner of the village was constructed: this may or may not have formed part of the defences.

We are now at the very edge of the modern village of Thespies, and it is clear that one purpose behind the building of the ancient wall was to incorporate the high ground on which the village now stands. In keeping with this, we have learned from another local informant that a further massive construction in mud-brick, recalling that just described at point '3', had come to light when a store house was built in 1976 (the Mitsonas site), within the village and just below its highest point, fittingly marked by a water tower. This location is marked as point '5' on the air photograph, Fig. 4.18, to which we shall shortly be turning. Sure enough, the earth section behind the store house revealed not only the presence of another section of mud-brick wall, this time standing to a height of up to 5 m and 3.3 m wide at the top, but also clear proof that the corner between the western and northern walls of the fortification lay in this precise location. In other words, the wall here began its turn eastwards, enclosing the very highest ground and no doubt thereafter following the approximate line of the steep bank which today divides the two halves of Thespies village, the 'Ano Mahala' to the south and the 'Kato Mahala' to the north.

More important still is the question of chronology, discussed in general terms elsewhere (Chapter 2, pp. 16–17; Chapter 3, pp. 93–5; Chapter 5, pp. 207–8). The examination of vertical sections could not be expected to yield much diagnostic material: but the ditches visible in the bulldozer section in front of the wall at point '2' contained finds extending down to later Hellenistic, while at point '3', what pottery there was consisted of black glaze wares of characteristic Late Classical/Hellenistic type; the covering tiles from the crown of the wall were also of a form typical for Hellenistic.

More circumstantially, a larger collection of pottery could be collected, in October 2006, from yet another bulldozer cutting, this time freshly made, in the excavation of a level platform for the construction of a factory (the 'Liakos site'), in the sloping ground just north of the tarmac road to Thebes. This lies some 250 m east of the wall line that we have been discussing: the site of the factory building is just to the left of point '6' on the air photograph, Fig. 4.18. As such, it has no direct connection with the fortification, beyond the fact that it represents a collection from below the modern surface, at the heart of the sector which was now, for the first time, protected by a wall. Its value lies in the size and freshness of the collection, and the fact that our colleague Vladimir Stissi was able to study it at the time. There was a certain amount of prehistoric material, mostly coarse ware of probable Middle Bronze Age date; a comparable quantity of pieces of Late Geometric and earlier Archaic date; then a much richer collection of Hellenistic fine ware types, in a variety of forms, with a date range in most cases concentrated between 250 and 150 BC and a plain ware component that also fits this chronology. A smaller number of Roman and later pieces completes the collection. A striking feature is the absence of anything clearly datable between about 550 and 300 BC. Some of the earlier material, and that from the periods after Hellenistic, can perhaps be connected with the funerary use of this sector north of the river for which we have argued in Chapter 3. Here again, the finds directly associated with the wall, from the excavation conducted by the Ephorate (see Addendum, pp. 196–8), do nothing to contradict a general dating to the middle and later Hellenistic periods for the structures that it protected.

The last occasion on which we hear of the Thespians having to resort to their external refuge at Keressos, had been in 371 BC; a claim by the Athenian orator Demosthenes (xix. 112) states that, in 343 BC, a promise by Philip of Macedon to re-fortify Thespiai had remained unfulfilled; and, more generally, the almost continuous unrest and warfare in Hellenistic central Greece, culminating in the First Mithridatic War early in the first century BC, shows that fortifications would have been highly desirable in this era, for any Boeotian city that could afford them.

From the time of the initial confrontation with Macedon, just before the beginning of the Hellenistic era, a closer scrutiny of the sources reveals many potential occasions for a decision by the Thespians to renew their fortifications, though the case everywhere stops short of being conclusive. The decisive Macedonian victory at Chaironeia in 338 BC fell heaviest upon Thebes, and its immediate sequel was the restoration of their independence to those other cities of the Boeotian League which had been under Theban sway. Soon this process went further: some of the more important Boeotian cities joined their western neighbours, the Phokians, in becoming active allies to Macedon, to be rewarded in due course with the rebuilding of their fortifications. When, in the face of further Theban defiance, Alexander decided to assault and sack the city of Thebes in 335 BC, these allies joined eagerly in the destruction.



Figure 4.18. *Air photograph showing the southern part of the modern village of Thespies and its surroundings, with locations (1) – (4) as before (Fig. 4.16), adding the north-western corner of the ancient Acropolis wall (5). Added to this are the Liakos site (6), the find-spot of a conglomerate block on a possible line for the eastern acropolis wall (7), and the theatre (8).*

Along with the Phokians, the name of the much-wronged city of Plataia is mentioned as Alexander's ally in all our historical sources (mostly much later) for these events. In two of these authorities, Diodoros (xvii. 13.5) and Justin (xi. 3.8), the names of Thespiai and Orchomenos are added to the list of allied Boeotian cities. Another of the sources, Arrian (*Anabasis* i, 9.10) specifically states that Plataia and Orchomenos had their walls rebuilt at this time, and in both cases there is substantial surviving evidence from the right period; but nowhere, to our knowledge, is there specific mention of a re-fortification of Thespiai. Theoretically this could be because, in Thespiai's case, the rebuilding had already taken place: but the archaeological evidence points to a later dating. At the most, we can say that Thespiai was involved in events which led to a rebuilding of their fortifications for at least two other cities whose circumstances closely paralleled her own.

Though the eclipse of Thebes was to prove temporary, her domination over the other Boeotian cities was never fully restored: rather, Cassander of Macedon's re-foundation of the city in 317 BC provides a further historical occasion when the lesser cities around Thebes may have found it prudent to restore or strengthen their fortifications. Once again, the recent excavations at Plataia (Aravantinos *et al*. 2003: 292–9; Konecny *et al.* 2013: 57–118) have made a strong case for dating different fortification works there respectively to the 330s BC (the Large Circuit Wall) and to the early Hellenistic period (the *diateichisma*). The arrangement of the extension wall at Thespiai, with its evenly spaced rectangular towers (see p. 169), matches that of each of these circuits at Plataia; but such features have a long history, both earlier and later than this. There may be a further parallel between the cases of Plataia and Thespiai: at Plataia it seems certain that the major extension of the fortified area in the fourth century BC was too ambitious: it soon became clear that the built-up area could not be extended so as to fill it, and indeed the *diateichisma* wall of probably only a generation later, cutting across the extension, looks like a palpable acknowledgment of this fact. Similarly, we have seen grounds for thinking that the spread of

the Hellenistic city of Thespiai, into the newly fortified area across the Kanavaris, never came close to filling the entire area of the extension. In neither city, evidently, can it have been foreseen that in Hellenistic times the urban population, far from continuing its recent growth, would actually fall.

Two other Boeotian cities deserve mention in this context. At Tanagra a substantial episode of fortification, probably accompanied by the laying out of a new and regular street plan within the city, had taken place, but at a somewhat earlier date. A case has been made (Roller 1987) for dating this episode before 377 BC, when the Spartan king Agesilaos led his army past the standing walls of Tanagra. Secondly, there is the case of Orchomenos, where the chronology may more closely match the cases of Thespiai and Plataia. As we have seen, one source specifically mentions the re-fortification of Orchomenos in the years after 335 BC: a recent re-examination of the material evidence there (Fittschen 2003), incorporating the construction not only of fortifications but of a theatre and temple as well, has found their building style to be compatible with such a dating. It seems, furthermore, that the new defences at Orchomenos were never completed – perhaps loosely recalling the contemporary misjudgments detected at Plataia and perhaps at Thespiai.

Only much later, with Rome's First Mithridatic War of 89–85 BC, do we find a clear implication, in the surviving historical narratives, that Thespiai's existing walls were once again in action. In the campaign of 87 BC, Mithridates's general Archelaos, invading Athens with a strong army and now backed by other forces from within mainland Greece, advanced through Boeotia, where Thespiai alone remained loyal to Rome, refusing to join his cause: he laid siege to the city, but soon had to face a Roman detachment sent southwards from Macedonia. After prolonged and indecisive fighting further west, near Chaironeia, Archelaos withdrew (Appian, *Mithridateios* 29). We hear nothing more of his siege, but an inscription records that very soon afterwards the Thespians awarded a statue and a golden wreath to the commander of the Roman force that had halted the advance of Archelaos, Q. Braetius Sura (Roesch 2007: i, 40–1 no. 34). This comes close to proving that Thespiai's walls had held out; but the question remains as to how long before this they had been in existence. Plutarch's gloss on the initial advance of Archelaos, that he came through Boeotia 'like a torrent' (*Life of Sulla* xi.4), makes it unlikely that there had been time to construct these walls from scratch: we recall the signs of repeated re-building, visible in the mud-brick sections of the structure (see p. 170).

There was one small piece of potentially relevant architectural evidence. We left off our account of the extension wall at the point where it had reached its north-western extremity and its point of maximum elevation, before turning eastwards and then, presumably, southwards again to return to the city in the plain below. Our search, during the 2007 season, for traces of this inferred eastern 'leg' of the extension, the return of the wall down the slope, met with little success and yielded nothing to compare with the evidence earlier summarized for the western leg (pp. 168–71). But there is a level terrace (marked '7' on Fig. 4.18) cut into by bulldozer trenches in the 1990s, close to and just below the south-eastern corner of Thespies village but still high above the ancient city site. A few conglomerate blocks, reportedly survivors from a once much larger collection, have been recently placed in the trenches or still lie on the terrace: one of the latter has a hole for a metal clamp and, exceptionally, a tapering, angled cut at one of its ends. This shape of block makes its first and most characteristic appearances in the style of masonry that R.L. Scranton called 'trapezoidal isodomic' (Scranton 1941: 85–9, 170–2), but very similar blocks could also feature in later, Hellenistic styles of fortification such as the 'pseudo-isodomic trapezoidal' (Scranton 1941: 93–7): they are closely matched, for example, in the later fortification works at Plataia (Aravantinos *et al*. 2003: 294, fig. 5 and 298, fig. 8). For the further course of the eastern side of the extension wall, once again local informants told us that the steeply climbing concrete track, which runs up to the village a little to the east of the terrace and appears towards the right-hand edge of Fig. 4.18, was once flanked by conglomerate blocks, presumably unearthed during its construction. Around the chapel of Agios Athanasios at the foot of this same track, four further conglomerate blocks, up to 90 cm long, were recorded during the city survey in 1985, but are no longer visible today. For the course of the eastern wall, finally, some of the evidence from the distribution of cemeteries and from the geophysical survey (below, Part III) will also prove to have a bearing.

In military terms, the aim of enclosing any adjacent high ground within the circuit of a city wall, as was now done at Thespiai, was pursued too widely and over too long a period for it to provide any secure chronological indications: the closely comparable arrangement of the wall-circuit at Eretria in Euboea, for example, had been executed well before this. At Thespiai, as already argued, the construction of the new wall also presupposed the continued existence, or restoration, of an earlier one on to which it could be joined. It is worth mentioning that the line of the western 'leg' of the extension wall, if continued southwards

on the same line, would meet our restored schematic rectangle for the Classical wall at a point close to its supposed extremity, where the scatter of conglomerate blocks terminates at its western end. Similarly the eastern leg, if it really passed through the line of the terrace at '7' or down the adjacent track and then across the river, would meet the putative Classical wall near its best-attested stretch, the field-bank that runs below the Magoula eminence. The latest outcome of this investigation, involving the likely course of the western leg of the wall southwards across the Kanavaris, is summed up in Fig. 4.40.

This is also probably the most appropriate place to deal with one other enigma of ancient Thespiai, even though it has no direct link with the defence of the city. This is the theatre, mentioned by Pausanias, briefly discussed here at the end of Part I (p. 165). For its location, the appropriateness of the largely natural feature marked '8' on Fig. 4.18 is apparent even in a vertical air photograph: it is still more so in the slightly oblique view seen in Fig. 4.28, where the same numbering of features has been retained, for convenience of orientation.

As far as can be determined from the surface, there is now no trace whatsoever of architectural evidence still *in situ* at the site. But, as we shall see in a moment, strong support of a circumstantial kind is given by the discovery of four theatre seat-blocks in 2006/07 in the near vicinity, three of them in the steep gully marked 8A on the same Fig. 4.28. These outweigh the few examples found on the city site across the river (see Part I above, Sites 7.III and 51.III), of which the second may be a survivor of the 150 examples that Stamatakis reportedly collected in 1883 (see p. 160). The same gully also produced an exceptionally dense accumulation of the ordinary conglomerate blocks, conspicuously seen on Fig. 4.13: these had most likely formed part of the acropolis defences above.

Credit for the discovery of the theatre, as of the northern extension wall just discussed, belongs to the Ljubljana University team, in its work of 2006 and subsequent years (Slapšak 2007, 17–20). In 2009, a detailed study of the surface morphology was undertaken by Uroš Kirn of the Ljubljana team, creating a Digital Elevation Model and fitting a three-dimensional theatre model on the current surface. As an Excursus here, we insert a lightly edited version of his report.

* * * * *

The Thespian theatre: by Uroš Kirn

The Thespian theatre is as elusive as most of the other buildings of this ancient city. The only proof of its existence can be found in Pausanias's second-century AD description of Thespiai, where he mentions it together with other public buildings, unfortunately without indicatng its location. Not until 1883 does the next indirect mention of a theatre appear, when Stamatakis recognizes 150 pieces of theatre seating which

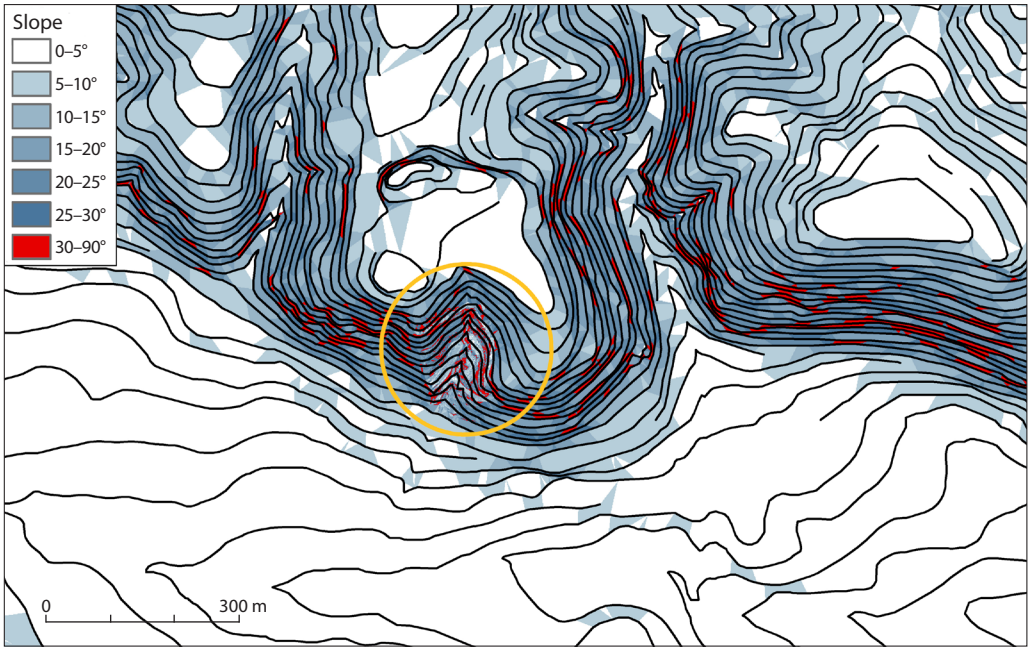


Figure 4.19. *Slope map of the area of the ancient city of Thespiai. The presumed theatre area is circled in yellow.*



Figure 4.20. *Locations and illustrations of theatre seating fragments. The presumed theatre area lies in the centre of the upper left-hand photograph. Aerial photograph by Božidar Slapšak: photos of seating fragments by Dejan Veranič.*

were brought to him by locals (Stamatakis 1883). Here too we are left wondering where those pieces were located or what happened to them afterwards.

In 2006 a team from the University of Ljubljana under the leadership of Božidar Slapšak began research at Thespiai. One of its tasks was an attempt to find a potential theatre location in the light of Pausanias's mention. At first, only the area south of the river Kanavaris was taken into account, since the latter was then accepted as the northern boundary of the ancient city. But the terrain south of the river nowhere offers a raised slope which could hold an elevated spectators section (*koilon*) of the theatre building. After the discovery of Classical/Hellenistic city walls north of the river and the confirmation that the hill of modern Thespies village also lay partly inside the city perimeter, immediate attention fell on the concave recess which cuts into the southern slopes of the hill (Fig. 4.18). The general morphology of the recess and the fact that it lay inside the city led Slapšak to identify it as a possible theatre area (Slapšak 2007).

During the survey by the Ljubljana team, four pieces of theatre seating were documented in the vicinity of the recess (at '8A' on Fig. 4.28). Three of these were found between 60 and 80 m west of the recess, together with more than 50 other fragmentary

architectural blocks. A fourth piece was spotted in the courtyard of one of the Thespian houses just above the recess. These pieces today constitute the only physical remains of a theatre building in this area of the ancient city.

After the discovery of a possible theatre location, a detailed study was needed in order to get a better view of the current state of the surface morphology. Our goal was to evaluate the potential of the supposed theatre area, by applying a three-dimensional theatre model on to a newly made Digital Elevation Model (DEM).

Methodology

A field survey of the studied area was carried out in August 2009. In 19 working days, an area of 15.756 m² was measured, using a TS Leica TC 600 (lent by 2B Geoinformatika d.o.o., Ljubljana). In total, 12,341 measurements were made, that is approximately one measurement every 1.3 m. This density of measurements was needed, in order to provide as detailed a picture as possible of the terrain.

Data from the field measurements were used, in GIS (Geographical Information Systems) form, to produce a DEM and the maps subsequently derived from it. Of particular importance were maps of slope (Fig. 4.21) and contour-lines, first for comparing the angle of the *koilon*, secondly for comparing the curvature of the terrain and the *koilon*.

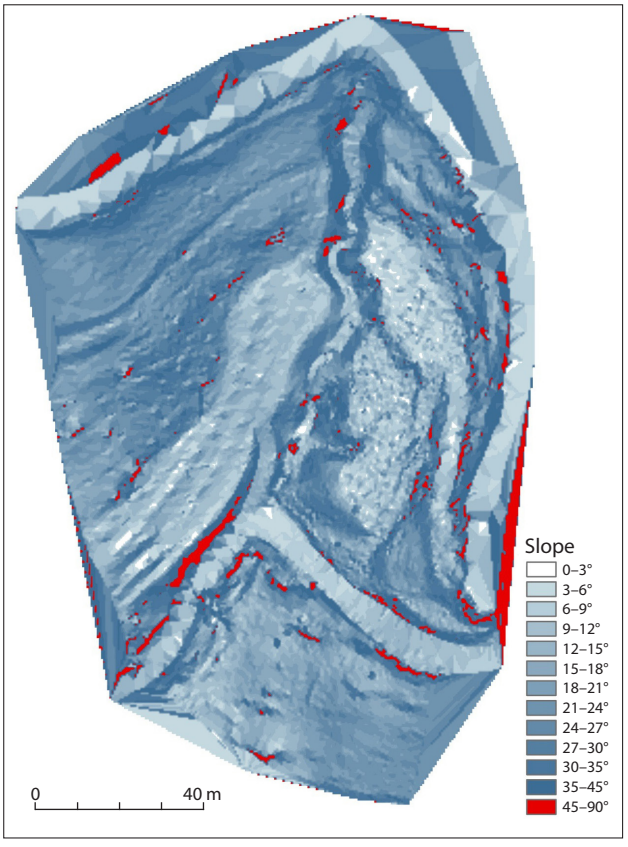


Figure 4.21. *Measured area on a slope map.*

The next step was the creation of a three-dimensional Greek theatre model. Here, our complete lack of knowledge about the size, shape and appearance of the Thespian theatre posed a significant problem. I therefore decided, in creating a model, to follow Vitruvius's description of a standardized Greek theatre. A scale model to represent a medium-sized theatre building was created by computer-aided design (Fig. 4.22). After determining the general outline of the model, I was faced with the problem of proportions of the specific theatre elements. Preliminary applications of a sketched model indicated that the study area was much greater in size, by comparison with the model. Therefore the diameter for the *orchestra* was set at 23 m, above the average for a range of other Greek theatres.

In the model, the seating area or *koilon* has three levels. Both the lowest level, with 15 rows, and the middle one, with 13 rows, subtend an angle of 210°, thus exceeding a semicircle. They both slope towards the *orchestra* at an inclination of 25°. In order to raise the capacity to approximately 7000 (assuming a width of seat measuring 40 cm per person), I added a third level with an additional 8 rows. This figure for capacity was reached on the basis of an accepted estimate for the population of ancient Thespiai at its height. The inclination of the third level was set at 26°, and the addition of the third level increased the maximum diameter of the model to 83 m. As the seating area was the prime focus of analysis, the stage building was indicated purely schematically.

The study area

At its extremities, the recess has a diameter of 200 m. Its lowest point is 324 m above sea level, while its highest point is 52 m higher at 376 m. Its volume is approximately 300,000 m³. Only that part which offered the most plausible frame for a theatre building was measured, leaving unsurveyed the upper part, whose extreme diameter exceeded that of even the largest theatres known.

A very precise DEM enabled us to see the surface morphology of the study area in great detail. The measured area was divided into seven surface features – channel, west slope, west terrace, east slope, east terrace, south slope and roads (Fig. 4.23). The most significant feature is represented by a water channel that cuts into the middle of the recess and is visible from the top to the bottom. Its depth, varies from 0.5

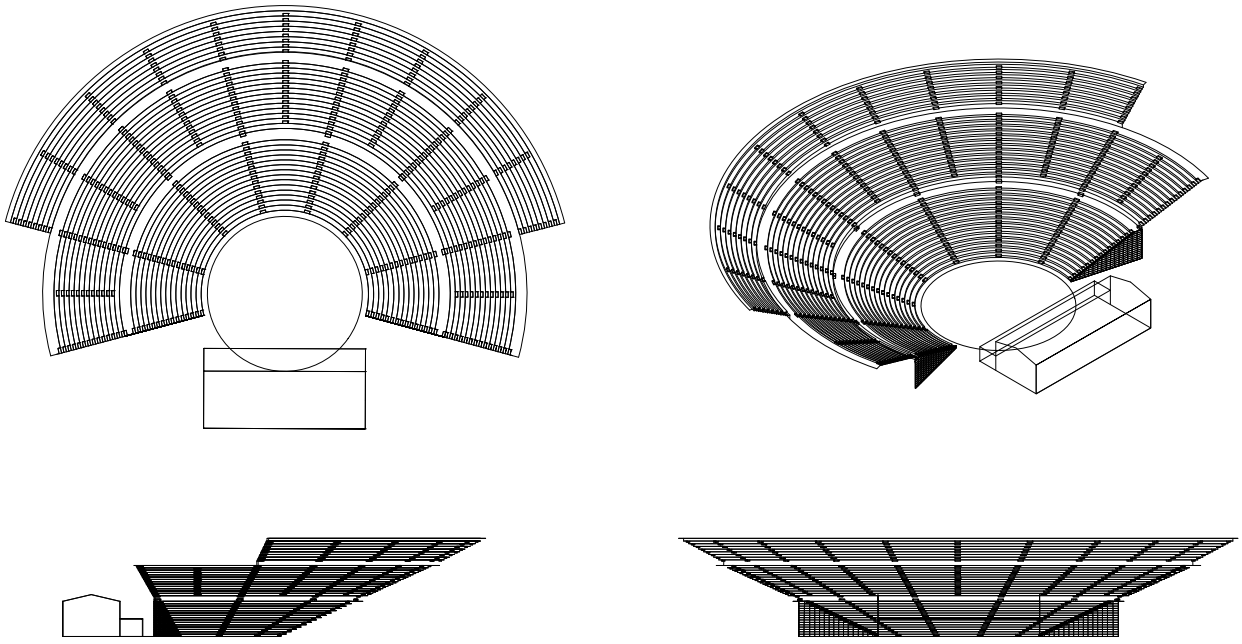


Figure 4.22. *The three-dimensional model of a Greek theatre from various perspectives (top, side, isometric, front).*

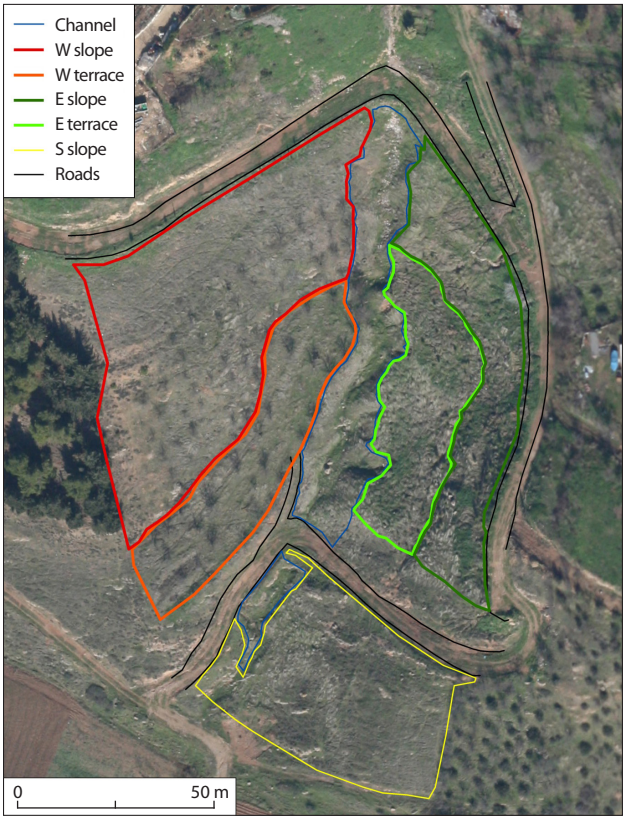


Figure 4.23. *The measured area divided into seven surface features (aerial photograph by Božidar Slapšak).*

to 5.5 m and its width from 7 to 22 m. The cause and date of its creation are unknown. Although there are no traces of water flow in the channel today, its depth and size point to an origin in a violent torrential flow.

The channel divides the slope and terrace of the recess into a western and an eastern part. The surface morphology on the two sides is quite different. The western slope, which is today part meadow and part orchard, is less steep than the eastern slope: its average inclination is 24.5°. The only significant features that stand out on the western slope are two lengthwise parallel lines, of lower and higher inclination, which today separate the meadow and orchard. At several points, bedrock conglomerate layers are seen on the surface of the slope.

The surface of the eastern slope is much more uneven. Already during the field measurements, it was obvious that the inclination of this slope is in some places extreme. This is mainly due to the creation and successive reparations of the road running above it. After the creation of the DEM, it became obvious that there are also traces of another, abandoned road crossing the eastern slope, which once connected the eastern terrace with the still existing road. Examination of old aerial photographs revealed this additional road crossing the eastern slope, which is today completely lost. Furthermore, the old aerial photographs showed three smaller channels crossing the eastern slope and terrace, eventually to connect with the bigger central

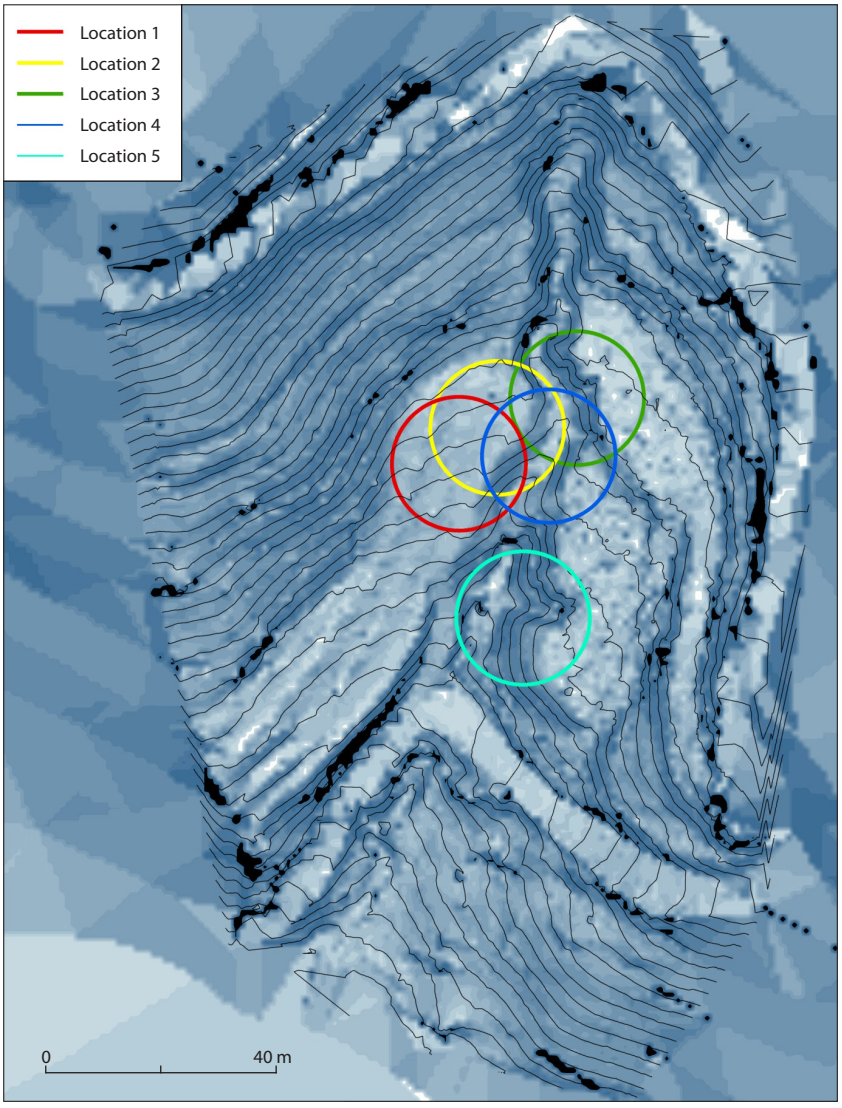


Figure 4.24. *Locations of the* orchestra, *in five different placings of the applied theatre model.*

channel. Together, these facts show that the eastern slope underwent major recent transformations, much reducing its suitability for a direct comparison with a three-dimensional theatre model.

Both terraces however, though not completely flat, were seen as promising platforms for an orchestra and stage building. The western terrace is tilted towards the channel, while the eastern is slightly tilted to the south. The surface of the western terrace was recently transformed by the creation and maintenance of an orchard. The eastern terrace is today abandoned, but could have been used as an agricultural field in the past. Bedrock conglomerate is visible in the northern part of the eastern terrace, while there are no surface traces of it on the western terrace. The presence of this bedrock, in all features except the western terrace, means that any possible theatre building must have been sited above the current surface.

Applications of the three-dimensional model

The three-dimensional model was experimentally applied at five different locations on the DEM (Fig. 4.24). With locations #1 to #3, I was looking for a correlation between the model and today's terrain, by setting the model directly against the contemporary slopes. Locations #4 and #5, by contrast, were set further above and away from the slopes, and represent entirely hypothetical locations for the theatre area. Locations #1 and #2 were set beside the western slope, which offered more potential than the much-transformed eastern slope. At both locations, the *orchestras* of the model were set on the western terrace, except that their eastern parts extended over the central channel. Both were at an elevation of 340 m a.s.l., which meant that only their most northerly tips lay on the current surface.

The relation between the three-dimensional theatre model and the DEM was depicted at four different

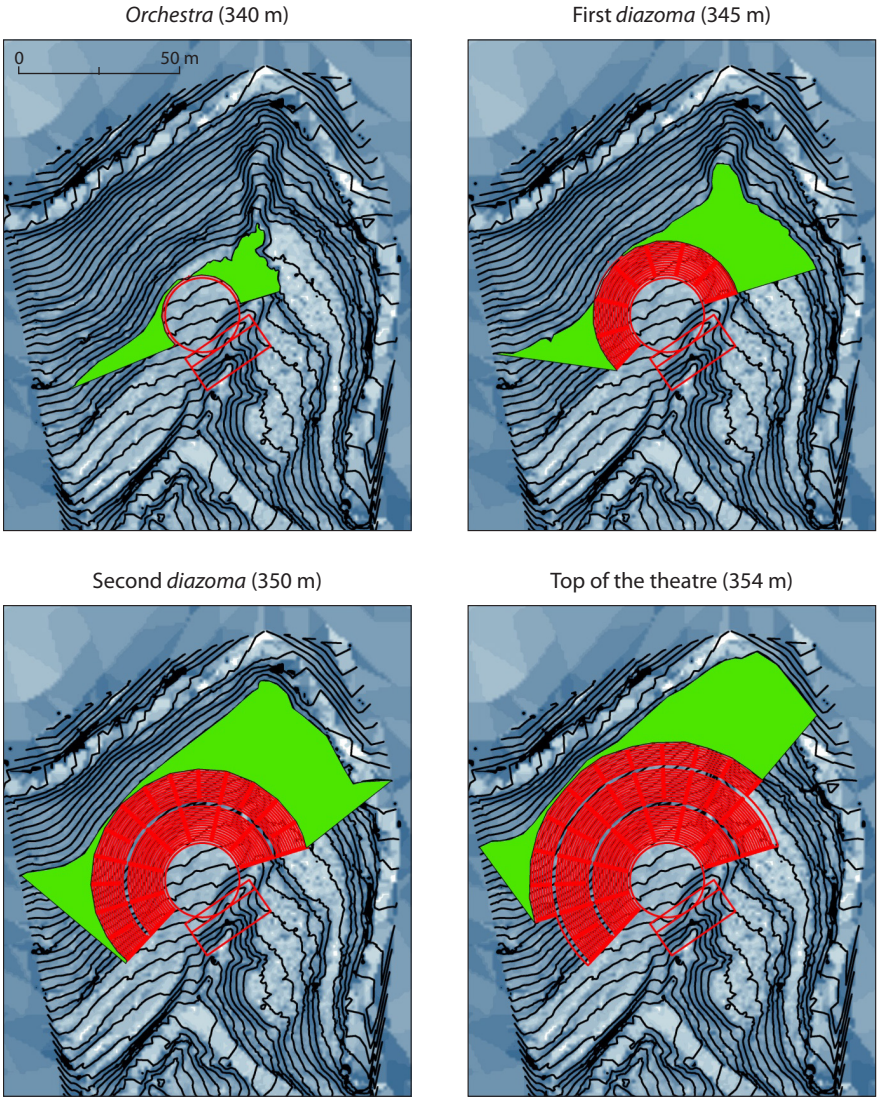


Figure 4.25. *The theatre model, set at location #1, seen on four different levels, associated with an appropriate contour. The green area represents any missing space between the applied model and the current surface.*

levels: Fig. 4.25 exemplifies this for location #1. Two elements were crucial in a possible location for a theatre building. First was the inclination, which in case of the western slope is generally favourable – on average 24.5°, as compared with 25° in the model. Second was the curvature of the slope which should follow, completely or at least in part, the shape of the *koilon*. In Fig. 4.25, the problem of an unsuitable curvature is seen very well. Each of the four suggested levels is compared with a suitable contour on the same elevation, with the green area representing any empty space between the model and surface. The contours are, by comparison with the model, almost straight, and thus do not support the idea of a theatre building resting against today's western slope.

An additional problem, for both locations #1 and #2, is presented by the orientation of the theatre structure. The orientation of the model shown in Fig. 4.25 is the only possible one, but nevertheless remains highly unlikely, since the *koilon* is turned, not towards the open space in front, but instead towards the opposite eastern slope. Any rotation of the model clockwise, that is more towards the south and the open prospect, leads to a blocking of the western *parodos* (entrance passage), the stage building being turned round until it directly abuts on the western slope.

In terms of orientation, the theatre is much more favourably placed at location #3 (see again Fig. 4.24), where it is turned towards the south. Here the model is set against the eastern slope but, because of the extreme inclination and the conglomerate outcrops, the model has to be moved further away from the slope, in the case of the *orchestra* to a distance of about 10 m. That means that only about half of the *orchestra* lies above the eastern terrace, while the rest is above the channel. When the alterations of the slope, by the

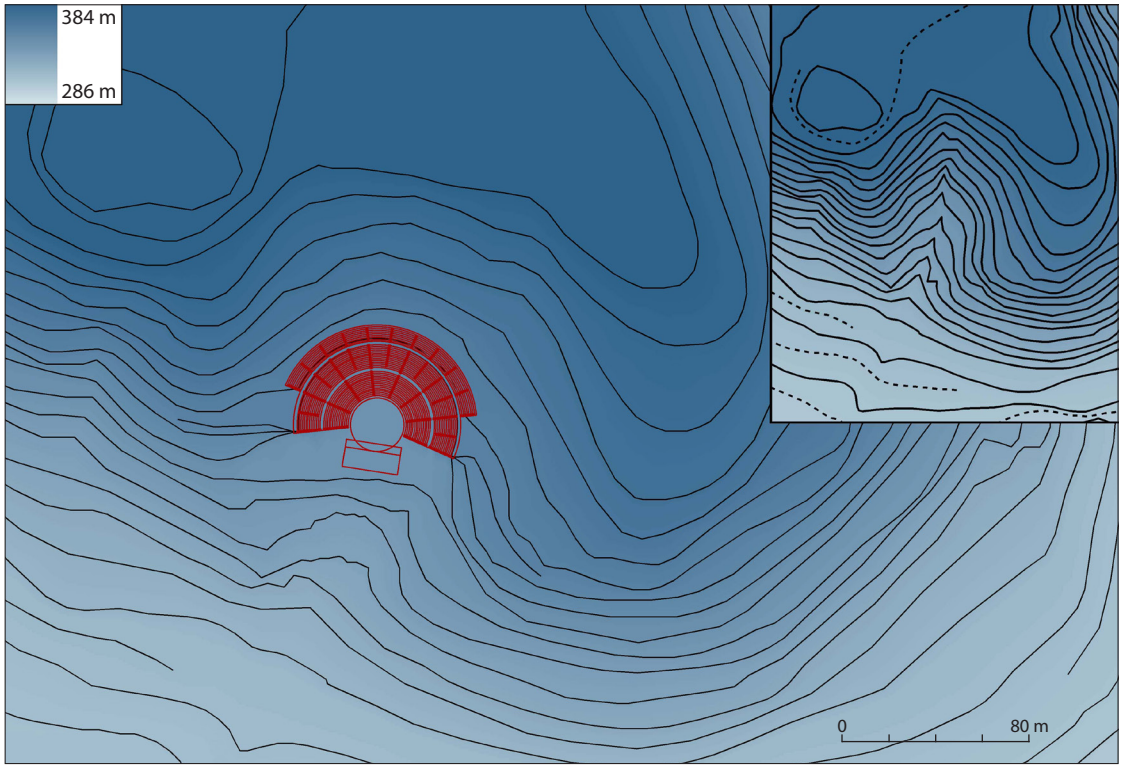


Figure 4.26. *The reconstructed terrain with the theatre at location #4. Inset, upper right: the recess in its current form.*

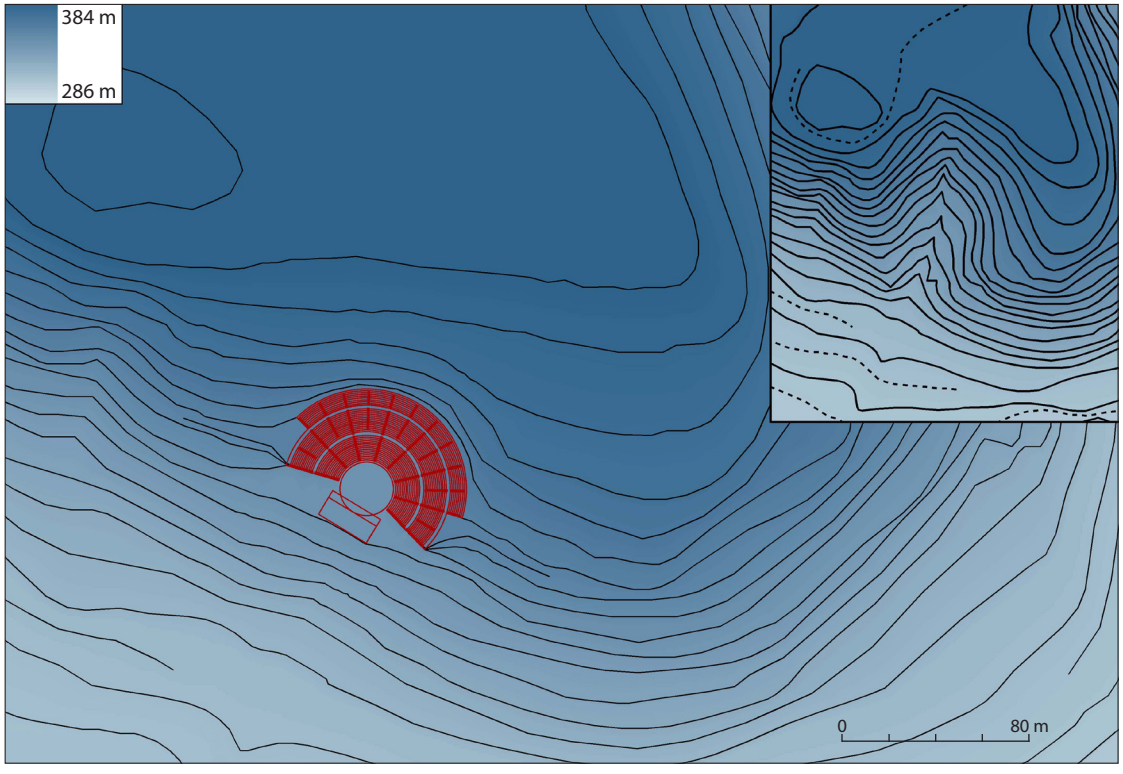


Figure 4.27. *The reconstructed terrain with the theatre at location #5. Inset, upper right: the recess in its current form.*

channels and roads mentioned earlier, are taken into account, together with the fact that part of the *koilon* remains on or beside the unsatisfactory western slope, this location too seems unsuitable.

Experiment with the first three locations has been enough to show that the putative theatre was not set against the slopes of the recess as they are today. It follows that any theatre must have been located more to the south of the recess.

There remain the two other possible reconstructions of the study area incorporating the three-dimensional model, locations #4 (Fig. 4.26) and #5 (Fig. 4.27). In the case of location #4, the aim was to set the model as close as possible to the current slope surface, so as to reduce to a minimum the loss of 'missing' material between the reconstructed theatre and the current slopes. The *orchestra* at this location actually covers parts of all three previous *orchestras* (see again Fig. 4.24), but the *koilon* is nevertheless at no point resting on the slopes. The *orchestra* is set at 340 m a.s.l.: the conglomerate outcrops on the eastern terrace and in the channel make it very unlikely that it would be located at any lower elevation. Because of its deep-set placing inside the recess, a theatre at this location can only be orientated so as to face southwards.

After the application of the model, the current terrain was modified, by alteration of the contours, to fit perfectly around the building. Because of its deep-set location in the recess, these modifications were minimal. In this case the most drastic change was elimination of the water-channel from above and below the theatre. A comparison between the actual situation and the modified one gave us a rough figure for the amount of missing material, namely 75.000 m³.

If location #4 then represents the lowest possible setting for a theatre inside the recess, with location #5 it is quite different. Here, the theatre was moved to the most southerly possible point within the recess. To judge from the general outline of the hillside, the theatre would this time probably be orientated towards the south-west. Once again, the *orchestra* was set at 340 m a.s.l., but in this case the modification of the surrounding terrain was drastic, so that the only remaining trace of the recess was actually the *koilon* itself. Comparison with today's terrain resulted in an enormous volume of loss in missing material, some 277.000 m³.

Any search for lost material from the recess lay beyond the scope of my research. The material most likely to have emanated from here can be seen in the fan-shaped spread immediately below the recess. The estimated volume of the fan, at about 40.000 m³, is only about half of the missing material associated with location #4, and less than 15 per cent of that involved in location #5.

Conclusion

The negative results of the three-dimensional model applications at locations #1 – #3 proved that a theatre cannot be restored directly on the current surface of the recess. Nevertheless, the reconstructions of the terrain in the cases of locations #4 and #5 showed that this area once had the potential to represent a suitable setting for a Greek theatre. Besides, the lack of other suitable locations inside the city walls still



Figure 4.28. *Oblique air photograph looking north, taken in 2007 and showing much the same terrain as Fig. 4.18, with the same numbering of features and with the addition of the gully in the conifer plantation (8A). Note that the new factory at the Liakos site (6) is now under construction.*

makes this recess the most favourable theatre site in ancient Thespiai.

How are we to explain the disappearance of the theatre at the site under study? As described earlier in this chapter, later structures such as the Late Antique *Kastro* walls were mostly built with reused material from the ancient city. An abandoned theatre, and especially its *koilon*, presented an excellent site for the 'quarrying' of already-prepared architectural blocks. With the clear signs of recycling of architectural material in the later stages of the ancient city's history, it was always unlikely that such an accessible source would be left intact. The theatre must have been dismantled and its parts reused in the construction of new buildings. By the time of the first travellers in the seventeenth century AD, the theatre had most likely completely vanished: otherwise such a significant monument would surely then have been mentioned. How and where the 150 pieces of theatre seating, mentioned by Stamatakis (see p. 160) fit into the narrative remains a mystery.

After the dismantling of the *koilon*, the funnel-shaped open recess situated on a steep slope would offer a natural course for water flowing from the hilltop. The large volume of missing material calculated for locations #4 and #5 could not be immediately identified, which might be thought to pose a problem for this interpretation. Nevertheless, given the known existence of a theatre building, the recess under study remains the most favourable location for a reconstruction.

The inflexibility of the theatre model could be seen as a further weakness of this study. For my analysis, I have used throughout only the one, unchanged Vitruvian model. Despite this I doubt whether, in the case of locations #1 – #3, the results would differ much, in terms of the suitability of the existing slopes as a setting for any theatre: changes in the size and inclination of the *koilon* would not affect the feasibility of placing the supposed theatre against the current slopes. All this is of course based on an assumption that a standard stone *koilon*, of roughly semicircular shape, existed at Thespiai: a theatre with an irregular seating plan would weaken my findings considerably. Otherwise, the most significant variability arising from the use of different models would occur in the reconstructions at locations #4 and #5. Here, changes in size, or even in inclination alone, would result in different values for the volume of missing material.

I would maintain that, for all the acknowledged objections, the best solution of the problem of the theatre is to locate it in the recess under study, and more specifically to place it in the area of locations #4 and #5.

* * * * *

Part II (*cont.*)

So neatly is the theatre enclosed by the extension wall of the city that it is tempting to see the two building projects as conceived in awareness of each other. Their construction dates may not in fact have been very far apart, but the dominant factor was probably the simple convergence of topographical needs, as between a theatre that required a steep hill-slope and a fortification that needed to run along the crest of the slope. For the dating of the theatre, analogy with other surviving theatres in Boeotia provides a kind of *a priori* argument (Germani 2015). Almost all of these show their prime development at points within the Hellenistic age: at Orchomenos construction dates to near the beginning of the period, in the decades before 300 BC; at Chaironeia, the conversion of the originally rectilinear, rock-cut theatre to something approaching the standard semicircular form probably occurred in the third century BC; the now vestigial theatre in Thespiai's own territory, at the Sanctuary of the Muses, is dated to about 200 BC; at the sanctuary of the Kabeirion, the original building phase of another small theatre belonged in the first half of the second century BC; while the extant traces of the theatre at Plataia are probably of Roman Imperial date.

Only the theatre at Tanagra may be earlier. Its situation resembles that of Thespiai in more ways than one: here too the theatre is today marked only by an obvious semicircular scoop in the ground, the last of its stone-work having been robbed out during the nineteenth century; and here once again the theatre appears neatly integrated in the layout of the city's defences. But in this instance as we have noted (p. 173), the walls themselves have been dated appreciably earlier, in the first decades of the fourth century BC, by Duane Roller (1974; 1987). This offers only indirect evidence for dating the theatre at Tanagra (let alone that at Thespiai) equally early. It is more cogent to argue that any theatre, designed as it was to concentrate a large part of the community in a very vulnerable location, would be best sited within any pre-existing defences that there were (as was most often the case in Greek cities): the more so, if Thespiai followed the example of other cities of Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times, in using its theatre for political and judicial assemblies (Moretti 2001: 117–20; Pont 2010: 111–126). We conclude that a Hellenistic date is much the more likely for the building of the theatre at Thespiai, bringing it into at least the same general era as the extension wall that so neatly encloses it. It is to be noted, too, that this theatre (unlike the fortification, it seems) survived until at least the later second century AD, and did so in such a condition that Pausanias, rather unusually for

him, picked it out as one of the sights worth seeing in Thespiai. We have already discussed (pp. 164–65) the detailed interpretation of his wording at this point, and concluded that he is *not* necessarily locating the theatre in the same place as the Sanctuary of Aphrodite and the *agora*: the three localities are simply designated as 'elsewhere', relative to the Sanctuary of Eros that he has just described. This is especially significant for the location of the *agora*, since there is evidence of several kinds for locating the main civic centre of Thespiai, in Roman as in Archaic times, in the district later encircled by the *Kastro* wall, across the river and far away from the theatre.

There are several Thespian inscriptions referring to the existence of gymnasia within the city, notably *IThesp* 373, dating probably to the last third of the first century BC, and *IThesp* 136, more likely of the first century AD. One could speculate as to whether the 'upper gymnasium' mentioned at the beginning of no. 136 might be located within this same extension north of the Kanavaris – where indeed the inscription itself was found; and whether it is to be identified with the one presented by a certain Polykratidas for the Italian residents of the city, as recorded in no. 373. On these, see Müller 2002: 98–100 and Chapter 7, p. 237.

Part III: other discoveries made by the University of Ljubljana team (with an Addendum by members of the 9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities)

This section contains a series of findings from the investigations of the University of Ljubljana team across the city site. The first of these is a contribution to a notably problematic issue, of central concern in the entire interpretation of the city survey: the recognition of cemeteries from surface remains, extensively discussed in Chapter 3 *passim*, especially pp. 56–63. Of the other topics, most relate to specific locations on the ancient site: the Church of Agios Athanasios in the northern or 'trans-Kanavaris' sector of the city survey; the cistern at Site (22) of Part II above; and another location in the heart of the *Kastro*. The church called *Makri Ekklesia*, at Site (51) of Part II, was also investigated, but see pp. 160–1 for a provisional summary of later findings in 2009. A final section deals with the application of various kinds of geophysical testing to the ancient site.

The identification of cemetery sites

We begin with a series of empirical findings, seen, inferred or reported, of graves or cemeteries, to provide support for the more indirect lines of reasoning by which we tackled this problem in Chapter 3.

The northern sector of the city had already proved the richest source of new information on the funerary aspect, even before the findings of the rescue excavation by the Ephorate in 2012–2014, to be discussed in a moment. In Fig. 4.29 below, covering the same area as Fig. 4.18, the definite finds of graves are marked by bold numerals in white or black; those that have been reported by local informants, or that are inferred from the special character of the finds, are shown by numerals in parentheses.

The new locations begin with no. 9, a discovery brought to light by the digging of the same sand extraction pit that proved so helpful in the case of the extension wall at locations 2a–2c (see p. 169). Here, two graves were spotted in the section of the pit in 2006, and excavated by the 9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities the following summer: we thank the Ephorate for permission to give this summary report. Both the burials were inhumations in tile graves, oriented east–west: Fig. 4.30 shows the more westerly one, which lay slightly higher in the section, in the course of excavation. The tiles used for the construction were large, unslipped and slightly rounded: both grave goods and skeletons had been scattered by the sand extraction, so that direct dating evidence was absent, but the graves seem likely to be, at the earliest, of Roman date. They lay well to the west of the extension wall: further east, by the wall, the lowest level, underlying the traces of the wall, its ditch and the fallen superstructure, produced a wealth of finds, ranging from high-quality Archaic fine wares to Late Classical and Early Hellenistic black glaze, a female 'Tanagra' figurine and an animal figurine: these, we infer, were grave goods of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries BC, from cemeteries destroyed at the time of building the wall.

The much more substantial feature at location #10, known by the name of *Spilia*, has by contrast long been known to the local community, and has even been used for recent Christian rituals. It is a chamber tomb for multiple burial (Fig. 4.31), hewn from the conglomerate bedrock on sloping terrain and once vaulted, at a little distance from the outermost limits of the city's extent. Rectangular in plan, it faces south, with a rock-cut niche in each of its other three sides and a sarcophagus, also rock-cut, sunk into the floor of each niche. The date is presumed to be Early Roman, but the whole complex and its contents have long since been looted, possibly already in antiquity.

The next two locations, (11) and (12) (see again Fig. 4.29), both depend on the evidence from local informants. First, at (11), a number of graves is reported to have been found on the slope beside the tarmac road climbing up to Thespies village, between



Figure 4.29. *Air photograph of the same area as shown in Fig. 4.18, with the addition of new grave or cemetery locations. Locations 9 and 10 indicate definite finds of burials; those in parentheses mark reported or inferred finds. The line of the western extension wall is repeated from Fig. 4.18, numbered 1–5.*



Figure 4.30. *Tile grave, discovered in the sand extraction pit at location # 9 on Fig. 4.29, in the course of its subsequent excavation.*



Figure 4.31. *View from outside, looking north (above) and from the inside, looking south (below) of the Spilia rock-cut chamber tomb at location 10.*

the locations of the *Spilia* tomb (10) and the modern cemetery at the Church of Agios Charalambos, just west of the village. This seems a credible location, and the specific report of painted terracotta female figurines from one of the graves suggests a possible Late Classical or Hellenistic date. Secondly, at (12), there is a less circumstantial report of further graves, similar to those excavated at location 9, having been found along the course of the track that cuts across the triangle between the two tarmac roads, to Thespies and to Thebes. The significance of this report is that the location, unlike 9, 10 and (11), lay well within the line of the extension wall; if it can be relied on, then the graves may well belong, again together with those at 9, to a time when the wall had become disused.

Next, we return to the Liakos factory site, (6) on Fig. 4.29, already noted (p. 171) for the rich finds visible in the bulldozer section left after the excavation of its site. It reappears here because, besides the notable quantity of Hellenistic pottery found, a few of the Archaic finds were of a character that suggested funerary material: Corinthian *aryballoi*, a terracotta animal figurine with a receptacle on its back and miniature vessels. Here, as with the material in the lowest level by the wall (see p. 171), we believe we have traces of the earlier use of this sector as a burial-ground, in this case well before the building of the wall, but with a narrower range of date. Likewise, the site at location (7) on Fig. 4.29 was noted (pp. 173) for the discovery of a distinctive building block which might offer a useful hint as to the date, as well as the line, of the extension wall; but the bulldozer trenches cut into the terrace here also contained fragments of figurines and miniature vessels, apparently of Classical/Hellenistic date.

The remaining locations in this sector, (13), (14) and (15), likewise represent reported finds of graves, all of them on the slope below location (7) which runs down into the valley between the two villages of Thespies and Leondari. Two roads run up this valley, a steep concrete one noted earlier (p. 173) as a find-spot of conglomerate blocks, and a major tarmac road that follows the valley floor. Location (13) lies on the slope between these two roads, and is substantiated as a burial area by the presence of large tiles, like those in the known graves at location 9, eroding from the hill-slope. Location (14) is some distance further up the valley, but again on its western slope. Terracing operations here are said to have produced 'vessels with long necks', a description which would fit the *unguentaria* so characteristic of Hellenistic burials. Location (15) is perhaps the best attested of the three sites: an *unguentarium* and a miniature black-painted jug, said to have been found here by children playing on the steep slope directly below location (7), are now in the Thespies museum and lend credence to the report of graves here: again, their likely dating must include the Hellenistic.

But much the best-substantiated contribution to the northern funerary sector comes from the discoveries made in the Ephorate's rescue trench of 2012–14, as can be seen from the details recorded in the Addendum below, pp. 196–8). Of the 32 burials recorded there, the great majority (those marked in red on Fig. 4.42) definitely lay outside the area protected by the extension wall, in that they lay to the west of its western wall, itself revealed in the same trench. This is as one would expect: at times, they converge fairly closely on the location of the 'Thespiai West Cemetery' already identified in our urban survey (see Chapter 3, p. 99). Less clear is the case of the easterly group of burials (shown by the green arrows on Fig. 4.42), which may or may not lie inside the area protected by the eastern extension wall. The most important case here is that of the apparently Hellenistic cist tomb at location # 358–359, with a coin of the first quarter of the third century BC: this should either antedate the building of the extension wall, or conceivably lie just outside its eastern limit, once built. The second alternative more likely applies to the group

of Roman or Late Roman child-burials further east, at location # 356-A41-357, by whose time the fortification may well have been already obsolete (compare our own location #12, p. 185).

It is unfortunate that we cannot be confident in drawing the line of this eastern return wall (see p. 173) but, together with the positive evidence of Late Hellenistic and Roman settlement revealed at location # 363, the finds in the Ephorate's trench broadly confirm that a long-established if intermittent funerary use of the sector north of the river was for a period interrupted by the development of this area as one of domestic settlement and public building, notably including a theatre, under the protection of a new extension to the city wall. This phase seems to have encompassed most of the last two centuries BC and the first two of the Christian era.

Since burial within the walls, whether in Greek or in Roman culture, was an exceptional occurrence, at least for adults, it can be assumed that, once the wall was erected and while it stood, these cemeteries would operate only in extramural localities. The ideal would be to use either one of the two main elements, the cemetery material or the extension wall, as a precise terminus for the dating of the other. But there are abiding uncertainties, not only about the chronology of both these elements but, equally crucially, about the precise course followed by the eastern leg of the extension wall, which must inevitably have passed very close to some of the burial locations – our own (7), (13) and (15), and # 356 – A41 – 357 in the Ephorate's trench – that we have described: but on which side of them?

The problems arise from the complexity of the Hellenistic evidence, as between, first, the reported finds of funerary type at the locations listed; secondly, the more copious finds at location (6), most of which there is every reason to see as domestic in nature; and thirdly, the fact that the same Hellenistic age is the period to which we date the construction both of the extension wall and of the theatre within it. The resolution of these problems, we regretfully admit, will require a degree of precision (in a ceramic phase that is notorious for its chronological difficulties) which it may be at present beyond the scope of surface archaeology to achieve. For the moment, we cannot progress beyond saying that this period could easily have accommodated the succession of developments of which we believe that there is proof – the discontinuation of burial in the sector, the construction (and later repairs) of the wall, the extension of the area of domestic occupation north of the river, the building of the theatre and possibly of other public structures, and even the disuse of the wall – but with the theatre at least certainly living on into Roman Imperial times.

Beyond the area of the immediate impact of the extension wall, there are other localities on this side of the river which also deserve mention. One of these is the environs of the Church of Agios Athanasios (see p. 188), where there is a combination of different categories of evidence pointing to past funerary use. Another, a short distance away, is at the north-eastern extremity of the city survey grid, an area picked out in Chapter 3 as having perhaps served continuously as (at least in part) a burial zone, for period after period from the Geometric to the Late Roman.

The eastern sector of the city presents a different picture in funerary terms. While there is substantial ceramic evidence for funerary use of the easternmost block of transects in the city survey itself, close to the *Makri Ekklesia* church and the Varvaka fountain (see Chapter 3 *passim*), one has to proceed some distance outwards from the city limits before evidence of this kind resumes. The church and fountain, with their immediate vicinity, appear with exceptional frequency as early find-spots for funerary inscriptions, quite apart from the unusual ceramic evidence from several periods. Beyond and into the open country, to the south-east as well as the east, there are occasional architectural fragments of suggested or definite funerary use: but it is only when one arrives at the site of the Polyandrion, fully 600 m to the east of the fountain and nearly as far from the edge of the city, that burial evidence of real substance can again be found: the early excavations here revealed not only the city's public war grave, but a regular cemetery flanking the sides of an ancient road. This evidence is, however, extremely valuable in demonstrating the potential outward extent of the city's Classical burial zone, in circumstances which unquestionably link the burials with the urban centre, rather than with any kind of outlying settlement.

The southern sector is different again, including as it does both some outlying, potentially funerary finds, interspersed and comparable with rural cemetery sites like LSE 4, THS 11 and THS 15 described in *Testing the Hinterland*, and two new locations much closer to the known habitation area of the city. Both of these finds have already been described, under Sites (G) and (H) in Part I of this chapter (pp. 161–2): the crowning member of a grave *stele*, first seen in 2007 a little to the north of (G) (Fig. 4.10), together with a ceramic *unguentarium* in the same stone-pile; and another *stele*, found some years ago a short way to the west, at or near Site (H), and taken to the Thespies Museum. This collection serves to reinforce the case, made on the basis of the finds from the city survey in Chapter 3, that the hillslope above and to the south of the *Kastro* housed another of the long-serving, multi-period burial zones

of the city. Yet the fact that the find-spot at Site (H) also produced outstanding non-funerary finds – the Cybele inscription and the marble table (pp. 162) – gives a hint that we are very close to the border between the city's built-up area and its cemeteries. Indeed, neither this nor the preceding locality is more than 150 m from the upper end of the *Kastro* circuit, and both lie well within the city survey grid.

The western sector of the city has also produced new finds, few but important. The most significant location here is the westernmost major cluster of conglomerate blocks recorded on Fig. 4.12. Here we are at a point beyond the westernmost site recorded in Part I, and in the vicinity of Transect 34 of 1986 in the city survey: the track that leaves the north-west corner of the *Kastro*, after running roughly westwards for some 300 m, here curves round to the south-west and passes over a low rise. The collection of conglomerate blocks here, which includes one or two pieces of exceptional size (up to 2 m in length), had led us to the tentative conclusion that the Classical city wall, perhaps at or near the westernmost extremity of its course, could have passed through this locality. But at a point only a few metres eastwards from the bend in the track, a row of three smaller conglomerate blocks came to light; these proved to belong to a built grave, evidently recently and unofficially excavated and then partly refilled with dumped rubbish. In 2008 this was partially cleaned out (Fig. 4.32) and found to have been partly cut into the bedrock, then lined with the blocks. None of the original material from the grave survived, but its shape conformed to a Classical or Hellenistic pattern. Not only does its presence here cast some doubt on our conjectured line for the Classical city wall, but this use of the sizable conglomerate blocks – the longest of them measures nearly 90 cm – is a reminder that such blocks had many possible uses (see also the results of geophysical testing in this vicinity, pp. 192–5). This discovery was reinforced by the finding, also in 2008, of an inscribed tombstone bearing the name of the deceased, which had evidently come to light in the course of repair work on the track mentioned above, just to the west. Once again, as in the northern and southern sectors, these unequivocal finds lie well inside the grid of the city survey.

Between 400 and 500 m to the north-west of here, and thus much further out from the core of the city (though still just within the limits of the grid, in Transects 87 and 91 of 1986), is a locality whose use as a peripheral city burial zone was recognized some years ago. This is the 'Thespiai West Cemetery', briefly discussed in *Testing the Hinterland* (p. 84) because of its near-rural location and firmly dated to Classical/Hellenistic times. Here too there are new finds: in a bank at the side of a small cultivated field, just south of the chicken farm which served as a marker for the West Cemetery, there was found another inscribed tombstone with the deceased's name; while a little over 100 m to the north of the same building, where the Kanavaris river runs, a palmette finial from a grave-*stele* was found on the north bank of the river and taken to Thespies Museum. The case for a funerary use of this locality, perhaps as part of a much larger burial zone running from north to south across the city grid (see especially Chapter 3, Fig. 3.39), is thus further strengthened.

To sum up: the discovery of all this new evidence on the ground has proved to justify the solution to the question of density criteria within the city survey, finally reached in Chapter 3, pp. 51–63. There, it was concluded that a band of city survey transects, sometimes thin, sometimes fairly deep, but running all the



Figure 4.32. *Grave structure of presumed Classical/Hellenistic date in the western sector of the city survey grid, after partial cleaning in 2008.*

way round the outer rim of the grid, should be seen as excluded from the fully built-up occupation area of the city, at all periods. Instead, this band must cover zones for burial and other secondary uses. The density level set at 22,126 sherds per hectare (visibility-corrected), enclosing a decidedly smaller area than the whole grid, was chosen as a rough indicator of the dividing line between the areas of occupation and of secondary activities (Fig. 3.38).

In the same way, the new finds of funerary character, made by our Ljubljana colleagues and ourselves in the seasons of 2006–2009, often extend into the city survey grid, but very seldom penetrate as far as the line demarcated by the '22,126' criterion. Where they do, an explanation is most likely to be found in the factor of local change of use. The most substantial case is that of the sector north of the Kanavaris, where intermittent use of the area, as a proven burial zone and perhaps for other purposes too, lasted for much of Classical antiquity, but was interrupted by a limited period of fairly intensive occupation, which generated some locally high densities of deposition and masked the boundaries. Even here, however, a degree of internal spatial distinction can be observed. A more isolated exception is the Roman tomb which we encountered in 2009, close to Site (6) and just within the *Kastro* wall (see pp. 147–8): this remains an enigma, since although the later city of Hellenistic and Roman times was certainly less extensive than in the Classical Greek period, it seems to have incorporated most of the area of the *Kastro* in the habitation zone throughout antiquity. The simplest solution is perhaps to 'think away' the *Kastro* wall, as most probably belonging to a period later than the tomb: the latter's location will then be at no great distance from the proven burial zone, a little higher up the hill-slope, which evidently remained in full use throughout Roman Imperial times.

It should not for one moment be suggested that a simple quantitative measure, on its own, is sufficiently sensitive to be able to differentiate the surface deposits left by domestic occupation from those of burial and other secondary activities, at Thespiai or anywhere else. The cases where the use of a particular locality changed over the centuries of antiquity would be enough to undermine any such rigid distinction. The function of such a criterion – represented in this case by the threshold of 22,126 sherds per hectare – is rather to provide a convenient general pointer to where the search for such a sector boundary should begin.

The Church of Agios Athanasios

The church is an important monument in several respects. It is the only structure still standing from the post-antique settlements on the actual site of the ancient city. It also embodies two of the issues that have just been discussed, lying within an 'island' of unusually high-density deposition for the sector north of the Kanavaris, yet also showing evidence of association, over a very long period, with a burial locality.

The location (see Fig. 4.33) lies at the heart of the more northerly of the two village settlements, from the Middle Byzantine period and later, noted in the course of the city survey (see Chapter 3, p. 123), and just to the north of the modern tarmac road to Thebes. In 1973, investigation and excavation by P. Lazaridis (Lazaridis 1977) threw some light on the history of the site. The present structure has had a series of predecessors, extending back in time to a basilica, probably with an accompanying cemetery, of likely Early Christian date, fragments of whose architecture can be seen in and beyond the small grove of pine trees that surrounds the church today.

Earlier still, at least from the Geometric/Archaic phase, this locality had been a focus of activity, small in scale but relatively intense, and we have argued that this activity was, or soon became, primarily funerary in character. Once again, a little further support for this view is given by the recent finds of the Ljubljana team in their inspection of the site: a tombstone, inscribed in very poor Greek lettering, had been brought to the surface by cultivation in a field just to the south, between the main road and the Kanavaris, and a female terracotta figurine was also found nearby. As in the original city survey, so 20 years later the surface pottery in the vicinity, spanning the range from Archaic to Late Roman, was of higher than usual quality, indicating either a funerary or a dedicatory origin.

The church itself is a rich storehouse of reused ancient spolia, including carved and even inscribed stones, unfluted columns, and two further additions to the repertoire of Ionic architecture from the city, a capital built into an external wall, and a small base incorporating the lower extremity of the column-drum (diameter *c*. 35 cm), used as a door-step down to the level of the now sunken floor. The structure itself (Fig. 4.34) is today in a parlous condition, but the local church council and the Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities are both well aware of this.

The cistern at the northern end of the Kastro circuit

The cistern located at Site (22) of Part I was briefly discussed there (p. 154). It is in a location that has clearly served as a major water-source for centuries, if not millennia – which makes it strange that the three springs listed by the painstaking traveller Ulrichs around 1840 all seem to be located elsewhere: the 'great spring', placed by him under the Church of St. John some 250 m to the east, and the 'spring of the willows' and

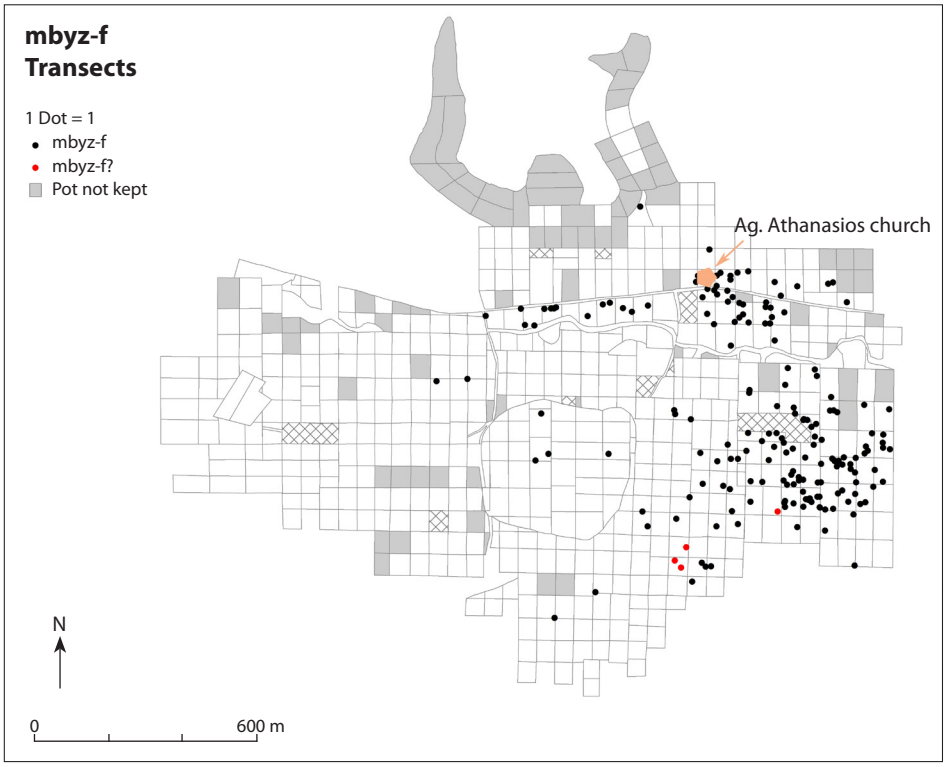


Figure 4.33. *The location of the Agios Athanasios church, superimposed on the distribution map of the city survey for the Middle Byzantine and Frankish periods.*



Figure 4.34. *The church as it was in 2008, seen from the south-east.*



Figure 4.35. *Interior view of the vaulted eastern chamber of the cistern at Site (22), with original entrance doorway visible in the background.*

'Varvaka', which can still be located by the survival of their toponyms and are further away (see Chapter 2, p. 13). But before, and perhaps for a time after, the construction of the fairly recent concrete cistern across the track to the north, this relatively well-preserved double structure clearly played a major role in the storing of water, apparently becoming obsolete only with the introduction of artesian wells and pumping stations, some 50 years ago.

The technique of its construction is based on the barrel-vault, with combined use of stone and tile, features compatible with an early date, perhaps in Late Roman or Early Byzantine times. There are two parallel chambers, to west and east: Fig. 4.35 shows the interior of the better-preserved eastern chamber. Access to both chambers has in recent times been given by holes left in the vaulting, but originally each chamber had a doorway built of three plain slabs of conglomerate stone. Also noteworthy is the fact that, in the floor of the western chamber, a water channel is visible which appears to have been lined with large conglomerate blocks, a feature that could perhaps be more ancient than the vaulted cistern above. An important remaining question is that of the relation of the cistern, or its predecessor, to the *Kastro* fortification itself. The destruction of the wall-circuit in this sector has unfortunately been exceptionally thorough, so that its line can no longer be followed as securely as elsewhere: but it is nevertheless clear that the line must have taken it very close to, perhaps over, the site of the cistern. It remains a possibility that there was access to the cistern from inside the fortification, but the position of the doorways at its outer, northern end would then be surprising.

The municipal pumping-station in the Kastro

One final investigation deserves mention, both for its absolutely central location and for a remarkable find that it produced. A fenced-off enclosure, near the heart of the *Kastro*, contains the municipal water pumping station of Thespies (Fig. 4.36). A few years ago, in the southern part of this enclosure, a bulldozer trench was dug, for reasons no longer recorded, measuring about 4 m by 6 m. In the resultant spoil heap, several large conglomerate blocks were observed, while from the eastern section the end of a wall protruded, not very far below the modern surface, built of a mixture of similar large conglomerate blocks and smaller stones and bound with mortar. On its south side, a foundation trench had been entirely filled with broken tile,



Figure 4.36. *Vertical air view of the* Kastro, *showing the location of the enclosure for the municipal water pumping station for Thespies village.*

but to its north could be seen an apparent excavation trench, possibly the work of the ubiquitous Paul Jamot in 1890–91. The wall, evidently the most recent structure on this spot and built over an earlier construction in small stones, was judged to be of Late Roman date: amphorae and *dolia* of this period were found in abundance. The profile of a small, somewhat earlier building, perhaps Early Roman, could be seen at the southern end of the west section of the trench.

A limited collecting operation from the floor of the trench in 2008 produced a certain amount of pottery: remarkably, this included a sherd of Protogeometric (only the second definite example to come to light from the entire ancient site). The finds were almost all in disturbed and unstratified contexts, but an ash layer containing animal bones could be detected, while the unstratified ceramic finds also included a whole series of Archaic, Classical and later pieces of unusual quality, reinforcing the suggestion of earlier religious activity here. The same disturbed layers produced the handle of a bronze balance and a remarkable pot-profile with a stamped emblem, of Roman date but inscribed in Greek letters naming a holder of the office of *agoranomos* (supervisor of market transactions: for this last find, see Schachter and Marchand 2012, 295–9, # 6).



Figure 4.37. *A selection of the finds from the bulldozer trench at the municipal pumping-station: left-hand column, top to bottom, Protogeometric, Archaic and Classical fragments; middle column, Late Classical, Hellenistic and Early Roman; right, the inscribed* agoranomos *pot (an official measure?), and handle of bronze balance.*

In sum, this cleaning operation has generated a range of new knowledge out of all proportion to its scale. In particular, it has reinforced the grounds for thinking that the area later enclosed by the *Kastro* wall had, for centuries past, enjoyed a special status within the city of Thespiai. The first solid basis for this belief had come with P. Jamot's discovery of the foundations of a monumental temple, over 35 m long, almost certainly of Archaic date and in the Doric order (see Chapter 2, p. 16; Chapter 5, p. 203), within the *Kastro*: such a huge structure, at this early stage in the city's growth, is more than likely to have been located at the civic centre, the *agora*. Now we can add the inscribed vessel, from at least half a millennium later, which records the appointment of an official who operated in the *agora* (and which, incidentally, may itself have served as an official measure of volume). Another inscription, on stone, provided the first occurrence, at Thespiai or elsewhere, of a new name for a group of officials, the *hagnistai* or 'purifiers' (Schachter and Marchand 2012, 284–7, #3): this too came to light within the *Kastro* in 2008 and, although it had almost certainly been recycled for a later building, may give a further hint of the status of this neighbourhood.

Finally, from an area where the surface collection from the city survey had been swamped by material of Roman and Late Roman date, there is a new and strongly contrasting ceramic collection from a trench section, down to a depth of some 2 m, which proves to span at least a millennium in time and whose quality is exceptional. This gives welcome support to the reasoning deployed in Chapter 3, pp. 46–8, 90–1, where it was argued that the material of earlier phases in the city's history, especially the Classical Greek, had been systematically suppressed in the surface collections by the massive overlay of Roman pottery, within the *Kastro* and immediately to its east. We have now a clear illustration of this process in action. In addition, we have in this collection an exceptional proportion of high-quality, decorated pieces from many of the earlier periods, contrasting with a heavy presence of Late Roman domestic and storage wares. This gives yet another suggestion that the later *Kastro* had long been a location for activities of a special kind: with the surface collections, we have sometimes had to equivocate between religious and funerary functions but, given the topographical circumstances here, we have little hesitation in identifying these activities as religious, and the ceramic material as dedicatory.

Geophysical studies

Testing by magnetometry and resistivity and GPR mapping were deployed by the Ljubljana team during the seasons of 2006–2008, with very varied success. Initial investigations in 2006 were directed at the *Kastro*, in the search for the major temple once excavated by Jamot, and described above; to the vicinity the surviving fragment of the ruined church at Site (36) of Part I, to the east; and to an area lying south of the *Kastro*. But nowhere were clearly relevant anomalies detected: within the *Kastro*, especially, features derived from the modern agricultural activity dominated the plot.

But a further aim was naturally the detection of any possible traces of fortification walls. It was observed, in the discussion of the new extension wall north of the Kanavaris in Part II, that if its course were continued southwards across the river in a straight line, it would meet the schematic rectangle, drawn by us for the pre-existing wall, somewhere near the western extremity of the latter, where the spread of conglomerate blocks begins to run out (Fig. 4.12). In 2007 and 2008, magnetometry testing was carried out in the general area of that conjectured junction: this was named 'Area 1' of 2007 and lies some 250 m due west of the nearest point of the *Kastro* circuit (it roughly corresponds with the rectangle formed by Transects 19–30 of 1986 in the city grid, and lies just north of the track that runs westwards from the *Kastro*).

Here the results seem more promising, with three definite anomalies that do not correspond to the more recent agricultural divisions. First, there is the feature marked 'A' on Fig. 4.38, which shows as a negative anomaly (therefore presumably a ditch rather than a wall), running in a NNE to SSW direction and so roughly continuing the line of the north extension wall from the point where we last saw it, with the conglomerate block at the river crossing, marked '55' on Fig. 4.13; it is at a slight angle to the modern agricultural features also visible on the plot. On its western side, there are at least three sub-semicircular projections, each about 6 m deep and 15 m across, marked '1', '2' and '2a': like the tower-like projections on the sector of wall north of the river (see p. 169), they are presumably defensive features. Further north, the line of feature 'A' is much weaker and seems to swing slightly westwards, still needing a small off-set to reach the precise point of the river crossing at location '55', with a correspondingly feeble indication of another projection beside the figure '3', at the same distance from '2' as '2' is from '1'.

Feature 'A' is crossed, slightly diagonally (at 15° from the perpendicular) by the broad linear feature marked 'B', even more prominent in the smaller extension, surveyed in 2008, that lies to the west: there it is seen as a strip, some 15 m wide, with positive and negative anomalies flanking it on either side. (It should be clearly distinguished from the equally straight but



Figure 4.38. *Magnetometry results in Area 1, west of the* Kastro*, by Matjaz Mori; the image superimposed on low-level aerial photograph – the modern track at the bottom is the continuation of that leaving the north-western corner of the* Kastro *in a westward direction.*

neater line, running a little to its south, which is set exactly at right angles to the agricultural field divisions of more recent date and must be closely associated with them). Where features 'A' and 'B' intersect, there are signs of disturbance and reorganization: the semicircular projection at '2a', which breaks the rhythm of its three counterparts, seems to be slighted by feature 'B'.

Then there is feature 'C', a strong positive linear feature that cuts across the line of feature 'A' at the southern end of the area tested, and does so at an angle, some 30° from the perpendicular, that is different from that made by feature 'B'. It too has a projection on its north side, rectangular and larger than the curvilinear ones on feature 'A' , at about 15 by 15 m.

These are striking results, though any interpretation of them must contain a strong element of conjecture. Perhaps the most convincing association is between feature 'A' and the extension wall on the other side of the river, whose reality has now been repeatedly established and whose alignment is roughly matched here. Since 'A' is a negative feature, the best inference would be that it marks the line of a ditch running in front of the extension wall: the presence of just such a ditch in front of the wall was indeed detected across the river to the north (see p. 169). The semicircular projections would then mark the deviations made by the ditch to pass round projecting bastions on the outer face of the wall, without necessarily matching the shape of the bastions.

The junction of feature 'A' with the positive feature 'C' now takes on a new significance. It has already been pointed out (p. 174) that the extension wall might be expected to make a junction with a pre-existing Classical wall south of the river in this very vicinity. If feature 'C' were interpreted as representing part of the line of the earlier wall, then two aspects would need explaining. First, it is running in a surprising direction, to the north-west, as opposed to the generally westward trend predicted by the schematic rectangle proposed in Chapter 3, Fig. 3.39; but then the rectilinear shape should not be interpreted too literally, especially given that the best-attested stretch of wall, in the field-bank to the north of the *Magoula*, has a decidedly *south*-westward, rather than westward trend (see pp. 165, 167). The fortification would be expected to follow a locally curvilinear course, in response to the contours of the terrain. Secondly, the rectangular projection on its north-eastern side would then lie *inside* the area protected by the wall at feature 'A'. But this would conform exactly to our expectations from the relative chronology of the two walls: if the extension wall is indeed a later addition, then it is no wonder that feature 'C' was laid out in disregard of it. A third, mildly surprising aspect of feature 'C' is that it should survive as such a strong positive feature – perhaps a reflection of its more robust construction, by comparison with the extension wall. But there remain problematic issues, both as to its further course westwards or southwards, and as to its relation to the grave (see p. 187) located a little to the south of here, and itself thought to be of Classical or Hellenistic date.

Feature 'B' is the least problematic element: it can only be a road. It is a pity that its intersection with feature 'A' gives such a confused picture, making it impossible to determine the relative dating of the two, but perhaps the 'uncanonical' semicircular feature '2a' reflects some response to the presence of the road. The direction taken by the road is entirely appropriate for a destination in the area of the Valley of the Muses and the second-order settlement of Askra, known to have lain in the territory of Thespiai. In its nearer course, it would pass very close to the 'Thespiai West Cemetery' (see p. 187), in the familiar pattern of road-side

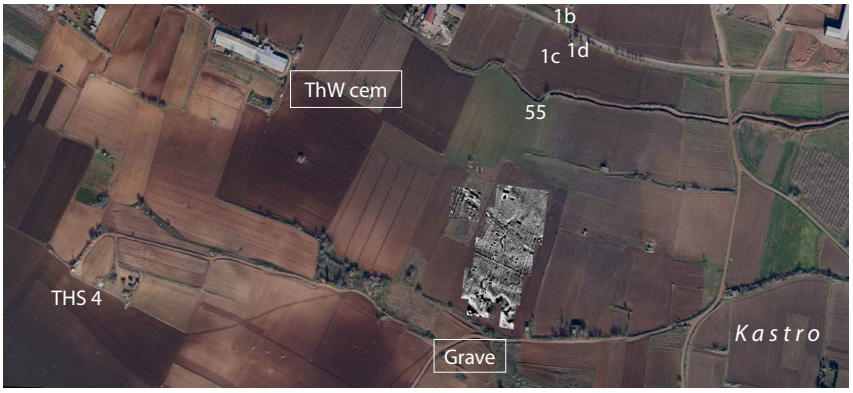


Figure 4.39. *Air photograph, linking Area 1 of the geophysical investigation with its wider spatial context, including the* Kastro, *the Thespiai West Cemetery ('ThW cem') to the north-west, the grave discovered in 2008 (p. 187) to the south, and the nearest rural site, 'THS 4', to the west. The features numbered '1b' to '1d' and '55' are repeated from Fig. 4.13.*



Figure 4.40. *The results of the series of investigations of the western extension wall, shown on a single map.*

location for Greek cemeteries; while in the opposite direction, it is heading straight for the heart of the *Kastro*, where we have located the civic centre of the ancient city. Fig. 4.39 sets all these findings in a wider spatial context, also marking the features '1b – 1d' and '55' from Fig. 4.13. The whole series of investigations of this western wall is summed up in Fig. 4.40.

This was easily the most fruitful of the geophysical projects to date, but other testing took place as follows. In 'Area 2', inside (to the east of) the extension wall where it was first discovered north of the river, the only clear features to emerge were either geological, or those associated with recent agriculture. Much the same was true of Area 3, located a little to the south-west of Area 1, just beyond the grave shown at the bottom of Fig. 4.39, which produced no signs of a possible southward continuation of either of the two fortification walls detected in Area 1. Area 4, immediately to the west and south-west of the *Kastro*, did produce features running in the direction south-east/north-west, in a way faintly reminiscent of the course of feature 'C' in area 1, but they are more likely to be, at least in part, geological in origin; and Area 6, directed at the locality of the 'Thespiai West Cemetery', was similarly unproductive.

There remains Area 5, a long, north–south-running strip located to the south-east of the *Kastro*, in the neighbourhood of Site (G) of Part I and incorporating the find-spot of the carved finial shown in Fig. 4.10. Here the natural goal was to pick up any traces of a southern stretch of the Classical wall, that might indicate whether it followed a course distinct from that of the southern wall of the *Kastro*, and further up the hill-slope. This investigation, by magnetometry and resistivity, can be linked up with the magnetometry testing of 2006 to the south of the *Kastro* (Area S), across the prominent field-track running south from the *Kastro*, and incorporating the collection of conglomerate blocks under Site (H) of Part I. Along with Area 4 to the west, described earlier, these two plots are combined in Fig. 4.41. Nearby, and between the two, is a short but prominent length of field-bank, the find-spot of two further funerary monuments (see p. 163). There are strong east–west-running features, including a notable positive one towards the northern end of Area 5; a more patchy, negative anomaly that runs across, some 30 m further to the north, carries on the line of the field-bank just mentioned over the modern track. In Area S of 2006, on the other hand, it is the network of diagonally oriented features, crossing each other at right angles, which is more prominent. If the positive feature in Area 5 is the best candidate for a potential city wall, it is harder to detect in Area S and its status remains questionable; to strengthen it, extension of the geophysical survey to the north and east would be needed. Meanwhile, the clear, but mainly later, evidence for funerary activity hereabouts will show that there was in any event to be a retraction in the extent of the built-up and fortified urban area on this side.

* * * * *



Figure 4.41. *Results of geophysical testing superimposed as images on an air photograph, showing (left) Area 4 and (right) Area 5 of the 2007/08 geophysical study together with (centre) the area of a magnetometry survey of 2006 (Area S).*

Archaeologists are fond of saying that all study of the past belongs in the present. What will have come over most clearly to the reader, from every part of this survey, is the fluidity in the present condition of the site of ancient Thespiai: no description or catalogue, composed at a single point in time, can remain valid for more than a month or two at the very most. The site has a dynamic rather than a static character, in which the dimension of the present intervenes at every turn. This is true, to a greater or lesser extent, of many archaeological sites: the distinctive factor at Thespiai is the location of virtually an entire ancient urban centre on what has become prime and intensively cultivated farming land. This of course prevents the site from enjoying the status of an official, carefully conserved archaeological site, or even the benign neglect that has preserved many an outlying monument on marginal terrain. Yet it would surely be unrealistic to call for the expropriation and fencing off of such an extensive site.

It is also a common practice to deplore the increasing destruction being inflicted by the bulldozer on rural Greece today. But even a cursory reading of Parts II and III of this chapter will have brought out the compensating factors that occasionally result from the mechanized operations, often not of a strictly agricultural kind, that are becoming progressively commoner in the countryside. It is, for instance, to the recent opening of a sand-extraction pit, for construction purposes, that we owe our more detailed knowledge of the line and composition of the extension wall (see p. 169); while it was the earlier cutting of a farm track, around the steep slope above, that revealed how the wall changed both its direction and its construction materials as it reached the higher ground (pp. 170–71). Rich finds of quite different nature and location were only brought to light through the digging of a rectangular pit, for a purpose no longer recalled, in the very heart of the *Kastro* enclosure (pp. 190–2). Finally, the discoveries made by the Ephorate in the northern sectors of Thespiai (see Addendum below) came about through a road-widening operation. We can hardly disown the additional understanding of the site which these chance events have brought. It would have a hollow ring if we were to deplore, without reservation, such interventions in the landscape.

ADDENDUM

The construction work of 2012–2014 on the 'Kanavari Road' (vicinity of the Thespies/ Domvraina junction)

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In the years 2012 to 2014, road-widening works took place on the 'Kanavari Road', the secondary road that crosses Boeotia, linking Thisvi with the outskirts of Thebes. Antiquities came to light along almost the entire course of the affected road, but especially along the boundaries of the designated archaeological zone of ancient Thespiai (indicated by the red outline on Fig. 4.42), where the road runs closely parallel to the Kanavari river, the ancient Thespios, indicated by a blue line. Investigations were confined to the sections of the road that were being widened, bringing to light

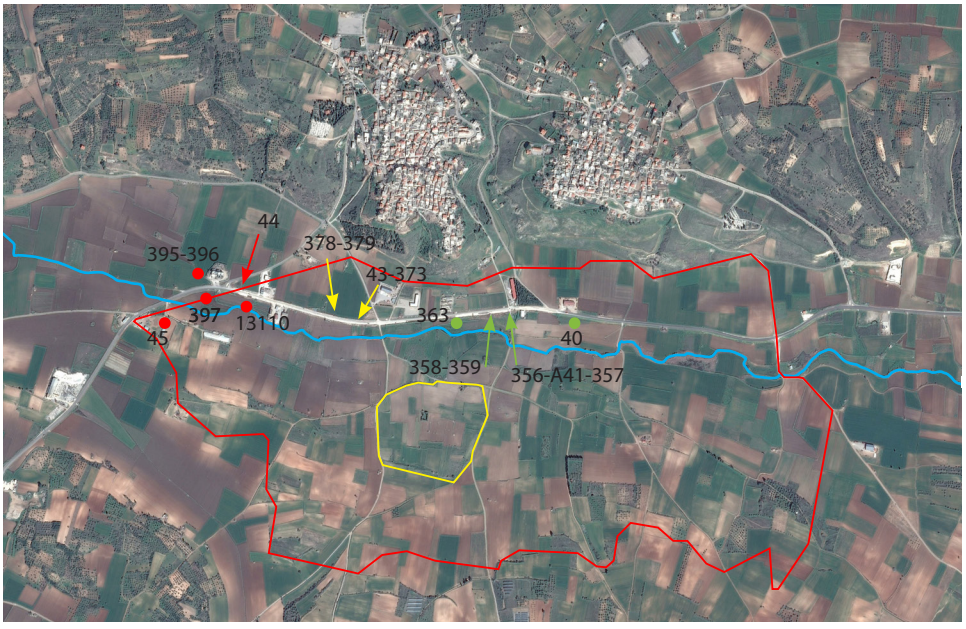


Figure 4.42. *Indication of the excavated sites: the red arrow points to the location of the north-western cemetery; the two yellow ones, to the section of the fortification wall and the foundation of a funerary monument; the green ones, to the settlement traces and a sector of the north-eastern cemetery.*







Figure 4.43. *Buttons and studs.*

mainly elements of the cemeteries of ancient Thespiai. To the north-west of the ancient city (the yellow outline indicates the site of the Classical *agora* and the Late Roman wall-circuit), cemeteries were located dating from Archaic to Roman times. In all, 32 tombs were located – funerary pyres, tile-graves and cist-tombs. Most of these had unfortunately been robbed, or else disturbed by the plough.

Of interest, despite being robbed, are two cist tombs at the western boundary of the designated archaeological zone (#45 on Fig. 4.42). They are formed of rectangular slabs of local Thespian limestone, set upright. These two tombs contained multiple burials of adults, both men and women. The fill of the tombs, unfortunately disturbed by plundering, produced 12 coins: one of these was issued by the Boeotian League, minted between 387 and 374 BC; one was minted in the period 306–281 BC; and one was of probable Roman date. The severe surface corrosion of the others did not permit of identification. Also found were iron nails, a fragment of a strigil, one bulb-shaped perfume-flask and another glass one, as well as fragments of ceramic vessels (cooking pots and an *oinochoë*). But of special interest in these burials is the discovery of bronze studs (Fig. 4.43, above), carrying impressed decoration or even lettering, which most likely served to attach the hide or metallic covering of the wooden shields of the soldiers of the Hellenistic age. Besides the studs, bronze buttons were also found (Fig. 4.43, below), with similar impressed decoration, which also probably formed part of soldiers' equipment (Tzavaropoulos 2010–2013.) These two tombs, then, were used in the fourth century BC, and re-used in Roman times.

Some 280 m further east was located a group of unrobbed tombs, on both sides of the modern 'Kanavari Road'. The group was made up of two tile-graves (to the south of the road embankment, #397 on Fig. 4.42), as well as seven further tile-graves, one pit-grave and two funerary pyres (to the north of the road, ## 395–396). Each of the tile-graves contained a single interment, except for one in which a double interment was observed, that of an infant placed on a piece of tile at the level of the skull of a disarticulated adult skeleton. The orientation of the tombs was uniform, running east/west with a slight inclination towards north-east/south-west. The associated grave goods date the tombs to the Hellenistic age. The unplundered pit-grave was contemporary with the tile-graves, dating from the end of the fourth to the beginning of the third century BC.

At the same point in the cemetery was located a primary cremation pyre, whose associated finds (a plank-shaped figurine, a bird-figurine and black-glazed vessels) to the end of the sixth century BC. A second pyre was located a little further east (#44), very richly endowed with 11 black-glazed *kantharoi* and nine *kylikes*, also dated to the end of the sixth to the beginning of the fifth century BC.

Another group of seven tombs was found a little further east again, to the south of the modern road (#13110). Two poorly equipped tile-graves and four cist-tombs, two plundered and the other two richly endowed, belong chronologically in Hellenistic times. An exception was a pit-grave whose only find, a bronze strigil with its handle entwined round a bronze bracelet, dates it to the fifth century BC.

To the south-west of the church of Agios Athanasios, and south of the modern road (## 356–A41–357) was discovered part of a cemetery, bounded by a semicircular funerary enclosure, built in local Thespian limestone and preserved in two rows. Within the enclosure and towards the south were found ten graves without goods, all of children and infants. In detail, they comprised four tile-graves and six vessel-burials in amphorae and beehives, whose external combing with parallel grooves allows us to date them to Roman or Late Roman times. Just to the west of this enclosure were found seven further child-burials, in tile-graves or vessels (three of them beehives), leading to the conclusion that this was a locality for child- and infant-burial.

Here a cist-tomb of large dimensions deserves special mention (# 358–359), which was unfortunately found robbed and without its covering slabs, with an overall length of 4.18 m and a width of 2.03 m. The interior of the tomb nevertheless produced a bronze coin of Lokris, in reasonably good condition and datable to 300–272 BC (*obv.*: helmeted head of Athena with Corinthian helmet, in profile to the right; *rev.*: cluster of grapes).

To the north-west of the city of ancient Thespiai (# 378–379) and north of the modern road was located a section of the city wall, built of orthogonal blocks of local limestone and roughly cut conglomerate blocks, with two faces and an earth-filled internal space. The wall is preserved to one, occasionally two courses with a predominantly east–west orientation. A further section of wall, oriented north–south, runs at right angles to the east–west sector. Its preserved length is 17 m and its width 3.5 m, with a maximum preserved height of 1.35 m. This find produced (unstratified) sherds of Late Hellenistic to Roman date, together with broken iron nails and two bronze coins of the Boeotian League of between 244 and 197 BC, overstruck on one of Antigonos Gonatas, and one bronze coin of the League of 315–288 BC.

To the east of the wall (#Ω43–373) was located a compact stone construction, in the form of a foundation with large dimensions, 5.77 m long and 5.49 m wide, composed of a poured filling of small loose stones and river pebbles or 'floaters' embedded in an abundant and exceptionally firm hydraulic mortar (*opus caementicum*). The construction stood at least 2.35 m high. It was not investigated further because the ground here was constantly flooded, with water welling up (which should indicate that in antiquity the springs and bed of the Kanavari river were to be found in this locality).

Apart from the cemeteries, settlement remains dating from Late Hellenistic to Roman times were located (# 363). There were ten wall-foundations in all, built of limestone blocks and loose stones. Three rooms could be distinguished, one of which was of especially careful construction, probably designed for a building of public character. These rooms, however, did not allow of the preparation of clear plans, nor were they connected to each other. Unfortunately further examination was not possible.

Chapter 5

A brief history of independent Thespiai

For much of historical antiquity, the political history of Thespiai can be defined in terms of its relationship with the usually much larger and more powerful city of Thebes, less than 20 km to the east. At times that relationship was adversarial and indeed converse: the periods of Theban decline or eclipse tended to coincide with those when Thespiai flourished – especially for a time in the mid-fifth century BC, and again more strongly in the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods.

It is possible that the tensions of this relationship were already in operation at the moment when the region of Boeotia first appears in the proto-historical age of Mycenaean palace civilization. By the thirteenth century BC at the latest, Thebes had emerged as one of the most important palatial centres in all of central and southern Greece. Because its site was to remain that of a major settlement through Classical and post-Classical times, the architecture of its Mycenaean heyday will never be recoverable to excavation to the same degree as with its more familiar peer settlements at Mycenae, Tiryns or Pylos. Yet the evidence of its fragmentary buildings, fortifications, tombs and documents is enough to substantiate its prominence at that period. With this in mind, we may turn to the case of contemporary Thespiai.

From the evidence of earlier visitors to the site, surface finds of Mycenaean pottery have long been rather fugitive at Thespiai. Karo in 1935 could only report that W.A. Heurtley had previously seen Mycenaean as well as earlier prehistoric sherds (Karo 1935: 609); Hope Simpson and Lazenby could find none in 1961 (Hope Simpson and Lazenby 1970: 22); a little later, French reported 'LHIII A claimed; LH III B confirmed' (referring to the styles of Mycenaean pottery that prevailed for much of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC respectively (French 1972: 100, fig, 16 (d)). Our prolonged examination of the site has done little to change this picture, with only few and scattered pieces of Mycenaean ware recognized. Many another location has been reckoned a Mycenaean site after the discovery of a few Mycenaean sherds in a brief examination of its surface by one or two field-walkers. But such a situation is far less easily explained here. We are left with no convincing evidence that there was a Mycenaean occupation of the site on a scale at all comparable with, for example, its much earlier extent in Final Neolithic and Early Helladic I times: on the contrary, the only fair conclusion, after such an exhaustive search, is that Thespiai in the Late Bronze Age had ceased to be a prominent regional centre. Criteria which had made Thespiai a typical, indeed a classic, choice for a settlement in Middle and Late Neolithic times, comparable with the better-known sites of Eutresis, a few miles to the south-east, or of Lerna, further afield in the north-eastern Peloponnese – a low-lying mound in a fertile arable landscape, with more than one then perennially running spring in the vicinity – may no longer have been over-riding ones. There are neither the traces of 'Cyclopean' walling found at a number of sites in this general area of south-western Boeotia – Eutresis (*Arkopodhi*), Kreusis (*Livadhostro*), Siphai (*Aliki*), on the acropolis above Thisbe (*Kakosi*) and at Chorsiai (*Sarandi*) – nor the chamber tombs of Mycenaean type found at Thisbe. If it could be shown that this group of fortifications had been designed to secure the overland routes from Thebes to the shores of the Corinthian Gulf (cf. Buck 1979: 38–9), then this would be suggestive evidence for a political organization of the region in later Mycenaean times that was centred on Thebes. It is important, too, to note that the recent survey of the site of Plataia, even closer to Thebes, yielded proportionately negligible evidence of occupation during the Late Bronze Age, the Mycenaean heyday; while two *sondages* near the West Gate produced virtually none at all (Konecny *et al.* 2013: 180; 237–40).

There is also documentary evidence from Thebes which hints at very similar conclusions. The recently discovered Linear B tablets from the citadel of Thebes contain lists of names, both ethnic and personal, which give more than a hint of the extent of the territory controlled by the palace at Thebes: it evidently extended beyond Boeotia, to cover at least a part of the off-shore island of Euboea (Aravantinos, Godart and Sacconi 2001: 355–8: see the useful map, incorporating both Linear B toponyms and fortifications, in Dakouri-Hild 2010, 620, fig.46.3). It may be by chance that no recognisable form of the name Thespiai appears in these lists. A more positive piece of evidence is that the settlement of Eutresis, much closer to Thespiai (about 7 km) than it is to Thebes, can be recognized in a list of places which contribute grain and olives to the palace. Another significant entry appears in a list of people who are evidently in the service of the palace: one of these men's names is given simply by the ethnic 'from Kreusis', undoubtedly referring to the coastal location of that name which was to feature throughout Classical times as the prime harbour – at certain periods, the only one – of Thespiai. It lies about 10 km south-south-westwards from Thespiai in a straight line, but over twice that distance from Thebes.

Theban sovereignty over Eutresis and, less decisively, Kreusis would have obvious and direct implications for the control of the fortifications at these two sites. Without extending this inference to the cases of Siphai, Thisbe or Chorsiai, we may reasonably draw the conclusion that any contemporary settlement that may have existed at Thespiai was not of a status to challenge Theban control over two places which, in historical times, were normally reckoned as lying within its own territory. This makes it easier to accept the archaeological finding that Thespiai did not at this period house a very substantial community. Other local studies of settlement growth in Mycenaean times have shown that there can be no general assumption of gradual progression from Middle Helladic times: local divergences and interruptions, sometimes lasting several centuries, can often be seen (Dickinson 1982). In the case of Thespiai, the pattern also prefigures, in a general way, the development in relations between Thespiai and Thebes that was once again to evolve some eight centuries later.

These negative findings have a bearing on the earliest appearance in a textual source of Thespiai, in one of its other variant forms. 'Thespeia' is named as one of the 29 cities contributing to the Boeotian contingent (of 50 ships with 120 men in each) at Troy in the Homeric 'Catalogue of Ships' (*Iliad* 2, 498). The case was forcefully maintained by a series of scholars in the middle years of the last century, extending from Allen (1921) right through to Hope Simpson and Lazenby (1970), that the source of the 'Catalogue' lay in a more or less contemporary record of late Mycenaean date (whether or not in verse form) listing the contingents taking part in a contemporary expedition against Troy. Subsequent opinion has retreated detectably from this conviction; and the evidence from Thespiai, so rich in material from earlier prehistory, suggests a further small weakening for the belief that the 'Catalogue' reflects, with any accuracy, the political geography of Mycenaean Greece.

The evidence from Thespiai nonetheless shows a remarkable persistence in the occupation, even if not an uninterrupted one, of the site over more than six millennia, from the Middle Neolithic to the opening years of the nineteenth century AD. Part of the interest of this history lies in studying the tension between the perceived advantages and disadvantages of Thespiai's location. After housing a long-lived but small Neolithic community, it had also been found capable of supporting an extensive and dispersed population by Final Neolithic times and the beginning of the Early Helladic, evidently much increased in numbers, now extending north of the Kanavaris river and perhaps located in ephemeral and shifting small farm sites, with a more substantial and durable concentration surviving around the former Neolithic site on the 'Magoula'. By now, the evidence of the surrounding landscape, which revealed a scatter of small outlying settlements of similar date, shows that Thespiai may have already become the dominant centre for a territory extending over part of the adjacent plain to the west and the upper valley of the Kanavaris river to the east. Its nearest rivals at this period seem to have been the Palaeokarandas site just 2.5 km to the south; another, smaller hill-top site above Neochori, some 3 km to the west; Askra, some 7 km away in the same direction; and Eutresis, a similar distance to the south-east. This already suggests a certain versatility in Thespiai's location.

Yet there remained the disadvantage of its complete lack of natural defensibility, which at certain periods became more critical. Thus, the picture for the Middle Bronze Age, in extent and in absolute numbers of finds, already shows some shrinkage and fewer concentrations, leading to the situation in the Mycenaean age which we have been reviewing. By the Late Bronze Age, indeed, at least one of Thespiai's closest 'sister' settlements of Early Helladic times had evidently suffered a parallel fate: there is no sign of continuing settlement at Neochori, and little at Palaeokarandas. This archaeological evidence, taken with the undoubted Mycenaean survival of the more distant sites of Eutresis and Askra's close neighbour

'VM 4', is fully compatible with the negative impression obtained for the immediate environs of Thespiai at this period.

Much more predictable is the dearth of material from the three or four centuries of the Early Iron Age which followed the decline of Mycenaean civilization. Numerous other sites in central and southern Greece, some of them excavated and many attesting a strong Mycenaean presence, tell a similarly negative story in the sequel. Our own examination of the surrounding rural landscape found equally slight traces from this period. No doubt an increased prevalence of handmade wares, not easily recognisable as diagnostic, could do a little to explain away this apparent abandonment of sites and territory; but the independent evidence of depopulation in these centuries, from excavation and surface survey alike, tells too widespread and too consistent a story for it to be dismissed as illusory.

Only in a later phase of the Early Iron Age, the Geometric period, does Thespiai once more show something resembling a concerted occupation, with two small but detectable concentrations of finds, one (identifiable mainly in the Samples) near the eastern extremity of the Classical city, the other across the Kanavari river to the north, close to the restored medieval chapel of Agios Athanasios and prominent in the Transects. Interestingly, both these localities had earlier appeared as foci of Prehistoric material, of the Early and Middle Bronze Age. These concentrations, with their clearly recognisable pottery, may well include burial as well as settlement material. With the thinner scatter of Geometric finds further to the west and south, they receive some reinforcement from the more numerous pieces that could be diagnosed only as 'Geometric to Archaic' or, less often, 'Prehistoric to early historical'. But this modest beginning introduces, this time without apparent interruption, the best-attested era in the whole history of the site, which was to last over a millennium in its own right. Now, too, we can begin to turn to documentary sources for some glimpses of Thespiai's development.

Boeotia and Thespiai in Archaic times

Archaic Thespiai receives a few mentions in the ancient sources, not all of which we can treat as reliable. The most direct testimony comes from Hesiod, who refers (*Works and Days*, 227, 240) to an unnamed *polis* as prospering or suffering according to the good or evil deeds of a few of its inhabitants. This *polis* might at first appear to be a mere stereotype, but it soon becomes clear that, by holding its rulers to blame for the injustices that he himself has suffered in his village of Askra, he has in mind a specific (and unfavourable) example of a city. It has therefore reasonably been assumed that that city is Thespiai, on grounds of its geographical proximity and the known subordinate status of Askra to it in later times,; though we cannot altogether exclude other possibilities, conceivably ranging from Thebes at one extreme (as perhaps in Mycenaean times) to a still independent Askra at the other. The rulers of the *polis* are clearly identical with the corrupt magistrates on whom he blames his misfortunes, and whom he both describes and addresses as 'Lords' *(Works and Days*, 38, 202, 248, 263). The most significant points are his recognition of a political community, apparently capable of waging war and of building ships and fortifications (246–7): a sinister sequel to this may be attested in the tradition, found in later but reputable sources (Aristotle and Plutarch), that after Hesiod's time the Thespians destroyed Askra and that its inhabitants fled to Orchomenos, perhaps taking with them Hesiod's bones (see Buck 1979: 98, 172, who places this episode in the first half of the seventh century BC). But a clear implication of Hesiod's lines is that all the members of the community might be adversely affected by the actions of a few, which in turn strongly suggests that the community in question was under aristocratic control.

Other sources give at least a hint that this remained the case for Thespiai in later stages of the Archaic period. Aristotle's *Constitution of the Thespians* has not survived but we have, among a series of brief later synopses and extracts from his many *Constitutions* by a certain Herakleides, the curious observation that 'Among the Thespians, it was held shameful to learn a craft or practise agriculture, and on this account the majority of them became poor and fell into debt to the Thebans, who were thrifty' (Rose 1886: 386, Fr. 611.76). This is a generalization very hard to apply to the ordinary Thespian, who can scarcely have either afforded such fastidiousness, or had such ready access to Theban lenders; it has therefore been taken (e.g. by Buck 1979: 96) to refer only to the bigger land-owners in the community. More certainly, it is a claim that can hardly refer to any period after 480 BC, when the political paths taken by the two cities permanently diverged. Some independent support for the latter part of Aristotle's (alleged) statement has been found in Herodotus, who has the Thebans refer to the Thespians, at a date close to the end of the sixth century BC, as being among those close neighbours who have also proved their most consistently loyal allies in war (v. 79.2). A much later source, Diodorus Siculus, states that Thespiai was originally ruled by seven families who claimed descent from the eponymous king Thespios and enjoyed the title of

damouchoi. In partial explanation of this last obscure term, he goes on: 'their descendants, they say, led the city until recent times' (*Histories*, iv.29.4). By the time that Diodorus was writing in the first century BC, the phrase 'until recent times' was palpably no longer applicable and must have been taken from a much earlier source: Thespiai had long since changed its political structures, as we shall see. These rather scanty testimonies can at least be reconciled with each other, and with a picture of Archaic Thespiai as ruled by a narrow and exclusive aristocracy. What little we know of Archaic Theban politics suggests a similar internal disposition of power there. It is entirely credible that an alliance should have existed between the two like-minded cities during at least a part of the sixth century BC; and this is borne out by the fragmentary and late evidence for a major military episode of the period, the battle at Keressos. Two centuries of modern search have yet to provide a conclusive location for this site, but the ancient sources are unanimous that it lay within the territory of Thespiai and the fullest account of a later episode (Pausanias ix. 14. 1) makes it clear that it lay at a distance from the city. In this, its first appearance in the historical record, Keressos witnessed the decisive defeat of an invading Thessalian force whose commander, Lattamyas, was killed in the battle. Plutarch refers twice to this, to him, supremely important event, once (*Life of Camillus*, xix.4) dating it very early ('more than two hundred years earlier than the Battle of Leuktra' [sc. before 371 BC]), once (*Moralia* 866 E) placing it 'recently' in relation to Thermopylai [in 480 BC]. In the second passage, he clearly implies Theban participation in the repulse of the Thessalians; yet the engagement took place on Thespian territory and Pausanias (ix. 14. 1) later presents the event as a successful *Thespian* defence of their own stronghold. It is in any case beyond question that these (and no doubt other) Boeotian cities would have combined against a threat of such magnitude and there is independent evidence, as we have seen, of a standing alliance between Thebes and Thespiai in the same general period.

The early use of Keressos as an external stronghold also shows a response on the part of Thespiai to a long-standing problem (cf. p. 200): the lack of natural defences for the city site itself. Numerous independent polities were growing up in Archaic times: few of them yet had fortifications surrounding their main settlement, but most included some form of internal acropolis to which the population could retreat in emergency. But at Thespiai we have no evidence that any fortification existed as early as this, either around or close to the city; and this would increasingly have come to seem a serious disadvantage. In later years, Keressos was on at least one occasion to play a key role in the city's military ventures (see p. 211), this time with less happy results for Thespiai.

We turn now to the evidence of our intensive survey of its site and the light that this can throw on the overall picture of the Archaic city. Finds of Archaic date, supplemented by some at least of those less certainly assigned to the period, extend over almost the entire area later occupied by Classical Thespiai, at the time of its maximum size and populousness. The density of this scatter is much lower than in the Classical city, yet detectably higher than in the last period when settlement had previously been so widely spread, the Early Helladic. It should be borne in mind that the spread of Archaic ceramics may be under-stated in our finds: generally, it is the fine wares which produce clear and diagnostic Archaic pieces, while domestic and coarse wares are much harder to distinguish from the subsequent Classical. The two concentrations visible in the preceding Geometric period (see p. 201) continue in occupation, but no longer stand out so prominently: the impression is one of a whole series of small units of habitation, with apparently open spaces separating them. Already in the previous period it had been clear that the inhabited area extended across the River Kanavaris to the north: in Archaic times, this extension is strongly and permanently reinforced, with important implications for the later city.

If we are right to detect in Archaic Thespiai a loose-knit grouping of independent homesteads, then this is a pattern of occupation not only attested by archaeological findings elsewhere (for instance in the much more extensive centres of Athens, Corinth and Argos, if at a somewhat earlier stage in their development); it also matches, on a smaller scale, Thucydides' description, 'settled in villages, after the old fashion of Greece', of the layout of its early cities (i.10.2), one still visible in the Sparta of his own day. In early times, such a pattern may have been at least as common as the more familiar one of a nucleated, 'proto-urban' concentration: our own survey has produced examples of each form (cf. Snodgrass 1987–89).

Such a grouping seems to presuppose a network of housing plots in the main settlement that were relatively few and also, in terms of strictly housing needs, quite large. The interesting suggestion has been made that the housing plots in an Archaic 'urban' area were at first conceptualized in rural terms, comparable in size with the area that could be ploughed in a day on an agricultural small-holding (Foxhall 2005: 87–8 – a paper which reaches other conclusions that are relevant here, especially (77–9) that there was as yet no overall scarcity of land, however unequally it might

be shared, for the populations of most Archaic cities: compare also Bintliff 2006). None of this is inconsistent with the picture of an Archaic Thespiai dominated by a narrow aristocracy, at least some of whom may have by now gravitated to this central settlement, composed of widely spaced out, farmstead-like 'town' houses.

The rural survey has shown that other members of the community were now living in settlements elsewhere in the territory, much smaller yet still relatively few in numbers (compare again Foxhall 2005: 78). Yet the historical record shows that, by the end of the Archaic period, the combined population of Thespiai and its territory had grown to appreciable size. In the famous episode of the battle of Thermopylai in August 480 BC, no less than 700 Thespian heavy infantry were sent to join the more celebrated 300 Spartans in defending the pass against the Persians (Herodotos vii. 202; 222; 226). This shows that the more prosperous Thespian farmers, those who could afford to provide their own arms and armour to serve as heavy infantry (*hoplitai*), numbered at least 700. After this force had been wiped out to a man, Thespiai was still able to field a force of 1800 men in the following September at Plataia: Herodotos (ix.30) explains that this consisted of 'those who were left', and that they were without arms. Regardless of equipment, any city that could muster 2500 men of military age, in all classes, within just over a year must have had a total free population of at least 12,000.

These are surprising figures, comparable in level with those calculated, by similar means, for the population of the city over 200 years later (see p. 214), when it had declined from a peak in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. A possible line of explanation for the unexpected growth lies in the territorial expansion of Thespiai. We know that, by the mid-fifth century, Thespiai had come to control not merely Eutresis (which excavation has shown to have been re-settled in the early sixth century BC, after centuries of apparent abandonment) and Kreusis, but also the hitherto independent cities of Siphai, on the coast to the south-west, Thisbe, further to the west, and Khorsiai, beyond Thisbe: this control is already recognized, in part at least, in an inscription of about 475 BC from Olympia (on which see most recently Minon 2007: 104–12, no. 15) and, later, in what was probably a fresh constitution of the League, drawn up after the Boeotian victory at Koroneia in 446 (see p. 206). The question is how much earlier Thespiai had achieved this expansion, which had the effect of roughly doubling both its territory and its population. (Out of the 11 districts that each provided a share of the army of the League, together with one of the Boeotarchs who jointly commanded it and 60 federal councillors, the constitution allotted Thespiai two shares, one perhaps in respect of its traditional territory and one in respect of the additional cities). There is no insuperable difficulty in thinking that this expansion could have taken place in Archaic times, perhaps towards the end of the sixth century BC (cf. Buck 1979: 99).

The extraordinary growth in density and extent which, on the evidence of the survey, the actual urban centre of Thespiai was to experience in the ensuing Classical and Early Hellenistic periods may have owed something to this political expansion. While the enlarged territory would be too big for the resident citizens in and around Thespiai directly to exploit the newly acquired outlying lands, they could have done so indirectly, through ownership and the employment of tenants or slaves as cultivators: a central market at Thespiai would then have begun to handle larger surpluses of produce. There must also have been administrative functions which could bring leading members of the dependent communities to take up at least part-time residence in Thespiai. But these speculations relate mainly to the fifth century BC, when this régime of dependency was in undoubted operation.

A necessary implication of the survey findings is that we are unable to follow the interesting suggestion of A. Schachter (1996: 105–7) that the location of the Archaic city of Thespiai lay, not on the Classical site but 2 km away to the south-west, in the vicinity of the columnar temple, probably in the Doric order, dedicated to Apollo and of early fifth-century date, discovered and excavated by P. Jamot in 1890 (see Müller 1996: 178–9). The bases for our conclusion are both positive – the extent and density of the Archaic pottery on the city site which, although soon to be overshadowed by the Classical material, exceeded those of any earlier period – and negative: the fact that our rural survey found no very substantial settlement material, of Archaic or any other date, around the temple location (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 143). The sanctuary would be none the less significant for being in a rural, rather than an urban, location, as has been shown in the studies of F. de Polignac (de Polignac 1995: 51–107, 'Le sanctuaire non urbain'). It is also very much to the point that Jamot discovered, in the city site itself, a capital in the Doric order, of which a drawing survives in the notes of his collaborator A. De Ridder, and which can be assigned to a date around the mid-sixth century BC: see Müller 1996b: 179–82. It probably came from the large temple whose foundations Jamot excavated in the heart of Thespiai, within the *Kastro* or Late Roman wall-circuit, and which he identified (unconvincingly) as the 'small Temple of the Muses' which Pausanias (ix. 27. 5) saw within the city.

Elsewhere in Thespian territory a much more famous sanctuary, though as yet a less imposing one architecturally, had evidently come into being before this time. At the upper, western end of the Valley of the Muses lies the Sanctuary of the Muses, intimately linked with Hesiod and the scene of another of Paul Jamot's excavations in 1888–89. The buildings found by Jamot all seem to date from long after the Archaic period; what little knowledge of his discoveries could be salvaged from oblivion was presented much later by G. Roux. A deposit which *may* be from the neighbourhood of the later altar suggests that the site was in use by about 600 BC (Roux 1954: 43, n.4). Pausanias (ix.31.3) further reports a series of tripod dedications, the oldest of which was said to be the very one dedicated by Hesiod to commemorate his own victory in the funeral games at Chalkis (*Works and Days*, 654–9); whether or not there was a genuine association with Hesiod, the ancient practice of tripod dedication would be enough to hint that cult here began a century or more before 600 BC.

It used to be held that, by the later sixth century, a development of still wider significance for Boeotia had taken place: the formation of the first Boeotian League or Confederacy. The evidence rests in the first instance on coinage. Several Boeotian cities struck issues of both uninscribed coins, with the emblem of the Boeotian shield as the insignia on one side, or of inscribed ones with the same device and the initial letter of the individual city added; a third series hints more explicitly at a federal origin by including a monogram of B and O (for 'the Boeotians'); a fourth, commemorating an alliance of the Boeotians with Chalkis in Euboea, is securely linked to the historical events of 507/06 BC. The first three issues used to be stylistically dated to *c*. 525 BC (Ducat 1973); but Schachter has now questioned this and, in keeping with the lower dating now adopted for early coinages generally, places them *after* the issue recording the alliance with Chalkis, and indeed after 500 BC (1989: 184–5). Thespiai may or may not be represented among the cities indicated by the initial letters: Knoepfler (1981: 147) has made a case in favour. But more recent scholarship (e.g. Larson 2007) has strongly questioned whether this and other signs of a communal Boeotian identity need imply the existence of a formal confederation earlier than the fifth century.

The specific case for Thespian membership of an early league was set out by Ducat (1973: 69–70)). An argument in its favour is the remark, attributed by Herodotus to the Thebans and quoted earlier (p. 201), that the people of Thespiai, along with Tanagra and Koroneia, had long been 'their most loyal allies in war'. A degree of support can also be found in the actions of the Boeotians at the time of the Persian invasion just before Thermopylai. The picture is a confused one: plainly communal action was discussed during these months, but equally plainly there were divided counsels. A further indicator would be the function of the Boeotarchs, later the chief executive officers of the League; although Herodotus (ix. 15. 1) first mentions them only under the following year, 479 BC, they have been argued to be in control of operations throughout. Boeotian troops, at least according to one ancient source, were among those sent further north earlier in the summer of 480 BC in an abortive attempt to block the pass of Tempe between Macedonia and Thessaly, and the name of the commander of the Theban contingent survives (see Buck 1979: 129–30). Notoriously, the Thebans were to take the Persian side in the end, but not until the latter had advanced much further south; and not before sending 400 heavy-armed to fight against them at Thermopylai, alongside the Spartan and Thespian contingents, until almost the end of the battle. Eventually the Theban survivors surrendered, unlike their companions; and from this point on, with central Greece irrevocably under Persian control, Thebes and most of the Boeotian cities forcefully took the Persian side in rest of the war.

But not Thespiai, nor Plataia (which had helped to man the Athenian ships in the simultaneous naval fighting off Cape Artemision); and these two cities promptly paid the price for their resistance. Both decided to evacuate their populations to the Peloponnese and both the deserted cities were then burned by the Persians, perhaps at Theban insistence (Herodotus viii.50.2). In the event that a league already existed, Thespiai must have now ceased for a time to be a member of it, while Plataia from the start will have shown resistance to joining it. But in Thespiai's case, there is no clear evidence that such an alignment, taken up in the heat of the Persian Wars, can be projected backwards into the later Archaic period.

The explanation for what appear to us bewildering differences in attitude may well lie in the balance of internal politics. Most Boeotian cities, most of the time were classified, by the Athenians at least, as being controlled by oligarchic régimes, right through the fifth century (as by Thucydides v. 31. 6). The label 'oligarchic' was then taken to extend to constitutions where voting rights were confined to the hoplites, those providing their own equipment as heavy infantrymen, as was argued by Larsen in an article that is still a classic (Larsen 1955). The 'oligarchs' of the Boeotian cities, thus defined, and the narrower 'dynastic' group which apparently ruled Thebes (so the Theban spokesmen at Thucydides iii. 62. 3) were evidently

at first more or less reluctantly inclined to join in the resistance of the more southerly Greeks to the Persian invasion; then, after initial setbacks and partly out of hostility to democratic Athens, the majority decisively reversed its stance.

But one city, Thespiai, had shown no sign of reluctance to resist, and had as a result the unique experience of seeing its own hoplite component, perhaps almost in its entirety, wiped out at Thermopylai. This can only have had a drastic effect on the internal balance of political power: those outside the 'hoplite census', probably for the first time, must have found themselves in a position to determine policy. The result was, in the short term, the desperate decision temporarily to evacuate their city and, over a much longer period, the pursuit of alliances with external powers against their fellow-Boeotians. This took the immediate form of close friendship with Athens, a city fully committed to the anti-Persian cause which had the longer-term attraction, in the eyes of the poorer citizens of Thespiai, of being by now a democracy. Plataia had already taken the same course, but with the relative security of much closer geographical proximity to Athens and a common frontier with it. As the Boeotian cities recovered in the post-war years Thespiai, more isolated, was to veer between oligarchy and democracy, as in its status as a full member of the Boeotian League. Other external ties were established, with Sparta (especially at times when Thespiai was under oligarchic hegemony) and probably with Corinth too. The fateful events of the summer of 480 BC had changed a typical city of Archaic Boeotia into a partly independent agent in the politics of the Classical Greek world.

Boeotia and Thespiai after the Persian Wars, 479–379 BC

With the decisive defeat and withdrawal of the Persians in 479 BC, the Thespians could set about re-settling and rebuilding their city. Not surprisingly, we learn from Herodotus (viii. 75. 5) that they accepted new citizens at this time, to make up their depleted numbers: Themistokles of Athens rewarded the services of his famous slave Sikinnos with money and Thespian citizenship, while the appearance at Thespiai of new cults, earlier associated with Athens, Sparta and Corinth, has suggested that new citizens came from all three places. The great painter of the period, Polygnotos of Thasos, whose murals in Athens and elsewhere won such fame that he was rewarded with Athenian citizenship, is also said to have painted works at both Thespiai and Plataia (see Schachter 1996: 115–17).

These external affiliations must have led to friction with the Boeotian League, once it had evolved. Whether or not the divided counsels during the Persian Wars were responsible for the delay, it is only more than 20 years later that the League, whether initially established or revived, can be seen to play a leading part in Greek affairs. Predictably, Thebes had for the moment lost her former prestige within Boeotia; but, together with Tanagra and some other Boeotian cities (but not including Thespiai or Plataia), she minted coins with the federal emblem of the shield that can be assigned to the intervening period (Buck 1979: 141–2). Externally, the most important development was the gradual estrangement between Athens and Sparta, documented now by Thucydides. In 458, Sparta was able to lead a large force through Boeotia, apparently without either opposition or support, in order to confront the Phokians (Thucydides i. 107. 1); on its return journey, this force was delayed in Boeotia by Athenian defensive moves and, according to another source (Diodorus Siculus xi. 81. 1–2), took this opportunity to set up an alliance with Thebes and recruit Boeotian troops. Finally, after defeating the Athenians and their allies in a major engagement at Tanagra, the Spartans continued homewards, leaving the Boeotians to their own devices (i. 108. 1).

Boeotia was clearly once more in the front line of greater conflicts: its immediate fate was very soon sealed for a decade by an Athenian victory over the now unsupported Boeotians at Oinophyta and by the effective Athenian control over the whole region, with the cities of the League now governed by pro-Athenian factions. This came to an end only when a rather small Athenian force was successfully ambushed at Koroneia, by a coalition of anti-Athenian elements, in 446; Thebes was later to claim the main credit for this defeat. The Athenians, anxious to recover their prisoners, withdrew from Boeotia under treaty, the exiled Boeotian elements returned, and the League was revived or, in some modern opinions, only now established (Thucydides i. 113). Spartan intervention had brought the Boeotians little immediate benefit: they owed their recovery to their own efforts.

Over the whole period between 479 and 446, we hear virtually nothing that specifically concerns Thespiai. She minted no coinage that might indicate her attitude to the Boeotian League, and there are almost no Thespian grave- and votive reliefs of this period, such as would indicate the presence of a prosperous middle class, within the 'hoplite census' (Schild-Xenidou 1972). We do not know whether she had voluntarily adopted democratic institutions, before the phase of Athenian domination when they were imposed on most Boeotian cities. It is uncertain

whether her territorial expansion belongs to this time, or had happened earlier (cf. p. 203); but the rebuilding of the city, the restoration of the losses in man-power and the installation of democratic processes must have required time and exertion. It seems on the whole more likely that the resurgent Thespiai eventually became capable of enforcing once again an earlier subordination, in Late Archaic times, of the ancient city of Thisbe and its lesser neighbours, than that these cities for the first time now succumbed to its power. One positive step which we can provisionally assign to these years is the establishment of the sanctuary of Apollo, with its columnar temple, outside Thespiai (see p. 203).

Clearer evidence comes only with the text of the constitution preserved in the papyrus of the 'Oxyrhynchus Historian', reflecting the state of the League in 395 BC after certain changes to its earlier form: scholars have agreed in taking this earlier form to go back to the reorganization of 446 BC, if not earlier. The terms (see p. 203) are very instructive. Thespiai, with control of two of the 11 districts of the League, had been on an equal footing with Orchomenos, Plataia (temporarily, it seems, a member) and, for a time, Thebes itself; Tanagra had one district; the remaining two districts were shared out between five smaller Boeotian cities. Since each district was to provide 1000 heavy infantry and 100 cavalry, it would seem to follow that Thespiai, in her own right and without taking into account the contributions of the cities she had annexed, had more than made good the disastrous infantry losses at Thermopylai a generation earlier: the admission of new citizens (see p. 205) must have done much to facilitate such a swift recovery (see Roesch 1965: 36–43 for the interpretation of this text followed here).

The Boeotian League, with its morale and military strength restored and its domination by Thebes at least nominally suspended, now recovered some of its potency in Greek affairs. Oligarchies were re-established in Thebes and most other Boeotian cities; again we do not know how quickly Thespiai conformed to this trend, but a significant sign is the sudden increase in Thespian sculptured reliefs of the second half of the fifth century (Schild-Xenidou 1972: nos. 11, 14–17, 19–26, 28, 30–1, 34–6, 40), implying the open display of private wealth. Plataia stood out against the trend and seceded from the League, a decision which was to help precipitate the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431. By this time, it is clear that Thebes had gone far to reimpose its supremacy within Boeotia (she alone minted federal coins throughout this period); but also that the League, Plataia alone excepted, had built up a degree of solidarity soon to be put to the test.

An abortive attempt by the Thebans, aided by disaffected Plataian oligarchs, to capture Plataia and overthrow the democracy was taken by the Athenians as an act of open war; once the Athenians had retaliated by garrisoning Plataia, it also ensured that the Boeotian League would align itself with the Peloponnesian alliance led by Sparta. When, four years later, Plataia finally surrendered to the forces of this alliance and was destroyed, Thucydides has the Theban spokesmen claim that the League was now the leading contributor to Sparta's alliance, with horses and other supplies (iii. 62. 5); the Spartans too regarded Theban support as of substantial value to them (iii. 68. 5).

In the event, the Boeotian League, with Thespiai still a whole-hearted participant, was to render important service to the Spartan alliance. The climax of its operations came when the Athenians planned a two-pronged attack on its territory in 424 BC. Part of the strategy involved the capture by betrayal of Siphai, which Thucydides confirms lay 'in Thespian territory' (iv. 76. 2: compare p. 203 above): this plan, and a parallel stratagem designed for Chaironeia, miscarried when the League got wind of it and occupied both places. Then, in the greatest land battle of the first part of the war, a League army under Theban leadership decisively defeated the Athenians on their frontier near Delion.

But even in this hour of victory, the precariousness of Boeotian solidarity between, and probably also within, the individual cities was exposed. In the battle at Delion, it happened that the brunt of the Boeotian losses had been borne by the Thespians: out of just under 500 Boeotian hoplites killed in the fighting (Thucydides iv. 101), Thespiai is known to have lost at least 100 and possibly many more (below, pp. 220–1; Schachter 1996: 118 and n. 70: this is the first major event in Thespian history to be directly reflected archaeologically, with the discovery at Thespiai of the state monument built over the tomb of those who had fallen at Delion). This was a repetition, on a smaller scale, of the blow that had happened at Thermopylai; the sequel too was not without its resemblances. The following summer, Thebes took the opportunity to dismantle the fortifications of the now weakened Thespiai – 'having long wished to do so' Thucydides adds (iv. 133. 1), but ostensibly on the charge of pro-Athenian sympathies. In the circumstances of the previous year, this would have been a preposterous charge and one wonders whether Thebes' design was really prompted by the threat of a democratic element taking control of Thespiai after the renewed losses to the hoplite class. If so, the measure was successful: we know that the oligarchs retained control of Thespiai ten years later (Thucydides vi. 95. 2), when the opposing party tried unsuccessfully to overthrow them. Regardless of such speculations, Thebes had

now displayed both to Plataia and to Thespiai the consequences of any challenge to the League and to its own supremacy within it.

This is the first mention in the sources of a fortification wall at Thespiai itself, no doubt intended in part to avoid the need for recourse to the external stronghold of Keressos (p. 202). We take the opportunity to revert here to the findings of the survey. The distribution of the uncertainly dated 'Archaic to Classical' pottery is the first signal of an important shift in the concentration of settlement with the city: in place of the wide and fairly even spread of the definitely Archaic wares, which included one long-standing nucleus of finds near the far eastern end of the city site (pp. 201–2), there is now a heavy focus on its western half, and especially on the south-western and southern border, with much thinner representation north of the Kanavaris and in the whole eastern sector south of the river. This pattern foreshadows, in exaggerated form, what follows in the ensuing period, which revealed a fairly dense presence of material recognized as strictly 'Classical' (consisting primarily of black-glazed pieces), and a spread of 'Classical/Hellenistic' that is very much denser still, and includes large quantities of cooking and coarse wares that were not so closely datable. This second, much more prolific category does restore evidence of occupation north of the river and in the eastern sector, but at the same time confirms that it was in the west that the Classical city had its densest habitation. This is seen most clearly beyond and outside the small enceinte of the Late Roman *Kastro'* within which the material of later periods has tended to swamp the Classical.

The spread of the 'Classical' and 'Classical/Hellenistic' finds, taken together, extends some 2 km from east to west and averages nearly 1 km from north to south, including the sector north of the Kanavaris, covering an area in excess of 150 ha, filling in virtually all the gaps detected in the earlier, Archaic distribution and in places adding to its extent as well. This huge area constitutes what we have named the 'ceramic city': it probably includes land under intensive infield cultivation and city cemeteries, both of which would have lain close to the edge of the built-up area. Within this spread, we have detected at several points the line of what appears to be a Classical fortification-wall, built of large, flat conglomerate blocks, each measuring approximately 1.30 m by 60 cm by 30 cm (see Chapter 4, pp. 165–8). It can be located with most certainty on the north side, where a line of three such blocks can be seen, probably almost *in situ*, at a field edge a little to the south of the Kanavaris river and just to the north of the *Magoula* feature which had marked the Neolithic site: their alignment is continued west-south-westwards by a prominent break in the slope of the ground which continues the modern field-boundary. By plotting the presence of similar blocks or breaks of slope elsewhere, we have reconstructed a circuit that embraces a decidedly smaller area than the 'ceramic city'. Allowing for the fact that some housing would extend beyond the fortifications (particularly in the unprotected area across the Kanavaris to the north), we estimate the total built-up area, at its Classical maximum, to have been about 57 ha in extent (see Chapter 3, p. 101). It is unlikely that most ancient settlements, even among the major cities, reached an *overall* level of density much higher than 125 inhabitants per hectare, given that something approaching half of the built-up area was probably devoted to non-domestic space (for the calculations see *Testing the Hinterland*: 143–51, 168–9). This would yield an urban population for Classical Thespiai of over 7000, with a few thousand further people living in the (original Thespian) territory.

But is this reasonably well-attested fortification to be identified with the city wall destroyed in 423 BC (p. 206)? Except in one respect, the exclusion of the zone to the north of the Kanavaris, its suggested outline roughly conforms to the densest distribution of the Classical (and indeed the Hellenistic) finds, within the outer spread of the 'ceramic city'. But, as seen in Chapter 4, a different wall-line was also discovered, composed of similar conglomerate blocks and even more clearly marked, this time lying to the north of the Kanavaris river and just outside the city survey area to the north-west. It runs almost due north–south, again along a field-boundary but with such a density of blocks as to suggest that these roughly follow the original line of the wall. This wall beyond the river was clearly directed uphill, towards the heights on which the modern village of Thespies stands, and supplementary examination of the natural bluffs at the southern extremity of the village confirmed that the fortifications did indeed enclose this raised area.

It is immediately obvious that this extension of the fortified area is not compatible with the use of the stretch discovered earlier, on the southern side of the river and running cross-wise on an ENE–WSW line. In other words, there were at least two successive stages in the fortification of Thespiai. At this point, we initially turned to the only other directly recorded episode in the walling of the city, when Agesilaos of Sparta in 378 BC rebuilt the destroyed walls which had evidently lain derelict for 45 years (see p. 210); his 'rebuilding', however brief its period of use, apparently survived attacks by the Thebans on at least two occasions, and must therefore have been substantial. But the evidence of such surface pottery as

can be directly associated with the wall suggests that it belongs rather to the prolonged phases of warfare which are known to have affected Boeotia in the third and earlier second centuries BC, but for which we have less detailed documentation.

K.J. Beloch's estimates of the Classical populations of Boeotian cities used the provisions of the constitution recorded by the 'Oxyrhynchus Historian' as a basis: this suggested about 7000 Thespian citizens, and a total free population about 20,000, living in the still enlarged territory of the city around 400 BC. Of these, he held that rather less than 10,000 would have been living in the actual city of Thespiai at this time (1922: i. 287). This is compatible with the figure that we have reached if, as we are about to argue, in 400 BC the population had yet to reach its absolute peak. The common assumption is that the provision, under the constitution, for about 2000 Thespian hoplites and 200 cavalry then needs to be approximately doubled to include an equivalent number of light-armed (as in the Peloponnesian campaign of 418 – see below); this suggests a total availability of adult males of military age in the region of 4500 and would confirm Beloch's estimate of a total free population of up to 20,000. As to the question when exactly within the Classical period the population did attain this peak, the ancient sources, when dealing with Boeotia's brief rise to supremacy in Greece in the first half of the fourth century BC, connect that later episode with a high level of population (e.g. Diodorus Siculus xv. 26. 1). They are of course primarily thinking of Thebes, which had by then achieved complete supremacy within the Boeotian League. But the highest figure given by an ancient source for the hoplite levy of the entire Boeotian League is the 13,000 hoplites quoted by Diodorus Siculus (xvi. 30, 4) for an expedition against Phokis in 354 – that is, just after its heyday under Epaminondas. This is a figure higher than the 12,000 hoplites who, according to the same historian (xv. 26, 4), had assembled to liberate Thebes in 379 BC; and higher than the notional 11,000 provided for under the constitution of 395 BC as reported by the Oxyrhynchus Historian. The forces deployed in the Peloponnesian War on no occasion approximate to this level.

We may refer again to the fact that by far the most strongly represented class of Greek pottery from the city site is actually that grouped as 'Classical/Hellenistic' (see p. 207). This excludes the 'Hellenistic' and 'Late Hellenistic', but still potentially covers the longer period of three centuries between about 500 and 200 BC. It is a reasonable assumption that this 'Classical/Hellenistic' class is chronologically weighted more to the fourth than to the fifth century – hence, in part, the uncertainty as to which side of the main period division it falls. This supports the trend of the documentary evidence in suggesting that the population, certainly of Thebes, apparently of Thespiai, probably of most other Boeotian cities too, reached its maximum in and after the fourth, rather than in the fifth, century BC.

To return to the Peloponnesian War. Purged of dissentients, the League remained so resolute in its opposition to Athens that, along with a few other Spartan allies, it repeatedly refused to subscribe to the 'Peace of Nikias' which Sparta and many of its allies signed with Athens in 421 BC (Thucydides v. 17. 2 and 35. 3), accepting only 'a truce renewed every ten days' (v. 26. 2). The following winter, after complicated and fruitless diplomatic dealings with other dissident allies of Sparta and even with Argos, its traditional enemy, the Boeotians were able to induce Sparta to sign a separate treaty of alliance with themselves, a tribute to the leverage which they could exercise (v. 36–39).

When hostilities reopened – not least because of Athenian displeasure at this separate alliance (Thucydides v. 42. 2) – the League continued to play its part, successfully defending the recent colonial foundation of the Spartans at Herakleia in Trachis (Diodorus Siculus xii. 77. 4); sending 5000 hoplites, 500 cavalry and an equivalent number of light-armed to the Peloponnese to join 'the finest Greek army ever yet brought together' (Thucydides v. 57. 2; v. 60. 2); and being among the first to send help to Syracuse in 413 BC (vii. 19. 3–4). This last venture took Boeotian troops further afield than ever before in the history of the League: significantly, two Thebans and a Thespian (probably Boeotarchs – Roesch 1965: 98) shared in the command of the force. The following winter, Sparta enlarged her fleet by making requisitions from its allies; she set the highest quota, of 25 ships each, on herself and the Boeotians (viii. 3. 2). This was another unprecedented development for the Boeotian League; once again, it can be assumed that Thespiai, with its three harbours on the Corinthian Gulf at Kreusis, Siphai and near Thisbe, played a prominent part in meeting this call.

The Spartan strategy had meanwhile changed in another way, with the fortification of a permanent base in the countryside of Athens, at Dekeleia: Thucydides remarks on its closeness to the Boeotian frontier (vii. 19. 1) and Athens' two most formidable enemies on land could now act in closer concert than before. When Thucydides' narrative finally breaks off, Diodorus provides further detail: the League, he says, provided 900 out of a force of 1200 horse which was now based in Attica and later engaged the Athenian cavalry below the very walls of Athens in 408 BC (xiii. 72. 4); and supported the project of the Euboeans to

link themselves physically to Boeotia by building a causeway across the strait of the Euripos (xiii. 47.4). Meanwhile, with its new status as a naval power, the small Boeotian fleet played a part in the later stages of the war, lending its support to a projected revolt of Lesbos against Athens (Thucydides viii. 5. 2), serving on the Spartan side in the naval defeats at Kynossema in 411 BC (viii. 106. 3) and, under Theban command, at Arginousai in 406, where it apparently performed well (Diodorus xiii. 98. 4 and 6); and eventually participating in the final victory at Aigospotamoi in 405, the Boeotian admiral being honoured, along with the commanders of the other contingents, with a statue erected at Delphi (Pausanias x. 9. 9).

Both the first and second parts of the war, ending in the final defeat of Athens in 404 BC, had lent substance to the Thebans' earlier boast (p. 201) that the Boeotians were foremost among Sparta's allies. The League had held together against the attempt to detach some of its members in 424 and the abortive assault on the ruling oligarchy at Thespiai in 414: its solidarity had even survived the Theban destruction of Thespiai's walls in 423, and a régime favourable to Thebes had evidently retained control there. Thebes, which since at least the destruction of Plataia in 427 BC now controlled four of the 11 districts of the League, was visibly supreme within it. But there is a case for thinking that Thespiai was now to be ranked as its second city. The main rivals for such a status had always been Orchomenos, with its legendary past, and Tanagra. But we know that the place of Orchomenos in the League's constitution had been, or was about to be, diminished by the detachment of the subordinate Chaironeia from its double district, leaving it with what seems to have been effectively a single share only; it may have been something of a spent force from much earlier (so Dull 1977; 1985). Tanagra, which had anyway never had more than a single district, had suffered in the war from its proximity to Athenian territory; defeat and devastation of its land in 426 BC (Thucydides iii. 91. 5) had already happened before the further Athenian invasion at the time of the battle at Delion. Thespiai meanwhile retained its double district for the present and, as we have seen, probably played an increasingly significant role in the second part of the war.

The impression remains, however, that the League's participation in the war had throughout been motivated more by hostility to Athens than by love of Sparta. Nothing shows this more clearly than the immediacy with which the policies of the two allies now diverged. For the present, the League had made itself the only credible alternative to Sparta as the dominant state in Greece; and it began to act accordingly. From this point Xenophon, a source bitterly hostile to Thebes (now in the eyes of outsiders almost synonymous with the Boeotian League), becomes our main historical source. The League had insisted, against Spartan resistance, on taking its tithe of the spoils at the end of the fighting (Xenophon, *Hellenica* iii. v. 5). Within a year, the League embarked on a course of refusing Spartan demands to supply military aid, against first Athens and then Elis (ii. 4. 30 and iii. 2. 25). Even more significant for the future, we begin to hear of a powerful democratic party in Thebes: its hold on policy was strong enough to make Thebes into a prime refuge for exiled Athenian democrats, again in express defiance of Spartan orders; and that policy begins to appear consistently anti-Spartan. In 396, it went so far as to prevent the Spartan king Agesilaos from sacrificing at Aulis on the Boeotian coast (iii. 4. 4); by 394, the 'Corinthian War' had broken out, with Boeotia now a prominent member of an anti-Spartan alliance, together with Athens, Argos and other states.

We now enter a phase in which the name of Thespiai, after whole centuries in which it had barely been mentioned in the annals of Greek history, is found close to the centre of events: indeed, it recurs with such frequency in our sometimes conflicting sources that there is repeated difficulty in establishing the exact sequence and date of the episodes. Xenophon remains the fullest and most reliable ancient authority; the account which follows draws mainly on the detailed studies of Tuplin (1986) and Buckler (1977), together with Buck (1994).

Neither the League's land forces, nor the cause which they now served, fared well in the Corinthian War: twice, at the Nemea river in the Peloponnese and at a second battle at Koroneia on Boeotian soil, the Boeotians and their allies were worsted by Spartan hoplites; but the Thespian contingent fought successfully on the first occasion (*Hellenica* iv. 2. 17) and, on the second, the Theban contingent seriously discomfited the Spartans, a portent for the future (iv. 3. 15). The League avoided major confrontation for the remaining years of this war, which ended in the humiliation of the 'King's Peace' in 387. A significant incident occurred at the signing ceremony: the Spartans had, realistically enough, inscribed 'the Thebans' as one of the signatories of the peace; the Thebans asked for 'the Boeotians' to be substituted. The Spartans refused; the Thebans were overruled; and the League was dissolved, with the imposition of autonomy for its individual member states (v. 1. 32–3: a similar prelude was to be repeated, with a very different outcome, when another peace was signed 16 years later, see p. 211 below).

This crisis in Boeotian affairs clearly meant different things to different cities. For Thebes, it meant the forcible installation of an oligarchic régime and later, when the oligarchs betrayed its citadel, the Kadmeia, to the Spartans, of a Spartan garrison in 382; years of resistance ensued, conducted latterly from exile in Athens, by its democratic elements. For Orchomenos, which had already broken away from the League and, with Tanagra, was later openly to take the Spartan side in warfare, it offered a brief glimpse of independence.

For Thespiai and its still oligarchic rulers, however, it seemed to hold out yet wider opportunities. On the debit side, the presumed restoration of autonomy to Thisbe, Siphai and Khorsiai will have deprived her of territory, population and two of her harbours on the Corinthian Gulf; but her continued possession of Kreusis still made for easy communication with Sparta and the other Peloponnesian powers who would be natural allies against the newly democratic tendencies of Thebes – a situation that partly corresponded to that of Plataia with her Athenian frontier. Presently, like Plataia, Orchomenos and Thebes, Thespiai too accepted the presence of a Spartan garrison, but with good grace on the part of its ruling party, since the city soon became the chief base for Spartan operations in Boeotia, accommodating what seems to have been a large force, additional to the garrison and its commander (Isocrates xiv. 13). Agesilaos of Sparta in 378 BC rebuilt the fortifications at Thespiai, destroyed over 40 years earlier, to enhance its value as a vantage-point (*Hellenica* v. 4. 41). According to Diodorus (xv. 27. 4; 33. 5–6), the Thebans were to make at least two unsuccessful attacks on the Spartan garrison within these evidently substantial fortifications. The next year (377) Agesilaos had to settle internal strife in Thespiai – a sign that not all parties were agreed on the city's new role (*Hellenica* v. 4. 54).

But the balance of power was rapidly shifting. At the end of the year 379 BC, the democratic elements in Thebes had been able to mount a successful *coup d'état*, capturing control of the city and inducing its Spartan garrison to leave. In this event lay the seeds of enormous changes, for Boeotians and for the Greek world as a whole. The immediate sequel was that Boeotia was turned into a battle-ground, ideological and physical. That winter, the Spartans invaded the region with inconclusive results. Thespiai's stance was equivocal at this time: Xenophon reports that a democratic faction came out from Thespiai to give support to the Theban army (v. 4. 46). In the summers of 378 and 377, Agesilaos appeared with a huge army, trying unsuccessfully to provoke the Thebans to a pitched battle and devastating their territory; but the following year's invasion, in 376, was repelled at the borders by Thebes (*Hellenica* v. 4. 59) and in 375 the Spartans were deflected by the fleet of Athens, still Thebes' ally. Their detachments in Boeotia began to meet with reverses while the main army was absent: the Thebans might be unable to capture Thespiai, Tanagra and Orchomenos, but they managed to defeat each of their Spartan garrisons in the open field, with the Spartan commander being killed in two of the three instances. All this boded ill for Thespiai, as well as for its Spartan allies. It may well be to this time that the fortified enclosure of fourth-century date, on the foothills of Mt. Mavrovouni on the edge of Thespian territory, belongs, as a Spartan outpost designed to protect Kreusis on the coast below (Tomlinson and Fossey, 1970, especially 258–60).

The period of the 'Theban League', 378–338 BC

Presently, the Thebans had recovered their strength to the point of reorganizing the League, in what has justly been called a 'pseudo-federal' form: Orchomenos was still excluded, Plataia crushed once more, and the number of the districts reduced from 11 to 7, with Thebes herself controlling four from her greatly enlarged territory. Equally important, a democratic franchise was now extended to, or imposed on, all member cities. When the Spartan governors left the garrison towns, Thespiai too was politically incorporated in the Theban state within the League, probably in summer 373, but otherwise escaped relatively lightly for the moment, merely having its ruling oligarchs expelled (the ideological alignments of Thebes and Thespiai having thus been exactly reversed from the previous century); its city and territory seem to have remained in Thespian hands, though an appeal was sent to Athens to avert worse disaster (*Hellenica* vi. 3. 1). With good reason, the revived confederacy is often styled the Theban, rather than the Boeotian League.

Further years of warfare, at first conducted mainly at sea and interrupted by two short-lived truces in 374 and 371, awaited Sparta and the alliance which opposed it. During this time, Thespiai seems to have suffered defeat and further punishment by Thebes for the aid which it had given to the League's enemies: the city itself is said to have been devastated, its walls apparently being for the second time destroyed; and, either now or at the time of its final punishment after Leuktra (see below), the population was forced to evacuate the urban centre and move into the countryside (*Hellenica* vi. 3. 5; 4. 10: Diodorus xv. 46. 6). At a peace treaty signed at Sparta in the summer of 371, Sparta demanded the restoration of Thespiai and other cities (Diodorus xv. 51. 3–4). But the

démarche with the Theban delegates (see p. 209) was now repeated. The other members of the anti-Spartan alliance agreed to the terms; the Thebans once again asked that the name of 'the Boeotians' be entered as their signatory; the request was once again refused (*Hellenica* vi. 3. 19–20).

But other circumstances had changed. A Spartan army under Kleombrotos, Agesilaos' fellow king, was at large in Phokis and would have to return home through Boeotia; above all, the Theban delegation was now headed by Epaminondas. He took the fateful step of asking that the name of Thebes be deleted as a signatory to the treaty, and immediately took the field to block the Spartans' homeward path. Kleombrotos, moving quickly by the mountain route over Helikon, eluded the main force of the League, emerged near Thisbe and reached the coast at Kreusis, which he surprised and captured along with some of the League's warships: so Thespiai's harbour, previously so vital to Sparta, had evidently spent a period in the hands of the League. His way home to Sparta was now open. But he was under orders from home to attack Thebes unless she retracted her defiant stance of a few weeks earlier. Knowing that she had done no such thing, he turned back and at Leuktra, again in Thespian territory, he was defeated by Epaminondas and the League's army in one of the decisive battles of Greek history. A Thespian contingent had marched out with the League but before the battle Epaminondas, apparently recognizing the city's divided loyalties, either dismissed it or allowed it to leave (*Hellenica* vi. 4. 2–15).

Retribution for Thespiai, worse than what it had already suffered, was now expected. Not waiting for it to fall, the whole population took refuge in their stronghold at Keressos, the site of a great Boeotian triumph some two centuries earlier (see p. 202), thereby confirming that their city itself was once again unfortified. Epaminondas besieged and captured Keressos, ejecting the Thespians (Pausanias ix. 14. 2). What further punishment, if any, was now exacted is debatable (cf. p. 210 above): there is at least no evidence that the population was forced to evacuate Boeotia as had happened in 480 BC. But in any case, the 'cityless' Thespiai was now reduced to almost as desperate a condition as that into which Plataia had already fallen.

The zenith of Theban achievement and the nadir of Thespian downfall had, true to form, coincided. The conduct of Thespian affairs, during the previous 30 years as earlier, had plainly been at the dictates of the changing ideological control of the city, evidently between two fairly evenly balanced factions: hence the apparently pendulum-like quality of the city's external policy changes. Thus, to look back, whole-hearted co-operation of Thespiai with the early League, while both were dominated by oligarchic régimes, is evident in the later sixth century and again, from 446 BC, through the Peloponnesian and Corinthian Wars, with conspicuous episodes such as the battle of Delion, the expeditionary force sent to Sicily, and the battle of the Nemea River, until Thebes turned to democracy in 379. Yet in between, there are signs of a democratic ascendancy in Thespiai in the period of Athenian alliance after 480 BC, when Thebes was apparently ruled by a much narrower oligarchy than Thespiai had been; and the virtual certainty of it during the brief phase of Athenian domination between 456 and 447. A suspicion of the same tendency in 423 BC was enough to bring about the first destruction of Thespiai's walls, and an abortive bid for power by the democratic faction again took place in 414.

Even after the reversal of roles in 379, with Thebes a democracy and an oligarchic ascendancy still prevailing in Thespiai, we see clear signs of pressure from the democratic elements in Thespiai, such as the offer of help to the Thebans and the army of the League in 378 and, once the period of open defection to Sparta's side was ended, the appeal to Athens and the acceptance of what was presumably coercion by the League apparent by the time of the events of 371, when Thespiai's harbour at Kreusis had reverted to use as a naval base for the League and Thespian hoplites, even though taking no part in the battle, had marched out with the League's army to Leuktra. The only constant element appears to be the readiness of the warring factions, when threatened by their rivals, to appeal to stronger external forces – Thebes, Athens or Sparta as the case might be – to maintain them in power.

Theban reprisals had, by her standards of the time, been less than extreme, with retribution for Thespiai coming, it seems, in three successive stages of increasing severity, but still falling short of the treatment already meted out to Plataia, and soon (364 BC) to fall upon Orchomenos (Diodorus xv. 79. 5). But Thespiai could naturally take no part in the ensuing phase of Theban hegemony, when successive invasions of the Peloponnese under Epaminondas seemed about to bring all Greece, from Thessaly southwards, under Boeotian domination. To this period belongs also the brief experiment of the League with an extension of its sea power. The small fleet of the Peloponnesian War was increased in size by Epaminondas to 100 triremes (Diodorus xv. 78. 4 – 79. 1): the Lokrian harbour of Larymna was appropriated to provide a base for this fleet (Pausanias ix. 23. 7), suggesting that neither the facilities of Kreusis and the other ports on the Corinthian Gulf, nor those of Aulis on the Euripos strait, were adequate for the enlarged scale of operations.

The region of Oropos was seized from Athens and added to the League's territory. But, with the death of Epaminondas at what would have been the crowning moment of supremacy on the battlefield of Mantineia in 362, not only the Boeotian cities, but all of Greece was left in that abject confusion and indecision which Xenophon describes in the closing words of his *Hellenica* (vii. 5 27).

After this phase of intensive Thespian involvement in greater affairs, and with Xenophon's narrative breaking off, we enter a period of marked obscurity. In place of continuous historical accounts, we fall back on the illumination offered by inscriptions, which gradually become more prolific, and by sporadic references in Athenian orators. The most important conclusion for the period after 371 BC is one that we can only reach by inference: that the Thespians must have fairly soon resumed full enjoyment of their lands and their (still unwalled) city. This view is compatible with the reputation of Epaminondas for clemency (he had allowed another recalcitrant city, Orchomenos, to rejoin the League for a brief period). It is supported by the continued intensity of habitation in the city, and the unbroken pattern of dense rural settlement, revealed by the survey, from Classical through to Hellenistic times; and it is justified in retrospect by occasional later reports from documentary sources.

For Thebes and the League as a whole, this was a time of gradual decline: their resources were seriously over-extended by participation, with mixed success, in the long 'Sacred War' of 357–346 BC, until they invited Philip of Macedon to settle the conflict – a step which was to have disastrous consequences for themselves and other Greeks, extending far beyond the great defeat of Chaironeia in 338. At the same time, the huge size of the League's heavy infantry force, as reported by Diodorus (see p. 208) under the year 354 BC, is not credible unless it includes a full complement from Thespiai, which would have taken some years to raise and train. The references, first by Isocrates (*Archidamos* vi. 27, of 366 BC), then by Demosthenes, in the same general period, to Thespiai as a desolate city can be taken to imply no more than the fact that the urban centre had not been properly rebuilt and, above all, remained unwalled. A recurrent theme of Demosthenes, between 353 and 343 BC, is that Philip of Macedon, the latest major participant in Greek affairs, had repeatedly given an (unfulfilled) promise, either to re-found and re-populate Thespiai (v.10 and xvi. 4; 25; 28) or to rebuild its walls (vi. 30) or indeed, to judge from the latest of the speeches, to do both of these things (respectively xix. 21 and 112). Demosthenes seems to show a studied ambiguity as to what exactly Philip's promise for Thespiai had been, and the truth may be simply that an Athenian orator had not had occasion to visit Thespiai and see its present plight for himself. This makes his evidence unreliable as an objective report of Thespiai's condition at this time: it may have amounted merely to continued political subordination to Thebes, and to an unfortified city.

For a community of citizens in ancient Greece could function effectively without a fortified city or acropolis and even, as the Thespians had shown in the months just before and after the battle of Leuktra, without an urban nucleus of any kind. The frequency of the Thespian grave- and votive reliefs, though declining from its fifth-century peak (see p. 206), maintains a steady level through much of the fourth century: remarkably, the quarter-century between 375 and 350 BC sees it at its richest (Schild-Xenidou 1972: nos. 52, 60, 62–5, 70). To these years or just afterwards, we may also assign the lifetime of a famous name in Thespian history, the beautiful courtesan Phryne who won fame and, eventually, considerable wealth as the model and mistress of the great Athenian sculptor Praxiteles. The gilded statue of herself that she dedicated at Delphi was still on show five centuries later (Pausanias x. 14. 4). But Praxiteles also executed at least four statues for Thespiai itself: figures in marble of Eros and of his mother Aphrodite, and another portrait of Phryne, all in the sanctuary of Eros (Pausanias ix. 27. 3 and 5), while the inscribed base of a fourth (probably of an athlete) (*IG* vii. 1831) was seen by a series of early travellers to the site (see Chapter 2, pp. 6, 8, 11). The first group of three implies the existence of a temple to house it: Schachter (1981. i, 216–17, with n. 2) discusses this question and raises the possibility that the Eros statue at least was commissioned from Praxiteles to mark the actual installation of his cult. Praxiteles' active career probably lasted from the 360s to the 330s BC.

The fact that Thespiai sent official delegates (*Hieromnemones*) to the Panhellenic sanctuary at Delphi in 340 BC, and again in the 330s and 320s, gives confirmation that by this time, at the latest, the city was exercising some of its normal functions (Roesch 1982: 467–8, 474). More unexpectedly, there is also one fourth-century inscription recording the appointment of a Thespian (and of a Tanagran) to the important office of Boeotarch: it cannot be more precisely dated than to 'around the middle' of the century. This would have been so strongly at variance with Theban policy throughout the duration of the second League that it seems best to follow D. Knoepfler (Knoepfler 2000: 351–5) in dating it after 338, which is epigraphically perfectly possible and historically much more likely. Finally, according to Diodorus at least (xvii. 13. 5),

Thespian troops lent their aid to that ultimate act of retribution, the destruction of Thebes at the hands of Alexander the Great in 335 BC.

The period of the 'Hellenistic League'

A range of independent evidence thus points to a revival of the fortunes of Thespiai between 371 and 335, going beyond the general historical pattern of their negative correlation with those of Thebes. Confirmation of this can be seen in the formation of the new, or 'Hellenistic', Boeotian League at the instance of Philip of Macedon in 338. This third League was to survive for well over 150 years, longer than either of its predecessors. Roesch suggested (1965: 46) that its durability could be put down in part to the simplicity of its organization, with as many as 16 independent cities each having equal voting rights and administering their own territories. The more recent insights of Denis Knoepfler, however, (Knoepfler 2000: 359–64; 2001) have shown that this appearance of an 'egalitarian' organization of the League was misleading. Behind the League's membership of 16 ostensibly equal cities, there lurked a different and much more hierarchical system, first brought to light through Knoepfler's analysis of an unusually detailed description by Pausanias (ix. 3. 2–4) of the Plataian festival of the Daidala. Effectively, the League clearly operated (like its predecessor) through a pattern of seven districts or *telê*, based on the concept of proportionality (Müller 2011), so that this time only Thebes, Thespiai and Tanagra enjoyed the privilege of a whole district to themselves: the other Boeotian cities, in accordance with their perceived lesser importance, had to share the remaining districts between pairs or larger groupings. Yet Plataia and Orchomenos were restored to membership, as were the long subordinated cities of Thisbe, Siphai and Chorsiai; in Anthedon, a newly sovereign member emerged. The recent annexations of Larymna and Oropos were reversed. The right to issue coinage, monopolized by Thebes throughout the previous 40 years, was now eagerly taken up by other cities, Thespiai included.

For Thebes, this was an unprecedented humiliation: her territory might still be larger than that of any other single city but, after her destruction in 335 BC, much of this too was to be lost to her for a time, being shared out by Alexander among 'the allies' (Arrian, *Anabasis* i. 9. 9). If this expression is to be taken as covering all those who had supported Alexander's attack on Thebes, then it must surely have included her immediate western neighbour, Thespiai, which had the readiest access to this fertile landscape: this would have been some compensation for the earlier loss (p. 211) of her own former appendages to the west; and it would help to explain the impression of long-term stability which we derive from Thespiai's epigraphic record for this epoch.

This record is a striking one (see Chapter 6, p. 219). Among inscriptions of all types, later publications have quadrupled the number of Thespian entries in the early catalogue of *IG* vii (Dittenberger 1892: nos. 1719–2022, 3562 and 4240): it is exceeded only by Tanagra (with its wealth of tombstones) and Thebes (with the huge yield of inscribed sherds from the sanctuary of the Kabeiroi). Taking funerary epitaphs alone, works of the 1950s reckoned the known tally of Thespian examples, from city and territory, as approaching 300 (Kahrstedt 1954: 78; Fraser and Rönne 1957: 93). Here again, these figures have since roughly tripled, but even so cannot rival the huge total of over 1000 from Tanagra, presumably in part the result of the late nineteenth-century rush for Hellenistic tombs containing Tanagran terracottas. The figures for Tanagra, Thebes and Thespiai, in each category, are very much higher than for any other Boeotian city.

Inscribed tombstones, requiring less expenditure for their erection, tell us less about social divisions than do the sculpted examples that were cited earlier (pp. 206, 212): they merely suggest the presence of a large, settled population of land-owners of moderate prosperity. Kahrstedt's study (1954), for each Boeotian city, of the proportion of epitaphs which date to Roman Imperial times, show that in the case of Thespiai more than three-quarters in fact belong to the earlier period with which we are here concerned, covering primarily the last three centuries BC; though, as we shall see, this probably hides a distinct decline within these centuries. Fraser and Rönne (1957) point to other striking features of the collection of Thespian epitaphs: the very low proportion of epitaphs for slaves, which works out at about 2.5 per cent, may under-represent the actual slave population; but this is widely held to have been lower in Boeotia than in other, less agriculturally oriented Greek states. Our own earlier inference (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 147) that the poorer Thespian citizens must have supplemented their subsistence production by working on the larger estates of others also implies a minor role for rural slavery. Fraser and Rönne found an even lower proportion – little over 1 per cent – of non-Thespians buried in the city and territory (1957: 93 n. 14 and 94 respectively). Only a single Thespian of the second century BC is known to have been buried in Athens, in contrast with several in the earlier period of the 'Theban League' (Roesch 1982: 488; cf. 464, 466). Was Thespiai becoming as cut off from the Greek world beyond Boeotia, and from the widespread practice of

slave-employment, as these figures suggest? We shall see that there is some evidence to the contrary.

Other significant classes of inscription, of Hellenistic or slightly earlier date, relate to the federal constitution to which Thespiai now subscribed. The once all-powerful college of Boeotarchs (cf. pp. 203–4) still retained a range of powers, but their importance now waned in favour of that of the federal Archon, annually elected and eponymous for his year of office (Roesch 1965: 75–94); annual Archons for the individual cities were also elected by each of them. The federal Archonship had only been created fairly recently, probably in the 360s under the 'Theban League', but its status was a strictly federal one, whereas the Boeotarchs, while also elected by the federal assembly, were chosen, one each, from the individual cities. The regular number of Boeotarchs throughout the period of the 'Hellenistic League' was seven (Roesch 1965: 103); as was that of a third federal magistracy, the *aphedriatai*, whose functions seem to have been mainly religious. We have seen (p. 213) D. Knoepfler's convincing explanation for this recurrence of the number seven, and for the regular appearance of Thespians in all three of these important offices, as of right: thus, Thespiai is one of the five cities which are regularly represented by a Boeotarch, along with Tanagra and, after its restoration to a place in the League in 316, Thebes (Roesch 1965: 104), with the names of Plataia and Orchomenos, who shared their respective districts, appearing at longer intervals. The same five cities dominate the lists of *aphedriatai* (138). Unfortunately the lists of federal Archons, unlike those of the Boeotarchs, do not often name the city from which the Archon came, but here too a Thespian is known to have held office in the 280s BC (87). The supremacy of the federal Archon, and the general tenor of the new League's constitution, emphasize its federal aspect; in actual practice, nonetheless, some cities among the 16 'equal' partners in the League were or became 'more equal than others'.

Another important class of inscriptions on stone, the military enrolment catalogues – in this case exclusively of Hellenistic date – is dealt with more fully elsewhere (Chapter 6, pp. 221–2). They were used as sources for demographic information by, among others, N.G. Pappadakis (1925: 218–27), who worked from a Thespian enrolment list (probably from the mid-third century) of 68 names, to reach a figure for the free population of Thespiai at that date. He used a multiplier of 127, based on the demography of modern Greece, to extrapolate from this male age-group to a total free population of 8636. This may be a gross underestimate, assuming as it does that the entire population of 20-year-old males was eligible for recruitment in the annual cohort: some selectivity is far more likely. But the size and representativeness of that cohort finds confirmation in other Thespian catalogues from the same short period. We shall return to this topic presently (p. 215).

Thespiai had thus recovered the status of a full, indeed a privileged, member of the League; and remained such even when, in 316 BC, Cassander of Macedon embarked on the lengthy project of rebuilding Thebes and, perhaps after even longer delays, of restoring the city to its place in the League (Diodorus xix. 53. 2). As the inscriptions show, Thespiai is regularly represented in all the League's functions where the record includes the representative's city of origin: not only among federal Archons, Boeotarchs and *aphedriatai*, but in other capacities. Thespians received honours at the sanctuary of Delphi, sometimes also serving as *proxenoi* or official agents, in the later fourth century and again around 300 BC (Roesch 1982: 459–62, 470, 473) and a Thespian architect was active there, over more than a decade in the same period, in temple-construction (474); Thespian *proxenoi* and *hieromnemones* continue to occur there through the third century BC and into the second, down to the 130s (477, 484–6, 489). Epidauros in the Peloponnese was another major sanctuary where Thespians were active in the third century, contributing to the costs of cult (482–3).

Meanwhile, however, the historical sources remind us that participation in the Boeotian League was, on the broader stage of Greek affairs, progressively coming to mean less and less. The ebb and flow of the struggles of Alexander's successors partly took place, yet again, on Boeotian soil; in the main, the League appears merely as the passive victim and involuntary host of the warring armies. Whatever the motives for Cassander's action in restoring Thebes, it was unquestionably taken as a hostile act by the other members of the League (Roesch 1982: 421–3). The oppression during the years of the 'Theban League' had not been forgiven. Roesch argues (417–39) that it was not until about 287 BC, after the death of Cassander, that Thebes was permanently accepted again as a member of the League, at the instance of Cassander's main rival among the Macedonian war-lords, Demetrios the Besieger (Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios* 46, 1).

We hear of a very few occasions when the League showed resistance to these external occupations. In the year 309 or 308 BC, the Macedonian regent Polyperchon tried to march his forces through Boeotia on his way to invade the Peloponnese but, we are told, was turned back by 'the Boeotians and Peloponnesians' (Diodorus xx. 28. 3). Later, in 293, a rebellion launched against the current occupant of Boeotia, Demetrios,

was led by Peisis, a citizen of Thespiai of good reputation. Remarkably, Demetrios spared him after the rebellion was put down, and indeed installed him as chief magistrate in his home town (Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios* 39. 1–2).

Such authoritarian interventions raise the question of the form of government normally prevalent, in Thespiai and elsewhere, since the fall of Thebes. Inscriptions, as we have seen, attest the existence of quite a list of offices at the level of the individual city, but these were compatible with more than one political system. The new and ostensibly egalitarian quality of the League's constitution would seem to have required the individual cities to reproduce the federal arrangements at city level, in respect of the magistracies, the deliberating council and the popular assembly. The wording of certain decrees – for example, those electing local *proxenoi* – makes it clear that the popular assemblies in the cities had the same role, of approval or election at their own level, as did the more important federal assembly at the level of the League (e.g. Roesch 1965: 125–33). But who composed the local assembly, the *damos* of the inscriptions? Müller has shown that, whether or not formal property qualifications were required for office during the lifetime of the Hellenistic League (as was certainly true for both the preceding and the succeeding eras), there is much evidence for the increasing concentration of property into fewer hands, not least in the case of Thespiai (Müller 2010: 226–36).

In military terms it is clear, for Thespiai and in most other Boeotian cities, that the army's strength, down to the mid-third century, remained concentrated where it had long been – in the city's hoplite force (compare Ma 2000). The military catalogues make this abundantly clear, even for much smaller places like Kopai. As late as 280 BC, the Boeotian League could put in the field a force of 10,000 hoplites and 500 cavalry, when faced with a serious external threat, the invading Gauls under Brennus (Pausanias x. 20. 3). This hoplite strength, unmatched by any other Greek state in the alliance against the Gauls, suggests a prestige that was probably reflected, as in earlier days, in political influence at home.

At the city site of Thespiai, pottery of distinctively Hellenistic date more than matched that of any earlier single-period class in quantity, although it was found to extend over a much smaller area than in the immediately preceding period; that recognized as 'late Hellenistic' covered a still smaller area, with the whole western sector of the Classical city evidently now abandoned and some shrinkage too on the south and east. It is particularly clear that the westward extension of the city in Classical times (see p. 207) was now being retracted: this is suggested not merely by the narrower spread of recognisably Hellenistic wares, but by the positive evidence of the distribution of the Hellenistic *unguentaria* which were commonly deposited in burials. Concentrations of these are found, not only at the furthest western extremity of the Classical city, where the parallel evidence of Classical *kantharoi* had already led us to locate a prominent Classical burial ground (the 'Thespiai West Cemetery'), but also much closer to the heart of the city and within a dense area of former Classical habitation. The almost universal Greek practice of extramural burial should mean that this area now lay outside the inhabited area. So, too, with the rising hill-slopes to the south of the *Kastro*: there are known Classical burials near the crest of the hill and just outside the area of the city survey. But now, in Hellenistic times, the rather dense concentrations of *unguentaria* lower down the slope do suggest a burial use for this locality, and a consequent contraction in the habitation area from that of the Classical period. Further, the number and size of the outlying settlements, particularly in the territory immediately to the south of the city, had also fallen drastically by later Hellenistic times (see *Testing the Hinterland*: 151–5, 174). This could be taken to point to a marked fall in Thespiai's overall population during the Hellenistic period. But is this supported by other evidence?

Feyel (1942a) offers what is still the most thorough overall account of the history of the League during the third century BC. The relatively ill-documented period, nearly a century and a half long, which had intervened after the closure of Xenophon's narrative at 362 BC, is at last brought to an end when Polybius takes over as our main ancient source for the later years of the third century. In Polybius, we have a generally reliable authority who, like Xenophon and indeed Thucydides before him, enjoyed the advantage of personal involvement in Greek political and military history. But, as Feyel shows, he also follows Xenophon in his palpably anti-Boeotian sentiments, most clearly visible in his famous jeremiad on the moral decline of Boeotia in the years before 192 BC (xx. 4. 1 – 7. 2; cf. xxii. 4. 1–17): Polybius saw the source of this decline in the events of 245, when a rather obscure war against the Aitolians had culminated in the decisive defeat, in a second battle at Chaironeia, of a sizeable League army under Abaiokritos, with about a thousand casualties.

Feyel's book presented a more complicated and nuanced account of this 'decline', incorporating a different chronology, with true deterioration setting in somewhat later. From a study of the enrolment catalogues (see p. 214), he argued that a major reform in the League's army took place in the mid-240s BC, as a consequence of the new defeat at Chaironeia

(Feyel 1942: 79–80 and 193–7; Roesch (1982: 352–4) argues for a slightly earlier date). From now on each city, instead of furnishing hoplites and cavalry, provided as its main contribution *peltophoroi* armed on the Macedonian model. The Macedonian army was drawn from a broader social base than the traditional Greek hoplite phalanx and its equipment must have been less costly. Yet, as Feyel found to his surprise, the same catalogues in most cases (at Akraiphnion, Kopai and Thisbe for example) show the numbers of the enrolled beginning to fall off after 245, then declining more sharply in the final decades of the third century, to reach roughly half of their original level in the early second. Thespiai seems exceptional in that its numbers for a time appear to have held up, perhaps confirming the evidence from the ceramic density (p. 215); but its series is less complete than those of some much smaller cities and the stones less well-preserved. By the time of the direct evidence from the earlier second century, the annual contingent from Thespiai has fallen from a figure in the high sixties or seventies to one in the low thirties: a glance at two relatively well-preserved lists of names, *IG* vii. 1752 = *IThesp* 108 (late third century, still with over 50 entries) and 1757 = *IThesp* 113 (earlier second century) brings out the change (compare the fuller series of catalogues from Hyettos, Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 201–10; 203 n. 688 on Thespiai). Does this, again, simply reflect a fall in population? Here too the more recent account of Hennig (1985: 335–6 on Thespiai specifically) argues for caution in demographic inferences from such data.

Feyel too (1942a: 188–218) had questioned a decline in population, pointing out that economic factors could have played a role by reducing the numbers of adult males who could meet the property qualification still required; others have observed that the catalogues do not cover light-armed troops, and suggested that the very rich found ways to secure exemption from the arduous new régime of training that the military reform imposed. A mid-third century inscription found at Thespiai (*IThesp* 29) is interesting in this general connection: it records a federal law that provides for the training of younger males in the use of the bow and javelin, types of missile warfare which were not covered in the military catalogues: in the case of Thespiai, this training is to be supervised by a resident Athenian. The inscription was exhaustively examined by Roesch (1982: 307–54), who concluded that the group involved was the 15- to 17-year-olds. The new military régime, whether caused by the second defeat at Chaironeia or disastrously implemented there, was evidently being taken seriously. Eventually, as we shall see, it was to prove of some worth.

Yet Feyel, suspicious as he was of the sweeping generalizations of the Polybian account, thought it right (as did the majority of scholars of his time and later) to treat it as a piece of serious historical analysis. This may have been a mistaken course. In a recent study Christel Müller has convincingly argued that the tirade of Polybius represents a late insertion, for primarily rhetorical purposes, into his historical narrative of the opening years of the second century BC (Müller 2013). The abrupt and illogical placing of this insertion in his text supports such a conclusion. But for a different view of the value of Polybius's account, see Osborne's Chapter 6, pp. 228–9.

In the course of his denunciation, Polybius chastises the Boeotians for not participating in the wars of this period (xx. 4. 6) – not entirely accurately, as we shall see. But the League did keep out of the next conflict with Aitolia, waged by Demetrios II of Macedonia in the years 239–235 BC. Polybius connects this (xx. 5. 4–13) with the growth of a pro-Macedonian movement in the Boeotian cities, and the wars of the next 50 years do indeed find them predisposed to, and even involved in some kind of standing alliance with, Macedon. What he omits to add on this occasion is that Demetrios rewarded this neutrality by giving the League possession of the strategically valuable fortress of Aigosthena. Polybius goes on to attribute the actions of the next Macedonian king, Antigonos II Doson, to purely personal motives, first in adding the much more extensive city and territory of Megara to Boeotia, then in installing a Theban as governor, when he left Sparta after his decisive victory over the Spartans at the battle of Sellasia in 222 BC. The actions of Antigonos suggest, rather, that he recognized the value of the service given him, in the campaign and especially at Sellasia, by the Boeotian force of 2000 infantry, armed on the 'new model', and 200 cavalry who had served among his allies. Polybius says as little as possible about this.

However one judges the policy of the League in these years, it was hardly one of bankruptcy, either moral or literal. To this same period belong inscriptions from Thespiai and perhaps Thebes (IG vii. 1737–8 = *IThesp* 40 and 2405–6: Feyel 1942b: 19–37, though Migeotte (1989) doubts the association of the Theban text) recording public loans in 229 BC to Athens, of at least four talents in Thespiai's case, to help secure 'the restoration of her liberty' (which she indeed achieved). About a decade later comes the documentation of a private loan, amounting after interest to more than three talents, by a woman of Thespiai to the city of Orchomenos (Roesch 1982: 299–300, 388–91). For the Boeotian League in general, with its unprecedented extension of territory, and for Thespiai in particular,

with such demonstrations of public and private prosperity, this hardly looks like a period of abject decline.

One specific source of prosperity for Thespiai lay in its hosting of the increasingly popular *Mouseia*, the athletic festival in honour of the Muses (Schachter 1986: ii, 163–79; below, Chapter 6, pp. 224, 227), which aspired to draw competitors from far and wide. Then there are the Thespian land-lease inscriptions, which cover very much the same period as the city's military enrolment catalogues (between about 240 and 170 BC) but have been less fully studied (see Osborne 1985; 1988: 292–7; and below, Chapter 6, pp. 224–8). Here we have documented an active process of land management, supervised by various city magistrates and largely confined to the better-off Thespian citizens, giving them access to new and often neighbouring land, some of it the property of local sanctuaries. Even if the benefits went to a wealthy minority, as seems to be the case, the matter was handled with responsibility and concern for the public good.

An important change that emerges from the study of the Hellenistic League is that the foreign policies of its member cities were no longer primarily shaped by factors of political ideology. Gone were the days when the changing fortunes of 'oligarchs' and 'democrats' determined the shifts in a city's external orientation: more often, it was now the rival factions of the city's élite, with their varied and less predictable patterns of association with the outside world, who contested the issues of policy (Deiniger 1971: 10–20). This does much to explain the frequent and sometimes unexpected changes of alliance on the part of individual cities during the wars of the Hellenistic age.

Decline, of several kinds, was eventually to come, in Thespiai as elsewhere in Boeotia. For the League, the campaign of Sellasia was the last significant demonstration of military cohesion. The eventual decline in population, suggested by the results of the survey for Thespiai and (if less decisively) by the evidence of the enrolment catalogues for many Boeotian cities, came to be accepted as a reality, not just for Boeotia but for all Greece, by Polybius himself in a later passage (xxxvi. 17. 5). The emergence in Greece of a new Great Power, in the shape of Rome, found the Boeotian League, once again, divided within itself as to its external policy. It tried to stand aside from the first major conflict between Philip V of Macedon and Rome in 200–197 BC despite, on the one hand, the now standing alliance with Macedon and Philip's strong support for the pro-Macedonian party in Thebes and, on the other, the exhortations of Attalos of Pergamon to join the Roman side (Polybius xx. 5. 13; xxi. 20. 5). This qualified neutrality was nevertheless rewarded, by the victorious Roman general Flamininus, with the offer of a treaty of alliance (though it seems never to have been ratified) and with an amnesty for those Boeotians who had fought for Macedon and were allowed to return to their homes (Polybius xviii. 43. 1–12: see Roesch 1982: 275–7, 289–90). Nor were the Boeotians seriously involved in the greater war between Antiochos III of Syria and Rome (191–89 BC), although the clash of the armies came close to their territory and although they had courteously received Antiochos (xx. 7. 5) and, according to Livy (but not Polybius), actually formed an alliance with him (Livy xxxvi. 6. 5). This is the moment which Polybius chooses for inserting his digression on Boeotian decline; yet there is the feeling of an impasse when, near its end, he has to acknowledge that 'they were lucky to slip somehow through the times of Philip and of Antiochos' (xx. 7. 1). We shall see further grounds for questioning his view of this epoch as the nadir of their decline, along with his later assertion that, by the mid-second century BC, 'the state of affairs in Boeotia had improved' (xxxii. 5. 1).

Still to come was Rome's Third Macedonian War (171–68 BC) against Perseus of Macedon, the son and successor of Philip V. This time, some of the Boeotian cities tried to anticipate events: envoys from Thespiai and Thebes approached the Romans before the war had broken out. The offer by the former to surrender their city to Rome found grateful acceptance and brought Chaeroneia and Lebadeia in its wake; the Thebans, in their by now predictable manner, proposed the submission of the League as a whole, which Rome, wishing to see the cities of the League divided, contemptuously rejected (Polybius xxvii. 1. 3). But counsels were already divided anyway, not only between the individual cities but also within Thebes. Encouraged by Perseus (xxvii. 5. 1–8), Koroneia and Thisbe, for a time, and Haliartos more persistently, were in favour of maintaining the Macedonian alliance, as was an opposing party in Thebes (see Müller 1996a on this whole episode). In the end, their objections were overruled and the League allied itself with Rome; presently Koroneia and Thisbe submitted to Roman arms; Haliartos alone continued to defy the decision and paid for it with a destruction (171 BC) so definitive that the city disappeared off the map and saw its territory handed over to the Athenians, who had also prudently taken the pro-Roman line. On one view, this had been yet another inglorious episode for the League; but Thespiai, which had taken the initiative in policy, was at some unknown date to be rewarded for its loyalty to Rome with the status of a 'free city', a privilege given only to Athens, Tanagra and a very few other Greek cities. The value of this gesture can perhaps be seen, in retrospect, from the words of the geographer Strabo, a century and a half

later, when he found Thespiai and Tanagra the only two Boeotian cities still in a relatively flourishing state, while the others, Thebes included, had now sunk below the level even of a respectable village (*Geography* ix. 2. 5).

The strictures of Polybius on late third- and early second-century Boeotia as a whole thus appear, at the very least, exaggerated. It is especially clear that they do not apply to Thespiai. There is first of all a temporal discrepancy: Polybius twice specifies (xx. 6. 1 – relating to 192 BC – and, from a date four years later, xxii. 4. 2) that in Boeotia 'for nearly twenty-five years, justice had ceased to be administered'. The repetition of the 25-year span and the generalization, ostensibly covering 16 independently organized cities and the League to which they belonged, immediately arouse suspicion. So too does the fact that a rather similar judgment, this time applied to Thebes alone and giving a duration at 30 years, had been expressed by a probably earlier writer, the mysterious Heraklides Criticus (i. 18–19). Everything suggests that we are dealing here, as before, with a rhetorical *topos*, and that Polybius is no longer writing as the objective historian. We may add that the alleged 25 years of chaos had in any case run about half their course before his own birth.

For Thespiai, at all events, there is no sign whatever of a breakdown in any area of administration in the years, soon after 217 BC, to which Polybius claims to refer. On the contrary, this is precisely the time to which the great *stele* of the magistracies of Thespiai (*IThesp* 84: below, Chapter 6, p. 223) belongs, together with a series of other Thespian inscriptions in closely similar lettering, two of which mention the name of a city Archon who must be placed between 217 and 212 BC: one of them in fact deals specifically with the appointment of judges to serve at Delphi (see Roesch 1965: 1–19 for the *stele*; 92 for the Archon; 238–44 for another magistracy, mentioned in the *stele*, which may also have been concerned with executing the law: Roesch 1982: 409 for the inscription appointing the judges). If Polybius' nightmare of a breakdown of justice was just round the corner, there is no sign of it yet at Thespiai; and later inscriptions there, as we saw, show that such activities as enrolment for the army or administering land-leases continued undisturbed. There is, too, the evidence from the same enrolment catalogues that drastic population decline had not yet become a serious factor in Thespiai: it is seen, if at all, only *after* the period of judicial anarchy that Polybius claims (though even then Hennig (1985: 341) would posit a further, undocumented change in the recruitment system as a likelier factor).

But the evidence might suggest that it is rather to this period, the early to middle second century, that Polybius' sombre picture best conforms. The material from the city survey assigned to 'Late Hellenistic' and 'Hellenistic/Roman' shows yet further contraction in the westerly spread of habitation; on the positive side, it shows the beginnings of a build-up in the east-central zone, just beyond the *Kastro*, which foreshadows the next major shift in the city's centre of gravity, this time towards the east, which was to be strongly reinforced in the Roman, Byzantine and early modern settlements.

An element that Polybius mentions more than once in his diatribes is the avarice, fecklessness and wasteful consumption of the better-off Boeotians. Here it could be argued that such exceptional individual wealth as had earlier enabled the Thespian woman Nikareta to bail out the city treasury of Orchomenos (see p. 216) hints at a growing divide between rich and poor in Thespiai. Polybius does not specify this as one of the evils befalling the Boeotians, though he does mention what could be a consequence of it, the growth of demagogic politics and of malpractices designed to placate the poor (xx. 6. 2–4). But again, Thespiai is not among the cities where such demagogy is attested.

The last word of Polybius on the fate of the Boeotians (xxxviii. 3. 8) is, typically, to say that they and the other Greek states had only themselves to blame for the ultimate disaster that had befallen them. One central feature of that disaster was Rome's dissolution of the Boeotian League during the Third Macedonian War (Polybius xxvii. 1. 3; 2. 10), proclaimed in the insistence of the Roman envoys, in the winter of 172/171 BC, that they would treat no longer with the League, but only with its individual cities (Müller 2007). It was the end of a long and rich story.

Chapter 6

Thespiai: the epigraphic city down to 171 BC

Robin Osborne

It is fundamental to field survey as practised in Boeotia that systematic close scrutiny of the whole surface of the landscape will yield signs of past human presence that are not arbitrary, and whose patterns mean something, if only we can decode them. What is left on the surface has only a somewhat attenuated relationship to what was once on the surface, and some types and periods of activity become more rapidly attenuated than others, but we do not expect there to have been any significant types of human presence that leave no material trace. We would, for instance, not expect to find every picnic, but we would expect to find some picnics – when crockery got broken, for instance – and we would expect the picnics we find (at which crockery got broken) to be a random sample of the non-random locational choices of all picnics.

Human judgement is, however, written all over the epigraphic record. There was always a significant cost to writing on durable materials, and those who decided, individually or as part of a group, to pay that cost will have been able to give some sort of an explanation for their decision. Their explanation will sometimes have involved merely citing what others do, but often a more particular reason for the permanent public display of a text could be given. We can be confident of this because of the way in which such reasons are sometimes themselves written in to texts. This makes the epigraphic city different, not only from the city of field survey but from the city of literary texts. Literary texts too were the product of conscious decision, but conscious decision by individuals, and often by individuals who do not belong to the city about which they write. In consequence, what gets recorded about a given city in literary texts is effectively random, and while literary texts may contain information of great value, we must hesitate before drawing conclusions from the pattern of what we are or are not told about a particular city. By contrast, on the basis of confidence that we have a more or less random sample of a purposive epigraphic legacy, the exclusively epigraphic city is worth excavating in a way in which the exclusively literary city is not. Like the material evidence, the epigraphic evidence can reckon to be an effectively random sample of decisions to record information on stone, decisions that are themselves part of the subject of interest – the history of Thespiai. The literary evidence, by contrast, constitutes a more or less random sample of activities that make up a subject which is, in this context, of no interest – the psycho-history of a self-selected group of élite individuals who were not themselves from Thespiai and whose common interest in this city is not enough to give them meaningful identity.

The advantages of looking at Thespiai, in particular, as an epigraphic city lie in the fact that this is a city of which we now have systematic archaeological knowledge, as well as one of which literary texts tell us a good deal. The epigraphic record can thus be read 'against' both random archaeological remains and arbitrary literary records. It is a further advantage that this is a comparatively rich epigraphy. In total number, Thespiai is the third best attested of Boeotian cities epigraphically, with some 734 epigraphic texts counted by Vottéro for the period of the use of the Boeotian dialect, behind Thebes (958 texts) and Tanagra (1151 texts); but in terms of the range of its epigraphic evidence it is much more interesting than Tanagra, where epitaphs, or Thebes, where private documents of various kinds including epitaphs, are overwhelmingly dominant (Vottéro 1998–2001: II. 42). Thespiai not only has a higher percentage of civic texts (21.2 per cent), but those texts are themselves very varied.

There are three sorts of questions we can ask of the Thespiai epigraphic corpus as a whole. The first, already implied, is what the people of Thespiai

decide to inscribe at all. The second is the language that the people of Thespiai decide to write in and how that changes. The third is how the people of Thespiai choose to identify themselves, that is their onomastic decisions – not as a matter of individual choice but as a choice of onomastic style. The first of these questions will dominate this paper, but I turn first to the other two.

The language story is a story of the persistent use of the Boeotian dialect, and then its abandonment. Thespiai certainly employs the Boeotian dialect through to the dissolution of the Boeotian confederacy in 172/1 BC even in those inscriptions (e.g. proxeny decrees), which elsewhere in Boeotia are most inclined to assimilate to the language of the person honoured, by using the form known as *koine*, the 'common language', based on the Attic dialect, which had become general across Hellenistic Greece.[1] After 172/1, however, *koine* takes over. This break is not clean-cut, in that five military catalogues from the early second century (*IThesp* 109–14) are in a mixture of Boeotian dialect and *koine*, but it is nevertheless notable.[2] The Romans themselves employed only *koine* in their written, and presumably spoken, communications, so that anyone wishing to get on had to use *koine*. Civic life before 171 was as part of the Boeotian Confederacy. Civic life after 171 was under Roman rule, and there was little place under Roman rule for a distinct Boeotian identity and so little place for writing other than in *koine*. The dialect rapidly disappeared from Thespiai. This story is quite significant in terms of the absence of linguistic resistance to Rome, which stands in striking contrast to the stories of other kinds of resistance in Boeotia in the 190s told by Livy, after Polybius, and to the destruction of Haliartos in 171 (Livy xxxiii. 28–9; xlii. 46. 7; lvi. 6; lxiii. 3–11; Strabo ix. 2. 30; Polybius xxx. 20). It signals how, despite the very light presence of Romans in Boeotia (Müller (2002)), Roman rule had a tight grip after 171, discouraging even linguistic acts of resistance. The only reappearance of the dialect at Thespiai comes at the end of the first century BC, when a dedication to the Muses puts all its headings – but nothing else – into Boeotian dialect (*IThesp* 288–97): a 'decorative' use of dialect, as Vottéro (1996a: 80) has termed it.

The onomastic story is the story, first of the late adoption of patronymics at all (as in much of the Greek world, only in the fourth century, and in official documents) then of the move from use partly of nominal patronymics and partly of patronymic adjectives until the middle of the third century, when in the 240s the use of patronymic adjectives disappears completely (Vottéro 1987; Knoepfler 1992: 450–2). This change is best seen as being, not about how people referred to each other in life, but about 'chancellery' decisions. It should be put in the context of a number of other changes of nomenclature and organization, and indeed in the context of decisions about what exactly ought to be inscribed at all.

The earliest inscriptions from Thespiai, with the exception of an inscribed bronze vessel, said to have been found on the summit of Helikon (*LSAG* 94, no.6; *IThesp* 273), which may date to *c*. 600, belong to the first half of the fifth century. They include dedications made by the Thespians as a body (*IThesp* 276; perhaps *IThesp* 225) and using the local alphabet, some private dedications, and some 30 epitaphs. Then from the late fifth century there are two lists of war-dead. Athens had been listing its war dead since at least the 460s BC and in the last quarter or so of the fifth century some of Athens' neighbours also adopted the practice: lists are known from Megara and from Tanagra, as well as from Thespiai.[3] What seems to be the earliest Thespian list (*IThesp* 484) contains some 21 names. It is not clear what battle is at issue here; in terms of known Thespian involvement on the battlefield, the main possibilities are either the battles of Tanagra and Oinophyta in the 450s or of Koroneia in the 440s. A terminus ante quem is provided by the second list (*IThesp* 485).

This second list is spread over nine *stelai*, found in 1882 in the road just north of the 'lion of Thespiai', forming part, like the lion itself, of a *polyandrion* in what seems to have been one of the already-existing cemeteries of the city (Schilardi 1977; Low 2003). The large funeral pyre, remains of cremated bodies, and seven inhumations were excavated along with numerous grave offerings of pottery, glass, bronze and bone. Reconstructions of the monument suggest there may originally have been as many as 25 *stelai*. Seven of the nine surviving *stelai* have 12 names each, one is complete with 10 names, and one, where traces of 8 names remain, originally seems to have had at least nine names. Although the *stelai* are very uniform in appearance, with letters evenly spaced as if written on squared paper (what is known as the *stoichedon* layout), they fall into two groups with regard to precise spacing and letter-form, presumably because two different masons or, perhaps better, workshops were involved. For Thespiai to have suffered (at least) 103 casualties (and perhaps as many as 280), we must be dealing with a major battle, and the assumption has always been that this monument, like the Tanagran monument (*IG* vii. 585), relates to the battle of Delion in 424, the casualties at which were so heavy for the Thespians (Thucydides iv. 96. 3) that the Thebans then took advantage of Thespiai's weakness to impose their demands on the city, razing the wall of a city that had lost its 'flower' (Thucydides iv. 133. 1), ironically on

the charge of '*attikismos*'. The list is notable for the inclusion of two individuals recorded, one after the other, as victors at the Pythian and Olympian games. Although identification of the deceased as victors in games occurs in individual epitaphs, and in one case we are even told that an individual was both an Olympic victor and died in war (*IG* v.1. 708), identification of victors in this way in a list of a group of war dead is unique: Athens allows only military officials to be picked out in its lists of war dead. We can in fact identify the Olympic victor here, the appropriately named Polynikos, with the Polynikos who is recorded in *P. Oxy* 222 Col. 2 32 (*FGrH* 415F2) as having won the boys' wrestling in the Olympic games of 448 – when he would have been 16 (and so 40 at the time of his death) (Moretti 1962: 164).

By the time that the Thespians next had occasion to put up a list of war dead, at least as far as the surviving records go, they were changing their epichoric alphabet for the Ionic alphabet. The heading to the list is in the local script, and the poorly preserved left hand column in larger letters seems to be in the same script; but the better preserved list of ten names in the right-hand column is in the Ionic alphabet and not Attic, as the use of omega shows. The whole list was inscribed most plausibly during the Corinthian war in 394, but with a second occasion at which casualties were suffered added to the first; in the meantime, the script had changed. A date in the 390s, and thus shortly after Athens herself had officially changed (in 403/2) from her epichoric Attic alphabet to Ionic, is most likely for the alphabet change, but a later date, in the 370s cannot be excluded (Vottero 1996b: 164–6; for recent discussions see Iversen 2010: 262–3, Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012: 243–4, 248–50). Whatever date we adopt, it seems that Thespiai was changing its alphabet not as an independent act, but in tandem with at least the bulk of the Boeotian confederacy (with Orchomenos lagging slightly behind).

Shortly after the list of war dead comes our earliest temple-inventory from Thespiai, a stone discovered at Chorsiai, headed 'Sacred money of the Thespians' and dated by Thespian archon (*IThesp* 38). This records, first objects in a Heraion (of unrecorded and unknown location), then three vessels and three '*drachma obeliskoi*' at Siphai and two vessels and two *drachma obeliskoi* at 'Kreisus'. The objects recorded here are not dedications but items of temple equipment. So the long list from the Heraion includes a saw, fire-dogs, cheese-graters, as well as more obviously sympotic equipment (couches, kraters, skyphoi and hydriai) (Tomlinson 1980: 221–4). This is a text entirely in the Ionic alphabet, except for the addition of digamma, but with various problems of transcription, including the use of omega on occasions which demand omicron, and the employment of H both for eta and for the aspirate (Vottéro 1996b: 166–70; cf. Iversen 2010).

The balance of advantage and disadvantage, in terms of representing the phonemes current in Boeotia, was not clearly weighted in favour of the new script. The change demands political motivation, and we must look therefore for a period when Boeotian relations are close and when the Boeotians have reason to assimilate themselves to other users of the Attic-Ionic alphabet, most obviously the Athenians. Either the years of the Corinthian war, or the very beginning of the 370s, offer appropriate conditions.

Not far from this date is the earliest of what will be a series of documents attesting to cultic groups in the Sanctuary of the Muses. Remarkably, this earliest example is a cult group for Thamyris, the man blinded for challenging the Muses. In a document dated by the 'hierarch' we are given the names of two 'θαμυρίδδοντες' and of 19 'ἁγιόμενοι' (*IThesp* 313). Equally interesting, and of very similar date, is a dedication to Hermes by a group of magistrates who style themselves 'The Eleven' (*IThesp* 282) and who are assumed to have the same functions as the Eleven at Athens and elsewhere (Roesch 1982: 380–2). Another group of Athenian look-alike magistrates appear on a very recently published statue (herm?) base: *pentekostelogoi* (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 278–80). From the very comparable letter-forms, this seems to be of the same date as *IThesp* 282. Though this was found on the site of ancient Thespiai itself, one would expect the 2 per cent tax on imports and exports to have been collected primarily at the port of Kreusis.

Down to 300, then, we have no certain decrees of Thespiai, and although the standard of some inscriptions suggests well-practised inscribers, we have no sign of systematic public inscription of anything relating to the affairs of the city except for the lists of war-dead (two more of which are to be found in the third century, *IThesp* 487 and 488).[4] Whether we should see that as the effect of prolonged repression by Thebes within the Boeotian confederacy, or whether we should think it represents a minimalist attitude to civic life, is hard to determine. Certainly what Thespiai inscribes seems to be what her neighbours are also inscribing; nor does this picture change immediately as we enter the Hellenistic period.

The major new element in Thespian epigraphy of the Hellenistic period takes the form of catalogues of young men recruited to the army. Such catalogues have been found at all the Boeotian cities around the Copaic basin – Haliartos, Koroneia, Lebadeia, Khaironeia, Orchomenos, Hyettos, Kopai and Akraiphia, and

also from Thebes, Anthedon, Tanagra, Plataia, Thisbe and Khorsiai. Dated by the federal archon as well as by the archon of Thespiai, these inscriptions nevertheless do not initially use a stable terminology. In the earlier inscriptions the terms *neoteroi* (cadets) and *epheboi* are both used at Thespiai, with *epheboi* used at Akraiphia (where, however, instead of their becoming *hoplitai*, or *hoplitai* and *hippotai* (cavalry) as at Thespiai, they become *thyreaphoroi* (big-shield-carriers); so too at Thisbe). In the later inscriptions *epheboi* is the term most widely used, but Thebes and Hyettos use *wikatiwetees* ('20-year olds'). What they are enrolled into is now variously described as the *hippotai* and *agema* (division), *epilektoi* (select) and *peltophorai* (light-shield-carriers) (at Thespiai), *peltophorai* (at Akraiphia, Aigosthena, Thisbe, Kopai, Hyettos, Anthedon), the *tagma* (brigade) or *tagmata* (Thespiai, Khaironeia).[5] We seem to be witnessing here two contrasting phenomena: on the one hand the pull of fashion, so that once one city started to write up the lists of its young men serving in the army for the first time, others felt, or were, obliged to follow suit; and on the other hand the absence of central imposition of a precise terminology, either on what the new recruits were called or on how in detail they were trained.

These lists of recruits offer us two things: one is a cross-section of Thespian names, the other is an indication of numbers. The earliest inscription, preserving a complete cohort and with patronymic adjectives (*IThesp* 88) has 67 names, an almost complete later list has around 61 names *(IThesp* 98); the fullest later list has upwards of 85 names (*IThesp* 95). A cohort of seventy 20-year-olds is likely to be the product of a male population of around 3800 (Etienne and Knoepfler 1976: 202–6; Feyel 1942: 207–17). We do not know what formal or informal mechanisms may have limited the number of males aged 20 who were recruited. If the relationship between citizen population and ephebes was the same as in fourth-century Athens, then approximately half the age cohort will have served as ephebes, in which case we are dealing with a total population not of approaching 10,000 (3800 males, 3800 females plus slaves and resident non-citizens) but something more like 18,000.

If the prominence of the military service of young men is one feature that marks the Hellenistic age, the interest of Hellenistic kings is another. Four stones record dedications of land to gods by Philetairos, two to the Helikonian Muses (*IThesp* 58–9), one to the Muses and the Philetairean fellow-sacrficers (*synthytai*) (*IThesp* 60), and one to Hermes (*IThesp* 61). The four are contemporary and, on grounds of script, relate to the years around 270. Philetairos seems to have bought up land and then gifted it back to help support the cult (for his foundations more generally, see Hansen 1971). Presumably in every case there was a group responsible for ensuring that the income from the land did indeed go to the cult, but this is spelled out only in one case. The variation between the inscriptions here (only one declares itself a boundary stone, but all presumably were so placed) is another example of the resistance of Thespian epigraphy to technical formulas. The full procedure employed is laid out in detail in an inscription from two generations later (*IThesp* 62), probably from 210–208, recording a gift of money from Ptolemy and Arsinoe that the Thespians decide to use to buy land, which they then rent out to give annual income. Thespiai's religious assets, and its penchant for leasing land, are clearly visible here.

It seems to have been the new Hellenistic world that first obliged the Thespians, as it obliged many other cities, to enter into the public provision of honours for those aiding them in other states that are so prominent a feature of Greek public epigraphy. Although the earliest Thespian proxeny decree – that is, a decree in honour of a *proxenos* or member of another city who had acted as champion of the Thespians in his own city – which in this case does not preserve the name of the *proxenos*, is written in a fourth-century script (*IThesp* 1), all subsequent Thespian proxeny decrees (*IThesp* 2–26), with three exceptions (*IThesp* 27–9), date to the last two decades of the third century and to the first quarter of the second. It was in the face of the conflicts that would eventually lead to Roman control that Thespiai came to think that encouraging support from other Greek cities might be advisable. The preserved decrees make *proxenoi* of men from Corinth, Argos (twice), Aigina, Chalkis, Physka (Macedonia), Amphissa, Herakleia, Sikyon, Athens (thrice), Panopeus, Perinthos, Epidamnos, Kanopos, Taras, and Seleukeia.[6] The local centre of gravity of this collection is very striking. It contrasts very strongly with the distribution of *proxenoi* of Oropos, but is quite comparable to the distribution for other cities of the Boeotian confederacy, such as Tanagra.[7] This is largely because there were also *proxenoi* for the Boeotian confederacy, and these included a range of figures from more far-flung places (e.g. Rhodes and Sidon, *IG* vii. 4260, 4261; Sinope *SEG* 1.104). But it is in part because proxeny is a way of giving honours to men who have deserved them, not for what they have done for Thespians abroad, but at Thespiai itself. This is clear from the proxeny decree for the Athenian Sostratos (*IThesp* 29), dated to 250–40, where to a more or less standard proxeny decree is added a more extensive honorific decree in which his services in educating the ephebes ('the *paides* (boys)

and the *neaniskoi* (youths)') are celebrated and he is offered the job, at an annual pay of 4 *mnas*, as long as he wants it.

By the time that the bulk of these Thespian proxenies were inscribed, Thespiai had taken to writing up rather more on stone. But although the bulk of public inscriptions from the years 245 to 172 is very much greater, it remains dominated by a small number of classes of evidence. Apart from the proxenies and the lists of newly trained soldiers, the most important classes of document are financial (largely to do with the leasing of land, but also the record of the repayment of a loan to Athens, perhaps dating to the 220s, *IThesp* 40), or relate to the contests of the Mouseia, or list magistrates.[8]

Although there are fragments of several others (*IThesp* 85–7), there is only one substantially surviving list of magistrates (*IThesp* 84, definitively studied by Roesch (1965)), which runs to 88 lines and records both the federal magistrates and the magistrates of Thespiai for two, successive, years around 210 (Roesch 1965: 18–19; Knoepfler 1996: 159–60 for the date). At the federal level, 7 federal officials are elected by Thespiai (3 *synedroi*, a *thesmophylax*, an *aphedriates* with secretary, and an *agonarch*).[9] But it is the city officials who are most of interest to us. Roesch suggests that the inscription lists them as one group of 'central administration', consisting of the archon, the three polemarchs and their secretary and the hipparch, and five other groups: magistrates responsible for finance and religious affairs, of whom there are at least 14 with two secretaries;[10] military commanders of various sorts, of whom there are at least 21; officials in charge of provisions and finance, of whom there are at least 16 plus two secretaries; those to do with festivals and the gymnasium, of whom there are 13 and a secretary; and miscellaneous, consisting of five 'officers of the Eleven' (*hendekarchoi*) with a secretary; and three 'road-leaders' (*hodegoi*) with their secretary. Numbers can only be approximate since it is one of the puzzles of the inscription that the numbers are not consistent from year to year and in general the second year seems more condensed than the first, with fewer magistrates in various categories.[11]

If a sum of upwards of 72 magistrates is hardly comparable to the 700 at home and 700 abroad claimed by the *Constitution of the Athenians* 24.3 for fifth-century Athens, that is hardly surprising given the different size of the two cities, and 72 is nevertheless a sizeable body.[12] But the interest is not merely in the number but in the distribution. Comparison with fourth-century Athens is interesting for both number and kind (the Athenian data are conveniently collected in Hansen 1980). In some areas the comparison is close – much closer than the discrepancy of size of city would have one expect: Athens had 5 *hodopoioi* to compare to the 3 *hodegoi* at Thespiai (for their role, see Roesch 1965: 244–5). The 5 *hendekarchoi* should perhaps be compared to the 11 *hendeka* (Roesch 1982: 380–2). The 21 military officials compare with 44 (plus three treasurers for them) at Athens. Even when it comes to managing the grain supply, the difference is only by a factor of 5: Athens had 35 *sitophylakes* to compare with the 7 *sitonai* and *sitopolai* at Thespiai. But whereas at Thespiai, if purely financial officials are separated from those whose role is connected to religious cults and festivals, there are 8 or 10 (3 *katoptai*, 3 *tamiai* of the polis, 5 or 7 *limenarchoi* at Kreusis, plus a secretary), at Athens we would have to count more than 80: 10 *poletai*, 10 *apodektai*, 10 *agoronomoi*, 10 *metronomoi*, 10 *epimeletai tou emporiou*, 10 *logistai* with their 10 *synegoroi*, 10 *praktores*, not including various *tamiai* (of the *boule*, the people, the shipyards, etc.). And against the 19 magistrates and one secretary that Thespiai has to look after sacred matters and festivals, Athens has up to around 130. What is most striking, however, is the absence of any reference to magistrates or colleges of magistrates who take overall charge of the city and its rules. Thespiai elects a *thesmophylax* for the Confederacy, but unless they are hidden in the lacuna (lines 37–42, where Roesch suspects the *hierarchai* are concealed) between the buyers of grain and the *tamiai* of the polis, Thespiai has no board in charge of its laws, no equivalent of the *thesmothetai*, *nomothetai*, and *nomophylakes* at Athens. And it is something of a shock to find that although Thespiai sends 3 councillors to the Federal synedrion, there is no direct reference, here or elsewhere, to any council at Thespiai.[13]

What emerges from all of this is that, despite its heavy investment in festivals and in the training of young men as soldiers, Thespiai ran itself with an extremely light touch. It is not just that Athens has the various financial and legal officials mentioned above: it also had the Council of 500 to discharge, directly or through its committees, a great deal of oversight of financial and other transactions. At Thespiai there are, first, very few people performing these functions, and secondly they are somewhat invisible. We meet the *katoptai* in the one substantial decree, from 189/8, in response to an embassy from Delphi asking Thespiai to send them three judges (*IThesp* 30). Here the *katoptai* are responsible for sorting out the purchase of the *stelai* on which the decree will be inscribed (line 19, cf. line 22). We meet them also in the earliest of the land leases, from the 240s, where they scrutinize the guarantors offered by the lessees (*IThesp* 44.7), and we meet them when the commission charged with

re-leasing property is required to clear its accounts with them (*IThesp* 56.10). By contrast, the *tamiai* of the polis never put their head above the epigraphic parapet at all.

This very light civic (as opposed to religious or military) administration is in one respect reassuring. The failure of Thespiai to inscribe decrees, beyond a small number of proxeny decrees and one or two others extorted from them by the actions of other cities (like the Delphian embassy), comes to appear most plausibly not as an unwillingness to inscribe, but as a failure to pass decrees in the first place. The epigraphic record is the one appropriate to a city whose communal civic activities were slight enough to be supported by the very light magisterial infrastructure described in the stele of the magistrates.

How could a city like Thespiai be so inactive as a political community? Part, at least, of the answer must be the existence of the Boeotian confederacy. Whatever we think the political organization of Boeotia was in the sixth century and the first half of the fifth, from 447 onwards Thespiai had always been part of a wider confederacy that both was responsible for Boeotian external arrangements, and imposed a measure of uniformity on Boeotian cities in their internal arrangements. The demand, and the scope, for an active political life in Thespiai itself was limited because of the responsibilities assumed by the confederacy. But part of the answer must also lie with a different attitude to magistrates and their oversight. Whereas Athens went consistently for boards of ten, with individual magistrates as a consequence having little responsibility, Thespiai used small groups, perhaps even expanding or contracting them according to the weight of business. Individuals must have ended up doing much more on their own in an unsupervised way.

What propelled Thespiai into the epigraphic limelight (apart from the expectation of the confederacy that troops would be provided and trained), was above all her religious resources. The Muses of Helikon, responsible for Boeotia's emergence into literature in the poems of Hesiod, created an interest outside Thespiai to which Thespiai was expected, certainly by the Boeotian confederacy as a whole but in some senses also by a wider community, to respond. In the 220s, for reasons not easy to recover but perhaps connected with changes in the Amphictyony under the benign hegemony of Aitolia, the Boeotian confederacy seems to have gone in for a wave of religious renewal ('une réactivation très remarquable des cultes civiques', Knoepfler 1996: 166). At Akraiphia the Ptoia were reorganized (*LSCG* 148–9, no.73 and Manieri 2009: 63–129, esp. 80–7); at Thebes the Agrionia (*SEG* 28.487 and Manieri 2009: 290–1); and at Lebadeia construction was begun of the temple of Zeus. As Knoepfler has shown, the reorganization of the Mouseia so as to have a quadrennial stephanitic contest – that is, one whose prize took the form of a simple wreath (*stephanos*), as at the Olympic Games – belongs in this context (Knoepfler 1996; more generally, Schachter 1986: 163–6; Manieri 2009: 318–22). The city of Thespiai and the Boeotian confederacy sent one Hierokles as an ambassador to the Technitai ('Artists of Dionysos') of Isthmus and Nemea, to ask for their support in turning the thymelic contest of the Mouseia into a stephanitic event (on the *technitai* generally, see the parallel treatments of Le Guen 2001 and Aneziri 2003). The Technitai obliged, and the first stephanitic Mouseia were held, with Hierokles as the agonothete (*IThesp* 156; Manieri 2009: Thes. 10). Similar requests were, it seems, sent to other groups of Technitai, and from the inscription which relates to the Technitai from Athens, we might conclude that the initiative was seen as more a Boeotian than an Athenian one, since reference is made to 'the Boeotians and the city of the Thespians', in that order (*IThesp* 157.10; Manieri 2009: Thes. 11 B20–1). Another decree of the *technitai* of Ionia and the Hellespont, dating from *c.* 170 BC and displayed on Delos, shows that the Delphic oracle was also consulted on the issue of the standing of the Mouseia at Thespiai, but from the way in which the Mouseia are there coupled with the Herakleia at Thebes, as well as with the Pythia at Delphi, it seems probable that the consultation was not by the *polis* of Thespiai but by the Boeotian confederacy, seeking to have two major events in Boeotia recognized as equal to the Pythia (*IG* xi. 4: 1061. 14). All of this makes it unsurprising that the federal archon, Lykinos, heads the catalogue of victors at the Mouseia (*IT*hesp 161.7; Manieri 2009: Thes. 17), and that in listing victors the ethnic 'Boeotios', rather than the particular city ethnic, is used down to 171. We should not see Thespian initiative behind the reorganization of the Mouseia, or at least not without confederate pressure. That said, when support was sought from Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe, and from another King, the letters that came back were addressed to the polis of the Thespians, and we might have a purely city initiative here (*IThesp* 152–4; Manieri 2009: Thes. 15, with the Thespian decree *IThesp* 155; Manieri 2009: Thes. 12). In the end, for all the attention-seeking publicity, the Mouseia seem not to have greatly increased their reach: the victor lists to 171 yield 6 Boeotian victors, 4 from nearby cities, and 4 from elsewhere.

It is in this context of a city sitting light to administration, whose priorities are coming to be determined by decisions made externally, in the Boeotian confederacy, that it is necessary to re-examine

Hellenistic Thespiai's singular epigraphic legacy – the land leases. As published in Roesch's corpus, there are 14 leases (*IThesp* 44–57), not counting the lease of lands newly acquired following the Ptolemaic donation (*IThesp* 62). But in terms of the number of separate inscribed stones, we are dealing with just six. The earliest is a large opisthographic stele (i.e. one inscribed on the back as well as the front) whose long inscription history has been established by Knoepfler (1992: 469–70). This earliest text (*IThesp* 44–7) dates to the middle of the 240s. The fragmentary opening records the names of those responsible for leasing what is plausibly restored as 'the sacred land and the Nympheion at Pheriai', a special commission, afterwards referred to as ἡ ἀρχή). We then have set out the financial conditions on which the land is to be let, involving inspection of the guarantors (*prostatai*) by the *katoptai*, and punitive measures over non-payment (rent increases 50 per cent for non-payment along with re-lease of the plot; previous tenant to pay a supplement if the new tenant only agrees to pay less). Fragments of the list of those leasing and guaranteeing leases then follow, but insufficient to enable any quantitative analysis to be made. The text on the back (*IThesp* 48–52) opens with the naming of Thespiai's magistrates and the naming of a three-man commission, and their secretary, responsible for leasing out 'each of the *tomoi*', then glossed as 'the sacred *tomos* and the Nympheion'. The conditions of lease follow, again concentrating on the provision of guarantors (*prostatai*) and what happens in case of default. In this case the scrutiny of the guarantors is by the commission, not by the *katoptai*. Once more there are clauses about the previous lessee being obliged to continue payments if the land is leased for less to the subsequent tenant. The period of lease is 20 years. The other fragments give lists of lessees and of guarantors, now referred to as *enguoi*. The bottom fragment preserves part of three totals, restored as the total of the first, second and third '*tomos*'.

The second stone (*IThesp* 53), to be dated perhaps in the early 220s, is a decree of the people ordering the five *hierarchai* to record the conditions on which they leased 'the public land in Drymos', those to whom they leased, with their guarantors, and the area leased and rent paid. This appears to be a purely Thespian decision, with the city's polemarchs to be consulted over where the stele should be put up. The conditions about payment of rent are essentially similar to those on the first stone, but the land here is rented out for 25 years. About 5 or 6 plots of land seem to be listed. At the end of the text a total is given for the rent from all the plots leased, but the crucial first figures are missing.

The third stone (*IThesp* 54–5) is once more opisthographic, but in this case the two sides may have been inscribed at the same time, at a date between the early 220s and 215. On one side we have the end of the conditions of rental (standard, but with an additional mention of trees), followed by a space and then a list of those who in the year of the archon Charopinos have rented 'the sacred lands of the Muses' for 40 years. The plot is identified with the phrase 'the (land) *par* + name in genitive'. Three interpretations of this formula have been offered: traditionally it has been taken to indicate the name of the last tenant, a position to which I offered objections in 1985 but now reasserted by Pernin 2004; Sosin 2000 has suggested that it indicates the name of the last owner of the land before the land was acquired for renting; I myself had argued that it identified the neighbour of a property (Osborne 1985). Once the first plot is dealt with, the next leases are described as 'other leases on the same conditions', and then two plots are described in the same way, one leased for 20 and one for 10 years. Then are listed 'other leases on the same conditions for six years', and 5 lessees are recorded, all apparently of land '*par*' the same person. At this point we have the name of an archon and the record of a dedication by the priest of the Muses of 4200 dr., the income from which is to be used to purchase an ox for sacrifice. There follows a decree proposed by one Damon son of Mnasarchos, setting up a two-man commission to record, along with the other gifts to the Muses, the land at Kereisia left in his will by Gorgythos son of Kleisthenes. This in turn is followed by a list of those who in the year of the archon Nikon have leased the 'oil-land' sacred to Hermes, on the same conditions, for 40 years. There follow the names, rent and guarantors of 12 lessees of 'land *par* Andreas' (including three men each leasing two plots), and then three men each leasing land *par* a different individual. Then we have 'other leases', dated to the same year of Nikon, for 20 years: first six leases of 'land *par* Andreas' (again), four of which are taken by one individual and a fifth by a man who might be his son, then one lease of land *par* Hagasistratos. The total for the leases of the sacred land for Hermes is then given as 2222 drachmas.

On the reverse of this stele are further lists of leases of land sacred to the Muses (*IThesp* 55). The archon Charopinos is again mentioned, but the bulk of the action seems to happen in the year of Nikon (and at a point when the name of the archon after him is not yet known). We have once again a list of conditions of lease (for 20 years) spelled out, this time for property identified as 'the garden which Sostratos dedicated to be sacred to the Muses'. The *tamias* of the Muses is here responsible for receiving the rent and for action in

case of default. It is clear that these conditions are set out for land to be leased for the first time. Something identified as 'the garden *par* Philotis' is then rented for 20 years for 121 drs. (the same rent as is stated for the garden which Sostratos dedicated, which must surely be that garden); and the total of rent from sacred land of the Muses given as 591 drs.[14]

The fourth stele (*IThesp* 56) is explicitly for the renewal of leases of plots in Apharkeioi that were leased when Empedokles was archon, in accordance with the original conditions. A three-man commission, plus secretary, is set up to do this re-leasing, and to lease the Nympheion at Pheriai, leased when Charopinos was archon, that is, the lease recorded in *IThesp* 44. Tenants who have kept their conditions and irrigated their property are allowed to lease again on the original conditions. 23 plots are then recorded as leased, with lessees and guarantors (here *prostatai*) recorded, plus the Nympheion, which is leased for 90 drs. 20 of the 24 plots have their lease renewed by the former lessee or his next of kin, and seven lessees continue to lease more than one plot.

The fifth stele (*IThesp* 57) is a fragment of only 14 lines recording the lease of numbered items, of which we appear to have here from the fifth to the 11th, plus a named plot, the Euonoumion. The plots here are bizarrely small (rents of 12 drs. or less except for the Euonoumion at 21 drs. 1 obol; the median of 10 drs. here contrasts with medians of 55, 50, 50.5 and 58 drs. elsewhere) and we must wonder whether we are dealing with land at all. The number system employed is slightly different from that in other Thespian leases and it is also notable that the names here are all otherwise unknown. The provenance of the inscription is not known (it was simply found by Roesch in Thebes Museum) and although this is certainly a Boeotian inscription it would probably be a mistake to conclude anything about Thespiai on its basis.

The sixth stele (*IThesp* 62) was mentioned above (p. 225), since it records the donation of land by Ptolemy as well as the leasing of that land. On the stone we have a decree ('The polis decided…': contrast, on *IThesp* 53 and 56, 'The people decided'…), setting up a commission to buy and rent out land, the description of two plots of land, one of them enormous, and their neighbours, and the leasing of that land for 14 years, with the second plot specified as leased at 2 drs. per *plethron* (where a *plethron* is a unit of area equivalent to just under 0.1 ha). The stone does not survive and we must rely on Jamot's transcription and on what Holleaux made of that and of a squeeze (Holleaux 1897; Sosin 2000 attempts, unconvincingly, to reduce irregularity here). The unexampled commission of six, according to Holleaux (the last of whom, Parmenias son of Phanteios, also leases the larger plot of land) has raised suspicions; but there are a number of irregularities here, such as fixed price rental for the smaller plot. Nor does the addition of the leasing of the larger plot to a member of the commission seem impossible, especially when the larger plot is 49 ha in area and rented out for 1451 drs., that is something like 25 times the median sum for land in other leases. The largest single sum paid in rent for a single plot in any earlier lease is 375 drs. in *IThesp* 54, so this plot is almost four times as large. Yet in date this document, which Knoepfler (1992: 470) argues should be of precisely 209, is more or less contemporary with *IThesp* 56, where the largest rent is 164 dr. We must accept that this lease is simply working in a different way from the others.

The land leases present a number of challenges. They offer some rich and specific data, relevant to the political, religious, social and economic life of Thespiai. But what are we to make of these data? Certain features of the evidence need to be stressed.

First, much of the land leased is explicitly sacred, and it is not clear that any of it is not sacred (compare Migeotte 2006: 381). The earliest opisthographic text refers directly, front and back, to 'sacred land and the Nympheion', and the text at the back also refers to 'the land of Herakles'. The second stone has everything in the hands of the *hierarchai*, although it does talk of 'public land'. Roesch denied that the land here was sacred, but his own description of the competence of the *hierarchai* makes it clear that they always operate in the sacred realm.[15] The third stone, front and back, is a collection on sacred matters, largely involving the Muses, but also Hermes. The plots re-leased on the fourth stone include the Nympheion. The fifth stone has the problematic tiny rents, but Schachter has suspected cult in the name 'Euonoumion' here. The sixth stone is the donation of Ptolemy, explicitly for the Muses. We can safely conclude that there is no evidence that the people of Thespiai leased land other than to raise money for cult expenses. Between them, the third and sixth stones show something of the mechanisms involved: either a donation of money is converted into land to give regular income (as with Ptolemy's donation), or individuals dedicate or bequeath land – a garden, as Sostratos has done, or the land at Kereisia left by Gorgythos – which is then leased out. Thespiai's land rental, or at least its epigraphically recorded land rental, is a direct product of its prominent cults, particularly the cult of the Helikonian Muses.

Second, there is a good chance that land leasing is something new to third-century Thespiai. The various donations are clear evidence that the stock of

land to be leased increased during the period of this documentation, but two further features encourage the thought that leasing itself is a new phenomenon. The first is the care with which the conditions, that is the financial conditions, for leasing land are set out. We find them set out on the front and back of the first stone, on the second stone, on both sides of the third stone, and alluded to in the fourth stone. The demand for guarantors who are scrutinized to see if they are credit-worthy, for a down-payment and for a tax payment on the rent, plus the requirement that if conditions are not met, either in terms of provision of guarantors or of subsequent failure to pay the rent, the plot will be re-leased and the first lessee liable for any comparative shortfall in rent, are extremely stringent. They suggest, on the one hand, a desire to put off those who are poor and might not be able to get sufficiently credit-worthy backers or to pay the deposit (see further below); and, on the other, considerable anxiety about how the rental process will work out. In the different leases the conditions are set out in very similar terms, but not in the same wording. Even the term used for guarantor varies between *prostatas* and *enguos*, in a pattern not simply determined by date. Nor are the lengths of leases constant, even when set up by the same officials. The variation in wording goes along with the variation in officials involved: there is a great deal of *ad hoc* invention here, as commissions of various sizes and compositions are set up, different officials are called on to validate guarantors, and so on. None of this reads like the practice of a city where this land has already been leased for generations. Feyel and Roesch have disputed whether the idea of a permanent commission makes sense, with Feyel (*BCH* 60 (1937), 407) objecting that with leases of 20 years, a permanent commission makes no sense, and Roesch insisting that commissions could be periodically renewed, citing a parallel from Tanagra dating to 90–80 BC (Roesch 1965: 187–93, at 192, citing *Arkhaiologike Ephemeris* (1956), 36–7). Roesch is clearly right that commissions can be kept rolling, but Feyel must also be right that if one were planning how to deal with these things, one would not put long-term oversight in the hands of a special commission. It is not hard to see why, when donations came in, a special committee was set up to deal with them, but the failure to create an overarching body responsible for the on-going oversight of leased land is a measure both of the novelty of the situation for the Thespians and of the lightness of their civic administration.

The third point to make is about the funding of cult. The amounts of money involved in these leases are certainly not enormous. Surviving figures here (*IThesp* 53 rents in total 1974 drs.; *IThesp* 54 rents for Hermes of 2222 drs.; *IThesp* 55 rents for the Muses of 591 drs.; *IThesp* 62 rents from the Ptolemaic gift of 1701 drs.) indicate total income per year of over 1 talent. But if not enormous, this is also not a negligible sum and will have ensured that an impressive amount of festival activity could take place in style. We simply do not know how cult at Thespiai had funded itself in the Classical period, but it is likely that the new gifts brought additional and not merely substitute funding.

All of these points suggest that in the middle of the third century there was an injection of funding and energy into Thespiai's most prominent cults, those based in the Valley of the Muses. But where did the initiative for this come from? The cult of the Muses had certainly long attracted interest: Pausanias (ix. 30. 1) indicates that there were major sculptural groups there by the early fourth century, further enhanced during the fourth and into the third century. The interest already shown in the first half of the third century by the Attalid Philetairos suggests that external factors may have been important in promoting the cult further. Whatever Thespiai was already doing to celebrate the Muses, it offered an occasion for display to some who were eager for such opportunities. The result, by the end of the third century, was not only the re-organization and up-grading of the Mouseia but the monumentalization of the sanctuary with the construction of at least one portico and a theatre.[16]

It follows from the relatively modest total of rent – even if we double up we are dealing only with around 2 talents annual rent – that the economic effect of this activity will also have been relatively modest. If we take the rate of 2 drs. per *plethron* in *IThesp* 62 to be normal, then we are dealing with around 6000 *plethra* of land (some rents include an element for buildings) – that is about 525 ha, or enough on normal calculations to feed 100 families.[17] Just how modest the effect of renting this out was will depend on who rented it. Feyel famously argued that the leases, at least those of the 220s on, were part of an effort to provide land to the landless. He was encouraged in this thought by the relatively low levels of overlap between the names of those leasing and the names of those known to take office, or otherwise prominent, in Thespiai. Yet some of those who lease property were certainly of high status (e.g. the polemarch Theirarchos son of Kanas, who leases four plots in *IThesp* 50), and the relatively high degree of repetition within individual lease inscriptions, where the same individual may lease multiple plots (of the 46 preserved names of lessees in *IThesp* 48–52, 54, and 56, 19 lease more than one plot) or appear as guarantor as well as lessee (9 individuals appear in both categories in those same inscriptions) discourages the view that we are dealing

with the poor.[18] I have suggested that what we see is relatively wealthy men taking advantage of land for leasing when they already have interests in that area, and not otherwise (hence the relatively small overlap of personnel from one lease inscription to another).[19]

The readiness of the relatively wealthy to lease property is significant in one particular respect: while the produce from one's own land can be directly eaten, or used for gifts, those who lease property are required to sell some of the produce in order to pay the rent. Readiness to lease will therefore relate to expectations about the marketability of the produce that can be grown. The more we stress this aspect, the more striking it is that Thespiai has so few officials regulating behaviour in the market. We should not think of the light administration as being simply a product of a heavily subsistence-based society and economy; it must also have reflected a political decision.

We can see something of the same point from the debate about the status of those leasing property, which arises from the nature of Thespian epigraphy. Although we have quite a lot of Thespian names, we have them mainly from the lists of recruits and from these leases. Neither serving as a soldier, nor leasing a plot of land is in itself a mark of status. What we lack from Thespiai are lists of individuals serving the city in ways that require money or status. The closest we come to this is in the inscription recording the repayment to individuals of money loaned to Athens, plausibly in 229 when they bought out the Macedonian garrison (*IThesp* 40). As a result, whether we take the lessee of the massive property bought with the Ptolemaic gift to be Parmenias son of Phanteios or Ari..idas son of Dio.., we are dealing with an individual who is otherwise unknown (except in as far as Parmenias serves on the commission to purchase and lease this same land). This is both a fact about the epigraphy and a fact about Thespiai as a city. That becomes apparent from the fact that only half of those wealthy enough to give a substantial sum towards the loan to Athens turn out to have names that occur at all elsewhere in Thespiai's record: of the nine named individuals – Kalliteles, Timyllos, Pouthodoros, Triax, Menalkis, Karon, Dion, Antidoros, Pedagenes – to whom sums of money received back from Athens are paid over, and to whom individually sums amounting to almost 4000 dr. are repaid, only Pouthodoros, Dion, Antidoros and Pedagenes have names that are even attested otherwise at Thespiai. The city sat light to its inhabitants, and they, even when wealthy, sat light to it.

I promised at the beginning of this chapter to read this evidence against both archaeological and literary evidence. Polybius famously complains about the state of the Boeotians in the early years of the second century, saying that they had been in bad way for many years (xx. 4–6). In particular, he claims that for almost 25 years there had been no administration of justice, either in private or in public cases, with magistrates concentrating on garrison duty and military campaigns and deferring justice, and generals using public funds to pay wages to the poor. He goes on to suggest that, along with corruption in high places, there was a general tendency of the childless to spend their money on feasts, so that many had more feasts to go to than there were days in the month. Feyel reviewed Polybius against the epigraphic record and came up with a story in which the years 245 to 220 were years of Boeotian renewal following conquest by the Aitolians; that Polybius knew this but concealed it because of his *'amour-propre achéen'* over the defection of Megara in 224; but that after 220, everything Polybius said was true.[20]

The epigraphy gives no grounds for thinking that there was any marked change in Thespiai in or around 220. Feyel's attempt to see changes in the size of plots leased in these years is in vain. But arguably Polybius' picture of Boeotia is not seriously at odds with the epigraphic record of Boeotia either before or after 220. What Polybius describes is what the epigraphic record also shows.[21] Thespiai is keen on military service – keen enough, at least, to write up the lists of recruits. The elaboration of the Mouseia will undoubtedly have led to more feasts, and we see individuals giving money to enable more animals to be sacrificed or giving property to be rented out to pay for cult activity. Such activity seems to have attracted, rather than repelled, those outside, at least to judge from the Ptolemaic benefaction. But it went with minimal civic institutions, and in particular minimal interest in regulations or regulatory bodies.

What of the archaeological evidence? Here the survey has provided rich evidence for small sites being densely scattered across the late Classical and Hellenistic landscape, subsequently to thin dramatically in the early Roman period. Exactly what we should make of the politics of that decision to live, or at least to spend much time based, outside nucleated settlements will only become clear when truly comparable evidence exists from enough areas where we are confident of the local political arrangements.[22] But it is at least worth observing that the choice of the less sociable option in terms of settlement pattern accords with the light-touch civic administration (both enabling the light touch and sharing the 'light-touch' mentality), and that the economic arguments in favour of living close to land farmed would also be arguments that caused even relatively wealthy men to be interested in acquiring land to lease only if that land was near their existing

landed interests (and presumably near their, at least temporary, residence). At the very least, nothing in the archaeology renders anything that we have deduced from the epigraphic and literary record surprising.

Arguments from silence draw widespread criticism, and any attempt to draw a portrait of a city from its inscriptions, like any attempt to draw a portrait of a city from the archaeological sites revealed by survey, will end up resting on what is not recorded, as well as on what is. I have tried to show how, in the case of Thespiai at least, absences of evidence can reasonably be taken as evidence of absence, since the record that does exist in various ways reinforces and reconfirms the absence. The result is a picture of a Greek city strongly contrasted to either the litigious and political Athenians, or the people of classical Thasos with their regulatory obsessions (Osborne 2009, based on similar epigraphic analysis). Thespiai emerges instead as a city where long years of important decisions being made at arms' length led to the construction of a community held together not by doing business together but by playing together – playing soldiers, and watching festival plays. The evidence for significant personal wealth and for a significant body of individuals able to take on additional rented land suggests that, whatever our Polybian moral disapproval of so light a state presence, Thespiai enjoyed in consequence at least a moderately well-distributed prosperity.[23]

Notes

1 Compare the way in which Thespiai is traditionalist in its orthography, keeping the letter E and not assimilating *e** + V to *i* (Vottéro 1996a: 85). This seems to be an element of Thespian resistance to Thebes. Note also that Thespiai, like other cities of Boeotia, keeps the use of Boeotian numerals in documents for internal consumption, but goes over to a more universally recognized numerical system when dealing with others (Vottéro 1996b: 178–9).

2 The story is explored by Vottéro 1996a, esp. 88–90. The shortage of independently dated inscriptions must be borne in mind when discussing the issue of how sharp the division at 171 was, and there are certainly other cities in Boeotia where use of dialect clearly persisted after 171: see Müller 2005: 98–9, citing in particular inscriptions from Akraiphia and Orchomenos, and below, Chapter 7, p. 232.

3 *SEG* 39 (1989) 411; *IG* vii. 585. Further afield, there is also a fifth-century casualty list from Argos. For a list of casualty lists from outside Athens see Pritchett (1985): 140–5. In the fourth century, lists are known from Plataia and Thebes, as well as from Argos, Corinth, Epidauros, Mantineia, and Tegea.

4 The latter identifies five dead men, four of them with their places of death localized, one dying at Oinophyta, two at Oropos and one at Koroneia: the reinscription of a family monument of fifth-century date (with Oropos as a way of referring to Tanagra) has been suggested.

5 See Roesch 1982: 340–3. The watershed between the two groups has conventionally been dated to 245 BC, but recent (unpublished) research by Y. Kalliontzis has argued that it should be placed at 225 BC.

6 This distribution is one of the things that argues against Fossey's view (1994: 40–3) that it is possession of coastal areas that leads a city to make a large number of proxeny decrees, despite his claims to the contrary.

7 Marek 1984: 27–32, and map between pp. 28 and 29 for Oropos; see also Fossey 1994. For proxeny in general, see now Mack 2015.

8 Although there is some element of the official about them (*IThesp* 214 even heads itself 'Gods. Good Fortune', like a decree), the 7 inscriptions recording the enfranchisement of slaves are in fact private documents, something reflected in the absence of regular vocabulary to describe what is being done or of consistent demands on the newly enfranchised. As in Boeotia generally, the Thespian acts of enfranchisement date to the end of the third and first part of the second century BC. See generally Darmezin 1999.

9 Thespiai was one of three cities (the others were Thebes and Tanagra) that each on their own constituted one of the seven *telê* of the Hellenistic confederacy: see Corsten 1999: 38–47; Knoepfler 2000; Müller 2011.

10 This is the least coherent group, but the case for all these officials having charge of money is made by Roesch 1965: 24.

11 For the way in which the numbers of any particular magistracy seem to vary from year to year more generally in Boeotia, see Schachter 1997: 278, who remarks there that Thespiai variously fields 1, 2, 3 or 5 *hierarchai*.

12 72 compares closely with 70 ephebes; Athenian ephebic numbers were around 500 a year in the fourth century (they would have been something like double that number had they existed in the fifth century). Ideally one would compare the array of magistrates at Thespiai to the array of magistrates in a city closer in size and time to Hellenistic Thespiai, but we have no comparably complete list from elsewhere.

13 Roesch (1965: 126–33) fudges the issue of whether there is a Council; Rhodes and Lewis (1997: 124) contemplate the possibility of there being no Council, even when a probouleutic formula is employed in decrees. Whether or not Thespiai did have a council, its complete absence from view cannot plausibly be regarded as an epigraphic accident: it tells us a great deal about its place within the city.

14 Pernin (2004) 223–4 sees the conditions, which mention that the lessee receives the land *par* the magistrates (i.e. the commission that has set up the lease), as being set up for the first-time lease, with the leasing which is then recorded being not the first but (at least) the second lease, so that the property is not received '*par*' the magistrates, but '*par*' Philotis. This enables her to retain the traditional understanding of *par* + personal name in the leases.

15 Roesch 1965: 189 for denial that the land here is sacred ('ce sont des domaines publics, et non des propriétés

sacrées, qui sont mis en location'); 204–5 for the invariably sacred tasks of the *hierarchai*.

16 The precise date of buildings is uncertain, but Roux believes them to be third-century: *BCH* 78 (1954), 43.

17 Thespiai, without Chorsiai, Siphai, Thisbe, and Eutresis is reckoned by Hansen (2004: 457) to possess 200 sq. km (20,000 ha); with them, it was 425 sq. km.

18 Pernin (2004: 228) takes issue with my suggestion that lessees were 'well-off', but without engaging with the full evidence. See more generally Müller 2010, who discusses the leases at 232–5.

19 Pernin (2004: 229–30) wonders whether the repeated appearance of the Nympheion undermines the case for the lands leased in the separate inscriptions being geographically separate, and prefers to see the fact that only occasionally do the same names occur in different leases as a product of leases tending to stay within a broad kinship or friendship group.

20 Feyel 1942: 304, 'à partir de 220, le jugement si sévère de Polybe paraît tout à fait justifié. Mais, précisément, il ne l'est pas avant cette date'; 305–6 for Polybius's reasons.

21 For a reading less sympathetic to Polybius, seeing his account as a literary *topos* of Roman origins, see Müller 2013.

22 See Osborne 2004 for the current problems of comparison of settlement evidence.

23 I am very grateful to participants at a workshop on Boeotia held in Cambridge in autumn 2011 and again at the 2011 autumn meeting of the British Epigraphy Society, and particularly to Albert Schachter, for comments on and reactions to an earlier draft. Christel Müller, Nikolaos Papazarkadas and Caroline Vout read and improved improved an earlier draft and, although I have sometimes stubbornly failed to follow their guidance, I warmly thank them for their help.

Chapter 7

The Roman fate of Thespiai (171 BC – fourth century AD)

Christel Müller

The literary sources for the late Hellenistic and Imperial Periods are scarce, scanty, and scattered in respect of the broader historical picture, offering many more lacunae than continuous narratives. We have bits and pieces from Polybius and Livy, an extract from Pausanias about the Achaian War, a few allusions here and there in Cicero. On the other hand, the two books on Boeotia by Strabo (ix) and Pausanias (ix) are full of interesting information about landscapes, topography and toponyms. To these one should add the works by the Boeotian Plutarch, especially the *Erotikos*, which is set in the Valley of the Muses. Overall, the partial nature of the literary evidence makes the epigraphical material all the more indispensable.

The total number of inscriptions for Thespiai is one of the highest in Boeotia (more than 1300), but this is not necessarily a direct reflection of the expansion and wealth of the city. That we have so many Thespian inscriptions is first and foremost the result of the 'excavation' by a member of the French school of Athens, Paul Jamot, who dismantled the *Kastro* at the end of the nineteenth century. A by-product of their inclusion in the *Kastro* is that for a lot of documents we know where they were found, but not where they were originally erected. This affects our understanding of the spatial organization of inscriptions in the city and the outer sanctuaries. But I shall still be referring both to inscriptions dealing with the Valley of the Muses and inscriptions concerning the urban centre (*astu*): the city is as much a whole for historians as it is for archaeologists.

This abundant corpus, as Robin Osborne has already mentioned (Chapter 6), has been recently published in an electronic version by the Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen in Lyon, and I shall use the numbering of this temporary opus (*IThesp*); but the chronology of many inscriptions in this corpus is either too vague ('III-II a.C.' is a very common feature), or inaccurate.[1] One example will suffice. Roesch (1982: 399) considered that the Boeotians did not use their regional dialect after 171 BC, which has proved to be mistaken: the dialect is still in use in the region down to the middle or even second half of the second century BC. Vagueness in chronology especially affects the funerary material. Tombstones are very numerous, about 900 in total for the whole history of Thespiai, but the dates are so poorly established that the material is hardly usable, so it will not be touched on here.

What will be done here is to glance through this remarkably dense material, pointing out the main dossiers in accordance with the following theme: what is Roman about Roman Thespiai? I shall focus on three main points:

- Thespiai in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War and its subsequent history during the late Hellenistic period
- Thespiai, the Roman power and its representatives
- Thespiai and its élites: Italians, Romans and Romanized Greeks

Thespiai in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War (after 168 BC)

The behaviour of the Thespians during the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC) had consequences. This period witnessed the fierce and consistent opposition to the Romans on the part of three cities (Haliartos, Koroneia and Thisbe) (Müller: 1996a). But in the other Boeotian cities we can see no clear 'pro-Roman' group: Thebes was more or less on the Roman side, along with probably a few other *poleis*, including Thespiai. Kreusis, the port of Thespiai (see Pernin 2011: 308–14) was used at least three times by the Romans to get into Boeotian territory, during the Second and Third

wars: in 191 (Livy xxxvi. 21), in 171 (Livy xlii. 56), and in 169 (Livy xliv. 1). Two ambassadors, Lases and Kallias (Polybius xxvii. 1), were sent to the Romans to surrender in the name of their homeland (*patris*), that is their city of origin. Yet equally we find the Thespians welcoming the newly elected Boeotarchs, who belonged to the other party (Livy xlii. 43). Overall, the Thespians are at this time rather favourable to Rome, or display at least a benevolent neutrality.

The biggest consequence of the Third Macedonian War for Boeotia was the dissolution of the *koinon*, the Confederacy. In this Hellenistic *koinon*, Thespiai had been quite powerful: as Knoepfler has shown (Knoepfler 2002, with a summary in Müller 2001a: 261–3), out of the seven districts (*telè*) forming the territorial framework of this *koinon* Thespiai, like Thebes and Tanagra, had held a whole one for itself, which means that it had a population able to support the demands of the *koinon*, especially in terms of young soldiers ready for enrolment.

In turn, the consequences of the dissolution are multiple:

– There was no longer a federal government or magistrates. There was to be no revival of the *koinon* before, at least, the end of the Mithridatic War; and in my view, later still, at the end of the first century BC (Müller 2014). When it did reappear, Thespiai was not directly involved (it concerned mainly Lebadeia and Koroneia). After 171, we know only about local and civic magistrates. The civic organs include the *synedrion*, the council, which is the new name of the *boulè* after 167 – providing a reliable chronological landmark for epigraphical documents (Müller 2005: 114–6) – and probably implies a different way of recruiting the councillors, with the introduction of a property qualification (as conceded by Hamon 2007: 87), which anticipates the measures taken for Greece by Mummius after 146, according to Pausanias (vii. 16. 7–10). Although not many Thespian decrees are preserved after 171, there is a fragmentary one (*IThesp* 41) mentioning *synedroi* (councillors) and concerning the election of *sitônai* (commissaries for grain) during an *archèresiè* (the assembly for the election of magistrates). This decree, which may have been a measure taken against a food crisis, would fit nicely in the years 170–150 BC, as the Boeotians seem greatly concerned with such matters after the Third Macedonian War.[2]
– There was no longer federal administration of justice, which explains why the cities had to appeal to foreign judges: in Thespiai, we know of one such judge coming from Troizen at a date just before 140/39 BC (*IG* II², 971: see Müller 2013: 272–3 on this topic).
– There was no longer a federal army; but the local, civic armies did not disappear, as is shown by the catalogues of conscripts: see Plassart 1946: 482–7 on the Thespian catalogues. There are at least 12 such catalogues in the new corpus (*IThesp* 109–120) dating from the second century BC to the first century AD, with numbers of names that are not negligible (for instance *IThesp* 113, which is complete, shows 28 names in the mid-second century BC), even though some of the lists are much shorter than their predecessors (Etienne and Knoepfler 1976: 203 and n. 688). In fact, any catalogue in which there is no mention of a federal archon and no patronymic adjective (e.g. *IThesp* 108) could post-date 171, since the presence of the regional dialect is no longer a relevant chronological criterion (Müller 2005: 97–8).
– There was no longer an overall territorial organization with intermediary structures and networks. Life was now based on cities, *kata polin* as Polybius says (xxviii. 1). Yet there may have been some trace of such an organization, what I have called a 'federal memory' (Müller 2014), visible in the *apologia* of an *agonothetes* (festival organizer) of the Basileia in Lebadeia in the mid-first century BC: here we see that the designation of his successor will be in the hands of the people of two *telè*: that of the Thespians and that of the Plataeans (*Nouveau Choix* 2005²: n°22, B, 36–7).

In the Achaean War of 146 BC, Thespian behaviour is again not very clear. Thanks to Cicero (*Verr*. ii. 4. 4), we learn that Mummius had taken all the statues from the city, except for the marble Eros made by Praxiteles for Phryne or Glykera in the fourth century BC.[3] Among the statues stolen were those of the Muses and also, mentioned not by Cicero but by Dio Chrysostom (xxxvii. 42), a statue of Philip II that he had reinscribed as being of Zeus, so that he could resell it at a better price! The theft of statues from a wealthy sanctuary should not always be seen as a punishment; certainly when, later on, Gaius stole the Eros from the city (Pausanias ix. 27. 3), Thespiai was not on bad terms with the Emperor. More interesting is the fact that Mummius, at Thespiai as at Thebes and Tanagra, at least once took the liberty of re-dedicating some statues under his own name (*IThesp* 396: see Knoepfler 1991: 270–1 on the re-use of bases in Boeotia). The practice was certainly not a novelty in Greece, but this almost systematic application of the process is no chance affair and must reveal an ideological appropriation

of the bases and, at the same time, of the space that they occupy.[4]

It is a real historical problem to know what should or should not be inferred from such a gesture: it seems probable that Thespiai, like most Boeotian cities, had stood with the Thebans and the Achaeans against the Romans (cf. Knoepfler 1991: 269), which would imply that Thespiai was among the cities that were placed '*sub imperium populi Romani dictionemque*', 'under the rule and jurisdiction of the Roman people', as Cicero (*Verr*. ii. 1. 55) notes for those *poleis* that had supported the Achaeans. But there is no certainty about this and especially, there is no evidence whatever of a province of Achaea in existence already at that time; the mention of a Roman governor of Achaea having been appointed from 145 'down to my own time' by Pausanias (vii. 16. 7) is an obvious mistake (see Plutarch, *Cimon* 2.1). The only possibility, according to the *communis opinio*, would have been that these parts of Greece that had rebelled against Rome during the Achaean War would have been made subject to the governor of Macedonia. But, as Gruen (1984: 524) has shown, it is difficult to imagine a patchwork system where some bits and pieces of Greece would have been under the authority of the Romans, while their neighbours would have remained free. It might be better to think of an informal control over Greece by the governors of Macedonia (Fournier 2010: 8).

The next step occurs during the Mithridatic war. At this time, contrary to its earlier behaviour, Thespiai stood clearly against Rome's enemy. As Appian (*Mithridateios* 29) relates, during the winter of 88/87 BC Archelaos, Mithridates' general, managed to overcome the reluctance of the Boeotians and made them his allies, with one notorious exception: the Thespians alone resisted the Pontic army before the arrival of Sulla. Archelaos besieged the city, but without success. The city dedicated two statues, one of Sulla (*IThesp* 397) as *autokratôr* (*imperator*) after his victory in Chaironeia in 86 BC; the other of Quintus Braetius Sura, *legatus* of the governor of Macedonia (*IThesp* 34), who had been sent against the Mithridatic troops. This heroic conduct is probably the reason why Thespiai was granted the status of *liberum oppidum*, 'free city' (Pliny, *NH iv*. 7. 25). At any rate, there is no way of demonstrating that this privilege could have been granted before Sulla, as a few historians have implied (Plassart 1926: 438; Accame 1946: 199; Bernhardt 1971), believing that the province of Achaia had been established in 146 BC and that this was implicated in the free status (that is, by Thespiai's exclusion from the province). The definition of such a 'freedom' is problematic: the one thing we really know is that such a status, as attested in Pliny, concerns only two cities in Boeotia, at least for the Augustan period: Thespiai and Tanagra. Roesch (1965: 73) held that Caesar was responsible for the award of this status, but the author of the grant, for the reasons already mentioned, must surely have been Sulla.

If Sulla was responsible for the grant of freedom, this would fit well with the fact that the Thespians showed gratitude to Sulla by establishing, probably after 86, the new athletic competition of the *Erotideia* (on this festival, see Manieri 2009: 341–6). The cult of Eros is well attested from the Classical period onwards in the town itself, but the competition appears only much later. The first local agonistic catalogue (of winning competitors) is to be dated around 60 BC (*IThesp* 186), but the earliest mention of this competition is in an Athenian decree (*IG* II^2, 1054), dated after 86 BC by Knoepfler (1997: 36–7). It gives its title as being the *Erôtideia kai Rhômaia*, which must mean that it bore the double name from the beginning. The other catalogues (*IThesp* 187–193) are mostly of imperial date and record only athletic games, which fits both Plutarch's essay *On Love* and Pausanias' testimony (ix. 31. 3), when the latter says that, thanks to both the *Mouseia* and *Erôtideia* (which took place at different times), there were prizes not only for musicians but also for athletes. Ideologically, the connexion of the *Erôtideia* with Sulla, who in Greek contexts styled himself Epaphroditos, fits well with the *imperator*'s wish to establish a link to Venus-Aphrodite: Eros is the servant of the goddess and was worshipped in her sanctuary at Thespiai.

The Sullan period was a flourishing one also for the *Mouseia*.[5] After 171 and the disappearance of the *koinon*, they were still celebrated as a musical festival that was penteteric (every four years) and stephanitic (with prizes in the form of a simple wreath). The Thespians organized the festival, now without any federal support, but with the deep involvement of the companies of artists, the *technitai*, who were taking part in *agônes* all over Greece (e.g. *IThesp* 165 and 172). The Sanctuary of the Muses and the *Mouseia* themselves became a very important space for the Thespians to express their links with the new Roman power, especially after the Mithridatic war. For instance, the crown given to Q. Braetius Sura after 86 BC (*IThesp* 34), already mentioned, was to be proclaimed in the theatre, thus in the Valley of the Muses, during the festivals, including the *Mouseia*, organized by the Thespians. Finally, Sulla did something else for the Thespian Sanctuary of the Muses, as related by Pausanias (ix. 30): he re-dedicated there a statue of Dionysos by Myron that he had taken from Orchomenos; as Pausanias writes, this was 'worshipping the gods with other people's incense'. As has been seen with

Mummius, this was quite a common practice and should not be over-interpreted.

As for the province, Achaia seems to have had a governor once in 81 BC (*RDGE* 105–11, no. 18, l. 110–111); but the most conspicuous attempt to reduce the freedom of the *civitates liberae* came between 58 and 55 when L. Calpurnius Piso (consul in 58), was given the province of Macedonia by a plebiscite of the tribune Clodius, the famous *Lex Clodia de provinciis consularibus*,[6] and the limits of the province were extended far beyond Macedonia and those Greek territories that had been under the surveillance of the proconsul since 146. It was extended to free cities including Athens, and will therefore certainly have included Thespiai and Tanagra. The first real attempt to create a province of Achaia, however, was Caesar's in 46–44 BC. Caesar sent Ser. Sulpicius Rufus and then M. Acilius Caninus as governors of Achaia, as is made clear in Cicero's correspondence (*Fam*. vi. 6. 10; vii. 30. 3; xiii. 17–28; xiii. 50). To the former, Cicero wrote in 46 a letter of recommendation for one of his friends (Cicero, *Fam*. xiii. 22), Titus Manlius '*qui negotiatur Thespiis*', 'who is doing some business in Thespiai'. This Sulpicius certainly visited Boeotia, '*ut (…) reliquam(que) juris dictionem absolvere(t)*' ('to discharge his other judicial duties': Cicero, *Fam*. iv. 12 [31 May, 45 BC]), but we have no proof that Thespiai was itself placed under the authority of the governor, just as we do not know much about Thespiai's fate under Augustus, when he finally set up a senatorial province of Achaia in 27 BC (Dio liii. 12).

We then reach the end of the Hellenistic period with Strabo, who gives quite a precise account of Thespiai and its territory in his own time (ix. 2. 25), although his testimony has not always struck historians as highly reliable (Knoepfler 1997: 23, is among those who think that Strabo knows little of Hellenistic Boeotia). The geographer enumerates in order the town itself, the port (i.e. Kreusis), and the citadel of Askra. There follows a geographical description of the westward extension of Helikon as far as Phokis, and the calculation of the distances between Kreusis and two Phokian sites, Mychos and Holmiai. The author then goes back to the Sanctuary of the Muses and the Hippokrene spring, as if he had never left Thespian territory. The biggest problem therefore is to establish, from the text, clear territorial boundaries. In the middle of the region lies Thisbe, which is mentioned a few paragraphs later (ix. 2. 28) not as a *polis*, but as a *chorion* 'adjacent to the Thespians and to the territory of Koroneia'. Strabo does not say explicitly that Thisbe lay in Thespian territory, but this is highly probable, as the term *chorion* is frequently used to designate dependent places.[7] Moreover, the extended geographical description of the *Thespiake* probably shows that the author includes Thisbe in it. The epigraphy of Thisbe does not contradict this hypothesis, as there is no inscription available beyond the last third of the second century, after the famous *Senatus Consultum de Thisbensibus* of 170 BC (*RDGE* 26–31, no. 2).

If there is one conclusion to be drawn for this period (Late Hellenistic), it must be that Thespiai has progressively imposed itself as the leading city in Boeotia, alike in terms of territory, status and excellent relations with the Romans. The only possible comparison is with Tanagra, but even Tanagra fails to shine as brightly in what may be called 'the new political order'. As Strabo concludes (ix. 2. 25), Thespiai, with Tanagra, is 'the only one to have maintained its existence (*monè sunestèke*) among Boeotian cities; of the other ones are left only ruins and names'.

Thespiai and the representatives of Rome

From the second half of the first century BC, Thespiai seems therefore the most 'Romanized' of all Boeotian cities. A good example of the links established with the Roman power is the last Thespian decree of the late Hellenistic period (*IThesp* 35, last third of the first century BC?[8]), in honour of a proconsul Futius Longus (*Brill's New Pauly*, *s.v. Futius* (2)), proposed by a Polykratides son of Anthemiôn, a character belonging to a family closely linked to the new rulers (see below). This Roman promagistrate is said 'to have been informed in Rome about our *patris* by those who take care of us', which tells a lot about the close relationship between Thespiai and the Roman power, even if we can only make assumptions about the identity of those taking care of the city's interests. We know of other Roman promagistrates honoured by Thespiai in the Late Hellenistic Period (in other words, the late Roman Republic), including for instance the *quaestor* Marcus Junius Silanus (*PIR*^{2} I 830), for whose wife Crispina and mother Sempronia the Thespians erected around 34–30 BC an arc-shaped monument (*IThesp* 400 and 401). The Thespians are known to be the only ones, apart from the Tanagraeans, to engage as a body of citizens in a relationship of *patrocinium* (patronage) with Roman promagistrates, among whom one can identify Caesar in 46 (*IThesp* 420; *MRR* II 293 and *MRR* III 107; Eilers 2002: C25), Lucius Caninius Gallus (*IThesp* 399; Eilers 2002: C24), contemporary of Cicero and perhaps praetor of Achaia, and Marcus Licinius Crassus (*IThesp* 403; *PIR*^{2} L 186; Eilers 2002: C26), consul in 30 BC and proconsul of Macedonia and Achaia in 29.

Of all these patrons, one is more prominent than others, although he is the patron not of the community but of an individual, a unique case in Boeotia: Titus Statilius Taurus. Here, the biggest problem is

to establish which member of the family is involved: our man is most probably the consul suffect of 37 BC and ordinary consul in 26 BC (*MRR* 2, 422; *PIR* vii.2, 318–23, no. 853; Thériault 2009), commander of Octavian's land forces at Actium, a role that may explain his standing in Thespiai, rather than one of two brothers who were consuls in AD 11 and 16 (*PIR* vii.2, nos. 851 and 855), much less known than the great Taurus. He is the patron of a Thespian already mentioned, Polykratides, son of Anthemiôn (*IThesp* 412), who belongs to the most prominent local family. He, or another Taurus, is also the patron of four freedmen with Roman onomastic formulae (*IThesp* 425). Finally the wife of a Taurus, Cornelia, is given a statue by the city (*IThesp* 413). But the most striking feature about Taurus is that he receives a cult: nine little *cippi* bearing the inscription *Theou Taurou* provide evidence for this cult (*IThesp* 72–80). According to Roesch (1982: 181 and n. 180), they are not altars (for which this would be an excessive number), but *horoi* (boundaries) for a sanctuary. There is also an *agôn* (competition) called the 'writing of an *enkômion* for Tauros' during the *Mouseia*, around AD 20 (*IThesp* 174), and the same Polykratides appears to be the priest of his cult (*IThesp* 412).

That leads to my second point: that the Thespians are the champions in Boeotia of the cult of Rome and, later on, of the civic version of the imperial cult in Boeotia (see Kantirea (2007), *passim*). It is not possible to cite all the inscriptions, but the cult of Rome appears in the agonistic catalogues of the *Erôtideia kai Rhômaia*, through the existence of an *archiereus* (chief priest) (Lysandros son of Polykratides: *IThesp* 374), and through the dedication of buildings (*IThesp* 426–7). The climax of the cult is reached between 20 BC and AD 20, and is associated with the very important local family of the *Phileinoi* (as one could call them, from the *cognomen* born by members of the family: see below).

As for the imperial cult, one must consider this alongside the celebration of the festivals, both the *Erôtideia* and the *Mouseia* (Manieri 2009: 313–433). After a decline during Augustan times, the latter competition flourished again during the Imperial period, when some eminent members of local circles took on the role of *agonothetes*, organizer of the festival: the importance of the position is visible in the fact that the *agonothetes* is mentioned before the eponymous *archôn* himself in some agonistic catalogues of the second half of the second century AD (*IThesp* 176; 178; 184). But one of the most striking facts is that the *Erôtideia* were originally associated with the *Rhômaia*, then with the *Kaisareia*; while the *Mouseia* were progressively linked with the *Sebasteia*, the *Traianeia* and the *Hadrianeia*, depending on the period (*IThesp* 358, first century AD: *Mouseia Sebasteia* and *Erôtideia Kaisareia*; *IThesp* 177, second half of the second century AD: *megala Traianeia Hadrianeia Sebasteia Mouseia*).

Another manifestation of Thespiai's relationship with the Emperors is the dedication of buildings: two *stoai* (porticoes) and perhaps a *bouleuterion* (council house), which are neither reused nor associated with another god, and which were probably built in the town itself. The first *stoa* was dedicated to the *genos Sebastôn* (*IThesp* 427). The second *stoa* and the *bouleuterion* were for the *theoi Sebastoi* and the *oikos Sebastôn* (*IThesp* 426). Also worth mentioning is a probable altar (rather than simply the *horos* of a sanctuary, as for *Taurus*) which is quite large (0.89 h. x 0.53 l.) and dedicated to the *theoi Sebastoi* (*IThesp* 81). As for who was in control of all this, involvement in the imperial cult was very strong among individuals coming from the wealthy Romanized families; yet the city, at least officially speaking, is the one dedicating statues, although the local *euergetai* (that is, private benefactors of the state) are probably making significant financial contributions. One exception is a document recently discovered and published that records the restoration of a public building by the emperor Domitian in AD 86 or 87 (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 292–4): the inscription may have suffered from the *damnatio memoriae* of that Emperor as it was found broken into pieces but, before that, Thespian coinage seems to have celebrated the Emperor's gesture (*RPC* ii: 66–7, nos. 266–74).

Beside the imperial cult, one must also mention the dedication of statues of Emperors. It should be noted that 40 per cent of the documents concerning Emperors in Boeotia come from Thespiai. They cover a huge time-span, from Augustus to Valentinian at the very end of the fourth century AD (*IThesp* 421–52), with special prominence for Hadrian (5 dedications: *IThesp* 433–7): the Emperor probably visited the city during the year 125, organized an Impeerial hunt on Helikon, perhaps took part in the local contests, and took the time to have an epigram engraved in honour of Eros, alluding to his beloved Antinoös (*IThesp* 270). Such a concentration of documents gives us some idea of the spatial renewal of the place from the Imperial period onwards. Judging by the find-spots of all these inscriptions, the two main places in which they were put up were the Sanctuary of the Muses, the *Mouseion*, and the agora of the city: we have to imagine these locations crowded with statues. As already mentioned, Augustus himself had his own bronze statue in the Thespian *Mouseion* (*IThesp* 421), but the city is one of the rare Boeotian *poleis* to have erected 'dynastic monuments', like the huge curved base in honour of Augustus's family (*IThesp* 422–3) that was placed there between 17 and 12 BC. That base supported six statues: of Livia, wife of Augustus, of Agrippa, his

wife Julia (Augustus' daughter), and their daughter Agrippina the Elder, and finally of Gaius and Lucius Caesar, the adopted sons of Augustus. This monument was obviously linked with cult of the *Domus Augusta* (Hurlet 1997: 440–1). Another very large monument is the base related to Emperors of the fourth century AD (*IThesp* 448–50) that was probably erected on the agora, since the pieces were found in the *Kastro*. This base was probably originally dedicated to the Muses and was then reused, first for Constantine, then for his sons, and then for Valentinian and Valens: each statue would replace the other.

The most intense phase of dedication and consecration in general is, however, the Augustan one. This is a very dynamic period for the city, in contrast with other Boeotian *poleis*. Slightly later, around the middle of the first century AD, the Thespians even had a copy of the famous Eros made with an epigram written on it by a wealthy poetess from Thessalonike, Herennia Procula (*IThesp* 271): that copy could have been either a replacement for the missing statue (taken away by Nero: so Gutzwiller 2004: 387) or a miniature of it (Knoepfler 2006: n°205). According to the epigraphic evidence, there is also a great deal of wealth in this city during the first two centuries AD, which could be linked one way or another to the fact that Thespiai maintained its freedom: under Hadrian, in AD 125, we know of P. Pactumeius Clemens, *legatus divi Hadriani Athenis Thespiis Plateis item in Thessalia*, 'at Athens, Thespiai and Plataia as well as in Thessaly' (*CIL* viii 7059), who is a *corrector* in charge of the free cities (Fournier 2010: 392 n. 648; 480–1). This culminates, as a famous decree records (*IThesp* 37), in the participation of the young people of the city in a military expedition under Marcus Aurelius around AD 170 against either the Costoboci or, more probably, the Germans, a war for which enormous levies were necessary (Jones 1971). This decree gives them, and their parents while they are away, the right to receive distributions and honours of bouleutic rank, at a time when the *boulè* (the Council) has been reduced to the equivalent of an order,[9] and the real political power lies in the hands of a few people, including the *prôtoi* ('first men') of the city mentioned in the text, even though the *demos* is still associated in the decision with the *boulè* and the magistrates (*archontes*).

The people: Greek Romans and Roman Greeks

The first point under this heading concerns individuals and communities from Rome and Italy installed in Boeotia (Müller 2002). The major phase of settlement of Italians or Romans in Thespiai is between 50 BC and AD 30, as in the rest of Boeotia, although the presence of Italians is sporadically attested in other cities well before the middle of the first century BC. One must underline the fact that there is a link between the names of the *negotiatores* (large-scale businessmen) attested on Delos at the end of the second and the beginning of the first century BC, and those attested in Thespiai after the middle of the first century BC; it is probable that some of them moved to Boeotia after the fall of Delos.

The first *negotiator* we know about in our city has already been mentioned: Titus Manlius, recommended by Cicero to Ser. Sulpicius Rufus in 46 BC (*Fam* xiii. 22). We cannot tell what kind of business he was involved in, nor whether he was actually living in Thespiai. In all likelihood, he did not reside there, as the city was surely insufficient for a man whom Cicero describes as a *bonus vir* (of high standing). Titus Manlius probably had freedmen working for him. Later, under Tiberius, one can probably identify some of his family in Corinth (Spawforth 1996: 172). Soon after this episode, one can talk of a real community of *negotiatores* established in Thespiai. In two dedications (*IThesp* 352 and 373), dating to the last third of the first century BC, we find the phrase *Rhômaioi hoi pragmateuomenoi en Thespiais*, a translation of the Latin: *Romani qui negotiantur in Thespiis*. But the most important evidence for this community is the Latin inscription dated to December AD 14 (*IThesp* 425), listing a series of 19 people, most of whom are Romans. This inscription is a dedication, probably of an altar, and should be connected to the deification of Augustus. In terms of business, what is interesting in this inscription is that the individuals are in groups of two or three from the same family, bearing the same *nomen*. That could indicate that they form little family businesses where the freedmen and probably the slaves act for their patron, whether resident or not. In this list two groups especially attract attention: the *Statilii* and the *Castricii*.

The *nomen Statilius* is linked with the famous *Statilii Tauri* about whom we have already spoken: the four people bearing this name in the Latin inscription (*IThesp 425*) are all freedmen of a Statilius Taurus. That suggests that they may have chosen to settle down in Thespiai while visiting the city with their patron. The *nomen Castricius* is the second prominent group; it is especially well attested in Boeotia, always in Thespiai, with two exceptions. The family seems to be organized around a free-born Aulus Castricius Auli filius Modestus. This *nomen* is well attested in Rome, in Campania (around Puteoli, Pompei, Naples and Capua), and in the eastern Mediterranean, especially in Delos in the first century BC, but also in Asia Minor. In Cicero's writings, bearers of the name seem

to specialize in lending money. This might have been the case in Thespiai too. But their *negotium* could also be connected with the geographical situation of Thespiai, which had a good port, Kreusis, often used by Roman commanders. In any case, the phrase *Rhômaioi hoi pragmateuomenoi en Thespiais* certainly means that these people had a special status among other foreign residents, one that could be useful in case of a judicial problem with the local Greeks and allowed them to appeal to the Roman governor (Fournier 2010: 314–18). There is a probable link between this community and an *agoranomos* (clerk of the market) whose name, Ingenuus, is recorded on a measure clay for liquids that shows a Hermes in a small stamped medallion (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 295–9, dated to the 'Early Imperial Period'). They also had their own *gymnasion*, built for them (*IThesp* 373) by a member of one of the leading local families, Polykratides. The Romans appear here as having their own private place of training, but also as dependent on the generosity of the local Greek *euergetes*.

This *gymnasion* might well be identified with another, referred to in a list of men as the 'upper gymnasion' (*IThesp* 136), where three people named *archontes* are seen directing the institution. One interesting problem is to know why this *gymnasion* is called the 'upper' one; it was perhaps situated in the later extension of the city (see Chapter 4, p. 183). Probably also from one of the Thespian *gymnasia* come different lists of names, including Roman names, from the end of the first century BC and beginning of the first century AD, which can be called 'ephebic lists', and are the later avatar of the military catalogues. I will give only two examples, one written on eight different blocks (*IThesp* 143–150) belonging to the crowning member of a unique monument (Plassart 1958: 165) and the other, recently reassembled by Y. Kalliontzis[10] and dated by him to the first century AD.

The subsequent development, from the first century AD onwards, is a little different in terms of geography. Now the link is between Thespiai and Corinth, following the re-foundation of that city in 44 BC. People move from one city to another, settle easily, and keep the links they established inside a macro-regional network. The first interesting example is the huge dedication to the Muses, on a base in nine parts erected in the Augustan period (*IThesp* 288–97). It bears a series of epigrams written by Honestus, who is known from the Palatine Anthology (9. 216, 225 and 230: on the links between Honestus and Thespiai, see now Jones 2004: 93–5). The poet came from the *colonia* of Corinth and wrote another dedication in Thespiai, mentioning Livia, wife of Augustus (*IThesp* 424). Another example is case of the *Vibullii*. Four bearers of this name are attested in Thespiai, three in a first century dedication to Egyptian Gods (*IThesp* 319) and a fourth in an agonistic catalogue of the second century AD (*IThesp* 192). Spawforth (1995) has shown that the patron Lucius Vibullius belonged to the well-known colonial family of the L. Vibullii, established in Corinth, who might have acquired their citizenship from L. Vibullius Rufus, a *praefectus* for Pompey during the civil war of 49–48 BC (*MRR* II 271). The main difficulty lies in identifying the kind of economic business the *Vibulii* were undertaking in Boeotia: Spawforth suggested that it could be linked with the trading of fish, because this early Imperial dedication is also made at the village of Hyle; this is not, however, the Hyle linked with the lakes Kopaïs and Iliki (former Kephisis), but is to be located in the south-western vicinity of Thespiai (Schachter 2007: 374).

Relations between Thespiai and Corinth are even better attested in the second century AD. A not negligible number of Roman citizens from Corinth are present in the agonistic catalogues of the *Erôtideia* and *Mouseia*. These competitions boomed in the second and early third centuries AD. At some point during the second century, both festivals turned into thematic competitions, in which the winners were given money prizes instead of a leaf-crown. This was a device to attract the big stars, contrary to any previous agonistic rules! (Strasser 2003: 271–3). The links between Thespiai and Corinth are not so surprising, as the Isthmian and the Thespian competitions have quite a similar profile. Some of the victors even have a double ethnic: they are said to be Corinthian *and* Thespian.

The second point under this heading concerns the Greek elites integrated in the *civitas Romana*, a phenomenon that completely overlaps the previous point in terms of chronology. The phenomenon is visible through a certain type of gentilicial (or middle) names (Müller 1996c), *nomina* that are taken either from eminent Roman generals, or from imperial *gentilicia*.

In the first centuries BC and AD, before the principate of Claudius, very few Greeks get Roman citizenship. One of these freshly Romanized individuals is a *limenarchos* of Kreusis, Thespiai's harbour, around the beginning of the first century AD: Dekmos Stertinios Eisiôn (*IThesp* 266 & 426). In Thespiai, we can establish a link between Marcus Licinius Crassus, honoured with a statue just after 29 BC (*IThesp* 403) and the presence of a man bearing the same *nomen* in the ephebic list of the 'upper *gymnasion*' (*IThesp* 136); there may also be a relationship between two Markoi Antonioi who appear as *archontes* in the same list, and the name of the famous triumvir. But nothing can be held for sure here. Some of the *nomina* (*Vipsanii*, *Pompeii*, *Cornelii*) are still present in the second century AD, which is

merely a sign of the transmission of the names through different branches of the families. For the early period (first century BC and first half of the first century AD), however, the leading Greek families display neither the *duo* nor *tria nomina* of Roman form; on the contrary, they seem to prize other Greek citizenships more. A really striking feature is that even the members of those families who establish firm and precocious links with the Romans, e.g. the *Phileinoi*, do not acquire the *civitas Romana* until quite a late date, in fact under the Flavians. Generally speaking, from the time of Claudius until Caracalla's edict giving citizenship to all free men in the Empire (AD 212), each of the imperial *gentilicia* are abundantly represented, with the exception of the *Ulpii*. Most frequently represented here are the *Flavii* (27) and the *Aurelii* (12). The latter *nomen*, unlike that of the Flavii, presents no special profile in Thespiai. One could explain this by a particularly generous policy on the part of the Flavian emperors; but in fact the most honoured emperors in Thespiai are not the *Flavii*, but the Julio-Claudians. The large number of bearers of this *nomen* is mostly due to the transmission of citizenship within prominent families.

Let us look now more closely at a particular family already mentioned: the *Flavii Phileinoi*. There are three important phases in the history of this family. The first falls between the first century BC and the 70s of the first century AD: during this period, the most important character is Polykratides son of Anthemiôn, who is close to the Romans and a strong link between the community of *negotiatores* and the city. He is the one who had Statilius Taurus as a patron. The second step comes in the acquisition of Roman citizenship by Mondôn, father of Phileinos, the friend of Plutarch; at that time, the family was prominent in Thespiai and in Boeotia at large. The most important family member is Titos Flavios Phileinos, Plutarch's friend, who lived at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century AD. As we can see from Plutarch's writings and especially the *Dialogue on the Pythia's oracles* (394e), he was a member of his circle. Finally, and this is the third step, the first member of the family to enter the senatorial order is another Titos Flavios Phileinos, at the end of the second century AD: he is said in the sources to be *kratistos* and *lamprotatos* ('highest and most illustrious'). His career took him far beyond his original city, mostly to the East: he was a *quaestor* in Asia, a tribune of the *plebs*, a *praetor*, a legate of the proconsul of Cyprus and a proconsul in Lycia-Pamphylia some time after AD 180. With this Phileinos, the family definitely gets beyond the bounds of Boeotia. This is shown by the marriage of his daughter Flavia Phileina with Markos Aurelios Olympiodoros, who is a descendant of the sophist Hippodromos of Larissa (see H. Müller 1968 for a thorough study of these two people). With this same Phileinos, the family becomes settled in Athens: his wife, Flavia Amphikleia, is the daughter of a Flavios Amphikles, whose origin, as between Thespiai and Athens, is not totally confirmed. At the least, this man served as archon of the Hadrianic *Panhellenion* in Athens (*IG* II-III^2 2957); but in fact, for this period, it is difficult to say that a family comes from this or that city. For instance, the maternal ancestry of Flavia Amphikleia has roots in different places in Greece and the East, such as Thera, Asia and Boeotia. Finally, at the end of the third century AD, in an ephebic catalogue from Athens, we find the great-grandson of this Titos Flavios Phileinos: he is called Titos Flavios Mondôn son of Phileinos, registered in the deme of Phlya, *archôn kratistos* and priest of Athena *Polias* and the *Homonoia* of the Greeks.

It is worth adding some final words concerning Pausanias' testimony for Thespiai in the second century AD. It is of limited use in defining Thespian territory and Strabo, at least for his own time, seems more useful in this respect. Pausanias gives a few indications about historical events of the Roman period, especially those involving Sulla, but nothing else. He also indicates a few public buildings or spaces in the town, which are supposed to be in contemporary use: an *agora* and a theatre. Finally, he gives a good impression of what could be called the religious correspondences between the town and the extra-urban sanctuary, the *alsos*. The best example of this is probably the reference to a small *Mouseion* in the town, which appears as a 'double' of the big *Mouseion*, this time with a temple, as is not the case with the one in the *alsos*. This small temple has unfortunately not been found, since it can hardly be the one that Jamot 'excavated' (see Müller 1996b).

Notes

1 Some effort has been devoted, mainly by D. Knoepfler but also by myself, to correcting some of the major chronological points in respect of Boeotian inscriptions, but these improvements have not been recorded in the online corpus. So the dates given there should not be trusted without further checking.

2 There are examples of this at Chorsiai, not far from Thespiai: cf. the Chorsieian decree (Migeotte 1984: n°10), which should be dated after 171 (see most recently Müller 2011b: 353).

3 Exempted, according to Cicero, 'because it was a dedication': '*ille L. Mummius, cum Thespiadas (…) ceteraque profana ex illo oppido signa tolleret, hunc marmoreum Cupidinem, quod erat consecratus, non attigit*'. Knoepfler 1997 has argued that, contrary to what Cicero says, Mummius had in fact stolen this statue, although

Pausanias writes that Gaius was the first to steal it, before Claudius gave it back and Nero stole it again. I am not completely convinced by this argument, resting as it does mostly on a text of Strabo (ix. 2. 25), who uses the past tense to describe the situation in Thespiai and therefore should refer to a situation around the mid-second century BC.

4 See Shear 2007 for parallel examples in Athens, although the context there is argued to be different in that, for the Romans (and the Athenians bestowing honours), the reuse of bases was a way of suggesting that 'the Romans were, in fact, Athenians of some sort', that they had 'Roman fortunes', but were 'Greek characters'. In this case, anyway, it is the Athenians themselves who are granting the honours. On statues and bases, see most recently Ma 2013.

5 On the *Mouseia*, see Manieri 2009: 313–40 and 347–423. For the most recently discovered catalogue of the Late Hellenistic Period: Schachter and Marchand 2012: 287–92.

6 Cf. Rotondi 1912: 393–4. On this law, see Habicht 1997: 338–42, who gives an account of the situation created for Athens by Clodius.

7 This is also the case with Salganeus, a *chôrion* in Tanagra's territory (ix. 2. 9). In each case, the word could even designate a fortified location used as a defensive outpost on the territory, but without excluding the possibility of a small settlement at the same location.

8 The date here proposed derives from the *stemma* that can be established for the family.

9 According to Hamon (2001: xx), this is a phenomenon that starts in Late Hellenistic times, mostly from the first century BC on, and grows during the Imperial Period.

10 Kalliontzis 2011: 316–22, who also provides (322–7) a concise synthesis of all these late Hellenistic and Early Imperial monuments.

Chapter 8

The history of Thespiai and Boeotia from Late Antiquity to the Frankish period

Athanasios K. Vionis and Chrystalla Loizou

Late Antiquity (fifth to mid-seventh centuries AD)

The period beginning around AD 400, whether referred to as 'Late Antiquity' or 'the Late Roman era', can be characterized as a turning point between the old Roman Empire and the emerging Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire. A sense of continuity with the Roman past can be noted, with elements of the ancient culture generally surviving into Late Antiquity. But this period can also be seen as one of gradual change and transformation, as attested in the material culture record. The founding of Constantinople by Constantine the Great in AD 330, as the new urban centre of the Empire in the East, and the emergence of the new (and later official) religion of Christianity mark the most significant of the breaks with the ancient past (Gregory 2005: 45–6).

The process of Christianization is of crucial importance when examining the history and archaeology of this period, relating as it does to political, economic and cultural aspects, as well as to the creation of an ideology centred on values that would unify a large number of diverse groups from different regions, with different languages and religions (Vionis forthcoming).

Epigraphic evidence and excavated ecclesiastical remains comprise almost the only sources of information about Christianization in Boeotia during the Imperial Roman era and Late Antiquity. The earliest reference for the existence of a Christian community in the region, however, comes from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle gives greeting to a certain Rufus, *electum in Domino* (*Romans* 16: 13), who is also thought to have been the first bishop of Thebes (Le Quien (ed.) 1958: xxiv, 207; Trombley 1989: 221). Excavations outside the city at the beginning of the twentieth century revealed a number of rock-cut chambers, identified by the excavator as 'catacombs' or places of worship, used by a Christian community that survived the early persecutions (Keramopoullos 1917: 102–6, 111–22). The assumption (Keramopoullos 1917: 134; Trombley 1989: 221) is that, throughout the early centuries of Christianity and during the persecutions of Diocletian in AD 303–311 down to the age of Constantine, Christian Thebans were using rock-cut tombs of the Late Bronze Age as places of worship and burial. It is perfectly possible, however, that the use of such underground burial chambers was not in any way secret, and that they were never used as places of worship; rather, they should be seen as exemplifying a popular practice, spreading out from Rome, of using locations whose geology favoured the construction of underground cemeteries readily and cheaply (Vionis 2014a: 338).

While this process of Christianization ran its course in city and countryside, paganism seems to have survived in Boeotia, along with other areas of central and southern Greece – Attica, the Peloponnese – (Frantz 1965; Sanders 2005; Vionis 2014a), down to the fifth and sixth centuries AD. It is likely that, in Thebes, pagan cult activity persisted throughout the fourth century and that the temple of Ismenian Apollo was abandoned only after the edict of Theodosius I (AD 379–395). It was around this time that the temple area, on a hill outside the Kadmeian walls, started to function as a Christian cemetery filled with tile graves (Keramopoullos 1926: 127–9; Trombley 1989: 222). The practice of establishing a Christian necropolis in the precinct of a pagan temple was common in central and southern Greece during Late Antiquity, appearing around the late fifth and sixth centuries (as the Lerna court cemetery in Corinth: Vionis 2014a: 338–9). The last manifestation of pagan cult activity in Boeotia is a funerary inscription (*ἐπί Ἀθηνῶ ἠρωει*) dated to the third or fourth century AD (*SEG* 25 (1971): 175, no. 512; Trombley 1989: 221).

Thebes is listed as one of the ten cities of central Greece assigned a bishopric, possibly after the Council of Nicaea (Harnack 1908: 230–1, n. 4). It is likely that other Late Antique Boeotian cities, such as Thespiai, Koroneia, and Tanagra, already comprised separate bishoprics by the fourth century (*ibid*.). Moreover, the city of Koroneia appears in the participants' list at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 (Koder and Hild 1976: 192–3). Thespiai too, by the first half of the fifth century, seems to have had a strong Christian profile, being mentioned in AD 446 by its ancient Greek name (*Thespiensibus*) in a text of Pope Leo I (AD 440–461) (Tautu (ed.) 1943: 185–6, no. 72; Schieffer (ed.) 1984: 771–2, no. 27; Koder and Hild 1976: 275). Two inscribed statue bases from Thespiai, one of them belonging to Constantine and the other to his sons Constantius II (AD 337–361) and Constans (AD 337–350) (Plassart 1926: 455 no. 99, 457 no. 101; Trombley 1989: 222–3; Vionis 2014a: 338) suggest that some of the Boeotian towns more than others showed an early inclination towards Christianity, or else a greater devotion to the Emperors.

The late fourth and fifth centuries must have been a period of relative stability and slight recovery for Thebes, after Alaric's attack of AD 396. According to the historian Zosimus (Paschoud (ed.) 1986: v. 175–6, § 5.7–8), Thebes had been the only Boeotian city to survive the assault (Koilakou 2006: 1105), suggesting that the walls of the Kadmeia were still strong enough to resist it. In the decree of AD 401/402 found at Megara (Cauer 1897: 663; *IG* vii, 21, no. 24), it is attested that Boeotia was able to provide a significant amount of agricultural surplus, as well as to participate in extended commercial activities in the Eastern Mediterranean (Trombley 1989: 216–18). Consequently, it is possible that the countryside had not suffered widespread destruction or large-scale depopulation. For the province of Achaea as a whole, a tax reduction occurred in AD 424 (Theodosius xvi, 11.1.33; Trombley 1989: 216–18).

The political boundaries of Boeotia in Late Antiquity remained the same as those of the second century AD, as described by Pausanias in the ninth book of his *Description of Greece*. According to the sixth-century *Synekdemos* of Hierocles, Boeotia was integrated in the Province of Hellas '*Ελλάδος, ήτοι Αχαΐας*' (which included Mainland Greece south of Thessaly and Epirus), with Corinth as its capital, under the administrative reforms of Diocletian (AD 284–305) and Constantine (AD 306–337). Hierocles, the author of the *Synekdemos*, provides a list of administrative divisions and their cities in different parts of the Empire. According to this, the geographical region of Boeotia contained five *poleis*, namely Anthedon (the ancient harbour of Thebes on the Euboean gulf), Thespiai, Thebes (the metropolis of the region), Tanagra and Plataiai; meanwhile, Livadeia, Koroneia and Thisbe are listed as 'cities' of the region of Phocis, while Chaironeia and Hyettos were 'cities' in Locris, in the *Synekdemos* of Hierokles (Honigmann (ed.) 1939: 17, 643.11, 644.5, 644.6, 645.2, 645.3a, 645.3b, 645.4, 645.5, 645.9; Trombley 1989: 215). Although the use and perception of the term 'city' in a Late Antique context is generally problematic, it has been suggested, on the basis of contemporary written sources of the period such as Procopius, that the status of a *polis* in the sixth century was defined by large-scale public amenities, such as aqueducts, cisterns, baths, public buildings, churches and fortification walls, as well as being large in extent and population and important in commercial activity (Bavant 1984: 246; Zanini 2003: 198–9).

Late Antiquity appears to have been a period of increasing prosperity and economic vitality throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, especially during the fifth and sixth centuries, as has been reported by a number of other archaeological field projects in the Aegean (Alcock 1993; Jameson *et al.* 1994; Bintliff 2012: 353–60; Vionis 2014a: 331–2). In Thespiai, the fifth-century wall-circuit enclosed an area of only 12 ha, containing the old forum of the town, while an unfortified extramural settlement of almost 20 ha was also identified to the east through intensive survey (Bintliff 2013a: 191, 195). Both areas in Thespiai bear traces of intense human activity in Late Antiquity, and include the contemporary remains of Christian basilicas. Even more interestingly, the evidence for ceramic and metallurgical production from within the walled area of Thespiai, and presumably in amongst the built structures such as the basilicas, reinforce the argument for an immediate relationship between production and the Church, as similar evidence for industrial and artisanal production from elsewhere (e.g. the fortress of Hexamilion at Isthmia or the town of Messene) seems to confirm (Gregory 1993: 47; Tsivikis 2012: 62–9). By the sixth century, it becomes evident that churches in 'urban' contexts and in their surrounding territories had become the social/economic focal points of the civic community. A series of transformations took place, in the wake of the dominance of Christianity, changing the civic plan and the social structures – for example by the construction of large basilicas (Bintliff 2012: 360–3). Not only was the position of early Christian basilicas in the urban grid the most prominent reference point for an institution and its financial resources, but the aim of visibility was to prove crucial for the emergence of a monumental Christian architecture (Cantino Wataghin 2003: 230).

According to the sixth-century historian Procopius of Caesarea, the fortifications of cities in the southern Balkan peninsula had long since fallen into ruin; most of these defences, however, were rebuilt or renovated by Emperor Justinian (AD 527–565) in the framework of his large-scale building programme and defensive policy (Gregory 2000: 105; 2005: 135). Although Gregory has suggested (2005: 135) that, to further his eulogy of Justinian, Procopius credited him with the construction work of his predecessors, it is certain that Justinian did restore most of the enceintes of the *civitates* that lay inside the fortifications of Thermopylae (Procopius, *De Aedificiis* iv. 2, 23–4). Procopius mentions restored fortifications in Thessaly, namely those in Echinus, Thebes, Pharsalus, Demetrias, Metropolis, Gomphi and Trika (*De Aedificiis* iv. 3, 1–15, where it is more likely that Procopius refers to the *Thessalian* rather than the Boeotian Thebes). Corinth, Athens and Plataia are also listed by Procopius amongst the fortifications restored by Justinian, although it is almost impossible to determine with accuracy which other Boeotian *civitates* were fortified or re-fortified in the framework of the emperor's building programme (Gregory 2000: 105–7, 109–10). But there is interesting evidence for the refurbishment of certain ancient forts or *phrouria* at this period in Attica and Boeotia, namely Kynosoura, Phyle and Panakton (Ober 1985: 145–7; 1987: 205–7, 209–11, 226; Munn and Zimmerman-Munn 1989: 38–9, 110), which points towards the need for defence in those provincial areas that were located on strategic land and naval routes, and to a primarily military act of organization, in a process of 'militarization of central Greece that was modelled on that of the Balkans' (Dunn 2006: 49–50; Vionis 2017).

In the mid-sixth century, as noted in Procopius's *Secret History* (viii. 25, 16–18) and Evagrius Scholasticus (Whitby (ed.) 2000, iv. 221. §23), earthquakes in Boeotia (in AD 543 and 551/2) proved quite destructive for many towns, including Chaironeia and Koroneia. On the basis of archaeological evidence from Corinth, however, it has been suggested (Sanders 2004: 163–93) that the violent events recorded in textual sources, such as the sacks by Herulians, Visigoths and Slavs, as well as several major and minor earthquakes in mainland Greece, did not always result in complete catastrophe and collapse at this time (see also Vionis forthcoming).

Thus, a period of transformation started to take effect from the late fifth century onwards, when Christianity began to leave its imprint on urban topography and the material culture record; this was the time when a new urban pattern developed and a monumental identity emerged in much of southern mainland Greece. As has already been mentioned, archaeological evidence from Thespiai testifies to this new urban pattern. The dense concentration of Late Roman surface ceramics within the so-called *Kastro* (which lies behind the settlement's later name of Erimokastro) and beyond it towards the north-eastern and eastern sectors, with a spread of contemporary burials around this occupied part of the site, taken together with the industrial debris within the *Kastro* area and the evidence for an early Christian basilica church within the walled area, with three more in the eastern and north-eastern sectors, represent an interesting case of a Late Antique *civitas*. This evidence suggests that Thespiai offers all the basic elements of a contracted, yet still busy *civitas*, with defensive walls, industrial activity, religious monuments and extensive Christian cemeteries (Vionis 2017).

Most interestingly, the *poleis* of Thespiai, Koroneia, Plataiai and Tanagra in this region are all noted as Episcopal sees of the fifth century, while Thebes formed the ecclesiastical metropolis of Boeotia (Koder and Hild 1976: 192–3, 243–4, 267, 275). It should be mentioned that our information about bishoprics in Boeotia in the fifth century derives mainly from participants' lists in Synods, such as those of Ephesos in AD 449 and of Chalcedon in AD 451, in both of which Domninos appears as the bishop of Plataiai (Δομνῖνος Πλαταιῶν τῆς Ἑλλάδος and Δομνῖνος ἐπ. Πλαταιέων) (Honigmann (ed.) 1942–43: 36, 56). It is noteworthy that Thespiai is not included in the list of early Christian bishoprics of Boeotia in Koder and Hild 1976; we should nevertheless consider it as one of the fifth-century Episcopal sees of our region, since Rufinus is listed as bishop of Thespiai (*Rufinus Episcopus Thespiensis*) in AD 458. Meanwhile, the content of an epistle of Pope Leo I the Great (AD 440–461) to the Metropolitan of Achaia implies that a bishop had already been appointed to the Thespians by that time (Tautu (ed.) 1943: 185–6, no 72; Le Quien (ed.) 1958: xxv, 210–11; Vionis 2017).

When we consider the status of Thespiai and other Boeotian cities in the fifth century, as ecclesiastical centres from which the bishops supervised their districts or dioceses, taking into account also the fact that all five sites – Thespiai, Koroneia, Plataiai, Tanagra and Thebes – are included in Hierocles' list of *poleis* of the Province of Hellas by the sixth century (Honigmann (ed.) 1942–43: 17, 645.4; Le Quien (ed.) 1958: xxv, 210–11), it is not hard to imagine that these Christianized places had acquired an 'administrative' or central role, always at local level, similar to that of their Classical–Roman predecessors. The archaeological evidence from Thespiai supports the belief that all five city-bishoprics could have preserved, to a certain

degree, the physical appearance of cities: they were densely occupied, they housed an élite as well as artisans, land supervisors and workers, they comprised regional *civitates*, and they must have functioned, both economically and ecclesiastically, as necessary centres for the populations living and working in their immediate territories (Vionis 2017).

The Byzantine Early Middle Ages (mid-seventh to early ninth centuries)

War, earthquakes and plagues were usually listed amongst the most favoured phenomena to explain the 'shrinkage', 'decline', 'collapse', 'transition' or 'transformation' of urbanism in the Eastern Roman Empire, from the late sixth to the seventh and eighth centuries. The difficulty of recognizing the material culture of the period has also contributed to the general assumption, by both archaeologists and historians, that the beginning of the Middle Ages is marked by a transformation and ruralization of the Late Antique city, and by the impoverishment of the countryside in the Aegean and in the Eastern Mediterranean regions (Brubaker and Haldon 2011: 453–4; Vionis 2013a: 29). Several scholars have detected variations in the scale and effect of external threat and natural disasters. It is, however, the excessive trust in the historical validity of our textual sources that has, for too long, shaped our perception of this period in a negative light, perceiving Slav land invasions and Arab sea raids as the sole explanation for almost every misfortune in the Early Medieval Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean (Charanis 1950; Ostrogorsky 1963; Zakythinos 1966; Herrin 1973; Mango 1980; Foss 1997; Holum 2005).

The Byzantine Empire went through a series of administrative reforms during the course of the seventh century, when the so-called 'themes' or *themata*, a series of larger administrative units or districts, in effect replaced the many small provinces which had characterized the period since the time of Diocletian (Haldon 1997: 132–6; 2005: 68; Gregory 2005: 178). The themes were essentially military zones, across which separate armies were governed by a *strategos* or *archon*, with military and civilian power and which. by the first half of the eighth century, became distinct geographical entities with defined boundaries. This new system of administration has generally been regarded as the result of Heraclius' policy (AD 610–641), but it gradually developed further within the Empire's defensive strategy to face the Arab advance in the Eastern Mediterranean (Haldon 2005: 68–70; Gregory 2005: 180).

The *Theme of Hellas*, which comprised the eastern portion of central and southern Greece, including Boeotia (with its northern extension into Thessaly), Attica and part of the Peloponnese, was formed some time after AD 687 but not later than AD 695 (Charanis 1955: 173–5). This dating rests on the fact that the *Theme* does not appear in the list of commands (*c*. AD 687) addressed by Justinian II to Pope Conon (Mansi (ed.) 1960–61: xi, 737); while Leontius, a former general of the *Theme of Anatolikon*, had already been appointed *strategos* of Hellas by *c*. AD 695 (in Theophanes: De Boor (ed.) 1980: i, 368, 18–21; Charanis 1955: 173; Ragia 2011: 97).

The Danube was generally considered the effective political frontier between the civilized Roman Empire and the barbarian world. In the mid-sixth century, a number of northern 'barbarian' groups, such as the Huns and various Germanic and Slavic tribes (e.g. the Veneti, the Antae and the Sclaveni), moved closer to the *limes*: these were occasionally invited by Byzantine emperors as *foederati* and frequently settled within the empire of their own will, seeking suitable unoccupied land (Barford 2001: 23–4; Gregory 2005: 157; Haldon 2005: 18, 28). As attested in Procopius's *Secret History* (viii. 18, 20), the Huns, the Sclaveni and the Antae had raided Byzantium almost every year since the reign of Justinian. The Slav raids were intensified in frequency and scale by AD 530, while Justinian was launching extensive military expeditions to restore the frontiers of the former Western Roman Empire (Barford 2001: 50–1). According to Procopius (vii. 29, 1–3; 38, 1–38), Slav expansion continued into the second half of the sixth century beyond Illyricum and Thrace, in a period when Byzantium neglected the Balkans through focusing on the eastern frontiers instead, in order to confront Persian aggression (Barford 2001: 56–8; Gregory 2005: 150).

The situation for the Empire became yet more challenging during the reign of Emperor Maurice (AD 582–602) with the arrival of the Avars, nomads of Turkic origin, who became a serious threat in the Balkans at that time. This was the beginning of a series of Avar attacks in the Adriatic, Aegean and Black Sea areas throughout the later sixth and early seventh centuries, effectively causing the penetration of Slavs and others into the Greek peninsula (Barford 2001: 56–8; Gregory 2005: 153; Haldon 2005: 18). According to the history of Menander Protector (AD 560–580), the Sclaveni 'devastated Thrace and many areas', arriving in *Hellas* towards the end of the year AD 578 (Blockley (ed.) 1985: fr. 20–1; Metcalf 1962: 134–5; Curta 2004: 515). Similarly, another contemporary account by John of Ephesus (Payne Smith (ed.) 1860: vi, 6, §25), recording events in AD 581–584 (in the reign of Maurice), narrates that 'an accursed people, called Slavonians' invaded the whole of Greece, pillaging and capturing towns and forts (Barford 2001: 61; Curta 2001: 92;

2004: 515–16). It is worth pointing out that, between AD 579 and 587, the Avars led several barbarian tribes, mostly Slavs (Charanis 1959: 36–7), in attacking the city of Thessaloniki on several occasions (in AD 586, 615 and 618), as is attested in the *Miracula of St. Demetrius* by Archbishop John of Thessaloniki (Lemerle (ed.) 1979–81: ii, 46–73, (1.13–15); Vryonis 1981; Curta 2001: 92–4).

Accounts of the expansion of Slav penetration into Greece have been largely based on the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*. According to the Chronicle, the Avaro-Slavs penetrated and conquered the Peloponnese (except for its eastern part), Thessaly, Epirus, Attica and Euboea, causing part of the Byzantine population to flee to Sicily and to small islands off the coasts of central and southern Greece (Charanis 1950; Barford 2001: 61; Curta 2001: 66–9). After the peace with Persia in AD 591, Emperor Maurice started to transfer large portions of the Byzantine army back to the Balkans. John of Ephesus (Payne Smith (ed.) 1860: vi. 6, 25) notes that in 584 the Sclaveni were still encamped and living peacefully in the rural hinterland of Thessaloniki. The intensity and extent of Slav settlement in Greece, however, remains a matter of historical and archaeological debate. A number of recent studies, based on a re-examination of the material culture record, have challenged the validity of sources such as the *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, putting forward the argument that a supposed Slavic invasion or migration in the southern Balkans in the early 600s does not fit the archaeological record; it seems that no material evidence comparable to that found north of the Danube can be dated earlier than AD 700 (Charanis 1959: 37; Curta 2001: 307–10; Vionis 2013b: 110–11).

But an acceptance of Slavic settlement in Greece, with a subsequent significant population movement thereafter, cannot be reconciled with the supposed emptiness of the Early Medieval landscape, since such settlers will undoubtedly have revived land use. The picture emerging from the limited material traces recovered or dated by archaeologists, it is suggested, points to a declining urban and rural life, with the acropolises of shrinking ancient cities serving as refuge spots for Byzantine Greek populations that seem to have remained in or near the former *foci* of settlement, during the late seventh and eighth centuries. This seems to have been the general pattern both for urban centres such as Athens, Corinth and Ephesus, and for the countryside (Bintliff 2001: 38; 2012: 384–8). Although it remains credible that the cities of the Late Antique era had ceased to be the dominant units of social and commercial organization and that villages and fortresses became the main settlement cells of the Early Medieval world (Mitchell 2000: 145), it should not be assumed that at this time the countryside was necessarily overrun by barbarian tribes, whose only contribution was the disruption of urban life, technology and trade (Vionis 2008: 34; 2013a: 29–30).

Regardless of the effects of potential incomers, settled communities in Boeotia seem to have remained on or near former settlement *foci*, presumably reduced in size and in the volume of material remains. As mentioned above (p. 244), this material 'absence' is probably related to our inability to recognize the material culture of the period, a gap which is now being filled by recent and ongoing archaeological investigations (Bintliff 2012: 384–8; Vionis *et al.* 2009: 149–50; Vionis 2013a: 29–31). The number of Slav toponyms that survive in Boeotia is not necessarily a confirmation of violent intrusion in the region by incoming Slavs between the later sixth and late seventh century; it could, alternatively, hint at continuity of settlement, with the likely replacement of Greco-Roman with Slav ethnic place-names (Bintliff 2000: 42; Vionis 2013a: 30; 2013b: 112). The numbers of the local population living in the countryside must have declined, possibly without recovering, throughout the seventh and eighth centuries. Yet, even assuming that we accept the historical narrative about the effects of the well-documented Justinianic sixth-century plague, continuing into the eighth century, and the gradual settlement of incoming Slavs in the southern Balkans, one would have expected some reasonable surviving population numbers, at least in rural areas. Trombley (2000: 1005) argues that the Slav population of Boeotia would have never been large because Slavic tribal-names do not appear in the toponymy of central Greece to the same extent as in the Peloponnese and Thessaly. However, as successful mixed farmers in their lands of origin in Northern Europe (Malingoudis 1991; 1992), integration with local Byzantine farming communities would have been relatively easy for the Slavs, as we can see from the better-documented interactions between Byzantine Greek and Albanian populations in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries AD in the same landscape.

As noted in Chapter 3, at the ancient city site and Late Antique bishopric of Thespiai, re-study of the systematically collected surface pottery from within the urban area has revealed low-density human activity in different parts of the site, not only in the core zones of late antique settlement and burial, but also in spots which will later form the centre of the later and clearer Middle Byzantine settlements that developed within the city's ancient boundaries. Although only 14 fragments of Early Medieval pottery have been recognized at the site, this material must be taken to indicate some settlement activity continuing in

the Late Antique town. Meanwhile, a carved piece of church architecture from the Late Antique *Kastro* of Thespiai, dated from the eighth to the early ninth centuries, provides further evidence for the continuation of domestic life within (as well as outside) the enclosure walls (Chapter 4, p. 149, 'Site 8'; Vionis 2013a: 30; 2017).

In the Tanagrike, the small fortified hilltop site of Kastri has been identified as a 'refuge' or successor settlement of the period (after the abandonment of the ancient city of Tanagra, 2 km to the north-east): the finds include a crudely built surrounding defensive wall and fragments of the so-called 'Slav' hand-made pottery. A different phenomenon has been observed at the ancient city-site of Hyettos, where surface ceramic evidence (both 'Slav' hand-made pottery and wheel-made vessels) points to a village community of the Byzantine Early Middle Ages, scattered between a cluster of small sites in the open country and close to the ancient town. In addition, the site of Askra in the Valley of the Muses, which flourished particularly between the fourth and seventh centuries, survived into the Middle Byzantine period as a small village-site. This community can be identified, through textual sources, with the settlement later called Zaratova, which gained an Orthodox bishop in the twelfth century, the name possibly indicating a presence of Slav-speakers there (Bintliff 2000: 41–4; 2012: 387–8; 2013b: 131; Vionis 2008: 33–4; 2013a: 30; 2013b: 111–13). Meanwhile, the fact that hand-made vessels of the 'Slav' tradition, with a flat base and flaring rim in coarse fabric, have been found in association with wheel-thrown vessels (such as amphorae and imported wares) at a number of sites, mainly in the Peloponnese but now in Boeotia too, could indicate the peaceful merging of local populations with incoming Slavs, creating Slavo-Hellenic communities through intermarriage (Avraméa 1997: 86; Bintliff 2001: 37–8; 2012: 385; Gregory 1993: 155; Vionis *et al.* 2009: 152–3; Vionis 2013a: 30).

In relation to evidence for Slav presence in central Greece, intensive field survey on the islets of Kouveli and Makronisos in the bay of Domvraina in the gulf of Corinth by Timothy Gregory (as well as elsewhere, in the Saronic gulf and close to the coasts of Boeotia, Attica and the Peloponnese) has revealed concentrations of surface pottery and extensive architectural remains recognisable as small late antique settlements: houses, a church, dock facilities and industrial/storage areas (Gregory 1980: 31–41; 1986: 16–21). Sinclair Hood's long-established view (1966: 165–71; 1970: 37–45), that such off-shore islets were used as refuge places by Greek populations in the course of the successive Slav invasions from the late sixth century on, has been challenged by firm evidence from these sites for the existence of flourishing *emporia* or 'ports of trade', as places where goods were collected, loaded and shipped in various destinations by 'open' communities of traders, rather than by small 'closed' groups of refugees between the sixth and late seventh centuries (Gregory 1984: 287–304; Kardulias *et al.* 1995: 3–21; Vionis 2013b: 113; 2017). However, normal open-air domestic activity at such sites is not clearly evidenced after the late seventh century, when they were usually replaced by less accessible often fortified coastal and inland establishments.

Considering that the 3rd *Notitia* for the Province of Hellas lists a total of 39 bishoprics, of which as many as seven sites in the province of Boeotia – namely Thebes, Hyettos, Chaironeia, Koroneia, Levadeia, Plataiai, and Thespiai – are attested as suffragan bishoprics of Athens in the eighth century (Darrouzés (ed.) 1981: 3, 43, 687–726), it is worth asking whether noticeable growth or decline of the number of bishoprics may be an indication for the growing or declining importance of local or regional settlements. Although references in the sources to bishoprics do not necessarily imply the survival and presence of a city or a site of urban character during the Byzantine Early Middle Ages and later, their appearance or reappearance in the eighth century can attest not only to a general political and military reorganization, with the foundation of fortresses by Constantine V (AD 741–775), but also the thrust to impose Imperial control along important routes and crossroads, in a period of administrative reorganization (Hendy 1985: 80–2; Kountoura 1997: 279–80, 285–6).

It is noteworthy that, while the admittedly limited archaeological record points to contraction in the nucleated and dispersed settlements in the provinces, focused on agrarian and other production, written sources such as the *Farmers' Law* provide important glimpses into a highly stratified society, with a growing class of free peasantry building up an agricultural and pastoral economy; and that the state and the Church were eager to re-impose their authority in a period of administrative reforms, through the so-called *themata* and the continuous assessment of existing and new bishoprics (Haldon 1997: 132–6; Wickham 2005: 633; Koder 2006: 163–5; Vionis 2017). Defensive measures, the continuous sight of the ruins of the Roman past and memory of the former status of those places, the presence of a bishop (even if resident in another centre), the evidence for elaborate churches, as well as industrial installations and evidence for commercial activity through regional trade networks: this is as far as we can get with the textual and material records available for Boeotia at this time.

The Middle Byzantine period (mid-ninth to early thirteenth centuries)

As the archaeology and the limited textual evidence confirm, the succeeding Middle Byzantine period saw significant growth and stability in Boeotia and other regions, with a further slow and steady demographic rise in urban centres and the countryside to come, mainly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Thebes played a central role in the economy of Boeotia, growing into a major regional capital with an industry of international importance and an agriculturally rich and well-populated agrarian territory in its lower and upper plains (Herrin 1975: 256; Dagron 2002: 401–4; Louvi-Kizi 2002: 631; Bintliff 2012: 394–5). As capital of the *Theme of Hellas*, probably from the mid-ninth century, Thebes was also a military and administrative centre. The evidence from the surviving ecclesiastical monuments (both monastic and parish churches) testifies to economic and cultural fluorescence, to imperial interest and the establishment of firm imperial control in central Greece. New churches were founded by local patrons, who seem to have been prominent officials of the Byzantine court, as attested by dedicatory inscriptions in the church of Saint Gregory the Theologian in Thebes, the monastery of Hosios Loukas or the church of the Dormition of Theotokos (Skripou) in Orchomenos (Oikonomides 1992: 245–55; Papalexandrou 1998: 18–24, 149).

The church of Saint Gregory in Thebes was built by *basilikos kandidatos* Basil in AD 872/73 during the reign of Basil I (AD 867–886), while a year later, in AD 873/74, Leo, *basilikos protospatharios* and *strategos* of the *Theme of Hellas*, erected the monastery of Theotokos Skripou in Orchomenos (Soteriou 1924; Pietro-Dominguez 2013: 174). Leo was obviously a wealthy landowner of the region, a member of the new elite of big landowners who decided to invest part of their income in the construction of churches, such as the church of Theotokos Skripou, as a symbolic expression of status or as a form of piety and desire for protection and prosperity (Soteriou 1931; Papalexandrou 1998; Pietro-Dominguez 2013; Vionis 2017). Close by, the remarkable classicizing church of Aghios Nikolaos sta Kampia, an outstation or *metochi* of the Hosios Loukas monastery, also marks the expansion of the local economy by wealthy lay and ecclestiastical founders (Bouras 2006: 132).

The church of the Theotokos in the Monastery of Hosios Loukas, in upland far west Boeotia, was constructed in the second half of the tenth century thanks to imperial and local patronage, and was to play a significant social and religious role for the Christian community of central Greece. This religious foundation was located on an important trade and pilgrimage route, within reach of the harbours on the Corinthian gulf and the major towns of Boeotia, becoming renowned for the healing miracles of the saint's relics (Connor 1992: 297). According to the *Vita* of Hosios Loukas (written by an anonymous monk in the third quarter of the tenth century), the Saint maintained close relations with high military officers, administrative officials and wealthy landowners of the *Theme of Hellas*; the *Vita* also informs us that Krinites, *strategos* of the *Theme of Hellas*, funded the construction of the church of the Theotokos already during the Saint's lifetime (Connor 1991: 108). Later, the construction and decoration of the monastery's *Catholicon* (erected in the early eleventh century) was funded by Theodore Leobachus, an imperial administrator and member of the Theban élite (Connor 1991: 51, 107, 120; 1992: 294). The architectural sophistication of this monastic complex and the lavishness of its mosaic decorative programme have been linked to a prophecy made by the Saint, relating to the re-capture of Crete from the Arabs under the Byzantine emperor. It is of great importance that the monastery of Hosios Loukas was associated not only with a renowned Saint, locally esteemed and with healing qualities, but also with the imperial victory on Crete, so crucial for the Empire in an era of political, military, naval and economic resurgence after a long period of insecurity and loss (McCormick 1986: 167; Connor 1992: 296).

Another important piece of prosopographical information about the lay population of Boeotia derives from the *typikon* of a Byzantine lay confraternity, a devotional and burial society founded in central Greece in the year AD 1048. Ioannes (monk and priest of Hagia Photeini), Soterichos (priest in the district of Copais), Gregorios Kalandos, and Georgios of Sagmata are names listed in the *typikon*, comprising prominent people who lived in the region surrounding Lake Copais. Gregorios Kalandos was a member of a land-owning Theban family, Ioannes was monk and priest of Hagia Photeini, a tenth-century church near to Thebes, Georgios of Sagmata must have been an inhabitant of the substantial settlement at the foot of the Sagmata mountain, close to the famous monastery of the same name (Nesbitt and Wiita 1975: 373–8). Meanwhile, the names of certain other prominent families possibly indicate their profession, such as Blatas (perhaps deriving from βλαττία, 'purple cloth of silk'), Chalkeus (smith), Sapoleros (soap maker), and Maloseiros (probably derived from the Slavic, meaning 'small cheese'). Evidence of this kind for settlement, landed property, and professions imply a mixed economy for Boeotia, based on agriculture and large estates, pastoralism, and industry (Vionis 2017).

The gradual revival of this period could potentially be traced through the conciliar lists of *Notitiae Episcopatuum*, which document the presence of metropolitan and suffragan sees in the region. Thebes seems to have emerged as an independent archbishopric after the Second Council of Nicaea in AD 787, like other ecclesiastically important regions in Greece, such as Thrace, Macedonia and the Peloponnese, even though it had no suffragan sees of its own (Darrouzés (ed.) 1981: *Notitia* 2, 79; Darrouzés 1975; Dunn 1995: 757). Thebes maintained its autocephalous status in the ninth century (Darrouzés (ed.) 1981: *Notitia* 7, 86), while reference to it as a *Metropolitan* in the late tenth century has been argued to suggest its promotion, by having gained its own suffragan sees (Darrouzés (ed.) 1981: *Notitia* 8, 63; Dunn 1995: 757–8).

Thebes apart, the 13th *Notitia* lists five suffragan bishoprics by the mid-twelfth century, namely Kastorion (ancient Thisbe), Zaratova (archaeologically recognized as the successor settlement to the town of Askra, also known locally today as 'Episkopi'), Kanala, Trichia and Platana (none of the last three being archaeologically associable with any known settlements in the region); while Diavleia and Koroneia are listed as suffragans of Athens (Darrouzés (ed.) 1981: *Notitia* 13, 449–50; 752–6; Vionis 2017). Archibald Dunn (1995: 759–60) provides a useful overview and analysis of the rise and fall of bishoprics in Middle Byzantine Boeotia, arguing that of these five listed suffragans of Thebes, Zaratova and Kastorion may precede the twelfth century. It is noteworthy that Tanagra disappears as a bishopric, possibly in the seventh or eighth century, and it is never listed as such again.

Assuming that the wealthiest and most populous bishopric, Thebes, never lost its dominance in Boeotia and functioned as the provincial capital and central market town of this region in Middle and Late Byzantine times, one might infer that lesser bishoprics should be rated as large and prosperous settlements, certainly not mere villages. But apparently not all of them were (Dunn 1995: 762). Intensive survey by the 'Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project' in and around the ancient city of Koroneia has identified the site of Middle Byzantine Koroneia, but its size would only rate it as a village. Similarly, earlier work by the Boeotia Project in the Valley of the Muses has identified Middle Byzantine Zaratova, the successor settlement of Late Antique Askra, but its size was certainly no larger than a village (Bintliff 2012: 387; Vionis 2017). It is highly likely that Zaratova had ecclesiastical control over most of the territory of ancient Thespiai, while the site of the ancient city of Thespiai itself survived as a village in Middle Byzantine times, inhabited by two communities clustered around two churches (Aghios Athanasios and the *Makri Ekklesia*), functioning as the parish churches of the settlements (see Chapter 3, p. 124, where it is estimated that some 300 people might have occupied these adjacent settlements). To conclude, 'we cannot regard the existence or foundation of new bishoprics as a straightforward sign of successful urbanization' (Dunn 1995: 764–5).

The *Cadaster* (or Land Register) *of Thebes*, dated shortly after the mid-eleventh century, demonstrates that agriculture was intensified during this period in Boeotia, while the number of land-owners was also rising (Svoronos 1959: 1–145; Avraméa 2005: 220). The Cadaster, however, simply lists the names of land-owners, without giving the size of peasant holdings (Harvey 1989: 59–76). Some 24 settlements, located between the town of Thebes and the eastern coast of Boeotia, are characterized as 'villages' in the Cadaster, while some of the land-owners mentioned are residents of Thebes or nearby Chalkis in Euboea, and their commercial enterprises were destined for those local markets (Harvey 1989: 228; Avraméa 2005: 220). This historical source gives clear signs of agricultural expansion, resulting in major population growth, re-settlement and rising productivity in the Boeotian countryside (Bintliff 2012: 388–95). The fertile lands had begun to act as a sought-after resource by the rising population, while production, mainly of wheat, was destined to meet the growing demand of major urban centres such as Constantinople (Dunn 1995: 770–1; Vionis 2008: 35; 2012: 35).

Despite the significant number of invasions in the region recorded by Byzantine authors, economic recovery seems to have developed steadily throughout the Middle Byzantine period. Symeon I of Bulgaria invaded Boeotia and Phocis with heavy forces in AD 918, devastating the land and claiming the payment of taxes (Oikonomides 1992: 252–3). Symeon's expansionist activities are narrated in the *Vita* of Hosios Loukas (Sofianos 1989: 182), which also records that the rural population abandoned its settlements and moved to fortified urban centres or other safer regions. Arethas of Caesarea (Bees 1928: 337; Bazaiou-Barabas 1989: 384) and the Chronicle of Galaxidi (Sathas 1865: 200–2) state that the city of Thebes was equally threatened by the Bulgars. The last significant invasion of Boeotia, recorded by Ioannes Skylitzes (Thurn (ed.) 1973: 330, 341–2; Wortley 2010: 313, 323–4), occurred in AD 996/97, when the Bulgarian Tsar Samuel swept from Thrace down to the Peloponnese through central mainland Greece, devastating Thessaly, Boeotia and Attica.

Kekaumenos' *Strategikon*, of the eleventh century, emphasizes the importance of landed property,

because 'one's own land is the most important source of income', while *Nomos Georgikos* informs us that the 'normal' population of the tenth century consists of farmers living in a village, not owners of large landed property who, in the case of Boeotia, are residents of Thebes and Chalkis (Koder 2006: 163). It has been argued that traditional agriculture and pastoralism in Boeotia were more important than the silk business, at least in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and that central Greece was supplying Constantinople with significant quantities of wheat down to the early fourteenth century, after the Bulgars had interrupted the flow of Thracian wheat to Constantinople (Dunn 1995: 770).

A parallel growth is also attested in regional towns, with Thebes occupying the most prominent position in the economy of central Greece. The city functioned as a large regional market, being located in the midst of a fertile area and on the land-route that linked Corinth with Thessaloniki (Gerolymatou 1997: 101–2; Jacoby 1991–92: 471). The dominance of Thebes can be seen in a series of treaties signed between Venetian merchants and the Byzantine Court in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In May 1072 two Venetian merchants appear to have agreed to confront the dangers and expenses of a commercial trip from Venice to Thebes; in August 1073 a similar agreement between Venetian merchants was reached for the same purpose (Gerolymatou 1997: 97–8). A treaty in the form of an imperial chrysobull was issued by Alexios I Komnenos in AD 1082, offering major trade privileges to Venice in exchange for military support against the Normans, who were invading Byzantine territory at the time. According to the treaty, Venetians were allowed to trade without customs duties in specific cities throughout the Empire, Thebes being listed amongst them (Gerolymatou 1997: 98–9; Jacoby 1991–92: 495). These privileges were renewed in AD 1126, 1147 and 1198, increasing Venetian involvement in Byzantine internal trade and leading gradually to Venetian acquisition of landed property and permanent settlement in centres like Thebes (Gerolymatou 1997: 99).

Silk industries had already developed at Constantinople and in the Byzantine provinces before the arrival of the Fourth Crusade in AD 1204. Important silk-producing centres were located in Thebes, Corinth, Patras, Euboea, and the island of Andros, all of which produced samite, a strong and glossy silk cloth in twill weave composed of six threads (Jacoby 2000: 22). Thebes was considered the main producer in twelfth-century western Byzantium of high quality silk textiles, dyed with murex purple from marine molluscs (Jacoby 1991–92; 2000). The large number of molluscs needed for the production of a small amount of dye (the purple colorant), the highly sophisticated procedure for preparing the colorant, and the actual dyeing process in Thebes rendered silk cloth a product of high cost, the production of which was subsidized by the emperor (Jacoby 1991–92: 455–8; 2000: 23; 2009a: 378–80; Muthesius 1995: 327–8).

The expansion of the silk industry in Thebes was supported by the abundance of water containing certain minerals (calcium and magnesium), important for the washing and dyeing process. Mulberry trees seem to have grown in the plains near the city, an area known locally as 'Morokampos' (Jacoby 1991–92; Koilakou 2004: 221–2). Evidence for the existence of the so-called rural 'longhouse' type in Boeotia, by the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries or even earlier at Harmena and Panakton (Gerstel *et al.* 2003: 154–5), may also imply its use for the household production of silk fibre (making use of the longer half of the house, sizable enough for silkworm farming). The sea around the port of Negroponte (Chalkis) functioned as a fishing area for the marine molluscs used for the well-known *porphyra*, the purple dye of the Theban silk industry (Koder and Hild 1976: 102–4; Koilakou 2004: 221–2; Dunn 2006: 53–4). The fact that purple fishers were operating also off the Aegean island of Gyaros, between Andros and Kea, some time after AD 1208, as suggested by the contemporary Michael Choniates, may indicate that silk thread was still being dyed with murex purple in Thebes, even after AD 1204 (Jacoby 2004: 210).

Byzantine textual sources, such as the poet John Tzetzes (AD 1110–1180) or Michael Choniates, writing as Metropolitan of Athens in AD 1183–85, refer to the skilful female weavers of low as well as high social rank of the Theban silk industry (Leone (ed.) 1972: 101–3, no 71; Lambrou (ed.) 1879–80: *Ep*. no. 50, lines 63–5; Setton 1944: 195–6; Jacoby 1991–92: 466–8). The appreciation of Theban silk fabrics beyond the Empire is revealed by Niketas Choniates, who documents the request for an annual grant of 40 pieces of Theban silk cloth, by Muhyi al-Din the Seljuk emir of Ikonion, from Emperor Alexius III Angelus in AD 1195 (Jacoby 1991–92: 467). It is noteworthy that after the Norman king Roger II of Sicily raided Thebes in AD 1147, he deported to Palermo a number of the most skilful silk workers, amongst them many Jews (Pertz (ed.) 1994: 83, lines 53–5; Pertz (ed.) 1989: 370, lines 29–32; Niketas: Van Dieten (ed.) 1975: 74, lines 45–9; Setton 1944: 195–6; Koder and Hild 1976: 270; Magdalino 1993: 51; Angold 1997: 200–1; Gerolymatou 1997: 105; Louvi-Kizi 2002: 631). According to the account of the Iberian Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Thebes around 1160, the Theban silk industry quickly recovered after this event and flourished even

more (Adler (ed.) 1907: 16–17; Jacoby 1991–92: 473; 2004: 225; Angold 1997: 281–2; Louvi-Kizi 2002: 632).

Until the late twelfth century, Thebes remained the capital of the *Theme of Hellas*, as is attested in a letter of Michael Choniates to the Emperor Alexius III Angelos (Lambrou (ed.) 1879–80: 308 §3). Boeotia, however, began to suffer from the arbitrariness of local power and excessive taxation. A requirement of additional tax payments was not uncommon: Leo Sgouros, an independent *archon* of the north-eastern Peloponnese in the early thirteenth century, forced the population of central Greece to pay the so-called 'naval tax' in return for protection from pirate raids (Setton 1944: 192–3; Angold 1997: 310). Sgouros took advantage of the chaos caused by the Fourth Crusade to extend his authority into central Greece by capturing Thebes and devastating the Boeotian countryside (Setton 1944: 204–5; 1976: 22).

According to the schematic map drawn by the historian Alain Ducellier of the pattern of settlement and cultivation within a Middle Byzantine village-territory, based on documentary sources, a number of farms and hamlets were dependent on the main village of the region, while areas under crop cultivation, vineyards, and fruit and vegetable gardens surrounded each settlement (Ducellier 1986: 187–8; Lefort 2002: 236–7; Bintliff *et al.* 2007: 23–4; Vionis 2013a: 31–2). Village, hamlets and farms, close to water sources and interconnected though a network of roads and paths, formed an economically successful and distinctive autonomous entity, even though their inhabitants comprised almost exclusively tenants. The infield intensive cultivation also is very well reflected at the two Thespiai villages, where a wide spread of manuring finds litter their fields to the west (see Chapter 3, p. 128).

Despite the at times discouraging picture drawn by the historical narrative above, ceramic sherds recovered during the course of archaeological intensive survey in several parts of Greece have shown widespread signs of recovery in the Byzantine countryside between the eleventh and the early thirteenth centuries. Middle Byzantine settlements are well-attested in several regions of Boeotia with diagnostic surface pottery reaching its peak between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries. These new settlements, of various sizes, established across the countryside are interpreted as small nucleated hamlets and villages, located at regular intervals in a way reminiscent of the modern nucleated village pattern. The locations of these settlements, both lowland (non-defensive) and hill-top (defensive), usually concentrated around churches, which probably functioned as parish churches for each settlement (Vionis 2008: 35; 2013a: 31–2).

The Late Byzantine/Frankish era (early thirteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries)

The capture of Constantinople by the Latins of the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent distribution of Byzantine territory amongst those who had contributed to the Latin conquest, led to the incorporation of Boeotia into the Duchy of Athens. The *Partitio terrarium imperii Romaniae* between Venice and the Crusading knights was agreed in October 1204, according to which a quarter of the Empire was assigned to the Latin Emperor of Constantinople (Gregory 2005: 282). The Duchy of Athens and Thebes, along with the Kingdom of Thessalonica, the Principality of Achaea and the Duchy of the Archipelago, was one of the conquered territories divided by the Latin Emperor into larger or smaller vassal fiefs (Longnon 1969: 235–6; Tricht 2011: 160–1, 234–5). Boniface of Montferrat established himself as king of Thessaloniki, having seized Macedonia, Thessaly, Boeotia and Attica, while declaring himself lord of Athens and granting the administration of Boeotia and Attica to the Burgundian noble Otto de la Roche (Setton 1944: 204–5; Longnon 1969: 238; Lock 1995: 70–2).

Otto de la Roche shared the administration of Thebes, '*Domini Thebarum*', with his son Guy de la Roche from 1211 on. Guy's sister, Bonne, received the other half of Thebes as part of her dowry upon her marriage with the Flemish knight Bela of Saint Omer. It is worth noting that Bela's father, Nicholas I of Saint Omer, had been granted lands in Boeotia as one of the participants in the Fourth Crusade (Setton 1966: 388–9, 408; Jacoby 1999: 525–8). Bela's son, Nicholas II of Saint Omer, completed in 1287 the construction of the castle and palace of Thebes which, according to the Chronicle of the Morea, was decorated with frescoes depicting the conquest of the Holy Land during the First Crusade (Lurier 1964: 298; Kalopissi-Verti 2007: 3–5).

The social and cultural background which the Latins brought with them from their countries of origin is not to be ignored (Ellenblum 1998: 13). Thus, the rulers and the imported Frankish élite of the Duchy of Athens imposed the Western feudal system on to the territory they ruled, organizing in this manner the exploitation of an extensive rural landscape, establishing themselves in castles and towers in or near the long-established towns and villages of the Middle Byzantine period (Bintliff 2000: 44; Vionis 2008: 35–6). They divided the Boeotian countryside into a number of fiefs, given out to Latin nobles and minor lords for agricultural exploitation, as agriculture continued to constitute the economic base of the region during the Frankish period; meanwhile the remaining Greek

Archons gradually penetrated into the Latin feudal network (Bintliff 1996: 5–6; Jacoby 2001: 199; 2009b: 524; 2010: 187). Archaeological evidence from Boeotia suggests that the general prosperity noted during the Middle Byzantine era continued through the Frankish period, until the outbreak of the bubonic plague in the second half of the fourteenth century and the Ottoman conquest in the second half of the fifteenth (Bintliff 1996; 2000).

Western immigration into the Aegean increased, gradually but substantially, after 1204 (Jacoby 1999: 534, 537). Western knights in Thebes formed a well-defined social class, who established themselves in urban castles and towers in the countryside. These feudal towers in the Boeotian countryside, rather than forming parts of an organized defence network, functioned as control- and tax-collection points for dependent villages in their vicinity, or served as a fortified residence for the landlord himself (or his bailiff) and as an administrative and storage centre of the fief (Lock 1986; 1989; Bintliff 2000; Vionis 2008). The social structure of the period consisted of free Franks and a largely unfree peasant population, the *villani*, strictly dependent on their lords and tied to the land (Jacoby 1973: 889–90; 2009b: 524–5).

Despite Latin immigration and shifts in the administrative system, agricultural and industrial productivity continued to grow in the second half of the thirteenth and the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Thebes remained a major trading and silk-producing centre, with a strong element of Latin merchants and bankers. The presence of the Genoese in Thebes is attested only after the Latin conquest, when they were acting as entrepreneurs in the city, financing the activity of the silk workshops (Jacoby 2004: 223). The treaty signed between the Genoese consul Riccio di S. Donato and the lord of Athens Guy I de La Roche in 1240, for the free export of Theban silk textiles, reveals that Genoese merchants financed a number of local silk workshops producing cloth for them, and probably also ordered silk fabrics from other manufacturers (Jacoby 2000: 24). One can also detect an internal movement of population from the countryside into the city of Thebes, taking advantage of new opportunities provided by the industry and trade in silk (Setton 1976: 420; Jacoby 1999: 540; 2010: 188, 190).

Catholicism had never been consolidated in the Aegean, except in some of the Cycladic islands, despite the efforts of the Pope and the Frankish lords. It should be noted that the majority of Greek bishops deserted their sees, refusing to submit to papal authority, and were replaced by Latin bishops. In a letter addressed to Otto de la Roche by Pope Innocent III and dating to AD 1210, it is stated that a Latin priest should be appointed in any community which numbered more than 12 Latin residents. It seems, however, that the Franks did not require the local population to renounce the Orthodox faith, and this led to a commitment of the Orthodox clerics to the rural churches and the monasteries (Migne (ed.) 1851: XIII, Ep. xvi; Wolff 1948: 41; Jacoby 1999: 542). In the Duchy of Athens, Athens and Thebes were preserved as two ecclesiastical provinces, while the autocephalous archbishopric of Thebes lost three of its five sees, retaining only the bishops of Zaratova and Kastorion (Wolf 1948: 55–7; Setton 1966: 409; Lock 1995: 208). The bishops of Diavleia and Koroneia remained under the authority of the Archbishop of Athens.

Archaeological investigations in Thespiai confirm that the two Middle Byzantine communities identified in the eastern sector of the ancient city, known together as Erimokastro, continued to exist and indeed to grow into the Frankish period (Bintliff 2012: 388; in Chapter 3 (p. 127) it is estimated that the Middle Byzantine population may have doubled to some 600 inhabitants, matched with more intensive manuring in the two villages' inner landscape). The Middle Byzantine church, built on the foundations of an Early Christian basilica and marking one of the two Middle Byzantine settlements, was later accompanied by a large estate tower of the French monastic order of the Premonstratensians who acquired this settlement, according to a letter of Pope Innocent III and dated to 1212 (Bintliff *et al.* 2007: 181; Bintliff 2012: 431). The letter confirmed the donation of the village *Hermocastrum* on behalf of Nicholas I Saint Omer to the Premonstratensians and to the brothers of Saint Mary of Ponte Parvo in Brindisi. It seems that Premonstratensians founded a community in the village, which was abandoned shortly after its building (Migne (ed.) 1851: 591, XV, Ep. lxviii; Tsougarakis 2012: 268–70; Coureas 2015: 166). Similarly, in the micro-landscape of the Valley of the Muses, the Middle Byzantine settlement of Zaratova (one of the new eleventh- to twelfth-century bishoprics of Boeotia), was transferred some 500 m to the east in the early thirteenth century; a Frankish tower was built on a high crag and the settlement itself, larger than its Middle Byzantine predecessor, was established on the hillside below the tower (Vionis 2008: 35–6; Bintliff 2012: 421).

But a turning point for Latin Boeotia was to come in the battle between the allied forces of the Duchy of Athens and the Catalan Grand Company on 11 March 1311. The *Magna Societas Catalanorum*, a band of mercenaries from Spain, was founded by Roger de Flor in the early fourteenth century (Gregory 2005: 304). In AD 1303 Roger de Flor, married to the

Byzantine Emperor's niece Maria Asenina, had offered the Company's services to the Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos, in support of the Byzantine Empire against the Turkic threat in Asia Minor (Miller 1908: 214–15; Setton 1948: 2–5; 1966: 411; 1975: 167–9; Lock 1995: 104–6).

Gautier V de Brienne, the heir of the last Burgundian Duke of Athens, had hired the Catalan Grand Company to protect his interests against Anna of Epirus, the Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and the Lord of Vlachia John II Doukas, and managed to annex the Duchy of Neopatras and parts of Thessaly in AD 1310. Gautier then attempted to expel the Catalan Company with a reward for their services; but the Company refused to give up the lands and strongholds which they had occupied, claiming the right to hold them as fiefs. In March 1311, Catalan and Aragonese troops joined battle against Gautier's strong force of French Knights in a battle known as 'battle of Halmyros' or 'the battle of Kephissos' (Goodenough (ed.) 1920–21: 577, II, no. ccxl; Miller 1908: 224–9; Lock 1995: 106–7; DeVries 1996: 58–65; Dourou-Eliopoulou 1999–2000: 87–8). This is more likely to have occurred at the first location, in Thessaly, than by the Boeotian Kephissos river, according to most specialists. The Catalans defeated the Frankish forces, seized the Duchy of Athens and Neopatras, and established a new Catalan state in the region. The cities of Attica and Boeotia suffered heavy damage, and it seems that many of the Latin inhabitants sought refuge in neighbouring Euboea (Setton 1966: 411; 1975: 171).

In order to secure protection for their domain, politically and diplomatically, the Catalans turned to the House of Aragon and King Frederick II of Sicily. Henceforward, the Catalan Grand Company was renamed *Felix Francorum exercitus in Romanie* (Fortunate Army of the Franks in Romania) with Thebes as the capital of the Duchy. Five municipalities, namely Athens, Thebes, Livadia, Siderokastron, and Neopatra were incorporated under the suzerainty of the Catalans. The Assizes and the Customs of Romania were replaced by the *Constitutions of Catalonia* and the *Customs of Barcelona*, while the Frankish baronage was replaced by the court of the Vicar General in Thebes (Setton 1948: 15–20).

The Catalans preserved the social structure inherited from the Franks. The local population was divided into free Greeks (with the *Archontes* amongst them) and the *villani* or unfree peasants. Some Greeks, however, who had been incorporated in the Frankish class of feudal lords, lost their social and economic benefits with the disappearance of the Frankish feudal hierarchy (Jacoby 2003: 95–8).

The rebellion of the marshal Roger de Lluria against the vicar general Pedro de Pou in 1362, the coalition between Roger de Lluria and the Anatolian Turks, and the war of the Catalans against Venice, all caused damage and resulted in further relocation of peasants to Negroponte (Euboea). It seems that Pietro Gradenigo, the Venetian *bailo* of Negroponte from 1362 to 1364, encouraged this re-settlement of Boeotian *villani* in Euboea. After the end of warfare in 1365, the Catalans demanded from the Venetian Senate the return of peasants (Lluch (ed.) 2001: 341–2, no. cclviii; Setton 1966: 417–18; Lock 1995: 125; Jacoby 2009b: 533).

But, some time around the middle of the fourteenth century, most of the Boeotian countryside became depopulated and deserted. The devastating effects of the Black Death, the continuous warfare between Byzantines, Franks and Ottomans, and successive raids by pirates on coastal Boeotia during the second half of this century were particularly felt by the Frankish Dukes of Thebes and Athens, who invited in Albanian semi-nomadic clans to resettle the deserted lands. The use of Albanian colonization, over much of central and southern Greece, was to be a practice repeated by the Ottomans after their conquest of Boeotia in 1460 (Lock 1995; Bintliff 1996; Kiel 1997).

The Catalans, however, survived in the Duchy of Athens until the attack of the Navarrese Company. The Navarrese (or 'White Company'), mercenaries from Navarre and Gascony, crossed the Morea, passed through Corinth and entered the Athenian Duchy. Nerio Acciajuoli, the Florentine lord of Corinth and conqueror of Megara in 1374, then enlisted the Navarrese Company, whom he permitted to pass through Corinth and Megara, encouraging them to attack Thebes (Setton 1960: 105, 111–12; 1975: 218).

In May or June of 1379, the Navarrese Company seized Thebes, forcing a massive exodus from Boeotia of the Frankish and Greek inhabitants of city and countryside, to seek refuge once again in Venetian Negroponte. In a letter to the doge of Venice, King Pedro IV expressed his gratitude to the Venetians of Euboea for the reception of his subjects, expressing his wish to have them repatriated as soon as Thebes would be once more under Catalan rule (Lluch (ed.) 2001: 486–7, no. cccxcvi; Lock 1995: 131).

On 7 July 1385, Nerio received the title of the 'Lord of Corinth and the Duchy of Athens and Neopatras' (Setton 1966: 419–23). Nerio annexed the lower city of Athens in 1386 and occupied the Acropolis on 2 May 1388. Meanwhile, the domination of the Navarrese Company was to last until the Ottoman conquest of central Greece, when Mehmed the Conqueror captured Thebes in 1456 and Athens in 1458

(Setton 1960: 112–13; 1966: 419–23; 1975: 218–19, 222; Jacoby 2009b: 533).

Despite the misfortunes, narrated by the textual sources, of the peasant populations throughout Frankish, Catalan, Navarrese and Florentine rule in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, settlement activity in Boeotia survived and reached its zenith in the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth centuries, until its devastation by the bubonic plague. Under new political regimes and the supervision of minor feudal lords, peasants still continued to till the same land. The settlement system continued to revolve mainly around the villages and hamlets established already in the Middle Byzantine period, now marked by the construction of feudal towers, symbols of a new regime and status. As has been noted above, the Latins opened up new export avenues and maritime contacts, while the new regimes in most cases continued to favour agricultural intensification, industry and trade. Survey archaeology since the early 1990s has revealed a dense network of rural sites, fortifications and fortified structures, to be associated with increased population (Vionis 2014b: 318).

This pattern of settlement in the areas where Frankish control had been imposed, as revealed by excavation and survey archaeology, has an interesting story to tell, featuring, first, the formation of new settlements; secondly, the relocation and thirdly, the continued existence, of old ones. The first category is well represented by the fourteenth- to fifteenth-century village-site of Panakton, on the borders of Boeotia and Attica, where excavation revealed a short-lived settlement dependent on agricultural production, with the humble housing of the inhabitants spread below a hilltop crowned by a feudal tower, in the possession of a foreign landlord (Gerstel *et al.* 2003: 149; Vionis 2014b: 321–2). The second case can be exemplified by the site of 'VM4', or Palaiopanagia, the eventual successor settlement to Askra/Zaratova/Episkopi, on the upper slopes of a rocky hill in the Valley of the Muses, where the feudal nobility established itself in a tower not far from Middle Byzantine Zaratova (Lock 1986; 1996; 1997; Bintliff 2000; Vionis 2014b). The third case is illustrated by the results of the 'Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project' in the region of Tanagra, where an existing Middle Byzantine settlement, around the church of Agios Thomas of the same date, was taken over by an incoming feudal lord at the beginning of the thirteenth century: the church was transformed into a square feudal tower with chapel and the village community continued to till the surrounding land until the outbreak of the bubonic plague (Vionis 2008: 30; 2014b: 322). The site of Erimokastro/Thespiai also belongs to this third category of continuing Middle Byzantine settlements, much enlarged over its Middle Byzantine predecessor but with the later addition of a large estate tower, belonging to the French monastic order of the Premonstratensians who had acquired this settlement.

Chapter 9

Thespia – Zogra Kobila – Erimokastro – Kaskaveli in the Ottoman Period, according to unpublished or little-known Ottoman Administrative Sources

Machiel Kiel

The Ottoman Empire, once extending over the area of 33 of today's nation states, has left us no mere 'paper trail', but what we could better describe as an 'Autobahn', with its over 100 million administrative documents and registers, many of them containing over 1000 pages. Because most readers interested in the archaeology of the Greek lands are unfamiliar with the preserved Ottoman archives and source materials, some introductory notes may be appropriate here. The main archive is the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Minister's Ottoman Archive) in Istanbul-Sadabad: entry to this archive is kept as un-bureaucratic as possible. The archive of the Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, Kuyud-Kadime (T.K.G.M.) in Ankara has a small but important collection of the latest and most complete of the great population- and taxation registers: since this is the archive of the National Land Registry Office, access for historians is rather difficult. The third great collection of Ottoman records is the Oriental Department of the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia, where entry is relatively easy.

Besides scores of registers of building accounts for government building projects, bridges, paved roads, river dikes, and fortresses, over half a million letters from the provinces to the centre, and their answers from the Sultan's government, collected in 500 bulky volumes (the *Mühimme Defterleri*), give a wealth of information on all kinds of interesting problems and the mewns of solving them. Of great interest for the archaeologist and the historian are some 2000 preserved grand registers, with province-by-province descriptions. These registers (*tahrir*) were kept in two versions: of these, the more detailed, *mufassal* (exemplified by Figs. 9.2 and 9.3), in contrast to the summary or *icmal* version (exemplified by Fig. 9.1) contain the names of all the settlements of the district they were dealing with, the names of all heads of household (including the incomplete households of widows, who were taxed very lightly), and the names of all unmarried adult males (*müdjerred*), and finally all the agricultural products, of which 10 per cent, or in some districts 13 per cent was taken as tax (*öşr*).

Each detailed register began with a survey of the local laws for the district, including a survey of the local measures used and their relation to the standard Istanbul measures. The description of these laws and rules goes under the legal name of *Kanun-nâme*. For our area, the Sandjak of Eğriboz (Chalkis), to which all the land between Lamia and Cape Sounion belonged, these *Kanun-nâmes* are preserved only in the registers from 1521 (1530) and 1570. They were published as part of a long series by Ahmet Akgündüz (Akgündüz 1992: 386–401). Those pertaining to the Greek lands were published in transliteration in Latin characters, and in English translation with copious commentaries, in the magnificent work of John Alexander (Alexander, 1985). The additional 3 per cent mentioned above, on top of the tithe of 10 per cent for cereals and grape must, called *salariye*, was also taken in the Sandjak of Eğriboz to which Boeotia belonged. Horses, cows, buffalos and donkeys were not taxed: only when they were taken to market to be sold was a small market due taken. Goats and sheep, on the other hand, were taxed: in the fifteenth century, at one small silver coin (*akçe*) for three animals, in the sixteenth century with one *akçe* per two animals, and in the seventeenth century one *akçe* for each animal, reflecting the slow inflation of the Ottoman currency. Characteristically for the pragmatic attitude of the Ottomans, pigs were also taxed, one *akçe* for each pig fattened at home, and one *akçe* per two animals grazed outdoors.

The taxes mentioned were divided in two groups, the canonical *öşr* (tithe, a tenth part) and the customary tax (*resm*). There was a certain reluctance to tax pigs, unclean animals in Jewish and Islamic law, as is illustrated in the way the tax is called in the

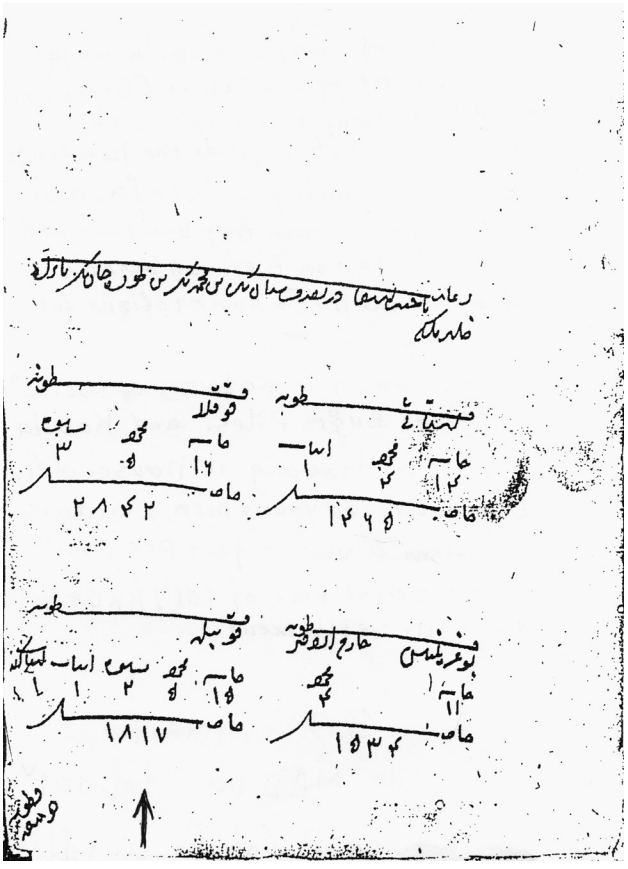


Figure 9.1. *Extract from İcmal Defter MAD 66, folio 101, of* AD *1466/67, showing entries for four* katun *encampments of Albanians, including Kobila (bottom left), with 15 households, 5 young men, 2 widows, 1 water-mill and 1 felt press mill, giving a tax assessment of 1817* akçe.

*tahrir*s: 'unlawful tax on pigs' (*bid'at al-hinzir*) or 'tax on monsters' (*resm-i canavar*). A similar hypocrisy was applied to the case of wine, which was officially described as *şira*, grape must, but which in fact was green wine, because *şira* cannot be kept long. In many districts in the Balkans, wine production was the second most important economic activity, ranking immediately after wheat production; and in spite of all religious objections, these two important revenue-producing taxes were levied. On top of this comes the practice of many benefactors, of establishing pious foundations (*vakf, evkaf*) for the upkeep of mosques, schools, soup kitchens for the poor, etc., foundations that took their income from the agricultural production of the villages that were the property of these foundations. More often than not, the half or more of this revenue came from wine production. In dry and stony Herzegovina, the entire Islamic life-style, with mosques, schools, baths and caravanserais, rested 60 per cent on wine production, with the little towns of Dabrica with 66 per cent and Predolje with 79 per cent offering extreme examples. Some great foundations, like that of the famous warlord Evrenosoğlu Ahmed Bey in Yenice-i Vardar and even the *vakf* of the great Süleymaniye compound in Istanbul, operated through the centuries to an important degree on the income from wine production (Kiel 2013).

Honey, in many places an important product, was taken in kind as tithe: one beehive from ten beehives, or the equivalent in cash. If a farmer had ten beehives, he could expect 20–30 *okka* honey per year per hive: when sold in the great cities, he could expect 8 to 12 *akçe* per *okka* (1.288 kg) of good honey. This would yield between 1600 and 3600 additional *akçe* annually to the farm's budget. For this sum of money, an Imam or Müezzin would have to work more than two years; a good mason, carpenter or stone-cutter about one year (all numbers and prices are those for the sixteenth century).

Cotton and flax were also taxed, five *akçe* per bale (*teker*) of cotton in 1506 and 1540, six *akçe* by 1570; for flax, two *akçe* per sheaf (*demet*). The numbers of bales and sheaves, as given in the registers, seem at first sight modest; but when transformed into cotton or linen tissues through home industry, they could amount to a valuable addition to the yearly budget, since textile production was not taxed. Only when the product was brought to market was a small amount of market dues taken.

The basis of the Ottoman administrative system was not, as many would be inclined to think, a continuation of Byzantine practices. The Byzantines taxed the land, the Ottomans only the products. The Byzantines registered all the people, including new-born children, the Ottomans only the heads of households (*hâne*), unmarried male young men (*mücerred*), and widows (taxed very lightly, as mentioned above). The Ottoman system was based on the administrative practices of their direct predecessors, the Mongol dynasty of the İl-Khanids of Iran, Iraq, and Western Central Asia, 1256–1336. The entire bureaucratic system was described in detail by a former member of it, Eman as-Sarâvî, who wrote around 1340 when the Mongol state had vanished. As-Sarâvî's very rare and extremely useful work was studied and entirely translated into German by Nejat Göyünç in his dissertation of 1962; the only copy was retrieved by the writer of these lines and his wife and later published in Berlin, with permission of the heirs of Prof. Göyünç (Göyünç 2012). The İl Khanid system contained some Chinese and Tibetan elements, as well as some practices from the Slavic Balkan states before the coming of

the Ottomans. A case in point is the hearth tax called *ispence*, 25 *akçe* per household and per *mücerred*, with the widows paying only 6 *akçe*. Another Balkan element is '*božik*', the old Slavic tax on pigs slaughtered for Christmas, and taken together with the 'tax on Monsters' (see p. 256). In the Late Byzantine period, it was the Ottoman system that influenced Byzantine taxation and not the other way round, as was made clear by the study of the Greek scholar Nikolas Oikonomides (Oikonomides 1986).

There existed *tahrir* registers for the Eğriboz Sandjak for the years 1460, 1466, 1490, 1506, 1521, 1540 and 1570. That of 1460 – made immediately after the annexation of the Acciajuoli principality – is not preserved, but the following one, from 1466, refers repeatedly to it. From the 1490 *tahrir* only a large section covering the great Island of Euboea, is preserved. From the 1521 census, the first from the rule of Süleyman the Magnificent, only a small part (10 folia) of the *icmal* version is preserved (Ali Emiri, Kanūnî, N° 27). It gives us, however, the means to establish the date of the information contained in the great *Muhasebe Defter*, T[apu]. D[efter]. 367 of 1530, which is preserved in its entirety and is even published (Ankara, T.T.K. 2007, the Kaza of İstife (Thebes) on pp. 81–5). The register from 1540 (T.D. 431) is entirely preserved but has suffered badly through water that came in when the fire brigade tried to extinguish a fire in one of the archive stores. The 1569/70 register (T.K.G.M. no. 157) is the only one of the whole series for the Sandjak of Eğriboz that is wholly preserved and undamaged, but it is kept in Ankara Land Registry Office, which is very difficult to enter, even for Turkish colleagues.

At the end of the sixteenth century the 'military revolution' forced the Ottomans to change their system (Parker 2008). After around 1600, *tahrir*s were no longer made on a regular basis. Only when a new province was added to the empire, like the great island of Crete in 1669 or Kamenets-Podolsk in 1672, or on the re-conquest of Ottoman provinces lost earlier like the Morea/Peloponnese in 1715 or Northern Serbia in 1740, were entirely new registers made, following the model of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century practices.

From the early 1600s on, scores of new registers were made for the new general tax, *'Avâriz*, where, village by village, the heads of households were registered, not only the peasants and citizens but also the administrative personnel, including the Kadı and his staff, and the military, who are usually missing in the *tahrir*s. In the *Mufassal 'Avâridefters*, a clear division is made between those who paid and those who were exempted. This is done at the end of the register of all the heads of households of each settlement. Below the line where the total number of registered people (here called *nefer*) appears, those who had to pay are grouped together. They are called *re'aya* (subjects), which until the end of the eighteenth century signified Christians as well as Muslims. The second group is called *Askeri*, or 'the military', which however also included blind or very old people, or the guards of the mountain passes (*derbendjis*), or miners, and curiously enough also Christian widows who were likewise freed from paying the *'Avâriz*. In the usual *İcmal 'Avâriz* registers, this whole group of privileged people is not mentioned at all. To use the latter group of sources can lead to big mistakes, and has already misled many a serious demographer (Darling 1996; Demirci 2003 and 2006).

Details on the agricultural production of the settlements are not given in this kind of register (for these registers too were made in a *mufassal* and an *icmal* version. They were made at intervals throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century and a large number of them have been preserved. For the Sandjak of Eğriboz they have not (yet) been found, alas. Preserved, however, is a third group of registers: the extracts from the 'Avâriz İdjmals, where the total populations of entire Sandjaks alone are listed, giving only the total number of 'Avâriz 'tax-houses'.

Under the 'Avâriz system, groups of actual households were formed, varying from 3 to more than 10 households, depending on their financial power, to form one 'tax House'.

Before using them as a basis for demographic research, one should know how many real houses went in a tax house. This is often explained in the introductory part of the register: but only when we have the 'key' can this kind of registers, called *Erkâm Defterler*, be used. From those published for the Eğriboz Sandjak for the eighteenth century, it can be seen that the time between 1700 and 1800 was demographic 'plateau', with a stagnant or very slowly rising population, which by the end of the eighteenth century was giving signs of a quicker growth (McGowan 1982).

The final group of registers, where the demographer can find relatively reliable material about the population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are the Poll Tax Registers called *Cizye Defterleri* (Figs. 9.2 and 9.3), which once again are found in a *Mufassal* and an *icmal* version. Until the reform of the poll tax in 1690/91, the *cizye* were assessed by household. Only Christians and Jews paid this tax, officially one gold coin per year per house. The Muslims did not pay, as they bore the duty of defending the country in case of war, while the Christian auxiliary forces of the Ottoman army, the numerous *Martoloz* from the fortresses along the borders of the

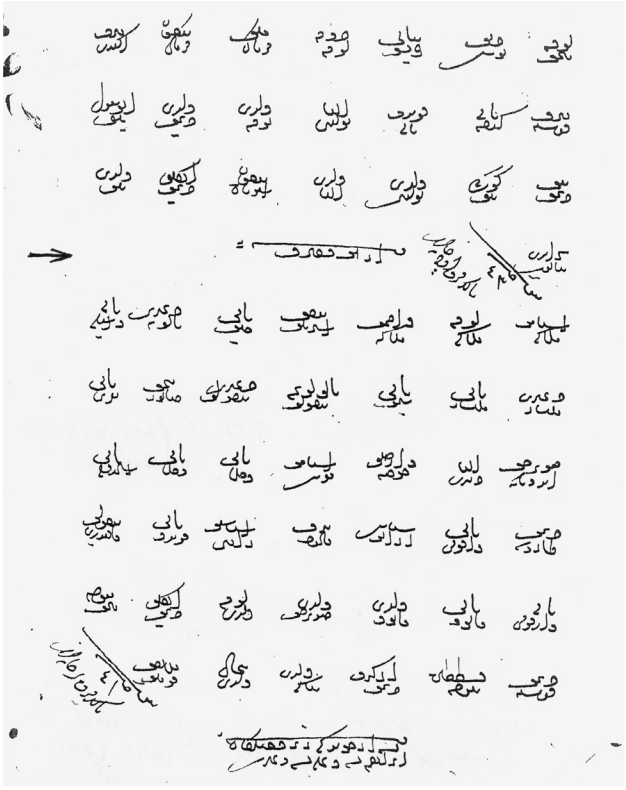


Figure 9.2. *Extract from the* Mufassal Cizye Defter *MAD 1000, page 88, of* AD *1646, showing the entry for Erimokastro (arrowed), as a separate village, with a list of its 41 heads of household and a total at the bottom left.*



Figure 9.3. *Page 87 of the same Defter as Fig. 9.2, with the entry for 'Zagra [Kobila]' (arrowed) and a list of its 21 heads of household.*

empire, were also exempted from the *cizye*. Besides this, a group of 10 to 20 per cent of the Christians, who possessed less than a certain limit and were thus regarded as poor, did not pay. When reconstructing past populations this factor needs special attention. As I have argued elsewhere (Kiel 1997), it is reasonable to allow for some 25 per cent of the population to be unregistered in the seventeenth-century tax archives. Many doubt the reliability of the numbers given in the *cizye* registers; others are unwilling to believe that, in the seventeenth century, a deep demographic decline took place or that this decline was world-wide (White 2011; Parker 2013). The reliability of the poll tax registers can best be illustrated by a table of some rare examples – all in Central Greece – where there are data (travel accounts) available to control the *cizye* numbers. They show not only the relatively high level of correctness of the poll tax registers, but also the deep decline during the crisis of the seventeenth century (Table 9.1).

Resuming, it can be said that the Ottoman administrative sources for the Greek lands, when compared with the 'black hole' after the Byzantine accounts stopped and before the first Western travellers came, are overwhelming in number and detail but, in the case of Thebes and its district, are far less abundant then they could have been.

British archeologists were the first to realize what a mine of information the Ottoman population- and taxation-registers could offer, to give them a solid background against which they could present their archeological findings. For about 30 years now, they have tried to incorporate the information from these sources in their own work. Other countries, such as Germany, follow hesitantly.

As the study of the pre-Ottoman and later textual and archaeological evidence in Chapter 3 has shown (pp. 130–1), there are two different communities whose fate must be followed through the Ottoman centuries. Medieval Thespiai had been a Byzantine Greek community occupying the eastern fringes of the former Greco-Roman city. By Frankish times, this was known as Erimokastro, from the abandoned Late Antique fortification some hundreds of metres to its west. In the troubled fourteenth century, this community was abandoned, its population almost certainly moving to swell the hill-top village of Panagia, in the Valley of the Muses several km to the west again. Panaya, whose Ottoman tax record we have already published (Kiel 1997), grows dramatically in size between Frankish times and the fifteenth century. As the Boeotia Project has documented for numerous other locations, both the final Accaijuoli Frankish Dukes of Athens and the incoming Ottoman

Table 9.1. *Poll Tax registers (*Cizye Defterleri*) for three Central Greek villages (research and composition Machiel Kiel).*

The mega-village of Oropos in Attica, Greece		
1521	97 households	Muhasebe Defter T.D. 367
1540	208 households	Mufassal Tahrir T.D. 431
1570	275 households	Mufassal Tahrir, T.K.G.M. N°. 157
1642	160 households	Cizye Defter, BBOA, MAD. 1000
1668	200 households	Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatnâme, VIII
1676	200 households	Jacob Spon – George Wheler, *Voyage*
The mega-village of Dauleia, Boeotia, Greece		
1521	248 households	Tahrir Defter, Istanbul, BBA, T.D. 367
1540	343 households	Tahrir Defter T.D, 431 (Istanbul, BOA)
1570	366 households	Tahrir Defter, Ankara, T.K.G.M. No 183
1616	120 households	Cizye Defter, Sofia, Nat. Libr. F. 64 A
1642	85 households	Cizye Defter, Istanbul, B0A, MAD 561
1676	50 households	J. Spon and G. Wheler, *Voyage*
1688	75 households	Cizye Defter, Ist., BOA, MAD 14826
1815	120 households	Cizye Defter *apud* Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce*, who had privileged access to Ottoman Poll Tax records
The village of Marathon, Attica		
1634	30 households	Cizye Defter, Sofia, Nat. Libr. F. 3A/20
1676	15 to 16 houses	Spon and Wheler, *Voyage*
1681	10 households	Cizye Defter, Sofia, Nat.Libr. OAK.131–19

administration encouraged a massive immigration of Albanian agro-pastoral clans, to repopulate the Boeotian countryside (Bintliff 1995). These small new settlements typically take over the same landscape niche as the abandoned Greek villages; but their locations, significantly, are found close to but not directly overlying those of their predecessors.

It is at this point that our second community enters the story: the Albanian 'new' village of Kobila, later known as Kaskaveli and most recently (1930) Hellenized into Leondari. It sits on a hill-top, above and to the north of the former Byzantine and Frankish Erimokastro in the plain. We first encounter this village, today's Leondari, in the well-preserved *İdjmal Defter* MAD 66 of 1466/67 (Fig. 9.1), which also gives information about the entire administrative unit, the Kaza of İstife (Thebes). The second group of settlements in this *Kaza* was the *zi'amet* (grand fief) of Sinan Bey, son of Mehmed Bey, and grandson of Turahan Bey. The latter was the famous warlord and great re-builder of Thessaly, Gazi Turahan Bey, who administered Thessaly for most of the first half of the fifteenth century (Emecen 2012; Kiel 1990). The *zi'amet* of Sinan Bey included three relatively large Greek villages: Topolia with 41 households, Oropos with 38, and Rastamytes with 94 households, altogether 173 households, which gives an average village size of 58 households per village. Because the unmarried young men (*mücerred*) are also mentioned we can see that these three villages with 18 per cent *mücerred*s had a slow population growth. The villages are explicitly called '*karye-i Rūm*' = Village of Greeks.

Next after the Greek villages there were 36 '*katunha-yı Arnavudân*' or semi-permanent half-nomadic encampments of Albanians with a total of 326 households, or 9 households per *katun.* Together with the 73 *mücerred*s, there were 399 taxable *nefer* (persons), which again gives 18 per cent young men and a similarly slow population growth. All these 36 settlements are explicitly called 'Albanian'. This difference was designed to make the task of the tax collector easier. The Greeks were 'tame', that is settled in permanent villages where they had extensive vineyards as well as watermills (*asyâb*), and cultivated more varied, and different, crops from those of the Albanians. The latter were 'wild' and could easily run away together with their animals when they did not want to be taxed.

We find our Albanian village, Kobila (the later Leondari) on folio 101 of the register MAD 66 from 1466/67, mentioned as 'the Katun of Kobila', grouped under the *katunha-yi Arnavudan* (Fig. 9.1). It had 15 households, 5 *mücerred*s and 2 widows, paying a total tax of 1817 *akçe*, or an average of 121 *akçe* per household; no data are given about the agricultural production. Kobila, however, had one watermill, a rarity among Albanians in the early stage of settlement, and one *asyab-i kebe* or water-driven felt press, which is even stranger. As this is a synoptic (*icmal*) register, no names of the heads of households are given and no details of agricultural production.

The next stage is marked by the year 1506 (T.D. 35, p. 26), when it appears as 'Kobila Livadi, also known as Zogra, Albanians'. This time it had only 5 households, headed by Mihal, Nikola, Yani and Kosta, and the widow Todora (= Theodora). Distinctively Albanian personal names do not appear in this text. In 1972, the Albanian Ottomanist Selami Pulaha gave a good sample of specific Albanian first names: Badom, Gega, Gjin, Gjon, Leka, Llesh, Kola, Kosh, Pepa, Pepo, Progon, Tole, Tanush, and others. None of these was used for the inhabitants of our Zogra. An important indicator that Kobila Livadi is the same as the one mentioned in 1466 are the two water mills that the village had in 1466 and which are also mentioned in the 1506 text. Besides 'Kobila Livadi, alias Zogra', the register mentions two other villages with the element Zogra in their village name: Kosta Zogra and Martin

Zogra. Kosta Zogra had 14 households, no *müdjerreds* and no widows, but as a special feature had 5 water mills and carries the remark that it was 'not inscribed in the old register' (*haric ez-defter-i kohne*): in other words, it was a newly formed village. This 'old register' was the register of the Sandjak of Eğriboz from 1490, which is only partly preserved, with the Thebes section missing. The third village is Martin Zogra with 16 hâne, no mücerred but 5 widows. Martin Zogra had no water mills at all, and in 1540 and 1570 still had none, ruling out this village from the candidates for identification. Most likely Kosta Zogra was formed by a group of families from the same semi-nomadic people that between 1490 and 1506 left Kobila, to settle at an entirely unknown location, one where there was plenty of water to run mills. By 1540, the number of mills here had doubled to 10, which proves that it really was a different place, most likely an offspring from the old Kobila of 1466.

In 1540 we find that the three Zogra villages had all grown considerably. 'Zogra Pili', as our village is now listed, had 45 households and but one mill: Kosta Zogra by comparison had 36 *hâne* and 10 water mills.

In 1570 we find our village mentioned as 'Zagra Kobili', slightly smaller than in 1540 and again having one water mill. Kosta Zogra, on the other hand, had lost almost half its inhabitants, but kept the 10 watermills. With the problem of identification solved, we now can follow the further development of 'our' village on the table below, based on five *tahrir*s, three poll tax registers and three local Greek sources. Its story, however, as argued in Chapter 3, is at times confusingly interwoven with the first, Greek community. In the seventeenth century, the Greek refuge village of Panaya suffered disintegration into numerous estates, seemingly losing most of its population (Kiel 1997). Part of the community moved just a kilometre to the east, to the site of the modern village of 'Palaiopanagia' (now officially 'Askri'). But it is almost certain that the element which had arrived some centuries earlier from Erimokastro returned to its former home: the village in the plain is reoccupied, but now a second hill-top above is settled too, separated by a ravine from the Albanian Kobila/Kaskaveli community to its east. By the later nineteenth to twentieth centuries, when Erimokastro and Leondari were recognizably distinct villages lying close together on the ridge above the ancient city, there is little risk of confusing the two; but in the Ottoman documents from the seventeenth century through to the early nineteenth century, the adjacent locations of the two hill-top settlements, together with the village in the plain, were at times assessed separately, at times together, making it much harder to unravel their respective developments (Table 9.2).

In the century between 1466 and 1570 the population of Albanian Kobila trebled, which is a good average development comparable with what happened elsewhere in Central Greece, but also in much of Europe, albeit at a lower speed than Central Greece. If compared with the development of the entire *Kaza* of *İstife*/Thebes, the growth of Zogra Kobila was much slower than the average. Between 1466 and 1570 the town of Thebes grew more than three times. Its 5 Greek villages and 60 Albanian *katun*s from 1466 had grown to 99 settlements,

Table 9.2. *The demographic development of Zogra Kobila – Erimokastro from the Early Ottoman period to the end of the nineteenth century. (*The records from 1466 to 1570 refer to Kobila-Kaskaveli only; then from the seventeenth century onwards Erimokastro appears as well. For 1646, Erimokastro is noted with 41 households (see Fig. 9.2) and Zogra Kobila (Fig. 9.3) is mentioned as a separate settlement with 21: here they are united, just as the assessment for 1642 probably merges them. But the number for 1687 most likely refers to one of these villages only, presumably Kobila, with the same number of households as in 1646. When in 1833, under King Otto, the Eparchy of Thebes was formed, Erimokastro, being the largest settlement of the newly created* Dimos *of Thespiai, became the centre of the* Dimos*. This unit included 10 small villages and 2 monasteries (information from Alex Karidis, Athens, in a letter of 15.6.2015). The numbers for 1879 are taken from the official results of the census of that year, published in:* Plithysmos tis Ellados kata to etos 1879, *p. 8.)*

Year	Source	No. of households	*Mücerred*	Widows	Total Tax	Tax per house
1466	MAD 66	15	5	2	1.817	121 *akçe*
1506	T.D. 35	5	/	1	1.132	226 *akçe*
1521	T.D. 367	31	2	3	2.000	123 *akçe*
1540	T.D. 431	45	14	4	5.391	120 *akçe*
1570	T.K.G.M. 157	40	10	10	5.391	135 *akçe*
1642	MAD 561	60	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1646	MAD 1000	62*	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1687	MAD 15184	21*	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
1833	Local source	63/64	Text gives Erimokastro 317 inhabitants			
1879	*Plithysmos tis Ellados*	180	Text gives Erimokastro 385 male and 380 female inhabitants, in all 765			
1896	*Resultats Statistiques*	233	Text gives Erimokastro 978 inhabitants			

while the number of households grew more than five times (from 869 households to 4487). This is far above the average growth in the most of Europe. These simple numbers point immediately to the desolate and depopulated state of Boeotia on the eve of the Ottoman annexation of the Acciajuoli principality in 1460. In this context we should recall the work of the Greek historian Spiridonakis, who in 1977 wrote: 'the 16th century was the deepest point of the demographic decline of the Greek nation, its nadir' (Spiridonakis 1977: 109–11). On the main introductory board on the art and culture of Greece this very negative picture, set in the time of the 'Ottoman Occupation', was still presented in the otherwise splendid Byzantine Museum in Thessaloniki, as recently as in 2015. The Ottoman registers with their dry pragmatism show that the historical reality had been rather different.

To find the position that Zogra Kobila occupied in the entire demographic pattern of Boeotia, we need to compare a larger group of Boeotian settlements. In the span of time covered by our principal sources, 1466 to 1570, there were only five Greek villages in the entire *Kaza* of Thebes as mentioned above. Between 1521 and 1570, these five villages – Harmena, Oropos, Panaya, Rastamites and Sykamenon – grew much more slowly than the 94 Albanian settlements. Between 1466 and 1570, the Greeks nearly trebled, while the Albanians grew by a factor of six. The Albanians had more individuals per household, as is clearly visible in the percentage of unmarried young men in relation to the married men.

In the seventeenth century – elsewhere a time of rapid demographic decline – it might appear at first sight that Zogra Kobila had fared comparatively well, and even seen some growth. But once we deduce that the former Greek community from Erimokastro had returned, to live alongside the Albanian Kobila, the apparent rise is easily explained by this returning element: this becomes clearer still from the 1646 record, when the Erimokastro village forms two-thirds of the joint community. On the raw figures, Kobila is now half the size it had attained in the sixteenth century, even when we allow for some additional unregistered inhabitants (see p. 258). For the eighteenth century, we have no direct data. Most likely the village showed the same static picture seen elsewhere in Central Greece and beyond. The numbers for 1833 would seem to indicate that the Greek War of Independence, 1821–1831, left Erimokastro undisturbed. For the remaining years of the nineteenth century, we see the well-known pattern of rapid growth in the population, familiar for most European countries.

The question of who the inhabitants of Zogra Kobila and Erimokastro were, for the later records, is again not easy to answer. For the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sources had been clear: they were Albanian half-nomads living in semi-permanent encampments. In the endless wars and insecurity of the fourteenth century, Hellenism had almost disappeared from the open countryside of Boeotia. Our oldest preserved source mentions only six cases where the source clearly states that the villagers were Greeks (*Rum*). They were: Harmena, Oropos, Panaya, Rastamites, Sykamino and Topolia, with altogether 312 households, or an average of 52 households per village.

The same source mentions, for the same territory, 60 Albanian katuns (*katunha-i Arnavudan*) with 712 households, or 12 households per *katun*. In the open country, the Albanian part of the population made up 70 per cent of the total. If we include the town of Thebes, with its 487 Greek households, then the Albanian element of the population of the *Kaza İstife* as a whole was 47 per cent.

The semi-nomadic Albanians must have settled down permanently in the 40-year interval from 1466 to our next register of 1506. Their settlements are no longer called *katun*, but are villages. Yet it is still noted after each village that the inhabitants were Albanians, a distinction that disappears in the 1521 register and in the two other *tahrirs* following it. In 1506 the list of heads of households of our village, as we saw, shows no distinctively Albanian Christian names. The idea that the new village of Kosta Zogra was an offspring of Zogra Kobila gains more weight when we look at the names of its heads of households: among the 14 male names, there are no less than seven sons of men named Zogra, showing that we have to do with a genuine tribal village. The first inhabitant, usually an older man, was Kosta Zogra, the founder of the village. After him come Pavlo Zogra, Dima Zogra, and Nikola Zogra, followed by Yorgi and Gjini Likores (the surname Likores was also rather popular as first name, or village name), Dimo Graniç, Gjon and Yorgi Zogra and Gjon Vlacho (Gjon the Vlach). Gjon, Gjin, Leka and Duka are generally among the most popular of all Albanian names. These names make it clear that in the first half of the sixteenth the village of Kosta Zogra was very much Albanian.

The 1540 register, too, has some Albanian names among the inhabitants. For the two *cizye defters* from 1642 and 1646, we have a relatively large number of Albanian names, but also some Greek ones (though Greek names like Nikola or Dimitri were also popular among Albanians). The conclusion is natural that, for most of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the village of Zogra-Kobila was indeed Albanian; but that in the seventeenth century, when the records

show an admixture of Greeks, the explanation lies in the return of the original Greek community, with its distinctively Greek name of Erimokastro, to the close vicinity. This is confirmed by the remark of the English traveller George Wheler, who in 1676 noted the two upland villages on the ridge above the ancient site, with a third one down on the plain, as having a mixed Greek and Albanian population (see Chapter 1, pp. 5–6). Wheler gave the name of Erimokastro to the three neighbouring villages together – a merging that is as confusing as the one we have observed in the Ottoman tax records.

The pottery sequence on the site of Erimokastro shows that the place was inhabited in from the seventh–eighth century to the late thirteenth, then succumbed during the war-stricken fourteenth century, to revive in mid-fifteenth century, when the Ottomans had brought a period of peace lasting for a century and a half. Here, as well as elsewhere in the area, the Ottoman administrative sources conform to the picture shown by the ceramics.

The Ottoman sources for the sixteenth century also give information about the way of life of the Albanian village and the pattern of its agricultural production. In what follows, we first give a table summarizing the hard evidence from the registers, and secondly our reconstruction of the total production by using the 'key' to the relation between the real total production and the amount taken as tax as given in the *kanun-nâmes* of the Sandjak of Eğriboz, as published in the excellent work of John Alexander of 1985. The total production per village is then transformed into kilograms and then divided by the number of households in the villages in question, to find how the individual households fared (Tables 9.3 and 9.4).

For a better understanding of the above numbers, it is helpful to know that the subsistence minimum of cereals is taken to be 200 kg per individual. The economic model, proposed by Asdrachas 1978: 90, 285, n.33 and by McGowan 1982 and Clark and Haswell 1964, suggests 200 kg cereals, 60 kg sowing seed, with 40 kg cereals as tithe, or around 300 kg per individual; the World Food Programme uses the same standard. A family of five would thus need 1500 kg per year to eat, sow and pay taxes. Even if the inhabitants of Zogra-Kobila had a smaller family, say 4.4 individuals per household, they would still have been below the vital minimum in 1540 or 1570. This model, as usual with all models, has one serious weakness. We do not know the level of fertility of the land of the various places and, as a consequence, how high the seed to harvest ratio was. In many areas this was 1 to 5; in 1805 Leake noted that in the Kephissos plain it was 1 to 10. The Messenian Plain in the Southern Peloponnese, famous for its high fertility, yielded an amount even higher than 1 to 10. The consequence is that some of our villages, where the use of the 1 to 5 ratio for seed gave in theoretical level below the vital minimum, in fact harvested more and were well above the critical line.

One of the main pillars of the rural economy of Boeotia was sheep breeding. The researches of Wolf Hütteroth, working among the semi-nomadic population of the mountainous districts of Eastern Anatolia, found that the average number of sheep a family of five needed to survive ranged between 50 and 60 sheep per household (Hütteroth 1965). On the mountain pastures

Table 9.3. *The economic development of Zogra Kobila/Erimokastro, 1506–1570.*

Date	Households	Unmarried	Widows	Tax	Tax per household	Wheat	Barley	Sheep	Pigs	Honey	Cotton	Wine	Mills
1506	5	0	1	1,132	224	8 loads	8 l.	92	2	12	14	0	2
1540	45	14	4	5,391	120	20 loads	7 l.	1.850	30	2	40	0	1
1570	40	10	10	5,391	135	30 loads	6 l.	1.121	30	5	20	20 *dönüm*	1

Table 9.4. *Our calculations of the total amount of the production* per household.

Date	Households	Unmarried	Widows	Wheat	Barley	Sheep	Pigs	Honey	Cotton	Wine	Mills
1506	5	0	1	2052 kg	2052 kg	37	4	24 hives	3 bales	0	2
1540	45	14	4	570 kg	199 kg	82	1	0.5 hives	7 bales	0	1
1570	40	10	10	962 kg	192 kg	56	1	1.5 hives	3.5 bales	20 *dönüm*	1

of Kyrgyzstan in 2008, we were told that '50 to 60 is possible to live from' and that 'a family with 100 sheep is regarded as rich'. The figure of 50 sheep is also known from nomads in Iran. When we asked Mr. Manopoulos, father of the organizer of the Katsanochoria Conference in July 2013 and an aged farmer from the mountainous and agriculturally rather poor Katsano villages south of Ioannina in Epirus, from how many sheep a family of 40 or 50 years ago could live, he spontaneously and directly answered '40 to 50' – provided one had a small plot of land to grow one's own vegetables. This means that in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, the average family of the Katsanochoria could live reasonably well, besides evidently having the money to build the many new churches we still see today in that remote district. Almost all these churches, over 80 in a cluster of 14 villages, were built in these same centuries. When, in so many parts of Eurasia, people manage to live off 40 to 50 sheep, the villages in rolling hills of the Thebes district could easily do the same because, in addition to the sheep, they all had sizeable amounts of wheat and barley, not to mention various types of beans and vegetables judged too unimportant for inclusion in the great *tahrir defter*s.

The low number of people per household, so important for any reconstruction of village life, is often mentioned in the older Greeks census results. That of 1870, published in 1874 (*Recensement*, *1870*: 22–3) gives for Attica and Boeotia 3.92 persons per family, almost the lowest of the entire Greek Kingdom at that time, while Akarnania with 4.76 and Messenia with 4.69 appear as the highest in mainland Greece. The overall figure for the 12 'Départements' of 1870 was 4.38. If we project back these data back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the decline of populations at that period becomes better understandable. Military or natural disasters were not the only reason for a falling or stagnant population. The decision to reduce the number of children, by postponing the age of marriage of women or any other method, was as important as the forces outside human control. In difficult times, such as a succession of bad harvests caused by climatic changes (the seventeenth century is commonly called the 'Little Ice Age'), people tend to reduce their family size, thereby making the amount of food available for each person noticeably greater and increasing the chance of surviving difficult times.

The rural economy of Zogra Kobila in the years between 1506 and 1570 shows a rather erratic pattern. In 1506, the tax on wheat and barley was evidently taken not as a tithe but as a fixed sum (*maktu'*), mutually agreed by the peasant and the Trustee (*Emin*) of the *tahrir* commission. The yield given for 1506 is otherwise impossibly high, with 2052 kg of wheat and the same amount of barley (the tax on the smaller cereals was not registered, meaning that it was barely produced, or not at all). In the time of the next register (the missing *tahrir* of 1490) the *maktu'* must have been abolished. In contrast to the figures for cereals, the number of sheep of the village in 1506 was relatively low: 184 animals in total, or 37 sheep per household. Because of its high cereal production Zogra Kobila in 1506 was particularly well off.

Despite its rapid population increase between 1506 and 1540, our village succeeded in more than doubling the number of its sheep from 37 to 82 animals per household. Its total wheat production actually increased from 61 loads (*himl*) to 154, but because of the steep population increase, the amount of wheat available per family sank to 570 kg. By 1570 it had suffered a slight demographic loss and had less sheep than in 1540 (55 head), still enough to live from. Moreover it had increased its wheat production by one half, which is phenomenal (Table 9.5).

With all cereals taken together – wheat, barley, millet and oats – Zogra Kobila in 1570 has 1346 kg cereals per household, close to the vital minimum. When the sheep are included, it manages rather well.

Two villages, Sigditsa and Kokovište (Vasmer 1941: 116), in the mountainous northern part of the *Kaza* of Salona (Amphissa), directly west of the Theban territories, show a different pattern (Table 9.6).

Table 9.5. *Zogra Kobila: changes in agricultural production, 1506–1570.*

Date	Households	Sheep per household	Wheat per household	Barley per household	Millet and oats per household
1506	5	37	2052 kg	2052 kg (*maktu'*)	0
1540	45	82	570 kg	199 kg	199 kg
1570	40	56	962 kg	192 kg	192 kg

Table 9.6. *Production figures, for the same period as in Table 9.5, for two Phocian villages, Sigditsa and Kokovište.*

	Date	Households	Sheep per household	Wheat per household
Sigditsa	1506	24	17	863 kg (barley also 862 kg)
	1570	31	90	2960 kg
Kokovište	1506	59	41	1480 kg
	1540	30	133	1480 kg
	1570	40	60	1110 kg

Both place names are of Slavic origin. The name Kokovište preserved the old Slavic ending of a group of words which disappeared after the metathesis of the Slavic language in the ninth century (…ište turning into …itsa). In 1985, many inhabitants of this village showed a clear Slavic physiology (jutting cheekbones, blue eyes), but were culturally and linguistically entirely Hellenized.

Sigditsa shows a slowly growing population, coupled with a vast expansion of sheep breeding and a more than threefold rise of the wheat production. By 1570 the village was in an enviable state. Kokovište fared much less well, falling down on all fronts. But both villages survived the vicissitudes of the ages: around the year 1800, Sigditsa had 40 households, Kokovište as many as 75 (Pouqueville 1826: 103–4). Both villages still exist, albeit with changed names.

An example of a village growing harmoniously, but with a strange twist in its economy, is Archonditsa-i Bala (High Archonditsa), only a few kilometres east-south-east of Zogra-Kobila (Table 9.7). (The inhabitants of this village, after its abandonment in the nineteenth century, in fact migrated to Kobila-Leondari.)

Table 9.7. *Archonditsa-I Bala (or 'Upper Archonditsa'), Boeotia: changes in production over the same period as in Tables 9.5–9.6.*

	Date	Households	Sheep per household	Wheat per household
Archonditsa-i Bala	1466	11		
	1506	35	9	1.887 kg
	1521	37		
	1540	40	93	577 kg + 288 kg barley = 865 kg cereals
	1570	45	83	712 kg + 285 kg barley = 997 kg cereals

Table 9.8. *Dara, near Thebes: production figures, for the same period, for a very prosperous village.*

	Date	Households	Sheep per household	Wheat per household
Dara	1506	26	85	2663 kg
	1540	52	29	1776 kg
	1570	35	100	2749 kg

It can be seen that in 1506 the village lived principally from wheat. But between 1506 and 1521, the village generated an offspring, Archonditsa-i Zir (Lower Archonditsa), that was soon prospering. While, even with barley included, the High village was below the minimum in 1540 and 1570 and must have had to sell sheep in order to buy the missing cereals, Lower Archonditsa did better: it grew slightly, maintaining almost the same number of sheep in 1570 as in 1540, while its wheat production grew from 1050 kg in 1540 to 1668 kg in 1570. The reason for the move, by a part of the Archonditsa population, down the hill to the more fertile plain is to be found in the increased security of the land.

For pre-Ottoman Archonditsa, security had been the most important factor, as reflected in its topographical position. On the site of the long-deserted village, some of the always very expensive sixteenth-century Iznik pottery was found, not a sign of poverty.

Dara

A village that, both in 1506 and in 1570, was incontrovertibly wealthy was Dara near the town of Thebes; but in between these two dates, it had witnessed a sizeable dip. Since this dip around 1540 occurred in several other settlements, we might think of it as a series of rather bad harvests around that year. But by 1570, Dara it was among the richest villages of the whole *Kaza* of Thebes. The greater amount per household of wheat was not only the result of a fall in the number of mouths to be filled: there was a real, albeit modest, increase in production. The number of sheep had also seen a real increase in 1570. Besides sheep and wheat, Dara produced 990 kg of barley per household and had three pigs per family. It produced a respectable quantity of honey and a little less than 5 bales of cotton. As an almost entirely Albanian village, it did not produce wine itself but imported some quantities 'from outside', as the register notes in most cases ('*bac-i hamr ki ez haric amed*', in a strange form of Arabo-Persian). 'From outside' has to be understood as 'from the Greek villages', as it was only the five large Greek villages in the district that were producing it: the large nearby village of Panaya made almost 2000 litres annually (Table 9.8).

Tatize

The last village for use as a comparison with Zogra Pila is the village of Tatize, 10 km south-west of Thespiai (Table 9.9).

Tatize in 1506 lived largely from the wheat that it produced: this was matched by a similar amount

Table 9.9. *Tatize (Boeotia): production figures, this time including cotton, for the same period.*

	Date	Households	Sheep per household	Wheat per household	Cotton, total bales
Tatize	1506	31	14	1903 kg	none
	1540	68	59	1528 kg	260 (@ 5.5 kg per bale)
	1570	68	59	1698 kg	360 (@ 5.5 kg per bale)

of barley, which points to a *maktu'* that we also saw elsewhere, including at Zogra Kobila (see p. 263). After 1506, we see a shift to a strong expansion of sheep-rearing. The numbers for 1540 show the characteristic dip in wheat production, but in this case it nevertheless remained above the vital minimum. Tatize did not grow in numbers of households, but maintained its sheep at a good level and increased its wheat production. The village also produced a quantity of cotton: none in 1506, but in 1540 200 bales and in 1570 360 bales, as well as some honey (50 hives in 1506, 187 hives in 1540 and 104 in 1570). In the last-mentioned year, we also see a hesitant start of viticulture. Overall, the village was notably well off.

Tatize was, like Kosta Zogra and others, a typical tribal village. The register of 1506 (the fragment preserved in Sofia and published by Balta 1992) shows that, of the 31 households, seven had 'Tatize' as their patronymic and are mentioned as the first inhabitants of the village. Three households had as patronymic Spata, referring to the mountainous region of Shpat in Central Albania.

By comparing Zogra Kobila with the average of the six other villages taken as a basis for comparison, we can see that our village was certainly not one of the richest. Whereas the six villages together had an average of 72 sheep per village, Zogra Kobila had only 56. The wheat production of the six together averaged 2200 kg per household, but for Zogra Kobila only 962 kg. Besides cereals, there was a little cotton: none in 1506, in 1540 400 bales for the whole village, and in 1570 200 bales, each with a weight of 5.5 kg; also some chick peas, broad beans, barley and 20 *stremmata* (*dönüm*) of wine grapes. Nevertheless, Zogra Kobila survived, basically from its sheep; and in 1833 it was the largest village of the ten settlements forming the *Demos* of Erimokastro.

It should be added here that the name Kaskaveli, by which it was known in the early nineteenth century according to Leake, does not appear in the Ottoman sources used here, from 1466 to 1688. Kaskaveli appears in the Leake's map of Boeotia as 'Katsikaveli'; Leondari, as the place was later known, represents an official change of the earlier twentieth century. The *İcmal Cizye* register MAD 15184 from 1687/88 (H. 1098) lists a total of 53 'free' villages and no less than 121 settlements that had either become wholly or partly a *çiftlik* (larger or smaller estate), or else formed a newly founded, independent *çiftlik*. Our Zogra, with its 21 households, is one of the free villages. Kosta Zogra is not mentioned in this source, nor (as already remarked) is the name of Kaskaveli.

All the villages compared here show a variegated economy, with great differences between one and another and with many internal changes in quantity also. The comparison also shows a gradual acceptance of home wine-production: although to a much lesser degree than the old Greek villages, this change is nevertheless a sign that the Albanian semi-nomads of 1466 slowly turned to real settled peasants, a process that was by no means completed by 1570; but here our records stop. An exception exists in the case of the four Boeotian villages, Harmena, Lokisia, Mavromati and Topolia, that in the years 1724 and 1731 were again registered in the manner of the old *tahrir*s (Kiel 1997: Appendix). There are more such registers, scattered in little-studied sections of the Ottoman archives, and here further work could enlarge our knowledge considerably.

In the chapter entitled 'The Dark Age of Greece' in his book *Modern Greece: a short history*, C.M. Woodhouse, basing himself on serious works such as those of George Finlay, William Miller and Leften Stavrianos, wrote: 'It is likely that the Greek peasant of the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries was better off than his counterpart in Western Europe' (Woodhouse 1986 [1968], 101). He might have chosen an even stronger wording if he had known that in the eighteenth century, the peasantry of German East Prussia had to deliver 70 per cent of their harvest to their noble landlords. In this light, it becomes understandable that so many peasant gravestones in the villages around Bonn, residence of the Prince-Bishops of Cologne, proudly announce that the deceased had been a *Halbmann*, a man who had to deliver 'only' half his harvest to his master.

In his rich work *Tableau de commerce de la Grèce* (Beaujour 1800), the French Consul-Général in Selânik (Thessaloniki) Felix Beaujour gave a calculation of the number of days in a year that the Greek peasant in Ottoman-controlled Greece needed to work, in order to make his and his family's living and pay his taxes. He arrived at a figure of 8 or 9 months, the peasant thus not having to work for between a quarter and a third of the year. When we

compare this situation with that in many other parts of Europe, we can only agree with Woodhouse, Finlay or Stavrianos.

In this context we have to place the development of the indirect successor of ancient Thespiai, destroyed during the endless small wars and raids of the fourteenth century, founded anew by Albanian colonists in the early fifteenth century and surviving into the nineteenth, to become an administrative centre of a *demos* of its own after Greece was reborn as an independent state, and recover in the twentieth century its prestigious name from antiquity.

Chapter 10(a)

The Neolithic site at the Thespiai Magoula

Kalliope Sarri

The site of the Thespiai Magoula is located on a low hill in the valley of the river Kanavaris, within the Classical city and below the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari (Fig. 10.1).

The river runs to the north of the Magoula, while its eastern periphery is marked by the same farm track, running southwards from the main tarmac road, that also forms the eastern boundary of the *Kastro* (Fig. 10.2). The surface of the site covers approximately 12,500 sq. m (1.25 ha) and it rises some 5 m above the valley floor to the north (305 m above sea level).

The perimeter and the back-filling of the Magoula change constantly over the years, since agricultural use is continuous. Visitors can still find numerous potsherds and stone tools of the Neolithic period on the surface of the site (Fig. 10.3). The project team has used this situation to make several revisits, in order to confirm the initial observations on the history of habitation on the site.

The Neolithic habitation at the Magoula has long been known, through the pioneer investigations of P. Stamatakis (1883) and from some early material collections published by J. Caskey and G. Bass (Caskey 1951; Bass 1959). The site was also mentioned by D. French as showing occupation during the MN period, as a strong presence of the decorated Chaeronea ware was detected (French 1972, 2). The finds discussed in this volume come from the surveys of the Boeotia project. To this material, a brief commentary on earlier published material and a brief re-evaluation of the very important figurines in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies have been added.[1]

Survey seasons and collections

The Thespiai Magoula was included in the investigated area of the Thespiai urban survey by the Boeotia project in the 1985 and 1986 seasons. In those two years, and again in 1989, 1991 and 1993, a large number of Neolithic sherds and stone tools were collected. The whole city site was gridded with transects, normally of 30 x 50 m but with much of the Magoula covered by the enlarged Transect 156 of 1986. This transect and its immediate neighbours yielded a total number of 320 sherds from various prehistoric periods, most of them belonging to the Neolithic era (Fig. 10.4). To this primary collection, a small number of 'grab' samples were added during later revisits and survey activities in the area.

Distribution

Scattered Neolithic finds occur over much of the surveyed area of the ancient city, up to the foot of the slopes below the modern villages of Thespies and Leondari (Fig. 10.5). But both during the systematic collections in this area and also on all subsequent revisits, the team has observed a particularly strong concentration of surface material in the centre of the Magoula and on its lower slopes (Transects 148–9, 153–6). The surface finds – many small and some bigger pottery fragments and large numbers of stone tools, found in a good state of preservation – indicate that the current surface level of the site, despite the intensive agricultural use, lies close to the habitation layers of an important, long lasting and well-preserved Neolithic settlement. In the *Kastro* area the density of the Neolithic occupation appears at its lowest, understandably when one considers the thick habitation layers of the subsequent periods. But between there and the Magoula, and in one location below the modern village of Leondari, some higher concentrations of Neolithic finds are found.

The ceramic finds of the Neolithic period stand out rather clearly, by their characteristic manufacture: the hand-made body, the intense polishing and the



Figure 10.1. *Thespiai Magoula, aerial photograph. Courtesy Darya Grosman.*

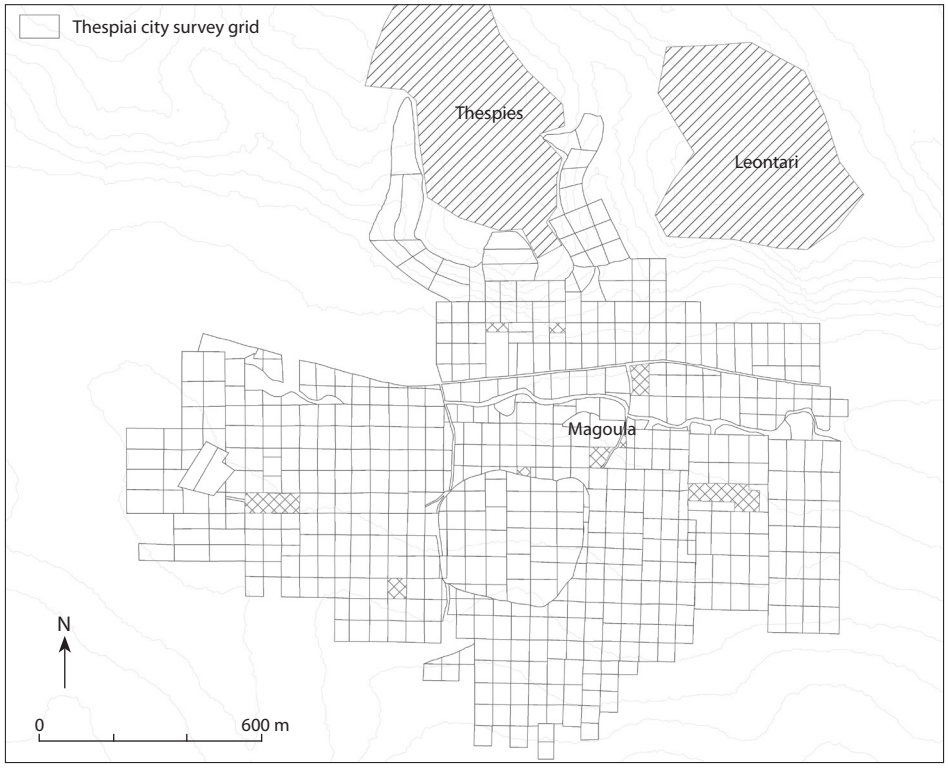


Figure 10.2. *Thespiai Magoula, location.*



Figure 10.3. *The site revisited in 1995.*

considerable hardness due to high firing temperatures, are all features of the Neolithic pottery of Central Greece, not to be repeated later in a similar combination. Many of these finds lack the morphological elements of shape or decoration and thus have to classified in a broad category of 'Neolithic', based on their generic macroscopic features.

The rare finds that can be dated to the Early Neolithic are concentrated near the center of the Magoula (Fig. 10.6). So too are the more numerous finds dated, with relative accuracy, to the Middle Neolithic (Fig. 10.7). The LN (Fig. 10.8) and FN finds are mostly localized on the lower slopes of the site, as well as at a greater distance to the north of the Magoula, where they appear in higher densities. This phenomenon can be explained by a series of much later intrusions in this area: in the centre we can discern a deep ditch arising from agricultural work, with irrigation wells and some older built constructions still in use. During the digging for these constructions, the removal of earth has probably reached the earlier, deeper layers, bringing the older material up to the surface (Fig. 10.9).

The dispersal of the LN ceramics around the Magoula, on the other hand, might be due to shallower ploughing that did not reach these deeper layers. This picture could however be explained by the fact – already noticed at other sites of the survey such as Tanagra and Hyettos – that the earliest Neolithic periods are limited to the main nuclei of settlement, while the LN structures and activities are spread to a longer radius, away from the main site (Bintliff and Sarri, in press).

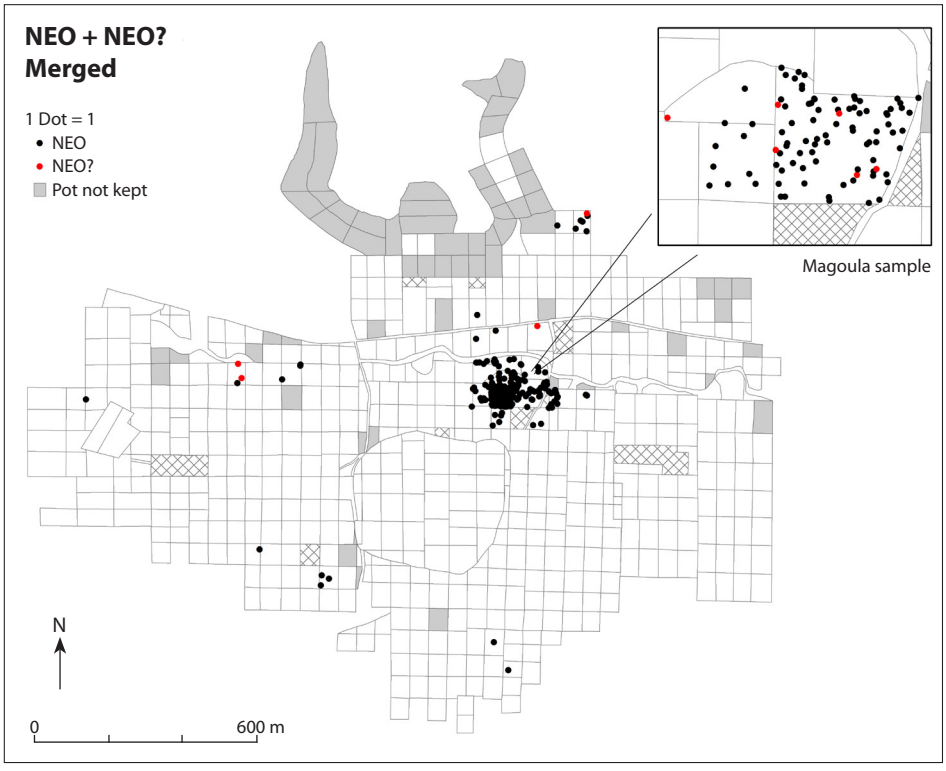


Figure 10.4. *Distribution of Neolithic and possible Neolithic finds from the Magoula area.*

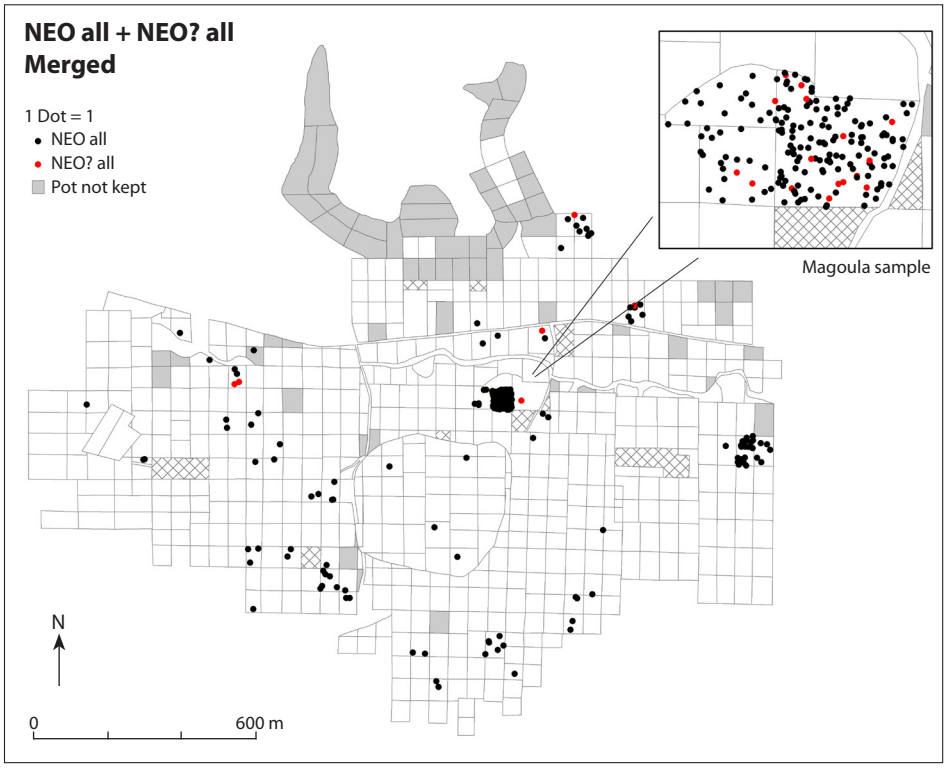


Figure 10.5. *Distribution of Neolithic and possible Neolithic finds over the whole city area.*

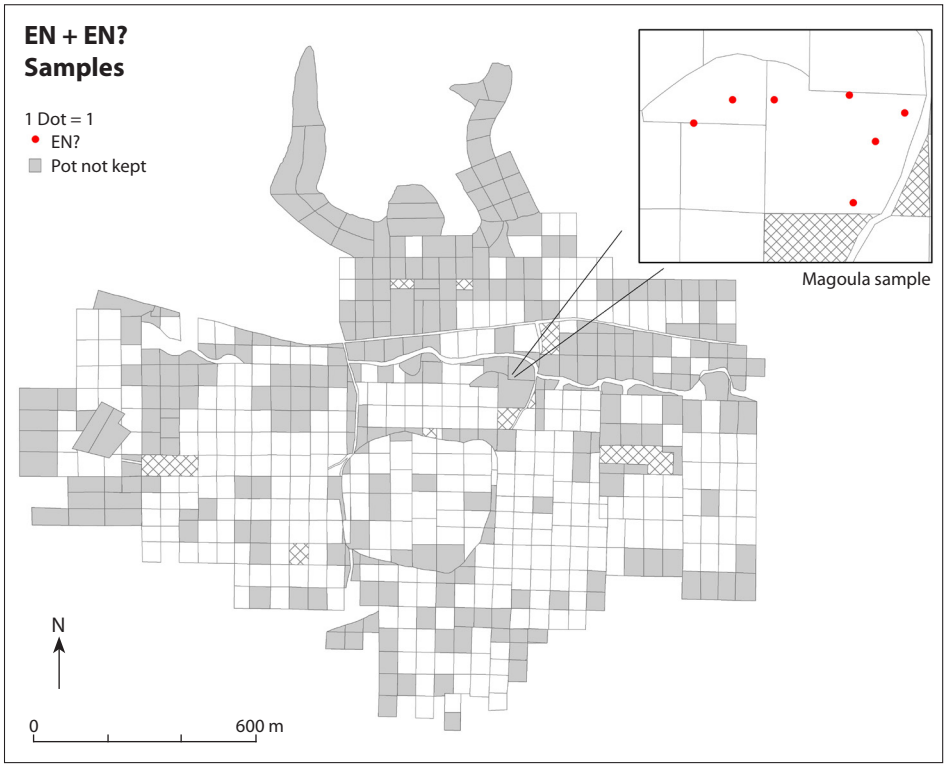


Figure 10.6. *Distribution of the Early Neolithic finds.*

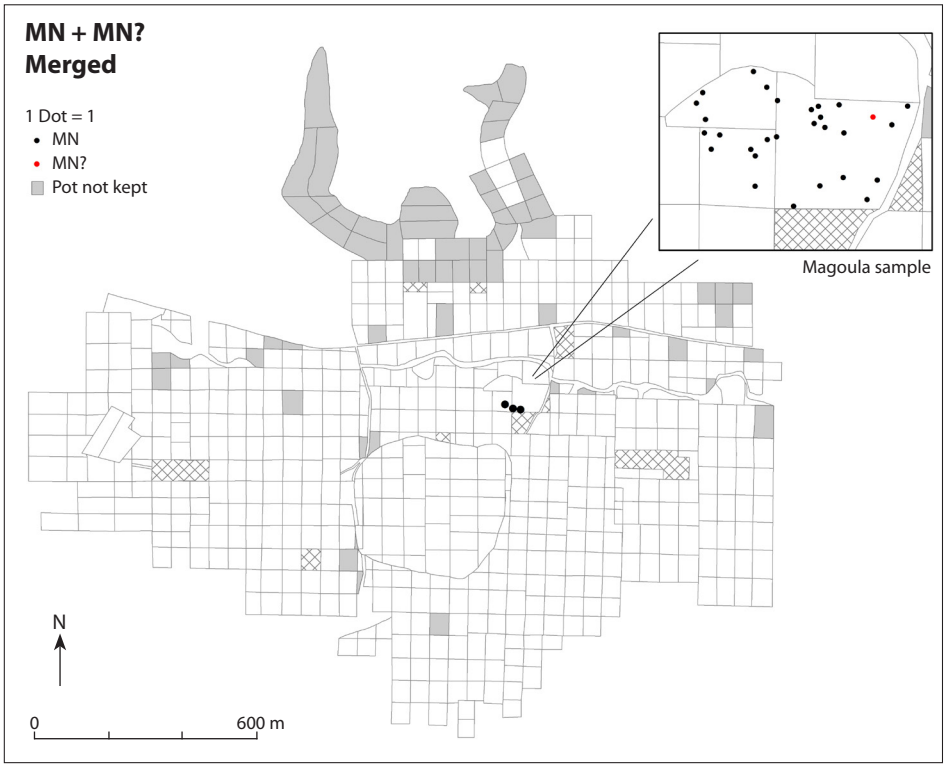


Figure 10.7. *Distribution of the Middle Neolithic finds.*

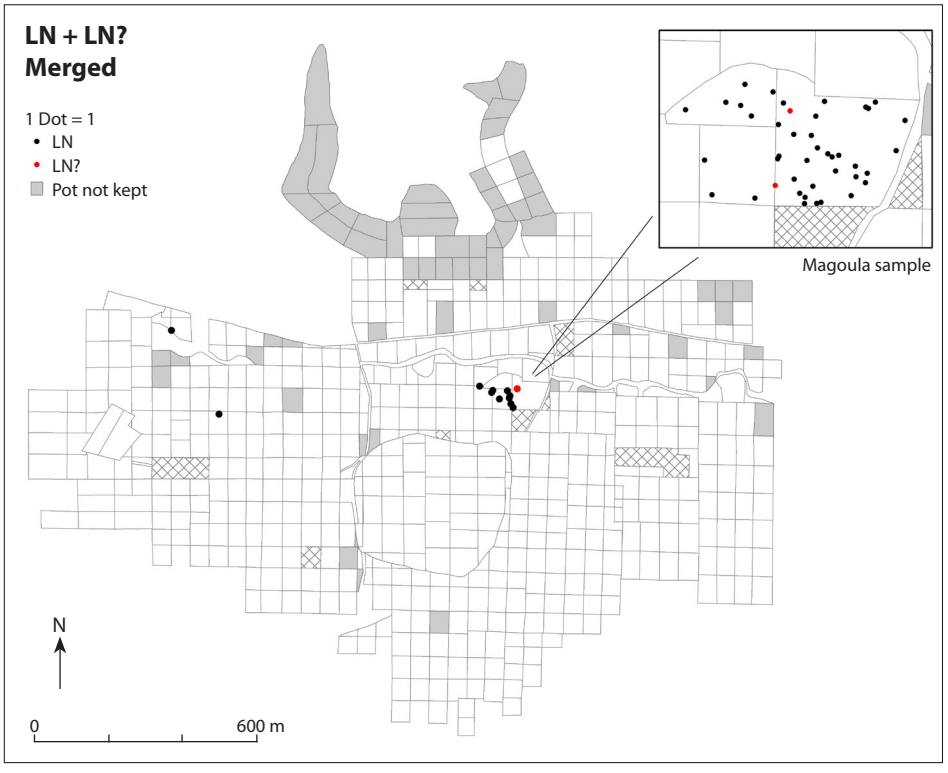


Figure 10.8. *Distribution of the Late Neolithic finds.*



Figure 10.9. *The Thespiai Magoula, marked by the electricity pylon in the middle distance, seen from the north-west. The outline marks the fields that were notably rich in Late and Final Neolithic material.*

Elsewhere within the Classical city site, the concentrations of surface finds contained also some examples of later prehistoric periods (see Dickinson, below, Chapter 10 (b)), but only a small number of Neolithic potsherds have been found, some from areas even beyond the *Kastro* (Fig. 10.5). These Neolithic sherds from outside the Magoula did not show any typological features. In the north-eastern extremity of the survey, particularly in Transects 2087 and 2088 of Sector 8, where the visibility was high, a second dense concentration of Neolithic and possible Neolithic potsherds was localized. These too were not typologically diagnostic, but their homogeneity and high numbers indicate an area of intensive activity. The location of this spot on the hill slope of the modern village Leondari, not far from the theatre, indicates a second pole of activity that could be related to another undiscovered site, located closer to the modern villages.

Pottery classification

Although most of fabrics attributed to the Neolithic period lack clear typological features, the special technology of the Neolithic – the hand-made manufacture, the hardness achieved through high firing temperatures and the smooth polish – distinguishes them easily from the later Bronze Age material. In this case, therefore, unlike those of many later, undiagnostic fabrics, we can be more confident that the number of plain and coarse Neolithic sherds recognized is close to the real amount in our collections.

Various pottery groups known from other sites of Central Greece appear at Thespiai, the most characteristic being the so-called painted Urfirnis pottery of the MN period (Fig. 10.10).

There are also several examples of undecorated red slip fabrics belonging to the MN or LN period (Fig. 10.11).

The LN painted ceramics further include specimens of the monochrome and bichrome matt-painted and the black burnished with relief decoration (Fig. 10.15). The Final Neolithic (4500–3300 BC) shows very different characteristics from those of the previous periods. The ceramics of the latest Neolithic phases, down to the Early Bronze Age, are coarse, rough, often rich in vegetal inclusions, fired at lower

temperatures and usually undecorated (Fig. 10.14: see Coleman 2012 for chronology and cultural interactions in the FN). For the fabric identifications and the dating of these later, seldom clearly diagnostic phases, we have used descriptions of the contemporary material from Boeotia, namely Thebes (Tsota 2009), the Sarakenos cave (Sampson 2008), Chaironeia (Tzavella-Evjen 2012), and from some other excavated sites in Southern Greece such as Franchthi and Lerna (Vitelli 1999 & 2007). All these parallels are reinforced by the FN finds from our recent surveys in the region of Tanagra, where some more characteristic examples of this period have been found (Farinetti *et al*. 2006; Bintliff *et al*. 2006; Bintliff and Sarri in press). It becomes clear that during the later stages of LN we are dealing with a different use for ceramics, one related more to food preparation and storage and less to food consumption.

Methodology

The comparative study of the Neolithic pottery is mainly based on Boeotian parallels from old publications which provide a limited typological range with the exception of the recently published cave of Sarakenos and the Magoula Balomenou at Chaironeia (Sampson 2008; Tzavella-Evjen 2012). Our systematic surface collection has also yielded new groups that were not attested in earlier, more selective studies. For this reason, we used a combination of systems to classify our Neolithic ceramic finds. For long familiar styles, such as the *Neolithic Urfirnis* and the *Larissa black burnished*, we have followed the traditional terminology used by Wace and Thompson (1912), Tsountas (1908), Theocharis (1993) and other pioneer researchers of the Greek Neolithic (French 1972; Coleman 1977; Hauptmann 1981; Hauptmann and Milojčić 1969; Phelps 2004), while for more recently defined fabrics, we used Vitelli's classification for the Neolithic pottery of Lerna (Vitelli 2007). For undecorated fabrics, first identified on the Thespiai Magoula and not comparable to any published groups, we used a new classification.[2]

Neolithic pottery groups

A. Painted wares

Urfirnis Pattern Painted is a MN, fine to medium-coarse fabric, which is partially painted or covered with a reddish-brown streaky slip (2.5YR 5/8) to 2.5YR 3/6), covering a large part of the surface (Fig. 10.10). It can also be painted on one side and slipped on the

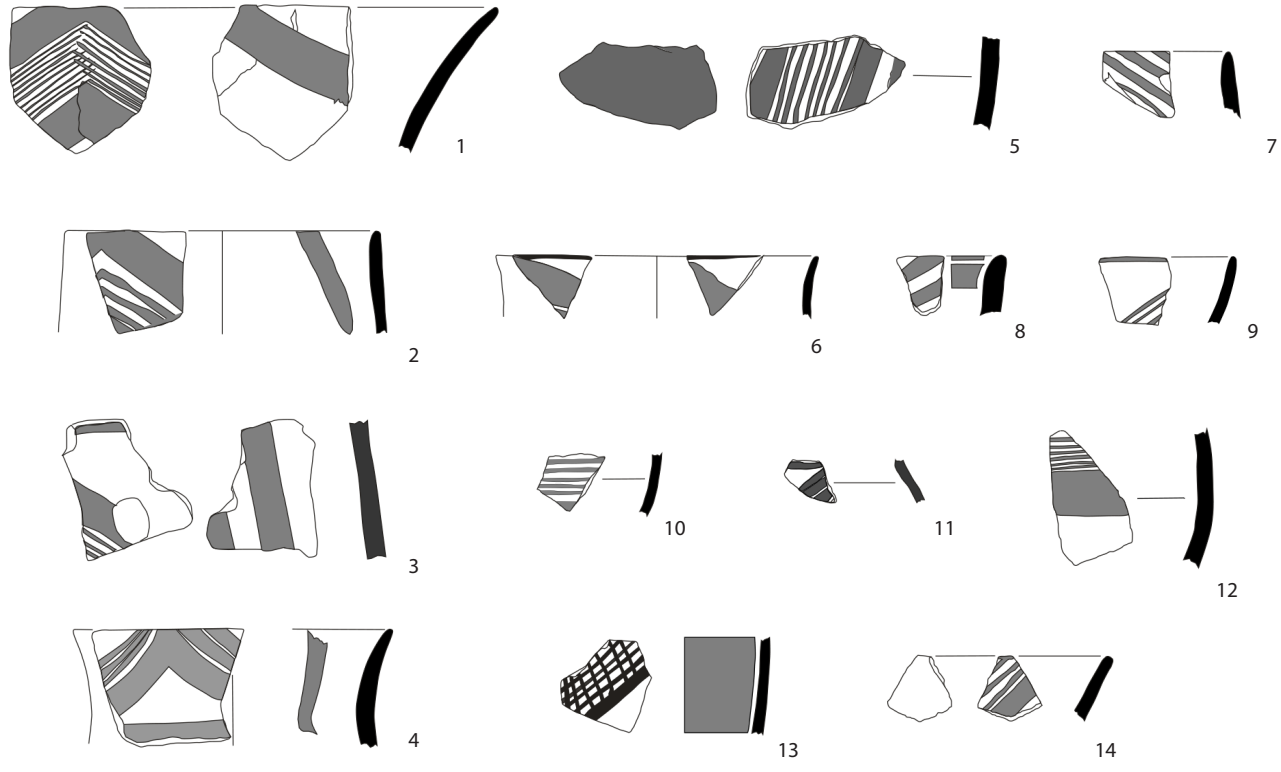


Figure 10.10. *Middle Neolithic Urfirnis painted pottery (scale 1:3).*

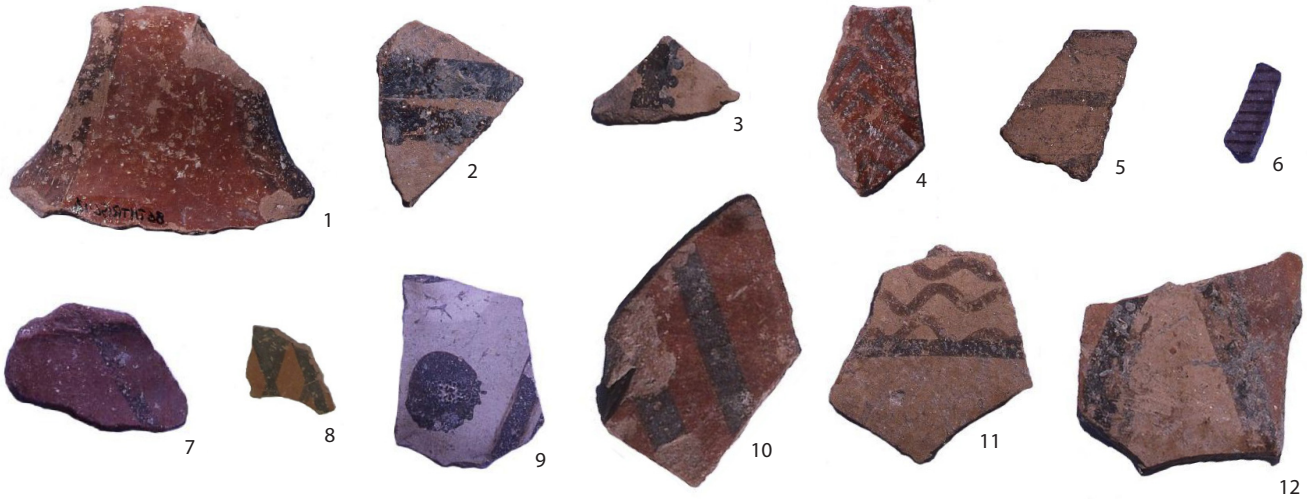


Figure 10.11. *Late Neolithic painted fabrics (scale 1:2).*

other. The reddish-brown paint can sometimes be streaky or applied in a striated style, without solidly painted areas or clearly defined edges. The shapes are mainly fine, often very thin-walled bowls with incurved or flaring rims or, more rarely, closed shapes.

Matt-painted pottery is a distinctive product of the LN period. The colour of the paint is dull and appears in various shades, such as black (2.5 YR 3/1), brown (2.5YR 4/2) and purple-red (10R 5/4), forming monochrome but also bichrome (Fig. 10.11: 11,12) patterns (for similar sherds from Thespiai in the ASCS collection, Caskey 1951, pl. 87, 5. The bichrome fabric was also found at Orchomenos (Kunze 1931, pl. iv. 1–2, 5: on the bichrome style, see also Hauptmann 1981, 24). It is a style used more for closed jars than for open bowls (Pentedeka 2007, 74). The examples from Thespiai show patterns such as dots, horizontal and wavy lines, and most commonly groups of hatched bands and chevrons. In a special variety of matt-painted ware, the decoration is painted on a dark slipped surface (Fig. 10.11: 4,7,10). This fabric is fine-tempered, covered with a dull, reddish-brown slip (2.5YR 5/6 red), and it is painted with a black matt decoration (2.5YR 4/1 dark reddish gray: compare Hauptmann and Milojcic 1981, Pl. B). We have no examples of this ware that indicate the characteristic shapes, but the relatively thick walls and the rough interior of some matt-painted pieces show that they come from large closed vessels.

B. Polished wares

To the broad category of polished fabrics, we assign fragments with no visible traces of burnishing, indicating a final surface treatment achieved through intensive scrubbing of the still wet clay with the aid of a soft material (Fig. 10.12). All examples are highly lustrous and most of them finely levigated.

B1: Fine polished is a highly polished fabric. The surface color can be reddish-yellow, red, orange-brown or grey (2.5Y 7/4 pale yellow, 5YR 6/6 reddish-yellow, 2.5YR 5/8 red, 7.5YR 4/1 dark grey). It is tempered with lime inclusions. In contrast to the shiny exterior surface, the interior can be porous and rough. This fabric may be datable to MN and is very similar to Vitelli's 'Monochrome Urf' ware (Vitelli 2007: CD Photos 25, 26, 27).

B2: Red Polished is a distinctive fine and hard-fired variety of fine polished ware, with a surface smoothly polished but not very highly lustrous (Fig. 10.12: 5–10). It can be generally attributed to Neolithic period, being found in all sub-phases of the Neolithic in the very common shapes of simple semi-globular and low-footed bowls.

B3: Buff Polished is a fine, hard-fired fabric with a highly polished surface (Fig. 10.12: 4a–b). It is glossier than the Red Polished group. Some examples show extremely thin walls, down to approximately 3 mm, recalling some of the porcelain-like fabrics of the EN.

B4: Larissa Black Polished (Fig. 10.12: 1–4) is defined as a fabric with a black, well-polished surface, after the style known from the earlier Late Neolithic period in Thessaly (Gallis 1987), but also having a strong presence in Boeotia (Kunze 1931, 9; French 1972, 6; Sampson 2008, figs. 48–51; Caskey 1951, pl 87, 16–18 for further examples of this style in the ASCS collection).

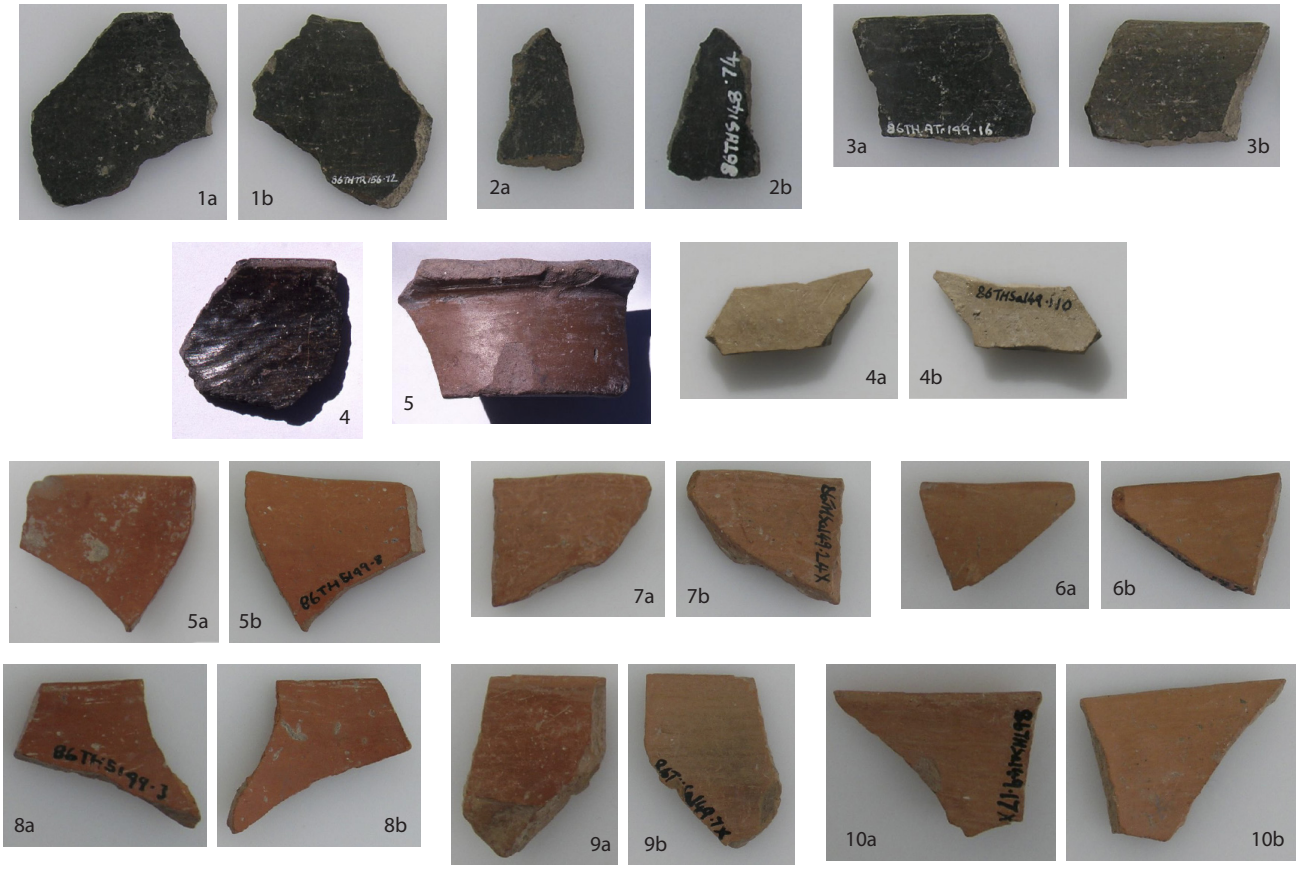


Figure 10.12. *Plain polished fabrics.*

A common form of decoration, placed high on the body of the pots, consists of tiny plastic pellets, a decorative style known as beading, sometimes combined with groups of parallel plastic ribs. This combination of relief decorative elements has been called '*Bead and rib decoration*' (Vitelli 2007, CD Fig. 52). The dating of this fabric is now assigned to the earliest phase of the Late Neolithic period or, in Boeotian terms, to the LNIA period (Sampson 2008, 89). The shapes are commonly small open bowls, but include a larger jar with angular flaring rim (Fig. 10.12: 3a–3b; see also Fig. 10.15).

B5: Coarse polished ware is a gritty, very hard-fired fabric with a polished surface on both interior and exterior. Sometimes it appears burnished as the brush-burnished fabric described below (C3). This variety is preserved only in body fragments.

C. Slipped wares

One of the largest groups in the assemblage consists of slipped wares, belonging to various periods (Fig. 10.13). Grey and black slipped fabrics are much less well represented than are red slipped.

C1: Coarse Slipped is a mid-coarse to very coarse fabric with rough surface, designed for pithoi and storage jars. The clay is usually dark reddish brown (2.5 ΥR4/6) and contains white marble and dark red inclusions. The surface is rough, covered by a thick dull brown slip.

C2: Black-slipped Coarse ware is a semi-coarse fabric, very heavy in weight (Fig. 10.13: 4–6) and containing many lime and black stone inclusions. The external surface is covered by a thin, dark-grey to black cracked slip with a matt appearance, giving the look and feel of a blackboard.

C3: Grey slipped is a semi-coarse fabric covered with a thin, dull grey slip, which varies from light to dark grey to dark brown (Fig. 10.13: 7). The surface finish shows traces of brush burnishing, resembling the monochrome Urfirnis. The clay contains large lime inclusions.



Figure 10.13. *Slipped fabrics.*

C4: Fine, creamy-white slipped is a thin-walled and hard fired fabric. It contains very fine lime inclusions and is covered with a thick creamy-white to yellow slip (10YR 8/4 very pale brown), which is smoothed and matt-polished. It can be unevenly fired, with the slip changing to a darker grey-brown. The interior can be rough with traces of smoothing running in different directions. This fabric may be dated to the EN.

C5: The ***Fine Red-slipped*** fabric makes up the largest group of the slipped classes (Fig. 10.13: 1–3). It contains plenty of lime inclusions, but few of sand or stone. It is covered with a thick orange or dark-red slip (5YR 6/8 reddish-yellow), which is often cracked. At Lerna, a similar group is classified together with the monochrome Urfirnis (Vitelli 2007, fig. 11–13c–14, 16, 21a, 31). The red-slipped fabric also extends after the MN period and characterizes a chronological horizon just before the EBA. These later examples have, however, a less shiny surface (for an example of the FN red-slipped fabric see Papathanassopoulos (ed.) 1996, 252, Catalogue no. 92 and, for the chronology of this period, Alram-Stern 2007 and Coleman 2012).

D. Coarse wares

Organic tempered
The organic or vegetal tempered is a semi-coarse fabric that is rather soft, porous and brittle (Fig. 10.14: 3a–4b).

The clay contains many vegetal inclusions, together with sand and larger white, gray and black pebbles. The surface is as a rule reddish-brown (red 2.5YR 4/6) and unburnished, the biscuit is always dark gray, and the feel rather soft. The better preserved fragments indicate that large household jars, sometimes with handles, formed the main shape manufactured in this fabric. Almost all of the examples appear in concentrations coming from the same transects. According to recent parallels with Lerna (Vitelli 2007: CD Photo 77), this fabric can be tentatively assigned to a period from the Final Neolithic to the beginning of Early Helladic (Bintliff and Sarri, forthcoming).

Lime tempered
This group is a fabric well represented in the Argolid, from the Neolithic strata of both Lerna and Franchthi (Vitelli 1999; 2007). The plentiful and sizeable lime inclusions are its main feature. At Thespiai, the lime-tempered is a semi-coarse fabric, very light in weight, with a large number of fine lime inclusions and some larger lime pops (Fig. 10.14: 1a–2b). The colour of the surface varies from light grey to buff. The surface is usually simply smoothed, but sometimes traces of an intensive faceted burnishing have been observed.

Plain' burnished
The fabric group of Plain Burnished pottery is the largest in the whole assemblage from Neolithic Thespiai.

Its main feature is the undecorated, well burnished surface. Variations in the art of burnishing create several sub-groups:

We give the name *Brush Burnished* to a very distinctive semi-coarse to coarse fabric, which is slightly burnished with a brush-like implement (Fig. 10.16: 1–2). This fine burnishing leaves traces of short movements in various directions.

Faceted (or Ripple-) Burnished is the name given to a fine to semi-coarse fabric, hard fired, showing traces of a sharp burnishing instrument (Fig. 10.16: 3a–3b). These are shallow, 1–2 mm wide and they run roughly parallel, creating a characteristic faceted surface. This kind of burnishing can sometimes be observed also on highly polished fabrics, and at times in combination with applied pellet decoration. No shapes can be recognized in this material, though all the examples belong to small, well-fired vessels.

The pottery sequence

Summarizing, the current data from the Neolithic Magoula show a faint and questionable presence during the Early Neolithic period, but a strong occupation from the Middle to the Late Neolithic. Final Neolithic is particularly abundant beyond the site's periphery, suggesting a reorganization of the settlement and a readjustment to the landscape around

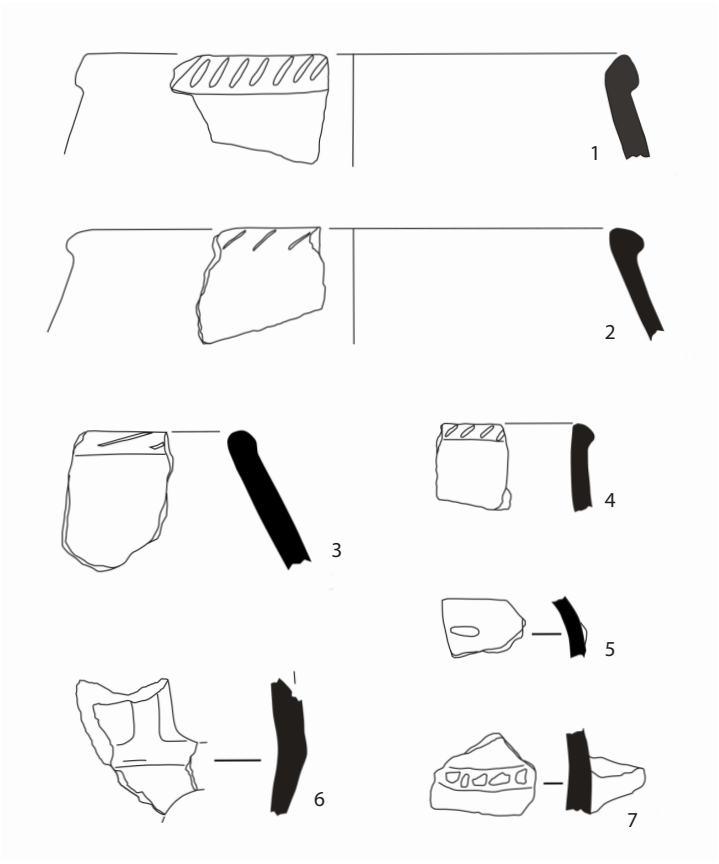


Figure 10.15. *Pottery with plastic decoration (scale 1:3).*

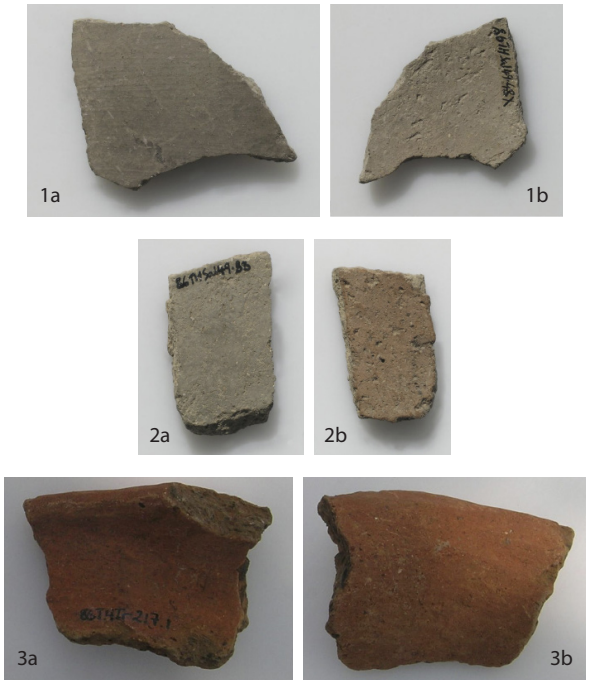


Figure 10.14. *Lime-tempered and organic tempering fabrics.*



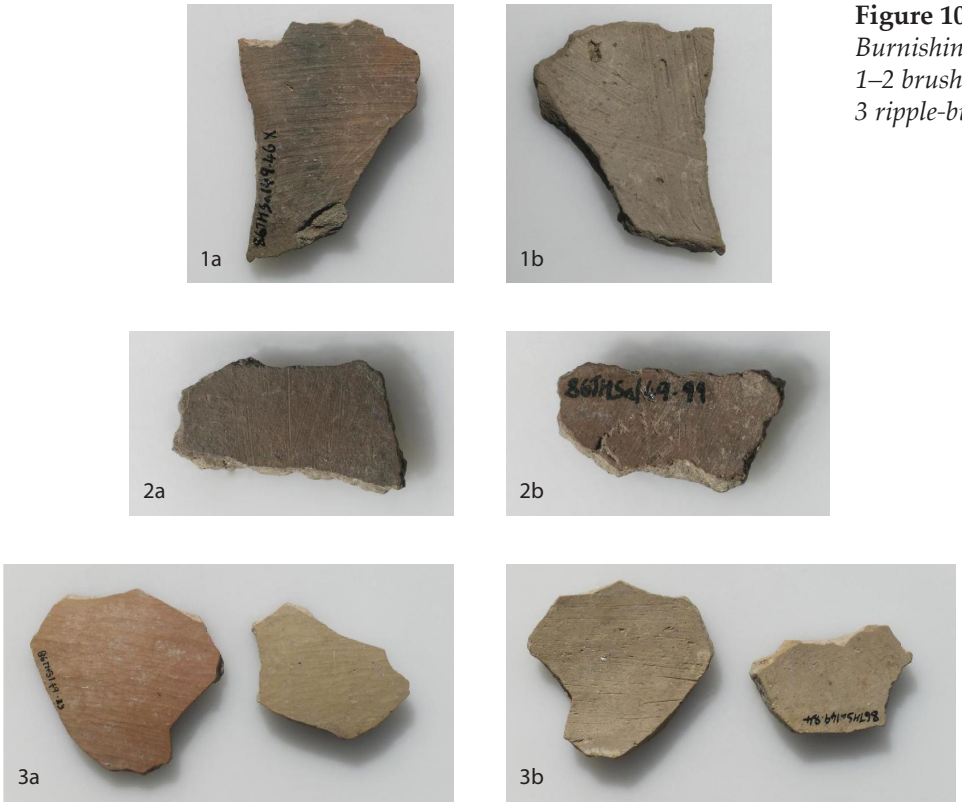


Figure 10.16.
Burnishing techniques: 1–2 brush-burnished; 3 ripple-burnished.



Figure 10.17.
Neolithic figurines in the ASCS, Antiquities Collection: 1 = AST 90; 2 = AST 291; 3 = AST 36; 4 = AST 60 (scale 1:3).

the site. The Neolithic pottery assemblage consists of well-recognized fabrics of Central Greece of a very high quality, which – although surface finds – are preserved in excellent condition.

The pottery classes represented in the bulk of the survey material do not complete through the entire repertoire of the Neolithic period. There are fabric groups and short periods missing, leaving some open questions about the site's pottery production and chronological sequence. Some supplementary material can be found in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies, published in a selective fashion by Caskey (1951). In this collection, we can distinguish further pottery classes that are not sufficiently, or not at all, represented in the Boeotian surveys, such as FN pattern burnished and EN incised and Impresso fabrics.

The Neolithic figurines

The six Neolithic figurine fragments published by Bass (1959) and now in the collection of the American School of Classical Studies[3] add useful information to the chronological sequence and the significance of the site.

Two of them belong to the steatopygous standing female figurines with narrow waist, broad shoulders and a strong emphasis on the navel (Fig. 10.17, 3–4). In no case are the head, arms or legs preserved. The rare omission of the usual practice of using stumps to denoting the chest and arms in one case (Fig. 10.17, 4) indicates similarities with an EN forerunner from Prodromos, Karditsa (Skafida 1996, fig. 205). Two of the figurines preserve decoration with bright and glossy red paint on a light background (Fig. 10.17, 3), a style known from MN pottery, but also from a figurine from Chaironeia (Theocharis 1993, fig. 69). This decoration presumably represents applied textile bands, decorating an elaborate garment, while a circular pendant round the neck of one figurine provides a rare depiction of Neolithic ornament.

A vase fragment from the same early collection shows a relief human face placed close to the vessel's rim (Fig. 10.18, 1: see also Caskey 1951: fig. 86, 96). The eyes and mouth of this figure are denoted by plastic applications. The eyes are ''coffee bean'' shaped, an element usually found on EN figurines (Perlès 2001, 264–5). The closest parallel for this comes from Nea Nikomedeia (Rodden 1962, 268–88). A series of similar finds occurs in the EN layers of Achilleion (III–b), but also in later layers at the same site (Pilidou 2006, 21, fig. 1a–b). The unique fragment from Thespiai seems to be later, however, since in addition to the face representation it bears incised decoration on the rim, a much later feature normally dated to the FN.

The other figurine fragments belong to different LN types. One of these is a large plastic, hollow figurine with one preserved leg (Fig. 10.18, 5). The surface is decorated with dense red chevron patterns, while a deep engraved line between the legs may indicate

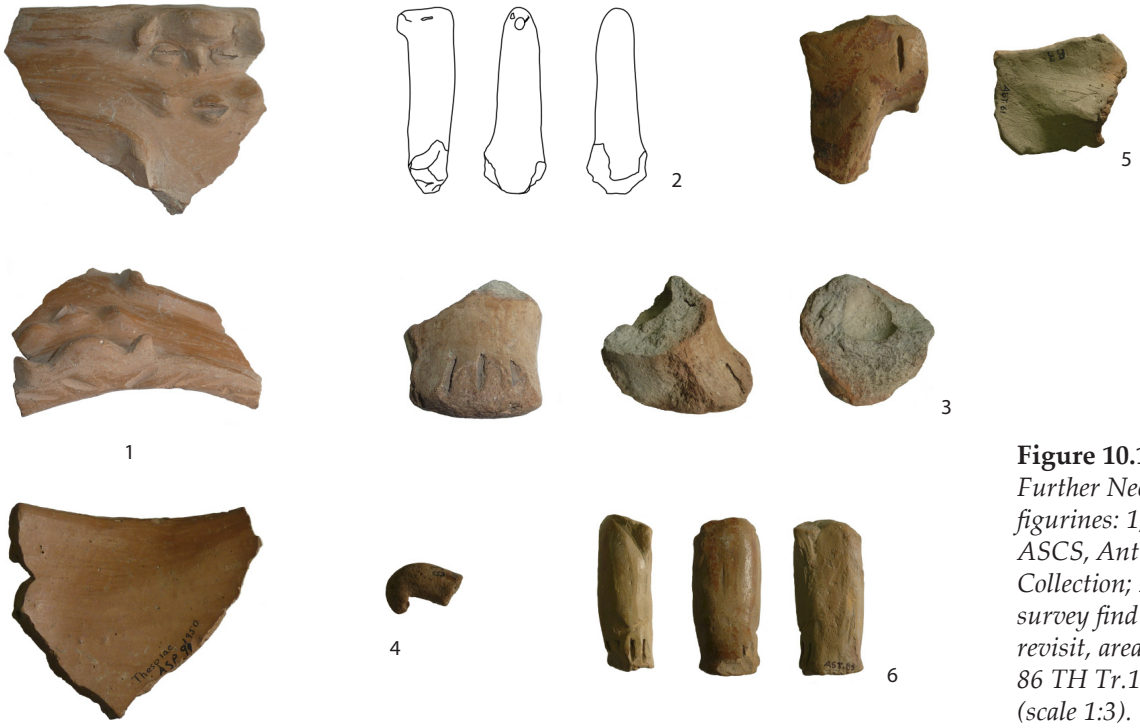


Figure 10.18. *Further Neolithic figurines: 1, 3–6 in ASCS, Antiquities Collection; 2 Boeotia survey find (1989 revisit, area of 86 TH Tr.156) (scale 1:3).*

gender. A foot fragment with engraved toes comes from a very large, hollow and well-burnished figurine (Fig. 10.18, 3), whose estimated size will be comparable to that of an ithyphallic figurine from Karditsa (Wace and Thompson 1912, 56, fig. 30). A fragment of a small compact figurine, with one leg preserved, also bears incised signs of toes (Fig. 10.18, 6): it is preserved intact from the base up to and including a part of the pelvic region. The group of vertical and horizontal painted lines seen on the external side presumably depict a long, decorated garment. The modelling of the body resembles that of a figurine from Chaironeia (Sotiriadis 1908; Tzavella-Evjen 2012, pl. Σ67). A fragment from the arm of a figurine (Fig. 10.18, 4) should belong to the type with arms bent and resting on the chest, as in the steatopygous figurine from Thespiai (Fig. 10.17, 4) or a type from Nea Nikomedeia (Rodden 1964, fig. 1,4). It is made of porous unburnished clay, without trace of decoration.

Two other fragments of solid clay figurines depict abstract human figures (Fig. 10.17, 1–2). One of them is from a naked torso, with extended arms and the backbone area heavily emphasized by a vertical cavity. The flat front side, though chipped, shows that it is probably a male figure, while the traces of a chipped plastic element suggest that the figure may have held something tightly to the body with the right hand.

The manufacturing technology and decoration offer some evidence to help clarify the chronological classification of the figurines. Thus the red paint, turning to a dark brown, on the hollow figurine (Fig. 10.18, 5) recalls MN Urfirnis pottery; while the bichrome decoration on the draped body of another figurine (Fig. 10.17, 2) offers a secure argument for a dating to LN.

A new figurine fragment was found during the visit of 1989, in the area of Transect 156, at the centre of the Magoula (Fig. 10.18, 2). The only preserved part is the head, which belongs to the cylindrical type with rounded top, incised eyes and strongly protruding, highly placed nose, a type which is also known from the Magoula Balomenou at Chaironeia (Tzavella-Evjen 2012, Pl. 6). It corresponds with the type dated to the EN period at Nea Nikomedeia (Marangou 1996, 151, 293, fig. 41, 188). A possible dating for this type of figurine as early as EN is supported by further parallels from Prodromos Karditsas (Orphanidi 1998, 121, a; 128, fig. 27 a) and Eleusis (Mylonas 1932, fig. 115 a, c; Orphanidi 1998, 139, fig. 59). The examples from both Eleusis and Nea Nikomedeia show that such cylindrical heads could be mounted on steatopygous female figurines, while the Prodromos example is considered to be phallus-shaped (Hourmouziadis 1973). The type with cylindrical head continues, however, into the LN period (Marangou 1996, figure on p. 209).

While Neolithic figurines cannot offer a safe dating, even in excavated sites, because of the constant intrusions caused by pits (Orfanidi 1995; Talalay 1993), some early features of the Thespiai finds could well be attributed to the EN period. It is worth noting that full plastic figurine types show more similarities and parallels in distant regions than are found at nearby sites. They seem to have more connections, even from the EN period onwards, with the areas of Eastern Macedonia and Thessaly, whereas the pottery from the site follows the standards and local traditions of Boeotia, Euboea and Attica of the MN and LN phases. Although we do not know the exact find-spots of the items in the early collections by the ASCS, some of which could come not precisely from the Magoula but from a nearby area, the chronological distance from the rest of the material could be an additional indication, even though one insufficiently supported by the pottery from the survey, for an EN installation of the settlement at Thespiai.

Notes

1 I am grateful to J. Bintliff and A. Snodgrass for their permission to study this material and my Boeotia Project colleagues V. Stissi, J. Poblome and A. Vionis for a constructive exchange of expertise and knowledge during many study seasons in Boeotia. E. Farinetti has kindly prepared the distribution maps, giving visual form to our chronological results. I owe many thanks to J. Coleman, O. Dickinson, S. Dietz and C. Perlès for sharing their experience with the prehistoric assemblages of the Greek mainland. Colleagues R. Di Ciaccio and G. Nymo kindly assisted in the study of the prehistoric pottery of the years 2009 and 2011 respectively. The Institute of the Aegean Prehistory generously supported our prehistoric study season for the year 2010.

2 Some preliminary classifications were given in Bintliff *et al*. 2012. For the colour definitions of the clay and painted decoration, we have used the Munsell 1994 revised edition.

3 I owe many thanks to J. Davis and N. Vogelkoff-Brogan for the permission to study and re-publish this material and for their helpful assistance.

Chapter 10(b)

The Bronze Age pottery

Oliver Dickinson

The salient impression is that material of the Bronze Age and the antecedent Final Neolithic (FN) period is spread widely in the city area, but in far smaller quantities than the Early to Late Neolithic material.[1] The distribution of what has been classified as 'Final Neolithic–Early Helladic' (FN–EH) (Fig. 10.19) is particularly striking: concentrations can be detected across the north part of the borderline between Sectors 1 and 2 (see Fig. 3.29 in Chapter 3 for a map of the sectors), in the south of Sector 2, in Sectors 4 and 7, and in the north section of Sector 10, and there are stray finds elsewhere.

Pottery that cannot be more closely defined than as 'prehistoric coarse', but that often seems likely to belong to these early stages rather than later, is generally found in the same or immediately adjacent transects and so, with notable frequency, are blades, flakes or cores of obsidian. Of course, theoretically such finds could be dated anywhere in the Neolithic or Early Helladic phases (much less plausibly later), and the relatively large quantities found at the E end of the Magoula and nearby could easily represent material of mostly if not entirely Neolithic date. But its common occurrence away from the Magoula in association with FN and EH material adds to an impression of wide-ranging activity. In comparison, it may be noted, blades and waste pieces of chert are extraordinarily rare, although chert was in common use throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age; but we think it quite possible that, to a great extent, this reflects obsidian's greater visibility to survey teams and a corresponding tendency to overlook pieces of chert, mistaking them for natural stones.

Very little can be said about the FN and FN–EH material in detail. The majority of the material is of coarse fabric, including pieces of a thick orange straw-tempered ware, well recognized in the Tanagra survey, where it often seems to belong to jars, and of a thinner red-orange rather gritty ware, which is recovered in such small fragments that nothing more can be said. It seems unlikely that these fabrics can have been so long-lived as to date anywhere within the FN period, for which an extent of well over a millennium (*c.* 4500–3200 BC) has been suggested. They are more likely to represent a later stage within the period and, if they survived into EH, they are unlikely to have been current beyond the subdivision classified as EH I, itself allotted a further half millennium (*c.* 3200–2700 BC).

Even on this more limited view, the finds could still date anywhere within a period of several hundred years, and for this reason it is necessary to exercise caution in interpreting their wide distribution. Rather than representing a whole constellation of small settlements or individual farmsteads established around the Magoula and occupied for long periods, it could reflect the movement of just a few families, settling at particular points for a few generations; some finds might not even represent settlements, but short-lived 'activity areas'. One possible grouping is towards the northern edge of the survey area, in Transects 2002 and 2086–8 of Sector 8, where considerable material of later phases has also been found; here, on the hill slope below the modern village of Leondari, the suggestion of a nearby prehistoric settlement has already been made (see p. 272).

Other notable groupings are in Transects 6–8 of Sector 10, near the eastern edge, where EH material has also been found (Fig. 10.20); and, in the south, in Sector 7, where FN–EH finds have been identified in many Transects but there is little of clearly later date.

All these might have a claim to be established hamlets, but only in the Sector 8 concentration is the material particularly copious. It can at least be said that this wide distribution of finds contributes to the impression that, in the territory around the Magoula, there was a different kind of activity from the likely

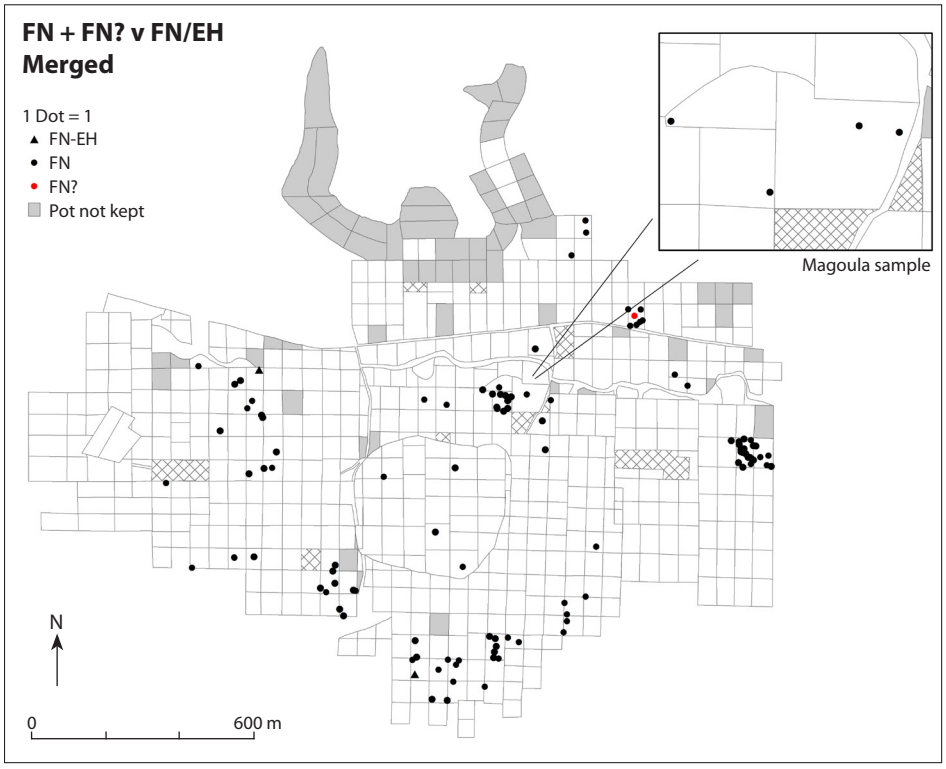


Figure 10.19. *Distribution map, Final Neolithic to Early Helladic sherds.*

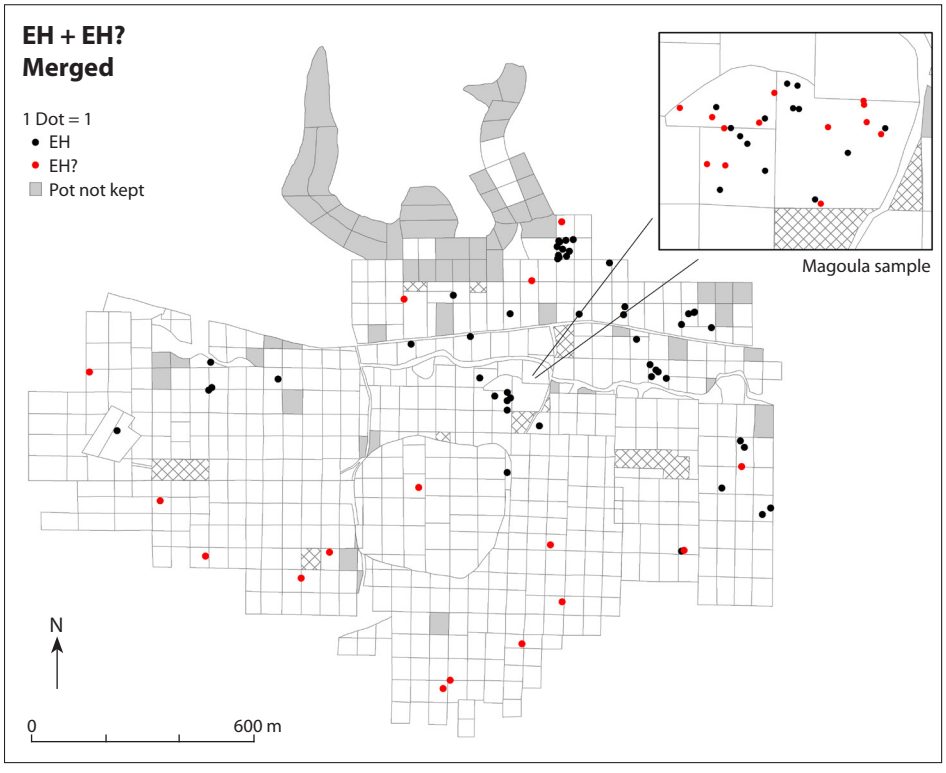


Figure 10.20. *Distribution map of Early Helladic sherds.*

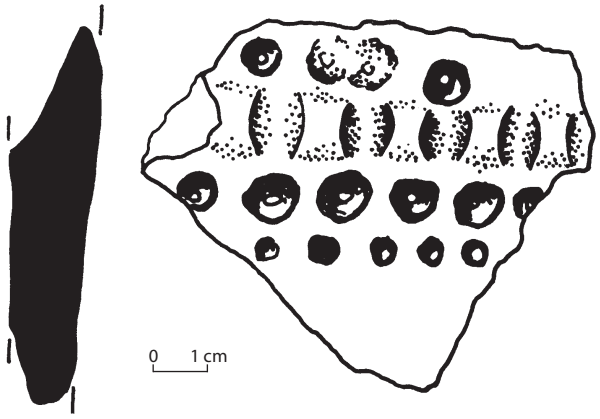


Figure 10.21. *EH body-sherd, from 85 TH Sa. 7.59.*

pattern earlier in the Neolithic period. Yet the Magoula is likely to have remained the main settlement of the neighbourhood, a true village, and possible pieces of the finer EH I wares have mostly been found here (Fig. 10.20 shows the distribution of finds for the EH period as a whole, and Fig. 10.21 a typical body-sherd).

The situation is the same for the phase generally reckoned to represent the peak of the Early Bronze Age development, EH II. Identifying material of this phase outside the Magoula itself has proved effectively impossible. In particular, there are no pieces of the very characteristic diagnostic shapes of the period, sauceboats and small bowls, which were produced in wares of truly fine quality; at most, a few pieces of finer quality that show traces of paint might be EH II. Pieces of this kind have been found on and close to the Magoula, though more in grab samples collected in later years than in the systematic surveys by transects in 1985–6; other finds recovered in this way include two possible pieces of the wheelmade bowls or plates in the 'Anatolian' pottery tradition that became influential in Boeotia, Euboea and various Aegean islands in the late stages of EH II. Rim and handle fragments of substantial bowls and jars, in plain but relatively well-fired wares, have been identified more widely, but there is nothing to support placing them closely within the EH I–II range; similarly, some better made pieces of coarse domestic ware defined as EH might be as late as EH II, but this is not easily demonstrable.

As a result, it has to be said that, although material identified as EH is found quite widely in the city area, with sporadic finds in Sectors 1, 2, 9, and even 5, the *Kastro* (where a little obsidian was also found), it would be very unwise to suppose that the pattern of small satellite settlements, tentatively proposed on the basis of the FN–EH spread, continued into EH II. The best argument for it is in fact that survey work in several parts of the mainland has suggested a general spread of very small EH II settlements as well as more substantial villages; but it remains possible that the likely concentration of population in the Magoula village that is detectable later in the Bronze Age took place at some stage within EH II.

The picture becomes even more obscure with the final phase of the Early Bronze Age, EH III. Apart from one piece from the eastern Magoula that does seem to be EH III, a body sherd with handle from a tankard found in a 1993 grab sample, and a couple of pieces that might be EH III or Middle Helladic (MH) but not earlier, there is nothing. Some material however seems plausibly attributable to 'early' MH, including pieces identified as Dark or coarse Minyan, both from the Magoula and the Sector 8 concentration (Fig. 10.22), so that the possibility of continuous occupation from an early stage of MH, if not continuously from the end of EH II through EH III, is not excluded.

Certainly, good quality Grey Minyan pieces that belong to shapes of the mature to late stages of MH, especially the well-known ring-stemmed goblet, have been found, not merely on and close to the Magoula and in the Sector 8 concentration, but in one case as far away as Sector 3 (Transect 2098) (see Fig. 10.23). Surprisingly, and in marked contrast with the situation earlier, hardly any of the shaped fragments assigned to MH, of whatever fabric, are rims; rather, they are body sherds, often showing evidence of strap-handles, or base and foot fragments.

The presence of good quality Grey Minyan might have more than ordinary significance, for it seems very likely that this was the recognized fine ware of the period, and that the goblet shape in particular was

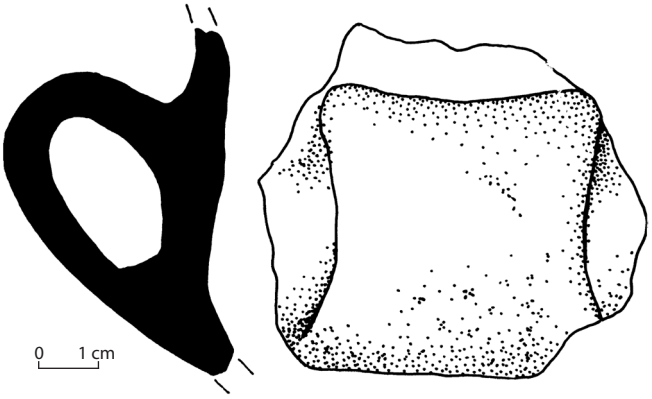


Figure 10.22. *Early MH dark Minyan carinated bowl handle, from 85 TH Tr. 2087.10.*

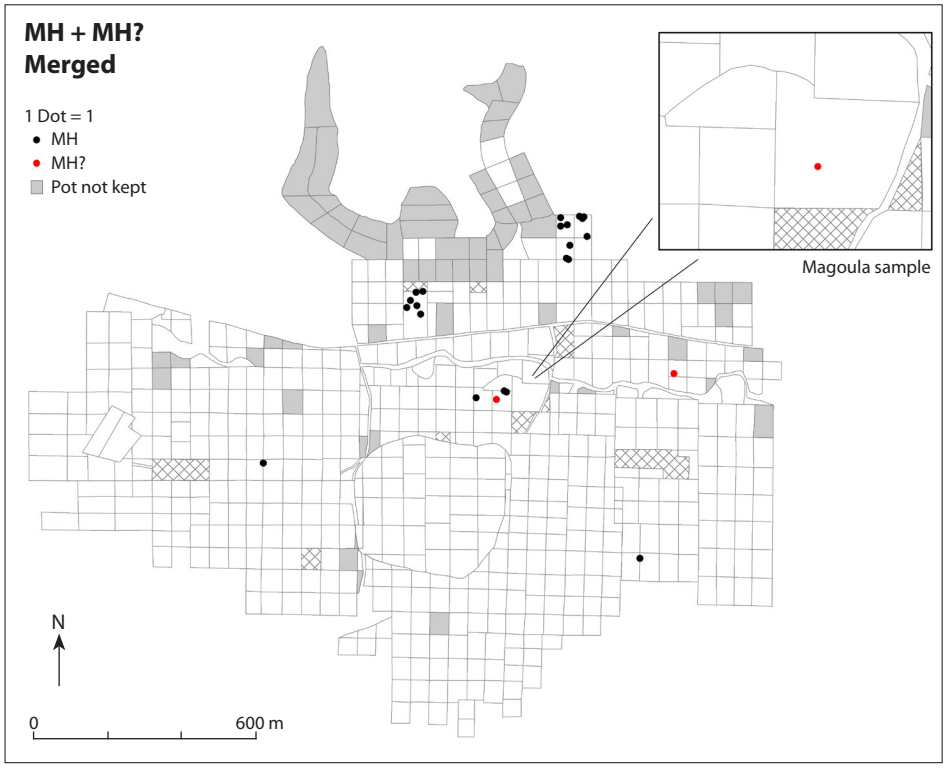


Figure 10.23. *Distribution map of Middle Helladic sherds.*

used in the context of ceremonial feasting. This would suggest that the Thespiai community was substantial, including families that would have been reckoned prosperous by the standards of the period. Indeed, if the Grey Minyan was locally made in the village itself, this would be another sign that it was a leading community; but the evidence is too scanty to allow this to be asserted with confidence. In contrast, it has not proved possible to identify any likely painted wares of MH date; but one piece of a well-made coarse ware jar with knob decoration, a late MH to early Late Helladic (LH) type, was found in the Sector 8 concentration (Fig. 10.24), and a body fragment with handle belonging to a krater or basin from the Magoula was of a ware datable to the final stages of MH or beginning of LH.

There are clearly identifiable LH pieces (Fig. 10.25), but they are conspicuously rare (little over a dozen in all) and the bulk of recognized pieces were found either on the Magoula, or not far to its north in Sector 3 across the Kanavaris river, or to the east and south–east in Sector 9 (as with the goblet foot, Fig. 10.26).

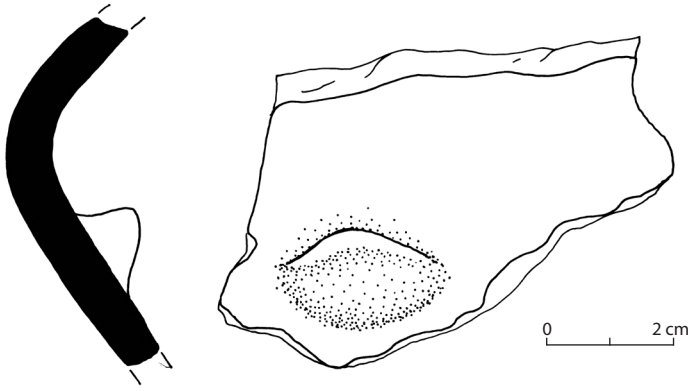


Figure 10.24. *Body-sherd of Late MH/early LH knobbed jar, from 85 TH Tr. 2088.18.*

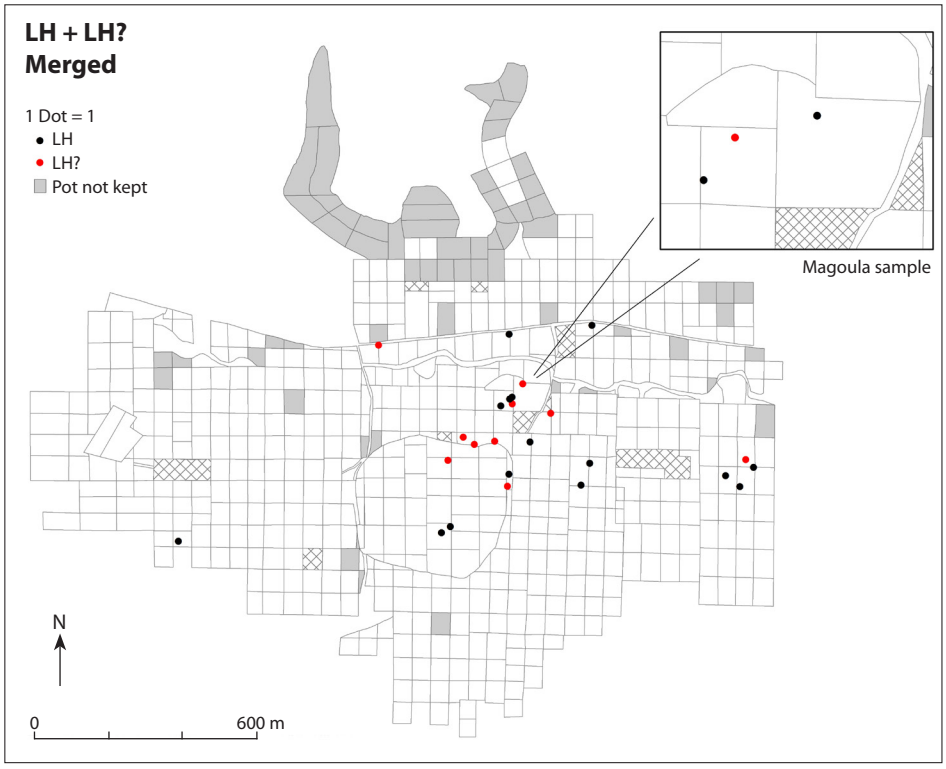


Figure 10.25. *Distribution map of Late Helladic sherds.*

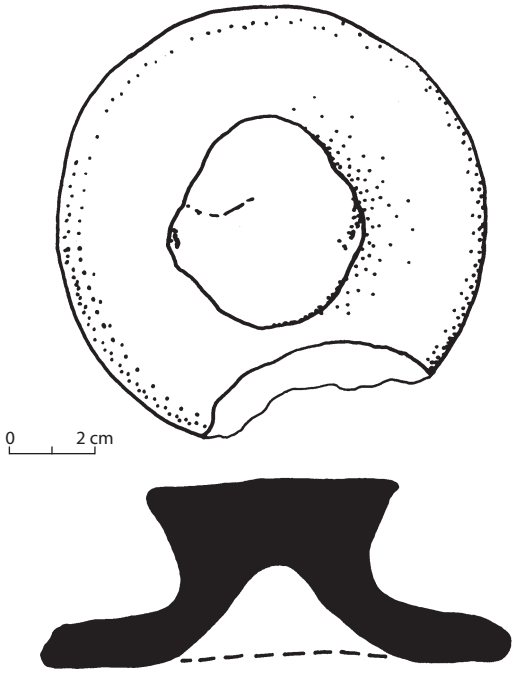


Figure 10.26. *Late Helladic goblet foot, from 85 TH Sa. 73.18.*

Some, however, were found much further away, a fragment of a kylix base in Sector 10, and a piece classified as LH IIIB or conceivably LH IIIC in Sector 7, while one of the best preserved pieces of a shape that would have been decorated, a LH IIIA mug, was actually found to the north-east of the Magoula, in Sector 8 (Transect 2074). Other finds, mostly on or near the Magoula, included an early LH bowl rim, two LH IIIA–B kylix fragments, and some painted, mostly banded, pieces that were certainly or probably LH III, one certainly from a fine closed shape. This rather scanty range of material seems sufficient to suggest continuity of occupation through most of the Mycenaean period, although clearly LH II material is lacking; the most notable feature is the occurrence of good quality painted pottery.

The fact that vases of good quality LH wares were available to and used by some families of the settlement is a strong indication that, as in MH, it was an established village. As with Grey Minyan, it cannot be asserted with certainty that the decorated LH pottery was made in the village; if it was, this would be another indication of its size and significance as a settlement. But while a case can be made for the existence of a subsidiary settlement represented by the Sector 8 concentration, perhaps covering the whole period from FN to

the end of MH, and possibly for others in part of the FN and EH periods, most of the MH and LH pieces found in places far from the Magoula seem more likely to be 'strays'. How they reached the places where they were found must be considered a matter for speculation – perhaps through the constant movement of soil caused by agricultural work, or as part of the matrix used to make mud-bricks, or with domestic refuse taken to the fields for manuring. Such finds do nevertheless fill out the rather scanty evidence from the Magoula itself, to suggest that there was a not very large but permanent settlement (perhaps comparable with Tsoungiza near Nemea?), in continuous occupation from some time in MH, if not earlier, until well into LH IIIA–B.

It would be unwise to draw any conclusions about when, or if, the site was abandoned in the closing stages of the Bronze Age; there is, quite simply, no evidence. This is not unexpected, since diagnostic types that belong exclusively to these final stages are confined to decorated wares that will only be found on the surface of minor sites through great good fortune. In fact, the period in which the survey evidence cannot shed any light on developments at Thespiai was to last from before the end of the Bronze Age until well into the Iron Age.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Anthony Snodgrass and John Bintliff for the opportunity to participate in the Boeotia Survey, and Kalliopi Sarri for her very helpful input into the identification of the pre-LH material.

Chapter 11

The pottery of the Early Iron Age to the Hellenistic periods

Vladimir Stissi

This chapter presents the results of the classification and interpretation of the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic pottery, found during the field survey of the city of Thespiai in 1985 and 1986: that is, of the proportion stored in the collection of finds and recorded in the database produced soon after its collection. This is an assemblage (depending on the inclusion or exclusion of finds at the chronological fringes) of around 4000 to 5000 pieces, from a total collection of more than 14,500 items (see further below and Figs. 11.1–11.3 for more detailed figures).

This collected assemblage, while quite substantial by the prevailing standards of the time – compare, for example, the urban site collections with at most a few hundred pieces in Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani 1991: 282–4 (Koressos: select catalogue of 63 finds) or Mee and Forbes 1996: 122–7, 177–83, 287–96 (Ancient Methana – some hundreds of pieces) – is not necessarily a precise and direct reflection of what was or is on the surface. The collection strategy at Thespiai was to bring in primarily feature-sherds, plus a significant supporting element of body-sherds (see Chapter 3, pp. 39–41). In addition, some material considered to be undiagnostic or redundant was discarded during processing, mostly without recording. Simple logistics also ruled out large quantities of tile being bagged and brought back. The counts (Fig. 11.2) clearly indicate that feature-sherds (rims, bases and handles) are heavily over-represented in the preserved collection; it also seems that decorated pottery, and some distinctive categories of material like black gloss (wall) fragments, large fragments of *pithoi* and certain categories of prehistoric handmade pottery, are relatively more prominent among the kept finds than on the ground; but there is no evidence or documentation to quantify this. As to tile, which can be expected to form at least half the amount of fragments on the surface, the general strategy of leaving it on the ground was not entirely successful, as 165 pieces in total were kept, of which 59 were pre-Roman (Figs. 11.3–11.5).

On the other hand, since it was also an explicit aim to collect samples representative of all categories of finds encountered on surface, a fair but varying amount of less remarkable finds, often plain body-sherds, was kept, even though they must have seemed undiagnostic at the time of collection and during processing; many indeed have remained in this category. All in all, one might tentatively conclude that probably very little of the highly diagnostic material in the paths of the walkers was left on the surface, while very many plain body-sherds were. To what extent the intermediate material, that which is only vaguely diagnostic or could be classified through fabric only, is represented in the retained collection cannot now be established, at least without further field-work; perhaps future comparison with the finds from Hyettos, Tanagra and Koroneia, where relatively more material was picked up, may offer at least an impression.

The new data in the context of previous work

Almost all the finds from Thespiai were first seen and classified by John Hayes and in some cases also by period specialists, notably Oliver Dickinson for prehistoric wares, soon after they were collected. The resulting data-base has been used as the starting point for all further research on the assemblage, which however led to only minor revisions and additions, before the study of the material was taken up again, in 2009 (for the Roman pottery) and 2011 (for Early Iron Age to Hellenistic pottery). I have looked at all the material over several weeks during each of four spring and summer study seasons in 2011 and 2012, with some additional work done afterwards from notes and through the database. The core of the database is now still shaped by the first classifications by

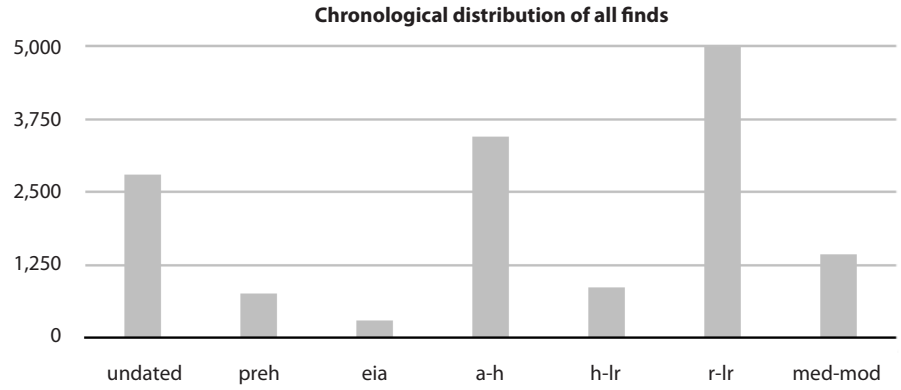


Figure 11.1. *City of Thespiai: the complete find assemblage, by date.*

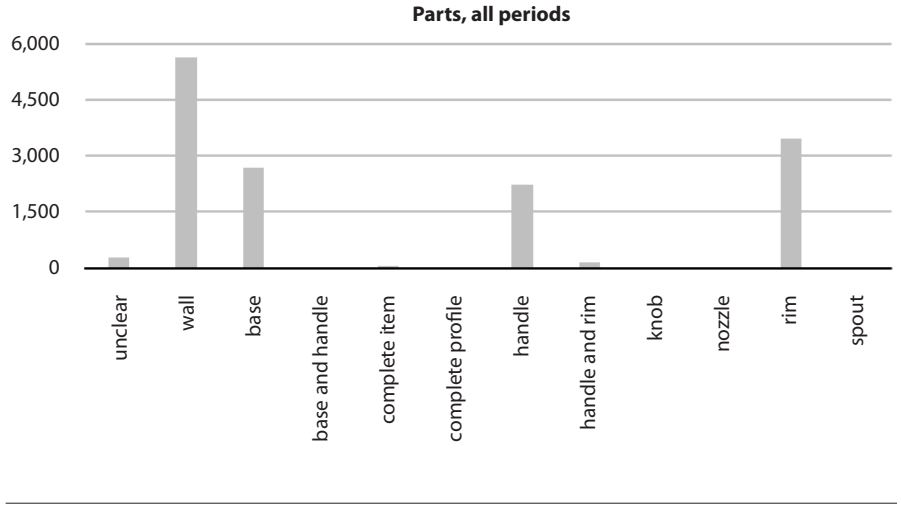
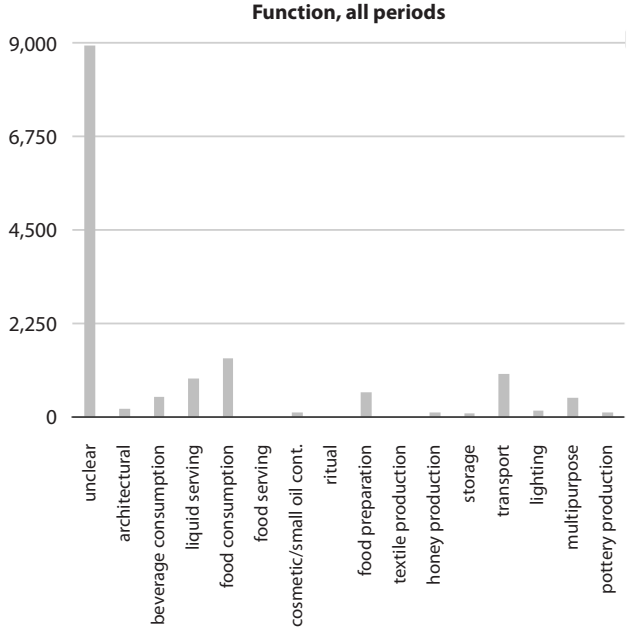


Figure 11.2. *Thespiai: Parts of vessels, represented in the complete find assemblage.*



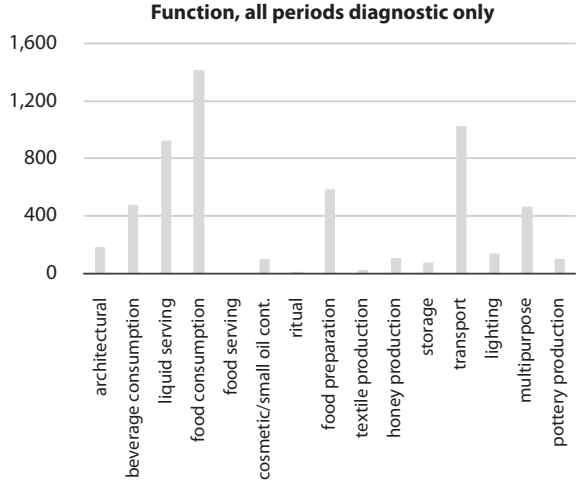


Figure 11.3. *(left and above) The complete find assemblage from the city of Thespiai, divided by functional category (above, excluding items that cannot be assigned to a category).*

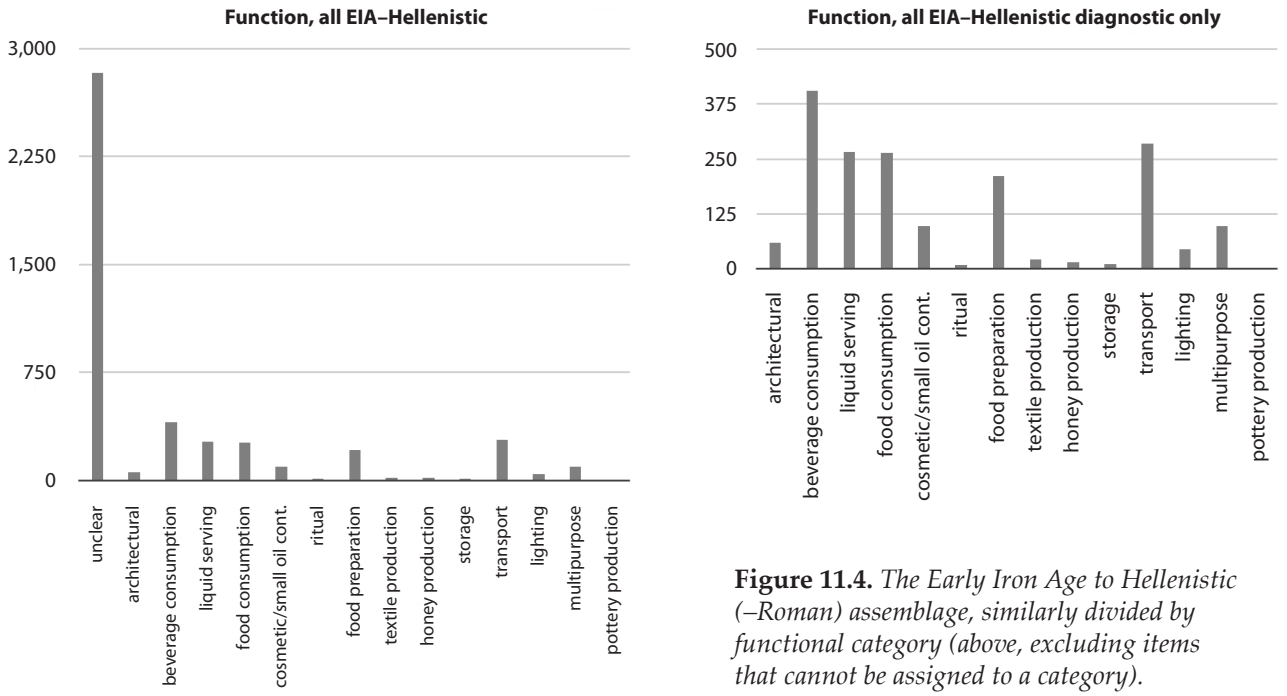


Figure 11.4. *The Early Iron Age to Hellenistic (–Roman) assemblage, similarly divided by functional category (above, excluding items that cannot be assigned to a category).*

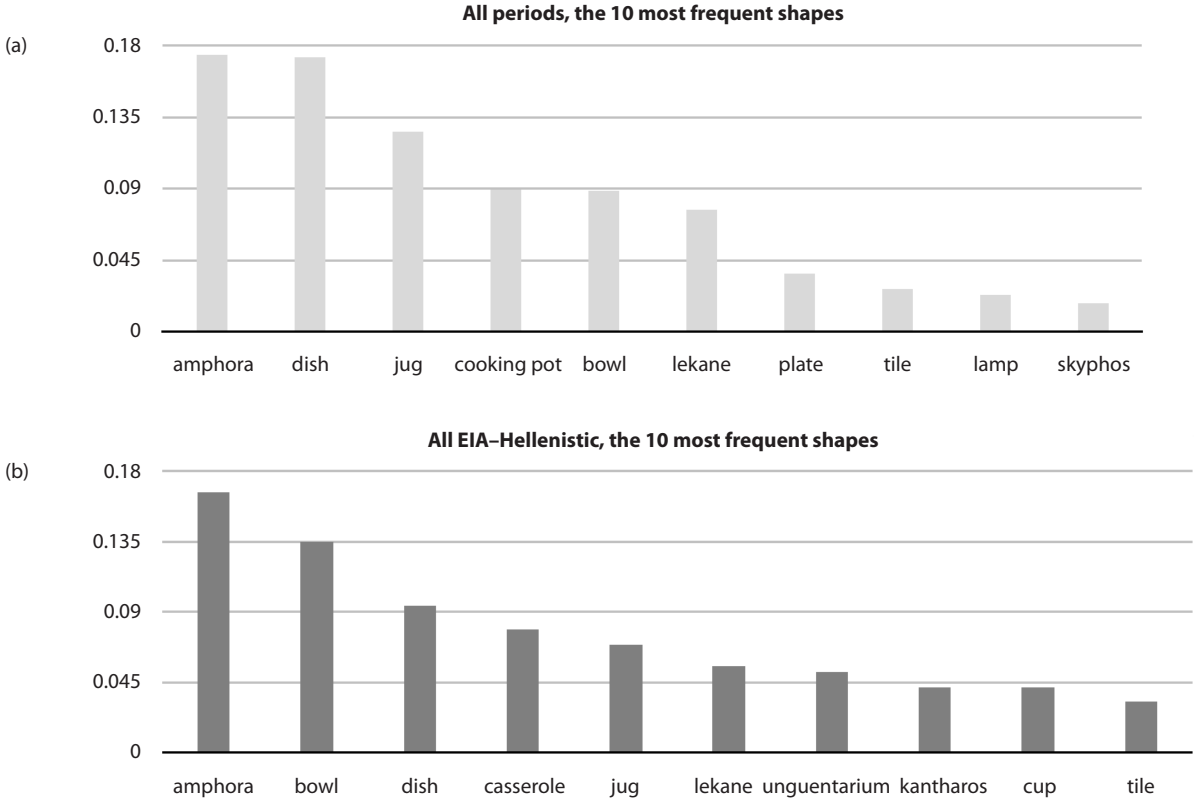


Figure 11.5. *The ten most frequent vase shapes in the complete Thespiai collection (percentages of the total number of items with a shape attribution) (a), and the ten most frequent vase shapes in the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic (–Roman) assemblage, shown on the same basis (b).*

Hayes, but many details have been added and refined, and some dates have been adjusted, deleted or added.

While merely spending more time on the material is always helpful, most of the changes and additions to this data-base are the result of the considerable advances in our general knowledge, especially of 'simpler' kinds of pottery, over the last 25 to 30 years, together with the increasingly specific expertise of the team of pottery specialists, who collectively have now worked on the material of the various surveys of the Boeotia project for 15 years (and who have seen quite a large amount of survey and excavation material from elsewhere in the Greek world too). It must be stressed that in the case of Thespiai, these revisions have had limited effect on our picture of general chronological patterns, at least for Early Iron Age to Hellenistic material, but have concentrated mainly on improving classification in the categories of function and shape and, to a lesser extent, on defining and recognizing some fabric groups. In combination with the work on other areas of the region, a further result has been to embed the finds more strongly in their Boeotian contexts, but also within our wider view of Greek household pottery.

Limitations of the present study

It must be admitted that this chapter is not the place for a fully detailed presentation of the results of this contextualization. On the one hand, this is a result of the limitations of time and budget in the study of the material, which did not allow for the amount of drawing, typological and analytical research needed for a fully thorough presentation of the finds: this would probably have required a volume of its own. On the other hand, the concision of this chapter is also related to the qualities of the material itself, apart from some serious issues regarding diagnosticity (which will be discussed below): the relatively few imports are of little intrinsic interest, and the local material does not offer much which cannot be, or has not been, illustrated better elsewhere. To put it differently, the general ceramic developments seen in the material from Thespiai seem perfectly comparable to what can be seen in major centres like Corinth and Athens, and most diagnostic sherds have good parallels in material from the Agora or Corinth publications series (see mainly, for the Athenian Agora, Sparkes and Talcott 1970; Rotroff 1982; 1997; 2006; for Corinth, Amyx and Lawrence 1975; Edwards 1975; Stillwell and Benson 1984; Risser 2001 and 2003). Some specific Boeotian features, like the prominence of the *kantharos* and the palmette-cup as fine drinking vessels (but found mainly in funerary and sanctuary deposits) are already well documented by publications of excavations in the region (see mainly Ure, P.N. 1913; 1926; 1927; Ure, A.D. 1962; Sparkes 1967; Braun and Havernick 1981; Heimberg 1982; Walker 2004; Heymans 2013). Moreover, typical compositions of domestic assemblages can be studied better at some of the other surveyed Boeotian cities, where relatively more and better preserved material was collected, or at short-lived rural sites which often offer more coherent collections of finds. Finally, unlike the material from some of those cities, the pottery from Thespiai, as will be discussed further below, does not seem to possess any remarkable local features deserving of specific attention.

The focus of this chapter is therefore less on the pottery as such, as might perhaps have been expected, than on general developments, partly as to preferences within the ceramic assemblage, partly as to the chronological and spatial development of Thespiai as a city, from its presumed pre-urban beginnings in the Early Iron Age, until the transition to the Roman period, which saw its entry into a very different realm of pottery consumption. For more specific information about single items, including a wider selection of profile drawings, we hope to offer more detailed information, after some further study, in a separate publication on the internet. One should not however expect too much of the finds of these periods from the urban area of Thespiai, as an exemplary ceramic assemblage.

Data quality, possibilities and difficulties

Pottery from urban survey in Boeotia: not an easy starting point

Pottery from a survey is never the easiest archaeological material to deal with; pottery from an urban survey is even more complex. The long life of most cities, in Boeotia usually of at least a thousand years of occupation in antiquity alone, resulted not only in the continuous burial of previous habitation remains, with associated damage through digging and re-use, but also in the mingling of materials belonging to different functional and chronological contexts. While this may not be problematic for highly distinctive categories of pottery, such as most fine wares, local and imported, and certain specific types of mostly non-local vessels such as transport amphorae, it is very troublesome for the bulk of locally or regionally made coarse and other plain pots that form the overwhelming majority of surface finds. Even though some of these may show chronologically or functionally specific details, many base, rim and handle forms are common to several shapes and last for centuries, or else recur in more than one period. Clay sources, and the recipes

and firing techniques used by potters, can be equally stable, resulting in fabrics used in more than one archaeological phase, even for millennia on end.

Classification and dating by fabric alone can thus be quite difficult in urban survey, especially when the excavation data available are limited or non-existent – as is the case with most Boeotian cities – or when there are limited possibilities of comparison with single-period assemblages surveyed nearby. In the case of Thespiai, there appears to be a particular additional problem: compared with most of the other *poleis* surveyed in Boeotia, the Archaic to Hellenistic pottery of Thespiai appears to have few remarkable or specific features; one might even call it bland. This seems to be connected, at least in part, with the qualities of the main local plain ware fabrics, which are soft, powdery and apparently low-fired, and thus prone to wear. A combination of the heavy agricultural use of the site in later times, the presence of streams, and the long occupational history of the city, further contribute to the bad preservation of the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic pottery from Thespiai. Even by the low standards that can be expected of (urban) survey pottery, the dating and classification of the finds from Thespiai present unusual challenges.

The way in which the finds were studied in the preparation of this chapter also plays a role here. In most other areas covered by the Boeotia project, the study of finds from urban sites can, or will, proceed in step with that of those from the surrounding countryside, including many short-lived small sites. Since the research on part of this rural area had already been published (in *Testing the Hinterland*) and the material has not been re-studied, while the rest of the city's territory has still to be treated, a fully integrated view was not possible at Thespiai, making it more difficult to recognize types with a specific chronology or functional association. Furthermore, limitations of time and budget did not allow a thorough microscopic and analytical study of fabrics, nor the inclusion of systematic comparisons with potentially relevant assemblages from surveys (including our own) or, where available, excavations elsewhere in the region. While several fabric groups do seem recognisable, even among the soft and powdery worn fragments just described, there is a lack of solid starting points for a systematic macroscopic fabric classification, or even a grouping into local and regional fabrics, such as has been possible with the Roman material (Chapter 12). Again, down to Hellenistic times there seems to be a relatively high degree of variation in fabrics, in relation both to later periods and to those of some of the other Boeotian cities, notably Tanagra and Hyettos. For the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period, at any rate, the number of securely dated items is also too low for reliable grouping. Thus, for now, a more systematic and thorough look at the fabrics of the pre-Roman pottery must remain a desideratum, which we plan and hope to fulfil in the coming years.

Some problems that remain to be studied

The limitations just described leave us with some major unsolved issues, which may be listed in chronological order. First, there is an apparent absence of pre-Classical coarse pottery (see Figs. 11.8c, 11.12c and 11.18c) – a problematic feature of most other urban assemblages in our project as well. In the light of the finds from several rural assemblages in the other surveyed areas (notably Askra and the Valley of the Muses, the surroundings of Haliartos and the Tanagra countryside (see Stissi 2011 for the latter area), it seems likely that at least some items belonging in this category of material have been included among those coarse hand-made finds which are now mostly (but not exclusively) classified as 'prehistoric', if only because there are no clear potential parallels from other periods. Only further close study of these find-categories, which offer very few feature-sherds and many crumbs (jokingly labelled as 'dog food' by the specialists) can offer a solution here; and it cannot be an easy one, because only a portion comes from assemblages with associated and dateable material. For the present, it is certain only that there are several clearly differentiated groups of coarse hand-made pottery in Thespiai and its surroundings, not all of which are securely connected to prehistoric assemblages.

A second, entirely different and perhaps less acute problem relates to the local and regional fine wares of the Archaic to Hellenistic periods: not only those from our survey, but also finds from previous excavations and in museum collections. Even though several fabrics and even decorative styles can be distinguished, both within Boeotia and in the Thespiai collections, few of these can as yet be assigned to a specific place of production. Research on the intra-regional connections of Boeotia in general, as well as those generated by our survey material, potentially including fabric analysis, is severely hampered by this (see e.g. Heymans 2013, with references). This is a defect that cannot be solved through our urban survey assemblages alone, even if these do provide some indications. What is needed here is further research starting from excavated assemblages; this could be relatively straightforward, assuming that each city had its own fine ware production which is locally dominant – as the survey finds till now indeed strongly suggest. But here, 'straightforward' need by no means necessarily be equated with 'simple': the

very pure, often soft orange fine ware fabrics that one finds in much of Boeotia and adjacent regions can look all too similar to the naked eye.

Possible biases in the data

The problems sketched above may not be so apparent when one looks at the data: both for the city overall, and for the period treated in this chapter, about 40 per cent of the finds in the database can be assigned to a functional category or attributed to a more or less specific vase shape (Figs. 11.3–11.5). This is quite a creditable proportion for a Greek survey, so far as can be judged in the absence of full, published survey data-bases of comparable size. Again, the proportion of over 80 per cent of datable items (Fig. 11.1) at first looks strikingly high. In part, this surely reflects the selective approach to the collection and retention of material, described at the beginning of this chapter. This figure of 80 per cent is, however, somewhat misleading, in that about 40 per cent of the dated finds are assigned to *combined* periods of some 500 years or more, with a further 16 per cent belonging to the single phase of the Late Roman, *c.* AD 300–600; so that, again, the amount of usefully datable material is more limited than it may seem; while about half of the dated material is in any case, broadly speaking, Roman.

Parallel problems arise with shapes and functional categories (Figs. 11.3–11.5), which are dominated by a few shapes: transport amphorae (about 17 per cent of the classified material, both overall and for the period treated here), dishes and jugs (about 17 per cent and 13 per cent overall, most of them Roman) and simple bowls (around 9 per cent overall and 13 per cent Early Iron Age to Hellenistic). Here again, the data probably reflect the selectivity of the processing: the figures suggest that cooking pottery (and therefore probably other vessels in so-called cooking wares) and plain household pottery are under-represented; while, as already stated, tiles were not systematically collected. All in all, most of the data derive from a series of very small chronological and functional groups, particularly for the pre-Roman periods (see further below).

When one brings together chronology and function, some more specific biases in the assemblage can be suggested. The combination of a high degree of wear with selectivity in collection has probably also affected the chronological distribution of particular categories of finds: for instance, earlier coarse, cooking and plain wares are likely to have been more vulnerable; while some types of pots, especially cooking and storage vessels but probably also water jugs, started out as very simple shapes with few specific, characteristic features: many lack a base ring and have only very basic, straight rims. On the other hand, attractive-looking and relatively durable decorated Early Iron Age and Archaic decorated sherds, some of them in specific shapes and fabrics (mainly pale buff Corinthian or Corinthianizing) that stand out even when worn, are probably over-represented in the collection – just as are Black Gloss pottery and some recognisable types of household cooking pots with specific rim and handle types (as will emerge from Figs. 11.8c, 11.12c, 11.18c, 11.21c, 11.25c, 11.41c and 11.49c).

Finally, the strong Roman and Late Roman presence in the central area of the site around the *Kastro* on the one hand, and the relatively short duration of intensive use of the more peripheral areas of the city in the (late-)Classical and Hellenistic periods on the other, also appear to have had significant effects on the general distribution patterns. This combination, for example, would explain the somewhat ring-shaped pattern in the concentration of Early Iron Age to Hellenistic materials (see Chapter 3, especially pp. 46–8, with Figs. 3.59–3.62, 3.66 and 3.71–3.74). It is, in all probability, justified to assume that the concentration of Roman to Late Roman finds in the centre of the urban area has obscured much of the core of the earlier city. The relatively higher presence of Early Iron Age and Archaic material in certain areas of the *Kastro* and along its now removed walls, which have been intensively disturbed over the last century, seems to confirm this (see Figs. 3.57–3.59).

Chronological overview

Introduction

Depending on how the sherds with a multiple-period dating are placed, between 4000 and 5000 out of a total of 11,782 dated sherds from Thespiai may be assigned to the period from the Early Iron Age to the end of Hellenistic (Fig. 11.1). This figure is slightly lower than that for the Roman assemblage, which covers a few centuries less, but considerably higher than the post-Roman, let alone the prehistoric material. As will be seen below, the quantities of finds seem to grow through time (Figs. 11.6 and 11.7b): very few Early Iron Age sherds, mostly belonging to the end of the period (Fig. 11.8d); probably a little more Archaic material, when finds with a longer dating range including Archaic are included: see Figs. 11.12, 11.18 and 11.21); then much more Classical – or potentially Classical, since there is much here which is dated 'Archaic–Hellenistic' (Fig. 11.21d) or, more frequently, 'Classical–Hellenistic' (Figs. 11.21d and 11.25). Even were most of this strictly, single-period Classical, the quantity of finds with a single-period Hellenistic dating (Fig. 11.41a–d) seems enough to suggest that the surface

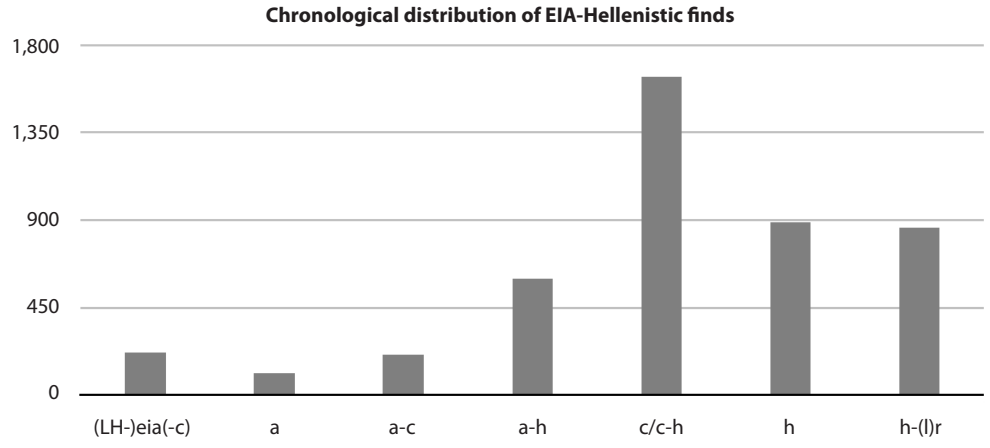


Figure 11.6. *Thespiai: the early Iron Age to Hellenistic (–Roman) find assemblage by date.*

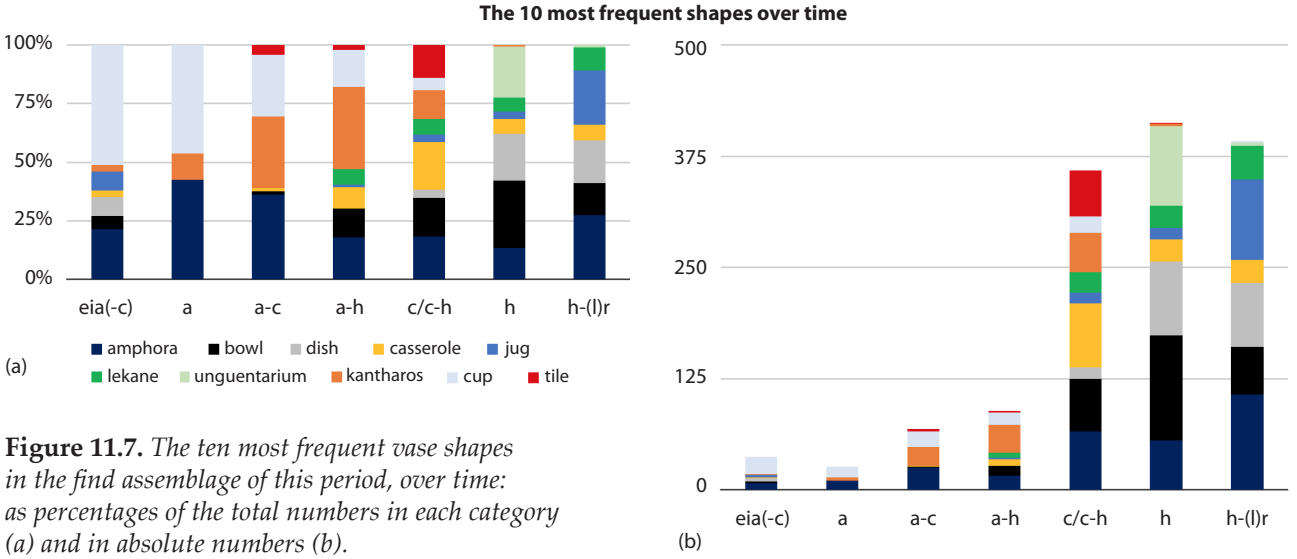


Figure 11.7. *The ten most frequent vase shapes in the find assemblage of this period, over time: as percentages of the total numbers in each category (a) and in absolute numbers (b).*

assemblage actually contains more Hellenistic than Classical material (see further below). This apparent Hellenistic peak – even if relatively low (compare Fig. 11.21d with 11.41d) – seems unusual when compared with other survey results (compare, e.g. Wagstaff and Cherry 1982, 143 (Melos); Mee and Forbes 1997, 68–9; 73–5 (Methana); Cavanagh *et al*. 2002, 175; 233–4 (Laconia); Cavanagh, Mee and James 2005, 7–10 (Laconia); Forsen and Forsen 2005, 265–6, 270 (Asea Valley).

Those projects, however, mostly relate to rural areas and do not always have a clear quantitative foundation. Below, I shall try to offer a more specific explanation of the phenomenon, which seems to find at least partial parallels in Hyettos and Tanagra. Unfortunately, tracing shapes and functional categories through time does not reveal much: while the assemblages appear to be, in functional terms, roughly balanced on the whole (Figs. 11.4, 11.8b, 11.12b, 11.18b, 11.21b, 11.25b, 11.41b and 11.49b), they are clearly affected by selection biases in processing (as already explained) and by typological classification, which probably dates relatively many finds, whether to specific periods or generically, when the reality may be less straightforward. In this context, I have already mentioned the problem of the missing early cooking wares, which clearly affects the visible Early Iron Age and Archaic functional range. More generally, clearly recognisable shapes with a short life span, like the Archaic *aryballos* or Hellenistic mould-made bowl, seem over-represented in their period assemblages, while less distinctive shapes, such as plain bowls, *lekanai*, cooking pots and some types of transport amphorae, often have multi-period dates that mask their presence. Nevertheless, it does appear that pottery related to drinking, and particularly social wine-drinking, is somewhat more prominent in the

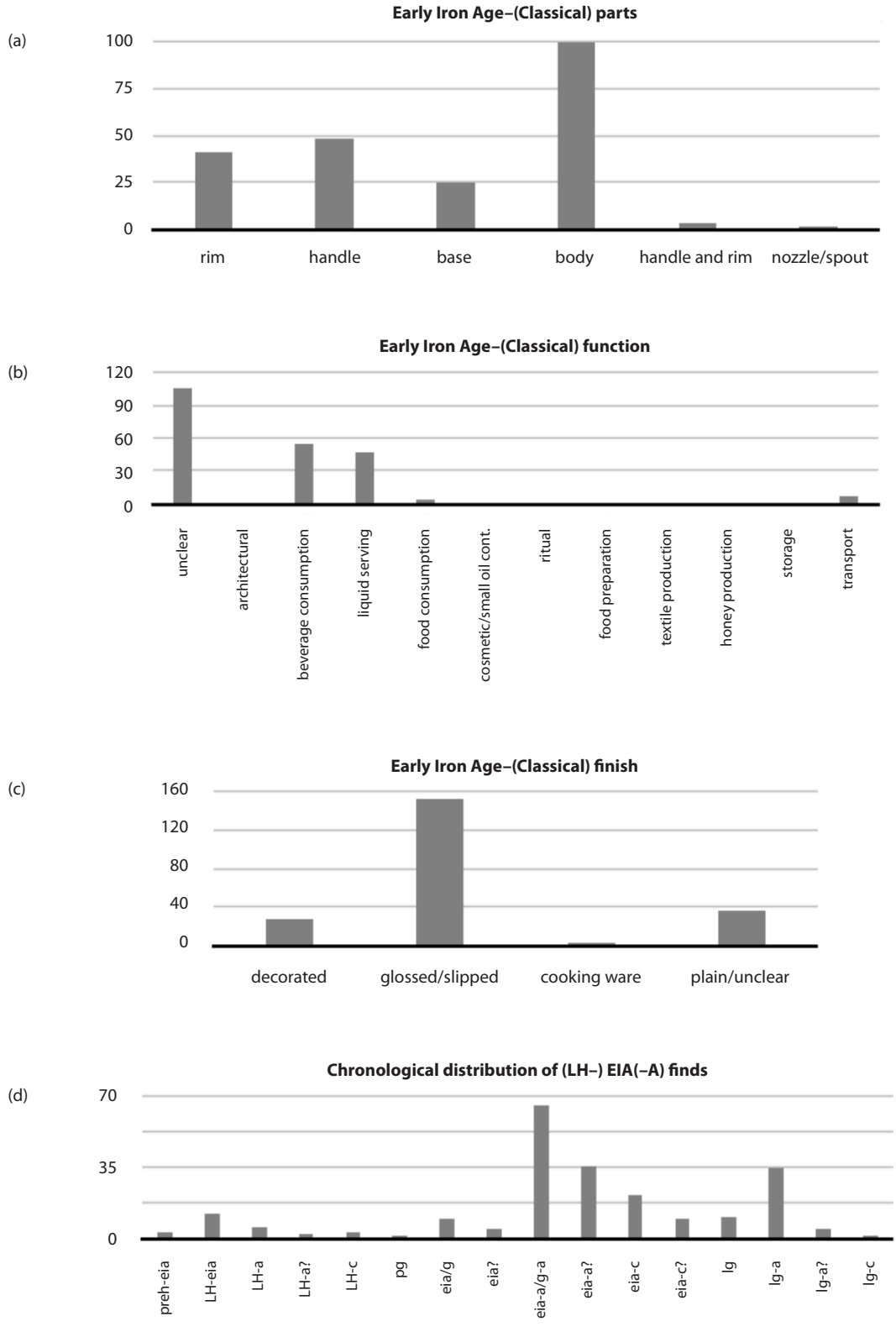


Figure 11.8. *The find assemblage of this period (including finds dated within the wider ranges shown in Chapter 3, Figs. 3.57 and 3.58, and listed here in Fig. 11.8d). The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b), types of finish (c) and chronological categories with numerical counts (d).*

earlier periods (see Figs. 11.9–11.11 for examples), down to Classical, whereas simple small jugs and dishes and transport amphorae grow in popularity from the Classical period onwards, as part of generally less representative and more utilitarian assemblages (as shown in Figs. 11.7, 11.8b, 11.12b, 11.18b, 11.21b, 11.25b, 11.41b and 11.49b).

At every stage in the period considered here, the shortage of loom-weights (19 in total), spindle whorls (none), beehives (15), *pithoi* (6, out of just 36 in the complete assemblage) and other items related to processing and large-scale storage, is remarkable. This is probably in part a result of preservation and collection biases, but it might also reflect a more narrowly domestic character of habitation at Thespiai – Hyettos and Koroneia appear to be different in this sphere. The low counts of miniatures and statuettes (just 2 and 6 respectively), on the other hand, follow the pattern seen elsewhere in the cities and countryside of Boeotia, except for some concentrations clearly related to funerary or sanctuary contexts. Religious practice is clearly difficult to trace through urban survey.

The spatial patterns in the Thespiai finds are in fact even more problematic than the functional ones. One cannot even clearly detect the growth in the size of the city through time, since the Early Iron Age material is already widely spread (see Chapter 3, Figs. 3.57 and 3.58); while the rapid rise in the amount of finds in the Classical period, by definition, fills the city area, eventually showing a clear urban core from the Archaic period onwards, amidst the cemeteries which seem to go back even further (Figs. 3.60 and 3.62). This last feature, however, is never entirely unambiguous: in various periods, the shapes that one would wish to associate with funerary or ritual contexts, such as Corinthian fine wares, black gloss *kantharoi* or Hellenistic *unguentaria*, are found not only in clearly funerary areas, but all over the rest of the surveyed area. While this is not entirely surprising, considering that all these shapes had a domestic use as well, it may also indicate that our surface assemblage is not as undisturbed or stable as we might hope. There are nevertheless some clear concentrations of likely funerary material, which will be indicated in the chronological overview below. Other functional zones, however, can hardly be traced from the ceramic assemblage alone, which is strongly domestic in character all over the probable urban area.

The finds of the Early Iron Age

The number of sherds certainly dated within the Early Iron Age is very small (see Fig. 11.8a–d, with Chapter 3, Figs. 3.57 and 3.58: one definite Protogeometric fragment from the actual city survey, ten Late Geometric items (including those illustrated in Figs. 11.9 and 11.10), between 9 and 13 with a generic Early Iron Age dating, including a few possible Sub-Protogeometric sherds. If one were to include sherds with a date range extending into the Archaic period (few of which would be later than 600), then that would add another 100–140 sherds (Fig. 11.8d). Almost all of these are either drinking cups or vessels of associated use (*kraters*, amphorae, *oinochoai*) and most are decorated or banded, or have the stripey gloss typical of the period (see again Figs. 11.9 and 11.10). The plain and coarse wares of the period, as explained, are difficult to recognize in survey. It is only when the sherds whose date range extends into the Archaic and Classical period are taken into account, that some possibly early transport amphorae and a very few cooking vessels start to appear (as Fig. 11.11). Finally, there are about 20 sherds (glossed fine wares, mostly cups) with a date range that begins in the Mycenaean period, but also covers the Early Iron Age, and in some cases goes beyond (Fig. 11.8d), and 81 with an Early Iron Age to Hellenistic date – the latter a barely diagnostic group, which I have from now on disregarded. Altogether, the entirely hypothetical total of around 300 sherds (about 3 per cent of the dated finds of the survey as a whole) that could conceivably belong to the Early Iron Age would be out of line when compared with other surveys (Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982, 143 (Melos); Wright *et al*. 1990, 616–17, 645 (Nemea Valley); Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani 1991, 245–6 (Keos); Jameson, Runnels and Van Andel 1994, 372–4 (Southern Argolid); Runnels, Pullen and Langdon 1995, 57–73 (Southern Argolid); Wells and Runnels 1996, 177–9 (Berbati); Mee and Forbes 1997, 57–60 (Methana); Cavanagh *et al*. 2002, 153–4 (Laconia); Forsen and Forsen 2003, 199 (Asea Valley): see already MacDonald and Rapp 1972, 143–4 on Messenia), whereas the approximately 20 more certainly dated within the period are more in line with results elsewhere.

The relatively high proportion of decorated fine ware fragments in the Early Iron Age assemblage, often stemming from large vessels like *kraters* or amphorae, may suggest that some at least some of them are remains of funerary or ceremonial objects. The spatial distribution of the sherds, however, does not seem to support such a hypothesis: apart from the rather empty western part of the surveyed area, the Early Iron Age (and EIA to Archaic) material is widely and very thinly spread, with rarely more than one or two sherds per survey transect. Except for a small but dense concentration around Transects 5–8 and 11–12 at the eastern edge of the surveyed areas, and a slighter concentration in Transects 2001–2004

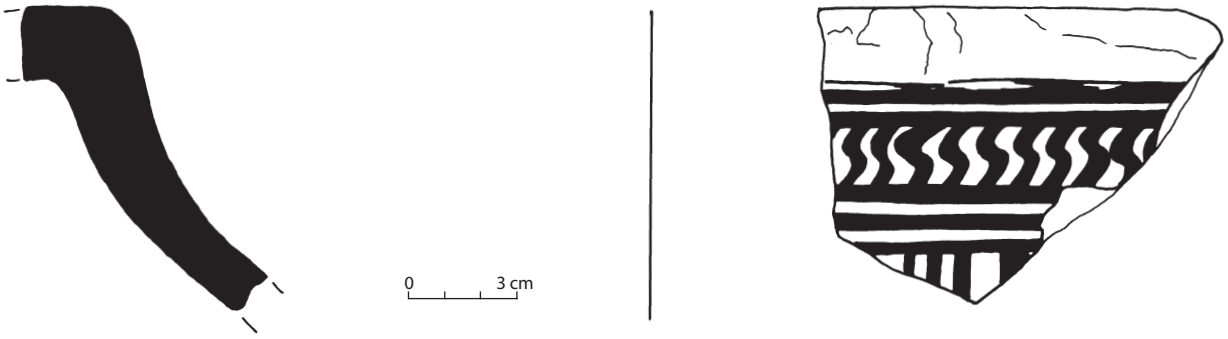


Figure 11.9. *Fragment from the upper wall of a decorated (probably Corinthian) Late Geometric* krater *(85 TH Tr. 84.1).*

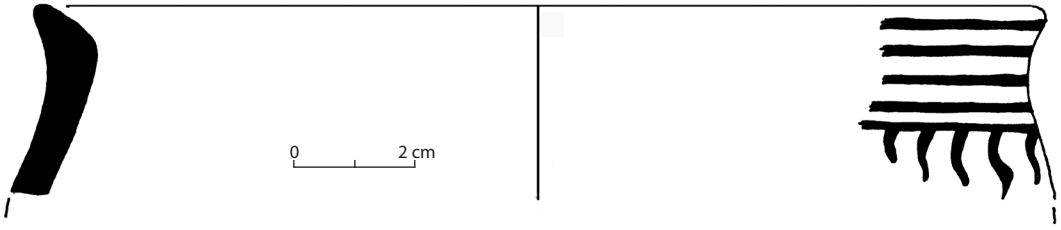


Figure 11.10. *Rim fragment from a decorated Corinthianizing, perhaps Corinthian, Late Geometric cup-*krater *or large cup (85 TH Sa. 73.3).*

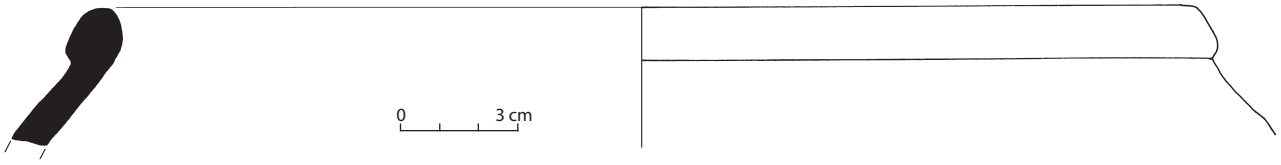


Figure 11.11. *Rim-fragment of a large, plain open shape, Early Iron Age to Classical (86 TH Sa. 93.1).*

of 1986 in the north-eastern extremity (for locations, see Fig. 3.13), there is no clear spatial patterning: finds appear all over the core of the survey area, without either obvious gaps or other concentrations.

While these two concentrations could represent cemetery areas, the thin but general spread of the other finds hardly seems compatible with that; while sanctuary areas of any period remain unidentifiable. Again, the evidence of some excavation finds from houses (Gialanella 1994; Whitley and Boileau 2015, 81) suggests that a considerable proportion of the large decorated Early Iron Age items may, after all, represent domestic refuse. Retrieval may also be part of the problem: coarse and cooking pottery apart, there is the possibiity of even many finer plain ware sherds ending up among the finds assigned to later dates. Such problems, together with the factor of later occupation refuse obscuring items from earlier layers, could partly explain the low density of Early Iron Age material. All in all, the thinness of the Early Iron Age spread, and indeed of the Archaic, could well disguise a more intensive use of the area than we can see. But what kind of use?

A continuous city of such wide extent, besides being hardly compatible with the low finds density, seems unlikely at this early period; a settlement consisting of clusters of houses forming separate hamlets, surrounded by their own little cemetery plots, is perhaps easier to envisage, and would fit the currently prevailing image of proto- and early historical Athens and Corinth (e.g. Snodgrass 1980: 156; Kolb 1984: 67, 77; Crielaard 2009: 361, 365; Bintliff 2012: 221, 240). As I have argued elsewhere however (Stissi 2016), the archaeological evidence for such a form of urbanism

is in fact limited, ambiguous and problematic. In the case of Thespiai, moreover, the thin spread of finds is, as already noted, rather even and does not show the combination of concentrations and rather empty areas that one might expect in a grouping of loose hamlets. Perhaps we should envisage a less intense and less clustered form of habitation, with widely separated houses, on rather large plots, spread over a relatively large area. While it remains possible that cemetery plots were situated between the houses, the survey results can neither prove nor disprove this.

The finds of the Archaic period

Perhaps surprisingly, the numbers of sherds dated within the Archaic period, though higher than those for the preceding phases, are not impressive: 71 definite and 42 possible finds (Figs. 11.12a–c, 11.13–11.17, with the map, Chapter 3, Fig. 3.60). Given that most of these belong within a single century (the sixth), however, whereas the Early Iron Age and the Classical periods each cover roughly two centuries, the quantity of Archaic material is relatively more substantial than may appear at first sight. Next, some of the 200-odd

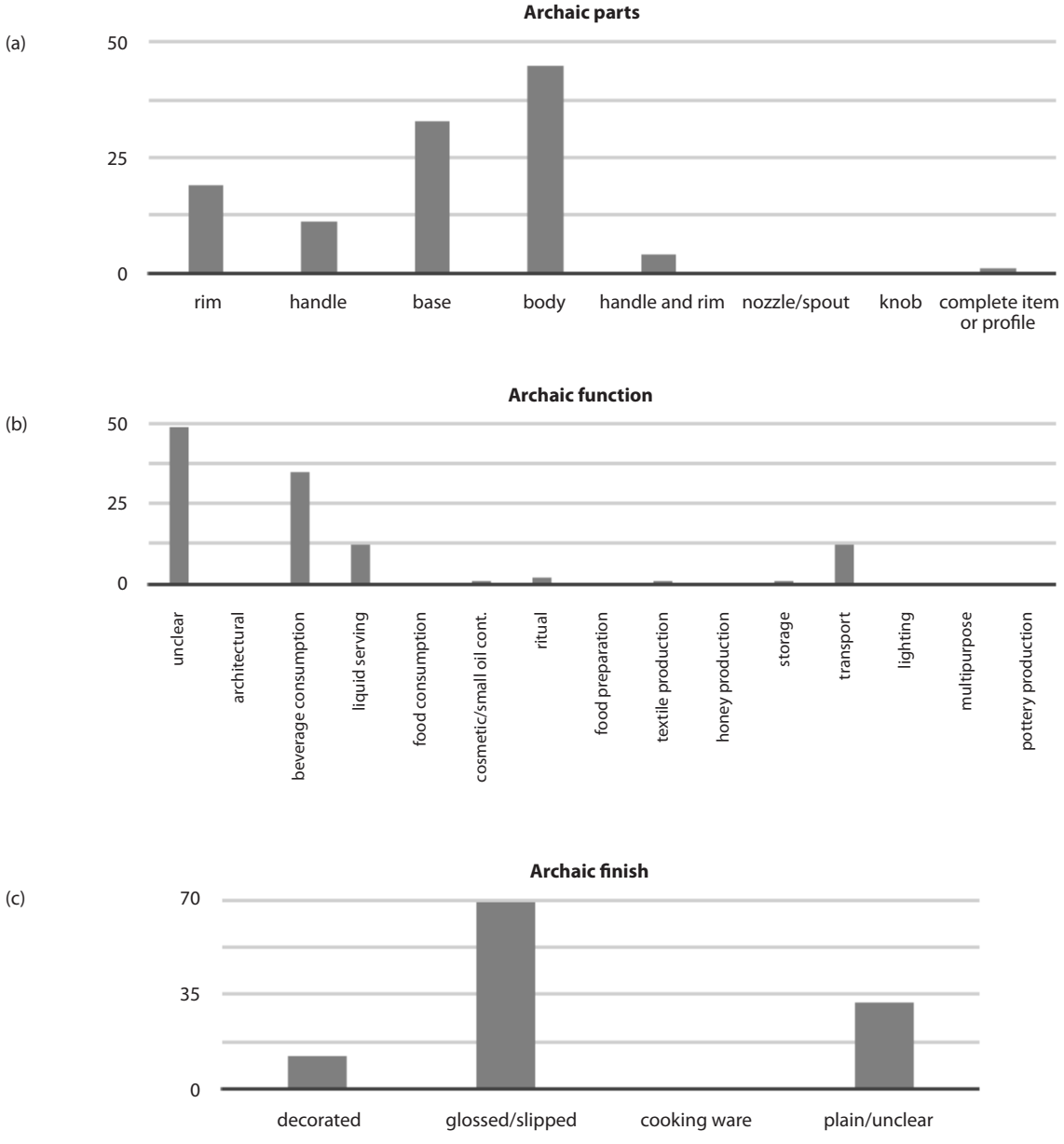


Figure 11.12. *Thespiai: the assemblage of finds dated as Archaic or 'Archaic?'. The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c).*

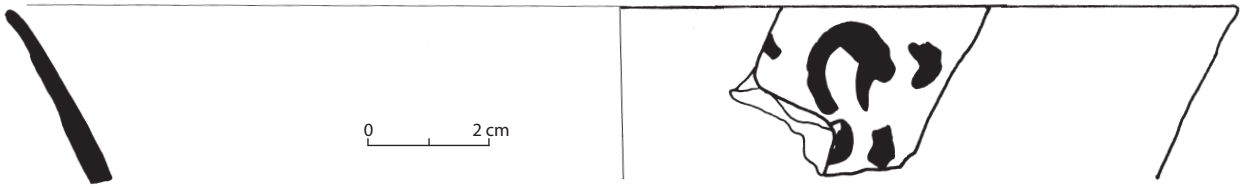


Figure 11.13. *Fragment of tall rim of cup or* kalyx, *decorated with silhouetted birds, Sub-Geometric to Archaic (85 TH Tr.71.5).*

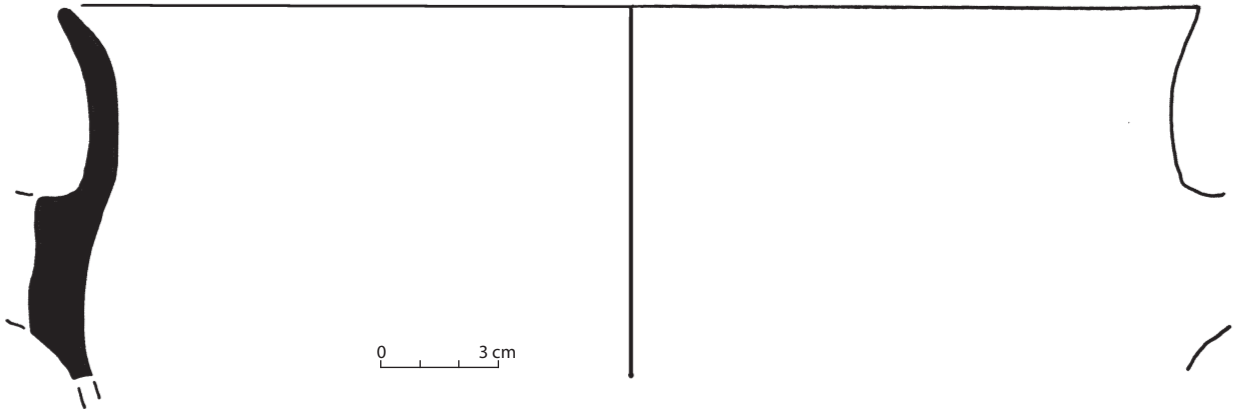


Figure 11.14. *Rim, upper wall and handle stumps of tall black-gloss cup with bands on the lip, probably Sub-Geometric to Archaic, perhaps earlier (85 TH Sa.7.2).*

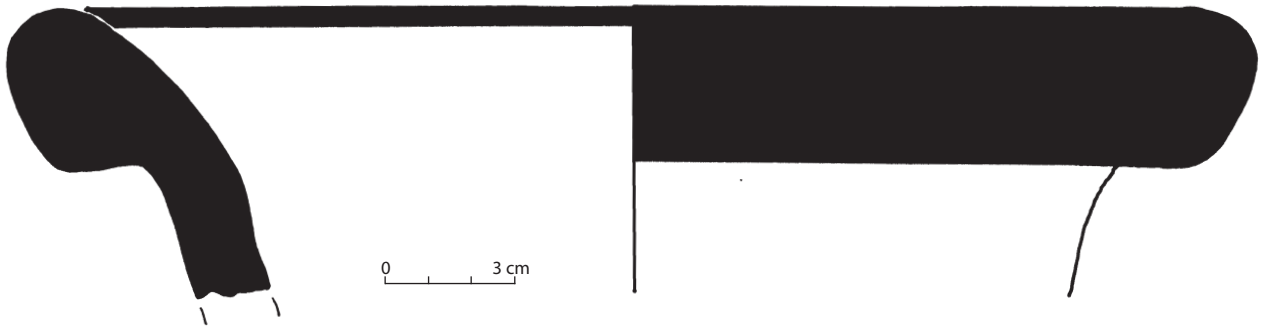


Figure 11.15. *Painted rim fragment of large Archaic transport amphora (86 TH Sa. 215.2).*

sherds with a multi-period date range starting in the Early Iron Age might belong in the Archaic period (Fig. 11.8a–d); and to these may be added a share of the further 200 sherds less closely dated as 'Archaic–Classical', shown together in Fig. 3.59 of Chapter 3, here presented separately (Fig. 11.18a–c and the drawings Figs. 11.19 and 11.20).

Then there are the 600 sherds dated, definitely or provisionally, as 'Archaic–Hellenistic' (Fig. 11.21a–e and the drawings Figs. 11.22–11.24, and shown on Fig. 3.62 of Chapter 3), mostly rather undiagnostic and often small black gloss fragments; of these, only a few are likely to be pre-Classical, but even a small proportion of this large group would be a significant addition to the total quantity of Archaic.

Of the single-period Archaic sherds, more than a third (44) belong to Corinthian or Corinthianizing fine ware vessels. Almost half of these (21) and an even



Figure 11.16. *Handle-plate of Boeotian Black-figure column-*krater, *Late Archaic (85 TH Sa. 8.22).*

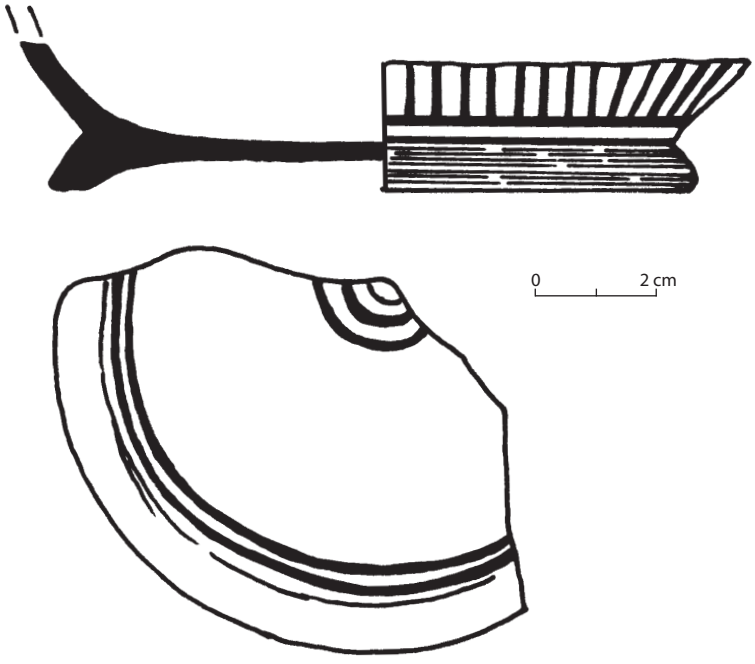


Figure 11.17. *Base fragment of Corinthian Late Archaic* kotyle *or similar drinking vessel, with rays on the lower wall (85 TH Tr.123.14).*

larger proportion of the remaining items (48 out of 69) have a black or red gloss finish, and a further 16 (of which 6 Corinthian or Corinthianizing) are decorated with a painted pattern or figural scene (see Fig. 11.12c, with Figs. 11.14, 11.16 and 11.17). The great majority of the fine ware fragments seem to belong to drinking vessels (cups, *kotylai*, *skyphoi*, *kantharoi*), while serving vessels (*oinochoai* and *kraters*) are rare by comparison with the previous period (compare Fig. 11.7a–b with Fig. 11.12b). Transport amphorae (as Fig. 11.15) now make up at least 10 per cent of the total assemblage. The composition of the Archaic–Classical find group (Fig. 11.18a–c) is very similar to that of the definite Archaic in respect of provenance and shapes, but shows a still higher proportion of black gloss vessels (compare Fig. 11.12b–c with Fig. 11.18b–c). Coarse wares, cooking and household vessels remain rare, or at least have not been detected.

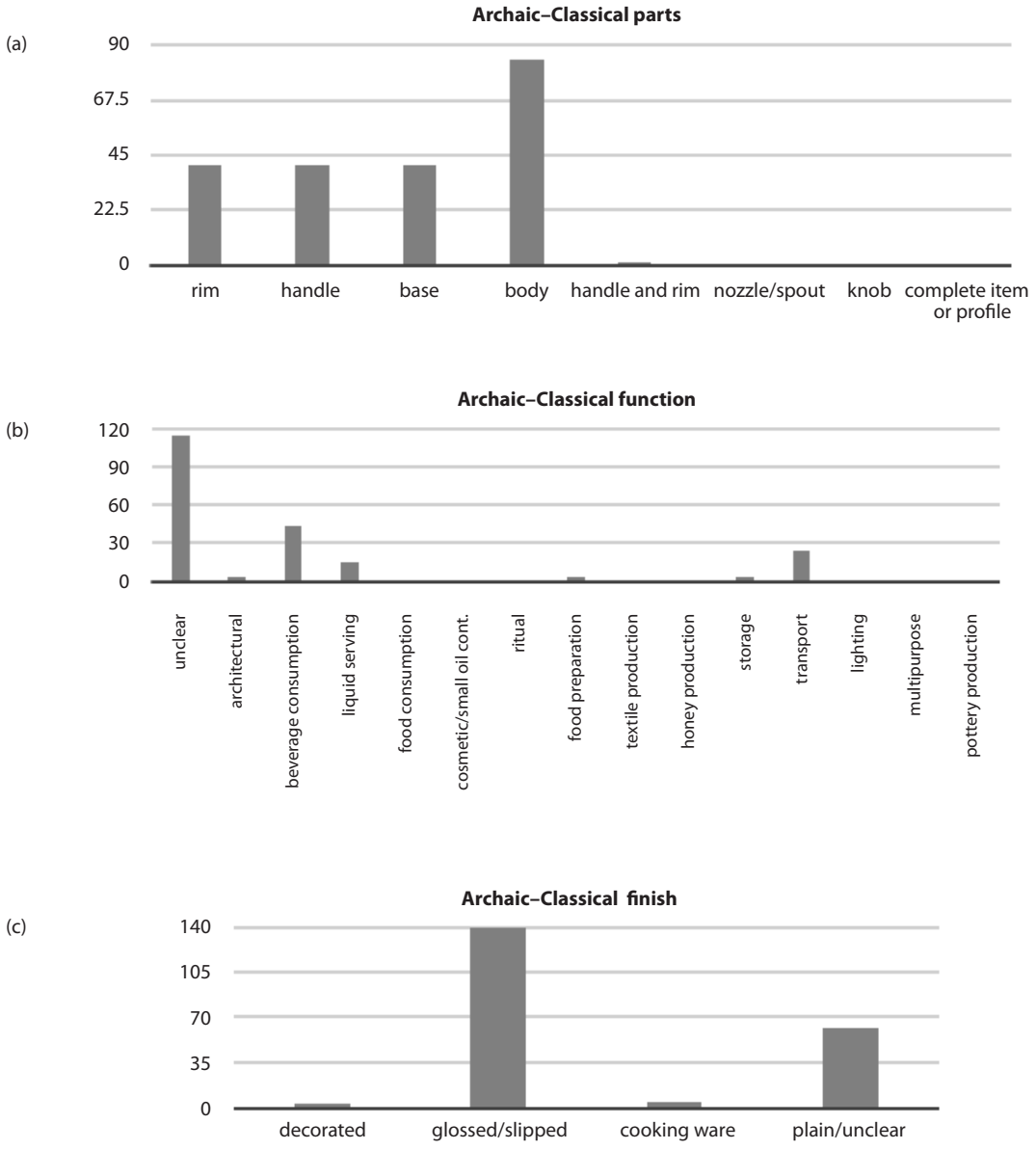


Figure 11.18. *Thespiai: the finds assemblage dated as 'Archaic–Classical'. The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c).*

Even though the amount of closely dateable Archaic and (Early) Classical material is relatively limited, the sixth and fifth centuries, as Fig. 3.59 of Chapter 3 suggests, seem to show a tendency towards concentration of habitation in a more clearly defined and continuous core area, surrounded by a ring of cemeteries or funerary zones, which are now becoming more clearly visible in the west (around Transects 29–32 and 237–45), south (Transects 215–19 and 255–69) – see again p. 28, Fig. 3.13 – and in the north along the modern tarmac road, where decorated and/or imported fine wares are concentrated. Besides these zones, the area at the eastern extremity around Transects 6 and 12 also seems to continue its funerary use from the Early Iron Age, perhaps indicating that the extent of habitation, at least on this side, did not change much. The material from the core of the site is less distinctive, and thus offers less specific information.

The finds of the Classical (–Hellenistic) period

While the quantity of sherds dated precisely to the Classical period (129 certain and 7 possible) exceeds that of the Archaic ones only slightly and remains

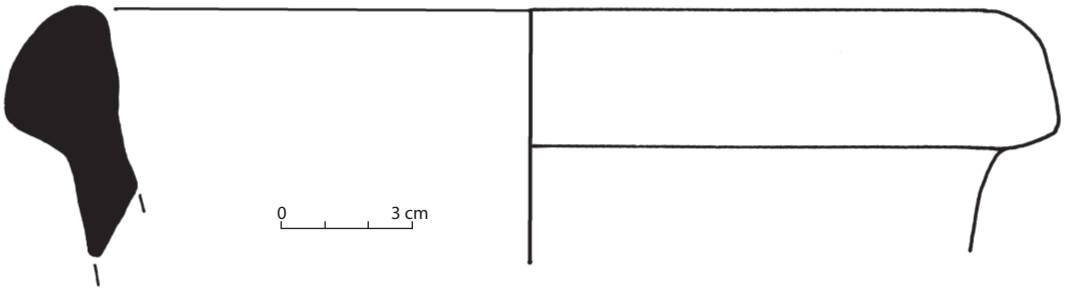


Figure 11.19. *Rim fragment of a thinly glossed Archaic–Classical transport amphora (86 TH Sa.185.5).*

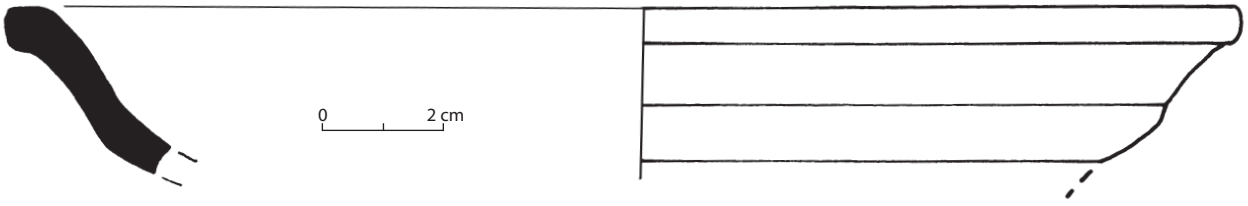


Figure 11.20. *Rim fragment of a black gloss, slightly carinated shallow bowl or cup, probably Archaic–Classical (86 TH Sa.209.2).*

relatively small, the categories 'Classical–Hellenistic' (almost 1500 sherds) and 'Archaic–Hellenistic' (almost 600) are very much more substantial (see again Fig. 11.21d). Altogether, when the 'Archaic–Classical' and several smaller categories mentioned earlier are added, more than 2500 items are involved, or over 20 per cent of the dated sherds (Figs. 11.18a–c, 11.21a–e and 11.25a–c, with the drawings Figs. 11.19, 11.20, 11.22–11.24 and 11.26–11.40; and Figs. 3.59–3.62 of Chapter 3). These make it the next largest cluster after the Roman and Hellenistic periods (the latter being of similar length), though of course it remains unclear how many of the 'Archaic–Hellenistic' or 'Classical–Hellenistic' sherds actually belong in each component period. Taking into account that the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods each cover more or less two centuries (perhaps a little longer for Hellenistic), a simplistic mathematical division giving each an equal proportion would yield about 1300 Classical sherds. On the one hand, the likelihood that the Archaic period would contribute relatively little to the total would lead to a higher number for Classical; on the other, the large amount of securely dated Hellenistic sherds could imply a lower proportion of Classical finds.

While it might seem depressing that perhaps only around 10 per cent of the material really belonging to the Classical period should have a precise dating within that period (examples below Figs. 11.26–11.30, 11.32), the numbers from the clustered periods have now finally become so substantial that they begin to form a workable sample. The Classical period, or at any rate (in view of the problems of chronological specification) the Classical–Hellenistic period – roughly the fifth to second centuries BC in practice – is the first to yield something that seems to approach a full functional assemblage, comprising not only decorated and plainer fine wares mainly used for drinking dining and cosmetics (Figs. 11.27–11.31, 11.33 and 11.38), but also cooking pottery (Figs. 11.36 and 11.37), coarse domestic pots (water jars, jugs, bowls and buckets, Figs. 11.20–11.22, 11.34, 11.35, 11.38 and 11.39), a few storage pots (*pithoi*) and also transport *amphorae* (Fig. 11.19), which are likely to have been reused as domestic storage pots in large numbers (see Fig. 11.21e, in addition to Figs. 11.18c, 11.21c and 11.25c). Since the material of this period comprises a large majority of all the Early Iron Age to Hellenistic finds, this fuller assemblage is of course less surprising.

Differences in chronological precision do nevertheless play some tricks. Of the 136 items with a certain or possible Classical date, 112 are black gloss vessels, and 8 show figured decoration: about 90 per cent of the items thus have a painted finish (for examples, see Figs. 11.26–11.33). This is very much higher figure than

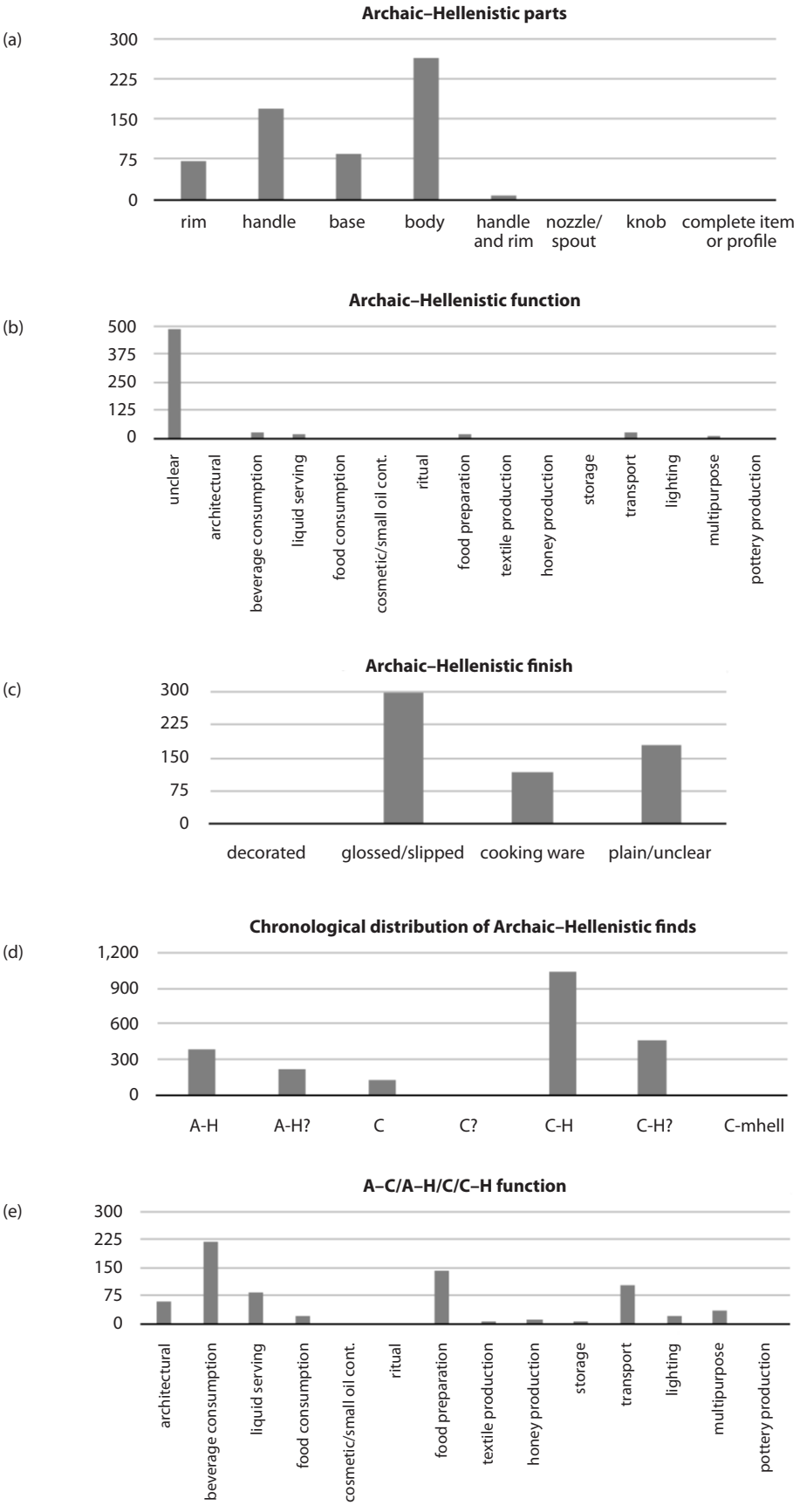


Figure 11.21. *Thespiai: the finds assemblage dated as 'Archaic–Hellenistic'. The breakdowns show, first, the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c); (d) combines the entirety of the Archaic to Classical to Hellenistic finds, as shown in Figs. 11.18, 11.19 and 11.25, with the numbers of items that they comprise; while (e) gives the breakdown of all these assemblages by functional category, excluding the items which cannot be assigned to a category.*

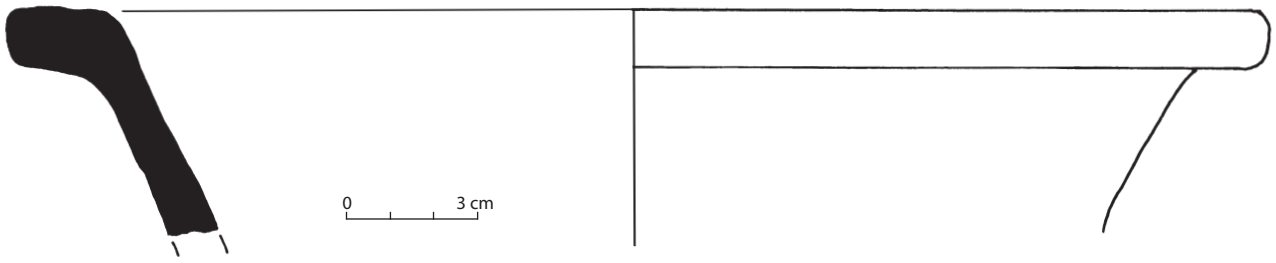


Figure 11.22. *Rim fragment of black gloss vessel of uncertain shape, Archaic–Hellenistic (86 TH Sa.215.3).*

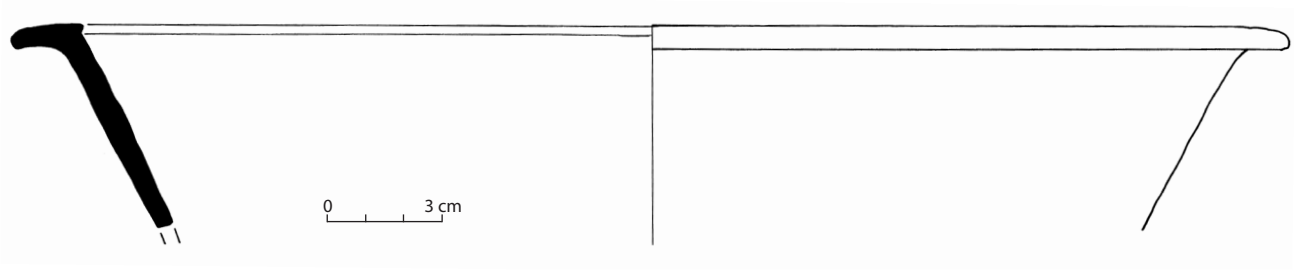


Figure 11.23. *Rim fragment of thin-walled 'cooking ware'* lekane, *Archaic–Hellenistic (85 TH Tr.2131.4).*

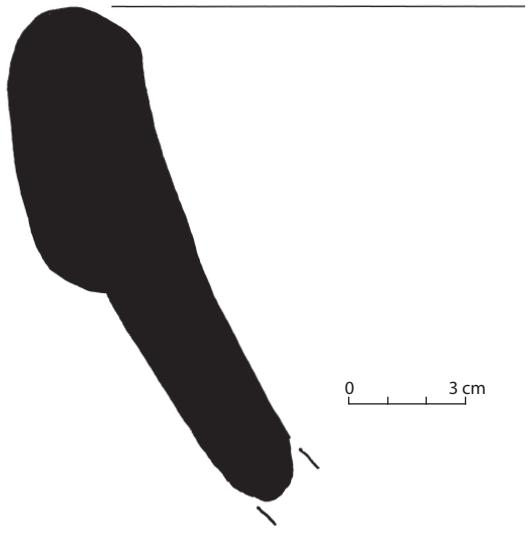


Figure 11.24. *Rim fragment of large plain basin, possibly Archaic–Hellenistic (85 TH Tr.8.2).*

for the items with a broader date range, and seems closely related with the high proportion of drinking vessels dated to the Classical period. These form about half the assemblage, and are mainly *kantharoi* (30 items); there are also around 10 *kraters*, bringing the total to over 80 for drinking and associated vessels: this, from about 100 items which can be classified by function or shape. On the other hand, almost all of the household and cooking pottery (examples, Figs. 11.34–11.39), plus most loom-weights (Fig. 11.40) and lamps (Fig. 11.32), are dated as 'Classical–Hellenistic', while transport amphora and *lekane* fragments are found alike in 'Archaic–Classical', 'Archaic–Hellenistic' and 'Classical–Hellenistic' (see in part Fig. 11.7 a–b, and Figs. 11.19 and 11.22–11.24). Clearly, the more accurate dating that fine table wares allow acts as a filter, placing them in the 'Classical' category, while utilitarian pottery ends up in the wider date ranges (especially the relatively later ones); the chronological divisions may at the same time reflect conventional dating solutions. In any case, taken together, the functional division seems to make more sense as a reflection of (mainly) domestic assemblages, from the fifth century into the Hellenistic period (Figs. 11.21c, 11.21e, 11.25c, 11.41c and 11.49c; compare Rotroff 1999: 68–70 and Stissi 2002: 220–9).

Perhaps because of the high density of finds, there seems to be little spatial differentiation between the chronological groups (see Figs. 3.59–3.62 in Chapter 3). Even though pottery was certainly being produced in Early Iron Age–Hellenistic Thespiai, virtually all the wasters found during the survey seem to be Roman. At Thespiai, unlike Hyettos and Koroneia, no concentration of votive material to indicate the presence of a sanctuary has been found. Although the occasional figurine is present, and some of the very

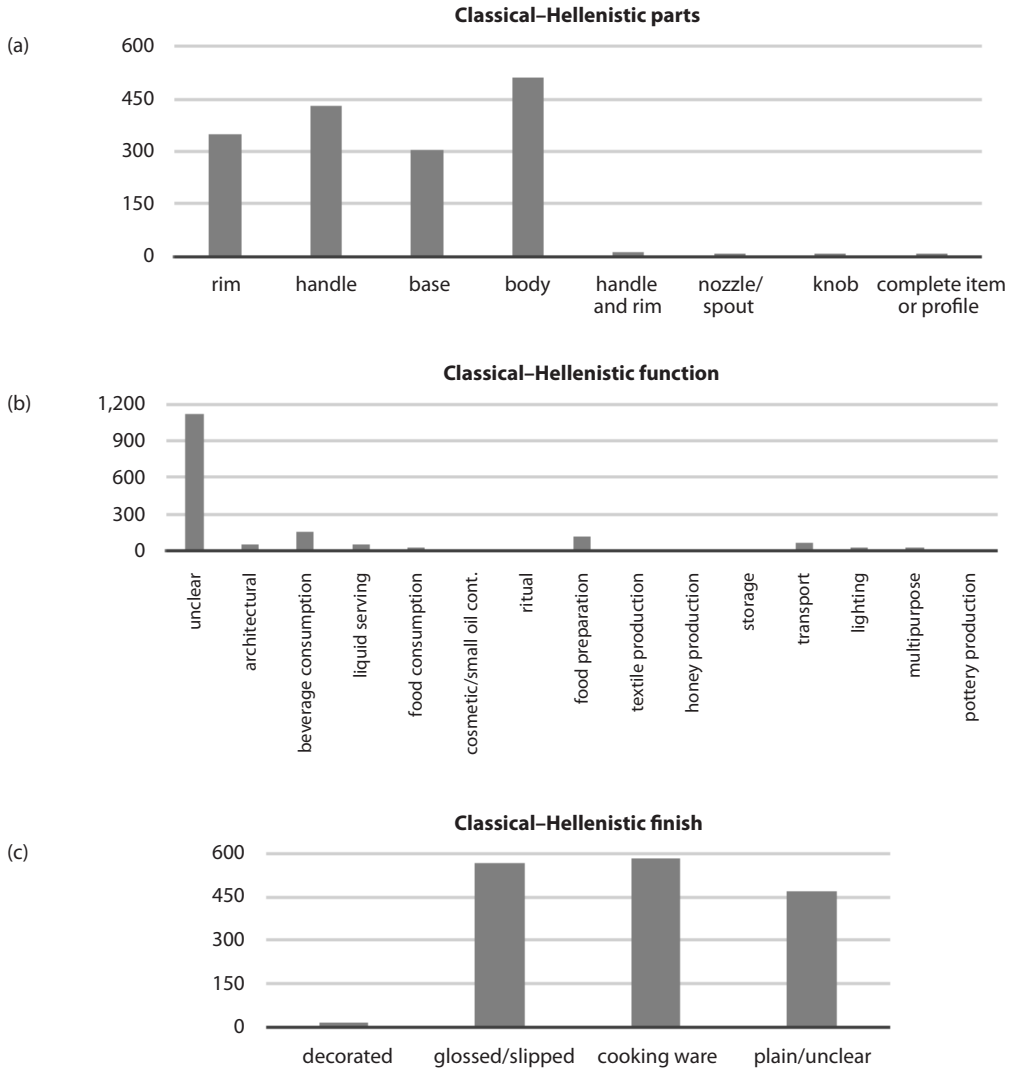


Figure 11.25. *Thespiai: the Classical–Hellenistic finds assemblage. The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c).*

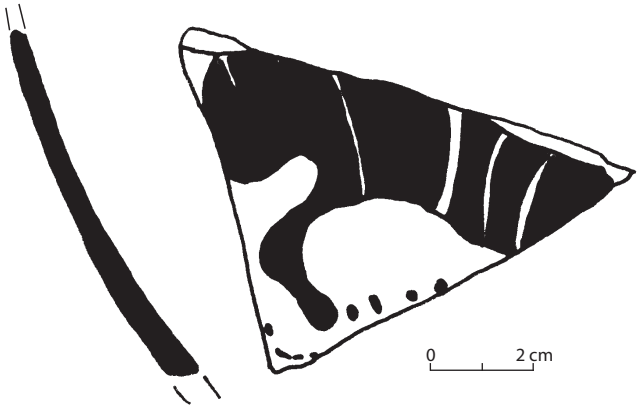


Figure 11.26. *Wall fragment of Boeotian Black-figured vessel of uncertain shape, Classical (85 TH Sa.2018-12).*

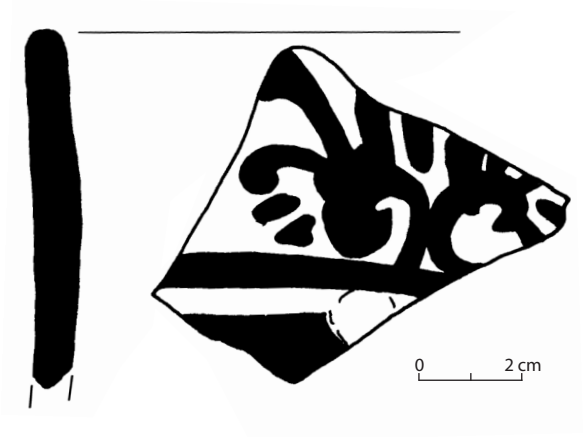


Figure 11.27. *Wall fragment of Boeotian palmette cup, Classical (86 TH Sa.102.7).*

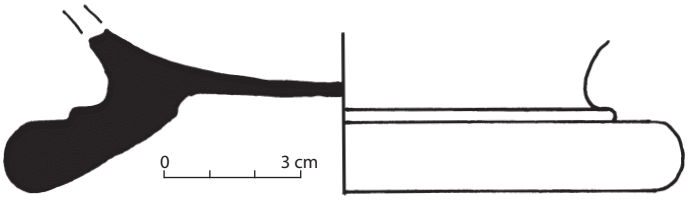


Figure 11.28. *Black gloss low foot of stemmed vessel, (Early) Classical (85 HT Tr.2004.2).*

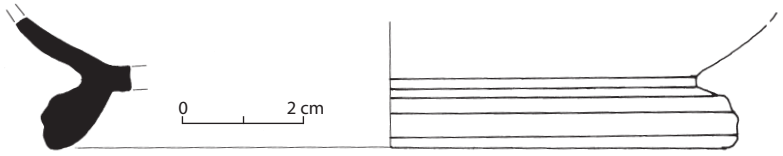


Figure 11.29. *Fragment of elaborate ring base of black gloss cup, Classical (late fifth or early fourth century* BC*) (86 TH Sa.86.1).*

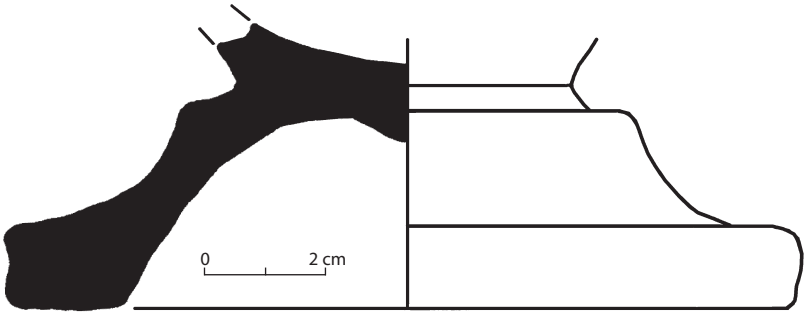


Figure 11.30. *Elaborate black gloss foot of stemmed vessel, Late Classical or slightly later (*c. *350–310* BC*) (85 TH Tr.110.28).*

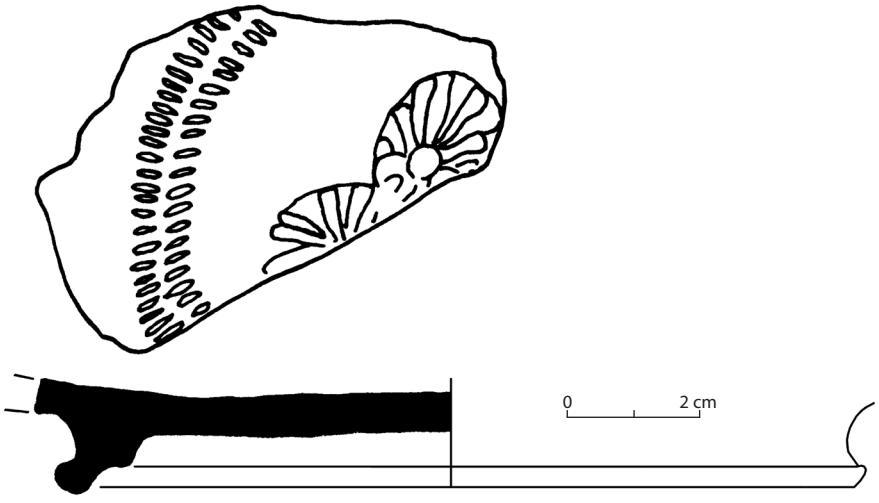


Figure 11.31. *Base fragment of Late Classical or Early Hellenistic black gloss bowl with stamped palmettes inside (86 TH Tr.73.6).*

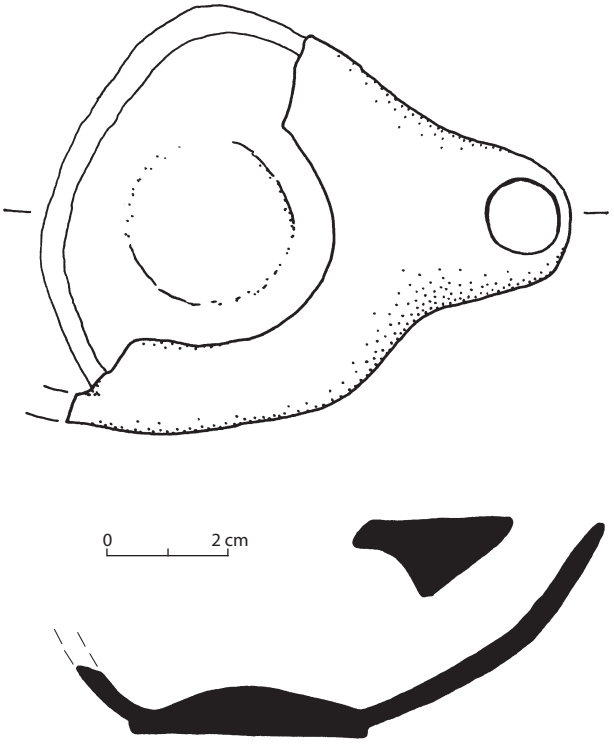


Figure 11.32. *Large piece of possibly Corinthian, Late Classical black gloss lamp (86 TH Sa.14.1a).*

rare decorated pottery from outside the likely cemetery areas may have a ritual origin, there is nothing to connect any of these finds to areas of religious activity. Just as in the preceding centuries, some of the cemetery areas which must have surrounded the urban core of Thespiai seem to be visible, actually in more or less the same areas as before: at the south-western, southern and western edges of the survey area, and along the modern road in the north-east), but the find patterns are not very clear. The problem seems to be that black and red figure pottery is extremely rare, that most of the black gloss pottery which now dominates funerary assemblages is not exclusive to graves, and that even the spread of palmette cups (as Fig. 11.27), which are so typical of Classical Boeotian graves, is not limited to funerary areas.

Another remarkable 'invisibility phenomenon' in the Classical–Hellenistic assemblage is that the

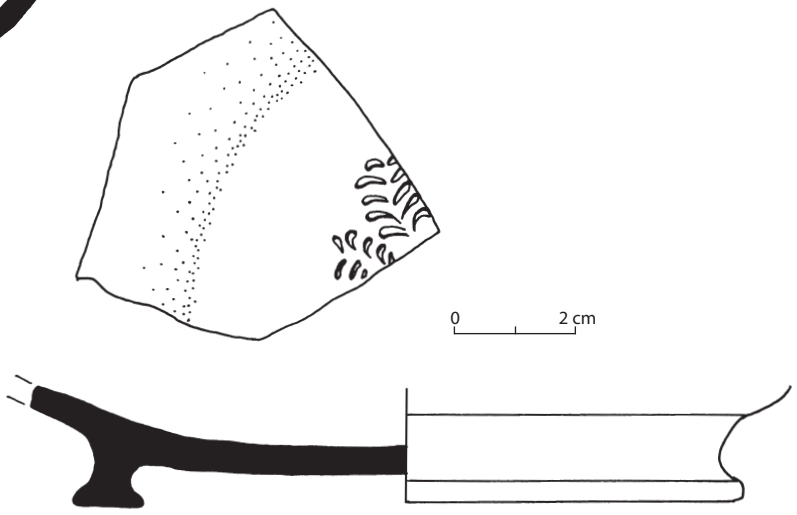


Figure 11.33. *Base fragment of Late Classical (or Early Hellenistic?) Hellenistic black gloss bowl with stamped palmettes inside (86 TH Sa.14.28).*

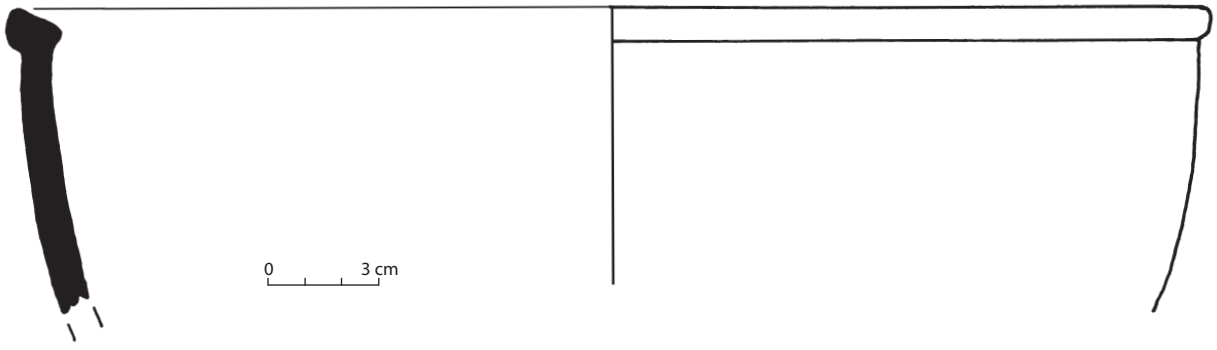


Figure 11.34. *Two joining rim fragments of plain Classical–Hellenistic deep bowl (86 TH Sa.14.7 and .14).*

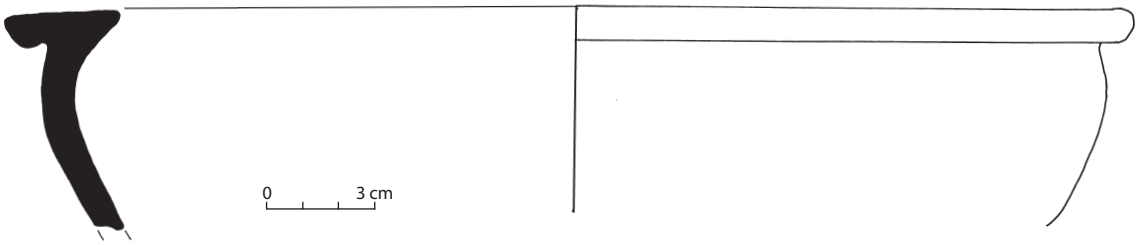


Figure 11.35. *Rim fragment of plain, probably Classical–Hellenistic deep bowl (86 TH Sa. 14.22).*

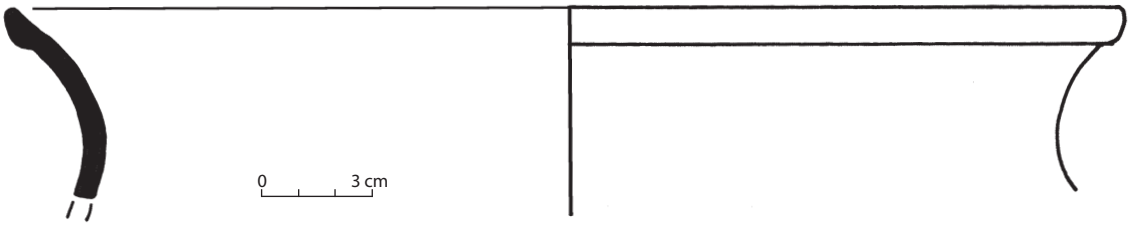


Figure 11.36. *Rim fragment of Classical–Hellenistic* chytra *(small cooking pot) (86 TH Sa. 48.6).*

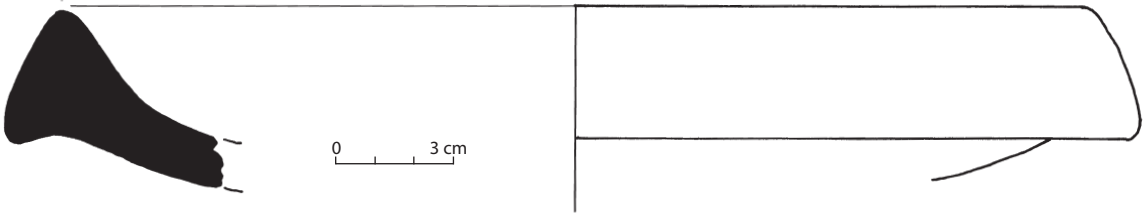


Figure 11.37. *Rim fragment of large, plain, probably Classical–Hellenistic flat bowl, possibly a* mortarium *(86 TH Sa. 14.12).*

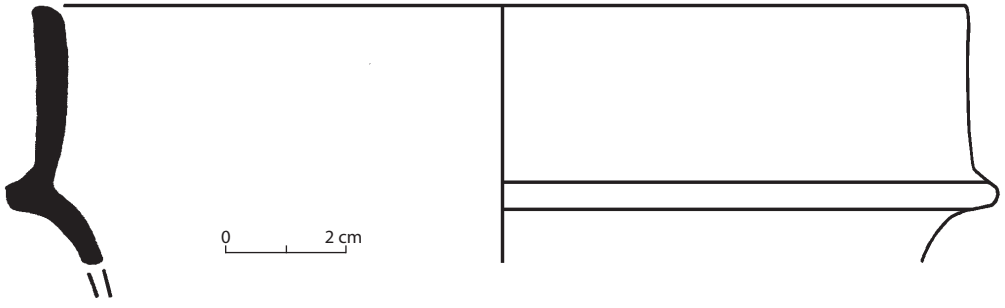


Figure 11.38. *Rim fragment of black gloss* pyxis*, Classical–(Early) Hellenistic (86 TH Tr.184.11).*

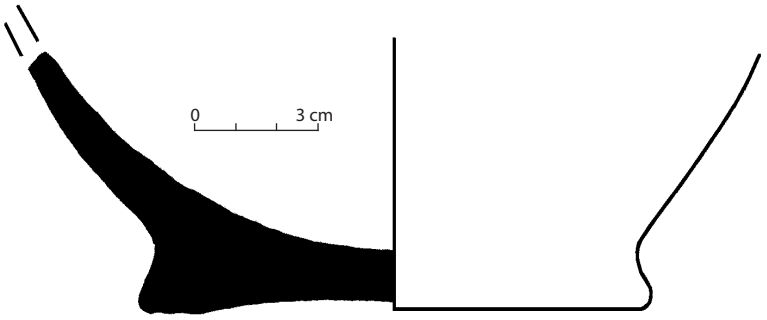


Figure 11.39. *Base fragment of possibly Classical–Hellenistic closed vessel, showing possible traces of black gloss (86 TH Tr.6.4).*

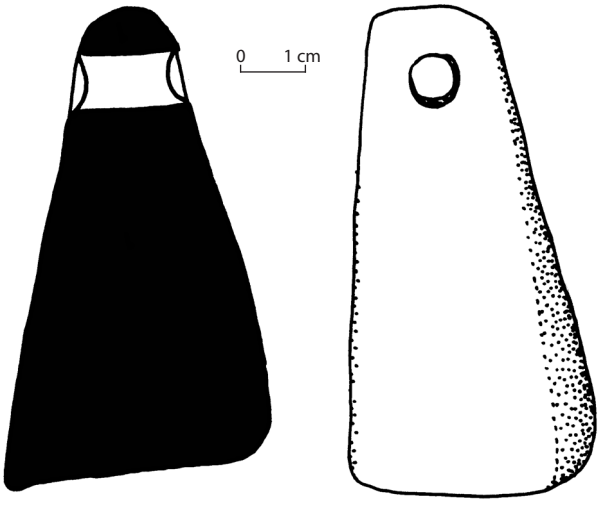


Figure 11.40. *Complete plain pyramidal loom-weight, probably Classical–Hellenistic (85 TH Sa.2024.8).*

dynamic historical events marking the history of Thespiai during the fifth and fourth centuries BC, including destruction, depopulation and rebuilding, do not seem to be reflected in the survey finds. Phases of short-term abandonment, contraction or expansion cannot be traced. This probably merely reflects the generally low chronological resolution offered by the material, and the almost complete lack of very precisely dateable finds. Nevertheless, the finds that do offer relatively good dating seem to leave little space for periods of abandonment, or moments of strong discontinuity, in the Classical and Hellenistic periods (compare Chapter 5, p. 212).

The finds of the Hellenistic period

Remarkably, the quantity of sherds with an exclusively Hellenistic dating is much higher than that of any single earlier period: 890 items, or about 8 per cent of the total collection of dated finds, definite or possible (Fig. 11.41a–d, with the drawings Figs. 11.42–11.49, and Figs. 3.66 and 3.71 of Chapter 3). Furthermore, up to about one-third of these (294 sherds) belong to a more precise category within the Hellenistic period (Fig. 11.41d) – although many of these phases cover a fairly long part of the period. In addition, we have to consider the likelihood that a large proportion of the 'Archaic–Hellenistic' and 'Classical–Hellenistic' finds considered earlier, and a probably smaller fraction of those with an earlier starting date, is likely to contain material that is indeed Hellenistic. At the other chronological end, there are also 859 sherds with a date range covering at least the last part of the Hellenistic period in combination with at least a part of the Roman period (see below, Figs. 11.49a–c and 11.49). Together, all this would create a potential Hellenistic collection of over 4000 sherds – the biggest after the Roman assemblage studied below (Chapter 12). The real figure is surely much lower, but in all likelihood the Thespiai assemblage still contains more Hellenistic than Classical sherds.

Part of this strong presence can surely be explained by stratigraphy and taphonomy: on the one hand, these items were deposited above the Archaic and Classical strata; on the other, there seem to be sectors of the urban area that were no longer settled after the Hellenistic period; while the areas with the strongest Roman presence, especially the core of the Roman city at the *Kastro* and directly east of it, show relatively fewer pre-Roman finds of any period, the Hellenistic material included (see Figs. 3.57–3.62, 3.66, 3.71 and 3.73 from Chapter 3, with Figs. 11.50–11.52).

Nevertheless, these do not seem to be the only relevant factors. A closer look at the Hellenistic assemblage shows that its composition may be more strongly affected by classification biases than those of earlier periods. 93 items, about one-third of the total for the narrower period to which they belong (Middle – Late Hellenistic, separately and as a combination) are *unguentaria* (as Fig. 11.47) , and all 28 mould-made bowls (Fig. 11.48) are also placed in the same timespan. Together, these shapes account for almost the entire bridge category of 'Middle – Late Hellenistic'

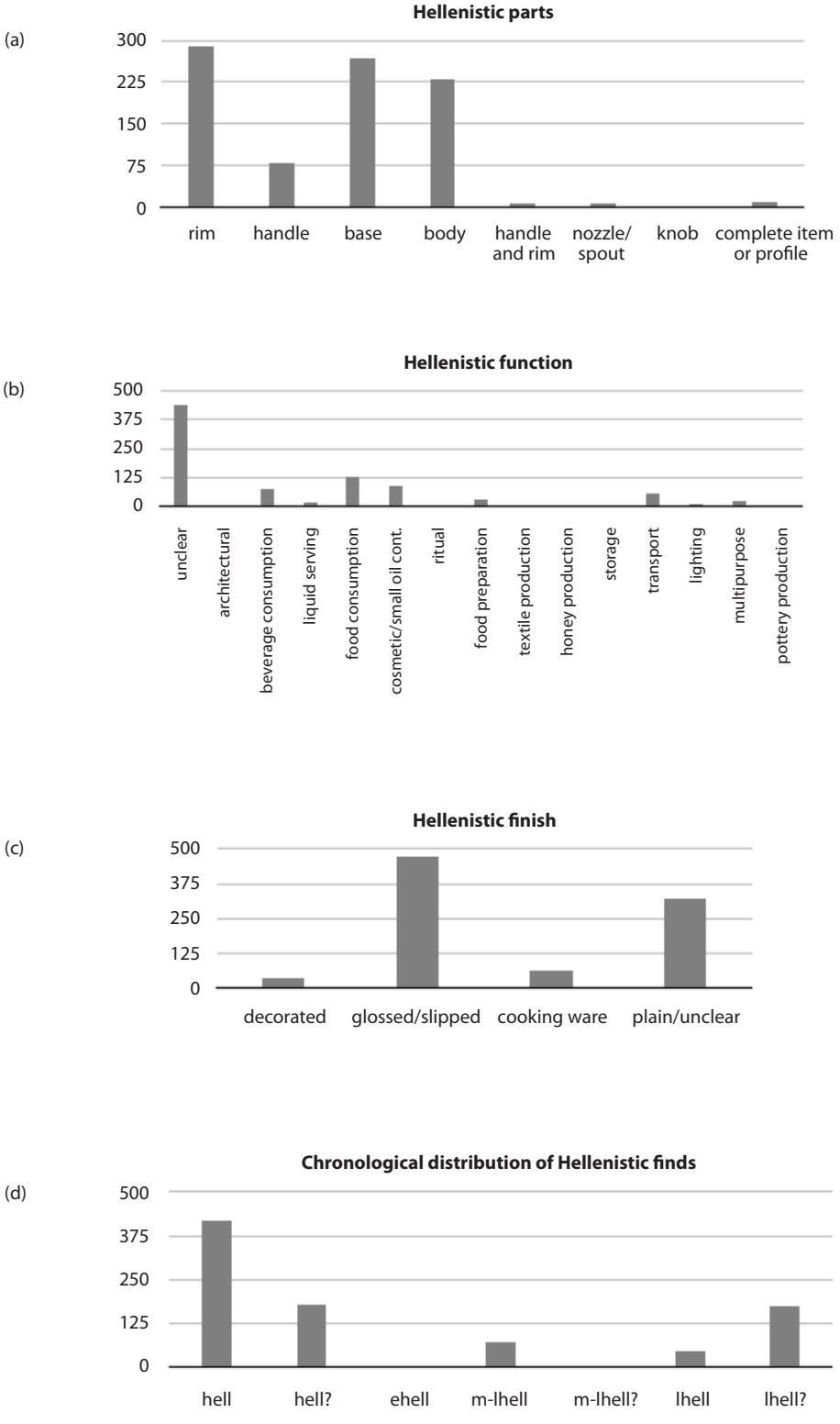


Figure 11.41. *Thespiai: the Hellenistic finds assemblage, including all finds dated to the period as a whole and in the sub-categories listed in (d). The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c), while (d) shows the chronological sub-categories that make up this assemblage, with the numbers of items that they comprise.*

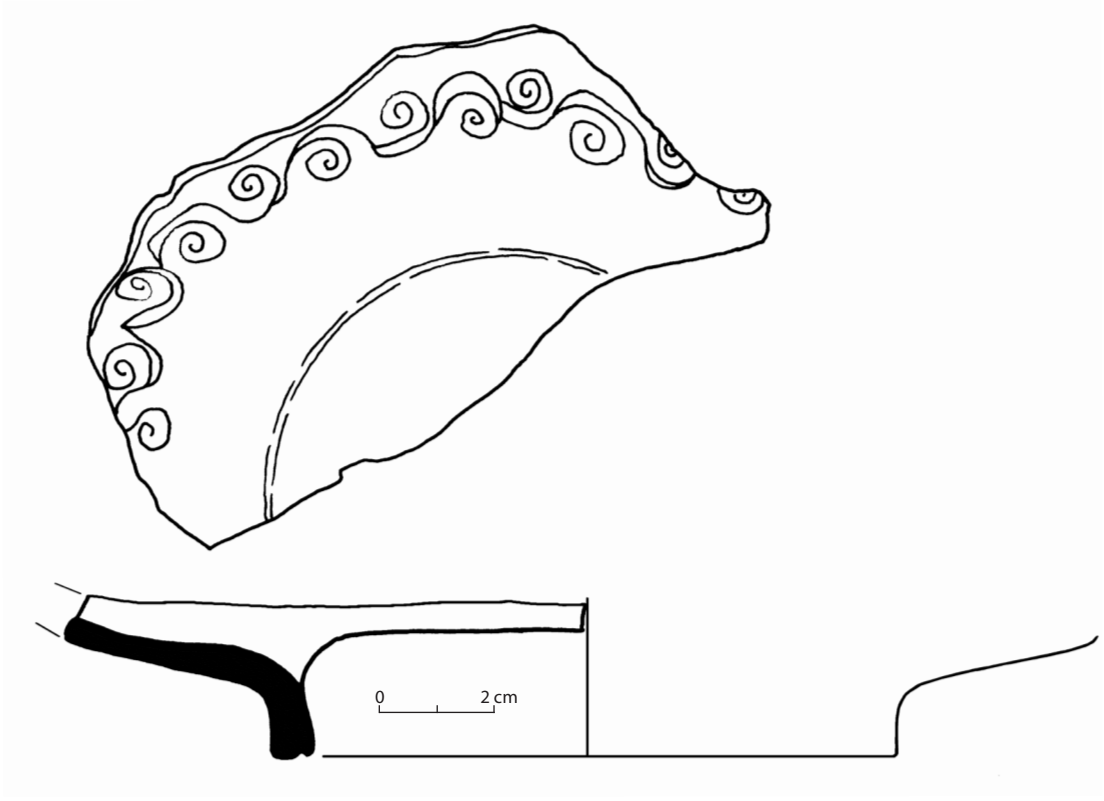


Figure 11.42. *Base fragment of Hellenistic black gloss dish or plate with incised 'West Slope' decoration (probably third century* BC*) (86TH Sa 13-19).*

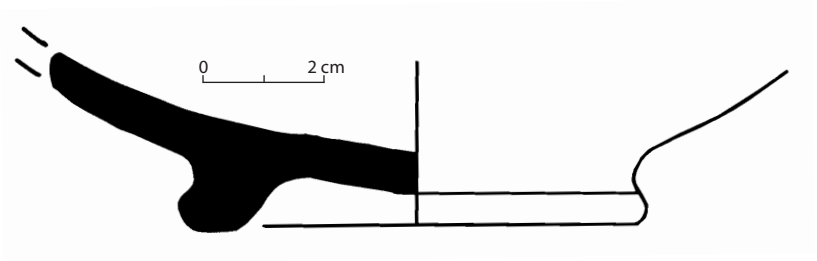


Figure 11.43. *Base of Hellenistic black gloss bowl, painted by dipping (85 TH Tr.2040.2).*

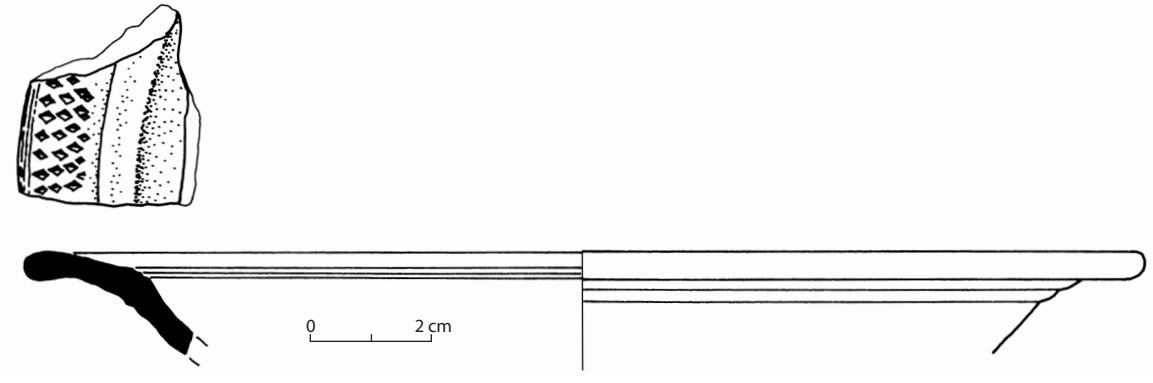


Figure 11.44. *Rim fragment of Hellenistic black gloss dish, with rouletted and incised 'West Slope' decoration (85 TH Tr.2064.5).*

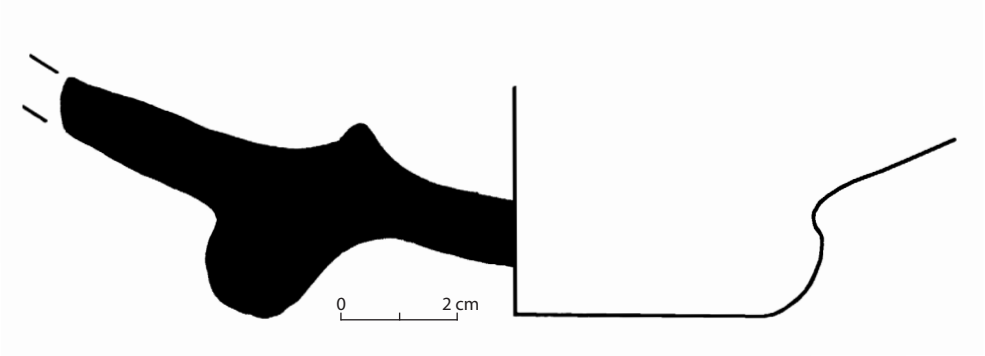


Figure 11.45. *Base of Hellenistic black gloss fish plate, painted by dipping (85 TH Tr.2131.26).*

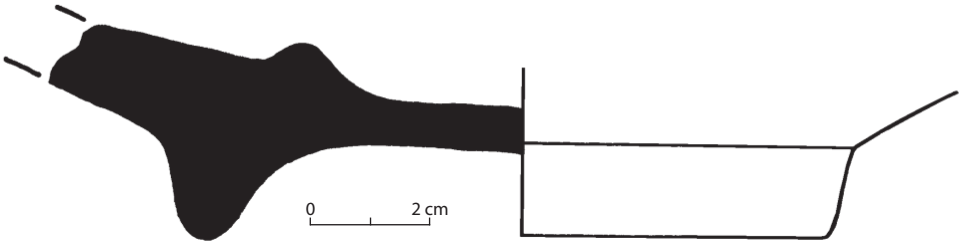
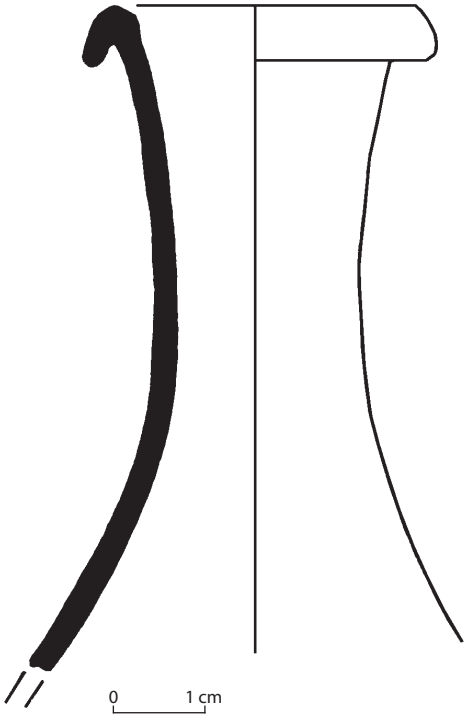


Figure 11.46. *Base of (probably) Late Hellenistic black gloss fish plate with plain exterior (85 TH Tr.18.6).*



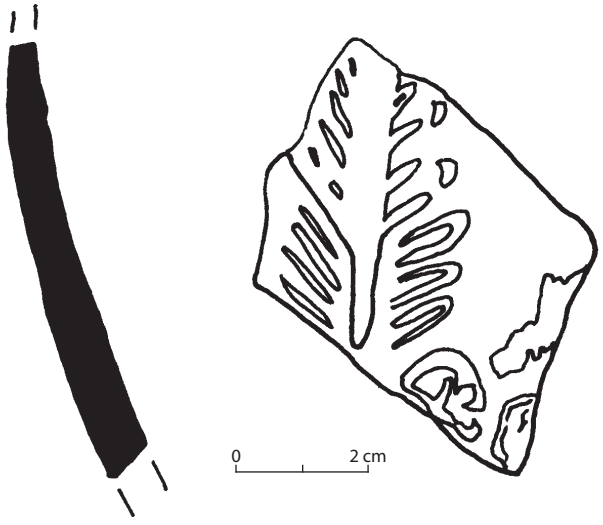


Figure 11.48. *(above) Small wall fragment of (Mid-) Late Hellenistic red gloss mould-made bowl, showing floral relief decoration (86TH Sa 201-14).*

Figure 11.47. *(left) Neck of rather large Hellenistic plain* unguentarium *or other small closed vessel (85TH Tr 81-14).*

(70 of 74 items), besides forming about a quarter of the Late Hellenistic items with a recognisable shape. Further, the proportions of jugs, dishes (Figs. 11.42 and 11.44) and fish plates (Figs. 11.45 and 11.46) with a date range falling within Hellenistic are stunning, with respectively 122 out of 125, 168 out of 171 and 17 out of 17 pre-Roman specimens at least potentially assigned to Hellenistic; within that, there is a preponderance of later Hellenistic and Hellenistic–Roman items. Similarly, a few clearly recognisable types of transport amphorae (mainly Knidian and Koan), with a specific chronological focus in the last centuries BC and the early Roman period, appear to have strongly raised the proportion of these vessels in the Hellenistic assemblage. Altogether, the six 'type fossils' just listed account for some 55 per cent of the definite Hellenistic finds which could be assigned to a specific shape (285 out of 514; see again Fig. 11.7). Such recognisable and easily dateable types will naturally be over-represented in the collected and retained finds. There are of course comparable type fossils in earlier periods too – one could think of Archaic Corinthian *aryballoi*, and Classical–Hellenistic *kantharoi* and palmette cups – but they seem relatively less prominent.

When taken together with the accompanying vessels, however, this somewhat odd combination of Hellenistic 'favourite pots' (to which simple bowls and some types of lamp and loom-weight could also be added) still forms a more or less convincing functional assemblage (Fig. 11.41b), though evidently a less balanced and complete one than those of the Classical and Classical–Hellenistic periods. The imbalance, mainly in respect of fine pottery (Fig. 11.41c), may even be strengthened by the relatively high proportion, already mentioned, of black gloss table wares within the prolific chronological categories of 'Archaic–Hellenistic' and 'Classical–Hellenistic'. In other words, we are probably missing a larger proportion of the coarse and plain wares of the strictly Hellenistic assemblage than for those directly preceding, wider phases. Besides this, I wonder to what extent the less clearly dateable sherds of rather generic shapes, such as simple bowls and dishes, have been 'funneled' by our classification biases into the Hellenistic (and the Roman) periods.

It does seem clear, however, that the range of pot shapes and their sub-types starts to decrease from the Classical period onwards, and that throughout the Hellenistic period, pottery generally grows simpler (see once again Fig. 11.7). Thus, by the second century BC, the very wide range of Archaic and Classical drinking vessel types is reduced to little more than roughly hemispherical bowls, while serving vessels are concentrated into basic *lekanai* and jugs, instead of the former array of *kraters*, table ware *hydriai* and amphorae and different kinds of *oinochoai*. In domestic contexts, pottery with painted decoration all but disappears (see also Hayes 1991: 187–90; Rotroff 1999: 68–70). The decorated *lekythoi* are at first replaced by simpler and smaller versions, and then by the even more basic *unguentaria*. The only domestic functional category which enjoys growth is food consumption, in the form of plates and dishes, whose numbers surge. Many of these developments culminate in the Roman period, when the range of shapes and types was to be reduced yet further, but the general trend towards simplification clearly already starts in the beginning of the Hellenistic period – if not somewhat earlier, should the slow demise of figure-decorated pottery be treated as part of the same process. The dominant trend seems to be that pottery becomes more and more utilitarian, and less and less suitable for representative uses – a role probably taken over by metal vessels, and in part also (mainly in funerary and sanctuary contexts) by terracotta figurines and stone sculpture (on this phenomenon see Hayes 1991: 183–4; Rotroff 1999: 68–70; Stissi 2002: 222, 247–8, 255–8).

It could be further speculated that some reduction in the wealth and/or the spending power of consumers might have played a role. Against such a hypothesis, however, is the fact that the simplification of household pottery assemblages goes hand in hand with an apparently steadily increasing proportion of transport amphorae. Not only the numbers of sherds, but the quantity of imports and the distances that they cover seem to increase. While both the easy recognisability of certain new shapes and fabrics appearing in the Hellenistic period is likely to contribute to our survey results, the scale of production and distribution of amphorae also seems to grow during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, leading to a higher consumption and discard rate, and perhaps less intensive reuse. It is difficult, however, especially in a survey assemblage, to distinguish the possible effects of the growth of an 'international' commercial economy from those of changing strategies in transport, storage and discard – or indeed from even more general use and consumption patterns involving amphora contents,. An alternative explanation would simply be in terms of more frequent food importation in this period, in amphorae, whether by a small élite or to feed the poor. Comparison between assemblages, including those found in excavations, may help to disentangle some relevant issues, but this procedure is only in its infancy. In any case, the low proportion of contemporary fine table-wares does not suggest that this was a prosperous time for those outside the élite, nor for the city in general. The developments just sketched are of course not exclusive to Thespiai: indeed, very similar trends can

be seen in other Greek survey assemblages (compare e.g. Wright *et al*. 1990: 616–17 (for the Nemea Valley); Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani 1991: 245–6 (Keos); Penttinen 1996 (Berbati); Mee and Forbes 1997, 62–3; 68–9; 73–5 (Methana); Cavanagh *et al*. 2002, 153–4; 175; 233–4 (Laconia); Cavanagh Mee and James 2005, 7–10 (Laconia again); Forsen and Forsen 2005, 249, 265–71 (Asea Valley)).

Apparently, the chequered history of their *polis* did not prevent the Thespians from following the example reflected in wider ceramic consumption patterns, seen for example at Athens and Corinth. The suggestion of continuous growth in the networks of exchange for food and wine, reflected in the amphora material from the later Classical and on into the Roman period, seems to go along with a stronger Aegean (and less Boeotian or Peloponnesian) focus of the exchange networks, as far as the pottery can indicate.

How closely the developments in Thespiai compare with those in the other surveyed Boeotian cities is still difficult to gauge, with the study of most assemblages still under way. Nevertheless, it already seems clear that not only the general prominence of Hellenistic finds in the Thespian survey assemblage, but also the overall trends in frequency of certain shapes and types, may be more pronounced than in other Boeotian cities – some of which, like Haliartos or Koroneia, were of course much more dramatically affected by the Roman expansion in the second and first centuries BC. On the other hand, the city of Tanagra and several rural survey areas do also show growth in the quantity of material through the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The spatial distribution of the Hellenistic pottery, again (Figs. 3.66, 3.71 and 3.73 of Chapter 3), cannot be very informative, first of all because it is unclear to what extent the massive amounts of Classical–Hellenistic (and Archaic–Hellenistic) material, which fill the whole surveyed area (Figs. 3.61 and 3.62), actually represent Hellenistic finds. But in any case, the clearly Hellenistic material, mainly belonging to the third and second centuries BC, is also spread widely, suggesting that Thespiai remained active on quite a large scale throughout this period. This may be confirmed by the spread of *unguentaria* which, though clearly present in habitation areas as well, show some clear concentrations in the eastern and southern funerary areas which have been in use since the Archaic period, and seem also to be present in some numbers in the western and other peripheries (Fig. 3.67). It is only the late Hellenistic period (Fig. 3.66) that apparently shows a spatial contraction and concentration in the spread of finds, but this seems in part related to the relatively low number of items involved (which of course might be an indication of decline in itself). It should be noted, too, that the problematic categories of 'Hellenistic–Roman' and 'Hellenistic–Late Roman', about which more shortly, have a rather wider spread (Figs 3.73 and 3.74). While some contraction of the city from the first century BC onwards is more than likely (see Chapter 3, pp. 110–14, for a slightly different view on the chronology of this development), as is also indicated by the Roman finds, the process may have been less straightforward than it appears at first sight. It cannot be excluded that the picture of urban decline sketched by the historical sources (see Müller 2013) is at least partly exaggerated. An alternative would be that we are perhaps looking at the wrong things, and should envisage a process starting with abandonment or lower density of use of certain areas within the city, before contraction of the city as a whole.

Looking beyond the Hellenistic period

It should, finally, be stressed that the chronology of the first centuries BC and AD material, as found in the Boeotian surveys, remains partly obscure, and that there are also large groups of finds which can only be dated within a period spanning from the second or first centuries BC into the Roman or even Late Roman periods, so up to 800 years later (Fig. 11.49a–d, with Figs. 11.51 and 11.52 and Figs. 3.66, 3.73 and 3.74 of Chapter 3). This means that, in Greek pottery assemblages like that at Thespiai, the transition to the Roman period must remain problematic, as material produced in the Hellenistic tradition of pottery making, using pre-Roman shapes and fabrics, probably continued to be used into the Imperial period, with Roman types and shapes only slowly taking over; while, in the other direction, some categories of finds associated with the Roman expansion (but often produced in the Aegean area) may possibly start to appear in the assemblages decades before the actual Roman take-over. Hence the prevalence of chronological categories like 'Hellenistic–Roman' or 'Late Hellenistic–Roman' which (so the general statistics suggest) would probably comprise much material produced in the Roman imperial period, with a smaller number of earlier items. In survey assemblages, it is simply impossible even to guess at the real proportions in such groups of finds. Similarly some, or even much, of the later Hellenistic pottery may be hidden among the sherds which are generically dated to the Classical–Hellenistic or Hellenistic periods, but which cannot be recognized as belonging to a separate phase.

One should perhaps also take into account the possibility that some of the less precise chronological categories represent the relatively basic, more utilitarian parts of assemblages. If this is the case, then the somewhat confusing distribution patterns of Late Hellenistic

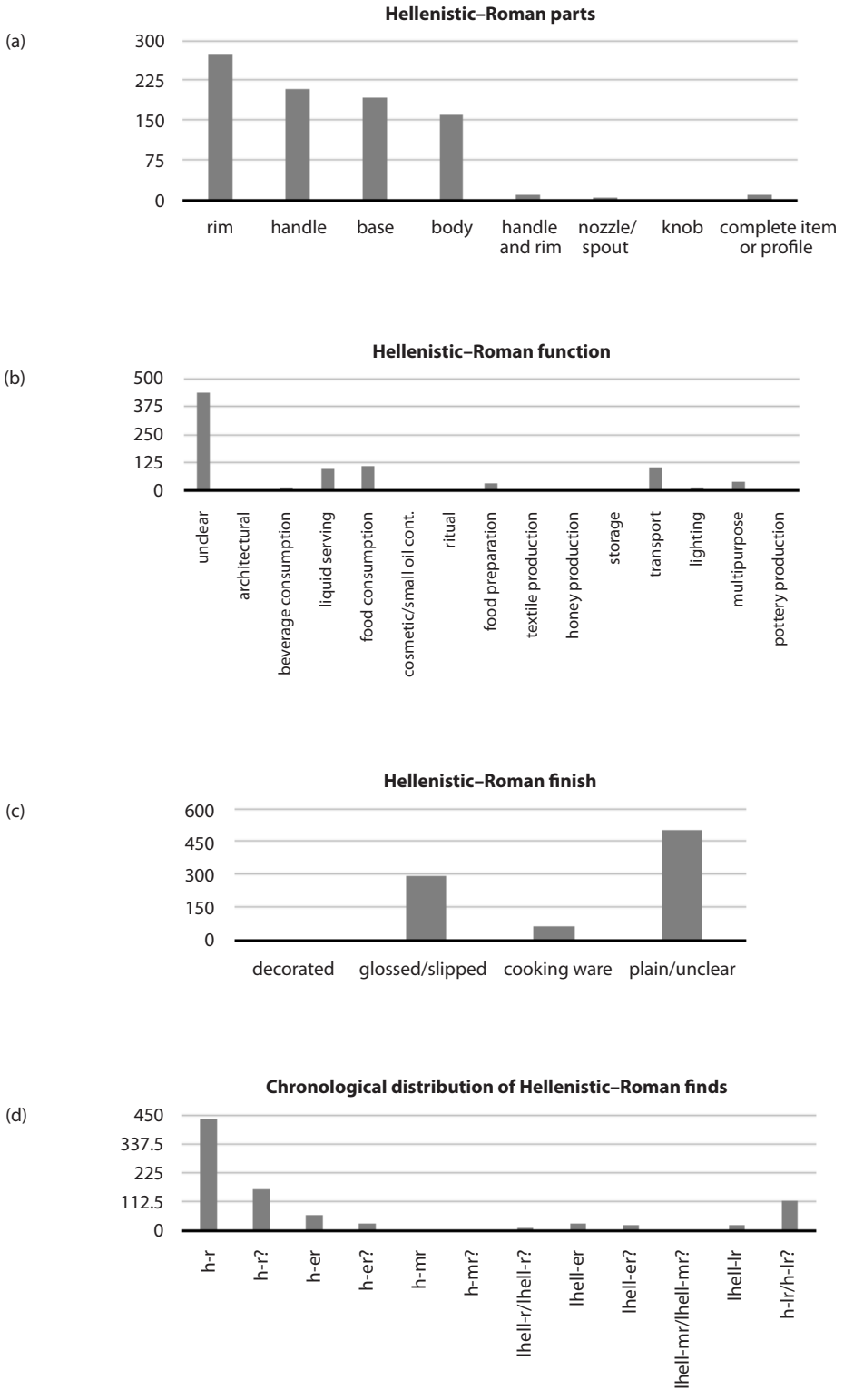


Figure 11.49. *Thespiai: the Hellenistic–Roman assemblage, including all finds dated within the range of the chronological units listed in (d) to the period as a whole, and to the sub-categories listed in (d). The breakdowns show the parts of vessels represented (a), functional categories (b) and types of finish (c), while (d) shows the chronological categories that make up this assemblage, with the numbers of items that they comprise.*

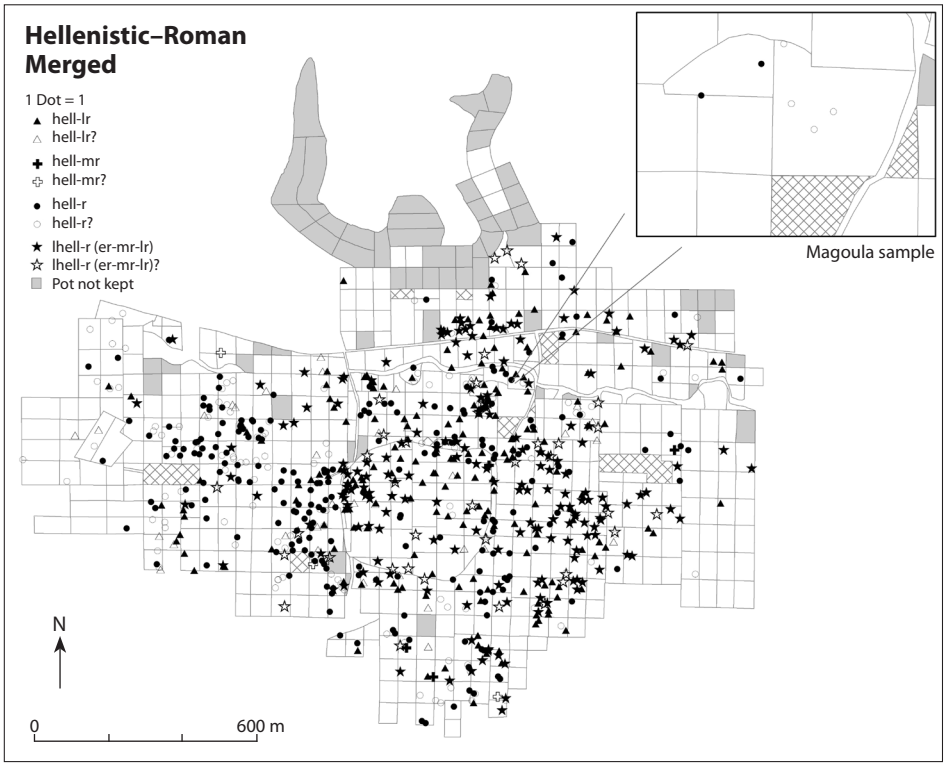


Figure 11.50. *In this map, the ceramic data shown in the earlier 'Hellenistic–Late Roman' Figures 3.73 and 3.74 (p.113) have been extended to include the material classed as 'Late Hellenistic–Late Roman' and 'Late Hellenistic–Late Roman(?) (see also Figure 11.49d).*

and 'Hellenistic–(Late) Roman' finds, mentioned above, might also hide functional developments – such as a continuing non-domestic use of formerly inhabited areas which were now outside the core area of the town.

A more specific problem is that the apparent small peak of Late Hellenistic–Early Roman finds (Fig. 11.49d), mainly generated by some of the very distinctive amphora types typical of the second and first centuries BC, may not be entirely 'real' after all. Most of the types of amphorae in question start gradually to be exported in the third and even the fourth century BC, then continue to be produced into the Imperial period. In so far as there is any chronological development in the typology, it is often difficult to trace this from survey sherds. Moreover, although the amphora finds at Thespiai certainly indicate intensive exchange, as already indicated, a flourishing trade involving Knidian, Koan and Rhodian-type amphorae may not necessarily reflect the general prosperity of an agrarian city like Thespiai.

Conclusions

Despite the difficulties caused by the low diagnosticity of the Thespiai material, which is simple, uniform and worn, even by the low standards characteristic of urban survey material, the developments seen in the overall assemblage offer a good impression of the general trends in the use of pottery over time, as well as the spread of the habitation of Thespiai, particularly between the fifth and second centuries BC. In respect of the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period, the much lower numbers of diagnostic finds, their limited typological and functional range and their thin spread produce a more hazy picture; yet they still seem to show an ultimately substantial settlement and later a town, not limited to a single small core, which seems to have grown by in-filling rather than by expanding. At the other end of this era, the transition from the Hellenistic to the Roman period in the first century BC seems very blurred: while the final result is certainly a contracted city, the chronological and spatial developments remain obscure, mainly because so much of the relevant pottery is both difficult to date and functionally rather generic.

During the intervening period, throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods, the assemblage appears to be remarkably stable, both in its spread over the surveyed area, which is almost completely

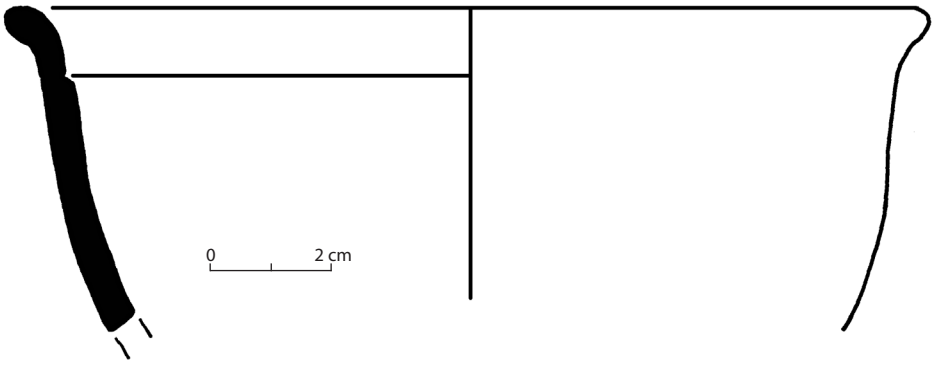


Figure 11.51. *Rim fragment of red gloss deep bowl, Hellenistic–Roman (85 TH Tr.51.2).*

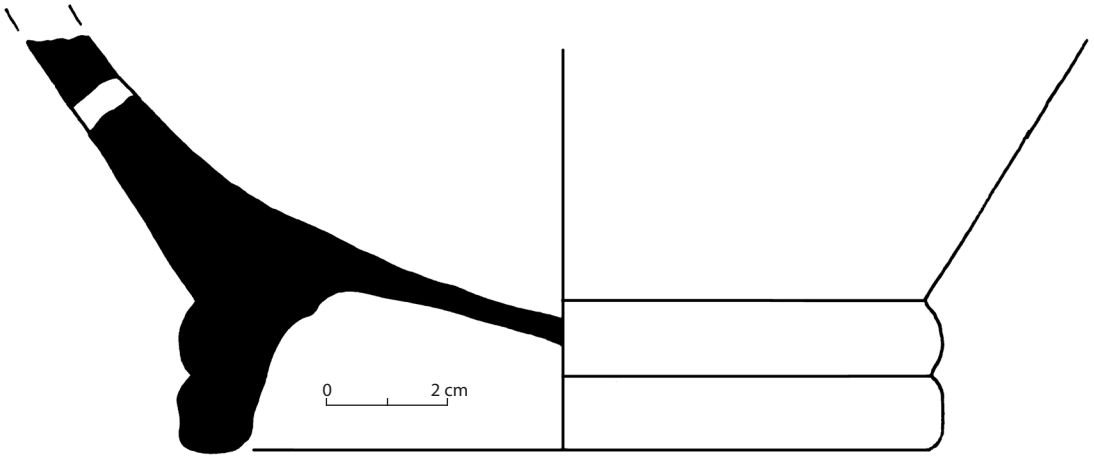


Figure 11.52. *Base fragment of uncertain open shape, black gloss inside, one perforation in lower wall, Hellenistic–Roman (85 TH Tr.2035.6).*

filled with pottery, and in its chronological developments, which are slow and limited. The chequered, even dramatic, history of Thespiai remains invisible in its surface pottery assemblage, which simply follows the general patterns that one sees elsewhere in the Greek world, both on the level of the appearance and disappearance of specific pot shapes and typical imports, and on the more general level of the functional range of the ceramic assemblage.

The problems in dating and classification, inevitable in the interpretation of survey pottery, naturally obscure or blur many of the details, yet the general lines are clear enough. Elaborate and refined drinking vessels gradually disappear from the fourth century onwards, as the pottery becomes simpler and more utilitarian. While fine ware imports disappear, however, the quantities of imported transport amphorae, and the distances that they travel, increase. Even before the arrival of the Romans, Thespiai is linked into an expanding world. In spatial terms, however, these changes mean that the funerary areas, most of which seem to have been in continuous use since the Late Geometric period or even earlier, become less identifiable and the boundaries of the urban area revert to the same vagueness that they showed in the Early Iron Age.

Chapter 12

Urban Thespiai: the Late Hellenistic to Late Roman pottery

Philip Bes and Jeroen Poblome

The survey of the urban area of ancient Thespiai was carried out in 1985 and 1986, and all ceramic finds (from the urban *and* the associated rural survey) were subsequently studied by John Hayes. As part of the Boeotia Project's publication programme (Bintliff *et al*. 2007: 2013), we undertook four campaigns – in January 2008, April 2009 and 2011, and May 2012 – during which the Late Hellenistic and Roman-period ceramic finds were re-studied, grid unit by grid unit. All the pottery from urban Thespiai was in fact re-evaluated by the different period specialists.

John Hayes' original work – kindly made available to us – obviously offered an essential starting point. Yet, with nearly 25 years having elapsed since that original work, the re-study aimed to take into account newly published knowledge and insights, as well as our own growing understanding of Roman-period pottery from other sites in Boeotia, particularly the urban sites of Tanagra, Koroneia and Hyettos. Thus, a substantial amount of new information was captured, and the terminology was made uniform so as to provide a better basis for comparison with data from elsewhere within Boeotia, as well as beyond. Furthermore, some 500 sherds could be added to the original database, which now holds (for all periods) 14,345 entries, after double entries and joining sherds (with fresh breaks) were set aside.

This chapter, first, introduces the framework concerning the methodology, chronology and terminology of the data studied, after which the pottery proper is presented, with a breakdown by chronological phase. Next, the material in question will be looked at from an economic point of view, so as to place Thespiai within a wider Boeotian and, *in extenso*, a Mediterranean context. This chapter also offers thoughts on the functional properties of the pottery – a line of research pursued within the Boeotia Project more generally, as well as elsewhere (Poblome *et al*. 2004–2005 [2008–2009]; Poblome, Bes and Willet 2012; Willet 2012) – and the question whether, and how, this translates into surface distribution, with the aim of determining whether or not functionally distinct urban zones can be singled out. The chronological balance in this chapter will tip increasingly in favour of the Late Roman era; that period is by far the best represented, and consequently should allow of more reliable analyses. The chapter concludes with a summary of the more significant trends and conclusions that can be distilled from the dataset.

Methodology, chronology and terminology

Methodology

The Boeotia Project has long relied on a sherd-by-sherd analysis of all collected pottery fragments (the survey methodology proper is discussed elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 3)). In this way, each sherd – numbered individually by hand – is represented by a unique record in the project's database(s), and is accompanied by a range of (meta)data based on pre-defined parameters. In addition to such basic administrative data elements as sherd and grid unit number, year of collection and so forth, other kinds of information include the kind of vessel, chronology, and any decorative aspects. Ascribing a (tentative) function to each fragment – through combined interpretation of fabric and fragment-shape-decoration – allows us to explore this line of thought, which resulted in interesting insights into the proportional relation between local/close-regional *versus* imported ceramic products at Tanagra (Willet 2012). Table 12.1 captures the functional framework as employed for the Boeotia Project's Roman-period pottery.

It is to some extent an artificial framework, based on presumed associations, and things could definitely be said against its use or, rather its too rigid

Table 12.1. *The functional framework used by the Boeotia Project for the Roman-period pottery.*

Function	Shapes
Food Consumption	Bowl, dish, fishplate, plate
Beverage Consumption	Beaker, bowl, bowl/cup, chalice, cup, dish, kantharos, mouldmade bowl, mug
Food Serving	Platter, tray
Food Preparation	Bowl, casserole, cooking dish, cooking pot, jug, lid, mortarium, pan, pounder, strainer/colander
Transport	Amphora, stopper
Transport/Storage	Jar/amphora
Multipurpose	Basin, lekanè
Liquid Serving	Chalice, hydria, jug, juglet, krater, pitcher
Storage	Jar, lid, pithos, pithoid shape, storage bin
Textile Production	Loomweight, spindle whorl
Lighting	Oil lamp
Honey Production	Beehive, beehive lid
Cosmetics	Unguentarium
Architectural	Tile, floor tile, waterpipe, hypocaust tile
Pottery Production	Waster, mould
Religious/Ritual	Figurine, miniature vessel, statuette
Unidentified	–

application. For example, we take most open and closed shapes or fragments, when in fine(r) fabrics and covered with a slip, to have been predominantly used for the serving and consumption of food and beverages, and they are classified as such; whilst closed shapes in coarse(r) fabrics would be classified under food preparation. Yet one should by no means reckon things to have been that simple.

This method is nonetheless preferable to ignoring 'function' completely: it is our conviction that functional parameters should at least be explored, chronologically and spatially, as an additional tool in trying to understand and interpret the collected data. That said, the proposed functional scheme should be handled with an open mind. This means that the use of the range of vessels and the composition of functional assemblages is likely to have varied greatly, being dependent on the availability and supply of pottery, the settlement's general economic and cultural outlook, a person's or family's social standing, etc. In brief, the way in which people will have dealt with their pottery (as with other material culture) is not to be captured by any static proportional scheme. At present we simply know too little to put forward secure statements. At the same time, however, some basic assumptions can be made as to the primary use of certain vessels – for instance tablewares, cooking wares, amphorae and oil lamps – this although a second or even further life for a number of functional shapes has been archaeologically proven (Peña 2007). Some possibilities are explored at the end of this chapter.

Such a time-consuming way of working nonetheless allows us to capture a detailed level of information, and proves beneficial once the interpretative stages are reached. The raw (meta)data thus gathered form the basis for all subsequent analyses and interpretation.

It should be briefly emphasized here that the interpretation (chronological, functional, economic and so on) of *survey* pottery faces particular methodological problems. Whereas vessel profiles may be reconstructed from excavated pottery, survey pottery almost never offers such opportunities; morphological and/or typological identification is thus more constrained, which prompts a comparatively greater dependence on fabric identification. Quite apart from the absence of stratigraphic context, and often of diagnostic features too, a greater or at times even sole reliance on fabric results in long(er), multi-period chronologies for the majority of the data. This is a particularly challenging factor, in the Boeotian context, in respect of the local and/or regional wares (see below, where some efforts to overcome this will be offered).

This condition is further exacerbated by the inherent 'palimpsest' character of survey pottery, a phenomenon that applies to a very large group of ancient sites. The last major phase of occupation of a settlement is generally the best represented and therefore the most readily definable on the surface, simultaneously blurring and 'burying' our understanding and interpretation of earlier phases, or more circumscribed occupation in later periods. Whereas this may also apply to excavated sites, there each stratigraphic unit offers much better opportunities to associate different types and shapes with fabrics and *vice versa* (even though residual and intrusive types have to be reckoned with), by comparison with survey pottery, where making closer associations is greatly restricted, precisely because of its generally mixed composition. Such factors often cause the collected fragments to be dated to two or more periods, resulting in such chronological designations as 'Classical–Late Roman', 'Hellenistic–Mid-Roman', and so on. Table 12.2 displays the relative quantities of securely and less securely identified pottery relevant to this chapter.

Table 12.2. *The absolute quantities of sherds, of certain and uncertain date, that provide the basis for this chapter (n=6217). All entries marked with a small 'r' in the main data-base pertain to the ER and MR periods, and are thus included in the relevant period counts.*

Period	Certain	Uncertain
C–HELL	2	0
C–MHELL	5	0
HELL	2	1
HELL–ER	93	41
HELL–MR	349	166
HELL–LR	185	37
MHELL	1	0
M–LHELL	79	4
LHELL	32	43
LHELL–ER	86	26
LHELL–MR	59	15
LHELL–LR	31	2
R–LR	1452	265
ER	90	29
ER–MR	460	217
MR	133	17
MR–LR	374	55
LR	1349	487
LR(/–Ebyz?)	0	14
DIVERSE	16	0
Subtotal	4798	1419
Total	6217	

At the same time, the supposedly better recognisable classes are held to favour or over-emphasize the ceramic record of certain periods over that of others, in diachronic site reconstructions: these include the Late Roman Amphora 2 (LRA 2 hereafter), or Late Roman ribbed/ridged/grooved/combed (amphorae) body sherds generally (Pettegrew 2007). Some classes of Late Roman pottery are undeniably very easily recognisable; yet one of several aspects that remain largely neglected in the recent methodological discussion is an equally fundamental aspect of ceramic studies, namely fabric differentiation, albeit only macroscopic. In an Aegean context, this most obviously applies to LRA 2. But since, at Thespiai, Late Roman pottery fragments come in significantly larger numbers – 1836 out of a total of 6217 entries here, or *c*. 29.5 per cent, while 295 identified fragments of LRA 2, *c*. 16.1 per cent of the LR total, were identified (figures updated from Poblome, Bes and Willet 2012: table 21.3) – it is not out of the question that sheer quantity could, on its own, overcome our perceptions of recognisability. Even if the combing on LRA 2, covering about one-third of the vessel's body, can be fairly characteristic (see however Slane and Sanders 2005: 286, or this Project's finds from Hyettos), the great range of combing, ribbing, grooving, etc. as surface treatments on body-sherds of Late (and sometimes already on Early or Mid-) Roman amphorae, as well as the wide variety of fabrics in which these amphorae can come to us, *do* not make the classification of (Late) Roman pottery any easier. For Late Hellenistic, Early and Middle Roman pottery also contain classes that are readily recognized: this is by no means true only of such categories as *terra sigillata*.

If the less diagnostic, multi-period material often tends to be disregarded, the normally substantial prevalence of such fragments in survey collections (in the material under study, only just over one-third could be attributed to a *single* period), not to mention the factor of fabric composition, prompts us to take this material also into account, by applying several techniques of redistribution (see below, and Poblome *et al*. 2012b).

Chronology

The chronological framework used in this chapter is that used generally by the Boeotia Project, which fits well enough with the ceramic evidence, and is henceforth abbreviated:

> Hellenistic (HELL) covering from the later fourth century BC to the reign of Augustus;
>
> Early Roman (ER) covering the period from Augustus to AD 200;
>
> Mid-Roman (MR) covering the third and fourth centuries; and
>
> Late Roman (LR) covering the early fifth to about the mid-seventh centuries.

Terminology

Throughout this chapter a number of terms and abbreviations will be used – in addition to the chronological ones just listed – and it is worth emphasizing these, as the intended means for definition and identification. First, all dates are AD unless otherwise stated. Secondly, so as to minimize ceramic jargon while avoiding the repetitive character of naming pottery classes in full, the names of the commonly occurring classes are given in full on their first occurrence in the text, and abbreviated from then on. Late Roman Amphora 1, for example, a common amphora type of Late Antiquity predominantly manufactured in Cilicia and Cyprus, will be abbreviated as LRA 1. Terms such as 'fabric' and 'shape' are applied as follows:

fabric denotes the macroscopically visible clay matrix and its non-clay components (*e.g*. minerals), whereas 'shape' captures and describes the general morphological features of a certain kind of vessel. 'Ware' and 'type'/'form', on the other hand, are applied more rigidly. 'Ware' is used only for a pottery class that has been archaeologically and/or archaeometrically characterized (and published), for example with regard to provenance and typology. African Red Slip Ware (ARSW) is a case in point (Hayes 1972). Type (or form), in fact, pertains to a more or less fixed set of morphological characteristics that refer to a specific shape or vessel that is defined as such. In this way, a type is often part of a ware; for instance, African Red Slip *Ware* (ARSW) includes Hayes '*type*'/'*form*' 97.

The data: quantitative and qualitative dimensions

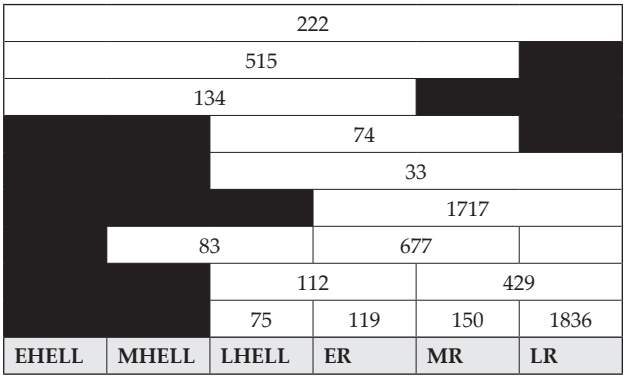
Anticipating the more detailed chronological discussion below, let us first briefly look into the quantity and quality (though these are not mutually exclusive aspects) of the pottery that was re-studied. 'Quantity' should speak for itself, but 'quality' may require some words of clarification. Quality is derived from the kind of fragments found: for example, what vessel parts are represented, how many fragments are datable to a single period, the extent to which fragments can be attributed to a (general) region of origin, etc. Such factors also have their bearing on the methodology and, ultimately, on the interpretation and conclusions and the degree of confidence with which these can be formulated. Both quantity and quality will be explored more fully throughout this chapter.

As mentioned, following the re-study the database currently holds 14,345 individual sherds or entries. Of that total, 6217 fragments (43.3 per cent) were selected for discussion in this chapter. Some 41 pieces out of that number are chronologically assigned either to too broad a period, or to a period that (partly) predates those dealt with here, yet are nevertheless of some relevance for particular parts of this chapter's discussion and interpretation.

Tables 12.3a and 12.3b capture the chronological breakdown, which first of all shows that 2180 fragments (*c*. 35.1 per cent) are attributed to a single period. Numerically, by comparison with the LHELL (1.2 per cent), ER (1.9 per cent) and MR (2.4 per cent) periods, the 1836 fragments (29.5 per cent) assigned to a LR date are particularly notable. Taking the LHELL phase as a basis for the four relevant periods, single-period material occurs in the following ratios: 1:1.6; 1:2; and 1:24.5. The LR period was in fact the last major phase of occupation in the urban zone of Thespiai, and

Tables 12.3a–b. *3a: Table showing the material by chronological breakdown, in absolute quantities (n = 6217). 3b: A visual representation of the same material.*

Period	n	%
M–LHELL	83	1.3
HELL–ER	134	2.2
HELL–MR	515	8.3
HELL–LR	222	3.6
LHELL	75	1.2
LHELL–ER	112	1.8
ER	119	1.9
ER–MR	677	10.9
MR	150	2.4
MR–LR	429	6.9
LR	1836	29.5
LR(/–EByz?)	14	0.2
R–LR	1717	27.6
LHELL–MR	74	1.2
LHELL–LR	33	0.5
DIVERSE	27	0.4
Total	6217	100.0



is the only period that satisfies the threshold of 600 sherds, to allow for a 'reasonable confidence in spatial representation of the original distribution' (Bintliff 2013: 196). Even if it is evident that other periods *are* represented and thus signal occupation or activity, the differences between the different periods, absolute and relative, obstruct a more balanced assessment of, in particular, the pre-LR periods. Thus, were we to limit ourselves to the single-period material alone, *c*. 65 per cent of the available data would be ignored. Such a course can hardly be advocated; so in order to explore the potential of this multi-period material, several methods of redistribution will be employed here, as ways to understand and accommodate it.

Table 12.4 presents absolute and relative quantities, per type of fragment, from several locations. In

Table 12.4. *The material from urban Thespiai compared with that from two excavated contexts (Sagalassos and Limyra, both in Turkey), per type of fragment, in absolute and relative quantities.*

Urban Thespiai			**Sagalassos 2000-117+125**			**Limyra Fundnummer 99**		
Fragment	n	%	Fragment	n	%	Fragment	n	%
R(im)	2025	32.6	R	655	10.9	R	120	12.5
B(ase)	1228	19.8	B	316	5.3	B	43	4.5
H(andle)	824	13.3	H	111	1.9	H	36	3.7
B(ody) S(herd)	2051	33.0	BS	4904	81.9	BS	762	79.3
Unclear	89	1.4						
Total	6217	100.0	*Total*	5986	100.0	*Total*	961	100.0

Table 12.4, as yet unpublished excavation data from Sagalassos and Limyra (both in Turkey) provide a sharp contrast to the almost equal percentages of rims and body sherds within the Thespiai data (cf. Pettegrew 2007: 765–9). The deposit from Sagalassos concerns an 'abandonment assemblage' that was at a later point disturbed (Bes forthcoming c). It was excavated in 2000 in the northernmost room of the Lower Agora's western portico, and activities presumably involved the storage of foodstuffs and the preparation of meals for sale to passers-by. The deposit from Limyra represents a secondary dump of possible domestic material, and was excavated in 2012 amongst architectural remains in the proximity of the city's West Gate.

In both the excavation contexts, however, body sherds comprise around 80 per cent, a percentage that echoes Pettegrew's expectation (2007: 769), leaving up to *c*. 20 per cent for rims, bases and handles. Whereas the life history of a surface assemblage is inevitably more complex, leaving room to imagine that proportions could have ended up differently anyway, our Thespiai data, and the manner in which it was collected, relied more heavily on *morphologically* diagnostic fragments, rims in particular. Even if the Sagalassos and Limyra data do not stem from ideal, high-quality primary deposits, the comparison does imply that the proportions for Thespiai are more distorted. But it is important that the stated methodology of the original Thespiai survey in 1985–86 was to focus collection on what were then seen as the most likely diagnostic finds, 'feature pottery', although body-sherds were also set for gathering on a smaller scale (see Chapter 3, pp. 39–41). There is also an active debate on the added value of larger quantities of body-sherds (compare the experiments by Mark van der Enden, in Bintliff *et al*. 2012: 33–41 and 59–63, with the finds from the urban survey at Koroneia).

The elimination of body sherds from the counts, as was done for the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey (EKAS) data (which are argued to reflect a 'busy countryside' nonetheless, if one that 'boomed' less intensely – Pettegrew 2007), does not produce results comparable with those for Thespiai (as Fig. 12.1 shows). Here, the ratio between the four separate periods is now 1:1.3; 1:1.7; 1:20.3 – not that different from those where body sherds were included. The percentages of rim fragments at Thespiai, however, are now by any standard excessively high. Yet Fig. 12.1 does bear out an important point: with the exception of the MR period (see below), which has the strongest dependence on rim fragments, the proportions of distinctive fragments for the LHELL, ER and LR periods are not so very dissimilar, with the percentage of rims ranging between 40 and 50 per cent, that of bases between 32 and 44 per cent, and that of handles (here with the MR period included) between *c*. 10 and 18 per cent.

Although this may warn us to be wary of their reliability, when looked at from a different perspective these data do generally conform rather well to broader trends. This applies most specifically to the imported pottery: for example, the common appearance of ARSW, the ratio between ARSW and Late Roman C (LRC), and the proportions of some amphora classes, are not radically different from what we observe for Boeotia more generally or for that matter central Greece (Bes forthcoming a, b, d). But given the lack of published excavation data for such multi-period material, the pattern for local and closer regional groups is much more difficult to assess.

In trying to apply Pettegrew's interesting exercise for the Eastern Korinthia, one major methodological obstacle is the different chronological framework that EKAS applies (Pettegrew 2007: 753, n. 35), with MR lacking as a period. For EKAS, ER spans 31 BC to AD 250, while 250 to 700 is all LR. Although the MR period has its inherent problems, as we shall see, it is the authors' conviction that the chronological framework as currently employed by the Boeotia Project should be retained, allowing at least an attempt to pick out the crucial historical MR period.

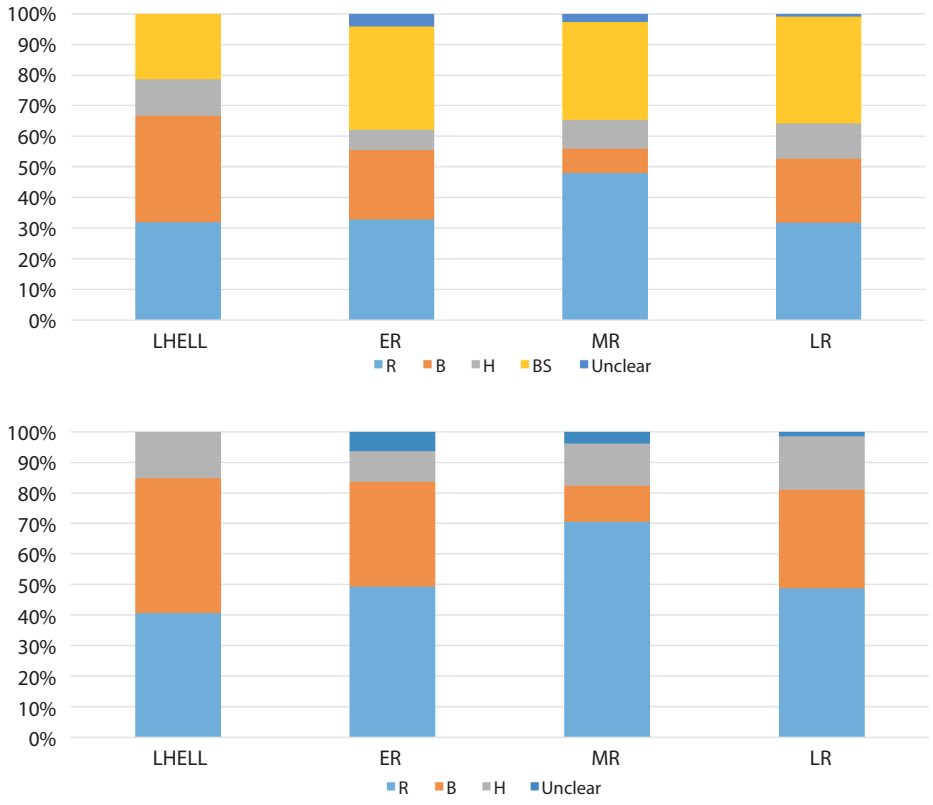


Figure 12.1. *Histograms showing the relative quantities of the Thespiai material, per type of fragment, with the body sherds included (top) and omitted (bottom).*

An outline of ceramic trends

An outline of the major ceramic trends will help in the understanding of the more interpretative parts of this chapter. Let us begin by discussing the class(es) of pottery that are thought to be manufactured locally or in the closer region, that is at one or more places within ancient Thespiai and its surrounding hinterland. Locally made pottery, long overlooked, today receives growing attention. This is important because, as will be shown, such classes often served to cater for the majority of a settlement's ceramic requirements.

Local Manufacture

Although the archaeological evidence for pottery manufacture is restricted to 91 fragments (ranging from over-fired pieces to true 'wasters', which are sometimes warped or bloated), together with a single lamp mould (Table 12.5) – all significant, though not as plentiful as at nearby Koroneia – this is enough to make clear that Thespiai to some degree catered for its own ceramic requirements. None of the wasters could be indisputably given a pre-Roman dating; to a few, only the very general C/HELL–LR date was ascribed. Some 70 wasters fall within the Roman Imperial timeframe; 34 are dated to the LR period, and a portion of the more broadly dated sherds probably belongs to the LR period as well. Even if only a minority could be morphologically identified, by and large these belong to open table-wares – as we see reflected both in the Thespian oxidized and reduced groups (see below), and in some of the varied shapes that are recognized throughout the 'Boeotian' group at Thespiai. One rim + handle fragment resembles LRA 2 (though it is thought unlikely that Thespiai participated in the

Table 12.5. *The material classified as 'production waste', by chronological breakdown, in absolute quantities.*

Date	Quantity	Remark
HELL–MR	1	-
HELL–LR	2	-
LHELL–LR	1	-
R–LR	31	Gouged ware?; 2x triangular rim
ER–MR	2	-
MR	2	2x incurving rim dish
MR-LR	1	-
LR	34	2x base; 1x torsed handle; 1x rim cf. LRA 2; 1x triangular rim cf. Koroneia; 1x almond-shaped rim
Unknown	17	1x base
Total	91	

broader vogue of LRA 2 manufacture); while another sherd, possibly a fourth- to fifth-century gouged jug of a type well known from Athens (Hayes 2008: 93), showed that small(er) and large(r) closed shapes were manufactured as well (Fig. 12.2a below). In fact, fragments of gouged jugs are relatively common amongst the Boeotian group; this, together with some clear evidence for production from Koroneia (Fig. 12.5 below), suggests that gouged jugs were fairly popular in Boeotia, and thus could well have belonged to Thespiai's manufacturing repertoire as well.

This modest yet clear evidence for pottery manufacturing activities can be substantiated by two fabric groups, defined by us as local or from the closer region. Admittedly, in the absence of firm archaeological clues (kilns, workshops, *etc*.) and of archaeometrical analyses, our claim for these groups to be considered 'local' relies solely on the actual fragments. That said, however, the origin of the clay(s) used can be predicted to have been within a range of roughly 5 km (Arnold 1989: 32–57, esp. 38–51, fig. 2.5; see also Shiel and Stewart 2007: 98, fig. 7.2). To support the claim, we can point to as many as 485 fragments that share fabric and finish characteristics, along with certain shapes that are echoed in some of the wasters. To cite Willet:

> '[t]he fabric has a fine granulation and commonly inclusions are present, mostly consisting of grit and rarely lime. As for the Thespian fabric, the granulation of the clay-particles could not be more clearly determined with eyesight, except that they are smaller than 50 μm. Pores are very common. In the reduced fired pieces, the pores seem slightly more numerous. These are mostly rounded and measuring between 50–75 μm or smaller, although larger elongated pores of up to 210 μm are observed as well, especially in the reduced fired pieces. Inclusions commonly include sand/quartz-like grit of dark brown to yellowish colour (ranging mostly 50–105 μm), which are evenly distributed, and rarely tiny bits of lime (mostly <75 μm). The reduced variety seems to have slightly more grit inclusions and occasionally larger lime inclusions are visible (sometimes up to <300 μm). Very few mica particles can occasionally be observed in direct sunlight on smoothed surfaces and/or on the break. Both size and quantity of these inclusions indicate a natural source, rather than the addition of temper to or the preparation of the clay. The colour of the unreduced variety of the fabric is red to light red-reddish yellow with an orange-red to brownish-red thin slip. The reduced fired variety has a yellowish brown to brown, with occasional light orange to buff sections, with a thin brownish, brown-greyish to greyish slip layer. The hardness of the fabric is 4 on the mineral scale (*i.e*. can be scratched by window glass, not by a copper coin). The feel of the fabric is sandy to smooth and the fractures are smooth. The inclusions are evenly sorted' (Willet 2012: 99).

Two groups can thus be distinguished in this material – an oxidized (n=58) and a reduced (n=210) group, with 217 fragments being unclear or intermediate. This is presumably a single fabric cluster, within which a restricted functional range of open (bowls, dishes) and closed (jugs) table-wares are the most popular (n=219). Also recognized were basins (n=29), jars/amphorae (n=15), beehives (n=5) and a small variety of other shapes (three flagons, an *unguentarium*, an oil lamp and a storage bin); the remainder could not be morphologically identified. What is interesting is the clear evidence for a local ceramic industry, which must have begun in the MR period if not before, but for which the LR evidence is comparatively the strongest – at roughly the time when the *Kastro* was the main settlement focus (compare Chapter 3, pp. 119–20).

Thespiai is no exception when it comes to the local or closer regional manufacture of pottery within Boeotia. Most convincing is the evidence from Koroneia where, besides moulds and abundant wasters, even fragments of kiln infrastructure were identified. A cluster of anomalies revealed in recent geophysical prospection, in one of the areas where such kiln remains were found, are believed to be pottery kilns (Eastern Atlas Geophysics Team, unpublished report 2015). Most interesting in the cases of Thespiai, Koroneia, Tanagra, and also Askra, is that each city's ceramic repertoire presents both individual forms and traits, and a number of morphological and decorative characteristics shared with one or more of the other Boeotian towns (Poblome *et al*. 2012a: 397). The evidence for local manufacture at Hyettos in northern Boeotia is less explicit, as only a very limited number of wasters was identified; but the presence of (local) magnetite particles, presumably added as temper, in some of the pottery recovered at the site, suggests a local production infrastructure that was mostly focused on basins and tiles. On the other hand, closed and open table-wares at Hyettos were, for the R–LR period at least, to a large extent drawn from Koroneia (see p. 325).

Individual traits need not reflect a strictly indigenous development, either locally or regionally; an alternative explanation would be that inspiration

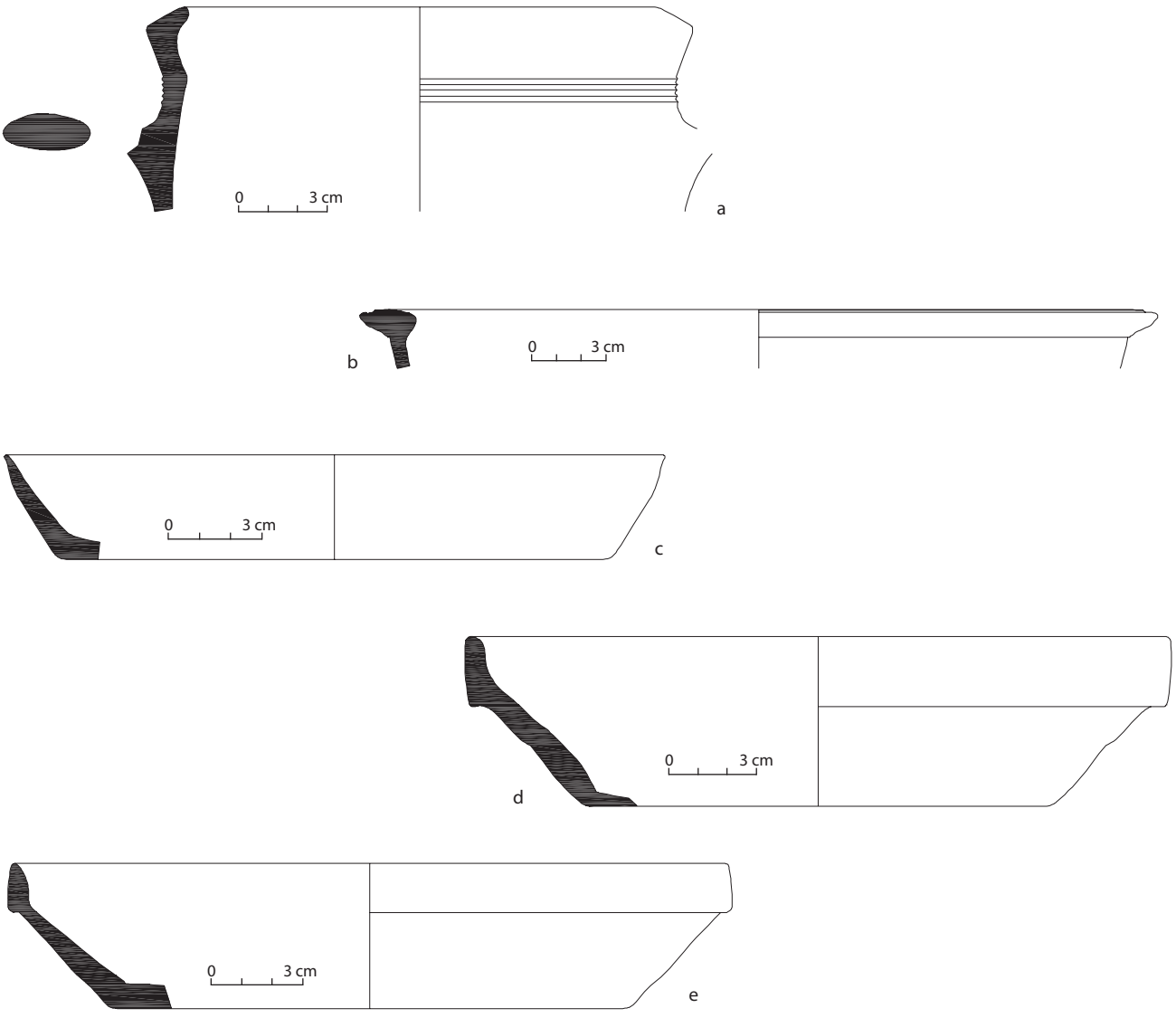


Figure 12.2a–e. *Profile drawings of pieces in the presumed local or close-regional Thespian fabric: (a) Roman-period (?LR) jar/amphora; (b) bowl of probable LR date; (c) dish of MR date; (d) and (e) two dishes of ER–MR date.*

found its way through one or more other channels, whether geographical, or in other materials no longer archaeologically visible, or through stylistic merging to produce something 'new'. Equally, the understanding of the shapes and decorative styles which can also be recognized elsewhere in Boeotia, is not at all straightforward. The whole field of association, relationship and dependence, as between morphologically similar shapes – whether for instance one shape was directly or indirectly inspired by the other, often involving a major (imported) table-ware category, or through one or more different material media – all this remains a challenging topic. Such relationships can have a number of implications with regard to knowledge, exchange, the local socio-cultural and artisanal climate, and so on (for Boeotia, this is explored more fully in Willet 2012). In any case such relationships, when they existed, did not necessarily follow linear paths (Willet 2012); they are perhaps best defined as a ceramic *koinè* (Poblome and Fırat 2011; Zelle 2014). This applies particularly to (open) table-wares (Fig. 12.2b above) and (smaller) closed vessels. A comprehensive discussion would be out of place here: suffice to say that some of the commoner rim profiles at Thespiai can be also recognized elsewhere in Boeotia, in local or closer regional fabrics. We assume that Thebes was at least to some extent part of this *koinè*.

These open table-wares include the incurving rim dish, the plain angled straight-wall dish (Fig. 12.2c), and the dish with off-set rim (Fig. 12.2d–e), for which we can find parallels in, respectively, ARSW (Hayes 1972: 67–9, 107–9, figs 12, 18, forms 49 and 62, possibly even as simplified versions of form 61: Hayes 1972: 100–7, figs 16–17); ARSW (Hayes 1972: 69–73, fig. 12, form 50), and later ESB (Ladstätter 2010: 190, n. 220) and Athenian/Attic products (Grigoropoulos 2009: 414–15, 436–7, 459–60, nos 56–63, 67; in Hayes 1972: 407–8, 2008: 442, fig. 7, 2010: 25, 31, fig. 7, of third-fourth century date; in Reynolds 2004: 225, 247, fig. 13.17 (possibly late fourth century); and in Robinson 1959: 61–3, pls. 12, 37, nos K 20–2, K 24–5, K 27: 'common in third century, pre-Herulian fills'). The plain angled straight-wall dish might even recall 'parallels' from what is now north-eastern Serbia, dated to the ER period (Jeremić 2009: 102–3, fig. 54, type III/4). Though this is admittedly a 'simple' shape, it underscores some of the methodological problems that arise in pin-pointing morphological parallels: it hints, if only implicitly, at a direction from which the source of inspiration can be sought, and this in turn relates to a framework of exchanging goods and ideas.

Morphological inspiration may still have been drawn, directly or indirectly, from both western and Greek/Aegean sources. Without exception, these rim profiles are combined with flat bases and with partially applied, multi-coloured or mottled slips (sometimes amounting to more of a wash), during the MR and LR periods especially. These features are invariably found elsewhere in Boeotia too, most notably at Koroneia. At the same time, shapes that are more site-specific appear at Thespiai with some frequency.

Returning to the local, Thespian series of (open) table-wares, the near-absence of controlled and published stratigraphic excavations – something which in fact applies to Boeotia more generally – hinders the construction of clear typological and chronological frameworks based on internal evidence, and compels us to resort to external parallels. This involves two inherent methodological considerations as, too often, parallels are named too easily with little or no regard for wider implications – which is not to say that no association existed. First, from a Boeotian point of view one easily makes a transition to Athens and Corinth, two sites already at considerable distances, that did not follow the same paths morphologically. Secondly, the clues suggesting that Boeotia had, to some extent, its own regional ceramic logic should warn us against looking for parallels too often and too far away; we may simply acknowledge that towns may have had their own developments, drawing inspiration from, or merging together, elements from sources we can no longer recognize or identify. Nonetheless, some of the commoner shapes at Thespiai resemble 'external' shapes too closely for us to deny some sort of morphological, and with it a chronological connection, of any kind.

In fact, following up such connections seems to result in tying together a wider regional tradition that comprises Boeotia, eastern Phokis (Delphi, Elateia), Corinth and Athens, possibly stretching as far west as Brindisi (De Mitri 2013: 10–11, figs 10–11): this applies particularly to fairly simple dishes that recall ARSW (Hayes forms 50 and 62). Another feature is decorative: the single crosses that are incised or stamped in the centre of dishes, a LR characteristic that can be found on ARSW and LRC, as well as on 'Askra Ware' (Hayes 2008: 94) (Fig. 12.3a–c). Similarly, (LR) oil lamps from Boeotia also betray morphological and/or decorative features that suggest an extra-regional inspiration. Here, as elsewhere, shapes and motifs can be recognized that are also found on oil lamps manufactured in Tunisia, such as palm branches (*e.g.* Bonifay 2004: 360, fig. 202a, type Atlante VIII; see also Slane and Sanders 2005: 266, 269, fig. 10, nos. 3-1, 3-2), and also the row of (alternating) motifs on both sides of the central disc (Bonifay 2004: 361, fig. 202b, type Atlante X).

Pottery of closer regional origin

Besides the strictly local ceramics, Thespiai was also firmly anchored within ceramic supply networks whose products originate both in Boeotia and in central Greece more widely. From sources relatively nearby, we can recognize products from Tanagra (n=2), Askra (n=10) and especially Koroneia (n=53). Most of the identified fragments are typologically familiar (open table-wares, smaller closed shapes), though the single beehive and oil lamp in Koroneia fabric are interesting additions. We can thus observe a modest level of intra-regional circulation of ceramic products associated with the various urban sites surveyed by the Boeotia Project, usually of an order ranging from a few to no more than a few dozen fragments. Hyettos in particular, with the rural sites in its *chora*, appears to have depended on a range of shapes that were manufactured at Koroneia, mostly if not exclusively during the Roman Imperial period. No actual products from Delphi (Pétridis 2010) were recognized, nor from Phokian Elateia, some 50 km northwest of Thespiai. Yet, interestingly open and closed shapes can be recognized in the local, albeit fairly limited, Elateian repertoire that readily match some of the Thespian and Koroneian shapes. This prompts us to include also Elateia in this ceramic *koinè* (Kouzeli and Zachos 2000). Other places too were surely actively involved in pottery production during the R–LR period, and their products may have seen some circulation within Boeotia. Yet in general it appears that this part

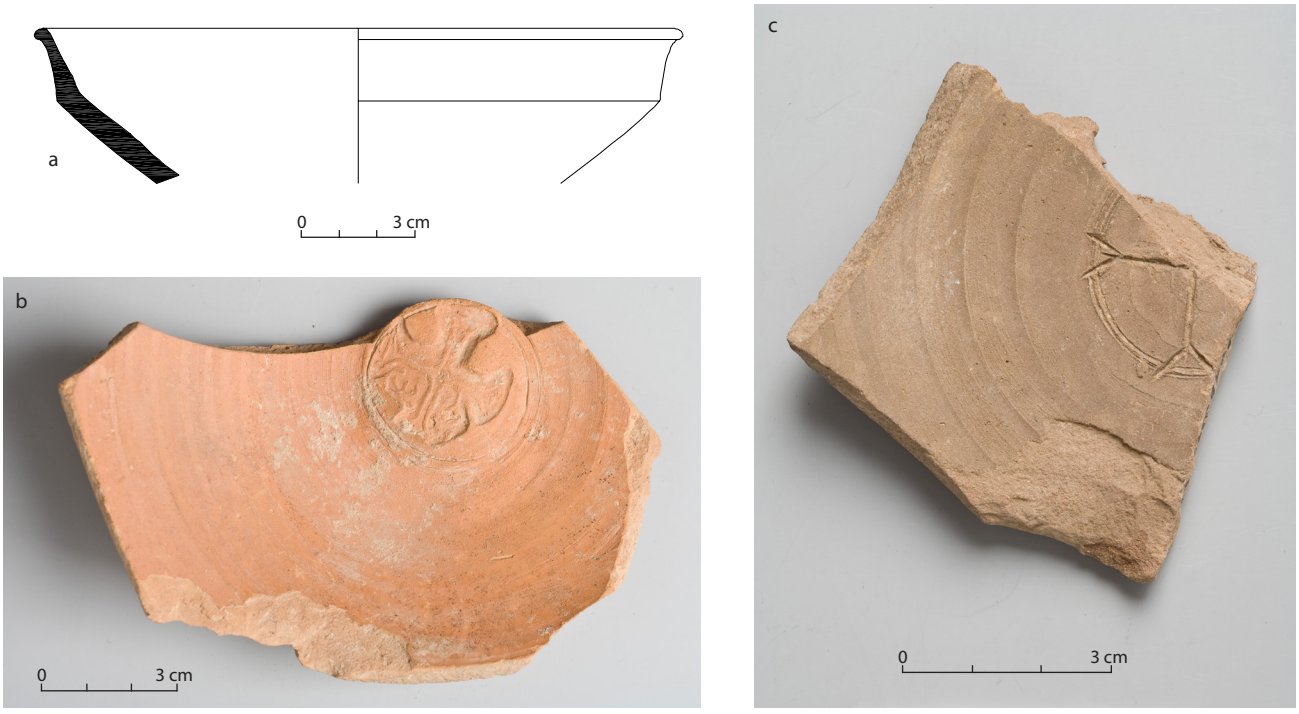


Figure 12.3a–c. *(a) Profile drawing of dish of MR–LR date, presumably in 'Askra Ware'; (b) interior of bowl or dish of MR–LR date, of presumed regional manufacture, with stamped cross with splayed ends at centre. Note the ω under the left arm of the cross and (?) A under the right, where the normal pattern is the reverse; (c) interior of bowl or dish of LR date, possibly in 'Askra Ware', with incised cross with splayed ends at centre.*

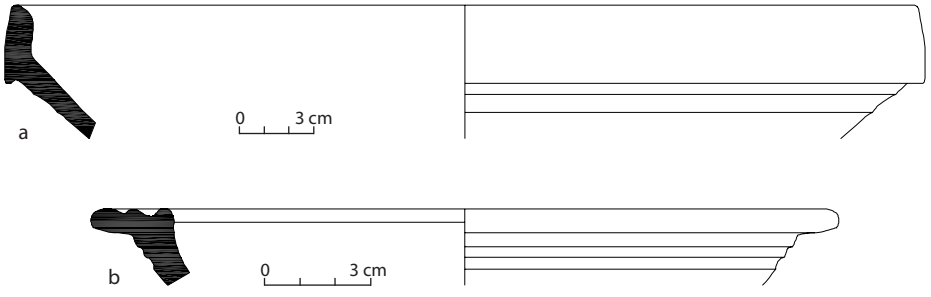


Figure 12.4a–b. *Profile drawings of pieces of Athenian/Attic manufacture: (a) dish of roughly MR date; (b) dish of MR–LR date.*

of central Greece was strongly focused on ceramic self-sufficiency, though not exclusively so; and that at the same time a fairly wide area absorbed morphological and decorative styles that probably originated from beyond this region. Tanagra was perhaps relatively better oriented towards other spheres of interaction, for both 'inspiration' and actual products; its port at Delion basically faced eastwards. There may in fact be clues pointing to a partial distinction between eastern Boeotia (with Attika) and western Boeotia (with eastern Phokis).

From further afield, small quantities coming from Athens/Attika (a handful of open table-wares) (Fig. 12.4a–b) and from Corinth (three oil lamps) can be recognized. But there is now firm evidence that the gouged jugs (eight fragments), so characteristic for fourth- and fifth-century Athens and Attika, were also produced at Koroneia (Fig. 12.5), probably at Thespiai, and perhaps at other places in Boeotia. This casts some doubt on assuming an exclusively Athenian origin for our fragments.



Figure 12.5. *Over-fired and warped fragments of gouged jugs of fourth- and fifth-century date from Koroneia, in local Koroneian fabric.*

To an important group, finally (n=1004), a generally Boeotian provenance was at first attributed. Here, the past decade has been highly instructive in familiarizing us, macroscopically, with the different fabric(s) associated with various Boeotian sites. These fragments fairly closely resemble the Thespian fabric group, yet present features (colour, feel, inclusions, surface finish) which do not fully match. Their identification as Boeotian is strengthened by their morphological repertoire (in so far as this could be determined), including shapes that are typical for Thespiai and in part for Boeotia more generally. In the event, we assume that a substantial portion of this group does in fact derive from Thespiai itself, thereby increasing substantially the proportion of local manufacture and bringing it more into line with the other Boeotian cities – Tanagra possibly excepted (Bes forthcoming b). As a result, the output of the Thespian workshops would become more varied and substantial than can be currently ascertained. In terms of shapes, the majority of the group consists of open and closed table-wares (Fig. 12.6a–d), as well as jars/amphorae, beehives and oil lamps, which again suggests that Thespiai, to an important extent, catered for such basic requirements itself, or else procured the material from nearby sources (compare Pickersgill and Roberts 2003, in respect of Sparta).

Most of the Boeotian cooking wares remain elusive as to their provenance. While a small fraction can be classified as identifiable imports, the majority can be separated into two major categories: the oxidized and the reduced, with medium-sized whitish-greyish grit common to both. The latter group, our 'grey gritty', seems to be mostly MR and/or LR in date. Though some of the shapes have features in common with specimens at Corinth – something that is clearer for the LR period – this is not true, interestingly, for the macroscopically determined fabrics; nor is the Boeotian picture readily recalled in the R–LR surface pottery from the region around Patras, nor in the excavated LR material from Naupaktos, nor perhaps that from the North-West Greek area more generally. In terms of table- and cooking wares, at least, Boeotia seems to have partly followed an internal, regional logic. This finds further support in the evidence from (LR) Delphi and Eretria: visits by Pláton Pétridis (École française, Delphi team), as well as Guy Ackermann and Simone Zurbriggen (Swiss School, Eretria) and a study visit by the first author to the Corinth storerooms brought to light no clear connection with the *Boeotian* cooking wares specifically (except for the known imported categories). This could lead to a tentative suggestion that the provenance of these cooking wares should be sought within Boeotia proper – or at least in its closest

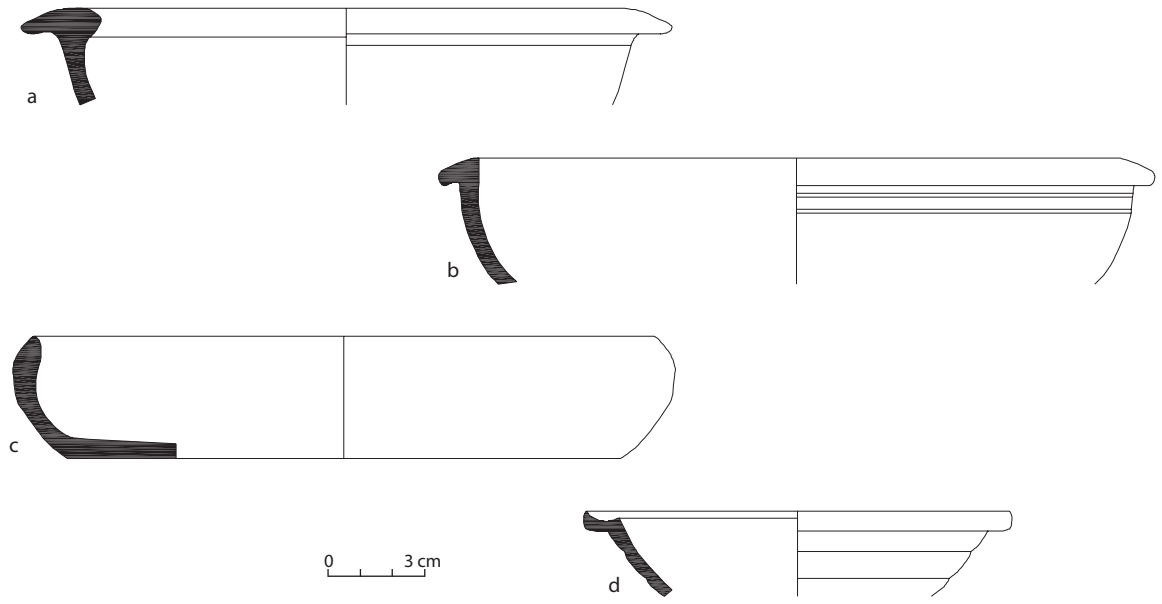


Figure 12.6a–d. *Profile drawings of pieces in a presumed Boeotian fabric: (a) and (b) two bowls of R–LR date; (c) dish of probable MR date; (d) dish of R–LR date.*

neighbouring zones. Any role played by Euboean-made pottery in Boeotian supply remains unknown, though Eretria and Tanagra (in eastern Boeotia) do share what appears to be the same or a similar fabric (group), used for utilitarian wares (Guy Ackermann, *pers. comm.*), recalling the much earlier tentative connections between Lefkandi and Oropos (Mazarakis Ainian and Vlachou 2014).

Supra-Regional Pottery

A wide variety of imported categories can be recognized in addition to the pottery from local and closer regional sources. These are discussed more fully elsewhere (Bes forthcoming b), but it will serve the general purpose to highlight the major types and trends here. Boeotia may look an unlikely candidate for the role of a major commercial hub in Greece, still less for the central Mediterranean generally; yet the data for Thespiai, as well as that gathered elsewhere by the Boeotia Project (most notably at Tanagra) do not support Pettegrew's claim that Boeotia 'is not geographically or commercially advantaged' (Pettegrew 2007: 776). Let us consider the evidence by period.

HELL–ER. Whereas HELL table-wares and other functional classes are discussed elsewhere (Chapter 11), there are 66 fragments from various classes of Aegean amphorae, spanning the HELL and/or ER periods (the great difficulties presented by the chronological identification of survey pottery need not be re-emphasized here). Some 36 fragments are Knidian (Bezeczky 2013: 53–6; Koehler and Wallace Matheson 2004: 167), a predominance that is reflected throughout Boeotia. The typologically identified Cretan fragments, including a probable handle of type AC4/Dressel 43 (Marangou-Lerat 1995: 84–9, 116–20, plates 19–21), do not predate the Augustan period (Marangou-Lerat 1995: 67–89). Throughout the Roman Imperial period, in fact, Aegean pottery – including that from sources within Greece – dominates the imported ceramic landscape. To the ER period also belong single examples of Knossos Types 41 and 43 (Hayes 1983: 156–7, fig. 26). From further afield come rare specimens of the Agora M54, a type that is strikingly common at Tanagra, as well as a handful of other Cilician double-barreled handle fragments that can be more generically attributed to the Dressel 2–4/Agora G198/Pompeii 13 family (Robinson 1959: 89 plate 19; Reynolds 2005: 564–5; Bezeczky 2013: 81–2). Western amphorae are represented by specimens from the Italian peninsula and the Adriatic: Campanian Dressel 1 and Dressel 2–4; Tyrrhenian Dressel 1; and Dressel 1 and Dressel 6 and/or Lamboglia 2 from the Adriatic (Bezeczky 2013: 100–10, 114–23, 129–33). Amphorae from the Iberian peninsula are rare, yet they include a large Beltrán IIA fragment (Fig. 12.7) (Bezeczky 2013: 146–7), and a handle possibly of a Dressel 23.

Imported table-wares of the LHELL and/or ER period are not common: ITS (Fig. 12.8a–b) stands out, next to a token presence of the Eastern Sigillatae series (Bes forthcoming a).

This is supplemented by rare imported pieces in thin-walled ware (a single fragment of imported lead-glazed ware has been recognized in the rural survey), as well as fragments of unidentified classes of *terra sigillata* that need not be Boeotian. At the same time, locally manufactured table-wares of this period remain poorly identified: this fits the overall picture, in contrast to the MR, but above all the LR period. Perhaps Thespiai drew table-wares from (regional) sources that differed from those used in the MR and/or LR period and, given their comparatively small quantities, are not recognized as such. Finally, rare imported cooking wares are represented by a Campanian Pompeian Red Ware dish (Slane 1986: 312; Johnson 2008: 117–18), and an Adriatic *mortarium* (originally identified by John Hayes). When we move more securely into the Roman period, imported amphorae include a probable Dressel 24 (Auriemma and Quiri 2004: 49–50; Opaiţ and Tsaravopoulos 2011). In the absence of typological clues, however, we may suppose that one or more of the Tripolitanian and Tunisian amphorae fragments belong to this period; rare examples of pre-LR types have in fact been identified elsewhere in Boeotia (e.g. a Tripolitanian I rim at Koroneia), and recent research into shipwrecks in the southern Euboean Gulf supports this idea (Koutsouflakis *et al*. 2012: wrecks 2 and 10, esp. 58, fig. 27), which is obviously of wider significance too.

MR. The third (and fourth) centuries witnessed the first substantial influx of ARSW (Bes 2015: Chapters 3–4) – mostly in C-fabrics and largely represented by Hayes form 50 (Martin 1999: 242–4), a form now thought to continue well into the fifth century (Slane and Sanders 2005: 283, there in D-fabric (248, n. 15)). This is also the time when Thespian wares become more prominent, or at least better understood in typo-chronological terms (Willet 2012: 96–120); the three shapes mentioned earlier (p. 325) are placed in the MR period. The occasional arrival of Corinthian oil lamps could have begun perhaps even as early as the second century, or in the ER period more generally (Perlzweig 1961; Pétridis 2011). Also recognized, in a handful of fragments, is what appears to be Corinthian cooking fabric (C.c.f.), of more generally Roman date, which could originate from Methana (Slane and Sanders 2005: 248–9, n. 15). Kapitän II amphora fragments are not uncommon (Bezeczky 2013: 149–51; Slane 2004: 364–5), whose date range in fact extends beyond the MR period with which it is traditionally associated. Their source remains unresolved (though some seem to have been manufactured in the wider Ephesos-Maeander Valley region). The same applies to the Zeest 80 (two fragments) (Bezeczky 2013: 173–4; Swan 2007: 256, 258, fig. 2.19; Reynolds 2010: 90–1). Macroscopic similarities (including the grey core) between these two types (Reynolds 2010: 90; Auriemma and Quiri 2004: 52) were also observed at Tanagra and Hyettos. Finally, two fragments of Tunisian cooking lids were noted, broadly MR in date, one originally identified by John Hayes, of his form 195 (Hayes 1972: 208).

LR. The LR pottery provides the clearest and most abundant signal for (urban) occupation and activity. This is reflected in the significant appearance of LRA 2, from a variety of Aegean sources; even without checking every fragment, it is clear that neither the Argolid fabric nor the micaceous fabrics are common (Slane and Sanders 2005: 287, nos. 64–5; Pieri 2005: 92; but see Reynolds 2010: 96). The latter occur more commonly elsewhere in Boeotia and central Greece (Pieri 2005: 85–93, esp. 92); while part of the Orange Micaceous group from Tanagra (Willet 2012: 67) definitely contains significant quantities of LRA 2 (Karambinis and Bes forthcoming). Also recognized was the hard and dense, lime-rich LRA 2 fabric that dominates at Hyettos, whose morphological traits suggest that it falls early in the type range, and which moreover lacks the classic 'combing', with rounded ribbing instead.

The original notion that Tanagra, where for example the Argolid fabric is more common, was a 'trap' for LR amphorae more generally must now be down-played. Preliminary figures suggest nothing exceptional, at least by comparison with coastal and near-coastal towns well connected to major shipping routes. Although (early) LRA 2 was manufactured at nearby Delion, Tanagra's harbour, along with other amphora types and utilitarian shapes such as basins (Gerousi 2014), a preliminary check of part of the Tanagra data suggests that the Delion products were hardly reaching the city itself, which is only some 10 km distant. This seems somewhat surprising; yet, if corroborated by further study, it strengthens our current hypothesis that the Delion amphorae were mainly intended for the export of regional agricultural surpluses, a hypothesis originally put forward specifically for LRA 2 (Poblome *et al*. 2012a: 395; Karagiorgou 2001). Furthermore, the variety in the amphora shapes made at Delion, though limited, could suggest some differentiation in their content.

Late Roman Amphora 3 (LRA 3) only occasionally penetrated these parts of Boeotia (Pieri 2005: 94–101). Even rarer are two Sinopean fragments (Kassab Tezgör 2010: 123). Three *spatheia* pieces – one complete top belonging to Bonifay's variant A (Fig. 12.9a–b) (Bonifay 2004: 124–9; 127–9 (Spatheion 3), *c.* 575–650/700) – together with a single Keay 62 (Bonifay 2004: 137–40) from central North Africa,



Figure 12.7. *External view of rim-fragment of a Beltrán IIA amphora with handle-stump, of ER date, an import from southern Spain.*



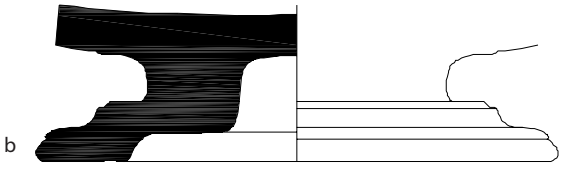


Figure 12.8a–b. *Interior view (a) and profile drawing (b) of a chalice of ER date, in Italian Terra Sigillata (ITS).*

represent the only typologically identifiable western imports for this period. The trickle of eastern imports is mostly made up by the 'usual suspects': Late Roman Amphora 1 (LRA 1), 4 (LRA 4) and 5 (LRA 5) (Pieri 2005: 69–85; 101–14; 114–27 respectively). Also from Thespiai comes the only Late Roman Amphora 7 (LRA 7) fragment so far attested in Boeotia (Pieri 2005: 128–32: the fabric conforms well to Pieri's description of Middle Nile Valley products).

ARSW still strongly dominated the import of table-wares (Bes 2015: Chapters 5–6); LRC arrived in smaller quantities, and whilst most originate from Phokaia, five fragments are attributed to other sources (Hayes 1972: 323–70; Hayes 2008: 83; Vaag 2005). Local and/or closer regional vessels nonetheless dominate the table-ware spectrum, though a few further exceptions can be noted. From central Greece are recognized some Athenian/Attic imports (identified by John Hayes), which are generally datable to the MR to LR period (Hayes 1972: 407–8). Further recognized is a single example of Macedonian Grey Ware (Hayes 2008: 90–1), as well as four fragments of a characteristic, but as yet unprovenanced class of table-ware (Fig. 12.10a–b, from Tanagra).

The (limited) morphological variety leaves little doubt that these belong to the LR period: they mostly consist of wide, shallow plates, not unlike ARSW Hayes form 104–105, yet rim profiles can also be reminiscent of CRSW/Late Roman D. Traces of brown paint (or painted slip?) are observed on one fragment, and a drop on another. These form a relatively common group at Tanagra (Bes forthcoming b; Willet 2012: 79–80). Although they are presumed to be local to Tanagra, macroscopic properties, as well as the manner in which they break, suggest otherwise. Vessels in the same or similar fabric, may have been found at Argos, Antikythera (Quercia *et al*. 2011: 70–1, fig. 4, no. 28, with further parallels) and possibly Athens (Grigoropoulos 2009: 440, 462, no. 91), which suggests that similar shapes, possibly in the same fabric, enjoyed a wide distribution. At Argos they are found in destruction deposits dated to *c*. 585 – though Slane and Sanders (2005: 294, n. 108) suggest a later date – and their fabric is described as an 'argile chamois rosé (5-7,5YR6 ou 7/6), bien épurée, mais mal cuite, se délitant par



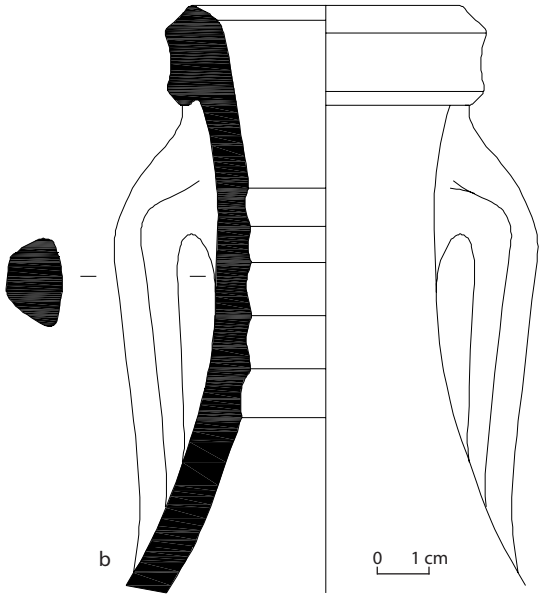


Figure 12.9a–b. *View of upper part (a) and profile drawing (b) of a* Spatheion 3 *of Bonifay variant a, of LR date, an import from Tunisia.*





Figure 12.10a–b. *Exterior (a) and interior (b) views of rim-fragments of an unprovenanced category of LR table-ware, found at Tanagra.*

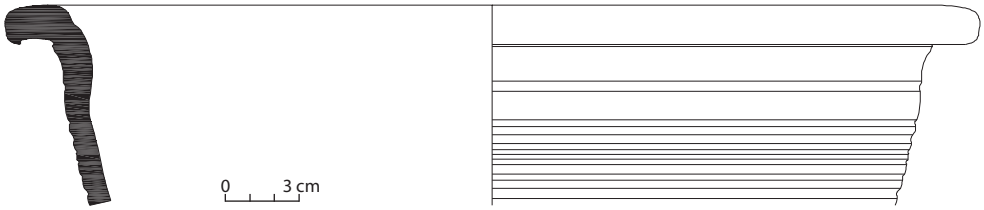


Figure 12.11. *Profile drawing of a basin, of roughly MR–LR date.*

plaques; engobe rosé (±2,5YR6/6), fragile à l'int. et sur le rebord. Le profil évoque de la fabrique africaine Hayes 104–105, mais l'on ne peut savoir si l'interieur présentait les mêmes ressaut ou rais circulaires. L'argile ne paraît pas argienne' (Aupert 1980: 416, 418, nos 124–6, fig. 35). From Ephesos comes a fragment that links up well with most of the rim fragments from Tanagra (Quatember *et al*. 2008: 284, 298, nos 72–3, 313, fig. 19; Ladstätter 2010: 102; Ladstätter and High 2010: 171, K 783, Taf. 217), dated 'spätantik/frühbyzantinisch' (seventh century) and termed 'Mäandertalsigillata' (see Ladstätter 2008: 142, Taf. 297, K 237, for a sixth- and early seventh-century date). The fabric, however, does not favour an Ephesian/Maeander Valley provenance. One further possibility that has been carefully considered for at least a part of this class – in particular the two (joining) fragments on the right in Fig. 12.10a–b – is that it represents a Central Greek Painted Ware originating in Thessaly, and more specifically at Nea Anchialos (Pétridis 2009 and *pers. comm*.). Only further study can clarify this.

LR micaceous Aegean Ware is uncommon at Thespiai, especially by comparison to Tanagra and Hyettos (Slane and Sanders 2005: 255–6, n. 21; also 287 n. 71). Most rims that are found at Boeotian sites resemble their fig. 3.1–28 (252; see also Abadie-Reynal 2007: 220–1, fig. 58, 372.1). Their date range spans the fourth and fifth centuries, and even if a (small?) part of this class may thus predate the LR period, this would have little effect on our impression of the major lines of import. Finally of interest are some utilitarian vessels (basins, but also some jugs) that recall certain categories of LRA 2 in appearance (Pieri 2005: 92, fig. 51 right) (Fig. 12.11). Such vessels are recognized elsewhere in Boeotia, as well as for instance at Corinth (Slane and Sanders 2005: *passim*, esp. 288, n. 79); morphologically, and perhaps also in their fabric, they also bring to mind basins from Crete (Yangaki 2005: 156–9, 468, 470, plates X.2, XII.4). The fabric of most fragments identified, however, does not recall the lime-and-mica LRA 2 fabric presumed to be from the Argolid; at Thespiai and elsewhere in Boeotia, they have a rather soft feel and, colour-wise, mostly come in pastel hues. Corinth offers a good morphological parallel (Slane 1994: 146, 149, plate 34.58) – the rim in particular – which suggests that such shapes had appeared already by the later third century, and thus that not all specimens identified at Thespiai are strictly LR. Slane's 'buff fabric' may possibly recall the fabric found in most of the fragments from Boeotia.

Table 12.6 and Fig. 12.12 together record the percentages for the pottery with *identified* provenance (n=2424), and clearly show that *c*. 61 per cent of the pottery found at Thespiai was manufactured in and around Thespiai, or within Boeotia more generally; if the radius is extended to 60–70 km, this proportion rises to nearly 74 per cent. Were the Aegean segment to be added, this would mean that *c*. 90 per cent of Thespiai's identified pottery was manufactured within the general Greek and Aegean areas, with only about 9.5 per cent originating from beyond. Following the same logic, *c*. 26 per cent could be considered, in relative terms, longer-distance imports – that is, with the 'Aegean' and 'Beyond' columns combined (though see Hayes 2000: 106–7, cited in Pettegrew 2007: 776, n. 95). It seems safe to suppose, provisionally, that of the provenance-*unidentified* pottery (n=4317, or *c*. 64 per cent), a comparable share (another 70 per cent or so?) is of 'regional' origin as well. So the tentative conclusion would be that at least 70 per cent of the pottery recovered from the surface at Thespiai, over the whole period from (HELL–) LHELL to LR, was drawn from sources within a radius of no more than 60–70 km. An explanation for the fact that local and closer regional products are hardly recognized prior to the MR–LR period need not be sought only in the restricted volume of finds and the, related, overwhelming dominance of LR pottery. As the presumed local Thespian fabric(s) – those up to within the 'Boeotian' range – are relatively easy to identify macroscopically, possibly the production

Table 12.6. *The Roman-period pottery classified by provenance, in absolute and relative quantities.*

Provenance	n	%
Thespiai	485	20.0
Boeotia	1004	41.4
(Central) Greece	298	12.3
Aegean	409	16.9
Beyond	228	9.4
Total (Uniden. n=3793)	2424	100.0

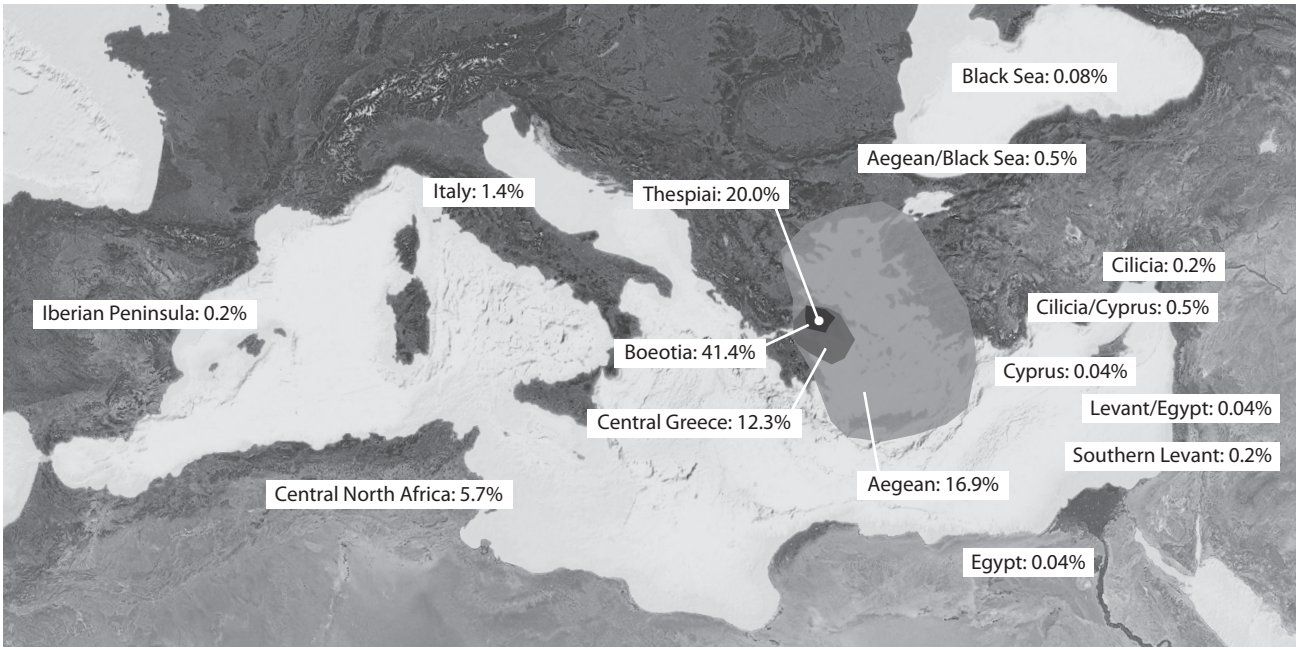


Figure 12.12. *Map showing the provenance of the Roman-period pottery by general provenance, in relative quantities.*

remained too limited to leave a mark, or a different clay or clays were used that were not recognized as such.

The pottery from beyond this Greek and Aegean zone mostly comprised amphorae and table-wares, with cooking wares and other categories playing a much smaller part (Table 12.7).

Although these originate from nearly all round the Mediterranean, there is a clear prevalence of western products (82.5 per cent) over eastern and Pontic sources (17.5 per cent). At Boeotian Koroneia, interestingly, preliminary calculations suggest that the locally produced table-wares, over this entire LHELL–LR period, account for at least *c*. 85 per cent of the sample studied thus far, with the workshops' repertoire comprising basically every functional category, except cooking wares.

In summary, Thespiai relied to an important extent (61.4 per cent) on local and regional provision of ceramic products, in particular open and closed

Table 12.7. *The pottery from beyond the Aegean, classified according to provenance and functional category, in absolute and relative quantities.*

Provenance	Amphorae	Table-wares	Cooking Wares	Oil Lamp	n	%
Italy	34	10	2	-	46	20.2
Iberian Peninsula	4	-	-	-	4	1.8
North Africa	15	120	2	1	138	60.5
Cyprus	-	1	-	-	1	0.4
Egypt	1	-	-	-	1	0.4
Palestine	5	-	-	-	5	2.2
Levant/Egypt	1	-	-	-	1	0.4
Cilicia	3	2	-	-	5	2.2
Cilicia/Cyprus	13	-	-	-	13	5.7
Black Sea	2	-	-	-	2	0.9
Aegean/Black Sea	12	-	-	-	12	5.3
Total	90	133	4	1	228	
%	39.5	58.3	1.8	0.4		100.0

table-wares as well as (presumably) cooking wares. On a wider geographical scale, the Aegean, including central Greece, provided another significant share of the pottery, some 29 per cent. Finally, Thespiai received pottery, largely amphorae and table-wares, from a variety of sources from across the Mediterranean throughout the LHELL to LR period (*c.* 9.5 per cent). Except for Tanagra, these proportions for the ceramic supply are roughly matched in the other cities surveyed by the Boeotia Project.

The 'Export' of Thespian and Boeotian Products.

By comparison with the manufacture and circulation within Boeotia of pottery manufactured at Thespiai and other Boeotian cities, very little is known about its *export* beyond the region's borders. Within Boeotia, some level of exchange took place between Tanagra, Thespiai and Koroneia. Hyettos in northern Boeotia was particularly closely connected to Koroneia for ceramic products and, although a local ceramic group of its own is associated with Hyettos, the available clays may not have been suitable for the manufacture of 'finer' products such as table-wares. Interestingly, the 53 fragments from Koroneia that were identified at Thespiai present a sharp contrast with the three Thespian fragments thus far recognized at Koroneia, among some 6000 fragments from a similar time-span. Given that the finds collection of Koroneia is estimated to consist of some 55,000–60,000 fragments, the Thespian contribution seems likely to prove negligible. But in general, it remains the case that Boeotian cities largely catered for their own ceramic requirements and for that of their respective territories. Unfortunately, we remain uninformed of the role played by cities such as Thebes, Orchomenos (which after Sulla's sack in the early first century BC survived as a minor centre) and other places, whether in terms of local manufacture or of any possible imports from, or exports to, other Boeotian cities.

Beyond the borders of Boeotia, little has been actually recognized. We know of products from Askra reaching Athens (Hayes 2008: 94, fig. 44) and Corinth (Slane and Sanders 2005: 259, fig. 5, 262, 267, fig. 8, 270, 284), while some of the local Thespian products can barely, if at all, be distinguished from the supposed 'Askra Ware'. This may be explained by the use of similar clays and/or firing technologies, but it is also very likely that products from Askra will have reached Thespiai, and *vice versa*. Particularly interesting is Hayes' observation concerning an example of a gouged jug from the Athenian Agora, that it 'seems related to the Boeotian products [*sc.* Askra/Thespiai Stamped Ware – PB] that follow' (Hayes 2008: 93; cf. below). Cursory examination by visiting colleagues further suggests that Boeotian table-wares (and other ceramic products) were scarcely marketed beyond the region. Finally, a beehive from Athens recalls a few examples from Boeotia, as does the fabric description (Rotroff 2001).

Pottery as a Proxy for the Fluctuations in Thespiai's Fortunes.

For the ceramics of Hellenistic Thespiai, a more comprehensive picture can be found in the preceding chapter. What is striking, however, is the most common appearance of Knidian amphorae by comparison to other major Aegean classes, a finding that emerges also for the other three main urban sites, Hyettos, Tanagra and Koroneia. Although a few Knidian and Rhodian stamps have been recorded, they are not enough to indicate any diachronic fluctuations in the import pattern. It is not impossible that we have here an indirect reflection of the massive import of Knidian amphorae on the part of Delos and Athens (Koehler and Wallace Matheson 2004; Grace 1985: 6–7). It remains uncertain whether those *negotiatores* presumed to have moved to Boeotia following the demise of Delos, drawn by the prospect of the 'commercialisation of agricultural wealth' (Chapter 3, p. 116), were originally responsible for these lines of exchange. The 'major phase of settlement' in Boeotia of these Italian men of business and other interests (Chapter 7, pp. 236–8), between 50 BC and AD 20, was certainly purposeful, but whether they in part explain the occurrence of Italic amphorae at Thespiai and elsewhere (though their chronology cannot be pinpointed with any great precision) remains an open question; the relative proximity of Boeotia and central Greece to Italy is a factor that should not be overlooked. In relation to this, it is worth noting that, although no stamps have been recorded in Boeotia, one Statilius Sisenna Taurus, known through epigraphic evidence from Boeotia (Marchand 2013), has been brought into connection with a villa estate near Loron on the Istrian peninsula, where amphorae were presumably manufactured of type Dressel 6B, used for the transport of olive oil (Marion and Starac 2001).

Roman stylistic influence also permeated the local economic organization, on the evidence of the presumably ER measuring cup found in the *Kastro* (Schachter and Marchand 2012: 295–9), testifying to the uninterrupted official control of the local economy during the period. The fabric of this intriguing object appears to fit the 'local/closer regional' range. A recently completed re-study of the Roman-period ceramic finds from Askra suggests that probably more was being manufactured and circulated from these local industries than merely our Askra and Thespiai groups.

This epigraphic and archaeological evidence may also be brought into connection with Strabo's observation that in Boeotia only Thespiai and Tanagra

'still endure, but of all the rest only ruins and names are left' (*Geographica* ix 2.25). In addition, Plutarch recorded (*Fragment* 82) that in his time Askra was uninhabited, and Pausanias' report (ix 29.2) from a little later confirms this. In the earlier second century BC, both Koroneia and Haliartos had been sacked by the Romans. The latter was never to be reoccupied, while the former had its surviving occupants sold into slavery, then repatriated under various limitations of action. This rather grim image of Boeotia, suggesting a region suffering an overall population decline, except for Thespiai and Tanagra (and even they are noted by Strabo as only 'moderately prosperous'), is not very easy to reconcile with the evidence for ceramic imports from such sites, most notably Koroneia. Koroneia, in fact, presents a relatively rich and varied repertoire of imported (L)HELL to ER pottery: study of part of the collected material thus far suggests no major gap in the ceramic sequence. The more intensive collection strategy could partly explain these higher counts; further, the absence of stratigraphic excavations at Koroneia and the lengthy date-ranges of some wares make it problematic to pin-point exactly the development of (imported) ceramic wares during the LHELL and ER periods. By contrast, only a handful of Italian pottery of HELL–ER date was identified at Hyettos, including a single, if uncertain, fragment of ITS (8 out of a *total* of 14,001 entries, or 0.06 per cent, compared with 45 out of a *total* of 14,345 entries [0.31 per cent] for Thespiai).

There is thus an apparent conflict in the evidence from, on the one hand, our surface surveys testifying to urban contraction at Thespiai and Hyettos (and probably at Tanagra and Koroneia too), supporting an apparent consensus in the historical sources; and, on the other, this quite significant import of exotic ceramics. Yet, rather than being simply contradictory, we might see this pattern as potentially informative on the divergent fates that befell the general indigenous population, the local élites and the immigrant Italian business community. Globalization and market integration were clearly reaching far beyond the main urban centres of the Roman empire and could also affect provincial settings at Thespiai and other Boeotian cities, as an effect of Roman absorption; yet they might have benefited only a narrow sector of society, while the remnant suffered depopulation and rural economic decline. A marked presence of foreign ceramic imports would be compatible with such a picture.

In ceramic terms, (L)HELL–LR Boeotia was wedged in between the Italian peninsula and the Aegean and, by extension, the Mediterranean and Pontic basins. In broader terms, Central Greece occupies an intermediate level: here, only a trickle of Corinthian and Athenian table-wares or oil lamps, and a handful of possible cooking ware fragments from Methana, can be identified, even though Corinth lay just opposite on the other coast of the Corinthian Gulf and Athens was reachable by road too. The festivals that were organized (Mouseia, Erotideia) also created significant foci for the production, consumption and circulation of goods (Osborne and Müller, this volume, Chapters 6 and 7; Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 367; Migeotte 2009: 129–31); they formed one of several channels through which local communities could become aware of new products, their shapes, decoration, or contents. In the case of Thespiai, however, there is some support for the idea that, relatively speaking, she was better connected to the 'western' than to the Aegean exchange patterns (see below). Her ancient port at Kreusis on the Corinthian Gulf (the bay at modern (Paralia) Livadostras), some 10 km south as the crow flies and probably about 15 km on foot, was used by Republican Roman armies to enter Boeotia (Chapter 7, pp. 231–2); goods and persons surely found their way to Thespiai and into Boeotia by this port (Arnaud 2015: 2–3).

The presence of Roman citizens, as well as the administrative status of Thespiai, contributed to its prosperity during the early Empire (see again Chapter 7). The presumed increase in Mediterranean-wide exchange under the peaceful conditions of the time, did leave its limited mark in the ceramic record (*e.g.* the Spanish and Cilician amphorae). But our insight into ER Thespiai relies more on other classes of evidence than that of pottery. During the MR and LR periods, there are signs that speak in favour of a more western orientation of ceramic supply. For example, the ratio between diagnostic ARSW (MR–LR, from Tunisia) and (Phocaean) LRC (LR, western Turkey) for the four Boeotian cities suggests that Thespiai and Koroneia, in western Boeotia, received comparatively more ARSW (*i.e.* 'western') imports (Table 12.8). It is noteworthy that a similar ratio between ITS and Eastern sigillatae seems to bear this out. The route via the Corinthian Gulf seems the more likely point of entry for these western products, although the stronger presence and more varied character of the ARSW at Tanagra suggests that, at times, different routes and redistributive mechanisms could perhaps have existed. The notion of 'western' and 'eastern' products is explored more fully elsewhere (Bes forthcoming b); suffice to say here that Thespiai and Koroneia on the one hand, and Tanagra and Hyettos on the other, in part belonged to different spheres when it came to the supply of Aegean and Mediterranean ceramic categories. A similar pattern can be observed for Corinth's eastern harbour Kenchreai, where cultural influences also generally have a stronger easterly emphasis (Pettegrew 2007: 776, n. 97; Rife *et al*. 2007: esp. 148, 167).

Table 12.8. *Absolute quantities of, and the ratios between, ARSW and LRC (above) and ITS and Eastern* sigillatae *(below), for the four major Boeotian urban sites surveyed by the Project.*

n			ratio	
ARSW	LRC		ARSW	LRC
35	2	Koroneia	17.5	1
69	11	Thespiai	6.3	1
183	53	Tanagra	3.5	1
29	15	Hyettos	1.9	1
ITS	ES		ITS	ES
10	8	Thespiai	1.3	1
6	22	Koroneia	0.3	1
28	116	Tanagra	0.2	1
1	11	Hyettos	0.1	1

As mentioned earlier, the MR and above all the LR periods provide the clearest and densest ceramic data. The MR is largely represented by local/regional as well as imported table-wares (110 out of a total of 150 entries). Only two cooking ware entries – lids, imported – were recognized. This prompts us to explore, at least theoretically, the possibilities for incorporating the chronologically less diagnostic material (see below).

The LR material, more intensively even than in the preceding periods since LHELL times at the site, remains focused on the *Kastro* with its eastern 'suburb', with presumed cemetery zones beyond the halo. The five churches, including a possible Episcopal church within the *Kastro* enceinte, signify a Christianized religious landscape; the north and east churches were presumably surrounded by cemeteries (Chapter 3, pp. 118–9; cf. Rife *et al*. 2007: 144). Thespiai remained fairly well connected to Mediterranean exchange patterns, though this was still largely an Aegean affair (Table 12.9), with only token quantities of western and eastern products.

Thespiai, and Boeotia more generally, may have been experiencing the ripple effect of the new geopolitical and economic configuration, following the growth in importance of Constantinople. While developments and outcomes may have followed variable temporal paths, the fact that the prime centre of gravity of the Empire was now closer at hand should have had positive effects on Boeotian society and the regional economy. At least, this is believed to have happened more directly at Tanagra, which may have grasped the opportunity to become incorporated into a broader imperial economic system (Abadie-Reynal 1989; Karagiorgou 2001); similar, if less direct, effects can be noted elsewhere (Poblome *et al*. 2008). Perhaps the initiation of amphora manufacture at Delion (Gerousi 2014), Tanagra's harbour, should be seen in the same light.

The intensity of LR occupation may possibly have been overestimated (cf. Pettegrew 2007), although Thespiai, like other urban and rural sites in Boeotia, definitely maintained a fairly high level of occupation and activity. The evidence for an EBYZ phase, scarce though it may be, suggests at least some sort of limited continuity of activity, following the demise of Roman political and economic hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. How far the earthquake of AD 551 (Procopius viii. 25, 16–18) disrupted the urban and rural frameworks of Boeotia is not clear. A single fragment of ARSW, possibly of Hayes form 109, postdates this earthquake, along with a small group of perhaps seventh-century table-wares (cf. pp. 330–2), although to consider this as the 'missing link' between the LR and EBYZ periods might be stretching the evidence too far. Similarly late pieces are recognized at Hyettos (a presumed mid-seventh century ARSW plate (Bonifay 2004: 183–5, fig. 98.8), as well as a fragment of Slav Ware of seventh- to tenth-century date: A. Vionis, *pers. comm*.) and at Tanagra (*e.g*. Hayes forms 105 (not only early variants), 107, 108; but no late (Phocaean) LRC whatsoever).

It is in the MR and especially, once again, the LR periods that evidence for local pottery manufacture emerges more clearly. These MR and LR products encourage belief in experienced and 'profitable' local ceramic workshops, which in turn suggests some kind of up-turn in the economic life at the city, whatever its scale: this view is certainly preferable to the (perhaps outdated) perception of local manufacture as a sign that socio-economic conditions have deteriorated. When such local pottery production ceased altogether is something that cannot be determined on the basis of the current evidence from survey.

Such a picture fits well with the recovery in rural settlement around Thespiai in MR–LR times (*Testing the Hinterland*: 155–66), even though it is becoming commoner to question whether this LR 'boom-and-bust' in the Greek countryside was as dramatic or lasting as

Table 12.9. *The MR and LR pottery classified by provenance, in absolute and relative quantities.*

	MR		LR	
Provenance	n	%	n	%
Aegean/Greece	17	11.3	313	17.0
EastMed	0	0.0	18	1.0
WestMed	52	34.7	43	2.3
Other/Undef.	54	36.0	1004	54.7
Boeotia/Thespiai	27	18.0	458	24.9
Total	150	100.0	1836	100.0

the survey data, taken at face value, suggest (as argued for the Thespian countryside in *Testing the Hinterland* and, for the Corinthian countryside, in Pettegrew 2007). We remain uninformed as to the degree to which the Thespian wares supplied the countryside as well: we are assuming that pottery manufacture mostly took place in and around the LR *Kastro* (but see Table 12.5 and Fig. 12.17: not all the wasters were clearly datable, and this material has not been re-studied). The parties involved in the local production are equally unidentified, but the options clearly include the landowning church (cf. Poblome and Brulet 2005), and the occupants of the military settlement.

Current insights allow us to picture a mostly internal, localized circulation within Boeotia proper for the output of each city, with Hyettos as the main exception. There are considerable differences between Koroneia – for which no definitive data are available yet – and Thespiai, when it comes to the proportion of local, regional and imported table-wares ('Food Consumption', Table 12.10): the percentages of local products at Koroneia, especially for the ER and MR periods, are strikingly high, even allowing for the fact that the typo-chronological framework of the local ceramic output there is 'work in progress'. Koroneia continues to stand out if one assumes that the 'Unidentified' category represents solely local and/or Boeotian products. Elsewhere, it is already clear that the ARSW attested at Thespiai and Tanagra shows diverging trajectories (Peeters *et al*. in press). As so far studied, the development of ARSW at Tanagra and Thespiai, and in their respective hinterlands, follows a fairly similar pattern from the early third century to the first decades of the fifth, but from then on Tanagra remained well-supplied with ARSW, whilst that at Thespiai dropped to limited quantities. The as yet unpublished evidence from Hyettos and Koroneia makes it clear that their import patterns are more in line with that of Thespiai than with that of Tanagra. In fact, within Boeotia, such is the diversity of the ceramic repertoire at Tanagra, with amphorae in particular, that it becomes ever clearer that Tanagra does not readily invite comparison with other parts of Boeotia (except in part with Hyettos, cf. Bes forthcoming b); instead, it followed a substantially divergent economic trajectory. The degree of accessibility to open Mediterranean waters is one factor that seems to have played an important role; Koroneia, a more land-locked place, was perhaps more focused on self-sufficiency and the intra-regional supply of, *inter alia*, its pottery, in particular to Hyettos, and possessed the (natural) resources for this. Yet Koroneia was not isolated, as is shown by its variety of long-distance imports; while its placing on the traditional main road from southern to northern Greece where it runs through Boeotia, connecting it with neighbouring regions, was also important here (Farinetti 2011: 45, fig. 5). In that context, it is worth noticing that only Koroneia (Cronias), along with Chaeroneia (Ceroni), are marked on the Peutinger Table.

To conclude, a few words can be said about the agricultural and other economic bases as explanatory factors for the strongly local and closer regional supply of pottery that is observed. The valley of Thespiai offers fertile and versatile land: 'As almost all of the land is potentially cultivable, though with varying yield and crop range, the overall carrying capacity of the land will be above the average for Greece' (Shiel and Stewart 2007: 106; see also Farinetti 2011: 54, fig. 3), and it is further argued that at times of lower population density – as in the LR period – soil fertility was comparatively better sustained (Shiel

Table 12.10. *Sherds classified under 'Food Consumption' (local, regional and imported) for Thespiai and Koroneia, in absolute and relative quantities.*

Thespiai								
n	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**		**%**	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**
Thespiai	2	16	50		Thespiai	3.2	14.8	14.7
Boeotia	6	7	81		Boeotia	9.7	6.5	23.8
Imported	15	55	67		Imported	24.2	50.9	19.6
Undef.	39	30	143		Undef.	62.9	27.8	41.9
Total	62	108	341		*Total*	100.0	100.0	100.0
Koroneia								
n	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**		**%**	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**
Koroneia	126	115	40		Koroneia	78.8	81.0	51.3
Boeotia		2	1		Boeotia		1.4	1.3
Imported	10	7	27		Imported	6.3	4.9	34.6
Undef.	24	18	10		Undef.	15.0	12.7	12.8
Total	160	142	78		*Total*	100.0	100.0	100.0

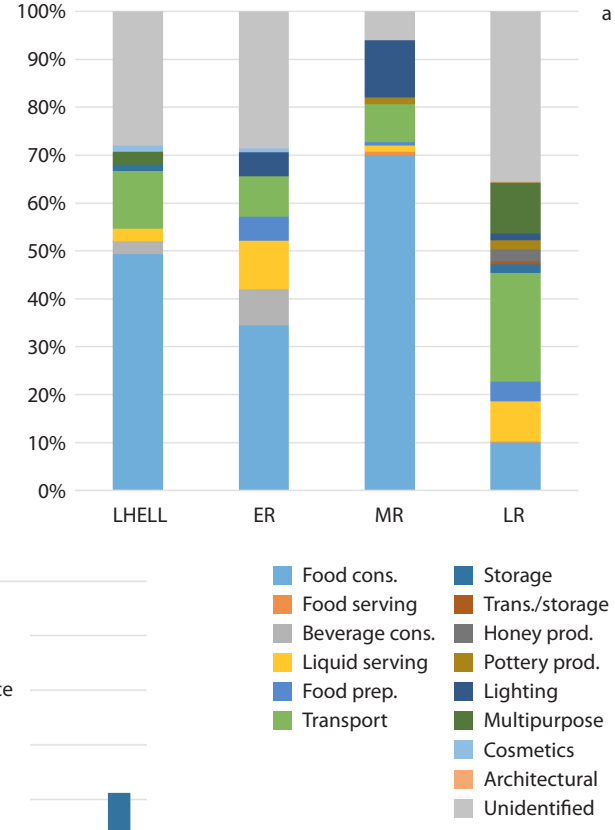
and Stewart 2007: 106). At times, however, Boeotia relied on external agricultural supplies (Rhodes and Osborne 2003: 486–93) and, more importantly, the use and arrangement of the land fluctuated through time (Bintliff *et al*. 2007: *passim*; Pernin 2004). That said, soil composition and variety permitted a mixed land use that included the growing of cereals, tree crops (*e.g*. olives) and vegetables, but also animal grazing (Shiel and Stewart 2007: 108–9, Appendix 1; Migeotte 2009: 75, 82, 88; Rackham 1983), while bee-keeping and thus honey production are archaeologically attested, and it is not unthinkable that the honey was used as a flavourer for wine produced in the area. The depiction of Demeter/Kore, with corn wreaths, on coinage of the Boeotian federacy might reflect Boeotia's agricultural prosperity (see Chapter 14). In the nearby Valley of the Muses, beehive fragments comprise a remarkable 62 per cent (at least) of the total ceramic finds from the Late Antique period (Vroom 2004: 321, with table 2B), although their easier recognisability may favour them in such counts of diagnostic fragments. Higher percentages of beehives are anyway somewhat to be expected, if not unequivocally (see further below) in the more rural or less densely built-up areas.

Functional zoning: ceramic assemblages and use

Functional parameters

Pottery is potentially also of help in defining functional zones within a settlement – that is, in pinpointing areas that, at certain points in the settlement's existence, were used for distinct purposes: occupation and activities of a domestic, commercial, public, artisanal/industrial, or religious nature. The problems that face us with this task, in the case of survey archaeology, are best illustrated on the basis of several charts.

Fig. 12.13a–b shows the single-period data, classified first according to (supposed) function. As we have already seen, the quantities attributed to these four (single) periods differ widely, and we were only moderately successful in finding means to overcome this problem. The chart reveals other things too: first, the high percentages for 'Food Consumption' for the LHELL, ER and especially the MR periods. This supports the notion that LHELL–LR red slip table-wares are not only relatively more recognisable in the field, but are also better identifiable in the subsequent study phase, that is typo-chronologically (a point that is rightly raised elsewhere). Yet the emphasis should not lie exclusively on table-wares: a second point of interest is the considerable share of *functionally unidentified* pottery (28–35.6 per cent), except for the MR period where it is much lower (6 per cent). This latter point is presumably related to the previous one, when applied



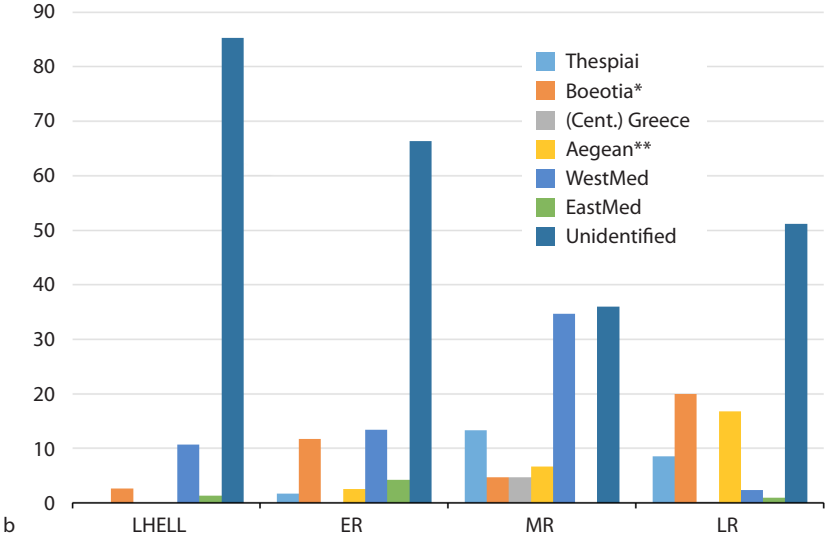


Figure 12.13a–b. *The single-period data classified by function (a – above), and by provenance (b – left), in relative quantities. *Casserole (fabric) is tentatively considered to be Boeotian for this purpose, and **Kapitän II tentatively considered as Aegean.*

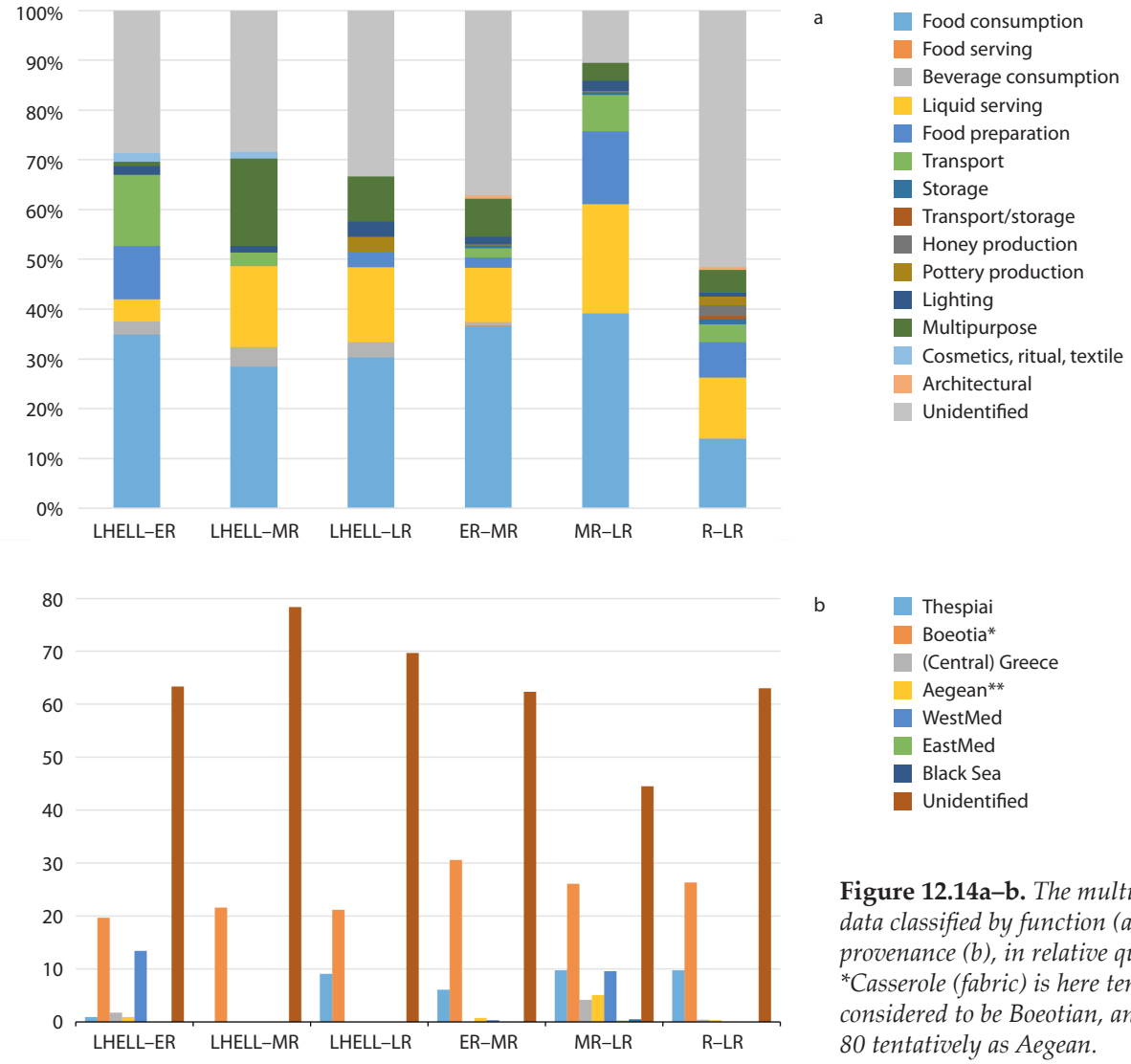


Figure 12.14a–b. *The multi-period data classified by function (a) and by provenance (b), in relative quantities. *Casserole (fabric) is here tentatively considered to be Boeotian, and **Zeest 80 tentatively as Aegean.*

to survey material. Although we try to retrieve different strands of information from each sherd – shape, supposed function, chronology, and so on – the rate of success is considerably lower than with excavated material. One further handicap, already mentioned, is the inherent 'palimpsest' character of survey pottery: together with fragmentation, it makes it difficult to associate a specific part of the material with a specific period or function. In Fig. 12.13a above, only for the LR period (omitting the 'Unidentified' group) do the proportions begin to approach a generalized pattern of expectation for functional proportions, as derived from excavation data. The multi-period material is of little help here (Fig. 12.14a–b): although we are still confronted with a substantial element of unidentified entries, the percentages for 'Food Consumption' are less dominant, which could be taken to strengthen the argument just made above: here again, they begin to approach the ranges we encounter in excavation data. Also noteworthy, at least for the periods other than the 'LHELL–ER' and 'MR–LR', is that the percentages for 'Food Preparation' are surprisingly low and do not match the higher ranges suggested by excavation data. Thirdly, in both the single- and multi-period data, the functional category 'Transport' shows percentages that are, once again, lower than one would expect (they are highest for the LR period at 22.7 per cent), and may thus be under-represented in the collected data. That no sherds at all were classified as 'Transport' for the widest 'LHELL–LR' period suggests a higher degree of chronological precision than, for instance, for 'Food Preparation'.

The question of course is, what are we looking for? A city such as Thespiai, throughout its existence, comprised zones with different functions, some of which we can no longer observe. Chapter 3 discusses

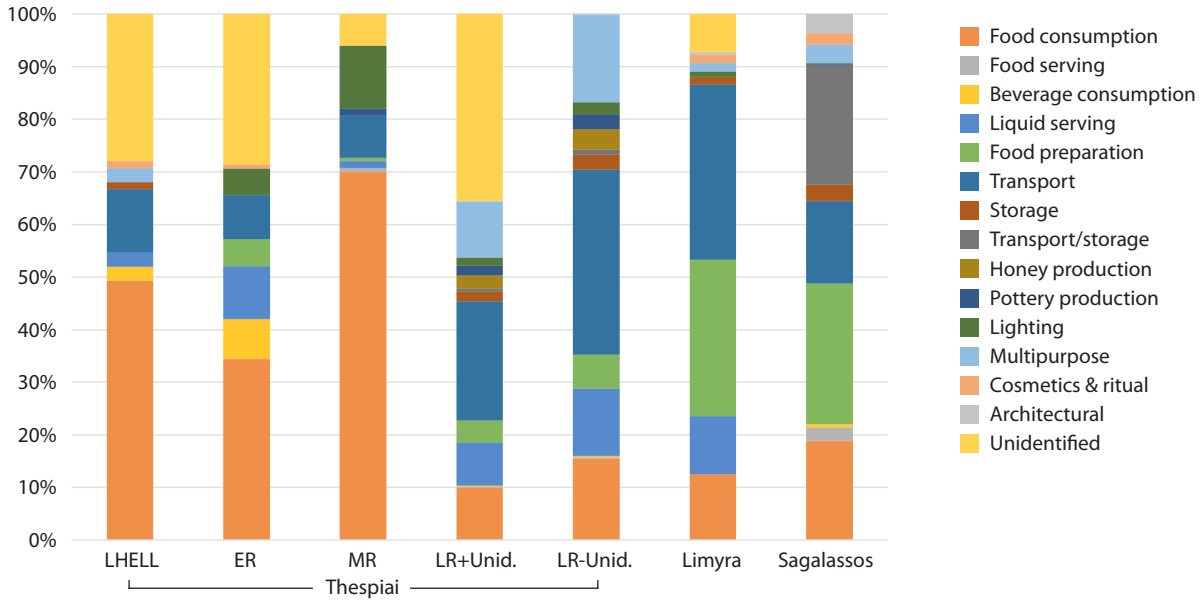


Figure 12.15. *Sherds from Thespiai, Sagalassos and Limyra classified according to function, in relative quantities. Some 26 residual or intrusive pieces have been omitted here (compare also Table 12.4).*

a reconstruction of Thespiai for, among other periods, the HELL to LR. This generally involves an urban core, surrounded by a site 'halo' and one or more cemetery zones, with the shifts that may have occurred therein. Elsewhere, experiments have been carried out in trying to tease out spatial-functional associations (Bintliff 2013: 197–8), though obviously a range of different factors could underlie any such association (Given 2004: especially table 2.2).

The data from Thespiai as such do not appear reliable enough for a very detailed investigation of the surface material. Given that the LR period was the last major phase of occupation, and assuming as a matter of convenience a settlement of generally domestic occupation, especially in the *Kastro* zone, a comparison with the two LR excavated contexts from Limyra and Sagalassos shows considerable discrepancies (Fig. 12.15). Data from these contexts were used earlier (Table 12.4) to point out the disproportions in diagnostic fragments, as between the three sites. One might question the appropriateness of drawing on these contexts, as both assemblages from Asia Minor involve secondary deposits, at the same time reflecting different urban contexts: semi-public/commercial and possibly domestic waste respectively. But they show what we presume to be more balanced functional proportions. The most significant difference can be observed for the functional category 'Food Preparation': the percentages from both excavation samples range between 26.8 per cent and 29.7 per cent, figures which may need to be reduced a little, to take account of the generally higher breakage rate of cooking wares; but for Thespiai, the proportion does not exceed 5 per cent, or 6.4 per cent when the 'Unidentified' category is omitted. Surprisingly these cooking wares, despite being not only less visible but also less precisely diagnostic, do not yield substantially higher figures in the proportions of the multi-period surface material either. The three main categories in the excavation samples are 'Food Consumption' (12.5–18.9 per cent), 'Food Preparation' (26.8–29.7 per cent) and 'Transport' (15.6–33.4 per cent). At Thespiai, apart from 'Food Preparation', it is only the figures in the 'LR–Unid.' column that very roughly invite comparison in the excavation data.

Pettegrew's functional analysis (Table 12.11), dealing in larger and wider categories, conforms better

Table 12.11. *Pettegrew's functional classification compared with that used at Thespiai, in relative quantities.*

Pettegrew 2007	%-range	≈Function	Excavation (LR)	Thespiai (LHELL–LR)
Fine Wares	6–10% (<15%)	≈Food+Beverage Consumption	12.5–22%	10–70%
Amphorae	33–66%	≈Transport (mostly)	33.4–38.5%	8–22.7%
Cooking Wares	1–30%	≈Food Preparation	26.8–29.7%	0.7–5%
Plain Wares	20–50%	≈Liquid Serving+Multipurpose?	3.5–12.6%?	1.3–19%

overall to the excavation data presented here, although he rightly emphasizes that he does not seek 'to establish a standard of proportions', and the exceptions that he himself refers to underscore that point (Pettegrew 2007: 765–9). Here, the only real exception occurs with Pettegrew's category 'Plain Wares': neither the percentages for Thespiai nor those for the comparative excavated material match Pettegrew's, assuming of course that the analogous categories are chosen correctly. Given the evaluation of the proportions of diagnostic fragments in Table 12.4 and Fig. 12.1, any attempt to perform the same exercise by using only rims, bases and handles would not lead to more satisfactory results.

Table 12.12. *A summary of the various methods of redistribution.*

Method	Description
1	Depiction of the single-period data
2	Grouping of the diagnostic pottery of Method 1 into two chronological blocks: LHELL–MR and LR
3	Proportional division of the multi-period data across the periods they are dated to
4	Redistribution of the multi-period data across the periods they are dated to, taking the variable lengths of the periods in question into account
5	Adding the multi-period data to the last period to which they are dated
6	Redistributing the multi-period data across the four single periods, based on the proportions of the data attributed to these single periods
7	Redistributing the result of Method 6 across intervals of 50 years

Table 12.13a. *Method 1 of redistribution, with the results of applying Methods 2 to 6 to the multi-period data, in absolute quantities.*

		LHELL	ER	MR	LR
Method 1	Single Period	75	119	150	1836
Method 2	Two Periods	344			1836
Method 3	Equal	89	1000	1158	795
Method 4	Period Length	570	761	761	951
Method 5	To Upper Period		112	751	2179
Method 6	Period %	105	166	209	2562

Single and multi-period data combined

One exercise that can be carried out, to make more sense of the data in question, is to apply a number of *redistributive* techniques, aimed at incorporating the multi-period data into the picture. This does nothing to resolve their multi-period character; the aim is rather to attempt to set minimum and maximum quantitative boundaries for all the data, so as to explore theoretically the ratio of difference between the four (single) periods in question, as well as compensating for the supposed poorer visibility and representativeness of older periods, and/or of certain functional categories. Although this admittedly implies a linear function for this latter factor, we must at the same time consider ways of incorporating the chronologically less precise material – some 65 per cent of the whole!

These techniques have previously been applied to a portion of the data from Tanagra: Table 12.12 picks out the essence of the seven stages of the technique used, while Table 12.13a–b and Fig. 12.16 contain the results of applying these techniques to the single- and multi-period data.

What we can extract, using the single-period data and that of methods 3 to 6, are lower and upper quantitative boundaries, providing us with some freedom to explore theoretically the quantitative and chronological limits of the data (the upper segment of Table 12.14 below). The rows 'Single + Min.' and 'Single + Max.' in Table 12.14 show the minimum and maximum quantities assignable to each individual period, added to each single-period count. The heading 'Increase Factor' gives an idea of the comparison between the redistributed data and the single-period data. It is interesting to observe the downward linear trend across the periods, which might lend support to the idea that, on multi-period sites such as Thespiai, the earlier the phase, the less well it is represented on the surface. This would in turn reinforce the case that, of all four periods discussed here, the ER is the most poorly represented. The 'true' ratios may lie somewhere in the middle (the middle segment of Table 12.14): the 'Increase Factor' based on the average values – the total of methods 3 to 6 divided by four – instead of on minimum and maximum values, gives rather different ratios; only that for the LR period is

Table 12.13b. *The results of applying Method 7 of redistribution to the multi-period data, in absolute quantities, for 50-year chronological intervals.*

		Chronological interval															
Method 7	Proportion+ Length	150–101	100–51	50–1	1–50	51–100	101–150	151–200	201–250	251–300	301–350	351–400	401–450	451–500	501–550	551–600	601–650
		50.0	50.0	50.0	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	52.3	52.3	52.3	52.3	512.4	512.4	512.4	512.4	512.4

Table 12.14. *A comparison of increase factors, based on minimum, maximum and average values, in absolute quantities for the four periods.*

	LHELL	ER	MR	LR
Single Period	75	119	150	1836
Minimum	0	112	209	795
Maximum	570	1000	1158	2562
Single+Min.	75	231	359	2631
Single+Max.	645	1119	1308	4398
Increase Factor	8.6	4.8	3.6	1.7
	LHELL	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**
Single Period	75	119	150	1836
Average	191	510	720	1622
Single+Average	266	629	870	3458
Increase Factor	3.5	5.3	5.8	1.9
	LHELL	**ER**	**MR**	**LR**
Increase Factor	8.6	4.8	3.6	1.7
Increase Factor	3.5	5.3	5.8	1.9

roughly the same. Again, the representativeness of the data is seen to be far from ideal.

A further small experiment may bring more balance to the problematic category of 'Food Preparation', if for convenience we identify this with the functional category 'Cooking Wares'. Whereas the percentages for the 'Single-Period' and especially the 'Multi-Period' vary wildly, when those of the 'Multi-Period' are distributed *evenly* across their respective periods (Table 12.15) and these are then added to the 'Single-Period' data, proportions emerge that, at least for the ER to LR periods, appear more 'realistic' when compared to Table 12.11 (Pettegrew's classification).

In Chapter 3 (*passim*), repeated attempts were made to interpret the multi-period data, in relation to the single-period distribution maps of finds. To take a notable instance, the spatial pattern of the MR–LR sherds was found to mimic the ER distribution far more closely than that of LR, suggesting that the majority of this cross-period class might be used to boost

Table 12.15. *Even redistribution of the relative quantities of the multi-period material of 'Food Preparation'.*

				LHELL	ER	MR	LR
Single-period				0.0	5.0	0.7	4.1
	Total %	Period	Division Factor				
Multi-period	10.7	LHELL–ER	2	5.4	5.4		
	3.0	LHELL–LR	4	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
	2.1	ER–MR	2		1.1	1.1	
	14.7	MR–LR	2			7.4	7.4
	7.0	R–LR	3		2.3	2.3	2.3
Total				6.1	14.5	12.2	14.5

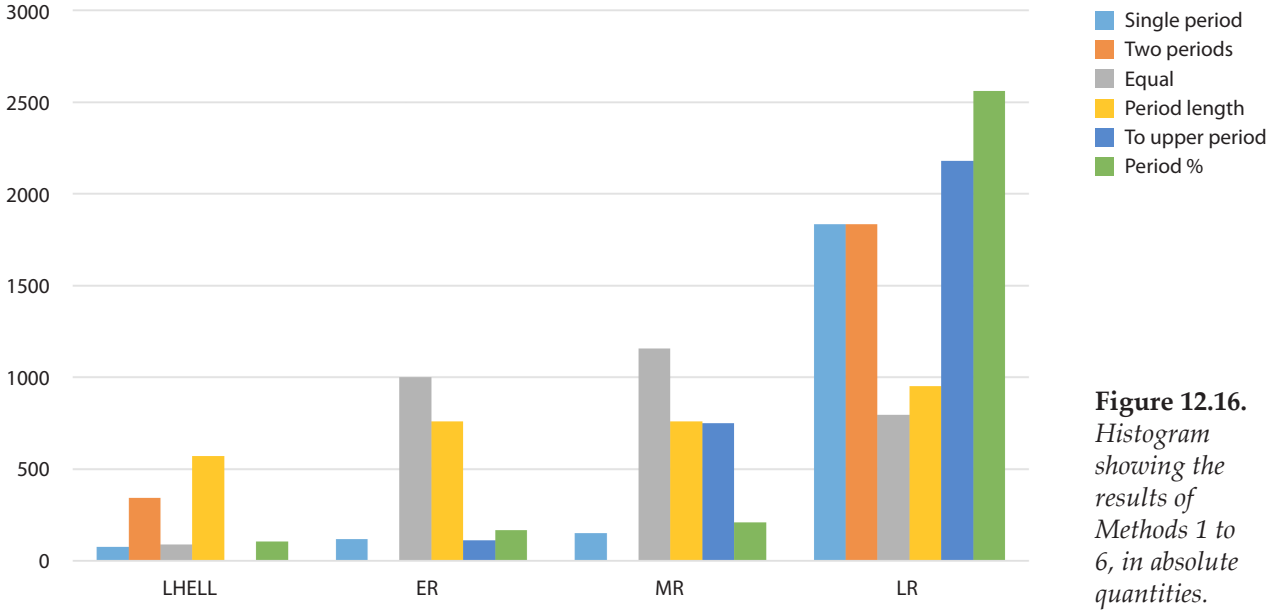


Figure 12.16. *Histogram showing the results of Methods 1 to 6, in absolute quantities.*

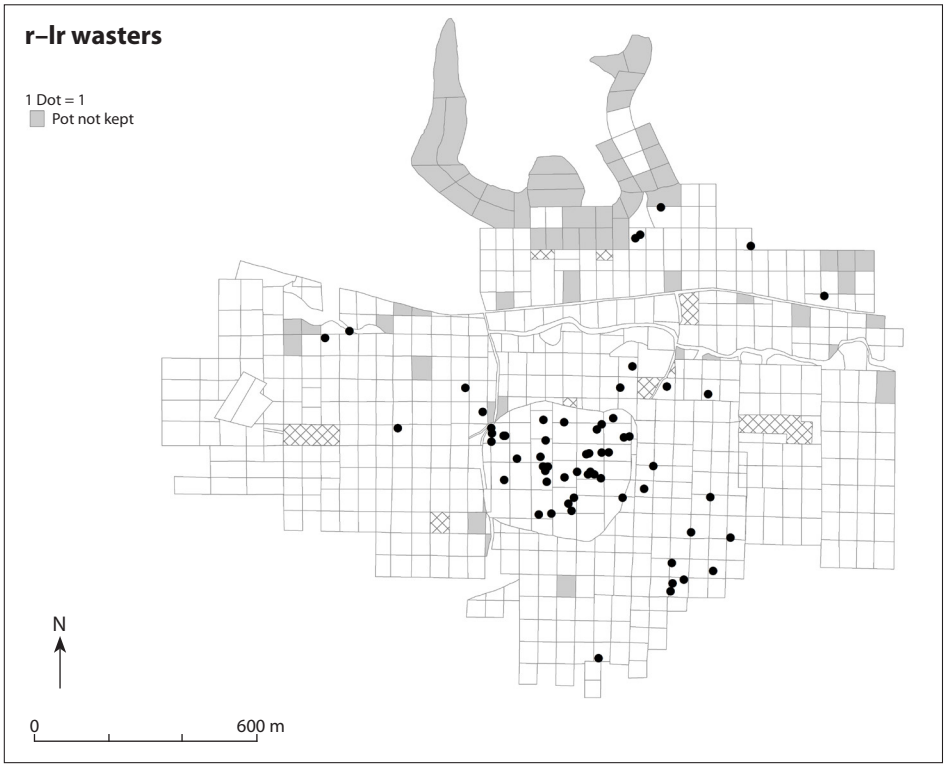


Figure 12.17. *Spatial distribution of Roman-period waster fragments (based on Fig. 3.77).*

the under-represented centuries of the MR period (see above, pp. 120–22 with Fig. 3.78*)*. While the chapter in question should be consulted for specific examples and further argumentation, the two approaches only partly overlap in their attempts to incorporate the multi-period data. For one thing, the techniques of redistribution do not capture the same spatial depth as is offered by detailed map analysis. The message should be that no single approach or method is likely to deliver an acceptable solution. The truth may well lie somewhere in the proverbial middle, to be found by a combination of these (and perhaps other) approaches.

Functional dimensions

To go a little deeper into functional zoning, a limited series of specific maps may serve to highlight distribution patterns that can shed additional, albeit limited, light on the functional use of space within urban Thespiai. These five examples, therefore, may be seen as 'windows', assisting as supporting evidence for broader ideas and interpretations put forward in this chapter and elsewhere in this volume.

The first, repeated from Chapter 3, shows the spread of sherds identified as wasters (n=91), that is fragments that reflect actual pottery production in and around R to LR Thespiai (Fig. 12.17, to be taken with Table 12.5). One can observe an obvious scatter within the confines of the *Kastro*, although not every piece at Thespiai belongs to the LR phase. This might reflect pre-LR ceramic activities, or the fact that not all wasters were clearly datable, but we might in any case expect artisanal activities taking place in urban centres by the LR period (Uleners and Poblome 2014). It is also of interest that LR wasters, albeit not many, were found well beyond the *Kastro* as well, up to a distance of 400–500 m, not all of them in zones interpreted as still in permanent occupation at this time. Again, several explanations present themselves: first, that settlement activity did in fact take place, but not on a scale that survey archaeology is able to detect; secondly, that these wasters were once embedded in the garbage produced by the *Kastro*, and later wheeled out to the immediate environs as fertilizer, or simply to get rid of it; thirdly, that LR Thespiai, comprising the *Kastro* and an eastern suburb, was surrounded by five cemetery zones, with an intermediate suburban 'halo' zone. The eastern and northern cemetery zones are each held to be linked to a church. LR finds are not uncommon in these latter zones, but the northern cemetery zone also produced two wasters, the eastern none. It was not uncommon for burial zones to be spatially associated with artisanal activities (Poblome

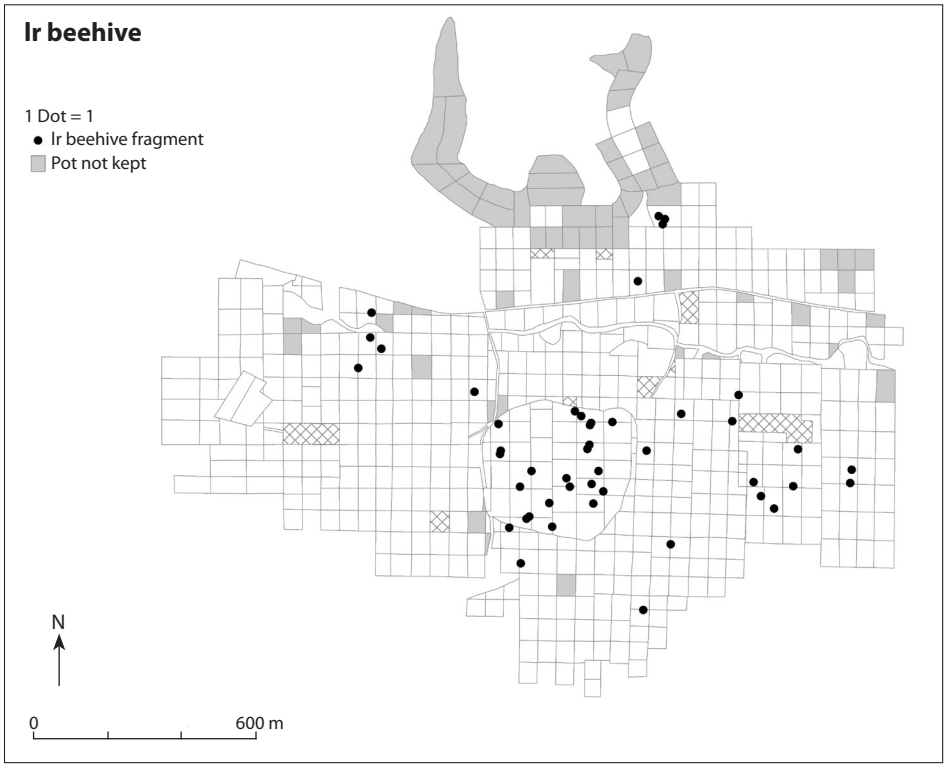


Figure 12.18. *Spatial distribution of LR beehive fragments.*

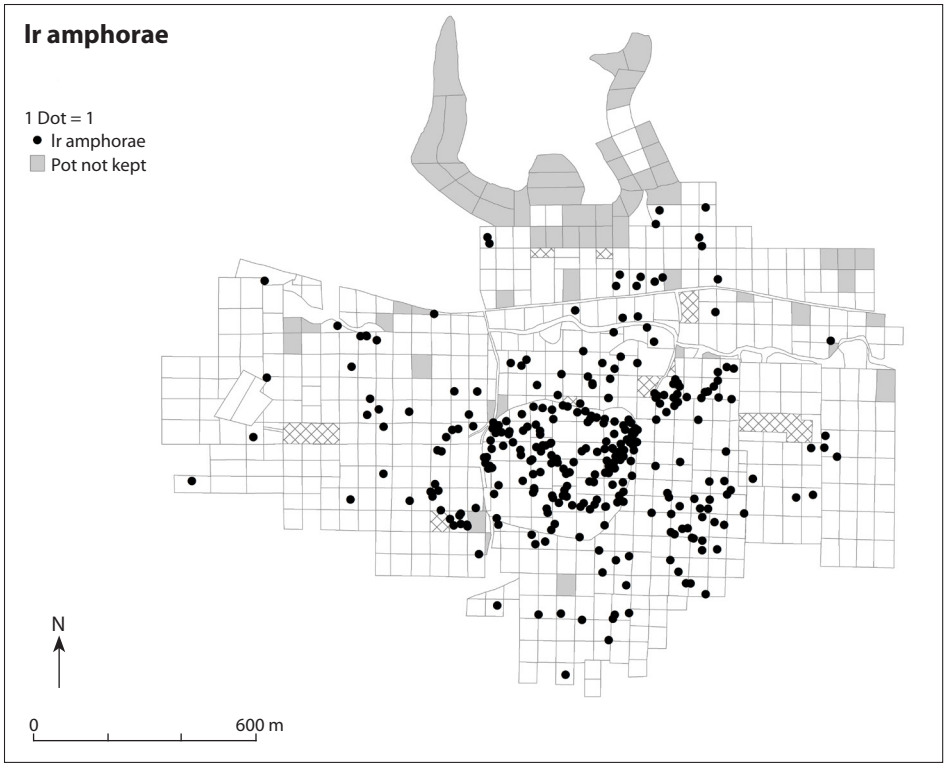


Figure 12.19. *Spatial distribution of LR amphora fragments.*

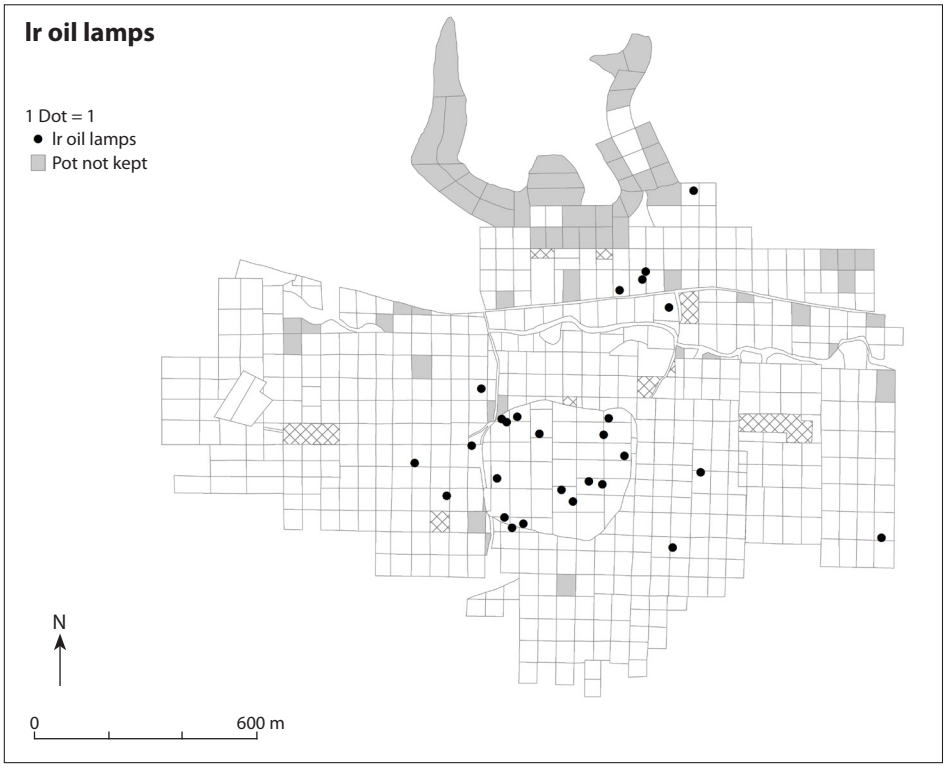


Figure 12.20. *Spatial distribution of LR oil lamp fragments.*

et al. 2001), yet any clue for such activity at Thespiai must remain tentative.

Attention should also be paid to what happened in both zones afterwards. Both churches continued to exist in MBYZ and F times, with a village core surrounding each. The material from these post-LR settlement foci, in much the same way as the LR pottery obscures LHELL, ER and MR Thespiai within what was to become the *Kastro*, obstructs any clear-cut interpretation. At the same time, we find only a few LR wasters to the west of the *Kastro*, where supposedly no post-LR occupation had developed. All this points to a relatively limited scale, either of pottery production, or of the subsequent disposal of waste. The only possible exception is a thin scatter that extends to the south-east of the *Kastro*, in between two supposed cemetery zones, which may yet still be part of, or reflect, the occupied area. This notion finds support not only in the general urban-rural model for Thespiai, but also in the fact that only a single waster was recognized in the rural survey (*Testing the Hinterland*: 237, hamlet Site LSE 7, dated MR–LR). Although the pottery from the rural survey was not re-studied, the presence of numerous wasters there can be excluded. This piece, found about 1 km south of the *Kastro*, is better explained as the product of limited local production at Site LSE7, rather than as the result of waste disposal from the *Kastro*, at this considerable distance. It may be worth noting that no imported table-wares of MR–LR date were collected at LSE 7 (Peeters *et al*. in press).

A second, and potentially partly related map, shows the distribution of LR beehive fragments (Fig. 12.18). Although beehives are difficult to date, rim fragments do bear some resemblance to the rim profiles of plain wares, at least in the Boeotian context. Once again, one can observe a fair number of fragments within the *Kastro* and a more dispersed scatter to its east. Of possible interest are the two small scatters to the north and to the north-west of the *Kastro*, both of them areas where we noted one or more LR ceramic wasters. In the overall maps of LR pottery in Chapter 3 (Figs. 3.76, 3.78 and 3.79), denser pottery scatters occur in both these zones; yet regardless of their small size, the coincidence of these two foci of wasters and beehive fragments may hint at some combination of agricultural and artisanal activities, at a limited distance from the main occupied area. Both areas also fall within what have been recognized as cemetery zones; we may perhaps envisage small-scale activities, possibly with non-permanent installations, at negligible distances from the *Kastro*, in a zone that is no longer urban but not yet rural either.

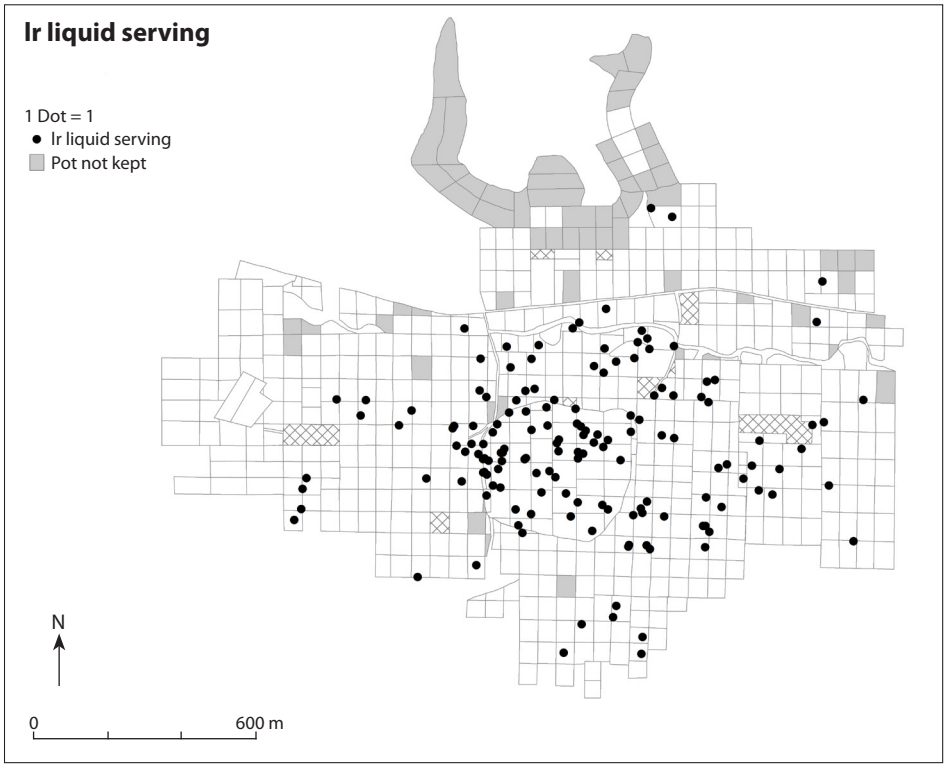
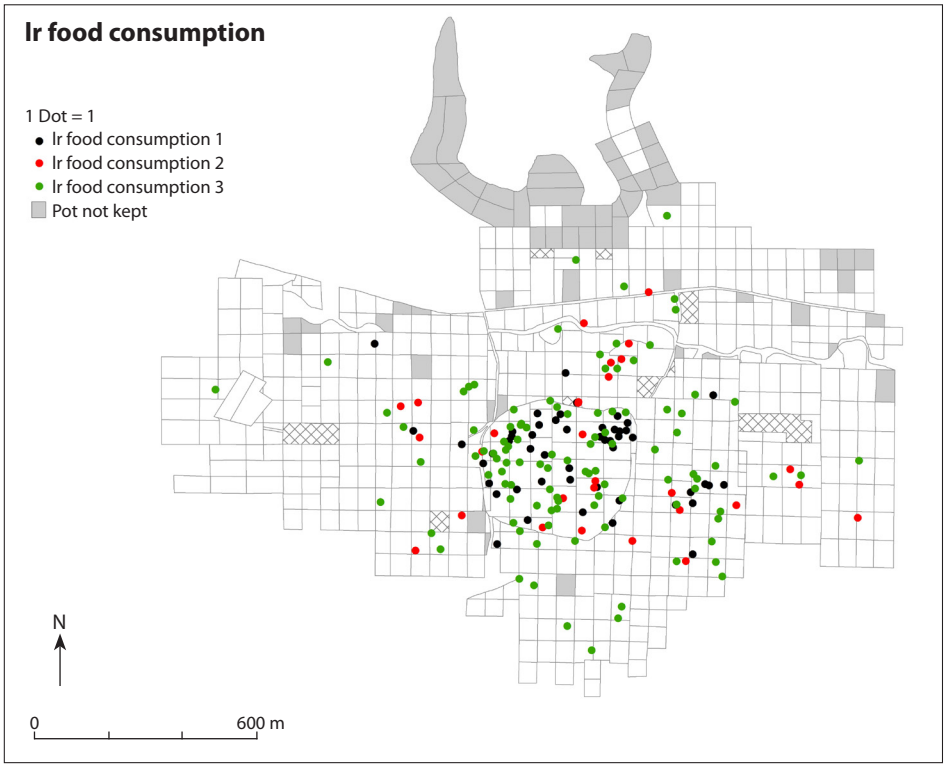


Figure 12.21. *Spatial distribution of LR 'Liquid Serving' fragments – mostly jugs.*

A third map may again be related, even if only on questionable premises. Fig. 12.19 shows the distribution of LR amphorae. Yet again, we note a heavy concentration within the *Kastro*, a thin scatter to its west and a more widespread dispersal to its east. Further afield the scatter thins out and, although a waste-disposal explanation cannot be ruled out, some of these areas are interpreted as cemetery zones. LR burial customs regularly included tile graves, yet burials in reused amphorae are also attested. Most archaeological examples of this practice, however, seem to come from the western Mediterranean, whether or not this reflects a genuine discrepancy in ancient custom, rather than in research and publication. Even if this is an intriguing idea, it cannot be archaeologically substantiated: the occurrence of LR amphorae beyond the immediately occupied area cannot yet be taken to imply the presence of cemetery zones.

Fourth, and to be taken in conjunction with the previous map, comes Fig. 12.20, showing the spread of LR oil lamps. The presence of lamp fragments within the *Kastro* is unsurprising, but the next issue to be raised is again that of identifying Roman-period cemeteries in survey archaeology: a particularly problematic matter, as we have seen, and one primarily related to the grave-goods (if any) that were placed within the grave. The difficulty is well illustrated through recent research by the Kenchreai Cemetery Project (Rife *et al*. 2007), which concludes that, as a general rule, the funerary pottery encountered would have equally suited a domestic setting. Though this rule does not necessarily apply everywhere (e.g. Chamilaki 2010), it does conform to the impression derived from a cursory survey of published grave finds.

Archaeological research has shown that, in LR times too, oil lamps were given to the deceased as grave goods (e.g. Rife *et al*. 2007: 172–4), although one might reiterate that, at Thespiai, waste disposal could also account for the dispersal of oil lamps outside the *Kastro*. Of particular note however is the small scatter lying to the north of the city, in an area that is loosely associated with one of the two Early Christian churches, Agios Athanasios. Even though the church lies at a distance of some 100–125 m from the scatter of the three or four lamp fragments to its west, this is in the zone where a long test trench was excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service in 2013 (see Chapter 4, Addendum, pp. 196–8). This trench followed the modern east–west road that runs north of the *Kastro*, and laid bare burials belonging to different periods – including an enormous platform, in *opus caementicium*, plausibly the foundation of an (ER?) monumental



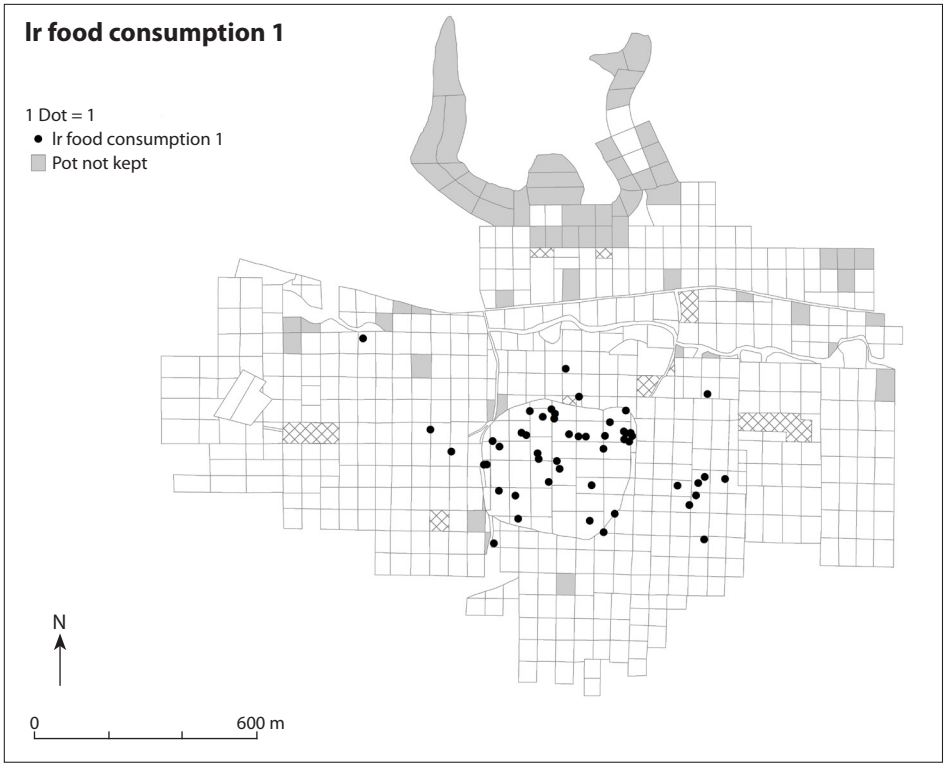


Figure 12.22a–b. *(a) Spatial distribution of LR 'Food Consumption' sherds (mostly bowls, dishes and plates): black = ARSW and (Phocaean) LRC; red = all categories attributed to Thespian manufacture (see Table 12.10 above), which includes the 'reduced firing' category; green = all other categories. (b) Spatial distribution of LR long-range imported 'Food Consumption' sherds (mostly bowls, dishes and plates). Black again = ARSW and (Phocaean) LRC.*

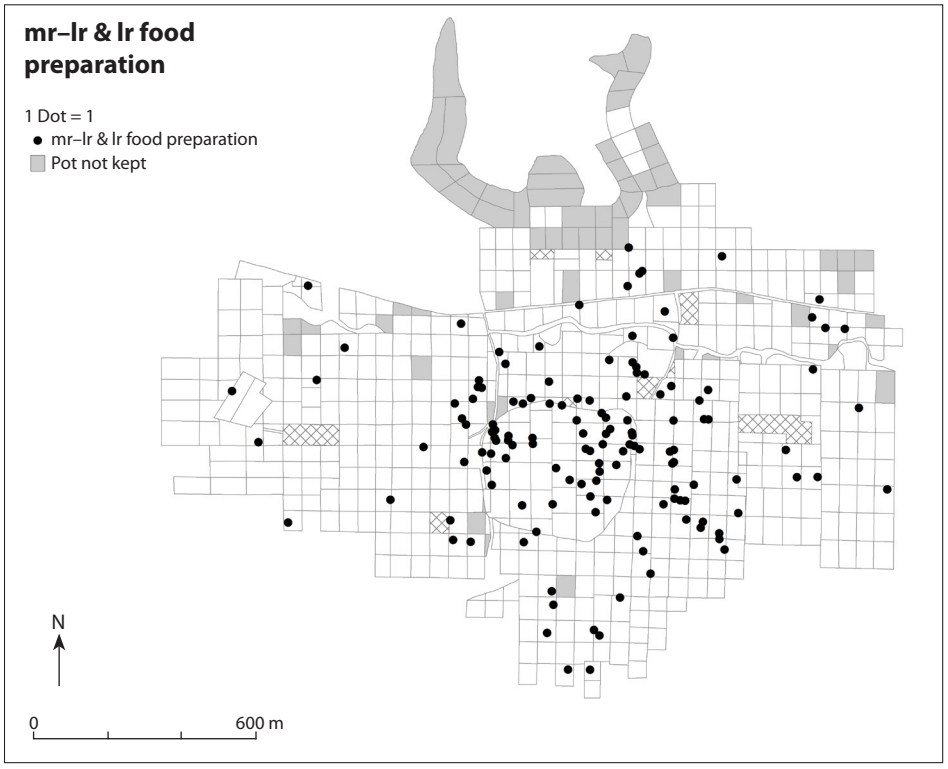


Figure 12.23. *Spatial distribution of MR–LR and LR 'Food Preparation' sherds (mostly cooking vessels).*

grave structure. As such, it does not contradict the possibility that the small scatter of LR lamp fragments are remnants of burials. Unfortunately, the distribution of LR 'Liquid Serving' vessels – jugs and juglets – likewise offers only an uncertain criterion for identifying burials or cemeteries (Chamilaki 2010); and whilst Fig. 12.21 does indeed show some outliers beyond the settlement area, they too cannot unequivocally be classed as grave goods.

Finally, there is one curious aspect that emerges from the distribution map for LR 'Food Consumption' – that is, local, regional and imported open table-ware vessels, such as bowls and dishes (Fig. 12.22a–b). We can observe generally comparable patterns for LR amphorae (Fig. 12.19), and now for 'Food Consumption' (Fig. 12.22a–b) and (MR–LR) 'Food Preparation' (Fig. 12.23), showing a denser find concentration within the *Kastro* and to its immediate east, with a more extensive but thinner distribution in the general city survey area. Yet the clearly recognisable long-distance imports (ARSW, (Phocaean) LRC) are virtually only attested within the *Kastro* and to its east (Fig. 12.22b). It is not easy to interpret this pattern. One, perhaps optimistic, explanation might be that such imports were higher valued. There is some more general evidence to support this, such as the incidence of repair holes: the single repair hole that was found at Thespiai was in fact on a MR–LR fragment of ARSW. While a down-turn in supply might equally well explain this, the explanation in terms of value might tell us something about the socio-economic profile of Thespiai's LR population. We should be wary of employing a circular argument, but it need not be a coincidence that the focus of these finds is located as it is, assuming that the LR occupational focus was within and to the east of the *Kastro* (Chapter 3, pp. 116–20). Alternatively, as these imports comprise only a minority of the functional category 'Food Consumption' (50 out of 183 entries, *c*. 27.3 per cent), the distribution pattern could simply be deceptive, since the less common a category or ware is, the smaller the chance of its being encountered in the wider surveyed area, in much the same way as was shown for prehistoric finds from the city survey (see Chapter 3, pp. 49–51).

Conclusion

The ceramic data collected by the Boeotia Project at ancient Thespiai, and specifically those which belong to the LHELL to LR period, were approached from several angles, in order to obtain interpretative insights into how the city's urban zone and ceramic

production and supply developed, through a period covering nearly a millennium.

Whereas detailed map analysis and diachronic site interpretation is to be found elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 3), this chapter has focused specifically on the methodological framework and the ceramic data in their own right, beginning with a demonstration of the skewed composition of the raw data by comparison with excavated material. Although efforts were made to achieve some balance in this, the conclusion was inevitable that this collection cannot stand as a representative sample, to be used in all its detail for a full and reliable analysis. In order to overcome this, the data were also looked at from several alternative angles, which were judged to be relatively trustworthy.

The first aim was to map Thespiai's economic ties, within Boeotia and with the Mediterranean lands more generally. Here, in spite of the large proportion of unidentified pottery, Thespiai was shown to have relied primarily on pottery supply from local and closer regional sources, with only a small portion coming from further afield. On the extended assumption that a larger share of the unidentified pottery also originates from Thespian, Boeotian or central Greek sources, Thespiai emerges as being firmly embedded in a regional framework of ceramic production and supply. This is further borne out by the range of shapes and decorative schemes, which clearly link up very well, at least in part, with ceramic groups from elsewhere in Boeotia, as well as neighbouring regions. On present evidence, Thespiai seems to have had relatively less in common with Tanagra, and perhaps eastern Boeotia (and Attika) more generally, than it had with western Boeotia and parts of the adjacent regions. Whether the local ceramic output and its external supply fluctuated through time is still unknown; the local manufacture of pottery remains an elusive element until the MR period – which may in turn be another survey-related factor.

The second part of this chapter concentrated on identifying spatial differences in function in the composition of the surface collection, with the aim of distinguishing zones with different functions during the periods under study. There was a specific focus on the LR period, as being the best represented, as well as the latest major period of occupation, over most of ancient Thespiai. The main categories identified – amphorae, cooking wares (in this case for MR–LR only) and table-wares – all present a spatially roughly homogeneous pattern, presumably reflecting not only domestic settlement, but also the dispersal of rubbish into the immediate, probably no longer occupied zone or suburban halo. Both in and beyond the immediate confines of the *Kastro*, clues could be observed that tentatively point to specific functional zones. Based on the hypothetical reconstruction of LR Thespiai given in Chapter 3, the distribution of specific categories – beehives, oil lamps and amphorae – offered tentative support to existing notions about cemetery locations, and the equally tentative identification of one or two zones, to the north and north-west of the LR city, where agricultural and/or artisanal activities may have been practised.

In summary, despite some problems integral to the raw data, the LHELL to LR pottery collected in the city of Thespiai could at least in part be employed to further our understanding of the city's economic connections, as well as offering insights, at least for the LR period, into its spatial and functional layout.

Acknowledgments

We are particularly grateful to John Bintliff and Anthony Snodgrass for the opportunity to (re)study the Late Hellenistic to Late Roman pottery from urban Thespiai. Their comments on a first draft significantly improved the text. Our re-study could build on the salutary earlier work by John Hayes, a highly informative experience that significantly advanced our study. There were fruitful discussions on matters of methodology, identification and interpretation with colleagues in the Boeotia Project – Kalliopi Sarri, Vladimir Stissi, Athanasios Vionis and Mark van der Enden – and we duly thank them. We are grateful to Emeri Farinetti for clarifying database questions and for creating the distribution maps. Bruno Vandermeulen energetically took on the task of photographing our selected finds (except where noted), and Mike Carremans and Eliane Mahy did a wonderful job in respectively making and digitizing the pottery profile drawings. Visits by Kathleen Slane, Mark Hammond, Pláton Pétridis, Guy Ackermann and Simone Zurbriggen were all helpful in establishing and refining identifications as well as generating ideas, and we are most grateful to them. We also express our appreciation to Martin Seyer, director of the Austrian excavations at Limyra, for his permission to use ceramic data from that site, which are under study by the first author. The four main and other supplementary study campaigns, during which we were based first in Thebes and later at Evangelistria, were particularly productive and enjoyable stays, and we warmly thank everyone else who contributed in various ways to making these possible. The research for this chapter was supported by the CORES network of the Belgian Programme on Inter-university Poles of Attraction (http://iap-cores.be/).

Chapter 13

The Byzantine to Early Modern pottery from Thespiai*

Athanasios K. Vionis

The detailed study of the post-Roman surface ceramic finds, of Byzantine, Frankish, Ottoman and Early Modern date, previously collected by the Cambridge-Durham Boeotia Project in 1985 and 1986 from the urban territory of ancient Thespiai, was carried out in three study-seasons in August 2007, 2008 and 2011 (Bintliff *et al.* 2013: 1). The present author was invited to carry out this task by the Project directors (John L. Bintliff and Anthony Snodgrass) in the framework of preparation for the final publication of the city-site survey and its finds.

A preliminary dating of all surface ceramic finds was masterfully carried out in the early 1990s by John Hayes, who is here gratefully acknowledged. In the late 1990s, Joanita Vroom studied samples of post-Roman pottery from several sites in Boeotia, including the city of Thespiai, for her Ph.D. thesis at Leiden University: Vroom (2003: 120–3) published nine fragments of diagnostic glazed wares from Thespiai and noted the existence of another 103 fragments of the Late Roman period (9 of 'Askra Ware', 15 LRA2 and 79 unglazed beehives), 23 fragments of the Middle Byzantine era (7 Plain Glazed Ware in red fabric, 1 Glazed White Ware II, 1 Fine *Sgraffito* Ware, 13 Günsenin 3 / Saraçhane 61 amphorae and 1 Incised *Sgraffito* / Champlevé Ware), one clay tobacco pipe of the Ottoman times, and two fragments of Painted Ware from Grottaglie dated to the Early Modern period. Nonetheless, the only chronology of the post-Roman finds available to the Project in the time prior to this publication was J. Hayes' dating. It was soon realized that, after 20 years of further ceramic research in Greece, the Thespian pottery database and chronology needed refinement and up-dating, for all periods. A more systematic study based on fabric, shape and decorative styles was therefore carried out for a better evaluation of the site's size, function and chronology.

This chapter is divided into three parts: the first part clarifies issues of chronology and terminology; the second discusses aspects of pottery production in the province of Boeotia, on the basis of the different fabrics identified in Thespiai; the final part presents and discusses the functional categories of the Byzantine to Early Modern pottery types and styles, by chronological phase, and their relation to everyday life. Similar approaches to post-Roman survey pottery in Boeotia have been applied to the assemblages from other sites in the region, examined in the framework of the Leiden-Ljubljana Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project (Vionis 2004–2005; 2006; 2008; 2013).

Chronology and terminology

Given the fragmented nature and worn condition of surface ceramic artefacts generally, one of the chief aims, in the course of processing the ceramics from Thespiai, has been the identification and dating of every single post-Roman pottery fragment, without taking into account post-depositional disturbances, visibility, or intensity of coverage. Through the meticulous study of fabrics and the identification (in most cases macroscopically) of inclusions (Braun 1983: 122–3; Rice 1987: 406–13), followed by the classification of shapes and surface treatment (Rice 1987: 232–3; Schiffer *et al.* 1994: 209), form and function (Henrickson and McDonald 1983: 630–1; Skibo 2013: 28), it was possible to assign a date and other relevant attributes, not only to feature sherds (i.e. rims, bases and handles), but to a number of tiny body fragments, some bearing no decoration, others preserving only traces of slip or monochrome glaze. Because of the dense concentration, the remarkable

* This chapter is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue of 50 representative shapes, appearing as Appendix 2.

Table 13.1. *Period abbreviations and subdivisions, with absolute dates for table- and common wares, total numbers of sherds and percentages for each period represented in the surface collection from the city site of Thespiai.*

Period	Absolute dates for table wares	Absolute dates for common wares	No. of sherds	%
EBYZ? & LR (–EBYZ?)	*c.* mid/late 7th – early/mid 9th century	*c.* mid/late 7th – early/mid 9th century	14	1
MBYZ & MBYZ?	*c.* (10th/11th-) 12th century	*c.* (10th/11th-) 12th century	88	6
MBYZ-F & MBYZ-F?	*c.* late 12th – mid 13th century	*c.* (10th/11th-) 12th – mid 14th century	229	17
F & F?	*c.* early/mid 13th – mid 14th century	*c.* early/mid 13th – mid 14th century	478	35
F-T & F-T?	*c.* mid/late 14th – mid/late 16th century	*c.* mid/late 14th – mid/late 16th century	14	1
MED & MED?	*c.* (10th/11th-) 12th – mid/late 15th century	*c.* (10th/11th-) 12th – mid/late 15th century	16	1
T & T?	*c.* late 16th – late 18th century	*c.* late 16th – late 18th century	165	12
EMOD & EMOD?	*c.* early 19th – early 20th century	*c.* early 19th – early 20th century	128	9
MOD & MOD?	*c.* early 20th century – today	*c.* early 20th century – today	248	18
		Total	**1380**	**100**

Table 13.2. *English terminology used to refer to different kinds of table- and common ware vessels and their morphological characteristics, identified in the Thespiai surface assemblage, accompanied by corresponding terms identified in Byzantine and Ottoman textual sources.*

Shapes	Textual terms	Characteristics
jug	*kanation* (Byz)	Table vessel, closed, flat base (6–10 cm), narrow neck (5–6 cm), vertical handle (strap or oval)
cup	*koupa* (Byz)	Table vessel, open, beverage consumption, flat or low ring-base (6–8 cm), everted rim (9–12 cm), one/two vertical handle(s)
chafing dish	*saltsarion* (Byz), *gararion* (Byz)	Table vessel, open, internally glazed bowl (15/16–25/26 cm) set on hollow ventilated stand (6–10 cm) for burning charcoal
shallow dish	*pinakion* (Byz), *missourion* (Byz)	Table vessel, open, large, shallow, flat or slightly incurving plain rim (20–26 cm), convex divergent lower wall, low ring-base (8–12 cm)
bowl	*skoutellion* (Byz), *kase* (Ott)	Table vessel, open, deep, hemispherical body, steep walls, straight or out-turned rim (13–18 cm), rounded lip, higher ring-foot or pedestal base (5–7 cm)
deep dish	*tabak* (Ott), *tazze* (Ott)	Table vessel, open, large, thickly potted, convex divergent upper wall, everted broad flaring rim (18–28 cm) with 'pie-crust' decoration, heavy ring-foot (8–12 cm)
plate	*piato* (Gr)	Table vessel, open, medium sized, thickly potted, straight divergent upper wall, broad everted rim (20–26 cm), low ring-foot or flat base (8–13 cm)
candlestick	*keropegion* (Byz)	Candlestick holder, ceramic, high cylindrical stem, flat or discoid base, dished drip pan
amphora	*magarikon* (Byz)	Common vessel, closed, large, ovoid body tapering to a point at the base, (long) narrow neck, two opposite handles
jar-stamnos	*stamnion* (Byz), *lagenion* (Byz)	Common vessel, closed, pear-shaped or rounded profile (20–35 cm), short neck, upright plain rim (6–10 cm), flat base (11–14 cm), two opposed oval or strap handles
jar-pithos	*vytinion* (Byz), *pithos* (Gr)	Common vessel, closed, large, thickly potted, two versions: (a) rough surface, flat base (25–45 cm), steep walls, no neck, upright plain rim (30–50 cm), internal ledge, average height 70–90 cm; (b) rounded body, two opposite broad flat handles, flat base (18–22 cm), short wide neck, everted simple rounded or flattened rim (18–20 cm), sometimes decorated with incised wavy lines or an applied twisted strip/rope, average height 50–60 cm
basin	*lekanida* (Byz), *çannak* (Ott)	Table and/or kitchen vessel, open, large, deep, flat base (8–12 cm), straight divergent walls, plain or flattened flaring rim (22–30 cm)
casserole	*tsoukka* (Byz), *chytra* (Byz)	Kitchen vessel, closed, flat base (7–12 cm), ovoid body, everted simple or thickened rounded rim (10–14 cm), vertical strap handle

state of preservation and the high diagnosticity of the surface ceramic finds (especially glazed wares) of most post-Roman chronological phases, at Thespiai and in Boeotia generally, an effort was made to extract as much information as possible from every potsherd of the post-Roman assemblage, on the assumption that all fragments collected from Thespiai would prove informative when studied in detail.

The post-Roman ceramic assemblage, like those of all periods at Thespiai, has thus been studied in a sherd-by-sherd approach. In the Project database, each individually numbered sherd is linked with interrelated information in other fields: apart from 'chronology', these include 'condition', 'form/shape', 'decoration' and 'function'. The study of fabrics has been carried out for all post-Roman ware-groups:

eight main fabrics – four for the production of common wares and another four for the various types of decorated table-ware – have been recognized, representing the commonest types of pottery produced, locally and/or regionally, and used during the main periods of occupation at the site, that is, in the Middle Byzantine and Frankish periods (see p. 358).

The chronological subdivisions for the post-Roman period used throughout this chapter follow the same lines as those of many other field projects in the Aegean (compare Bintliff *et al.* 2007: 14). Although the conventional dates of specific periods follow a chronology based on political events that may or may not have direct relation to the historical fate of Boeotia (the Ottoman/Turkish period starts in 1453, for example, with the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans), an attempt has been made to adjust to the historical realities of the region and – more importantly – to the chronological overlap of certain ceramic styles and forms between two successive periods (e.g. Middle Byzantine – Frankish, Late Frankish – Early Ottoman), an aspect often taken into account by John Hayes also. The specific period abbreviations and subdivisions are summarized in Table 13.1, showing absolute dates for both table-wares and common wares.

The identification of form/shape has always been another complicated aspect of the processing of archaeological ceramics. Here, generic terms such as 'dish' or 'jar', to describe different shapes, have been avoided wherever possible. Although terms such as 'casserole', 'basin', 'bowl' and 'shallow dish' leave no doubt about their intended use, they represent terms that, besides providing more detailed information about the specific shape – e.g. by using 'shallow dish' instead of 'dish' or 'bowl', 'bowl' instead of 'cup' and so forth – reinforce an implicit association of form and function (Rice 1987: 211–2). Determining the form/shape of a vessel represented by a tiny potsherd in the Thespiai assemblage has been carried out as thoroughly as possible, to avoid misinterpretations based on related cultural parameters, such as culinary preferences. The chafing dish, for example, is connected with a specifically Byzantine culinary practice; so the misidentification of a chafing-dish body fragment as a monochrome glazed bowl may lead to incorrect conclusions. Similarly, the 'shallow dish' is a form commonest during the Middle Byzantine period, whereas a 'bowl' of smaller rim diameter and higher ring-base is a characteristic shape of the succeeding Frankish period, often seen as imitating metal-ware forms (Vionis 2012: 245, 308, 323).

Table 13.2 summarizes the *terminology* used to refer to different kinds of table- and common ware

Table 13.3. *The various post-Roman table- and common ware types (and their abbreviations) identified at Thespiai.*

Code	Ware type
PLW	Plain Ware
PBW	Pattern-Burnished Ware
HMW	Hand-Made Ware
S35	Saraçhane 35
GW	Gouged Ware
UIW	Unglazed Incised Ware
GWW	Glazed White Ware
GRW	Glazed Red Ware
FSW	Fine Sgraffito Ware
PFSW	Painted Fine Sgraffito Ware
GBPW	Green and Brown Painted Ware
SPW	Slip Painted Ware
O2	Otranto 2
G2	Günsenin 2
G3	Günsenin 3
MGW	Monochrome Glazed Ware
CHW	Champlevé Ware
ISW	Incised Sgraffito Ware
MSW	Monochrome Sgraffito Ware
MSW-C	Monochrome Sgraffito Ware from Corinth
MSW-T	Monochrome Sgraffito Ware from Thessaloniki
ZW	Zeuxippus Ware
ZWD	Zeuxippus Ware Derivative
PSW	Polychrome Sgraffito Ware
ISW-L	Incised Sgraffito Ware from Lemnos
BGSW	Brown and Green Sgraffito Ware
PSW-I	Polychrome Sgraffito Ware from Italy
PW	Painted Ware
PPM-M	Polychrome Painted Maiolica from Montelupo
PPM	Polychrome Painted Maiolica
GPW	Glaze Painted Ware
GRW-C	Grottaglie Ware from Corfu
LSPW	Late Slip Painted Ware
SPW-D	Slip Painted Ware from Didymoteicho
CW	Çanakkale Ware
STW	Siphnos Table Ware
TPW	Transfer Printed Ware
SW	Stone Ware
UTW	Unglazed Table Ware
MW	Multipurpose Ware
WM-CW	Wheel-Made Cook Ware
WM-CWS	Wheel-Made Cook Ware from Siphnos
TJ	Transport Jar/Stamnos
SJ	Storage Jar/Pithos

Table 13.4. *The different kinds of shapes (and sherd raw numbers) represented, by ware and by chronological phase ('MED' and 'MOD' wares have been excluded from this table).*

Period	Wares	Jug	Cup	Chafing dish	Shallow dish	Bowl	Deep dish	Plate	Candle-stick	Amphora	Jar-stamnos	Jar-pithos	Basin	Casserole	Tile	Total
EBYZ?	PLW	8														8
	PBW	3														3
	HMW													1		1
	S35?									2						2
MBYZ & MBYZ?	GW	1														1
	UIW	6														6
	GWW		1													1
	GRW			11												11
	FSW				15											15
	PFSW				2											2
	GBPW				37	1										38
	SPW				7											7
	O2?									1						1
	G2?									6						6
MBYZ-F & MBYZ-F?	MGW		3						3							6
	CHW				7	3										10
	ISW				84	20										104
	SPW				5	1										6
	G3									28						28
	TJ										25					25
	SJ											7				7
	UTW	5														5
	MW												3			3
	WM-CW													31		31
	TILE														4	4
F & F?	MGW	1				156			3							160
	MSW					86										86
	MSW-C					33										33
	MSW-T					7										7
	ZW?					2										2
	ZWD					26										26
	PSW					8										8
	SPW	2			3	21										26
	TJ										76					76
	SJ											13				13
	UTW	15														15
	WM-CW													23		23
	TILE														3	3
F-T & F-T?	MGW	1				5										6
	MSW					2										2
	ISW-L					2										2
	BGSW					2										2
	PSW-I		1													1
	PW					1										1

Table 13.4. *(cont.)*

Period	Wares	Jug	Cup	Chafing dish	Shallow dish	Bowl	Deep dish	Plate	Candle-stick	Amphora	Jar-stamnos	Jar-pithos	Basin	Casserole	Tile	Total
T & T?	MGW	14				22	34		2				1			73
	MSW						1									1
	BGSW					3										3
	PW	4				5	3									12
	PPM-M												1			1
	PPM	6														6
	GPW					1										1
	TJ										32					32
	SJ											13				13
	UTW	3														3
	MW												2			2
	WM-CW													15		15
	TILE														3	3
EMOD & EMOD?	MGW	4				2	2	7					2			17
	GRW-C	2					2	45								49
	LSPW												13			13
	SPW-D						5									5
	CW						1									1
	STW	1	1					5								7
	TPW							6								6
	TJ										5					5
	SJ											6				6
	SW	1						1								2
	UTW	1														1
	MW												2			2
	WM-CWS													14		14
	Totals	**78**	**6**	**11**	**160**	**409**	**48**	**64**	**8**	**37**	**138**	**39**	**24**	**84**	**10**	**1116**

vessels (and their morphological characteristics) identified in the Thespiai surface assemblage and dated between the mid- to late seventh and the twentieth centuries. The Medieval Pottery Research Group's (MPRG) standard *Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms* (London 1998) was consulted for the description of most vessel forms and shapes, although an attempt has also been made to provide here a definition of the different terminologies used for different shapes, in comparison with references in Byzantine and Ottoman textual sources (Koukoules 1948: 96–108).

The term 'Ware' refers to a specific class of pottery that has been characterized archaeologically and is long-established in the published literature, with its name usually referring to decoration technique, style and/or provenance. For example, 'Günsenin 3', one of the commonest amphora types of the Middle and Late Byzantine periods (here abbreviated as 'G3', with its standard morphological characteristics) was recognized by and named after Nergis Günsenin, a Turkish underwater archaeologist, in the 1980s (Günsenin 1990: 271–4). Table 13.3 summarizes the 44 different post-Roman table- and common wares (and their abbreviations) identified at Thespiai. The abbreviations given in each case constitute the initials of their full nomenclature, e.g. ISW for 'Incised Sgraffito Ware'.

Several shapes/forms were first recognized in the post-Roman assemblage from Thespiai, covering nearly the whole chronological spectrum from the middle/late seventh to the middle twentieth century. Certain forms however, such as the 'Chafing Dish', remained period-specific and did not continue into the succeeding centuries. Table 13.4 summarizes the different kinds of shapes (with raw numbers of sherds),

represented by ware and by chronological phase (MED and MOD wares being excluded from the table).

The four main functional categories (serving, processing, storage, transport) can be further sub-divided according to the more specialized uses and functions of open and closed forms, common wares and table-vessels. The following is the terminology used for these sub-divided functional categories, grouping together the different post-Roman shapes from Thespiai:

– SERVING: (a) Liquid Serving (Jug), (b) Beverage Consumption (Cup), (c) Food Consumption (Chafing Dish, Shallow Dish, Bowl, Deep Dish, Plate).

– PROCESSING: (a) Food Preparation (Casserole), (b) Multipurpose (Basin).

– STORAGE: Storage (Jar-Pithos).

– TRANSPORT: (a) Long-Distance Transport (Amphora), (b) Short-Distance Transport (Jar-Stamnos)

Pottery fabrics and production

In recognition of the fact that ceramic containers served different functions (Braun 1983; Rice 1987), the pottery fragments from Thespiai have been sorted under the four main functional categories just listed (with further sub-divisions): (a) serving, (b) processing, (c) storage, and (d) transport. In addition, since the variety of functions served by vessels of fired clay was determined by the pots' mechanical and thermal properties, different technological attributes such as clay type and temper were also described and recorded in detail in the initial stage of pottery study. The identification of clay by hardness, compactness, break and firing colour, and the description of the size, shape, amount and – where possible – type of temper, not only facilitated the sorting of vessels into broader categories, but also allowed the safer identification of vessel forms and subsequently functions. For example, there were several occasions where the numerous thick-walled body fragments (with added temper, to reinforce the clay and provide structural support to larger pots) were recognized as 'storage vessels', made with a fabric coarser than the ones used for vessels identified as 'transport vessels'. Similarly, two fabrics, different from those used for the manufacture of either storage or transport vessels, were recognized as having been used predominantly for the production of 'chafing dishes' and cooking pots of the MBYZ

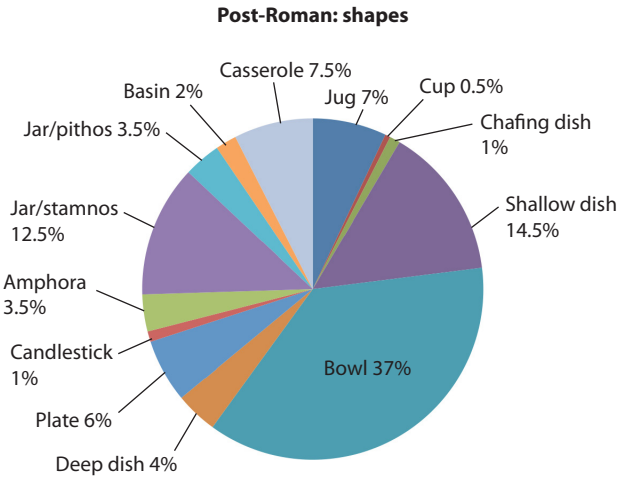


Figure 13.1. *Percentages of post-Roman pottery shapes represented in the Thespiai assemblage.*

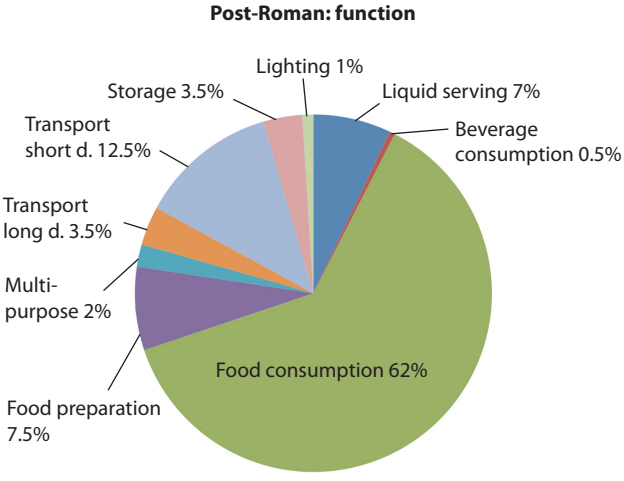


Figure 13.2. *Percentages of post-Roman pottery functions represented in the Thespiai assemblage.*

and F periods, with a specific type, amount and size of temper designed to enhance the vessels' thermal shock resistance, strength, toughness, and thermal conductivity (Kilikoglou *et al.* 1998: 261–3; Hein *et al.* 2008: 41–2; Vionis and Dikomitou-Eliadou 2014: 109). Cooking vessels (or casseroles) in the Thespian assemblage comprise 7.5 per cent of the collected and dated post-Roman potsherds (Figs. 13.1 and 13.2) and, although this vessel type is generally characterized by its high breakage rate and coarse appearance, the relatively few but rather large fragments in our collection seem to suggest that this type of medium-sized, mineral-tempered cooking vessel with medium-thick walls was a highly specialized and durable product.

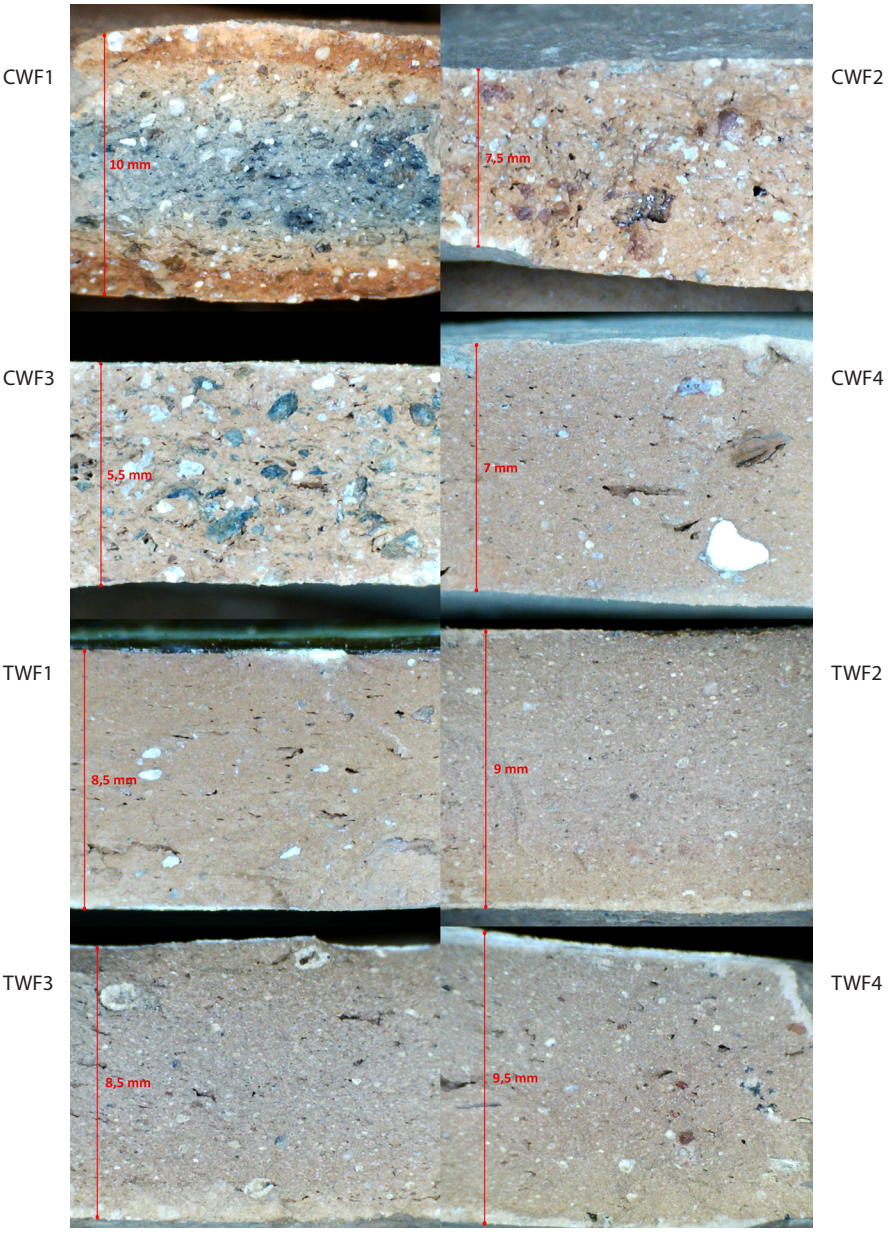


Figure 13.3.
Photographs of cross-sections of eight fabric types recognized at Thespiai: 'CWF' = Common ware fabric; 'TWF' = Table-ware fabric.

Among the preliminary aims of the study of the post-Roman ceramic assemblage was the identification of different fabrics macroscopically, by using a USB Microscope (Veho VMS-004 with 400x Magnification), so as to provide a thorough and realistic description (often lacking in Byzantine ceramic studies) of ceramic pastes, for securer and readier comparison with decorated and common wares identified elsewhere. Moreover, the systematic description and identification of temper (either natural or intentionally added to the fabric), its quantities, sizes and shapes, together with the consideration of fabric hardness, colour, break and feel, when evaluated, provides important insights into local (or non-local) production, ceramic properties and technology (Rye 1981: 50–1; Rice 1987: 313). The system of fabric description employed here, along with the identification and frequency of inclusions, is based on that developed and modified by the Corinth Excavations (Sanders 1999a: 477–8); while fabric colour is described according to the *Munsell Soil Color Charts* (MPRG 1994). Eight main fabrics (Fig. 13.3) have been identified in the production of the EBYZ, MBYZ, MBYZ-F, F and F-T periods (four fabrics for the production of common wares and four for table-wares), the principal characteristics of which are summarized in Tables 13.5 and 13.6.

The macroscopic examination of all types of ceramic fabrics from Thespiai provides some

interesting insights into the issues of pottery technology, production, distribution and economics in the wider region. The general observation, that the bulk of MBYZ, MBYZ-F and F fine/decorated and common wares are characterized by the frequent occurrence of limestone and other substances (whether naturally present or added by the potter as temper), as well as by similar fabric colour, surface treatment and hardness, suggests that we are either dealing with multiple production sites in the region of central Greece which followed similar recipes; or, if all the pot-types were being produced at one or two major manufacturing centres, that these were distributing them across different sites, urban and rural, from Thessaly to Attica and from Euboea to Boeotia. It seems, however, that the majority of the fabrics recorded at Thespiai appear sufficiently similar for us to argue that they belong to a shared pottery tradition, with a long history in central Greece, one that is defined by the exclusive use of calcareous clays for the production of wheel-made table- and common wares.

Common wares

One of the main differences between common and table-ware fabrics is the frequency, size and sorting of grains. Grains are moderately well or well-sorted in the ceramic matrices of table-wares, indicating the use of a fast wheel, whereas those in common-wares are generally moderately poorly to poorly sorted (Rye 1981: 61). The mixture of sub-rounded, sub-angular and angular grains (mainly limestone and quartz) in common ware fabrics (especially CWF1-3, Table 13.5) indicate the crushing and addition of specific substances as temper to modify the clay's properties, in a paste that would still contain natural traces of such elements (Rice 1987: 406, 410). The production and use of temper is an admittedly laborious and costly task, so that there is a strong correlation between clay and temper sourcing, placing the location of manufacture within a distance of up to 7 to 9 km (Degryse *et al.* 2003: 263, 278; Skibo 2013: 39). Although an 'unattractive' and coarse functional class of pottery, the majority of ovoid cooking pots with medium-thick walls of the MBYZ, MBYZ-F and F periods are made of two distinct fabrics (CWF1-2) with the afore-mentioned mineralogical and technological characteristics, a fact that denotes a significant investment in effort, funds and knowledge of mechanical and thermal properties, leading to an often highly specialized product, commonly found in both urban and rural domestic contexts (Vionis and Dikomitou-Eliadou 2014: 109; Dikomitou-Eliadou *et al.* 2016). On the other hand, the consistent occurrence of a gray core in the majority of cooking-pot (HMW, WM-CW) and chafing-dish (GRW) sherds (in fabrics CWF1-3) suggests that these vessels were not fired for long enough in an oxidizing atmosphere (Rye 1981: 115; Orton *et al.* 1993: 134), although this did not render such vessels dysfunctional.

It should be noted that there is also a very small number of cooking-pot fragments that do not match any of the four coarse-ware fabrics, indicating a different site of manufacture, possibly outside Boeotia. A trade in cooking wares was not an unknown phenomenon in the Eastern Mediterranean, from Late Antiquity into the high Middle Ages, although only a handful of studies have so far tackled this issue (Gabrieli 2007: 402–3; Yangaki 2015: 177–8; Vionis *et al.* in press). The co-existence of this outlier group of cook-ware, characterized by its non-calcareous fabrics, alongside the calcareous ones, poses questions relating to culinary practices, such as the cooking of meat and meat products in the former and the cooking of legumes and vegetables in the latter, requiring different cooking times and temperatures (Dikomitou-Eliadou *et al.* 2016).

Another interesting detail is related to CWF4 (Table 13.5), a finer-looking fabric compared to CWF1-3, which seems to have been used exclusively for the production of Günsenin type 3 amphorae (or Hayes' Saraçhane type 61), and of another type of transport vessel of smaller dimensions, with a pear-shaped or rounded profile, upright rim and two opposed oval or strap handles, here referred to as 'Transport Jar' (the so-called *stamnion* and *lagenion* in Byzantine terminology). Günsenin 3 is one of the most frequently occurring amphora types in the Aegean, being the commonest of all Byzantine amphorae at Saraçhane in Constantinople, and dated between the mid-twelfth and early thirteenth centuries (Hayes 1992: 76). It is also the commonest amphora type (represented by 28 sherds) in the Thespiai surface assemblage, accounting, together with 2 EBYZ fragments of S35, 1 MBYZ sherd of O2 and 6 fragments of G2 (see Table 13.4), for 3.5 per cent of the total collection of all periods (Figs. 13.1 and 13.2). I have previously noted the remarkable resemblance, in terms of fabric and surface treatment, between the presumably locally made, undecorated common vessels (transport and storage jars, cooking pots) and the Günsenin 2 and 3 amphora types, from a number of Byzantine rural sites in Boeotia (Vionis 2008: 38). Similarly, on the basis of a large number of isolated finds of Günsenin 3 at several sites in northern Keos, John Hayes had already suggested that it was possibly produced in Boeotia or Attica (Cherry *et al.* 1991: 354–5). Moreover, a waster resembling types 2 and 3, found just outside the late antique walls of Tanagra in eastern Boeotia, provided

Table 13.5. *The principal characteristics of common ware fabrics 1–4 (CWF1-4).*

	CWF1	CWF2	CWF3	CWF4
Colour	Red to brown surface (Munsell 2.5YR 5/8 to 7.5YR 5/4), reddish-gray to dark gray core (Munsell 2.5YR 5/1 to 10YR 4/1)	Red to reddish-yellow (Munsell 2.5YR 5/8 to 5YR 6/6)	Light red to yellowish-red (Munsell 2.5YR 6/8 to 5YR 5/6), occasionally red to reddish-yellow self-slip (Munsell 2.5YR 5/8 to 7.5YR 6/6)	Reddish-brown (Munsell 5YR 5/4), light brown self-slip (Munsell 7.5YR 6/4)
Hardness	Medium hard	Soft to medium hard	Medium hard	Hard
Feel	Smooth to rough	Smooth to greasy	Rough to harsh	Smooth to rough
Break	Smooth to hackly	Smooth and slightly granular	Smooth to hackly	Smooth to granular
Inclusions	Few to frequent, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular white crystals (possibly quartz); frequent, medium, spherical, rounded milky white inclusions (possibly limestone); few, medium, angular, tabular to platy gray inclusions (possibly chert or schist); rare, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, sub-rounded reddish-brown inclusions (possibly mudstone or hematite?)	Rare to few, medium, spherical and tabular, angular white crystals (possibly quartz); frequent, fine to medium, spherical, rounded milky white inclusions (possibly limestone); few, medium and occasionally large to v. large, angular, tabular to platy gray inclusions (possibly chert or schist); rare, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular reddish-brown inclusions (possibly mudstone or hematite?)	Few, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, rounded milky white inclusions (possibly limestone); rare to few, medium, spherical and tabular, sub-rounded white crystals (possibly quartz); common, large to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular dark gray inclusions (possibly dolomite, chert or schist?); rare, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular reddish-brown inclusions (possibly mudstone?)	Abundant fine, spherical and tabular, rounded white inclusions (possibly sand/quartz?); few, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, rounded white inclusions (possibly limestone)
Pores	Frequent pores, medium to v. large parallel thin elongate and spherical voids	Frequent medium parallel thin elongate and irregular voids	Frequent medium parallel thin elongate and irregular voids	Frequent to common, medium to v. large spherical and irregular voids
Wares	HMW, GRW, WM-CW, MW, TJ	PLW, WM-CW	PLW, GRW, MW, SJ	G3, TJ

more secure evidence for the origin of this vessel type (Vionis 2008: 40).

The results of chemical analyses (with the use of a portable–XRF and the expertise of Dr Andreas Charalambous, University of Cyprus) of a sample of domestic common wares and fragments of Günsenin 2 compared with Günsenin 3 (Fig. 13.4), taken from a number of Byzantine sites in the region of Tanagra in 2012 (with written permission from the Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Boeotia and Euboea), confirmed that the commonest types of Byzantine amphora (Günsenin 2 in particular) must have been produced within the wider region of Boeotia, if not Tanagra itself (Vionis and Charalambous forthcoming).

With the exception of a limited number of cooking-pots of a different fabric composition (which could very well have travelled from beyond Boeotia, as discussed above), the bulk of the common-ware assemblage, including Günsenin 2 and 3, together with an unglazed MBYZ table-ware type (UIW), bear a similar chemical signature and must therefore have been produced in the wider region. At the same time, these are distinctively different from various types of decorated MBYZ, MBYZ-F and F glazed wares (including PFSW, SPW, CHW, ISW, MSW-C, MSW-T), as well as of certain EBYZ pottery types (such as PBW, HMW, S35).

The characteristic features of Günsenin 3 are its ovoid/piriform body, rounded base, long and narrow shoulder, thick walls, and its pair of high and heavy slung handles (Hayes 1992: 76; Sanders 1993: 281–3). The fabric of the finds from Boeotia (CWF4) is finely grained, with inclusions naturally present (rather than added as temper), such as limestone and sand/quartz. The only temper that seems to have been used is one possibly made from bioclasts and many organics (such as straw), especially evident on the exterior surface of the body and on the handles: this helped improve the plasticity of the clay and create greater porosity, after the organic temper had been burned

out during firing (Rye 1981: 33–4; Rice 1987: 231). The size of Günsenin 3 (ranging between 55 and 70 cm) and its thick walls (of up to 1 cm) give the impression that these were vessels of limited transportability when filled with wine, as the resin and grape pips identified in their interior seem to suggest that they were (P. Armstrong: *pers. comm*.; OCSCAE 1988: 94, 102). The lack of a substantial temper in the fabric meant that a rather thick-walled body was required to provide structural support to this large vessel used for long distance transport; yet, as contemporary pottery analyses have shown (Skibo 2013: 40–1), the air pockets, created within the ceramic matrix after the burning of the organic temper, made the vessel up to 30 per cent lighter than similar sand-tempered pottery.

Knowledge of the production of Günsenin 3 amphorae, most likely in the wider region of Boeotia, must have had an effect on the choice of a similar fabric recipe for the production of transport vessels (TJ) used for short-distance transport. These too are amongst the most frequent types of closed vessel in the MBYZ-F and F assemblage, represented by 25 and 76 sherds respectively (Table 13.4), and accounting for 12.5 per cent of the total surface collection of all periods (Figs. 13.1 and 13.2). The smaller size and lighter weight of local transport jars must have rendered them suitable for the export and transport of liquid goods to neighbouring regions, apart from serving a purely domestic function, such as keeping water cool in the kitchen and wine fresh in the cellar. A similar conclusion has been drawn for the 'wine *stamnoi*' from Laconia, also identified as imported products in neighbouring Argolid and Arcadia in the Peloponnese and as far away as Lycia in Asia Minor (Armstrong 1989: 186–8; 2009a: 318; Yangaki 2015: 173–5). Textual sources of the late twelfth century from Mount Athos point in the same direction, referring to the use of vessels other than amphorae for the transportation of goods to Constantinople (Lemerle *et al.* 1970: 352; Yangaki 2015: 174).

Table-wares

The examination of table-ware fabrics has been equally rewarding in providing hints about pottery production and trade patterns between Thespiai, the rest of Boeotia and the Aegean world. With some notable exceptions (Megaw and Jones 1983; Sanders 2003; White *et al.* 2006; Waksman and von Wartburg 2006; Armstrong 2008; Yangaki 2008; Waksman *et al.* 2014), the general lack of previous published analytical studies that recorded, described and classified different types of Byzantine glazed table-ware on the basis of context and fabric, rather than decoration, did not usually allow the identification of those ceramic wares that were produced in regional centres and whose circulation remained at the local or regional level, as has recently been noted by Yangaki (2015: 162–71).

The classification of Byzantine and later table-ware fabrics from Thespiai into four groups (TWF1-4, Table 13.6) demonstrates that certain distinctive classes of decorated wares, such as Fine Sgraffito Ware (FSW) or Slip Painted Ware (SPW), easily identified thanks to their characteristic decorative techniques and/or glaze colours, were probably either manufactured in multiple production centres across the Aegean, or at a single production site (or several neighbouring workshops) using different clay sources. This allows us to assume that TWF3-4 were most likely local or regional in origin, while TWF1-2 originated from somewhere outside this region. This argument is supported by the fact that 'simpler' table-ware forms, with unsophisticated decoration, such as the PBW of the EBYZ period, and later the MGW and UTW dated to the MBYZ-F, F, T and EMOD periods, are manufactured in TWF3-4, together with other widely known table-ware types, such as FSW, GBPW, ISW etc. Moreover, the chemical composition of a sample of decorated table-ware from the region of Tanagra, taken from all the main MBYZ, MBYZ-F and F types and analysed in order to compare the relation between common ware and table-ware fabrics, does not reveal a single clear cluster, but rather a complex picture with four different clusters, ranging from one group of samples that are somehow closer chemically to the presumably 'local' common wares and three others which are completely differentiated (Fig. 13.4). One can easily deduce that the origin of decorated table-wares in the region of Tanagra (and probably Thespiai, too) lies in four different places or regions, within, close to or further away from Boeotia. It goes without saying that those wares, of all periods, which are well-published and whose origin is securely identified, such as ISW-L, PSW-I, PPM-M, CW, TPW etc., fall outside the afore-mentioned four main table-ware fabrics identified in Thespiai.

On the basis of chemical analyses (carried out by Wavelength Dispersive – X Ray Fluorescence) of samples from Thebes and Chalkis of all the main decorated MBYZ and MBYZ-F types (including FSW, PFSW, GBPW, SPW, CHW, ISW), it has recently been argued (Waksman *et al.* 2014) that a single, major production centre (or a group of workshops in the same geological region), had been located at Chalkis since the early/middle twelfth century, distributing decorated pottery (labelled 'Middle Byzantine Production') around the Aegean, the Black Sea and as far as Cyprus and Lebanon. The authors have also proposed that clay, most likely from the Lelantine plain, was used for the manufacture of this 'Middle Byzantine

Table 13.6. *The principal characteristics of table-ware fabrics 1–4 (TWF1-4).*

	TWF1	TWF2	TWF3	TWF4
Colour	Red (Munsell 2.5YR 5/8) to yellowish-red (Munsell 5YR 5/8), very pale brown self slip (Munsell 10YR 7/4)	Light red (Munsell 2.5YR 6/8) to yellowish-red (Munsell 5YR 5/6)	Red (Munsell 2.5YR 5/8) to yellowish-red (Munsell 5YR 5/6)	Yellowish-red (Munsell 5YR 5/6)
Hardness	Soft to medium hard	Soft to medium hard	Soft	Soft to medium hard
Feel	Smooth to soapy	Smooth	Smooth to rough	Smooth to rough
Break	Smooth	Smooth	Smooth	Smooth to conchoidal
Inclusions	Few, medium to v. large spherical and tabular, rounded white inclusions (possibly limestone); rare, medium clear/white spherical, sub-rounded vitreous grains (possibly quartz); frequent, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular gray inclusions (possibly mudstone); few, fine glistening mica	Few, medium to v. large spherical and tabular, rounded white inclusions (possibly limestone); common to abundant fine to medium clear/white spherical sub-rounded vitreous grains (possibly quartz/sand)	Few, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, angular white crystals (possibly quartz); frequent, medium, spherical, rounded milky white inclusions (possibly limestone); abundant fine, spherical and tabular, rounded white inclusions (possibly sand?); rare, large to v. large, tabular, angular gray inclusions (possibly dolomite, chert or schist?)	Frequent, medium to v. large, spherical and tabular, rounded milky white inclusions (possibly limestone); few, fine to medium, tabular, angular gray inclusions possibly dolomite, chert or schist?); rare, medium to v. large, spherical, rounded and sub-rounded red inclusions (possibly mudstone)
Pores	Frequent, medium to v. large thin elongate voids	Few, medium to v. large spherical and irregular voids	Few, thin elongate, and rare large to v. large, irregular voids	Rare, spherical, and few, thin elongate voids
Wares	GW, UIW, FSW, GBPW, SPW, CHW	MSW-C, ZWD	PBW, FSW, PFSW, GBPW, SPW, ISW, PSW, MGW, MSW, BGSW, PW, GPW, LSPW	MGW, MSW, UTW

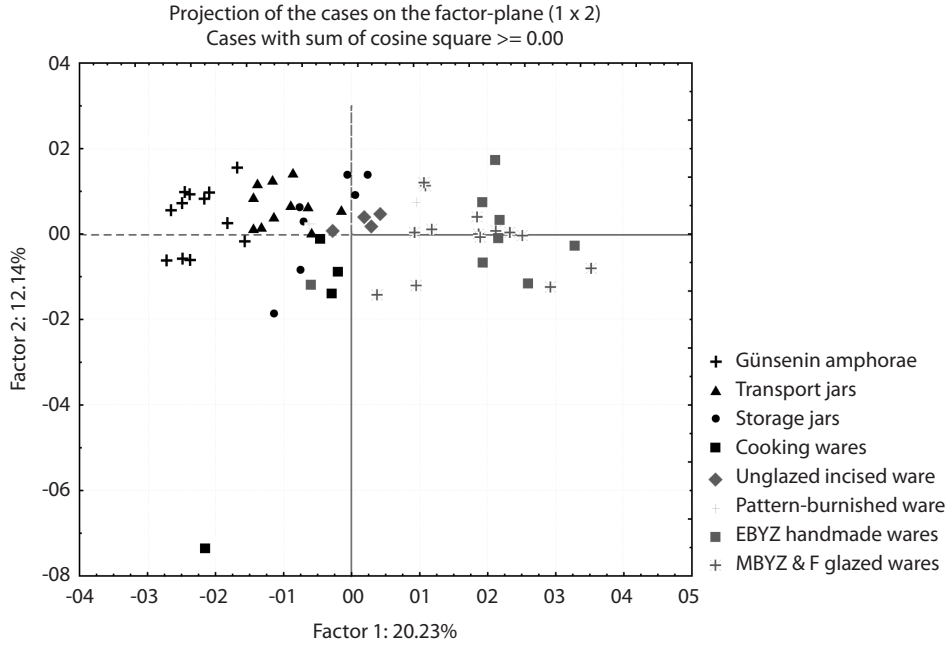


Figure 13.4. *A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) scatterplot of the results from chemical investigation (with the use of a portable–XRF) of Günsenin 2 and 3 amphora fragments, compared with samples of EBYZ, MBYZ, and F household pottery from the region of Tanagra (by Dr Andreas Charalambous, University of Cyprus).*

Production', which continued well into the thirteenth century, with Chalkis acquiring a primary role in an organized maritime network, within and beyond the Byzantine Empire (Waksman *et al.* 2014: 415–6). But when we note the number of find-spots for tripod-stilts and the distances between them, occurring as they do both within and outside the medieval walls of Chalkis and towards the western portion of the modern town, facing the Boeotian mainland (Waksman *et al.* 2014: 402, 404–5), it begins to seem likely that an alternative clay source, also exploited by the demanding and large-scale Euboean pottery industry, lay across the channel, on the Chalia peninsula. With the proximity of the Boeotian coastline and the easier transport of materials by sea rather than overland, this would have made for a less costly extraction process.

Although it is at present impossible to determine the provenance of the decorated table-wares from Thespiai, our four fabric groups identified macroscopically and the parallel chemical analyses of samples from the region of Tanagra (with the same macroscopically identified fabric composition), together point to multiple production centres, both regional and non-regional, for the decorated pottery in use at rural sites in Byzantine, Frankish and Ottoman Boeotia. Boeotia, however, had been a region where almost all the pottery in use, at every period, had been locally produced (Bintliff 2000: 43): thus, it would be hard to imagine that the bulk of post-Roman decorated wares was imported from outside the province. It is noteworthy that Boeotia and the western portion of neighbouring Euboea are very similar geologically, comprising alluvial plains, fluvial, river and lake deposits, metamorphic rocks, schist, marls, limestone and dolomites (Farinetti 2011: 21), an ideal environment, with a variety of good clays (especially around lake Kopais and the various streams throughout Boeotia) for the production of common ware and table-ware. Until it can be confirmed or refuted by archaeological evidence, it is safe to assume that most micro-environments in Boeotia – such as the landscape of Thespiai with its alluvial deposits, sandy, silty and clayey sediments, and Pleistocene deposits derived from limestones and flysches (Bintliff *et al*. 2007: 97–8), together with firewood available from nearby Helikon and running water (at least seasonally) in the Thespiai plain – comprised ideal 'ceramic environments' that may well have attracted potters in pre-modern times (Rice 1987: 314). Evidence for ceramic production, tentatively dated to Late Antiquity, from within the walled area of Thespiai (Chapter 8, p. 242), supports this argument.

Obviously, the identification of a major glazed pottery production centre with an international market at Chalkis, remarkable as it is, does not preclude the existence of other major and minor production centres in the Aegean, satisfying different markets and meeting different budgets, at local, regional and inter-regional level. It seems that sites of some significance (harbour-towns, regional centres) constituted organized centres of glazed pottery production already in the twelfth century, almost a century before the so-called 'decentralization' of pottery production from the mid-thirteenth century onwards. Corinth, Sparta and Argos in the Peloponnese (Sanders 1993; Sanders 2003; White *et al.* 2006; Oikonomou-Laniado 2006; Dimopoulos 2007; 2009), for example, should be seen as significant and competing producers of glazed ceramics, operating already since the eleventh century, along with Chalkis a little later, and possibly other, as yet unidentified sites.

Thus, it is highly possible that the varieties of table-ware fabrics of the post-Roman periods identified at Thespiai through macroscopic examination (TWF1-4), in parallel with the four clusters of decorated wares from Tanagra classified through chemical analyses, represent the different centres of production from which rural sites throughout Boeotia acquired their pottery. The location of Thespiai in western Boeotia gives it easier access to its ancient port in Livadostro (Farinetti 2011: 162) and the bay of Dombraina in the Corinthian Gulf (some 15 and 10 km respectively to the south), to the regional inland centre of Thebes (some 16 km to the east-northeast), but leaves it rather distant from Chalkis (50 km north-east). This would suggest that sites that appear rather isolated in the more mountainous western portion of the province would in fact have had easier access to products from further away (from Italy, Corinth and the Peloponnese), by comparison with local or regional products from Chalkis – that is, unless villagers from throughout Boeotia frequented the markets of Thebes. It appears that 12 per cent of the table-ware (in the form of TWF1-2) would have arrived in Thespiai from outside the region, while another 12 per cent (OTHER) are identified as definite imports (from GWW to SW); whereas the origin of the remaining 76 per cent (TWF3-4) of post-Roman table-ware should be sought within the wider region, definitely from more than one production centre (Fig. 13.5). The proportion of imported table pottery seems rather notable for a rural site in Boeotia. Although it was long thought that the most active harbours of Boeotia were those located on the Gulf of Euboea, more recent studies have suggested that the ports in the Gulf of Corinth, especially Vathy in the bay of Dombraina, comprised the 'Empire's principal radial axis of communication' with the West (Dunn 2006: 45). We could argue that ports and anchorages along the Boeotian coast of

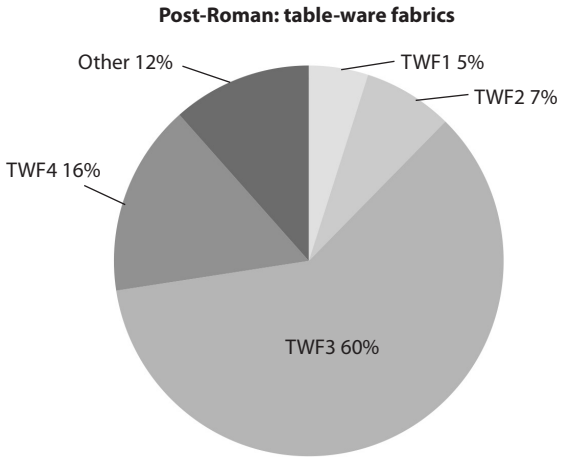


Figure 13.5. *The percentages of different table-ware fabrics identified in the post-Roman assemblage from Thespiai.*

the Corinthian Gulf comprised the gateway of this 'marginal' territory of the province, towards a wide economic exchange network, with access also to the products of neighbouring Corinth and its extensive territory in the north-eastern Peloponnese (Vionis 2017). It is interesting that MSW-C and ZWD, the only two decorated types made with TWF2 (Fig. 13.6), represent 7.4 per cent of the decorated table-ware assemblage (Fig. 13.5): here, Corinth or the north-eastern Peloponnese could be regarded as potential production centres, distributing their products primarily on regional and inter-regional levels through the Saronic Gulf and the Gulf of Corinth.

Functional categories by period

The ceramic database from Thespiai contains 1116 post-Roman sherds – that is, after 248 sherds of MOD/MOD? date (comprised of bathroom and kitchen wall-tiles, brick, roof tile and flower pots) a further 16 non-diagnostic sherds (all tiny body fragments and tentatively dated to the MED/MED? Period), have been excluded (Tables 13.1 and 13.4). Fig. 13.7 presents the different chronological phases of all post-Roman surface ceramic finds. The EBYZ period is represented by 14 fragments (1 per cent), the MBYZ by 88 (8 per cent), the transitional MBYZ-F by 229 (21 per cent), the F by 478 (43 per cent), the F-T by 14 (1 per cent), the T by 165 (15 per cent), and the EMOD by 128 sherds (11 per cent). It is clear that the prominent occupation phases at ancient Thespiai in post-Roman times are the F era, followed by the MBYZ-F, between them covering the period between the mid-twelfth and mid-fourteenth centuries, and represented by 707 potsherds or 64 per cent of the whole post-Roman assemblage (Table 13.1 and Fig. 13.7). This is not at all surprising, considering that the MBYZ period saw significant growth and stability in Boeotia and other regions, with a further slow and steady demographic rise in urban centres and the countryside to come, mainly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a prosperity that was maintained during F times and up to the outbreak of the bubonic plague in the mid-fourteenth century (Chapter 8, pp. 247–53). The overall picture shows a degree of continuity in ceramic terms, extending all the way from the middle/late seventh to the twentieth

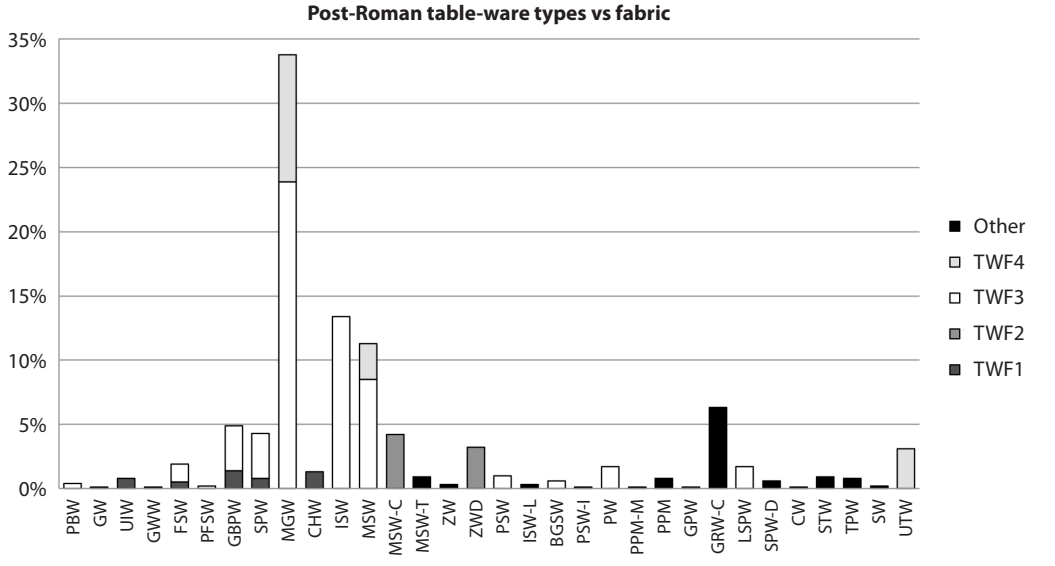


Figure 13.6. *The percentages of different post-Roman table-wares by fabric.*

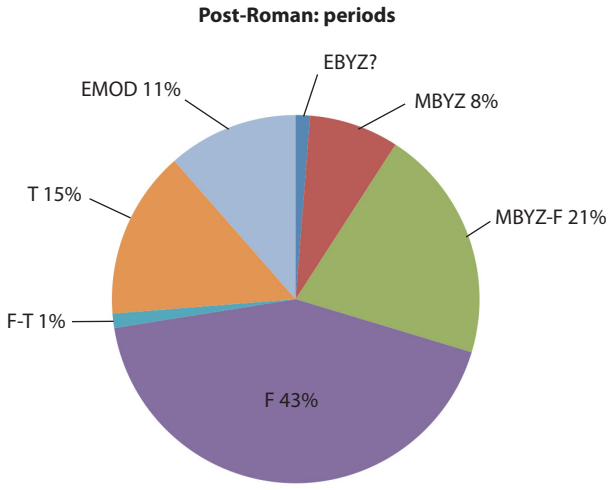


Figure 13.7. *Percentages of the different chronological phases represented at Thespiai by dated surface ceramic finds from across the site.*

centuries, with short interruptions in the ninth century, then again in the middle fourteenth/middle to late fifteenth, and finally the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Table 13.7).

The EBYZ period, mid/late seventh to early/mid ninth centuries

The problem of identifying human activity in the troubled period between the mid-seventh and early ninth centuries has often been compounded, in the past, by difficulty in actually dating the material culture of the period (Vionis forthcoming). Apart from the sometimes false assumptions to which archaeologists have been driven on the basis of the few surviving textual sources (Chapter 8, pp. 244–6), there have also been misleading attempts to assign false labels to those who produced and used certain types of material culture. New archaeological discoveries, however, and a revised ceramic chronology for certain types, have contributed to effectively bridging the gap between Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Early Middle Ages (Rautman 1998; Slane and Sanders 2005; Gabrieli *et al.* 2007; Yangaki 2007; Armstrong 2009b; Vionis *et al.* 2009; Poulou-Papadimitriou and Nodarou 2014).

The EBYZ surface material from Thespiai includes eight fragments of PLW (in CWF2-3 fabric), three of PBW (in TWF3), one HMW (in CWF1) and two possible sherds of S35 amphora (Table 13.7). Although the material is confined to little more than a dozen potsherds, they are representative of the kind of human activity in the area of ancient Thespiai during this period. As argued in Chapters 3 and 8, these EBYZ fragments suggest a low-density human activity in different parts of the site, both in the Late Antique core zones of settlement and burial, and also in spots which will later form the centre of the clearer MBYZ settlements that were to develop within the city's ancient borders, denoting a certain degree of continuity from one period to the next.

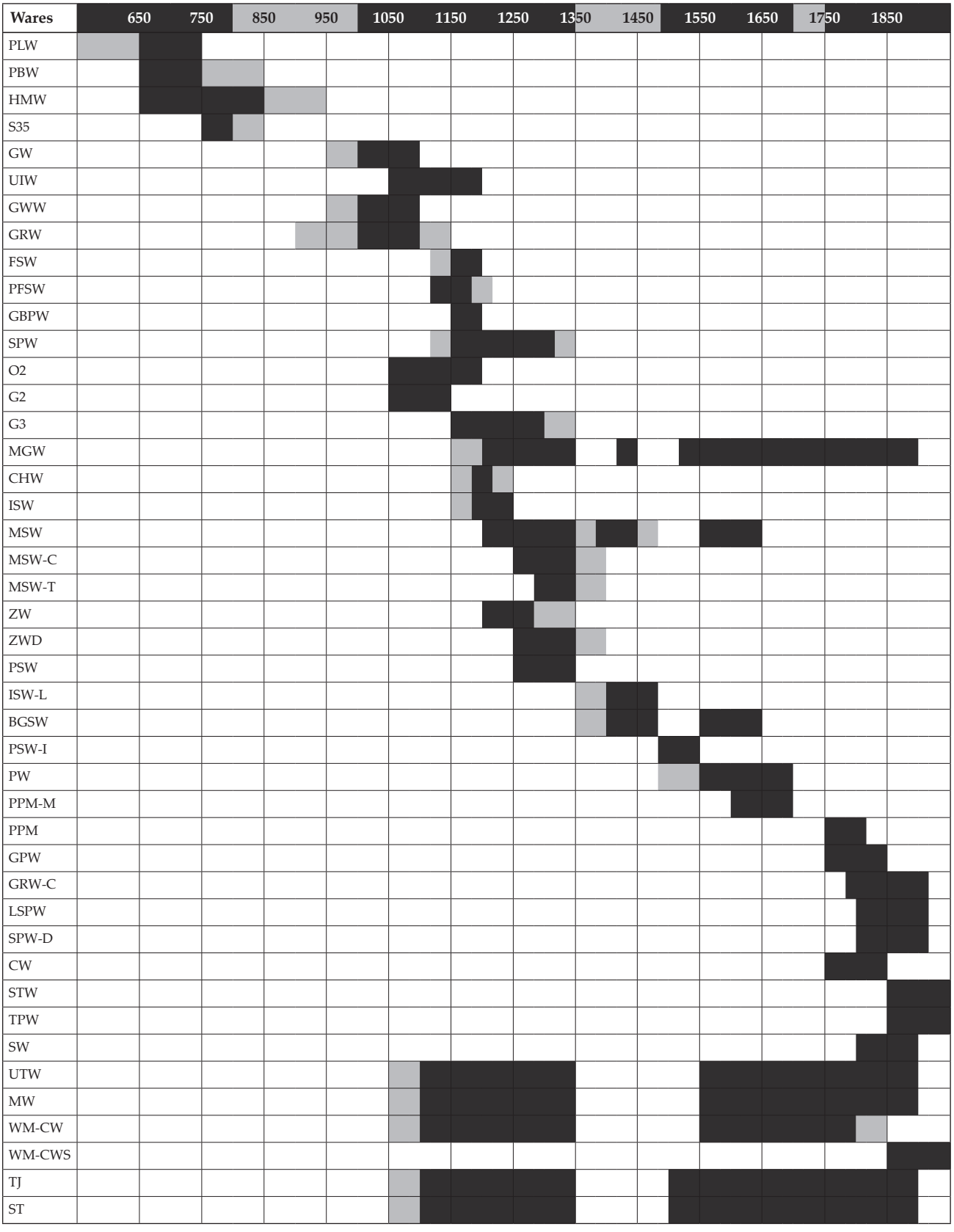
The EBYZ wares identified in Thespiai do reflect human habitation at the site, even if at a low level. Table-wares such as PLW and PBW, used for liquid serving, HMW possibly used for food processing/cooking, and S35 denoting some kind of long-distance transport, provide an almost complete domestic assemblage, despite the absence of open table-ware shapes used for consumption. This absence may indicate the importance of local pottery production and regional circulation within the wider region of Boeotia, and stresses the need to observe local patterns of consumption in order to explain special phenomena in the archaeological record. One such explanation, as has been argued elsewhere for the case of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware Phase 9 and Cypriot Red Slip Ware Form 9 (Vionis *et al.* 2009: 158–60; Armstrong 2009: 178), is that well-known Late Antique table-ware forms may have continued to be produced into the eighth century or even beyond.

It seems plausible to suggest that the EBYZ wares from Thespiai (with the exception of S35) are local or regional. PLW, used for beverage consumption and short-term storage, consists of plain closed table-vessels or pitchers of small dimensions with flat base ('jug', Table 13.2). The typical shape of this ware has also been noted at a number of sites in domestic and burial contexts in Greece, such as Corinth, Athens, Argos, Chios, Naxos (Robinson 1959: 121–2; Aupert 1980: 429–31; Boardman 1989: 100–3; Vionis 2013: 29–31), and at Sagalassos in Asia Minor (Vionis *et al.* 2009: 154–6).

PBW is another table-ware jug or pitcher with rows of parallel vertical or diagonal burnished lines on its exterior walls. Fragments of PBW have been identified at another site in Boeotia (Klimataria), while similar decorated vessels have been excavated in Cyprus, at Kalavasos-Kopetra (Rautman 2003: fig. 5.9:128) and Paphos (D. Michaelides, *pers. comm.*), and at Sagalassos (Vionis *et al.* 2009: 156–8).

A fragment of HMW was probably made on a slow wheel and can be identified as a cooking pot. Hand-made pottery, found in Late Antique and Early Medieval contexts, has been noted at several sites on the Greek mainland, Asia Minor and Cyprus (Vionis *et al.* 2009: 150–3; Vionis 2013: 29–31). The type of hand-made vessel – as well as the slow wheel-turned – in a coarse fabric, with flaring rim, rounded body and flat base, is known as 'Slavic Ware' and has been

Table 13.7. *Ceramic 'continuities' and 'breaks' in Thespiai (black-shaded cells indicate 'definite continuity'; grey-shaded cells indicate 'possible continuity' and/or a 'break' in the ceramic sequence of the site).*



associated with the invading Slavic populations in much of central and southern Greece since the late sixth century or later. Meanwhile, it has been found together with wheel-made ceramics in the same archaeological contexts, and it has been argued to indicate a peaceful co-habitation of Slav- and Greek-speaking peoples, rather than a violently imposed presence (Gregory and Kardulias 1990; Gregory 1993; Sanders 1995).

Finally, two fragments, possibly of S35, come from an amphora with globular body, broad shoulders and a vertical tapering neck, made of a powdery fabric with some limestone, perhaps a few fine quartz inclusions and much mica, dated to the 'eighth century and later' (Hayes 1992: 71). Similar fragments have been identified in Klimataria in Boeotia (Vroom 2003: 144), while its variation, often termed 'Byzantine Globular Amphora' has been identified, and was perhaps produced, at a number of sites in the Aegean (e.g. Crete, Naxos), Constantinople and the Eastern Mediterranean (Hayes 1992: 32–42; Yangaki 2007: 770–1; Vionis 2013: 29–31; Poulou-Papadimitriou and Nodarou 2014: 874). Thus, transport amphorae of known types, such as S35 and its variations, found in Constantinople and the Aegean regions that remained under Byzantine control during this period, silently suggest continuity in production and trade at regional and inter-regional level (Vionis 2017).

As I have argued elsewhere (Vionis *et al.* 2009: 161), the shift from the Roman mass-produced and customized wares that had started to disappear from the market, to non-specialized local or regional production, initiated to satisfy basic household needs, need not have been a sudden one. But undoubtedly the change in manufacturing techniques, introducing the low-quality, simple potting and non-standard appearance of certain table- and kitchen-wares (e.g. PLW, PBW, HMW), indicates a shift in production mode, focused on small scale production at village or even at household level during this period.

The MBYZ and MBYZ-F periods, tenth/eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries

Although these would normally be taken to comprise two different periods, in ceramic terms they cannot always be separated: certain types of table-ware are dated to the mid- to late twelfth century (that is, within the MBYZ period), and others between the late twelfth and early/middle thirteenth centuries (that is, in the F period). Archaeological and limited textual evidence confirm a significant growth in most parts of Greece during this period, mainly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Chapter 8, pp. 247–50). Although this revival may have been simply a product of better archaeological visibility (Sanders 2000: 394–5), evidence for intense settlement activity is revealed through large ceramic concentrations around churches in many parts of rural Boeotia (Vionis 2008: 34–5; 2013: 31–3): the very repetitive surface finds reflect a dense network of settlement-sites, almost at kilometre intervals, across an open fertile rural countryside.

The final decades of the eleventh and of the opening of the twelfth centuries saw a significant change in ceramic technology and trends: the gradually more widespread production and use of lead glazed wares, made with a red fabric and decorated with painted and/or sgraffito (incised) designs over a thin layer of white slip (Sanders 2003: 394; Yangaki 2015: 158). The glazed types encountered in Thespiai, such as FSW, PFSW, GBPW, SPW, CHW (made with TWF1 and TWF3), as well as MGW and ISW (made with TWF3), belong to this new trend of the twelfth century (see Tables 13.4 and 13.6), gradually replacing the glazed wares in white fabric from Constantinople (Talbot Rice 1930: 19–23; Hayes 1992: 12–34). The earliest glazed fragment in the Thespian assemblage is the rim of a GWW cup with an olive-yellow glaze and stamped decoration on the outside, made in a soft fabric with a few fine limestone and sand inclusions, and dated to the [tenth-] eleventh century (Vroom 2003: 122, 147–50).

Two categories of unglazed decorated table-ware, GW (1 sherd) and UIW (6 sherds), both made in TWF1 (Figs. 13.8 and 13.9), are amongst the earliest samples of MBYZ pottery found in Boeotia, dated between the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries on the basis of similar vessels excavated in Corinth and Thessaloniki (Sanders 1999b: 159; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1999: 17; Vroom 2003: 145–7). On the basis of their fabric (distinctive, although not too different from the other table-ware fabrics) and the chemical analyses of samples from Tanagra (Fig. 13.4), it is likely that the origin of both wares should be sought in areas geologically similar to Boeotia, such as Chalkis or nearby Corinth. GRW, or the so-called 'chafing dish', on the other hand (Table 13.2), is made in CWF1 and 3, although internally glazed (in olive-green or olive-brown colour) and set on a hollow ventilated stand that would be filled with burning charcoal, to hold liquid sauces warm on the dining table (Vionis *et al*. 2010: 455). Some 11 chafing-dish fragments, accounting for 4 per cent of the MBYZ and MBYZ-F assemblage (Figs. 13.8 and 13.9), are dated to the (late tenth-) eleventh century.

FSW, PFSW, SPW (made in TWF 1 and 3), as well as GBPW and ISW (in TWF3), CHW (in TWF1), and MGW (in TWF 3 and 4) come mostly in forms such as 'shallow dishes', large 'bowls' and 'cups'

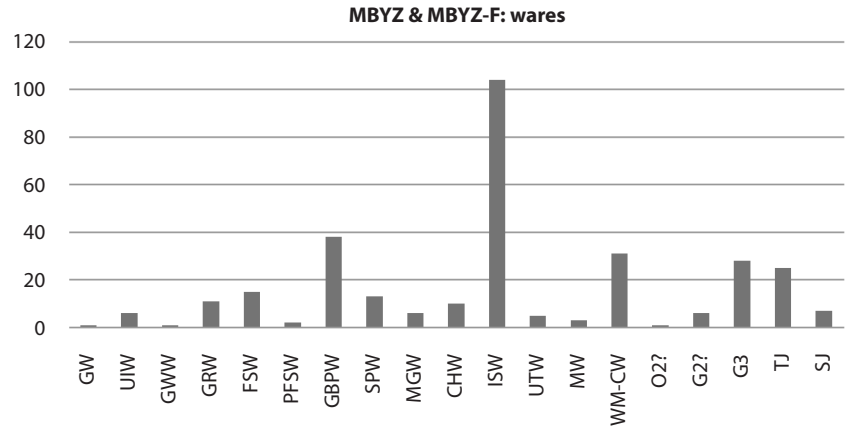


Figure 13.8. *The quantities of different MBYZ and MBYZ-F wares from Thespiai.*

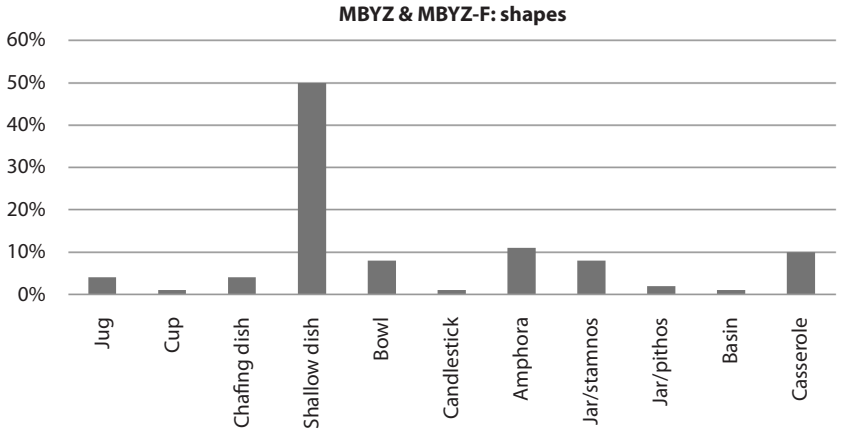


Figure 13.9. *The percentages of different MBYZ and MBYZ-F pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

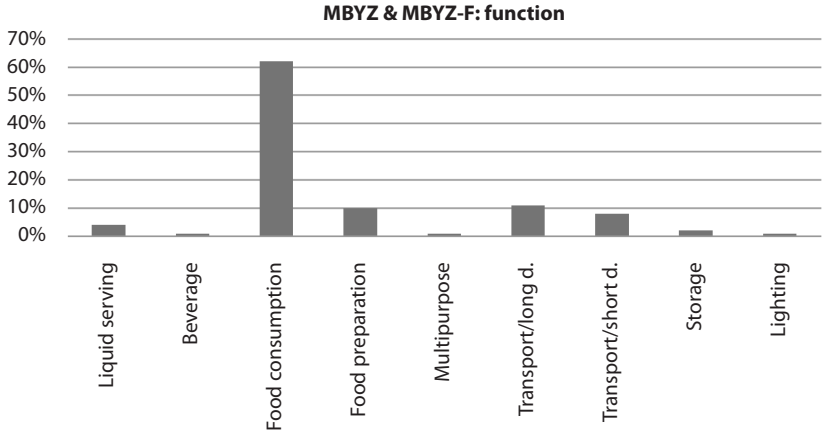


Figure 13.10. *The percentages of different MBYZ and MBYZ-F functional categories, as reconstructed by the variety of pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

(Tables 13.2 and 13.4 and Figs. 13.8 and 13.9), functioning as vessels for food and beverage serving and consumption at the table, and representing 63 per cent of the period's functional categories (Fig. 13.10). The above-mentioned wares comprise the main types of glazed table-ware of the period and are very common in both urban and rural contexts throughout Greece, at least from the mid-twelfth century on (Armstrong 1996: 126–8; Sanders 2003: 394; Athanassopoulos 2004: 90–6; Vionis 2008: 36–9). The decoration of such vessels involves, first the application of a white slip over the inner and, partially, the outer red surface of the vessel (in open forms); and secondly the decoration of the slipped areas with incised (FSW, CHW, ISW) and/or painted (in brown and green) designs (PFSW, GBPW), under a clear colourless lead glaze (Vionis 2001: 87–9;

2012: 229–34). Common shapes of the period include TJ ('jar-stamnos', 25 sherds), SJ ('jar-pithos', 7 sherds), UTW ('jug', 5 sherds), MW ('basin', 3 sherds), WM-CW ('casserole', 31 sherds), as well as amphorae of different types, namely O2 (1 sherd), G2 (6 sherds), and G3 (28 sherds), representing several types of domestic and non-domestic activities: short-distance transport, short- and long-term storage, liquid serving, food preparation and cooking, and finally, long-distance transport (Tables 13.2 and 13.4, Figs. 13.8–13.10).

Interestingly, the proportion of what appear to be the table-wares imported to Thespiai, from both neighbouring and distant regions, amounts to some 14 per cent (43 sherds) of the MBYZ and MBYZ-F assemblage, together with 2 per cent (7 sherds) of non-Boeotian amphorae. Of the remainder, 75 per cent (235 sherds) is made up of common wares and glazed table-wares of regional manufacture, with another 9 per cent (28 sherds) representing amphorae produced in the region (such as G2 and 3). Thus it becomes evident that, setting archaeological visibility aside, the quantity of possible imports into this area of Boeotia is a substantial one while, as is noted further below, the relatively high percentage of glazed table-ware is preserved in the succeeding F period, between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries.

A large proportion of the pottery at Thespiai is associated with food and beverage consumption, with a relatively high percentage of glazed table-wares (63 per cent) when compared with the unglazed common wares (37 per cent) (Fig. 13.10). Although this is probably due to the higher visibility of glazed decorated pottery on the ground, it is a pattern noted in other assemblages of rural Boeotia (Vionis 2008: 36). With a rural community living entirely off the land, however, one would have expected a typical assemblage to place a greater emphasis on vessels used for storage and food preparation, rather than for meals. The ceramic record may thus show that glazed table-wares would be rated as objects of daily use rather than being reserved for special occasions only, with a further suggestion that peasants in the MBYZ and MBYZ-F countryside were possibly better-off than has been thought.

The food storage aspects are equally interesting. Storage jars/pithoi are represented by only 2 per cent in our functional categories (Figs. 13.8–13.10). Clay storage containers, mainly because of their weight and size, are rarely moved from their original position after the abandonment of their context. Thus, we could argue that the number of storage jars recovered may closely represent the actual volume of storage goods in MBYZ rural Boeotia. The low percentage of pithos fragments, however, has also been explained (Sanders 2000: 170) on the basis that these large ceramic containers were probably expensive to acquire, so that most people were expected to buy no more than two or three of them in a lifetime. It would seem reasonable to argue that the figure of 2 per cent of storage vessels present in this functional analysis was sufficient to cover consumption needs, to avoid food shortage in case of an agricultural famine, and to meet tax obligations (Vionis 2013: 35).

The F period, mid thirteenth – mid fourteenth centuries

The period is formally taken to start in 1204 with the capture of Constantinople by the Latins of the Fourth Crusade, while Boeotia was incorporated into the Duchy of Athens a year later. The Latins divided the Boeotian countryside into a number of fiefs, given out to Latin nobles and minor lords for agricultural exploitation (Chapter 8, p. 250). The archaeological evidence from Boeotia suggests that the general prosperity, noted during the MBYZ era, continued through the F period until the outbreak of the bubonic plague in the second half of the fourteenth century and the Ottoman conquest in the second half of the fifteenth (Bintliff 1996; 2000). In ceramic terms, this period is characterized by the continuous presence of glazed wares in both urban and rural contexts and the gradual shift in table-ware shapes, from large 'shallow dishes' with a low ring-base to deeper 'bowls' of smaller rim diameter with a higher base-ring. The largest component of post-Roman surface ceramics from Thespiai is dated to this period, with 478 sherds (43 per cent of the total assemblage) representing the main occupational phase after Late Antiquity (Fig. 13.7).

One of the major technological innovations of the period, partly explaining the overwhelming quantities of glazed pottery throughout the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean after about AD 1200, is the use of clay tripod stilts for the stacking of pottery in the kiln during firing (Dark 2001: 80–8). Tripod stilts are associated with the increased capacity of the kiln, with the reduced numbers of mis-fired pottery, and with mass production of glazed ceramics and increased output (Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1999: 21), making glazed table-wares affordable items of everyday use. On the other hand, the available information also suggests a process of decentralization of pottery production, with local provincial workshops initiating mass production of wares with their own distinctive characteristics. Pottery workshops seem to have been established in rural areas, such as at Serres and Mikro Pisto (Rodopi) in Northern Greece, Larissa and Thebes in central Greece, Argos and Sparta in the Peloponnese, Oreoi on the island of Euboea, and Lemnos, along with continuing production at urban centres such as Thessaloniki

(Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1999; Vionis 2012: 267–9). The F pottery fragments found at Thespiai and other sites in Boeotia bear traces of the use of tripod stilts on the interior of their bases, while it is evident that the quality of glazing has improved, appearing as a thicker, glassier and shiny layer over the red body of the vessels.

New types of glazed table-ware appear from the mid-thirteenth century onwards in the Thespian assemblage, such as MSW, MSW-C, MSW-T, ZW, ZWD and PSW, while already established styles, like SPW, continue to exist (Fig. 13.11). Here, the dominance of wares made in TWF2-3 is noteworthy, while fragments in TWF1 tend to be very rare. TWF4 seems to be reserved for the production of other, simpler, glazed and unglazed table-wares, namely MGW, MSW and UTW (Tables 13.4 and 13.6). The diminution in TWF1 and the emergence of TWF2, together with the appearance of new wares produced in this fabric (MSW-C and ZWD), possibly point to the demise of MBYZ-F workshops and their replacement by new ones, maybe local or otherwise regional (e.g. Thebes or Corinth): in other words, the breaking of traditional ties with existing workshops and their replacement by different and possibly cheaper markets. Yet the majority of wares from Thespiai reveal a trend similar to that of the MBYZ and MBYZ-F period: local pottery (glazed and unglazed, common wares and table-ware) accounts for 85 per cent (402 sherds) of the F assemblage, while the remaining 15 per cent (73 sherds), all table-ware fragments, is of non-local origin, possibly from Constantinople (ZW), Thessaloniki (MSW-T), Corinth or maybe Thebes (MSW-C, ZWD, PSW). Common-ware shapes continue, more or less, the established MBYZ-F tradition of shapes, with the exclusive use of CWF1 and 4 for the production of TJ (76 sherds, 16 per cent), of CWF3 for SJ (13 sherds, 3 per cent), and CWF1-2 for the WM-CW (23 sherds, 5 per cent). By the mid- to late thirteenth century, TJ must have replaced G2 and 3 amphorae for short- and long-distance transport, just before the transport of liquid products began to be served by wooden barrels in the fourteenth century.

The broad pattern that characterizes decorated table-ware of the period at Thespiai is a phenomenon general throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, when the fine incised technique that characterized FSW and PFSW declined and disappeared, to be replaced by broad-line and sometimes careless *sgraffito*, such as MSW, MSW-C, MSW-T and ZWD; while sometimes the interior of open vessels acquired thick brush-strokes or splashes of brown and green colour under a yellow or colourless glaze, as was the case with PSW (Vionis 2012: 238). The greatest novelty of the period is found in shapes, with out-turned dish rims, up-turned bowl rims and higher ring-foot bases. The widely flaring 'dishes', with low ring foot and large rim diameter, of FSW or GBPW, particularly common during the MBYZ and MBYZ-F, were slowly being replaced during the first half of the thirteenth century by a 'bowl' with in-curving sides, steeper walls, a higher ring base and smaller rim diameter (Fig. 13.12). This shift in table-ware forms has been suggested to signify a shift from Byzantine-style vegetable or fish, dry or semi-dry dishes to more western-inspired liquid dishes, such as meat stews, in the period that followed Latin domination in the area (Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1998; Vroom 2003). Further recent research in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean has, however, revealed, on the basis of cook-ware shapes, textual and iconographic references, environmental studies and chemical analyses of cooking-pot residues, that populations were enjoying meat and meat-stews before the Latins established themselves in the Aegean and elsewhere (Vionis *et al.* 2010; Vionis *et al.* forthcoming). Table-ware shapes should thus be looked at from a different angle.

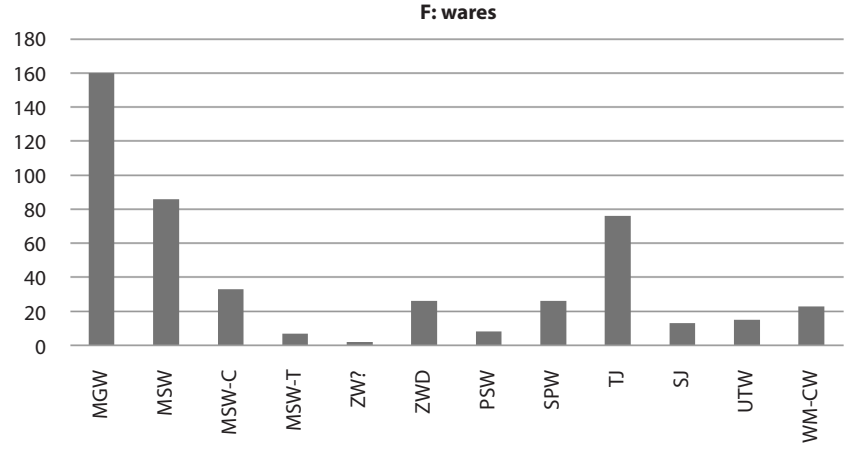


Figure 13.11. *The quantities of different F wares at Thespiai.*

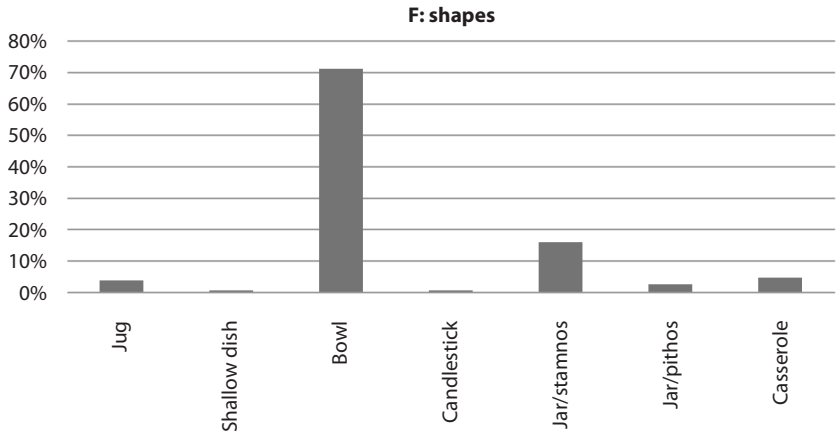


Figure 13.12. *The percentages of different F pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

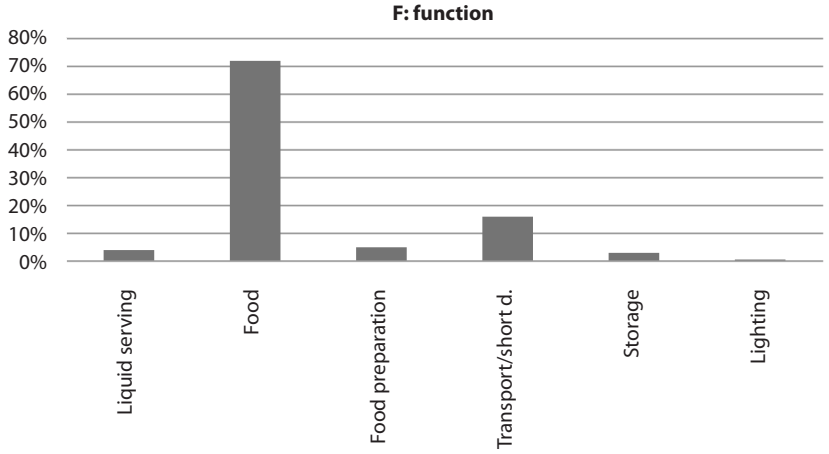


Figure 13.13. *The percentage of different F functional categories as reconstructed by the variety of pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

The strong survival of glazed ring-foot base fragments from deep bowls discovered at Thespiai may stress the need (on the part of those who could not afford more costly Italian table-ware, or table vessels of more expensive materials) for internal, highly visible ornament (Figs. 13.12 and 13.13). This is clearly attested by the proportion of bowls (71 per cent) present in the assemblage. Past and continuing excavations at urban centres, such as Corinth (Sanders 1999; 2000), have confirmed the growing incidence of glazed ceramics, after the wider adoption of glazing in the eleventh century throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. For example, glazed pottery in the Corinth assemblage (by weight) accounts for 0.7 per cent in the tenth and eleventh centuries, 2 per cent in the early twelfth, 6 per cent in the mid-twelfth, and 20 per cent in the mid-thirteenth century (Sanders 2003: 394; Vionis 2012: 271).

The F-T period, mid/late fourteenth – mid/late sixteenth centuries

This represents another 'transitional' period, spanning the years between the outbreak of the Black Death in the second half of the fourteenth century and the Early Ottoman period, starting with the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453, in the mid/late fifteenth century. In ceramic terms, the period is characterized by the wider presence of local and imported polychrome sgraffito pottery and 'Maiolica Wares' from Italy. There is, however, a relative gap in the ceramic record during this chronological phase in Thespiai, with just 14 fragments (1 per cent of the total assemblage) representing very restricted human activity at the site (Fig. 13.7).

A distinctive history of Boeotia in this period began to unroll when most of the Boeotian countryside became depopulated and deserted; the devastating effects of the Black Death, continuous warfare between Byzantines, Franks and Ottoman Turks, and successive raids by pirates on coastal Boeotia during the second half of the fourteenth century were particularly felt by the Frankish Dukes of Thebes and Athens, who invited Albanian semi-nomadic clans to re-settle the deserted lands. The Albanian colonization, over much of central and southern Greece, was to be repeated as a practice by the Ottomans, after their conquest of Boeotia in AD 1460. The subsequent period of the *Pax Ottomanica*, during the second half of the fifteenth and most of the

sixteenth centuries, saw a tremendous demographic recovery and significant economic growth (Bintliff 1995; Kiel 1997; Vionis 2006) – a growth, however, that is not reflected in the ceramic record of Thespiai.

As noted in Chapters 3 (p. 130) and 9, this situation is explained by the Ottoman tax documents, which record the foundation of the new Albanian settlement of Kobila/Kobili (later Kaskaveli, the modern village of Leondari), on the eastern hill-top above the ancient site, rather than at the location of the preceding F village, which was abandoned around the mid-fourteenth century. This also explains the random distribution of contemporary pottery around the ancient site, which comprises MGW (6 sherds), MSW (2 sherds), ISW-L (2 sherds), BGSW (2 sherds), PSW-I (1 sherd) and PW (1 sherd) – all most likely rubbish from Kobila/Kobili.

MGW and MSW continue previous traditions of glazed and *sgraffito* deep bowls (Table 13.2). BGSW also constitutes a fifteenth–sixteenth-century developed form of PSW, with careless and asymmetrical incised *sgraffito* decoration and added brush-strokes in brown and green colours. ISW-L is a new production, from the island of Lemnos, comprising bowls with raised flaring ring foot, upright rim and hemispherical body with thin walls (Vionis 2012: 239). PSW-I, finally, is an Italian product (from the Veneto region), among the common finds from another site in Boeotia (VM4 in the Valley of the Muses), and appearing in the mid/late fifteenth century: shapes include bowls with flanged rims and medium-high ring-bases, decorated with incised busts, animals and flowers and enriched with green, yellow, blue, purple colours (Vionis 2012: 244).

The T period, late sixteenth – late eighteenth centuries

This covers the Middle and Late Ottoman era, between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries (down to the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821). In ceramic terms, the period is characterized by the presence of large, deep forms of cheap and thickly potted glazed wares, with painted and *sgraffito* decoration. A total of 165 sherds (15 per cent of the total assemblage) have been dated to this period (Fig. 13.7).

The reappearance of a small site at the location of the MBYZ village is also confirmed by the textual sources, as explained in Chapter 3, pp. 130–1. In 1676, George Wheler records the existence of a triple settlement called 'Rimokastro', incorporating a hamlet on the ancient site in the plain (also known as 'Lefka' by later travellers), as well as Kobila/Kobili (later Kaskaveli, today Leondari) and Erimokastro (today, Thespies), both recorded in the seventeenth-century Ottoman tax archive sources. A thin concentration of surface finds from the ancient site, dated to this period, with a larger focus on the eastern sector, seems to represent the domestic wares and the rubbish disposals of a few households of the late sixteenth – late eighteenth centuries.

MGW (73 sherds) is the commonest amongst the table-ware finds, followed by TJ (32 sherds), SJ (13 sherds) and WM-CW (15 sherds), and UTW (3 sherds) (Fig. 13.14). TJ has the typical shape of forms equivalent to the BYZ-F and F 'jar-stamnos', Table 13.2), with flat handles, polished and an exterior surface sometimes decorated with incised horizontal and/or wavy lines. UTW comprises smaller closed table vessels, with a similar surface treatment, a flat strap handle, flat base and a spout (of the so-called 'ibrik' type). WM-CW has the standard ovoid shape of the F period, although the rim seems to become broader by 3–4 cm. Table-wares imported into Thespiai include PPM-M (1 sherd), PPM (6 sherds) and possibly BGSW (3 sherds). The first two of these wares come from northern Italy and the commonest shapes include trefoil-mouth table jugs and basins with polychrome painted decoration (Vionis 2012: 260–1). BGSW is a later form of the F-T version, the dominant shape being that of a deep bowl.

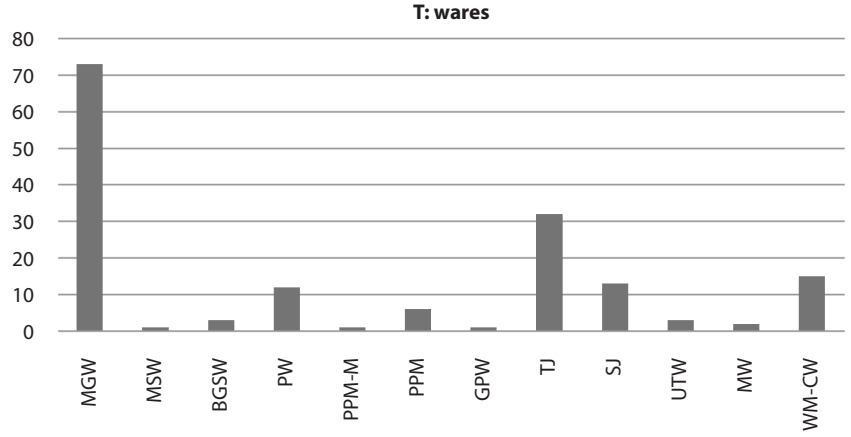


Figure 13.14. *The quantities of different T wares at Thespiai.*

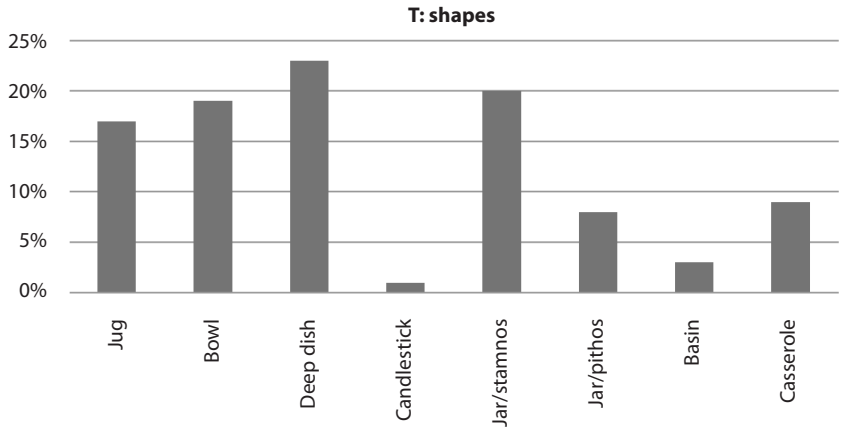


Figure 13.15. *The percentages of different T pottery shapes at Thespiai.*

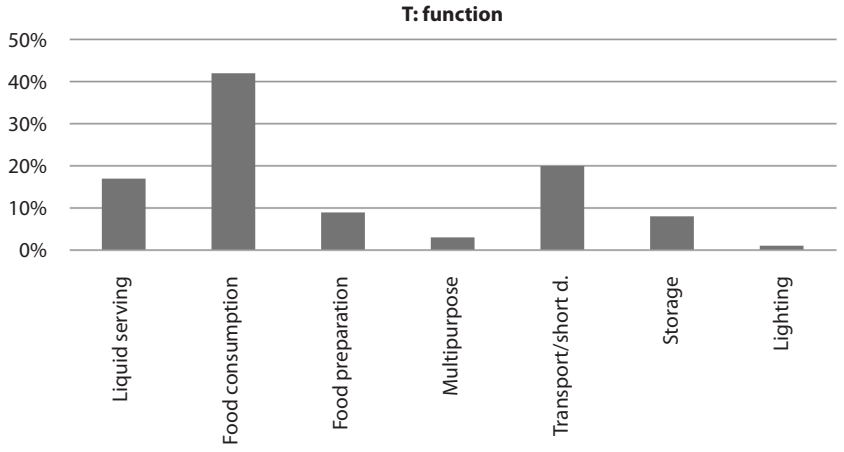


Figure 13.16. *The percentages of different T functional categories, as reconstructed by the variety of pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

This F and F-T tradition of deep 'bowls' seems to be dying out during the T period, to be replaced by the 'deep dish', a very common shape within MGW and PW (Table 13.2; Fig. 13.15). PW (12 sherds) and MGW (73 sherds) are also common as table-ware types in Thespiai and Boeotia in general during this period. The inner surface of bowls and dishes, with chunky ring-bases and broad everted rims, is decorated with brushstrokes in brown or mustard-yellow and green paint under a lead glaze (Vionis 2006: 789).

The high proportion (42 per cent) of glazed table-wares in open shapes is again noteworthy. The locally produced pottery of the Post-Medieval periods is noted as having lost the refinement of shape and decoration that had characterized ceramics of the previous era, the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. With the exception of the more sophisticated tin-glazed imported wares from Italy and Turkey, such as Maiolica and Iznik wares (largely absent in Thespiai), the great majority of glazed pottery produced in the region is rather thickly potted with careless broad *sgraffito* or painted designs. What is more important, however, is the greater availability of glazed wares, as against unglazed/domestic wares, at rural sites during the T period (Fig. 13.16).

The EMOD period, early nineteenth – early twentieth centuries

This covers the period between the beginning of the Greek War of Independence and the early twentieth century. In ceramic terms, the period is characterized by the rise and import of factory-produced vessels from England, France and Germany, and the popularity of 'peasant ceramics' or 'folk pottery' from Kütahya and Çanakkale in Asia Minor. A total of 128 sherds (11 per cent of the total assemblage) from Thespiai has been dated to this period (Fig. 13.7).

The thin and dispersed nature of the finds dated to this period around ancient Thespiai confirms that the T hamlet on the plains no longer existed in EMOD times. As argued in Chapter 3 (pp. 135–7), the finds most possibly comprise waste disposal out of the two villages of Thespies and Leondari to the north, and by other activities deriving from them. This assemblage, however, provides a glimpse into the material culture of the two EMOD villages on the hills during this period.

Table-wares (Fig. 13.17), imported from Corfu (GRW-C, 49 sherds), from Crete and/or Chalkis (LSPW, 13 sherds), Siphnos (STW, 7 sherds; WM-CWS,

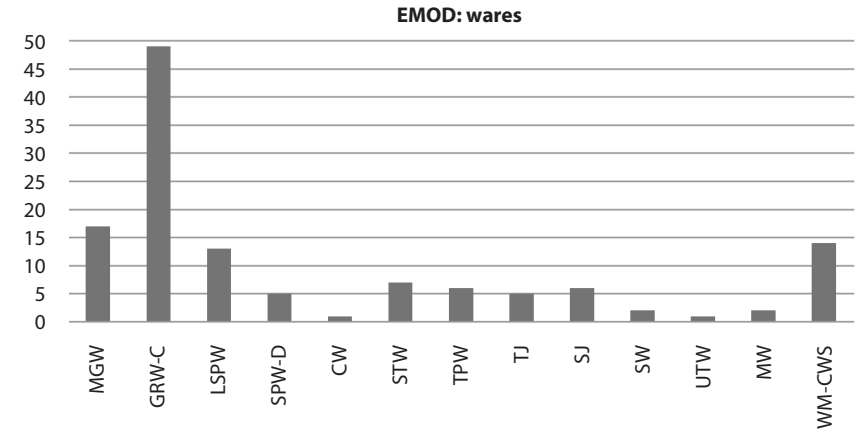


Figure 13.17. *The quantities of EMOD wares from Thespiai.*

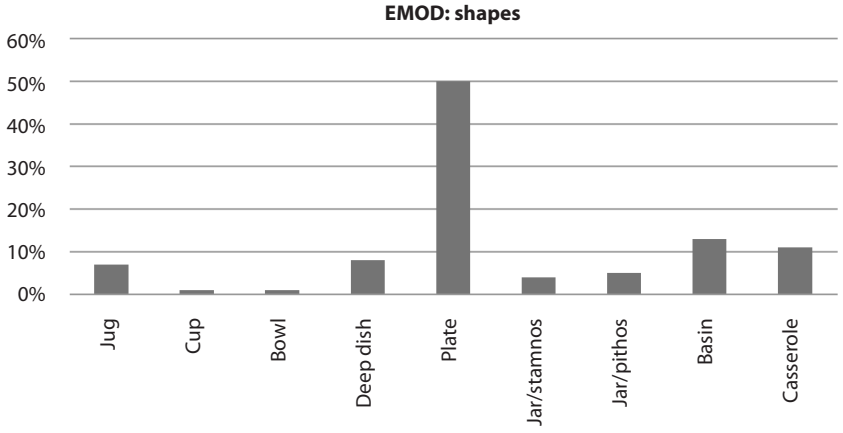


Figure 13.18. *The percentages of different EMOD pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

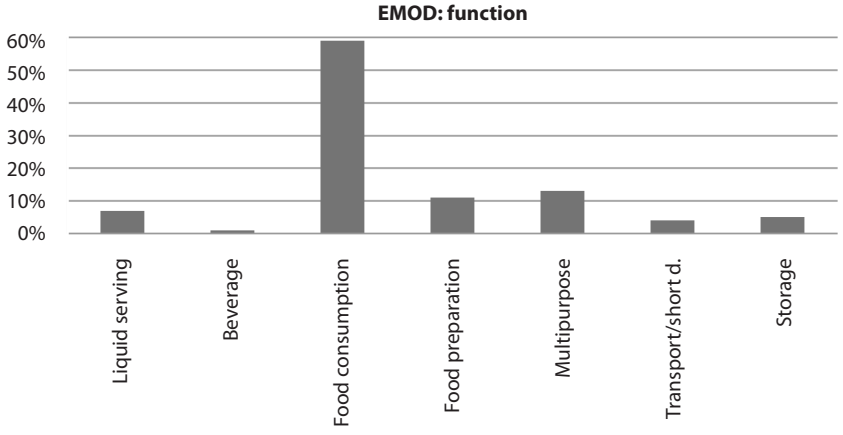


Figure 13.19. *The percentages of different EMOD functional categories, as reconstructed by the variety of pottery shapes from Thespiai.*

14 sherds), Syros and/or England (TPW, 6 sherds), Didymoteicho (SPW-D, 5 sherds), and Çanakkale (CW, 1 sherd), comprise a representative sample of the wide range of decorated and glazed pottery in demand throughout the Aegean and the Greek world, and of the products of affordable markets for urban and rural communities in most parts of Boeotia and Greece. 'Deep dishes', shallow 'plates' and 'basins' (Fig. 13.18) constitute the main shapes of this period, characterized by their wide dimensions and highly visible polychrome linear ornament, in use as communal as well individual dinner/serving items (Vionis 2012: 261–7).

A real socio-economic upsurge during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in commerce, economy and rising population, had brought back a wide range of colourful glazed ceramics in every Aegean household, both imported and locally

produced, perhaps in part as a result of cheaper ceramic mass production from the West. Thus, cheaper glazed pottery forms and styles (of lesser quality than their Early Ottoman predecessors) as table settings (Fig. 13.19), from production centres such as Çanakkale in Anatolia, and Didymoteicho in Thrace, Corfu and Syros or England a little later, began to make their appearance in the mid- to late eighteenth century, in almost every household in mainland Greece and the Aegean.

Concluding remarks

Rather than focusing on a catalogue of diagnostic samples of table- and common wares found at Thespiai, or discussing issues arising from the main pottery shapes and decorative techniques of the periods after Late Antiquity (as is common nowadays in most publications of survey projects in the Aegean and beyond), this chapter has concentrated, first, on aspects of pottery production and technology in the province of Boeotia, on the basis of the different pottery fabrics identified in Thespiai; and secondly, on the functional dimension of the ceramic assemblage (by chronological phase) and its relation to facets of the economy and everyday life. What has been achieved is an overview of the 'ceramic history' of the site, from the conventional end of Late Antiquity to the dawn of the twentieth century. As has already been pointed out in Chapter 3 (pp. 122–3), this ceramic history, as reconstructed from the distribution of post-Roman potsherds across the surface of ancient Thespiai, reveals a contracted occupation of the former Late Roman town in EBYZ times, including the *Kastro* and the eastern fringes of the ancient city; this was later to form the cores of two separate MBYZ and F villages, the first centred around the Medieval to post-Medieval church of Agios Athanasios, the second, and more extensive, adjacent to the so-called *Makri Ekklesia*.

While noting that Boeotia, at every period, had been producing most of its pottery within the region, we should add that the variety of table-ware fabrics of the post-Roman era identified in Thespiai still provides insights into the production dynamics and patterns of exchange between regional or supra-regional centres of production and rural sites throughout Boeotia. The geographical location of Thespiai, with easier access to its ancient ports in the Corinthian Gulf, would suggest that village-sites, apparently rather isolated in the mountainous western portion of the province, could nevertheless have fairly easy access to products from further away (e.g. Italy, Corinth and the Peloponnese). The estimated percentage (24 per cent) of post-Roman pottery that was probably imported into Thespiai from outside Boeotia is a rather notable figure for an outlying site in this province. We might well argue that ports and anchorages along the Boeotian coast of the Corinthian Gulf formed the gateway, for this 'marginal' territory of the province, towards a wide economic exchange network, with access to the products of neighbouring Corinth and its wider territory in the north-eastern Peloponnese.

Overall, the functional analysis of the ceramic finds from Thespiai points towards six successive trajectories: (a) a contraction in the human presence at the site throughout the EBYZ period, with only a handful of potsherds to indicate ceramic continuity and a shift from the Roman mass-produced and customized wares to a non-specialized local production; (b) a revival of settlement activity in MBYZ and MBYZ-F times, perhaps accentuated by improved archaeological visibility, with two large ceramic concentrations around the two Medieval churches, as well as a strong component of glazed vessels reserved for food and beverage consumption, possibly suggesting improved living standards; (c) continuity and further growth during the F era, to the point where finds of this period represent the main occupational phase in Thespiai after Late Antiquity, with a stronger focus on glazed tableware from within Boeotia and neighbouring regions; (d) a sharp decline in ceramic finds of the F-T period, representing the large-scale depopulation of Boeotia brought about by the bubonic plague and other factors in the mid-fourteenth century; (e) the reappearance of a small site in the T period at the location of the MBYZ village on the eastern sector of the ancient city, with a thin concentration of surface finds representing the domestic pottery and the rubbish disposals of a few households of the late sixteenth – late eighteenth centuries; and finally (f) a thin and dispersed carpet of finds dated to the EMOD period, when the T hamlet apparently no longer existed, containing a representative sample of factory-produced vessels from England, France and Germany, and 'folk pottery' from Kütahya and Çanakkale in Asia Minor; these finds provide a glimpse into the material culture of the two EMOD villages on the northern hills (the present-day Thespies and Leondari) during this period.

Chapter 14

The coins of Thespiai

Catherine Grandjean

Our knowledge of the Boeotian federal coinage and the series of the Boeotian cities derives mainly from the fundamental work done by the British scholar Barclay V. Head in 1881. His *On the chronological sequence of the coins of Boeotia* still provides the most comprehensive classification, although his chronology of the issues is inaccurate. The chronology of the federal Boeotian coinage still raises questions, and the links between this coinage and the civic ones are not clear. Boeotian hoards are rare and scant. Excavations in Boeotia have not produced much evidence for the numismatic history – production and circulation – of the Boeotian series. On the other hand, some Boeotian coins have fortunately been discovered in important hoards and in archaeological contexts in Euboia, Thessaly, Athens and the Peloponnese.[1] For our knowledge of the circulation and use of money in Boeotia, coins from the survey of Thespiai are therefore important. Their find-locations are very precise, both in the city and in the *chôra*. The purpose of this chapter is to attempt a study of the coins found at Thespiai during the Boeotia Survey in relation to the history of the landscape and, with other available sources, to give a numismatic picture of the Thespian district through the ages.

Coins of the Boeotian Survey: Thespiai, Haliartos and Hyettos

(The help of D. Hollard, C. Morrisson, P. Papadopoulou and Camille Prieux is gratefully acknowledged. Coins are illustrated actual size. See p. 386 for a list of abbreviations used only in this chapter).

Fourth century BC

1. (inv. 15) (Fig. 14.1)
LSE 1 Sample 10.1.b2 1991 (rural site near Thespiai city)
AE 2.04 g, d. 12 mm
Alexander III (*c.* 336–*c.* 323 BC, without symbol = first issues, Macedonian mint); Head of Heracles with *leonte* r. / club quiver + bow no symbol insc. ΑΛΕ→/ΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ→
Price 1991: 267; *SNG Copenhagen* 2, pl.27, 1062 (Bellinger 1964; Liampi 1986).



Figure 14.1.

Third century BC

2. (inv. 12) (Fig. 14.2)
Probably from city of Hyettos: HY 91. Sa. 578.8
AE 1.38 g, d. 14.5 mm, 12h
Locri Opuntii (*c.* 300–*c.* 272 BC)
Apollo laureate l. / Grapes between Λ and O
SNG Copenhagen 3, *Aetolia–Euboea*, pl.2, 72; *Cambridge Fitzwilliam McClean* 2, 5457, pl.198, 22; Picard 1984: 31.

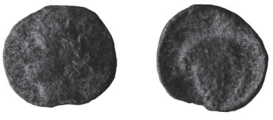


Figure 14.2.

3. (inv. 13) (Fig. 14.3)
Probably Thespiai 85 TH Sample 2146.113 (city site of Thespiai, 1985)
AE 3.49 g, 18 mm, 4h

Antigonos Gonatas? (277–239 BC)[2]
Head of young Herakles in lion's skin r. / BA above horseman crowning horse right; below monogram = ANT
SNG Copenhagen 2, pl.31, 1216; Kroll 1993: 509.



Figure 14.3.

4. (inv. 4) (Fig. 14.4)
Soil sample # 208: watermill at Neochori (off-site location in the rural territory of Thespiai)
AE 3.62 g, 15.5 mm
Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 287–*c.* 200 BC)
Head of young Dionysos right, wearing ivy-wreath / ΒΟΙΩΤΩΝ Apollo, holding bow, seated left on a cippus decorated with trident right, upon which stands tripod; Head 1881: 83, pl vi. 4.

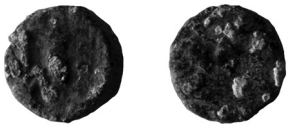


Figure 14.4.

5. (inv. 9) (see Fig. 14.5)
Thespiai Th85 Transect 2167.36 (city site of Thespiai, 1985)
AE 3.91 g, 17.5 mm
Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 255–*c.* 220 BC)
Head of Demeter or Kore facing three-quarters right, wearing corn-wreath / Poseidon naked, standing left, resting right foot on rock and leaning on trident (overstruck on Macedonian coin)[3]
Head 1881: 86–7, pl vi. 6; Kroll 1993: 595.

6. (inv. 10)
Thespiai Th85 Transect 2167.37 (city site of Thespiai, 1985)
AE 3.54 g, 17 mm
Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 255–*c.* 220 BC)
Idem – overstruck on bronze coin of a king Antigonos.

7. (inv. 11) (Fig. 14.5)
Mavrommati Plains B2, grab sample 1993, area E (rural farm site close to border of Theban and Haliartan territories)
AE 4.75 g, 17.5 mm
Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 255–*c.* 220 BC)
Idem



Figure 14.5.

8. (inv. 14)
Hyettos, rural site in the city's territory (92 CN14. Sa. 21.21)
AE 2.87 g, 17.5 mm
Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 255–*c.* 220 BC)
Idem – overstruck on bronze coin of a king Antigonos.

Second – first centuries BC

9. (inv. 8) (Fig. 14.6)
Haliartos, Omega area: 1986 HAL Transect 167 (off-site location in the rural territory of Haliartos)
AE 4.98 g, 14.5 mm
Thespiai (*c.* 171–first century BC)
Veiled female head of Hera right / Lyre or *chelys*; ΘΕΣΠΙΕΩΝ downward on left and right respectively; all within laurel-wreath tied at bottom
This coin, probably struck after 171, depicts Hera Teleia, common deity of the Boeotians, and not the queen Arsinoe III. Another coinage depicting Hera was issued at Orchomenos (Guittet 2012).



Figure 14.6.

10. (inv. 25)
Makri Ekklesia 19-08-2009. Eastern extremity of the city site of Thespiai, area 2 (TH 09 TES 051)
AE 1.95 g, 12.5 mm
Thespiai (*c.* 171–first century BC)
Veiled female head of Hera right / *chelys*; ΘΕΣΠΙ\ ΕΩΝ downward on left and right respectively; all within laurel-wreath tied at bottom
Compare no. 9 above.

11. (inv. 17) (Fig. 14.7)
LSE 1, 1991 Sample 7.2.b2 (rural site near city of Thespiai: same location as no. 1 above)
AE 4.37 g, 17.5 mm
Thessalian Koinon (second–first century BC)
Head of laureate Apollo r. countermarked (branch: compare Howgego 1985: n°382, on an Augustan *as*); Athena Itonia r. ΘΕΣΣΑΛΩΝ
SNG Copenhagen 3, *Thessaly–Illyricum*, pl.6, 310–17.



Figure 14.7.

12. (inv. 16)
21/07/1985 Askra, Field 58. GS 1.50 (ancient *kômê* of Askra in territory of Thespiai)
AE 3.28 g, 15 mm
Sikyon (*c*. 90–60 BC)
Dove flying left; above wing, ΞEN(OTI)-(MOΣ)/ ΣI within olive-wreath with ties above; Warren 1998: group 10,3.

13. (inv. 5) (Fig. 14.8)
1981 Thespiai East 1/1A 19.2b.9 (rural farm in the territory of Thespiai)
AE 6.75 g, 21 mm
Sinope
Aegis, on which Gorgon's head facing three-quarters r. ΣIN / ΩΠHΣ to l. and r. Nike advancing r. carrying over l. shoulder a palm-branch held in both hands
SNG Copenhagen 4, *Bosporus–Bithynia*, pl.8, 308–9; *Cambridge Fitzwilliam McClean* 7432–3.



Figure 14.8.

Third century AD

14. (inv. 19) (Fig. 14.9)
Thespiai Th85 Transect 2154.39 (city site of Thespiai, 1985)
Sestertius 19.1 g, 27 mm
Gordian III (239–244), **Rome**
Gordian bust laureate r. / SECVRIT.PERPET.S.C.
RIC iv.3: 335a.



Figure 14.9.

15. (inv. 18) (Fig. 14.10)
Thespiai TH85 Transect 2146.56 (city site of Thespiai, 1985)
Sestertius 12 g, 28.5 mm
Philip II (AD 248 = 1000 years of Rome), **Rome**
IMP.M.IVL.PHILIPPVS AVG Philip II Augustus bust r. / SAECVLARES AVGG.S.C. Goat walking l.
RIC iv.3: 264b



Figure 14.10.

Fourth century AD

16. (inv. 21) (Fig. 14.11, above)
20/07/1984 VM 61 F1. Sa1.1 (large rural site in the Valley of the Muses, territory of Thespiai) – found with inv. 22
Base billon 7.65 g, 26 mm
Julian, Antioch (end 361–363 AD)
Julian bust r. / SECVRITAS REIPVB Bull, head facing, standing r.; above, two stars; ANT[A]
RIC viii: 216 (Hollard 2010)

17. (inv. 22) (Fig. 14.11, below)
20/07/1984 VM 61 F1.Sa1.1 (large rural site in the Valley of the Muses, territory of Thespiai) – found with inv. 21
Base billon 1.22 g, 13 mm

Constantius II *et alii*, Heraclea (= Perinthos)
(*c*. 345–347)
Victory advancing l., holding wreath, palm branch
[SM]HA
RIC viii: 43



Figure 14.11.

18. (inv. 24)
1991 Thespiai South Tr. 1140 (off-site location in the southern rural territory of Thespiai, close to rural site THS 17)
Pierced bronze 1.04 g, 13 mm
Fourth–fifth century AD

Byzantine and Modern coins

19. (inv. 20) (Fig. 14.12)
Haliartos B Transect 2098 (off-site location in the territory of Haliartos, near rural site B1)
AE 4.64 g, 24.5 mm
Byzantine Follis (end 11th century AD)
Facing aureoled bust / cross
Morrisson 1970: 603–4, Classe 1, 41/Cp/AE/152-190 and pl. lxxxi, AE/167



Figure 14.12.

20. (inv. 23)
1986, Haliartos A transect 67 (off-site location in the rural territory of Haliartos)
4.75 g
George I of Greece
10 Lepta (issued in 1882)

Most of the coins were issued in the third century BC: a few come from areas connected to Boeotia, such as Macedonia and Locris, but the majority are bronze coins of the Boeotian *Koinon*. The numismatic landscape looks similar to that of Thebes in the same period (Hackens 1969, Vlachoyannis 2000). Very few coins, except for the three local ones with the bust of Hera, can be attributed to the four ensuing centuries; but four belong to the mid-third and fourth centuries AD.

It is tempting to connect this numismatic evidence with the general conclusion of the survey, concerning the decline of human occupation in the area between the end of the third century BC and the fourth century AD (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985; 1988; Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007). Such a working hypothesis on the numismatic side, however, needs to be checked against a larger sample of coins: those found during excavations at and around Thespiai.

Other coins discovered at Thespiai

Excavations conducted by the Ephoria of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of Boeotia at Thespiai[4]

Five silver coins (pseudo-Rhodian drachms and tetrobols of Histiaia) and seven Imperial coins were found in 1971–1972: a bronze Thespian coin issued in the reign of Domitian and six coins of the fourth century (Constantine II and Gratian, *c*. 336–383: *ADelt* Chroniká (1971), 224, nos. 18–20, 23–5).

Excavations conducted by the École française d'Athènes at Thespiai

P. Jamot excavated in the Valley of the Muses (1888–1889) and, from 1890, at Thespiai and its vicinity (the *Polyandreion*, graves and ancient road to the east), the temple of Apollo at *Toumboutzi* (to the south-west) and the area of the Byzantine *Kastro* (central), where he discovered a Doric temple. A. De Ridder later published a list of the coins discovered during these excavations in the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* in 1922. The list gives references to the first edition of the *Historia Numorum* by B.V. Head and consequently can be used, but with caution, because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish silver from bronze coins, and their denominations, in the list. The doubful identifications are italicized.

Fifth century BC

AR Corinth *Trihemiobol (c. 450–c. 400 BC) Pegasos / gorgoneion;* cf. *SNG Copenhagen* 3, *Corinth*, pl.1, 31 **(one in the temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

Table 14.1. *Coins found during the survey at Thespiai and at Haliartos (4 – 10: Boeotian coins)*

	Fourth century BC	Third century BC	Second–first centuries BC	First–second centuries AD	Third century AD	Fourth–fifth centuries AD	Sixth–tenth centuries AD	eleventh–eighteenth centuries AD	nineteenth century AD
City of Thespiai		3, 5, 6	10		14, 15				
Rural sites of Thespiai	1	4	11, 13			18			
Village of Askra			12						
Valley of the Muses						16, 17			
Rural sites of Haliartos		7 ?	9					19	20

Fourth century BC

AE Lokrian league (338–*c.* 300); Head of Athena r., wearing Corinthian helmet / ΛΟΚΡ- bunch of grapes; *BMC Central Greece*: 57–68 or 71–6 **(six in the temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

AE Histiaia (338–third century or later); Head of Maenad r., wearing vine-wreath / ΙΣΤΙ below forepart of bull r.; above, caduceus; *SNG Copenhagen* 3, *Aetolia–Euboea*, pl.11, 540; Kroll 1993: 629; Picard 1984: 289 **(one at 'Erimocastro' = city of Thespiai)**.

AR drachm Chalkis (338–308); Female head l. / Eagle flying left, holding snake; Picard 1979: issues 1 or 2 **(one in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

AR Tetradrachm ***Athens*** *'light tetradrachm, of usual type' (?) (silver Athenian coin probably of the fourth century: the list follows the chronological order of the series in B.V. Head's Historia Numorum i)* **(one at 'Erimocastro' = city of Thespiai)**.

AE Phokian League (*c.* 325 – *c.* 275); Helmeted head of Athena, facing / Φ in olive-wreath; *BMC Central Greece*: 20, 66–74; Kroll 1993: 588; Knapp and MacIsaac 2005: 189; **(two in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

AR Obol Megalopolis (*c.* 340); Horned head of Pan to l. / monogram AP with syrinx below; Warren 1989 (Kato Kleitoria 1980 Hoard) **(one in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

Third century BC

AE Boeotian *koinon* (*c.* 300–250); Boeotian shield / ornamented trident upward with curved crossbar; Head 1881: pl. v, 14 and 16; *SNG Copenhagen* 3, *Aetolia–Euboea*, pl.4, 179–81 **(four in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

AE Antigonos Gonatas (*c.* 277–239); Heracles head r. / Horseman A; Head, *Historia Numorum i:* 199 **(two in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

AR hemidrachm Phlious (*c.* 270 BC); Bull butting left / Large phi in an ivy-wreath; Pozzi (Auction J. Hirsch 1920): 1788, pl . lv **(one in the Temple of Apollo – rural sanctuary)**.

Boeotian federal coinage (*c.* 255 – *c.* 220 BC); Head of Demeter or Kore facing three-quarter right, wearing corn-wreath / Poseidon, naked, standing left, resting right foot on rock and leaning on trident (overstruck on Macedonian coin of a king Antigonos, cf. *supra*, nos. 5–8); Head 1881: 86–7, pl vi. 6; Kroll 1993: 595 **(seventeen in the Temple of Apollo, others in the Valley of Muses, at Erimocastro, rural sanctuaries and city of Thespiai)**.

Second century BC

AE Thespiai (*c.* 171–first century BC) – Laureate female (Hera) head right / Lyre; ΘΕΣΠΙ \ ΕΩΝ downward on left and right respectively; all within laurel-wreath tied at bottom **(Temple of Apollo and Erimocastro – rural sanctuary and city site of Thespiai)**.

The information given for Imperial coins is so limited (and inaccurate) that it was generally not possible to identify the mint and to give a precise reference for most of these coins.

First century AD

Large AE Vespasian (AD 69–79); IMP[ERATOR] CAES[AR] VESPASIANVS AVG[VSTVS] laureate head r. / SC Naked warrior running **(1 in the Valley of the Muses – rural sanctuary)**.

Denarius Domitian (Rome, AD 91?); IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM TRI X Laureate head r. / IMP XXI COS XI (?) CENS P P P Helmeted Athena on a base decorated with prows. **(1 in the Valley of the Muses –rural sanctuary)**; *RIC* ii: 142–146

Second century AD

Large AE Marcus Aurelius M A ANTONINVS PIVS Laureate head r. / SC Standing Emperor with CONCORDIAE AVG **(one in the Valley of the Muses – rural sanctuary)**.

Third century AD

Large AE Gordian III (238–244) Head in profile and GORDIANVS PIVS; **(one in the Kastro – centre, city site of Thespiai)**.

AR Gallienus (Rome, 253–268) GALLIENVS AVG Radiate and laureate bust r. / PAX AVG Goddess holding spear **(one in the Valley of the Muses – rural sanctuary)**; *RIC* v.1: 63.

AR Gallienus (with other reverses and legends including GALLIENVS P F AVG).

AR Salonina ONINA AVG Head of Salonina r. / REGINA Athena facing **(one in the Valley of the Muses – rural sanctuary)**.

AE Diocletian (284–305) IMP C C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG Radiate bearded head r. / Concordia **(one in the Kastro – centre, city site of Thespiai)**.

Fourth century AD

AE Constantine I (306–337) IMP C CONSTANTINVS AVG Head r. / **(one in the Kastro – centre, city site of Thespiai)**.

Byzantine

AE – ANVS P P AVG / Large M between 3 crosses **(one in the Kastro – centre, city site of Thespiai)**.

Venetian

AR- Francesco Dandolo (1328–1339) Fra. Dandulo Dux, Dux l. / Lion of Mark and St. Mark of Venice **(twelve in Episcopi = village of Askra)**.

AR – Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354) / *idem* with Andr. Dandulo dux / *idem* **(four in Episcopi – village of Askra)**.

Private collection T (from the territory of Thespiai)

Hermione (*c*. 350–320 BC)
AE 1.48g, 13.5 mm
Head of Demeter Chthonia to right / EP in grain wreath
Grandjean 1990.

Phokis, Federal coinage (late fourth – early third century BC)
AE 2.36 g, 13 mm
Athena helmeted head facing / F within olive wreath
SNG Copenhagen 3, *Aetolia–Euboea*, pl.3, 113–16; Nemea cat. 189.

Chalkis (*c*. 290–273/271)
AE 2.08 g, 13 mm
Hera head facing / CAL Eagle flying r.
Picard 1979 group 2.

Boeotian federal coinage (*c*. 255–*c*. 220 BC)
AE 4.3 g, 18.5 mm
Head of Demeter or Kore facing / Poseidon naked, standing left, resting right foot on rock and leaning on trident (overstruck on Macedonian coin: cf. *supra*, **I**, nos. 4–8).

Thespiai (*c.* 171–first century BC)
AE (4) 3.92 g, 14 mm; 4.62 g, 15 mm; 3.26 g, 15 mm; 1.94g, 11.5 mm
Veiled Hera head right / lyre or chelys ΘΕΣΠΙΕΩΝ; all within laurel-wreath tied at bottom.

Athens (*c.* 190–183 BC)
AE 5.95 g, 19.5 mm
Head of Athena right; border of dots / Zeus, nude, striding r. hurling thunderbolt; at right, star and eagle
Kroll 1993: 82.

Thespiai (AD 81–96)
AE 1.6 g, 15 mm (very worn)
Laureate head right AϒΔO ΚΑΙ ΣΕ ΓΕΡ / Apollo standing facing holding plectrum and lyre ΘΕΣΠΙ-ΕΩΝ
RPC ii: 266.6.

Table 14.2. *Coins from the French excavations (P. Jamot) (***x** *= silver coin(s);* x *= bronze coin(s);* x̲ *= Boeotian coin(s)).*

	Fifth–fourth centuries BC	Third century BC	Second–first centuries BC	First–second centuries AD	Third century AD	Fourth–fifth centuries AD	Sixth–tenth centuries AD	Eleventh–eighteenth centuries AD	Nineteenth century AD
City of Thespiai	**x**x	x̲	x̲		x	x	x		
'Temple of Apollo'	**x**x	**x**x̲x	x						
Village of Askra								x	
Valley of the Muses		x̲x		**x**x	**x**				

The monetization of Thespiai

Production and circulation

The Archaic coins inscribed with an epichoric H and traditionally assigned to Haliartos are now believed to have been struck by Hyettos. Thespiai probably struck silver coins (stater, drachm, hemidrachm, obol; *obv*. Boeotian shield, some with Θ / *rev.* Θ in mill-sail incuse square) on the Aiginetan standard before 480: an epichoric letter originally interpreted as a Φ and associated with Pharai, is now interpreted as a Θ and assigned to Thespiai (Fig. 14.13 = BCD 2006, 229; 12.11 g, stater: Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 219, 222).

Haliartos issued staters, drachms, hemidrachms and obols, probably before the Athenian invasion in 454 (*c.* 475–454?) with the Boeotian shield on the obverse, rim divided into eight sections and a square incuse with anti-clockwise mill-sail pattern. During the first half of the fourth century, Haliartos issued staters (Fig. 14.14 = BCD 2006, 164; 11.91 g) and fractions (Fig. 14.15 = BCD 2006, 165; 0.41 g, hemiobol), with Poseidon as reverse type and the shield on the obverse with a trident.

Thespiai issued a complete silver monetary system on the Aeginetan standard and some bronze coins. The series of fractions (during the 370s, before the battle of Leuctra in 371 BC?) can have preceded the larger denominations, as in most cases in the Greek world: obols (Boeotian shield / two vertical crescents back to back or a horizontal crescent composed of two lines facing upward (Fig. 14.16 = BCD 2006, 591; 0.91 g), hemiobols (half Boeotian shield / horizontal crescent facing downward) and tetartemoria (Boeotian shield / a horizontal crescent composed of three lines facing upward).

Then (mid-fourth century?) Thespiai issued the series of staters, triobols, obols and tetartemoria depicting a Boeotian shield and the head of Demeter Melainis on the right with a crescent (Fig. 14.17 = BCD 2006, 605; 12.02 g) (Head 1881; Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 222, n. 773; Demetriadi 2000; BCD 2006: 37–40, 108–113).

Haliartos issued bronze coins (Boeotian shield / API or ΑΛΙ in concave shield), probably from after the battle of Chaironeia in 338. Some Thespian bronze coins may also belong to that period (Boeotian shield



Figure 14.13.



Figure 14.16.



Figure 14.15.



Figure 14.14.



Figure 14.17.



Figure 14.18.



Figure 14.19.



Figure 14.20.

with a narrow double rim / ΘΕΣ in a large concave incuse with a curved edge). The heavy weights of these rare bronze coins are quite unusual: 8.14 g (*BMC Central Greece*: 13) and 6.92 g (BCD 2006: 610, Fig. 14.18), both issued with the same reverse die. Lebadeia, Koroneia, Orchomenos, Plataia and Tanagra issued such bronze coins, with the beginning of the city name on the reverse. Thebes seems not to have issued such coins, which are usually dated to the end of the fourth century or before 287, or else during the final decades of the third century BC, when there was an increasing involvement of the Ptolemies in the affairs of Greece: the bevel-shaped edge of a Tanagra coin is obviously 'Ptolemaïc' (*Triton* 9 (10/1/2006), 124).

Some coins of these mints were found in hoards from the areas using the same standard (Central Greece, Peloponnese), mainly in those dating to the fourth century.[5] None, however, have yet been found on excavations or during the surveys at Thespiai and Haliartos. The oldest coins found there are dated to the fifth and fourth centuries and come from outside Boeotia (Central Greece, Peloponnese and Macedonia): silver coins from Corinth, Chalkis, Athens and Megalopolis were discovered in the city of Thespiai, and bronze coins (Phokis, Locri, Histiaia, Hermione and Alexander) in rural sites as well as in the city. Many coins were issued in the third century as bronzes of the Boeotian *koinon* (Demeter/Poseidon). Coins from central Greece (Lokris, Phokis, Histiaia) and from the Peloponnese (Phlious and Megalopolis) belong to the same century, as do some silver coins.

Federal Boeotian silver coinage played a significant role in the area until the dissolution of the *koinon c.* 171 BC. No examples have yet been found on excavations, or during the surveys at Thespiai and Haliartos. A hoard including Boeotian drachms has been published recently by Eleni Vlachoyannis (Thebes Hd 1997, *CH* 9 (2002), 244), but the hoards of Thebes 1935 (*IGCH* 193) and 1965 (*IGCH* 233) include, as at Thespiai, foreign silver coins (Athens, Macedonian, Ptolemaïc, Rhodes, Central Greece, Peloponnese). The Lake Copais 1908 hoard (*IGCH* 229) (1547 bronze federal coins issued in the third century, 1 bronze coin of Carystos and 1 bronze coin of Perseus), as well as the third-century hoards discovered at Thebes, show the importance of the federal Boeotian coins in that area (Hackens 1969; Evgenidou and Tselekas 2010; Vlachogiannis 2000); bronze federal coins depicting Demeter and Poseidon, often overstruck on Macedonian coins (*c.* 255–220 BC), are especially numerous at Thebes and at Thespiai.

The chronology of this federal Boeotian coinage still raises questions and the links between this coinage and the civic ones are not very clear. Moreover, pseudo-Rhodian drachms were being issued at Haliartos or at Hyettos in the second century BC and some of these were discovered at Thespiai (Knoepfler 1999; Ashton 2000).

Finally, Thespiai itself issued two series of bronze coins. The first was probably struck after 171 and shows, on both denominations, not the Ptolemaic queen Arsinoe III depicted as the tenth Muse, wearing modius or calathos and veil – as a tribute to the Ptolemies' euergetism – but Hera Teleia, common deity of Boeotians, as depicted on contemporary bronze coins of Orchomenos (Guittet 2012). These bronze series were the most significant of those issued by Boeotian cities on their own, as Philippe Guittet demonstrates in his unpublished thesis focused on the Hellenistic Boeotian Coinages (109 obverse dies are attested and production was significant).[6] Two denominations were issued by Thespiai: 15–17 mm and 3–4 g; 11–13 mm and 2–2.5 g (Fig. 14.19, BCD 2006: 611).

The second series, issued during the reign of the emperor Domitian (AD 86–91), shows the laureate or radiate head of the emperor with seven or more various deities and figures (Schachter 1961; Knoepfler 1996: 154; Burnett, Amandry, Carradice 1999: 267–74; Psoma 2008: 227–55): those with Apollo seated (14–15 mm, 3.17 g) are smaller than those with standing figures (16–17 mm, 4.41 g, Fig. 14.20, BCD 2006: 617a).[7] Two denominations were issued, as during the Hellenistic period. Tanagra issued coins with imperial heads in three denominations during the Julio-Claudian period (a: 23 mm-8.52 g; b: 19 mm-6.04 g; c: 15 mm-3.89 g) and Thebes minted only during the reign of Galba (21 mm-7.94 g). 'Autonomous' coins are also attributed to Tanagra, though it is not clear whether they should be regarded as Hellenistic, Julio-Claudian or Flavian (Burnett, Amandry, Carradice

1999: 66; Burnett, Amandry, Pau Ripolles 1992: 266). At Thespiai, Imperial coinage is known for Domitian only, but Tanagra issued coins in the second century AD, during the reigns of Trajan, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (BCD 2006: 315–17; Heuchert and Howgego 2005: s.v. Tanagra).

The geographical distribution of the coins

The rural sites. The survey provides precise information about the distribution of coins and consequently the level of monetization of the area. Coins of the fourth, third and second centuries BC were found in the *chôra* (## 1, 4, 7–9), which obviously implies a precocious monetization compared with some rural areas, such as Messenia. Silver coins of all periods were discovered exclusively in the Valley of the Muses and in the *asty*. It would be interesting to make similar studies of monetization in other areas, such as Athens, in order to compare them with Thespiai/Haliartos.

The city of Thespiai and its vicinity. The Classical and early Hellenistic period seems to be particularly highly monetized, with discoveries both in the city and in its vicinity (Temple of Apollo, farms, hamlet). Only one coin belonging to the early Roman period (#13) has been found on a farm close to the city. On the other hand, several coins issued in the late Roman period have been discovered, but only in the centre of the city, as during the Byzantine period.

The Temple of Apollo. A. Schachter argued that the city of Thespiai before 480 was centred on the Temple of Apollo, and that the settlement moved to its Classical site only after the Persian destruction, but that is not a view supported by either the city survey, or the evidence from the locality of the Temple (*Testing the Hinterland*: 133, 143, Figs. 9.4 and 9.9). Further, Ch. Müller has demonstrated that the evidence relating to that temple is very slight. Jamot excavated, at some distance away from the city, a temple epigraphically

Table 14.3. *Monetary circulation in the Thespian area through the ages.*

	Thespian issues	***Haliartan issues***	***Boeotian federal issues and Theban issues***	**Circulation at Thespiai (Boeotian coins)**	**Circulation at Thespiai (other coins)**	**Circulation at Haliartos (Boeotian coins)**	**Circulation at Haliartos (other coins)**
Fifth century BC	*AR stater / dr / obol*	*AR stater / dr / obol*	*AR stater / dr / obol / tetart*		AR Corinth		
Fourth century BC	*AR stater / AE*	*AR stater / AE*	*EL / AR stater / AE*		AR / AE Macedonia Central Greece Peloponnese		
Third century BC	*AE*	*[AR Pseudo-Rhodian drachm]*	*AR drachm / AE*	AE	AR / AE Central Greece Macedonia	AE	
Second–first centuries BC	*AE*		*AE*	AE	AE Central Greece Athens Peloponnese Asia Minor	AE	
First century AD	*AE*		*AE*		AR Rome		
Second century AD					AE		
Third century AD					AR / AE Rome		
Fourth–fifth centuries AD					AE Antioch Heraclea		
Byzantine					AE		AE
Venetian					AR		
Ottoman					AR		
Modern					10 Lepta (1882)		

identifiable as that of Apollo (Schachter 1996: 103–4; Müller 1996; Hansen 2004: 458). Coins discovered there by Jamot are actually the oldest found at Thespiai (see above).

The Valley of the Muses. The oldest coins date to the last third of the third century BC, the period to which D. Knoepfler has dated the reorganiztion of the *Mouseia*. Silver Imperial coins have been found only in the Valley of the Muses. L. Robert and D. Knoepfler assumed that the *Mouseia* had been celebrated 'au moins' until the third century AD (Robert 1946: 5; Roesch 1965: 214–19; Knoepfler 1996). The discovery during the survey of two billon coins of Constantine II (*c*. 345–347) and of Julian (361–363) (above, ## 16 and 17, from a site close to the Sanctuary) confirms and extends that working hypothesis.

Monetization

Two methods exist for approaching monetization, that is, the rôle played by money in the economy. The first is the one used by economists in industrialized countries: the level of monetization of a given economy is defined as the commercialized percentage of GDP.[8] But there is a lack of data concerning speed of circulation and monetary flow and stock in ancient Greece and the quantitative approach poses many methodological problems, arising mainly from the poverty of the documentary record and on the unknown amount of recoinage.[9] Fortunately, there is another approach to the monetization level of pre-industrial societies. The French historian Jean Meuvret has shown, in a famous study of money in modern France (sixteenth–eighteenth centuries), that high-value coins were found only in big cities, harbours and places near major roads, in addition to banks and suppliers' credit; smaller towns and villages used mainly small coins, except during the harvesting season. That approach to monetization involves the study of coinage, as well as of transactions and monetary circulation, both alike focused on their geographical distribution. In short, it implies a global approach to the human occupation and exploitation of a whole region, in the same way as does archaeological survey, but not traditional excavation focused on towns (Meuvret 1971; Howgego 1992; Katsari 2008).

Some years ago, I applied that qualitative approach to monetization to Messenia (Grandjean 2006). No fewer than three major international projects have been launched in this area in the recent past (the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, the Nichoria excavations and the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project), while very fruitful excavations have been conducted since the 1950s by the Greek Archaeological Society at Messene/Mavromati. As is well known, Sparta forbade the use of coins in Messenia as well as in Lakonia. After Sparta's defeat by the Thebans at the battle of Leuktra (371 BC) and the creation of the Messenian state, the use of coins was very slowly adopted in Messenia; first in the capital city of Messene and in the harbours at Pylos and Kyparissia, and later (in the second century BC) in the small towns and sanctuaries of Messenia. Unfortunately, however, these surveys did not produce consistent information on coins in the countryside.

I also attempted such a study in other Peloponnesian areas where survey projects have been conducted: Achaia and the Hermionid (Hermione and Halieis). In these areas, the peak of human occupation and the peak of monetary production seem to be concomitant. That peak took place in the fourth and in the first half of the third centuries in the Hermionid, but in the second century in Achaia (Bintliff 2008). At all places and all times, high-value coins and suppliers' credit seem to be concentrated in the main cities, the harbours and the small towns connected to important sanctuaries, to a much greater extent than in modern France. Coinages with many denominations, including some of high value (tetradrachms, staters and drachms), and small coins used in daily life (obols and otherwise mainly bronze coins) seem to be another indicator of a high level of monetization in ancient Greek societies.

Coins discovered during the Boeotia Survey and in the excavations at Thespiai lead to a single conclusion concerning the chronology and the distribution of the mints: the oldest coins date to the fourth century (the single Corinthian one excepted), which reflects the history of Thespiai, destroyed twice during the Classical period; by the Persians in 480 and by Thebes after 371. Haliartos too was destroyed by the Persians in 480 and later by the Romans in 171. The fourth century was the time when most Greeks were discovering bronze coinage, introduced in Greece during the Peloponnesian War, in order to replace silver when access to the Laurion mines was difficult. The largest group of coins discovered in the area of Thespiai are Boeotian federal bronze coins, followed by the Thespian bronze coins with the bust of Hera (and a few coins issued under Domitian). The other mints are from neighbouring areas: Central Greece (Lokris, Phokis), Euboia and the north-eastern Peloponnese. The proportion of Macedonian coins must be underlined – as too that of Athenian coins, which is insignificant despite the fact that the Romans gave the territory of Haliartos to Athens in 171.

The chronology of the coins fits the general understanding of the history of the area, with most of the coins dating to the fourth and third centuries BC.

Their continued circulation during the late Hellenistic period (and possibly much later still), is however likely, as was often the case with small coinage in Greece.

It seems that in Boeotia there was no monetary silver issue in the Hellenistic period after the end of the third century, which is very different from the developments in Thessaly, the Peloponnese and Euboea. It is tempting to connect this with Feyel's theory, based on Polybius (see Chapter 6, pp. 228–9, and Chapter 5, pp. 215–6; Müller 2013) concerning the 'crise économique' of Boeotia from the end of the third century BC; but it is impossible to draw conclusions. Most of the Federal bronze coins (Demeter/Poseidon) were overstruck on bronze coins of a Macedonian king (probably Antigonos Gonatas, *c.* 229–220), but that is not really significant because such overstrikes were also made by Athens, and by Chalkis too (Feyel 1942; Migeotte 1985; Picard 1979: 179–81; Kroll 1993: 69 and 509). Some foreign bronze coins of the late Hellenistic period (Sikyon, Thessaly) could have been in local circulation (this often occurred elsewhere with Sikyonian coins, while the Thessalian coin (#11 above) has been countermarked).

There is a gap after the end of the third century BC, apart from the Thespian coins depicting Hera and a few foreign coins, until the reign of Domitian, when another series of coins – bronze and some silver – begins, many belonging to the third and fourth centuries AD (Gordian III, Gallienus, Diocletian and Constantine), but not in such significant numbers as during the fourth and third centuries BC. Most of the coins dating to the Roman period, especially those in silver, were discovered in the city itself.

A few Byzantine, Venetian and Ottoman coins were discovered, especially in the village of Askra and in the *Kastro* at the heart of Thespiai.

To summarize, coins circulating in the *chôra* of Thespiai and of Haliartos were not the same as those in the urban centre or *asty*. In the *asty*, the circulation resembles that at Thebes, with silver as well as bronze coins in significant numbers from the fourth century. Most of the coins discovered in rural sites were bronzes issued later, in the third century BC. Inscriptions suggest that the monetization of this area was quite significant in this century. The inscription from Orchomenos (*IG* vii. 3172, *c.* 223 BC) focuses on the loan by Nikareta of Thespiai of 18,833 drachms (more than 3 talents) to the city of Orchomenos. The Thespian banker Pistokles acted as an intermediary in the repayment. Nikareta – a woman – had an account in Pistokles' bank. Other inscriptions, such as the accounts of the *athlothetes* (magistrate in charge of the annual contests during the Mouseia, whose winners at this time won prizes in money), as well as the Thespian leases (for which taxes and rents are expressed in drachms and obols), give the same picture (Migeotte 1984: 53–69; Knoepfler 1996; Pernin 2004 and 2007).

It seems that coins discovered in surveys are very useful for the study of monetization because their location is very precise, both in the city and in the *chôra*. A traditional approach to the monetary circulation of a particular area can obviously derive great advantage from the contrast between hoards and excavated coins, found in an urban context, and the coins discovered in surveys that are usually in the countryside, part of the Greek landscape so long ignored by archaeologists.

Notes

1 Head 1881; Schachter 1958; Hackens 1969; Fossey *apud* Etienne and Knoepfler 1976; Madsen 1981; Phoungas 1986; Hepworth 1986, 1998; Kravartoyannos 1993; Knoepfler 1999; Vlachoyannis 2000; Ashton 2000, 2002, 2008; Demetriadi 2000; Tsourti 2000; BCD 2006; Liampi 2008; Gartland 2013; Guittet 2013.

2 The attribution of this issue is controversial: it may be an issue of Antigonos Doson (regent, then king of Macedon, 229–220) rather than of Gonatas; cf. Kroll 1993, 509 and p. 205 (federal Boeotian coinage overstruck on Herakles/horseman Macedonian bronzes).

3 This coinage was mainly overstruck on Herakles head/horseman bronzes of a Macedonian king, Antigonos Doson or, more probably according to J.H. Kroll, Antigonos Gonatas. I also agree with his hypothesis about the overstriking: 'a plausible case can be made that the Macedonian coins entered Boeotia during the reign of Antigonos Gonatas or Demetrios II (who occupied the country after 236) and that this overstriking took place during the sharp anti-Macedonian reaction upon Demetrios' death in 229' (Kroll 1993: 205; also Vlachoyiannis 2000, for arguments in favour of the overstrike in the 220s).

4 I am very grateful to Professor Aravantinos and to Mrs D. A. Charami, successive Directors of Antiquities of Boeotia, for their warm welcome at the Museum of Thebes.

5 Myron hoard in Thessaly, *IGCH* 62; Moulki hoard (near Sicyon) *IGCH* 67; and later, Larissa 1948 hoard, *IGCH* 239.

6 Thebes, Orchomenos, Plataiai and Lebadeia also struck autonomous bronze issues during the second and first centuries BC.

7 *Apollo seated*: Athens 2539 (15 mm-2.9 g), Athens 2540 (15 mm-2.88 g), Paris 688 (14.5 mm-3.5 g), Athens Tsivourakis 1896/7 271 (14 mm-3.2 g), Paris 689 (15 mm, 2.83 g), Oxford Milne 4.7.1947 (14 mm-3.15 g), *BMC Central Greece* 30 (15,5 mm-4.22 g), *BMC Central Greece* 31 (15 mm-3.19 g),

BMC Central Greece 32 (15 mm-2.7 g). *Standing figures*: Oxford Loring 21.7.1949 (18.5 mm-3.56 g), Athens 2538 (16 mm-4.27 g), Paris double (19 mm-4.54 g), Paris 690 (17 mm-3.5 g), Paris 687 (17 mm-4.25 g), Paris 686 (15 mm-4.26 g), Oxford Milne 4.7.1947 (17 mm-4.03 g), *BMC Central Greece* 27 (18 mm-4.38 g), *BMC Central Greece* 28 (17 mm-3.64 g), *BMC Central Greece* 29 (18 mm-4.71 g), Athens Tsivourakis 1896/7 270 (17.5 mm-4.76 g).

8 The rate of monetization in modern France and UK is 100 per cent, when measured without taking into account the calculation of GDP for products and services that do not enter the market.

9 Rates of liquidity are proposed by analogy with India before 1950, another preindustrial economy (60 per cent rate of monetization), the Roman Empire (less than 50 per cent according to R. W. Goldsmith and about 30 per cent according to K. Hopkins) and the Byzantine Empire (around 46 per cent according to C. Morrisson). That of France in the middle of the eighteenth century could have been about 35 per cent. For Messenia at the end of the Hellenistic period, I propose about 30 per cent. This rate recalls the estimate of K. Hopkins for the Roman Empire. (Morrisson 2002; Grandjean 2006).

Abbreviations used only in this chapter

BCD 2006 = *The BCD Collection of the Coinage of Boeotia. Triton catalogue ix*. Auction January 2006, session 1: New York.

BMC Central Greece = Head, B.V. (ed. R.S. Poole), *A Catalogue of the Greek coins in the British Museum: Central Greece (Locris, Phocis, Boeotia, Euboea)*. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1884.

Cambridge Fitzwilliam McClean = S.W.Grose, *Catalogue of the McClean Collection of Greek coins, vols. 1–3*. Cambridge: CUP, 1923–29.

CH = Coin Hoards

Nemea cat. = R.C. Knapp and J.D. Mac Isaac, *Excavations at Nemea* iii: The Coins. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

RIC ii, iv.3, v.1 and viii = *Roman Imperial Coinage*:
ii = Mattingly H. and E.A. Sydenham: *Vol. 2, Vespasian to Hadrian*. London: Spink, 1926.
iv.3 = Mattingly, H., E.A. Sydenham and C.H.V Sutherland: *Vol. 4 Pt.3, Gordian III – Uranius Antoninus*. London: Spink, 1949.
v.1 = Webb, P.H: *Vol. 5 Pt.1, Valerian I to Florian*. London: Spink, 1927.
viii = Kent, J.P.C.: *Vol. 8, The family of Constantine I, A.D. 337–364*. London: Spink, 1981.

RPC ii = *Roman Provincial Coinage, volume ii: From Vespasian to Domitian*. (London: British Museum Press (= Burnett, Amandry and Carradice 1999, in main bibliography, p.394 below).

SNG Copenhagen 2, 3 and 4 = *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: the royal collection of coins and medals, Danish National Museum*. West Milford, NJ: Sunrise Publications, 1982 (reprints of the first edition, Copenhagen, 1943–45):
2 = *Vol .2, Thrace and Macedonia*.
3 = *Vol .3, Greece: Thessaly to Aegean Islands*.
4 = *Vol. 4, Bosporus to Lesbos*.

Chapter 15

Conclusion

The site of Thespiai fulfilled all our expectations, even if in some cases these were negative ones. The destruction, casual or deliberate, of virtually all its standing architecture had happened long before our arrival on the scene, to leave (as cited earlier) 'no site in Boeotia more depressing than Thespiai' (Fossey 1988: 136). Then, the pottery from the city site of Thespiai, with the sole exception of the Neolithic finds from the Magoula area, has been judged by our specialists to be exceptionally 'bland' (see p. 291), worn and fragmentary, even by the standard of surface survey finds. But one of our prime aims was to reconstruct the urban layout, and here worn pottery probably posed less of an obstacle than another ceramic factor, one by no means confined to Thespiai: the shortage of vessel-types that were diagnostic for burial (or indeed sanctuary) use. Again and again, whether with the Classical Greek *kantharos*, the Hellenistic *unguentarium* or the Roman lamp, a vessel-type commonly found in the grave proved also to be well-attested in domestic use. Hence the besetting difficulty of defining a cemetery zone, surrounding the built-up area, such as must have existed, and as we had hoped to detect.

Next, the application of various kinds of geophysical testing, which has since enjoyed some startling successes on the other urban sites studied by the Project (notably Hyettos, Haliartos and Tanagra) yielded very mixed results at Thespiai (Chapter 4, pp. 192–6). Then there was the problem of the fortifications: here we found, on the one hand, two sets of walls, many centuries apart in likely date, which are palpably present on the ground, yet not directly attested in any source for hundreds of years after their probable construction, down to recent times (the northern extension wall and the *Kastro* circuit); and, conversely, an earlier city wall whose existence is repeatedly confirmed in ancient accounts of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, but whose traces are utterly fugitive on the ground.

Each of these findings, including even the last one, is primarily a product of one and the same factor: the exceptional fertility of the terrain that forms the city site, which has led to its intensive agricultural exploitation at every period when it was not built up – conspicuously so at the present day. The greater part of the urban site is situated on the prime agricultural land of the luvisols: Soil 3 and (optimal for cereals and vegetables) Soil 4, in *Testing the Hinterland*, pp. 99–109 with Fig. 7.2, top right (Shiel and Stewart). Yet the same authors warn (pp. 103, 105) of one possible environmental threat to such a location, flooding and waterlogging; and, although the risk of this is now considered low, we have encountered, in the notices of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century travellers (Chapter 2, p. 12), reports of the marshy state of the ground. This intermittent flooding may well be responsible, not only for the quality of the stony and inferior riverine soil '5s' (*Testing the Hinterland*, p. 101), forming a strip across the low-lying parts of the city site, but also for the worn nature of so much of the surface pottery.

Such a choice of terrain, as the location for a major Greek city, has not very often been matched elsewhere. This can easily be explained in practical terms: not only is it wasteful of agricultural resources to build over some 100 ha of level and extremely fertile land, but further, such a situation is likely to offer very little in the way of natural defensibility. So we find the ancient Thespians using, in pre-Classical times, the rare expedient of an 'external acropolis' at Keressos; then, at some date before the later fifth century BC, building a city wall, even if its repeated destruction thereafter does not argue for a high level of monumentality; and finally, in late Classical or Hellenistic times, extending the fortified area, with

limited aspects of the urban occupation, across the Kanavaris river and up the steep slopes to the north, so as to enclose the high ground, some 50 m above the plain, where the modern village of Thespies stands. Here at last we see the Thespians conforming to more widespread ancient practice.

But all these negative aspects had their compensations, both for the ancient occupants of the site and for the present-day archaeologists investigating it. In antiquity, there was evidently enough fertile arable land left over to feed an indigenous population that grew steadily over the centuries that preceded its probable peak in the fourth and third centuries BC, whether or not the extended population and territory, which prevailed when the adjacent cities of Thisbe, Khorsiai and Siphai were absorbed, are included. Defence, however, was to remain a besetting problem for Thespiai, down to the time of the Mithridatic Wars in the first century BC, when an enemy siege was evidently successfully resisted.

For our survey teams, the heavily cultivated, low-lying site generated pottery in quantities that we had only dreamed of in our earlier investigations of smaller sites: in such terrain, the plough-soil offers an almost inexhaustible reservoir of material from past occupations, in this case covering at least seven thousand years. It also offered better ground visibility, with fewer trees and less undergrowth, than in most other localities, urban or rural, that the Project covered. This made for speedier and more accurate assessment and selection of the finds. At longer range, too, good vision was an added bonus: there were almost always visible landmarks, in the middle or further distance, to facilitate field team alignments and overall orientation.

The worn and fragmentary nature of the pottery is to a limited extent off-set by the stone finds of architectural interest treated in the first part of Chapter 4, some of which are fairly well preserved - notably in the many cases where they spent much of the past 2000 years safely embedded in the *Kastro* wall. These give us confirmation that Thespiai possessed the attributes of monumentality that one would expect of a major Classical city: multiple traces of at least one monumental temple (probably the same Archaic one whose foundations were planned by P. Jamot in 1891), in the shape of large column drums (Sites 2, 2A.IV, 2B.I); a Doric frieze block from a probable *stoa* on the Magoula hillock (Site 30.I); threshold blocks that in some cases (Site 43.II and perhaps 4A.V) attain a length of nearly 2 m, a door-jamb as much as 2.5 m high (Site 42A.I), part of the foundation of a fine circular monument in marble with a restored diameter of at least 5 m (Site 7.I), a *voussoir* from a stone arch of more modest dimensions (Site 14.IV); a proliferation of column-drums, mostly unfluted and of small dimensions, which hint at colonnaded public spaces; a few grave-monuments and inscriptions of some pretension; above all a theatre, whose bare existence is attested in one ancient source and more or less confirmed by finds of the late nineteenth century, but about whose structure we have learned much more from the material evidence (Chapter 4, pp. 174–83).

Thinly scattered as they are across the landscape – it is well over a kilometre from the coffering slabs at Site 18 in the west to the easternmost collection of fine stones at Site 51 – these relics attest to the wide extent as well as the high quality of the built environment of Thespiai. The fact that we can in almost no case match any two pieces together, as definitely coming from the same building, merely confirms what a tiny proportion of the original architectural wealth our finds comprise.

The presence in the ancient sources of an at first tenuous, later at times more detailed narrative has provided, to say the least, a useful check on our archaeological conjectures. We have shown that some of these sources, even when contemporary, are to be treated with scepticism, such as the repeated claims of the Athenian orators Isocrates and Demosthenes (Chapter 5, p. 212) that Thespiai remained a deserted and unfortified city, years and even decades after the time of its known abandonment: neither is likely to have seen this for himself, and Demosthenes's motive for rhetorical exaggeration – to denigrate Philip of Macedon - is patent. Yet without the intermittent guidance of the true historians, Herodotus, Thucydides, the 'Oxyrhynchus Historian', Xenophon and Appian, our reconstruction of the development of Classical Thespiai would surely have gone astray, especially in matters of demography and military history. For the middle and later centuries of antiquity, the prolific inscriptions paint a strikingly positive picture of at least certain elements in Thespian society, in the shadow of Macedonian hegemony and later of Roman rule, when evidently some of the city's vitality - the more surprising in the light of its shrunken size and population – survived the loss of independence; just as the late sources, the Ottoman registers and the observations of the early Western travellers, have contributed decisively in shaping our vision of how the present state of settlement, in the immediate locality of Thespiai, has come into being.

Thus, even if the site of Thespiai did prove as resistant and inhospitable to investigation as had been feared, we believe that we have thrown some new light on each of the seven millennia of the city's life. For the historical periods, we have found a few tantalising traces that hint at buried remains of high quality, awaiting future excavators. We have also referred to

the lessons learned in the course of our work: many of these are likely to be applicable to the examination of other large urban sites in the Mediterranean lands, even allowing for the unusual nature of the terrain at Thespiai which may prove difficult to match elsewhere. The technical challenge of analysing surface survey data, from the pioneer days of Mediterranean intensive survey in the 1980s, has led to lengthy pondering of the comparatively little-researched issues of collection methods, sample size, period bias and the realization that, in addition to collecting surface ceramics, a battery of other methods – surface architectural survey, geophysics, discussions with local residents, incorporation of official and unofficial excavations – are required to establish a 'cumulative credibility' (to borrow a term from Stuart Piggott). Among the products of this work, the issue of sample size may prove to be the most important and far-reaching (Chapter 3, pp. 43–4, 48–51).

The results of this complex process of reconstruction can be most simply summarised in a table, recording the long-term changes in the extent, nature and demography of the successive settlements on the ancient city site (Table 15.1). A brief commentary or narrative can be added as a summary of the nature of settled life on or beside the city-site over some seven millennia.

Our analysis indicates that at no time within the first 5000 years or so of human settlement on the later city site, from Neolithic times till the end of the Bronze Age, can the presence of anything more than a series of villages, with populations of less than a couple of hundred inhabitants, be inferred. Thus, the inclusion of Thespiai in the Homeric 'Catalogue of Ships', purporting to be a list of contingents present at the Siege of Troy (*Iliad 2, 498*), cannot stand as evidence for a Mycenaean dating of the passage. Indeed, the low density of later prehistoric sites in the areas covered here and more widely in Boeotia by our Project, even when allowance is made for under-representation attributed to the 'hidden landscape' factors of sherd survival and recognizability, or to subsequent disturbance and overlay by historical-period finds (Bintliff *et al.* 1999), points both to successful ecological sustainability,

Table 15.1. *The site of ancient Thespiai: the long-term changes in size, nature and demography of settlement. In 1934, Kobila/Kaskaveli was renamed Leondari, while Erimokastro became Thespies.*

Period	Settlement area	Nature of settlement	Suggested population	Adjacent settlements
Neolithic	1.25 ha	Hamlet	100?	
Early Helladic	?	Dispersed hamlet+farms?	Less than 200?	
Middle Helladic	?	Dispersed hamlet	Less than 200?	
Late Helladic	4 ha	Thin focal hamlet + farms	Less than 200?	
Early Iron Age to Early Archaic	Several ha rising to tens of ha	Hamlet cluster enlarging to a dense core town	A few hundred rising to several thousand	
Late Archaic to Early Classical	40 ha?	Medium-sized town	*c.* 5250	
Late Classical	57 ha	Large town	*c.* 7125	
Early–Middle Hellenistic	72 ha	Large town	*c.* 9000	
Late Hellenistic–Early Roman	34 ha	Medium-sized town	*c.* 4250	
Late Roman	30 ha	Medium-sized town	*c.* 3750	
Early Byzantine	?	Dispersed hamlet	Less than 200	
Middle Byzantine	5 ha?	Double focus village	*c.* 300	
Late Byzantine/Frankish	10 ha	Double focus village	*c.* 600	
Early Ottoman 15th–16th century	Abandoned			Kobila rising from hamlet to village, 75 to 225
Ottoman 17th century	2.3 ha	Double focus hamlet	*c.* 130	Kobila hamlet 140 Hill-top Erimokastro *c.* 130
Early 19th century	?	Hamlet	15–20	Kobila village ? Hill-top Erimokastro village 317
Late 19th century	Abandoned			Kobila=Kaskaveli village 404 Hill-top Erimokastro village 801
1928				Kobila/Kaskaveli 961 Erimokastro 1268

and to the absence of any stimulus to rural development associated with the rise of urban political foci in Boeotia during the Bronze Age.

Here and perhaps in most areas of Boeotia, this situation would seem to have continued in intensified form, through and beyond the Early Iron Age. To judge by our work at other ancient towns and in their territories, it was only in the Archaic, and especially the late Archaic, eras that a relatively dramatic rise in urbanization took place. This is followed, in the Classical and Early Hellenistic periods, by the growth of a proliferation of farms and villages in the hinterlands of these cities: Thespiai, as seen from the sample of its countryside published in our earlier *Testing the Hinterland*, offers a typical example here.

For the Late Hellenistic, Roman Republican and Early Imperial eras, our role has been to provide a novel commentary on the ancient literary and epigraphic sources, suggesting a pattern of élite prosperity in which the countryside was neglected, apparently to the benefit of the wealthier classes and to the detriment of the peasantry. For Late Roman times, a further stage in such a polarization can be inferred, both from the city and from its territory. Yet in the course of these eras, the urban area was shrinking steadily, to less than half of its Early Hellenistic extent.

With the Byzantine, Frankish and Ottoman to Early Modern eras, our narrative returns to following the development of a series of villages on and near the ancient city site, with a chance to match the archaeological surface finds with documentary records, variable in nature but cumulatively shedding much new light on rural life over this 1300-year span.

The Thespian urban landscape can now be seen as a remarkable microcosm of wider Greek prehistory and history, reminding us that analysis even of a lesser city – as Thespiai was for much, but in our view not all of its ancient history – can provide an unexpected depth to our understanding of the Greek landscape through time.

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Boeotia Project, Volume II: The city of Thespiai

Few major Classical cities have disappeared so completely from view, over the centuries, as Thespiai in Central Greece. Only the technique of intensive field survey, carefully adapted to a large urban site and reinforced by historical investigation, has made it possible to recover from oblivion much of its life of seven millennia.

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