



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Medieval and post-medieval ceramics from the archaeological sites discovered by the Boeotia Project, Central Greece, to the present day

Vroom, J.

Citation

Vroom, J. (2003, January 29). *Medieval and post-medieval ceramics from the archaeological sites discovered by the Boeotia Project, Central Greece, to the present day*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/13511>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/13511>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will try to present an historical and methodological context for the ceramics under discussion in this book. First, I will present an overview of the history of archaeological research of Post-Roman pottery in Boeotia before 1996 (when I started my own study of the Boeotian material). In the course of this presentation, the relevant publications on the subject prior to the 1990s will be discussed, and I will try to evaluate what has been published until 1996. Furthermore, what do these publications tell us about the ceramics found in Boeotia from Medieval and Post-Medieval times?

Secondly, I will present in this chapter a short introduction to the Boeotia Project, its approach to intensive survey and its sampling strategies. Thirdly, I will briefly discuss some of the well-known problems which face pottery archaeologists who work with surface ceramics from field surveys. In particular I will address here the problem of establishing a chronology on the problem of selection of the wares on the ground.

I will finish the chapter with a perspective on how to overcome these problems. Apart from recognizing the problems, it is also worthwhile to investigate new approaches for dating Medieval and Post-Medieval sherds in (Central) Greece from intensive survey.

4.2 Previous research into Post-Roman ceramics in Boeotia^[1]

4.2.1 PUBLICATIONS BEFORE THE 1990S

It is probably safe to say that research into Post-Roman pottery in Boeotia started in 1926 at a large cemetery in the centre of modern Thebes, where the Greek archaeologist Antonios Keramopoulos excavated several tombs of the 12th to 13th centuries (Keramopoulos 1926). This cemetery, situated at the site of the ancient sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios on a small hill 200 m. East of the Kadmeia, yielded a significant amount of Middle Byzantine pottery. In the tombs, plates and cooking ware, jugs, lamps, and candlesticks were found. Other

finds included bronze fibulae and jewellery (Symeonoglou 1985, 236-9, site 8). The cemetery was dated by Keramopoulos on the basis of a few coins, and his short note on the pottery was merely illustrated by four vague photographs (Keramopoulos 1926, plates 2-5).

It was almost 40 years later when the next publication on Medieval ceramics in Boeotia appeared in print. In 1964 Peter Megaw reported on a *bacino* in the Byzantine church of Agios Georgios in Loukisia, on the Northern coast of Boeotia (Megaw 1964). Of the twelve bowls once immured in this church only one had survived: a Fine Sgraffito bowl of the 12th century. However, there had been ongoing discussion about the date of the church. The Greek archaeologist Orlandos, for instance, argued on architectural grounds that the church was from the second half of the 11th century (Orlandos 1937, 166-171).

A few years after Megaw, a German-British project published a handful of Late Roman-Early Byzantine amphorae fragments with combed decoration, excavated at the Boeotian harbour of Anthedon (Schläger et al. 1968). The harbour was dated on the basis of construction techniques to Late Roman – Early Byzantine times (4th to 7th century). The pottery extracted from the structures (mostly amphorae and no fine or glazed wares) was according to the excavators characteristic for the 6th century, although they stated that numerous small fragments could also easily belong to the 4th, 5th or 7th century. Pottery of a later date found on the sea bed in the harbour and in the cement of the harbour works showed that the harbour was also in use during the 12th century (see John Hayes' information in Hood 1970, 37, note 3). Unfortunately, the excavators did not publish much of this later material; an exception is their publication of one Günsenin 3/ Sarāḫane 61 amphora of the 12th-early 13th centuries (Schläger et al. 1968, 88, fig. 90).

From the late 1960s onwards, reports by the Ephorates of Antiquities in Boeotia and Chalkis in the 'Chronika' of the Greek journal *Archaiologikon Deltion* provided an increasing amount of information about Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery found at excava-

tions in Boeotia. However, these references were often mere notes on finds from rescue excavations, without any chronological or stratigraphical support, let alone good illustrations or photographs.

Positive exceptions to the rule were several Greek reports on Middle Byzantine material from Thebes and Chalkis, in which the 12th-13th century pottery was clearly featured in good photographs (e.g. Pharaklas 1968; Ioannidou 1973; Georgopoulou-Meladini 1971; 1973; 1973-74; Papadakis 1975; Ioannidaki-Dostoglou 1981 and Koilakou 1986). Noteworthy is also Georgopoulou-Meladini's article from 1973-74 about Late Frankish-Early Ottoman material from Chalkis. She was the first to publish 14th-16th century pottery found in Boeotia (Georgopoulou-Meladini 1973-74).

In 1985 G.A. Nikolakopoulos published a short note in which he discussed some 12th-13th century fragments from excavations at Thebes, carried out by the Greek archaeologist Keramopoulos in the 1920s (Nikolakopoulos 1985). This article was an abstract of an unpublished extensive study, the main aim of which was to show that Medieval pottery of mainland Greece, was 'one of the most beautiful and together with the Hispano-Arabic one of the foreshadows of modern European pottery', and in no way inferior to ceramics from Constantinople. For this purpose Nikolakopoulos selected sherds from the collection of the Byzantine Museum of Athens, and presented them in an art-historical perspective, without any archaeological context.

4.2.2 RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The first extensive publication of Post-Roman pottery in Boeotia, which fully met up-to-date archaeological standards, was Pamela Armstrong's article in the *Annual of the British School at Athens* on finds from Thebes (Armstrong 1993). The material she discussed had been excavated in 1980 by Katie Demakopoulou, then Ephor of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Boeotia, in the central square of the city (Plateia Agiou Ioannou Kalokteni). The finds in the nine deposits discussed by Armstrong covered a wide chronological range, encompassing the time span from the Middle Byzantine period to Early Modern times. In the absence of numismatic evidence, all fragments were dated by parallels from the excavations at Corinth and Constantinople/Istanbul (published by Morgan 1942 and Hayes 1992 respectively).

Most of the Theban deposits were very mixed and

contained pottery of many different periods, except for deposits I and IV. The unglazed domestic wares (such as amphorae) found in deposit I were dated by Armstrong within the 8th to 10th centuries. However, the current director of the Corinth excavations, Guy Sanders, later dated comparable amphorae at Corinth to the later 10th and 11th centuries (Sanders 1995). Sanders also voiced a different opinion about the dating of deposit IV: instead of the second half of the 12th century, he preferred a date in the early 13th century. On the whole, he considered Armstrong's article 'valuable more for parallels and distribution of types than chronology' (Sanders 1995, 21).^[2]

Another contribution to Medieval archaeology in Boeotia before 1996 is a publication of three complete vessels which are perhaps from the Frankish period, some Ottoman pipe fragments and a tripod stand, all found at various places in Thebes (Theodorou-Mavromatidi 1995). Of special interest is the find of the tripod stand, which was used at potter's workshops to separate glazed vessels during the firing process, because it seems clear evidence that pottery production must have taken place in Medieval and Post-Medieval Thebes.

However, in spite of the valuable reports in the *Archaiologikon Deltion* from the late 1960s onwards and of the published results of recent research in the 1990s, one cannot avoid the conclusion that the study of Post-Roman pottery in this part of Greece (as in other parts of the Aegean outside Corinth) left room for improvement. Most fundamentally, research into post-Roman pottery in Boeotia has been hampered by a lack of systematically collected and especially well-stratified data. Presently, this situation has changed, in the first place by the systematic collection of Post-Roman wares in the course of the Boeotia Project, and in the second place by several recent excavations by the Greek Archaeological Service of the Thebes Museum, where attention was paid to the Post-Roman strata (e.g. Koilakou 1992-1996; Vroom forthcoming a).

4.3 The Boeotia Project: background and methodology

Between 1978 and 1999 the Boeotia Project, a collaborative field survey directed by Anthony Snodgrass (University of Cambridge) and John Bintliff (University of Leiden; formerly Bradford and Durham), has been

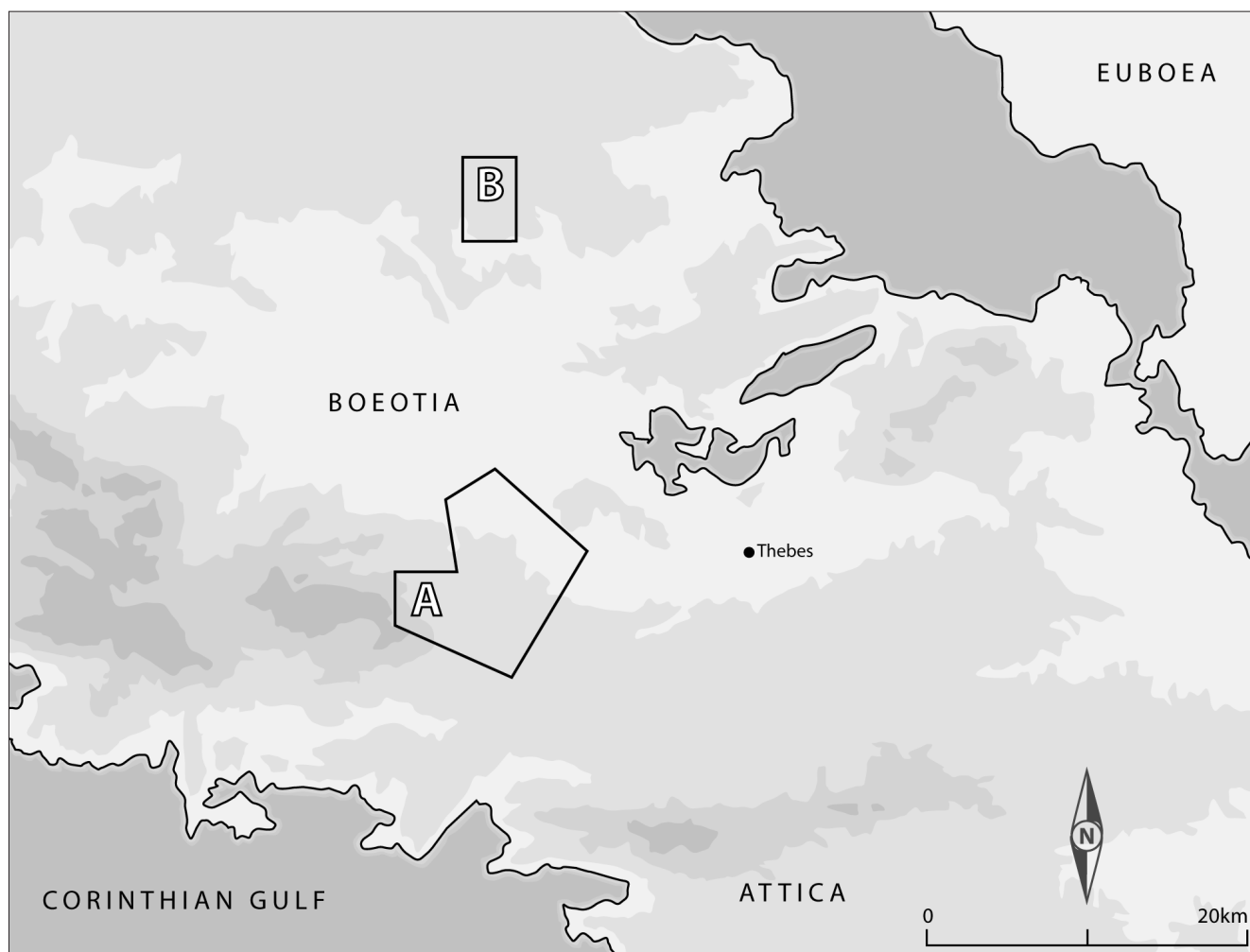


Fig. 4.1 Map of Boeotia with approximately the size of the two research areas, including research area A (e.g. Valley of the Muses) and research area B (Hyettos area).

investigating the history of habitation of this large province in Central Mainland Greece (some 2580 square kilometres in its ancient boundaries). The circa 12,000 Post-Roman sherds collected during the course of that project will be discussed in this and the following chapters.

The key approach used by the Cambridge-Durham Boeotia Project in its study of settlement patterns was intensive field walking (Bintliff & Snodgrass 1985; Bintliff 1994; 1995; 1996; 1997 with further literature). Teams of students, each with a staff leader, covered the countryside, walking at distances of some 15 metres apart in long transects. Covering the landscape as fully as possible (however difficult the terrain), the teams conti-

nuously inspected the surface for pieces of pottery and tile. The field walkers counted all pottery fragments in sight on so-called 'clickers', in order to enable the computer mapping of the continuous density variation of surface pottery across the entire survey area (Bintliff & Snodgrass 1985).

At regular intervals (after each transect of about 50 to 200 metres), team leaders recorded the pottery densities recorded by each individual walker. Anomalous highs in density or quality were taken to betray the presence of a possible 'site'. These apparent places of human activity were gridded in mini-transects 7.5 metres wide and 10 metres long (the former normal transect width divided in two), which were totally counted for ceramics by each



Fig. 4.2 Intensive survey area in the Valley of the Muses, Boeotia (photo: J. Vroom).

walker. Finally, all transects were sampled for chronologically-diagnostic sherds, with the purpose of diagnosing and dating at a later stage, to enable the detailed mapping of the expansion and shrinking of sites during each phase of their existence (Bintliff 1996).

Most of the fieldwork during sixteen years of the Boeotia Project has been carried out in an area of some 51 square kilometres in South-Western Boeotia, more or less around the modern village of Mavromati (the expedition base till 1993). The research area includes the territories of the ancient cities of Haliartos and Thespieae, as well as the ancient large village/small town of Askra (see fig. 4.1: area A). Since the late 1980s the Boeotia Project opened up a second but much smaller survey area (a mere three square kilometres) in the far Northern borderlands of the province, near the modern village of Pavlo. Here, the entire surface and surroundings of the small ancient city of Hyettos have been field-walked (see fig. 4.1: area B).

The surveyed area in Boeotia is dominated by two main landscape types: large lowland plains and lakes of alluvial/colluvial deposits and plateaux of soft carbonate rocks. With irrigation the plains make fertile agricultural land, in contrast to the coastal limestone mountains in the South. Approximately one third of Boeotia is currently classified as cultivated: the entire lowland zone and much of the upland soft rock plateaux and hills (Bintliff 1992, 134; see fig. 4.2). To the North, the lacustrine deposits of Lake Kopais, drained in the late 19th century by the English company 'Lake Kopais Co. Ltd' (1886-1952), are very fertile, and tomatoes, melons,

cotton, vegetables and maize are all grown there (Stedman 1996, 179; Papadopoulos 1997). Since ancient times, Boeotia has been an agriculturally rich and relatively densely populated region, which has apparently been inhabited continuously throughout the ages.

All in all, a total of some 54 square kilometres of the region has been surveyed in the course of the Boeotia Project. Until now, some 300 rural sites have been discovered, and complete surface surveys of four urban sites (that is: 'urban' in Late Antiquity) were carried out. Sites from the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods (7th-19th centuries) are ubiquitous in the research area (Bintliff 1995; 1996; 1997). Partly due to the widespread practice of deep-ploughing, they usually yield fairly rich surface material of rather fine quality. Certainly when compared to sites in more mountainous parts of Greece, these sites are abundant in diagnostic surface finds (Vroom 1996; 1997; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; forthcoming d).

4.4 Survey material as a source of information

4.4.1 PROBLEMS OF CHRONOLOGY AND VISIBILITY

Since its spectacular rise as a research strategy in Mediterranean lands in the 1970s, surface surveying has always met with a degree of scepticism from excavation archaeologists. But today, as regional surveys are well established, a new sort of scepticism among surveyors themselves seems to be emerging. Questions about site definitions and especially about the efficiency of collection strategies of surface material for the identification of sites are more commonly heard than a decade or so ago. This is not the place to embark on a rejoinder in these very interesting but complex methodological discussions. Perhaps it suffices here to state that among archaeologists – including survey workers – there is a growing awareness of the potential difficulties which may arise when some (or all) of the sampling is done by unskilled field workers, mostly students, who are expected to collect everything 'in sight' but are not always trained to detect certain 'difficult' ceramic types (for instance local domestic wares) (Sanders 1995, 6).

But 'visibility' is not only a problem of untrained eyes – it may even be that this is the least worrying aspect of this problem. Then there is the specific difficulty of diagnosing and dating certain wares, especially without a stratigraphical context. And there are the even more

specific difficulties in recognition and identification of Post-Roman material in Greece. Also among experienced field workers it is nowadays acknowledged that certain types of pottery are very difficult to recognise and still harder to diagnose. Among these types, the Medieval and Post-Medieval unglazed wares in Greece figure prominently (Davis 1991, 133).

The 8th and 9th centuries in particular still pose serious problems for all archaeological field workers in the Mediterranean. There is a wider significance in the remarks made by the historian Chris Wickham upon the absence of Early Medieval ceramics on rural sites in Italy: 'Even if we found 8th century pottery, we would usually not know it, because we have too few diagnostic types' (Wickham 1994, 110).

In addition, the ceramicist Helen Patterson, who studies Early Medieval pottery from Italy, stresses that the problems in Post-Roman chronology in Italy are further exacerbated by the regionalization of ceramic production and distribution after the collapse of the Roman market system in the 5th and 6th centuries (Patterson 2000). The lesson to be taken from her observations is that vast regional differences should be taken into account when dating survey assemblages and excavation finds of Post-Medieval material. As an example Patterson mentions the Saraçhane excavations in Istanbul, which according to her 'have shown that late 7th to 11th century wares circulating in Constantinople are rarely found outside the capital' (Patterson 2000, 112). To this she adds that although the ceramic evidence becomes more abundant all over the Mediterranean from the 10th century onwards, the production and distribution systems still remained at a regional level.

Patterson also points to other factors which may influence the low ceramic visibility of wares in certain periods. She mentions the different function and status of sites, the quality of the pottery, the practises of use and discard behaviour, the intensity of later (modern) occupation, the phenomenon of 'unploughed' hilltop settlements, and the collection strategies adopted by field surveys. To this one may add the phenomenon of 'opting out' of the use of ceramics as household utensils, which may occur for all sorts of reasons in various periods and in all sorts of places (Vroom 1998b). It is increasingly recognised that the scarcity of pottery from certain periods on sites may indicate that other materials (wood, metal) were preferred to make means of preparing and

serving food and drink among the inhabitants (Vroom 1998b).

Lastly, one may note that ceramicists trying to diagnose Post-Roman wares still have to depend on the traditional, but outdated pottery handbooks of Post-Roman wares from Corinth and Athens. This situation and the perhaps sometimes uncritical use of the handbooks has rightly been questioned (Sanders 1999; 2000). Still, one must admit that there are hardly published alternatives, in spite of progress being made recently in Corinth and other places.

In view of all these problems in the study of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery in Greek lands, there is an urgent necessity for specialists of different periods to work closely together on this material (whether it is assembled in the course of surveys or during excavations). Especially needed is the establishment of datable ceramic sequences. Here, the combination of survey material (which offers information because of its quantitative nature) with excavation material (which offers information because of its stratified nature) should be aimed at.

In spite of the recent signs of (self-)doubt among fieldworkers, it may be underlined here that survey is the single and unsurpassable research strategy when aiming to address problems of long-term habitation history in a regional perspective, and was never meant as a refined mode of exact chronological analysis. Although surveys may not provide the final answers to all archaeological problems, as perhaps some field walkers of the first generations once hoped, it certainly has proven itself as a very successful method and it surely is the only way to approach the historical landscape as a source of information in its own right.

The further refinement of intensive field walking techniques and the repeated resurveying of identified sites (in the company of pottery specialists with a trained eye) can perhaps help alleviate problems of visibility. And apart from close co-operation between specialists involved, and apart from the use of excavated data to control the dating of pottery sampled from the surface, survey collections themselves may be used in new ways, in order to fully use their two specific qualities: quantity and spatial variation. Due to its character (much fine ware found at many different sites), the Post-Roman collection of the Boeotia project seems to offer possibilities for typo-chronological research in its own right.

4.4.2 POSSIBILITIES: TOWARDS A 'HORIZONTAL CHRONOLOGY'

Refinement in the chronological diagnosis of Medieval and Post-Medieval survey material is an ongoing process, and substantial progress has been made over the last few years in collecting and dating sherds in surveys all over the Mediterranean area. The Boeotia Survey has been trying over the years to contribute to the development of a new perspective on the problems related to the chronology of Post-Roman pottery. In contrast to most other recent surveys in Greece, the study of the Medieval and Post-Medieval history of habitation has, in fact, become one of its important goals (Bintliff 1994; 1995; 1996; 1997; 2000a).

When the Boeotia Project started its field research in 1978, little was known about urban or rural developments during the Medieval and Ottoman periods in this part of Central Greece (or of any part of Greece for that matter). After more than two decades of intensive archaeological survey this situation has now changed. Many unknown Medieval sites have been recorded and about 12,000 Medieval and Post-Medieval sherds have been collected.

These circumstances offer at least some sort of foundation for the study of a continuous Post-Roman history of habitation. The starting point for my own contribution to the Boeotia Project is the fact that some sites in Boeotia have been inhabited continuously throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages until Modern times, whilst other sites were inhabited during short and clearly bounded periods of time. One prospect of my endeavours is to combine the ceramic data from all these sites into a sort of typo-chronological mosaic, which may provide for Boeotia a so-called 'horizontal chronology' reaching from ca. the 7th to the 20th century. The possibility of constructing such a horizontal stratigraphy, from the Boeotian material was first suggested by Anthony Snodgrass and John Bintliff and they offered me the opportunity to explore this line of approach. (The concept of assemblage definition from surface survey linked to type fossils was already tested by John Hayes for the Archaic-Hellenistic period.)

Of vital importance for the construction of this 'horizontal chronology' are three unique factors: 1) the quality of the Post-Roman survey ceramics found in Boeotia, which includes a substantial amount of diagnostic tablewares and imports; 2) the quantity and

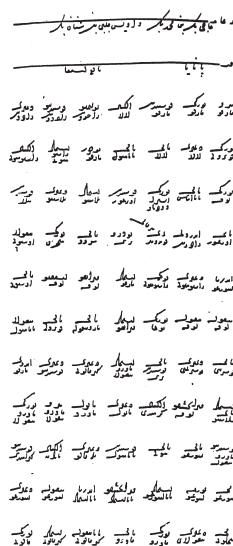


Fig. 4.3 Beginning of the description of the households of the village of Panaya in Boeotia. T.D. 35 from 1506 AD. Example of a Mufasssal Tahrir (by courtesy of M. Kiel).

regional distribution of the Post-Roman survey ceramics over some 74 different site-samples; 3. the fact that the Boeotia Project has surveyed distinctive one-period sites with rather well-defined chronological boundaries. Detailed analysis and seriation of this material may produce the identification of characteristic groups of material for the entire Post-Roman period with overlapping phases of perhaps 150-200 years. In this way, the chronological chain of the horizontal chronology could be linked together step by step.

Furthermore, the dating of the horizontal chronology in Boeotia was helped by three other factors. First, previous independent work by John Hayes on the entire survey collection of the Boeotia Project in the 1980s had already provided provisional datings of the Medieval and Post-Medieval fragments. His expertise on Roman and Post-Roman pottery in the Mediterranean (especially on ceramics from the Sarāḫane excavations in Constantinople/Istanbul) helped me enormously with recognizing different types of pottery. His study of the survey material found in Boeotia was, however, at that time hampered by the lack of good reference points furnished by excavations. As a result of this, Hayes studied thousands of finds which fell into quite recognizable classes, but whose exact date-spans remained elusive. This led him to the conclusion that the research area in Boeotia is rich in finds, 'but lacking in imports (or close copies of them) from ca. 1100 BC to 1100 AD' (Hayes 2000, 106).

Secondly, the dating of the ceramic sequences in Boeotia will benefit greatly if it could be controlled by testing it with excavated material from local excavations in urban centres. As it happened, I had the opportunity to do just this. The Greek Archaeological Service had kindly offered me the opportunity to study and publish the Post-Roman pottery from excavations in the city centre of nearby Thebes (Vroom forthcoming a).[3] This city was during the Middle Ages one of the most important economic centres of this part of the Byzantine Empire (it may even be ranked third after Constantinople and Thessaloniki). The excavation of some rubbish pits in the historical centre of Thebes revealed that some of these pits had closed deposits with ceramics dating from the 12th to 18th century (Vroom forthcoming, a). This was a great chance to compare excavated material from a major urban centre with survey finds from its rural surroundings.

Finally, the well-stratified sequences of Medieval pottery in Corinth (often found in association with coins), recently splendidly published by Guy Sanders and Charles Williams II, could broaden the ceramic reference base in Boeotia (Williams & Zervos 1988-1998; Sanders 1995; 1999; 2000). Partly as the result of the kind co-operation with and permission granted by both Williams and Sanders, I already have had the opportunity to notice that there are many similarities between the ceramics from both regions.[4]

4.4.3 THE DATING OF THE POST-MEDIEVAL CERAMICS

In studying and dating the Post-Medieval ceramics found on the Boeotian sites an important chronological anchorage was provided by the fact that the Boeotia Project has disposal over very detailed Ottoman tax registers from the Imperial Archives, which are translated and studied by Machiel Kiel (Kiel 1997). These registers range from the 15th to the 18th century and provide information about village-names, about the foundation of new settlements, about the number of inhabitants per village, about the number of households, as well as all sorts of economic output and resources (see fig. 4.3). This textual information can be linked with the archaeological data, so that the pottery of the Ottoman period need not be studied *in vacuo* (Bintliff 1996; 1999; see Vroom 1998a for an example of this approach).

The Boeotia project, as several projects in the Mediterranean, has benefited enormously from the

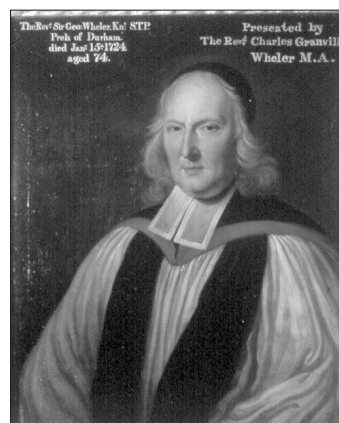


Fig. 4.4 Portrait of the British traveller George Wheeler (1650-1723 AD), Durham Cathedral, Durham, 1696 AD (by courtesy of Durham Cathedral).

work by Kiel (and others) to open up the Ottoman archives. Still, it may be that non-specialists find it not that easy to use the data from the Ottoman registers. The Ottomanist Suraiya Faroqhi has recently warned scholars to be careful with the interpretation of these tax registers. She suggested that that one has to take into account several distorting factors, such as the conditions of transport and communications during the 16th century. Certain taxpayers may well have hidden and thus avoided registration during the 16th century (Faroqhi 1999, 89). Other problems are connected with the fact that in most parts of the Ottoman Empire the tax registers of the 16th century record very high levels of population growth. Some of these increases may, according to her, simply reflect more effective counting procedures (Faroqhi 1999, 90-91). Finally, historians trying to arrive at estimates of rural population for the 17th and 18th centuries – a period in which the registers seem much less detailed than before – are obliged to work ‘with a rather intractable documentation’ (Faroqhi 1999, 93).

Although Faroqhi’s warnings are perhaps too pessimistic (and probably not quite accurate as far as all later defters are concerned), it is certain that it is something of a challenge to combine the information obtained from the Ottoman tax registers with the actual archaeological data from the sites. In this respect it may prove helpful to put special emphasis on the absence or presence of tobacco clay pipes of the Turkish period when dating the Post-Medieval sites in Boeotia. It is nowadays acknowledged that the study of tobacco clay

pipes may contribute to resolve the problems encountered in excavations and surface surveys with establishing a tentative typo-chronology of the 'difficult' ceramics from Ottoman times (cf. Ziadeh 1995 for such an approach). According to Rebecca Robinson in her study of tobacco pipes from Corinth and the Athenian Agora, these pipes were first introduced into the Middle East at the beginning of the 17th century and their development can fairly accurately be followed through the following centuries (Robinson 1985).

Last but not least, the above gathered information for dating the ceramics found in Boeotia of the Turkish and Early Modern periods can be extended and controlled by the accounts of Western travellers who passed through Boeotia from the late 15th century onwards. Some of these travellers were scholars and antiquarians visiting the ancient sites and Classical monuments of Boeotia; others were just casual travellers. The antiquarian perspective was expressed, for instance, by the Canon of Durham Cathedral, George Wheler (1650-1723 AD), who travelled with his companion the French physician Jacob Spon (1647-1685 AD) through Boeotia in 1676 AD (see fig. 4.4). Both antiquarians roamed the Greek country with the intention of identifying and describing the ancient sites and gathering original information. The accounts they both have written are considered to have 'founded the modern tradition of Greek travel-literature' (Constantine 1984, 7-33; see also Eliot 1978 and Roller 1988, 43-48). Where relevant, the observations of Spon and Wheler and of other travellers of the Boeotian landscape and sites, as well as their comments on villages and settlements have been used to support the dating of the sherds.

4.5 Summary

When John Bintliff and Anthony Snodgrass offered me the opportunity to start my research of the Post-Roman ceramics in Boeotia in 1996, there was not much existing literature to build upon. Due to the fact that the Modern cities of Thebes and Livadheia are built on top of the Medieval and Post-Medieval layers, there were hardly any good stratigraphical sequences from these Boeotian urban centres. There existed no campaigns of long-term excavation designed to explore Medieval and Post-Medieval Boeotia. What was available, amounted to little

more than publications of some rescue excavations (mostly small interim reports), which were valuable in their own right but a far cry from establishing some sort of a typo-chronology of Post-Roman ceramics for this part of Central Greece. In addition, most of the information from these reports is related to the Byzantine period, virtually nothing, however, to the Turkish and Early Modern periods.

The Boeotia Project carried out an intensive surface survey in two parts of the region, which resulted in a substantial amount of systematically sampled Post-Roman ceramics, supplemented with some grab samples. Without losing sight of the many problems involved with working with surface material, the Post-Roman collection of the Boeotia Project seems to offer unprecedented opportunity to try and construct a horizontal chronology from ca. the 7th century up to the 20th century.

Furthermore, my study of the Post-Roman pottery from Boeotia was helped by four factors: 1) all the survey material of the Boeotia Project was previously dated in broad categories by John Hayes; 2) I had the opportunity to study ceramics from a well excavated context in Thebes; 3) there are many parallels with the well published pottery from Corinth; and 4) the dating of some Post-Medieval ceramics on Boeotian sites could be controlled by information on human settlements gathered from the Ottoman tax registers and the Western travellers' accounts with reference to the region.

NOTES

1. See for the location of places mentioned in this chapter fig. 8.1.
2. In view of the discussion about the dating of the finds published by Pamela Armstrong, it is rather regrettable that all the material (which was stored at the Thebes Museum) has been thrown away, and is therefore lost for further study.
3. I would like to thank Dr. Vassilis Aravantinos of the IX Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities at Thebes for the opportunity to study and publish the material of his excavations.
4. I would like to thank Dr. Charles Williams II and Dr. Guy Sanders of the ASCS for allowing me to see unpublished material from the excavations of Corinth.