



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Boeotian landscapes. A GIS-based study for the reconstruction and interpretation of the archaeological datasets of ancient Boeotia.

Farinetti, E.

Citation

Farinetti, E. (2009, December 2). *Boeotian landscapes. A GIS-based study for the reconstruction and interpretation of the archaeological datasets of ancient Boeotia*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14500>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14500>

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

INTRODUCTION

Aim of the present work is to illustrate a possible way of dealing with a regional landscape and its long-term settlement history based on the integration of archaeological data applying a GIS based approach to the social dimension of the landscape.

The large province area (ca 2,500 sqkm) of Boeotia (Central Greece) is examined by means of GIS (Geographical Information System), processing data from different archaeological, historical and environmental sources.

The methodology established, dealing jointly with material culture and the environment, follows a critical comparative regional approach and opts for both region and micro-regions as the analytical unit. It aims mainly to assess landscape characters and the interface between human and social actions and landscape by critically assessing, first of all, the available archaeological record constituted by diverse, variegated and often incoherent data sets. Main periods of interest are the historical periods from Archaic to Late Roman, while earlier (Neolithic to Geometric) and later periods are taken into account for the analysis and understanding of diachronical processes which took place at the micro-regional and regional levels.

In the first part, the theoretical background and the methodological framework on which the followed methodology of research is based are illustrated. Special focus is given first to the research framework, discussing the approach to the regional archaeological landscape and the use of GIS in regional studies. Secondly, the presentation of the methodology is followed in the collection, recording and management of physical and archaeological/cultural data sets in the GIS system created for this work. A relational database has been implemented (in a Microsoft Access 2004 environment) in order to record the archaeological information available, which has then been included into the GIS system, realized in an ArcGIS 8.1 environment.

The main part starts with the description of the Boeotian landscape and its geographical sub-regions followed by an examination of the state of archaeological research for the region. It follows the presentation of the archaeological record available for the individual *chorai*/micro-regions of Boeotia, after which aspects of the landscape and settlement of each *chora* are discussed in detail, and micro-region and micro-landscape trends are individuated. The marked territorial character of the ancient Greek *polis* requires a detailed examination of the different landscape issues each *chora* may present, and the separate treatment of each *chora* facilitates the analysis of the lower rank sites, mainly directly related to

the city. Moreover, there are differences in intensity and quality of research in the various *chorai* affecting the available data and the knowledge of landscape and settlement history. A systematic analysis of the archaeological record is performed to produce aggregation into culturally meaningful entities, through info-critique processes and comparison of data sets, led by the challenge of dealing with a heterogeneous, poor, incoherent and spatio-temporally incomplete data body. From the examination of the landscape at the micro-regions and settlement chambers levels in the *chorai* chapters, I move in the final chapter to some landscape trajectories at the regional scale under thematic units by means of GIS analysis, concerning the ancient socio-political and cultural landscape within the Boeotia region.

Throughout the entire work, I compare and analyse similarities and differences among micro-regions, as well as diachronical regional trends, using data that include the diverse types of data sets involved, such as physical landscape features, data sets derived by computer modelling, archaeological information given by the topographical tradition, information from the intensive hovering of the landscape performed by systematic artefact surface survey, epigraphical evidence, and relevant historical sources. Analyses and comments give special focus on the association between landscape zones and activities, resulting in landscape character, on cultural landscape meanings, as well as on the settlement behaviours and community choices over the landscape.

The volume is completed by some appendices: the analytical description of the archaeological evidence known for the region structured according to the enucleated components of the archaeological landscape; a qualitative geographical description of Boeotian landscape sub-regions; a study on the Copais basin, including the digital reconstruction of the Copais lake fluctuations and illustrating water behaviour, settlement and life in and around the basin.

