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

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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>

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II.3.3

Chaironeia valley: Chaironeiake

TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The plain of Chaironeia corresponds to the lower Kephisos valley (of ca 4km length) before it enters the Copais (fig.1). As Philippson (1951: 430) notes, it has the form of a depression rather than a basin, which runs in an E-SE direction and opens into the Copais plain.

Today, the whole of the basin lies in Boeotia, and is occupied by a few villages around it (Thourion, Chaironeia, Agios Vlasios, Davleia, Mavroneri, Akontion), but in ancient times the border was somewhere between the two communities/*chorai* of Panopeus (Phokian *polis* – today in the area of Agios Vlasios) and Chaironeia (*polis* of Boeotia) - see below.

The width of the plain is almost uniformly 3km. To the N, the plain is bordered by the long wall of Akontion/Dourdouvana, a long low ridge (ca 20km long) which runs along the plain until it enters the Copais basin at Orchomenos.

The territory of the ancient *polis* extended on the right bank of the river to the southern edge of the plain, which is marked by a wide extended low mountain lying (in an E-W direction) below the Helicon mountain, and constituting its northern foothills. The southern mountain border of the Chaironeia plain is shorter (ends earlier in the W) than that of the N (marked by the Akontion), and ends at the Kourpeiko promontory, next to the Levadeia railway station, at the crossroads to Orchomenos. The Kourpeiko promontory divides the plain of Chaironeia from the Levadeia valley, which belongs to the Copais basin system and runs into the mountains surrounding Copais from that location¹.

The landscape of the area is, and was in the past, marked by the presence of the river Kephisos and the variations of its meanders. Even today, after the drainage of the Copais, much of the Chaironeia plain has a tendency to be marshy².

Boundaries

Chaironeia is the last Boeotian city before Phokis (Thucydides IV 76; Pausanias IX 40.2; Pausanias X 4.1). As noted earlier, the *chora* has geographically-marked

boundaries³, being constituted by the lower Kephisos valley before it enters the Copais. Nevertheless, the borders are not always so clear. The valley is marked to the S by the ridge of Kourpeiko (which divides the territory of Chaironeia from the Levadeia area, and is the only clear border), while to the N the only potential physical boundary with the territory of Orchomenos is the line of the Kephisos⁴. To the E, the area of Chaironeia probably reached the edges of the Copais basin, but not the flooded area of the lake itself (see chapter II.3.2 – BOUNDARIES- for a discussion on the matter). To the W, the boundary between Boeotia and Phokis is still not recognisable with certainty, but on the S side of the valley, somewhere between the ancient cities of Chaironeia and Panopeus, a Phokian city was located at Agios Vlasios, almost 4km W of Chaironeia⁵. A detailed study of the matter has been published quite recently (Dasios 1995a), concerning especially the border line on the N side of the valley. As Fossey reports (1988: 384) “*the territory of Chaironeia could hardly have reached Mt. Hedilion on the N side of the plain as Meyer suggested* (Theopompus, *Hellenika* – Halle 1909), *for the territory of Orchomenos bounded upon that of Panopeus* (Strabo IX 416)”⁶. Dasios (1995a), however, he comments that along the border between Phokis and Boeotia, one of the weakest points is precisely that of Agios Vlasios, at the N end of Vathyrema river valley, between Phokian Panopeus and Boeotian Chaironeia. He also notes as problematic the attribution of the area in the open Kephisos valley, as well as of the small valley between the Akontion/Dourdouvana, the Idilion/Vetriza and the Yphanteion/Paliovouna⁷. The latter could have belonged to Chaironeia, but Dasios suggests it belonged to Panopeus, following Pausanias (IX 39.1) and Strabo

³ Philippson 1951: 430; Fossey 1988: 384.

⁴ Historically speaking, the relationship between Chaironeia and its stronger neighbour Orchomenos was always marked either by slight conflict or open tension (see for instance in the Archaic period –chapter II.3.4). For the border see Fossey 1988: 384 and also below in the text (LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS) and chapter II.3.4 – TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING.

⁵ Fossey (1988: 384) suggests that the boundary might be marked by the stream (ancient Molos?) which flows from the valley immediately to the E of Agios Vlassios.

⁶ Fossey concludes that, for this reason, Orchomenos must have had land in the Kephisos valley (Fossey 1988: 384). Certainly in the Archaic period, Chaironeian territory was reduced to Orchomenian control (Roesch 1965).

⁷ For the archaeological record available for the area, see below (*components CH_31 to CH_33*).

¹ The description of the landscape of the Chaironeia *chora* is based on Philippson 1951: 430ff, quoted also by Fossey 1988: 375, on Lauffer (Kopais I: 131), and some personal observations.

² Fossey (1988: 384) reports from Pausanias (IX 42.7) that, in antiquity, inhabitants of Chaironeia distilled perfumes from various marsh flowers.

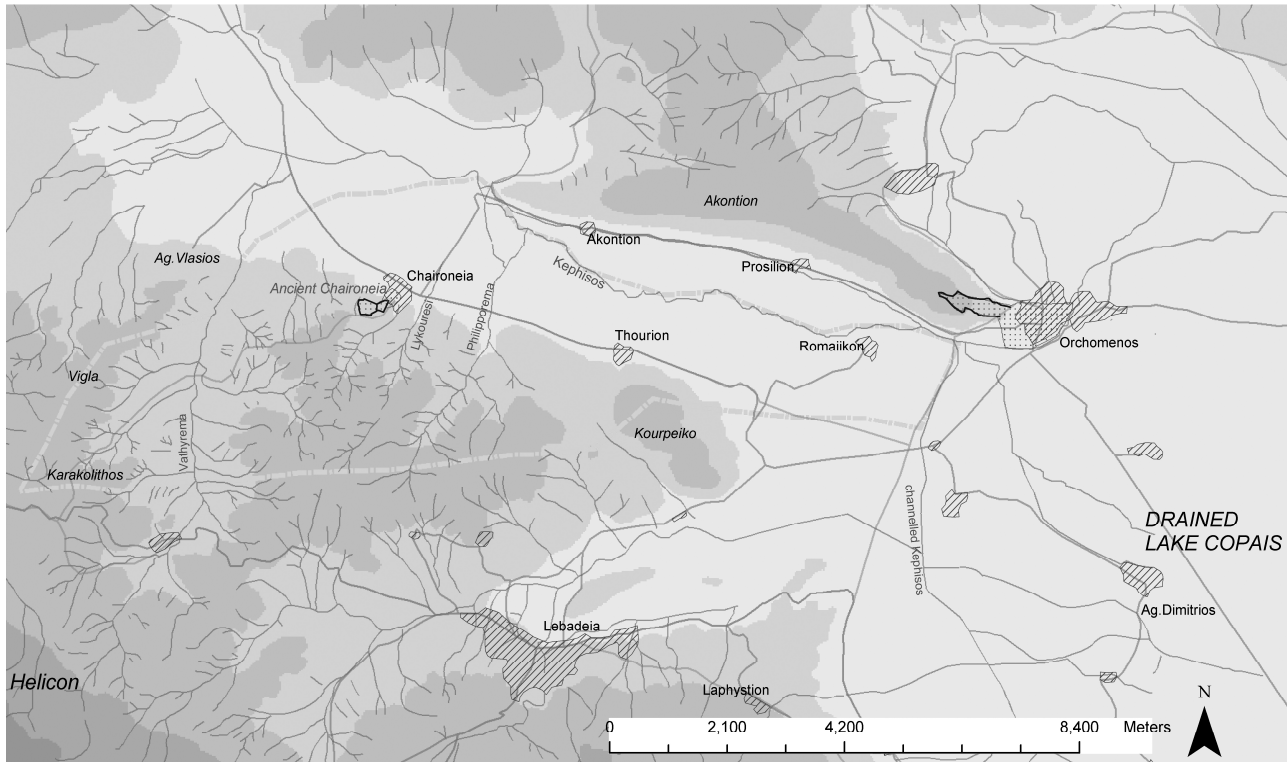


Fig.1. Topographical setting of the chora of Chaironeia.

(VIII 2.42), according to which Panopeus' territory bordered that of Orchomenos⁸.

PHYSICAL LAND UNITS

The physical landscape of the *chora* can be subdivided between the landscape of a plain (ca 50%), constituted by the Kephisos basin, and the landscape of the hills bordering it at its southern edge, which also separated the Chaironeia *chora* from that of Levadeia (ca 50%). Unlike the basin of Levadeia and Koroneia, the Chaironeia area does not reach the Helicon massif, and therefore the mountainous (>600m) segment is not present in the landscape (see fig.2 in chapter II.1).

The physical border with the *chora* of Orchomenos has been located along the Kephisos river itself, though this cannot be stated with certainty for every historical period (see above). Consequently, the lowland area belonging to Chaironeia may have changed considerably, also with regard to the uncertain border towards Copais⁹ (see above and chapter III.1).

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Hilly landscape</i> | 48.3% |
| <i>Mountainous landscape</i> | 0% |
| <i>Plain</i> | 51.7% |

⁸ See previous note: Fossey (1988: 384) uses the same historical texts to validate his hypothesis. As for the border between Boeotia and Phokis, see also chapter II.3.4 (*boundaries*).

⁹ Did the territory of Chaironeia reach the water of the Copais lake? See above (*boundaries*) and chapter III.1 for discussion.

| | | | |
|----|-------|--------------------------|-------|
| 1 | P1_P2 | lacustrine basin, valley | 42.1% |
| 2 | P3 | gentle slope | 0.9% |
| 3 | P4 | foothill | 8.6% |
| 4 | H1 | plateau | 19.2% |
| 5 | H2 | gentle slope | 1% |
| 6 | H3 | moderate slope | 3.8% |
| 7 | H4 | severe slope | 12.7% |
| 8 | H5 | very severe slope | 11.6% |
| 9 | M1 | Plateau | 0% |
| 10 | M2 | plateau/gentle slope | 0% |
| 11 | M3 | moderate slope | 0% |
| 12 | M4 | very severe slope | 0% |

Table 1. Percentage of the different physiographical classes present in the Chaironeia area (P=plain; H=hill; M=mountain)

The borders of the plain rise quite steeply from it (P4 class), and the P3 class is almost absent. Three large upland plateaus (H1), and several smaller ones, characterise the landscape of the hilly segment. Furthermore, in the upland of the *chora*, within the hilly zone, a quite fragmented landscape can be noted, ranging from H1 to H5, which corresponds to the lowest and the highest values of slope within the hilly landscape. There is no mountainous segment (classes M1 to M4 are absent). The landscape is almost equally subdivided between the plain and the hilly zone (see above).

RESOURCES

As is visible in fig.6, the *chora* include very few unfertile areas (U). Low fertile areas (LF) are represented by the rocky area above the Chaironeia city site, and by the limestone ridge of Kourpeiko above Thourion village.

II.3.3 CHAIRONEIAKE

For this area, flysch soil formations have been assigned the land capability value of LF, because of the high presence of pebbles. In gently sloping areas they have been assigned a value of MF as, under special conditions and using adequate techniques, these soils can also be cultivated (see chapter I.2.1). On the other hand, the soil of the plain, characterised by heavy river deposits and with a high tendency to marshiness, especially in certain areas, also requires specific evaluation concerning its suitability and workability. Like Koroneia and Levadeia, the ancient city sits at the interface of fertile hilland soils and valley lowland soils.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

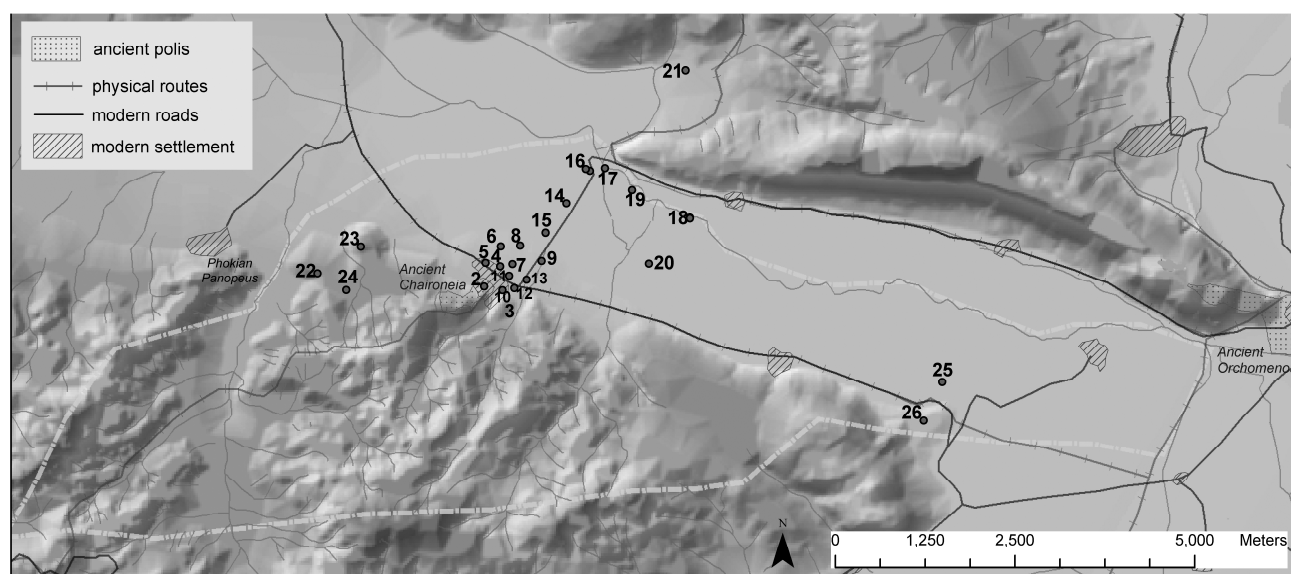


Fig.2. Archaeological map of the ChaironeiAKE chora.

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 1 | CHAIRONEIA | Components CH_1 to CH_9 and CH_38 |
| 2/3 | CHAIRONEIA area | (2) Components CH_10 and (3) CH_11 |
| 4 | Chaironeia – dioikitirio | Components CH_26 and CH_45 |
| 5 | Chaironeia N | Component CH_12 |
| 6 | Chaironeia – Plateia Scala and Vourlies | Components CH_46 to CH_49 |
| 7/8 | Chaironeia – Rema | Components CH_34 and CH_35 (7); CH_36 (8) |
| 9 | Chaironeia - Kovras/Agortses | Component CH_50 |
| 10/11 | Chaironeia museum | Components (10) CH_15, CH_16 and (11) CH_37 |
| 12 | Chaironeia East | Component CH_19 |
| 13/14 | Chaironeia North and Chaironeia bridge | (13) Component CH_14; (14) components CH_13 and CH_17 |
| 15 | Varka | Component CH_18 |
| 16/17 | Magoula Balomenou | (16) Components CH_21 to CH_24 and CH_13; (17) component CH_25 |

| | | |
|-------|---|---|
| 18/19 | Akontion – Kephisos | (18) Components CH_40, CH_41 and (19) component CH_42 |
| 20 | Chaironeia plain | Component CH_20 |
| 21 | Agioi Apostoloi - Agios Georgios | Components CH_31 to CH_33 |
| 22 | Agios Charalambos | Components CH_27 to CH_29 |
| 23/24 | Isoma | Components (23) CH_43 and (24) CH_44 |
| 25 | Thourion – Koumoulia | Component CH_39 |
| 26 | Thourion East | Component CH_30 |

Table 2. List of archaeological components and activity loci mapped in fig.2.

As for the city site, being the modern village of Chaironeia located above the site of the ancient polis, accidental finds and rescue excavations constitute the main provenance of our archaeological knowledge of the ancient city site, as for Levadeia or Thebes.

Most of the information concerning the archaeological record in the Chaironeia chora seems to have come from the most recent decades. This is mainly due to rescue excavations and to the attention paid by the local ephorate to any invasive intervention in the landscape. Rescue

excavations in the area have taken place for the widening of the Kephisos river bank, for the construction of channels controlling the flooding of the area, and for the installation of a gas pipeline (1993-94)¹⁰.

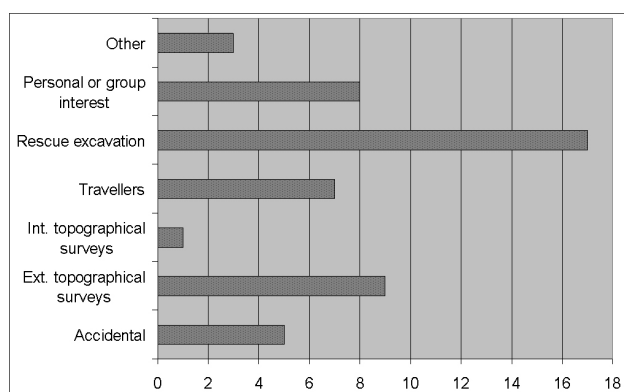


Fig.3. Graph illustrating the proportion of components discovered within different research frameworks.

especially the most recent ones, greatly contribute to shed light on the transformation of the ancient landscape of the *chora*, in particular on the rural segment (see below), which is still poorly known in the majority of the Boeotian areas which have not been covered by intensive surveys.

In fig.4 we can see the relationship between known archaeological sites and the distance from the modern road network. The fact that the majority of known evidence is located by the road exiting the city and crossing the plain is due to a combination of all the factors illustrated above (lack of intensive survey, river deposits burying sites, rescue excavation activity for channeling).

The ratio of known Prehistoric to components is 11 to 39 (1:3.5), while among the historical periods, 54% is dated Archaic to Hellenistic, 33% Roman-Late Roman, and 13% is attributed to the general Greco-Roman period.

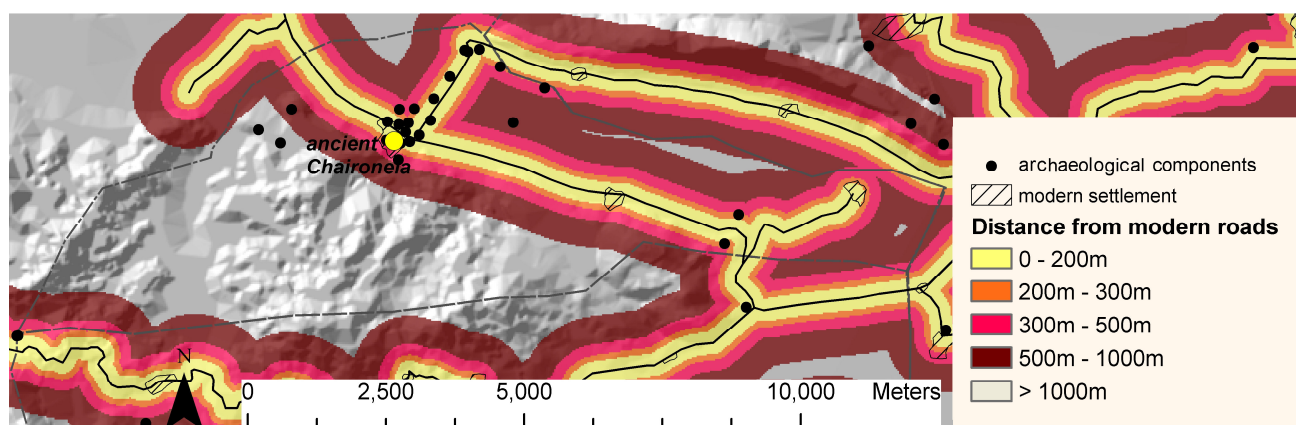


Fig.4. Relationship between components and modern road network.

The graph (fig.3) illustrates the proportion of components discovered within different research frameworks. In the case of the Chaironeia *chora*, whilst the large portion of the chart connected with travellers mainly concerns the city site of Chaironeia itself, the majority of archaeological discoveries have been obtained by rescue excavation (for urban and rural evidence), followed by a large amount of evidence uncovered by research led by personal interest, in particular the Prehistoric Magoula Balomenou site and the Agioi Apostoloi - Agios Georgios site at the border with Phokis.

Considering that the landscape of the area is greatly affected by the Kephisos river deposits, in addition to the fact that no intensive surveys (not even non-systematic) have been carried out in the *chora*, we have quite a rich archaeological dataset available¹¹. Rescue excavations,

ANALYSIS OF THE CHORA LANDSCAPE

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

For the Prehistoric period, it seems that the lower Kephisos valley (which corresponds to the *chora* of Chaironeia) has similar characteristics to the upper valley, which is, however, in Phokis (Lauffer Kopais I: 131), and this is probably due to the presence of the river clearly marking the landscape and its geomorphological characteristics. On the other hand, low mounds corresponding to Prehistoric habitation sites or activity foci are typical in general of the NW area of Copais (see chapter II.3.4). Lauffer (Kopais I: 131) mentions the low *magoulas*, typical of the upper valley in Phokis but also

¹⁰ See above within the single site descriptions.

¹¹ Extensive survey to locate sites known from the bibliography and from rescue excavation (on the GYS 1:5,000 map) has recently been carried out by the local ephoreia. A map is published in AD 51 (1996): 284 (fig.14), on which sites are

marked with black dots. Despite the fact that in the article there is no clear association between these dots and the information on the sites, correspondence can be found between some known sites and the black dots represented on the map, and therefore the sites could be mapped within the GIS.

visible in the Chaironeia area and the W part of the Copais basin, unlike the rest of the Copais area.

The only places with traces of Neolithic occupation known for the area are Chaironeia itself (acropolis and N slopes - *component CH_7*), and the site of Magoula Balomenou (Middle and Late Neolithic - *component CH_21*); the former intensively investigated because of the presence of a major later site; the latter discovered through excavation due to interest in Prehistoric material found in previous excavations at the site. The resulting picture is therefore very far from representative of the Neolithic human landscape in the area, which was certainly suitable for Neolithic life (fig.6 in chapter II.3.1). The presence of a large river could be a factor appropriate to Prehistoric settlement, for archaeological presence, but also a potential burying factor, for archaeological absence (the river deposits potentially burying earlier evidence).

The same is true for the Early Helladic period, for which the archaeological record available again presents a similarly limited picture: a probable activity focus of an undetermined kind at the Magoula Balomenou site (*component CH_22*), and at Chaironeia (*component CH_8*) – see fig.7 in chapter II.3.1.

For the Middle Helladic period, the extended settlement at the site of Magoula Balomenou provides a parallel with MH Orchomenos, both at the foot of Akontion. Their relationship, as Tzavella-Evjen points out (1988: 37-41), was probably close, and the two settlement sites should be studied together. MH is unknown elsewhere within the Chaironeia *chora*, with the exception of the uncertain *component CH_10* (only one MH pot from a burial) – see fig.8 in chapter II.3.1.

For Late Helladic, the only certain presence are chamber tombs and burials known from the surrounding of the Chaironeia city site, probably related to a settlement on the later acropolis of historical Chaironeia (*components CH_9 and CH_11* see above – Chaironeia section) – see fig.9 in chapter II.3.1. Otherwise, evidence from the period is uncertain (*components CH_24 and CH_29*).

Generally speaking, one could say that the Chaironeia area is known to any scholar of Greek Prehistory due to the presence of the impressive and well known, even if never systematically published, Magoula Balomenou site.

GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY¹²

Town level

The ancient *polis* of Chaironeia controls the lower part of the Kephisos valley before it enters the Copais basin. It is located along the road from Northern Greece, through Phokis to Boeotia, Attica and the Peloponnese. The *chora* of Chaironeia is quite small, and gravitated around the *polis* itself, which was occupied probably since early times (Geometric and Archaic¹³), and until the Late Roman period. Even today, the main settlement (the other

is Bramaga/Thourion) of the area is the modern village of Chaironeia, situated just above the ancient city site.

Above the ancient *polis* a fortified acropolis was built (probably since A period, see appendix I.3), providing the city a fortified area, quite well protected, above the settlement itself. It was apparently fortified since the Late Bronze Age (see above), which testifies to the weak location of the city site, at the only open entrance to Boeotia from the N.

Village level

If we consider as belonging to the *chora* of ancient Chaironeia only the right (S) bank of the Kephissos (without the left, N, bank), it could seem that there are no suitable locations for a potential village. There are two villages in this area today: Kapraina/Chaironeia and Bramaga/Thourion compared to which Chaironeia is a little larger. In ancient times, when Chaironeia was a larger *polis*, there would have been no need for a satellite village settlement. The position of the Thourion settlement, though, at the entrance of the valley, is similar to the situation of other W Copais areas, such as Koroneia or Levadeia¹⁴, where the ancient satellite settlements seemed to be located towards the exit of the valleys into the larger central Copais basin (see below - LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS).

If we take into account the small valley to the N side of the Kephisos valley (an area which, however, could have belonged to Phokis – see above Agioi Apostoloi), the existence of a Classical-Hellenistic and Roman? settlement has been hypothesised and linked with archaeological evidence by Dasios (1995a), on the other side of the probably formerly marshy area (*Loutsas*), from the Magoula Balomenou site (see appendix I.3 and below – LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS).

Rural segment

The archaeological record available for the area is quantitatively not very rich, as seen above. We have all periods represented but in low quantity as for number of sites. As is often the case, the resulting picture lacks a well-documented rural segment. In particular, no information on Classical (Archaic and Hellenistic) rural sites seems to be available. Conversely, investigated villa sites (or potential villa sites) from the Roman period are relatively quite well represented.

Roman (or LR) villa sites are reported for the area along the Kephisos river in ancient texts (Kahrstedt 1954: 109). Pausanias mentions a cemetery with flowers (especially iris) all around a villa, and archaeological data from mainland Greece tell us that such villa sites also often had burial areas nearby, or by roads nearby (*Mesogaia* 2001). Plutarch had a friend (Soklaros) who had a villa by the Kephisos and was an expert in conifers. As evident from the examples, the archaeological dataset from the *chora* offers us *components CH_13 and CH_14*, with the

¹² Period maps are included in chapter II.4, figs.17-19-21-23-25-27.

¹³ On the territory of Chaironeia reduced to Orchomenian control in the Archaic period see Roesch 1965.

¹⁴ see relevant chapters.

cemetery *component CH_17* probably in association with *component CH_13*¹⁵.

Burial areas

Known particularly from rescue excavations, the burial landscape of the *chora* is mainly characterised by burial areas linked with the *polis* of Chaironeia (*components CH_46* to *CH_49*), mainly to the N of the city site. Monumental burials are also known from the area, whose landscape is marked by the presence of two monumental tombs (polyandron type) - *components CH_19* and *CH_20*. *Component CH_15* (Roman?) probably testifies to the presence also of a burial area linked to the city site to the E, but it could also represent a rural cemetery¹⁶.

The archaeological record available for the *chora* also includes burials associated with villa sites (or near to them) in the Roman period (see above - *component CH_17*, and potentially also others similar to this), and rural burial areas associated with possible isolated farms or rural plots¹⁷. Cist-tombs (mainly) in groups related to a farm have been noted in different localities in the area (see for instance *component CH_50* and probably also *components CH_34*, *CH_35* and *CH_36*), mainly to the NE of the city site.

Moreover, the discovery of the cemetery area by the Kephisos (Late Geometric-Archaic and some Classical graves - *component CH_40*, *CH_41* and *CH_42*) could mark the character of the river as a border with the territory of Orchomenos, especially in an early period (during the period of expansion of Orchomenian control over Chaironeian territory - Roesch 1965).

Cult places/Religious areas

Apart from known or probable cult places within the city site, such as the probably urban cult place dedicated to Asklepios, recognised by the ancient theatre, beneath the church of the Panagia (*component CH_38*), few other places have been reported by scholars as potential extra-urban sanctuaries or cult place sites (see Ag.Charalambos - *components CH_27* and *CH_28*).

Attempts at the identification of the Apollon Thourios temple mentioned by Plutarch (*Sylla* 17.6-8) have been made (see *components CH_27*, *CH_28* and *CH_44*). A certain location for a cult place, however, independent of the identification, is not reported.

Forts and fortifications

According to the available archaeological record, there are no fortifications overlooking the wide passage from

Phokis through the Kephisos valley. On the other hand, the city of ancient Chaironeia itself, as noted above, had a quite well protected fortified area above the settlement itself (a fortified acropolis, with a defensive purpose). Probably already in the LH period, the site of the later acropolis of ancient Chaironeia was a fortified settlement (*component CH_9* and fortification AE792).

Recently the picture of the fortified landscape of the *chora* has been enriched by the discovery made by Camp et al (1992) of the fortification identified with Mt. Thourion mentioned by Plutarch (*component CH_43* - Isoma).

Other activities / unspecified activity areas

Some unspecified activity foci, of differing characters, can be pointed out in the general panorama of the *Chaironeiake* archaeological record. For some a possible character can be suggested (discussed under each individual component¹⁸), but for others not.

LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS IN THE CHORA LANDSCAPE

The landscape of the area is, and was in the past, marked by the presence of the Kephisos river.

The river meanders greatly, which means that it was and is subjected to a high degree of variability in its 'path'. Therefore, we cannot simply consider the current river bed as if it were that of the past, but, while trying to understand past landscape dynamics, we must also bear in mind that even the past, and also during the periods considered in the present work, the river course shifted through time (see under Magoula Balomenou site), with consequent changes in the landscape.

Landscape life was characterised by the presence of regular swamp creation and flooding, and the alternation of wet and dry periods. The settlement pattern in the area ought therefore to be studied accordingly, by taking into account any possible variation. It would be interesting to investigate how much the presence of the river, the shifting of its course, as well as the presence of large marshy areas, would have influenced human life and the human activities pattern in the valley.

Only a field campaign of intensive and systematic core sampling could provide a more certain reconstruction of flood dynamics, and could help to build up a realistic model. In the meantime, I simply consider the different possibilities of water presence in different periods, also according to the flooding dynamics of the Copais lake (known in much more detail mainly due to the work of Knauss' team). In fact, water balance in the area is strictly linked not only with the behaviour of the Kephisos, but also with the water level variations of the Copais (see chapter III.1).

¹⁵ See also Agios Charalambos site, for another possible villa site in the area, as well as Agioi Apostoloi - Agios Georgios site.

¹⁶ The doubtful interpretation of *component CH_15* (see appendix I.3) is linked with the still uncertain border line of the lower town, lying somewhere below the modern village (see appendix I.3).

¹⁷ Evidence of small rural burial areas from A-C-H period associated with isolated farms are also found quite often in intensive systematic surveys in the Boeotia region, and are visible on the surface through a few freshly-broken fineware sherds. See, for instance, the Tanagra Survey (chapter II.3.14 and appendix I.14 - THE TANAGRA SURVEY PROJECT).

¹⁸ For instance, both the LR and the H component at Agios Charalambos, marked generally as 'activity focus', might represent a rural site rather than a cult place (see above in text, under the entries).

As seen above, in the Late Prehistoric period the landscape was settled, and the area was probably considered suitable for early agriculture from the Neolithic period (judging by the presence of an important settlement site at Magoula Balomenou). The Early Helladic is less well represented, while in the Middle Helladic, Magoula Balomenou again expanded, and the occupation known for that period gives us an idea of the use of the area.

For the LH period, from an examination of the dimensions of the Cyclopean fortifications, Fossey (1990b: 100ff) suggests that the site of Chaironeia might belong to the series of fortifications controlled by Mycenaean Orchomenos. Thus, according to Fossey, the site might have been an important site in the LH landscape, but we have only his report and hypothesis on this (see above – Chaironeia *component CH_9*), without any other clear indication of LH occupation in the area – see above.

If Fossey is right in dating the acropolis as a large Mycenaean site, then it must imply that the Kephissos Valley was cultivable over large areas and was not a marsh, either because it was managed by local drainage or just better naturally drained than in recent times. The Magoula Balomenou site also implies a better drained valley in prehistory, as a major settlement surrounded by wetland and marshes till recently.

In the Geometric and Archaic periods, the archaeological record available offers us the case of the Chaironeia city site itself, and the large necropolis along the Kephissos (*components CH_34 to CH_36*), which might be related to the city itself, marking a presumable border (see above).

With Chaironeia always being the main habitation focus of the area (always at a city level), in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, the available picture is that of an empty landscape as far as habitation sites are concerned, though we might suppose that this was not the case, especially considering the suitability of the landscape (fig.6) and the good amount of evidence available for later periods (R and LR) for living in the countryside (figs.23-25-27 in Chapter II.4). Despite this apparent lack, data on the rural landscape are available through evidence concerning burials probably marking rural estates (*components CH_50; CH_34 to CH_36*) for the Archaic-Classical-Hellenistic periods. They are located mainly E/NE of the city towards the edge of the fertile plain (fig.2 nos.7,8,9 and fig.6). The landscape of burials therefore gives us an idea on the transformation in the rural settlement in the area, less represented in the archaeological record.

In the Archaic-Classical-Hellenistic periods we have evidence for burials (*components CH_46 to CH_49*) related to the main city site, Chaironeia¹⁹, along with the above mentioned ‘rural burials’ related to a process of progressive infill of the landscape with individual farm

¹⁹ Burials start just outside the modern village, testifying the expansion of the ancient *polis* in that period (fig.2 no.4).

sites linked to the system of small property, located in different areas of the landscape. City burials in the area N of the city continue until the mid 2nd C AD, when graves begin to appear in the area formerly occupied by the city site²⁰, then abandoned. This can be read as proof of a reduction in the size of the city itself in the course of the Roman period. In the same period, evidence is available for the rural segment of the landscape, which is marked by the presence of villa sites (see above – RURAL SEGMENT) and large estates. At the beginning of the Late Roman period (mid 3rd C AD), the Chaironeia archaeological record seems to testify to the presence of burials (*component CH_45*) in the location of a large villa of the previous period (see *component CH_26*), which could be associated with the labour force for the villa and a probable different organization of functional spaces rather than to a decay of the property system of large estates²¹.

In the *chora* of Chaironeia, therefore, we obtain, mainly from excavation data, the picture of a settlement pattern similar to that we usually find in surveys. Since the information comes from rescue excavations we do not get an idea of the density of sites; information that we obtain usually through intensive surveys. Rescue excavations, though, certainly offer less biased information on the archaeological landscape than that from ‘thematic’ excavation (see Chapter II.2), and provide information on the settlement pattern which produces a picture similar to that from intensive systematic surveys in other areas of Boeotia (see for instance the results of the Tanagra survey²²).

Examining the settlement dynamics in the area (fig.5), in modern times just below the ancient acropolis lies the modern village of Chaironeia (former Kapraina). It is also recorded in the Ottoman archives (1466-1688) as a large Greek village, indicating continuity of Greek population, presumably from ancient Chaironeia²³. To this village belongs the main area of the territory of the ancient *chora*. The ancient *chora* can also be described as a large unique settlement chamber, controlled by the city of Chaironeia. If we consider as belonging to the *chora* only the right (S) bank of the Kephissos (without the left, N, bank), as noted above²⁴, there was no apparent place for another settlement, even a satellite, when the *polis* of Chaironeia was larger²⁵.

²⁰ For instance, burials dated to the imperial period have been found in the area of the museum of Chaironeia (information from the 2002 poster exhibition in the Thebes museum). One example recorded in our database could be *component CH_15*, though published as of uncertain date (see appendix I.3).

²¹ As suggested in the panel of the exhibition at the Museum of Thebes. The villa / large estate system seems usually to begin in Boeotia in mid Roman times (200-400 AD), and they reach their maximum size and extent in Late Roman (400-600 AD).

²² See above footnote 17, chapter II.3.14 and appendix I.14 – THE TANAGRA SURVEY PROJECT.

²³ There is also Byzantine and Frankish evidence in the area.

²⁴ See section VILLAGE LEVEL.

²⁵ Fossey notes that the territory of ancient Chaironeia covered virtually the same area as that of the two modern villages of Kapraina/Chaironeia and Bramaga/Thourion (Fossey 1988:

On the other hand, two more modern villages are situated in the wider *chora* area today: Thourion (formerly Bramaga) and Romeiko (formerly Arapochori), in the central and east side of the *chora* territory, marking settlement chambers in this central and eastern half of the *chora*. In the case of other *chorai* on the same side of the Copais basin (Koroneia and Levadeia, closest neighbours), we noticed the presence in antiquity of satellite settlements towards the Copais plain, at the entrance to the ‘valleys’ (Alalkomenai for the *Koroneiake*, a possible settlement in the Laphystion area for the Levadeia *chora*). We could hypothesise a similar situation for the *chora* of Chaironeia, in which a second rank settlement could have been located in the Thourion area, where a Frankish tower and settlement is located, as well as the modern village of Thourion. Actually, the presence of a Frankish tower and settlement SE of modern Thourion strengthens the potential gap in this area, although no archaeological evidence is available for earlier periods. The results of a cost distance analysis²⁶ indicate adequate space for a settlement in the area. On the other hand, one should also consider the possibility that the Kourpeiko/Thourion area could have worked as border area for Levadeia instead, occupied also in ancient times by control posts and watch towers (see Lauffer Kopais I: 145ff and *component CH_30*).

In addition, just behind Chaironeia, a topographically defined small landscape, potentially suitable for a sanctuary with its ‘catchment area’, can be located in the area of Ag. Charalambos (*components CH_27 to CH_29*), a flysch mid fertile area overlooking the Vathyrema river valley – figs. 2, 5 and 6.

The discussion above considers as the northern border of the *chora* the course of the Kephisos river. If we also include in the territory of ancient Chaironeia the area N of the river, additional settlement chambers open up along the Akontion ridge. The Akontion mountain, an area also suitable for a pastoral economy (fig.6), is occupied today by two villages, Akontion (formerly Visvardi) and Prosilion (formerly Velis), both probably going back to the Ottoman period. Therefore, the traditional and Ottoman settlement pattern allows for the possible existence of a settlement on the N side of the Kephisos valley opposite Chaironeia, in order to understand the settlement network possibilities in antiquity also. Akontion village, in its position and its vicinity to Chaironeia, seems rather to be linked to the shrinking of the medieval/post-medieval Chaironeia village and the exploitation of Akontion slopes for pastoral activity, while Prosilion village could give us a clue to the placement of a settlement in the area at the entrance to the valley. Such a settlement could have exploited the area corresponding to the entrance of the Kephisos river into the Copais basin, and could have been located somewhere in the area of Thourion, Prosilion and Romaiikon. The evidence provided by *component CH_39*

is too weak and undetermined to be meaningful so far, although its position at the entrance of the valley towards the Southern border would fit. The cost distance analysis allows for a potential settlement chamber that would also have respected the border towards Levadeia marked by the Kourpeiko (fig.5).

Finally, a potential small settlement chamber, potentially suitable for a rural settlement (at hamlet level) could be located in the area of the Agioi Apostoloi-Agios Georgios site (*components CH_31 to CH_33*), a small valley with alluvial fertile deposits. The cost distance analysis defines a fair room for it (fig.5), but the area might however have been in Phokis for most of its history – Dasios 1995a.

385), and see also Bintliff’s Thiessen polygons analysis for ancient Boeotia (Bintliff 1994b fig.20), where only Chaironeia appears as exploiting the whole area.

²⁶ See chapter II.3.1 – LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS.

II.3.3 CHAIRONEIAKE

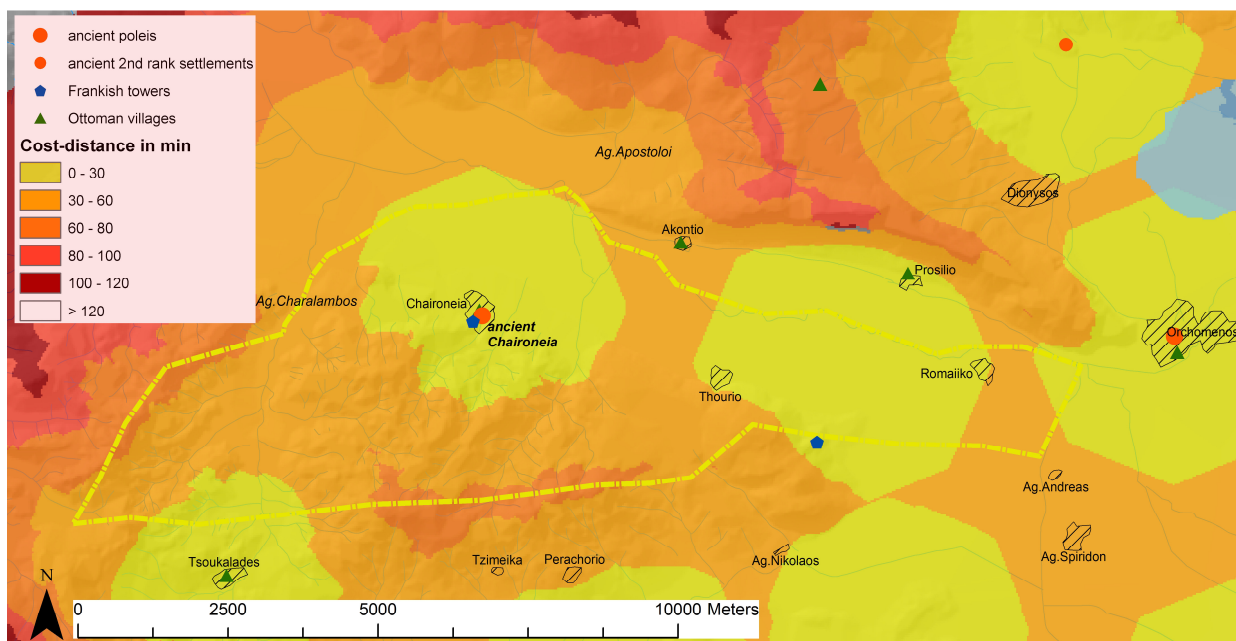


Fig.5. Classified surface representing the cost-weighted distance (1/2 h walking and further ranges) from recognised 1st and 2nd rank ancient settlements (represented by larger and smaller dots). Areas without dots indicate potential settlement chambers. Ottoman villages and Frankish towers have also been added to the map to show their spatial relationship with the Greco-Roman settlement network and to appreciate potential settlement chambers.

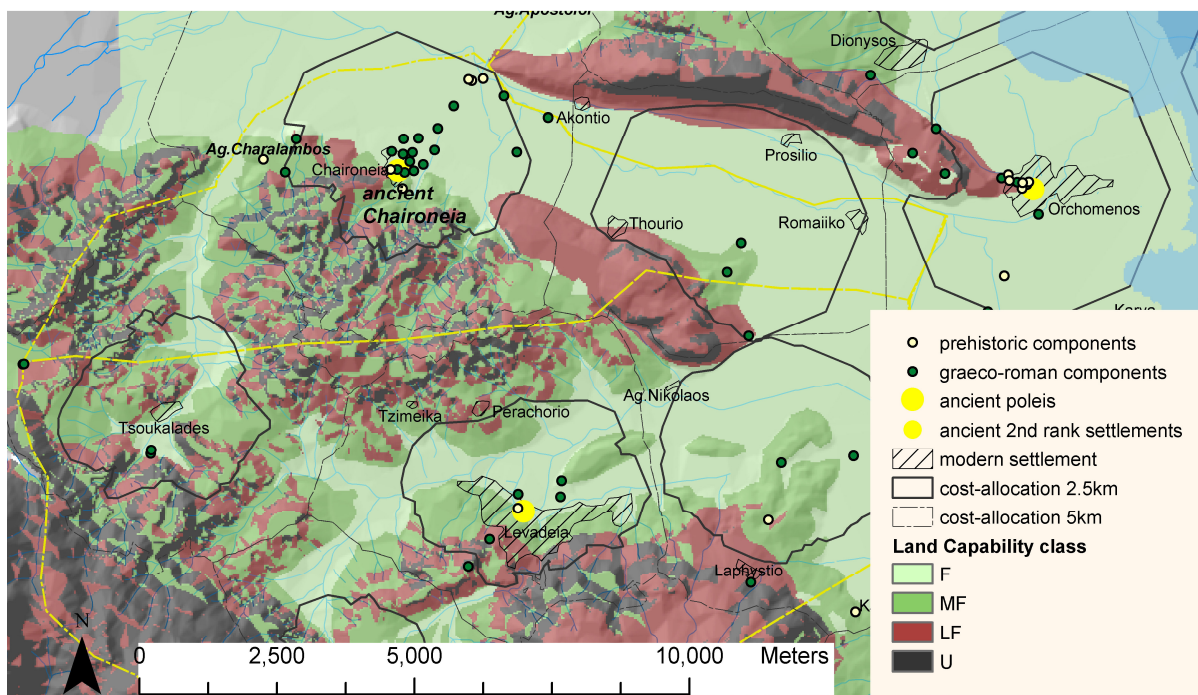


Fig.6. Map showing the Greco-Roman settlement network, the polygons resulting from the cost-distance analysis (marking half an hour and one hour walking time distance) and dots representing the known archaeological components (same as in fig.2), with land capability information underlain.

