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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.3.11

The upper Asopos basin: Parasopia and Plataea

TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Parasopia is the ancient name for the upper basin of the Asopos. It constitutes a geographical unit, mostly comprised of a Tertiary plateau, rich in cultivable soil, and it can be considered one of the most fertile areas of Boeotia.

The Asopos river marks the landscape of the *chora* in its entirety, crossing it transversally from W to E. In its upper part, the Asopos is a river with not much water flowing in a large basin, which falls from W to E from 300 to 240m a.s.l. (Philippson 1951: 502[1]). During its course, the river sometimes flows within narrow banks marked by reeds, while sometimes it opens up (Philippson 1951: 506)[2]. To the N of the river the area is characterised by small valleys and basins.

The Livadostra/Stavropotamos river marks the landscape of the SW corner of the *chora*. The river has its source in a basin (2-3km; 280m asl) to the E of the Kotroni hill[3] at the foot of Kithairon (Philippson 1951: 504). The basin, namely the open area before Plataea[4], is bordered to the E by a Tertiary *tafel* divided into several valleys. The *tafel* outcrops from the mountains at the village of Kriekouki/Erithres, and extends to the S towards the Asopos. To the N, the Livadostra valley is separated from the Asopos plain by a low rise, atop which is the deserted village of Pyrgos[5], concerned mainly with cattle in Philippson's days (Philippson 1951: 504).

An elevated limestone zone from the area N of Korombili[6] runs towards the E with an average elevation of 320m asl. At its end lies the large village of Kaparelli, and Eastwards the isolated limestone hill of Kotroni (385m asl). To the N, parallel to the limestone ridge, is a cultivated slope covered with soil from the Tertiary period, on the N slope of which is the Parapoungia/Leuktra village, formed by three settlements which look over the wide valley basin (Philippson 1951: 505).

The ancient city of Plataea, the largest settlement in the area in historical times, with the status of *polis*, was situated S of the Asopos, on a low terrace (320m asl – today named Kastro) on the foothills by the plain, E and below the village of Koukkla/Plataies (390m asl), located at the upper end of a talus slope.

Further to the E, along the foothills of Kithairon, is the village of Kriekouki/Erythres, to the E of which the mountain range turns slightly to the N with the Pastra ridge, below which ancient Erythrai lay[7] (Philippson 1951: 506).

Boundaries

The borders of the *chora* are: to the S, Mt. Kithairon and Pastra, to the N the Soros range, to the E the line across the Asopos valley at the point where the foothills of Pastra approach the Soros range and there is a narrow ravine of the Asopos[8]. To the W the boundaries are less defined geographically, and the border would probably lie somewhere between ancient Plataea and the Thespiae area, probably corresponding to the rolling, barren hills W of Thebes and the very slight rise between the Asopos river system and the Askris system to the W[9], as Fossey (1988: 132) suggests. Since geographical limits are not so clear in this area, political limits would also fluctuate. Much of the area, in fact, lay very close to the great power of Thebes, and precisely in the direction where natural divisions are least clear. As Herodotus (VI 108) and Pausanias (IX 4.4) inform us, the S boundary of the territory of Thebes was at some point in history fixed by arbitration at the Asopos river itself.

PHYSICAL LAND UNITS

As can be seen from the chart above, the plain landscape is practically absent, and the hilly segment constitutes the majority of the landscape. As in the case of Thespiae *chora* (see chapter II.3.9), this is due to the elevation range within which the *chora* landscape is included, rather than to the morphological character. In fact, the majority of the hilly landscape is comprised of features belonging to class H1, constituting a plain landscape as far as morphology is concerned, but simply located

[1] A detailed geological description of the Asopos valley can be found in Philippson 1951: 506. See also in appendix I.14 - THE TANAGRA SURVEY PROJECT.

[2] There are several bridges over the river (Philippson 1951: 506).

[3] Kotroni hill, an isolated limestone hill 385m asl, E of Kaparelli village.

[4] In the open area before Plataea the famous battle of 479 BC took place; the battlefield lies between the *tafel* of Kriekouki/Erythrai and the upper part of the Livadostro basin (Philippson 1951: 504).

[5] A Frankish tower stands by the village, and is named after it. The location has a nice view towards the Plataea plain where the battle of 479 BC took place.

[6] See chapter II.3.10 and map in fig.1 (II.3.10).

[7] Ancient Erythrai has been identified with the Daphni plateau location (see *components PP_50 to PP_54*).

[8] The E border would run not far from ancient Tanagra to its W.

[9] For the Askris river, see chapter II.3.9.

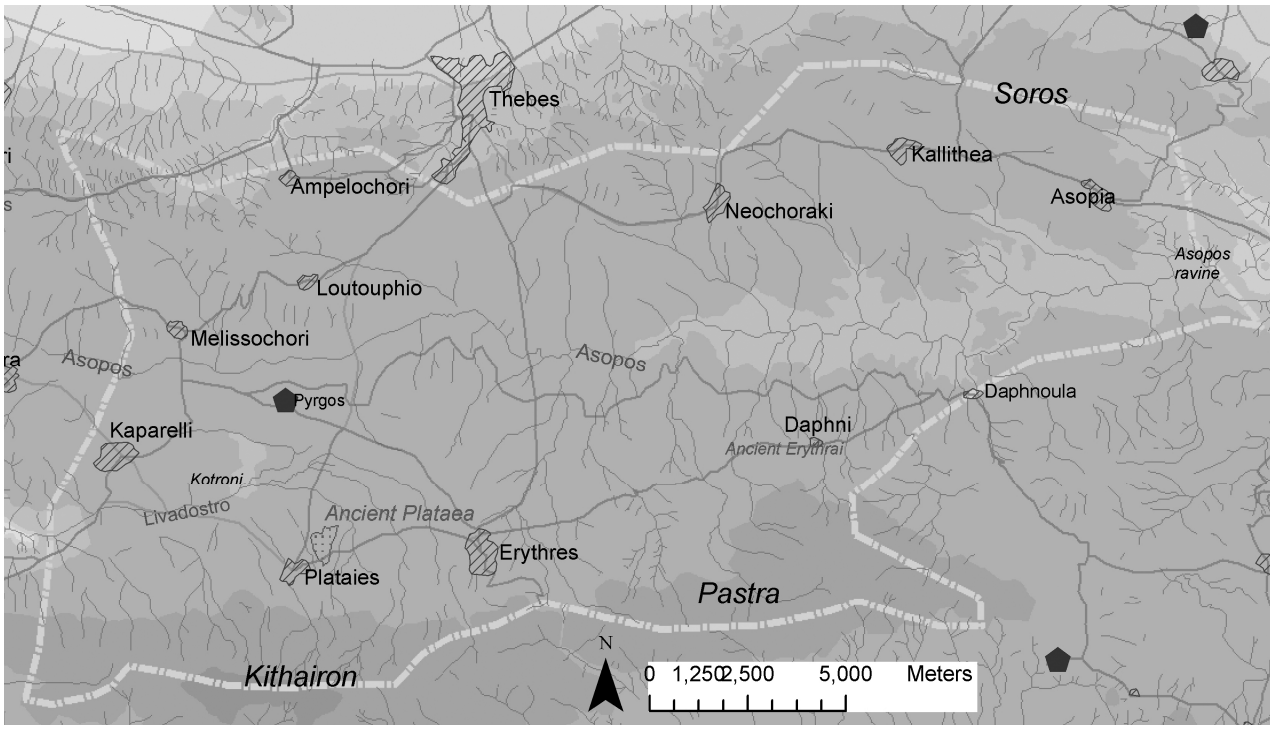

Fig.1. *Topographical setting of the Parasopia and Plataea chora.*

entirely above a 200m elevation (which we have taken as the elevation border between plain and hilly landscape – see chapter I.2.1). As is visible in the map fig.2 in chapter II.1, H1 features constitute the Asopos valley (comprising a Tertiary plateau) as well as the basins marking the landscape of the N side of Asopos (see above, general description). Steeper slopes characterise the E area of the *chora*, marked by a much more differentiated landscape and a narrower Asopos valley.

Mountain landscape is represented by the slopes of Kithairon above 600m asl, along the S edge of the *chora*.

Hilly landscape	87.1%
Mountainous landscape	12.8%
Plain	0.1%

1	P1_P2	lacustrine basin, valley	0.0005%
2	P3	gentle slope	0.005%
3	P4	foothill	0.002%
4	H1	plateau	46.3%
5	H2	gentle slope	12.8%
6	H3	moderate slope	15.3%
7	H4	severe slope	9.2%
8	H5	very severe slope	3.5%
9	M1	plateau	3.4%
10	M2	plateau/gentle slope	1.8%
11	M3	moderate slope	4.1%
12	M4	very severe slope	3.4%

Table 1. *Percentage of the different physiographical classes present within the Parasopia and Plataea area (P=plain; H=hill; M=mountain)*

RESOURCES

The plain between Plataea and Thebes is marked by high fertile Neogen sediments and older pre-Holocene colluvia. The streams, including the longer Asopos, are embedded deep in their valley, allowing mainly for narrow patches of alluvia.

As stated above, the area is rich in cultivable soil, with intense crop production. The map in fig.10 clearly shows the predominance of fertile land (class 1=F) in the area. The value 2=MF is totally absent, while the U value is represented by the highest slopes of the Soros range (to the NE) and the limestone heights on the slopes of Kithairon along the S border, as well as the few dolomite formations showing on the surface in the area where the modern village of Kaparelli lies (W of the map).

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

1	**PLATAEA**	*Components PP_1 to PP_10; PP_76 and PP_77*
2	**Plataea SW frindges**	*Components PP_1, PP_2, PP_76 and PP_77*
3 – 6	**Plataea burial places**	*Components PP_12 and PP_13, PP_14* (3); *PP_17* (4), *PP_18* (5) *and PP_19* (6)
7	**Plataea N – Kotronaki**	*Components PP_15 and PP_16*
8/9	**Neochorakion**	*Components PP_20 to PP_22* (8)*; PP_33 and PP_75* (9)
10	**Moustaphades/Kallithea – Pyrgaki**	*Components PP_23 and PP_ 24*
11	**Kallithea Metochi**	*Components PP_71 to PP_73*
12	**Soros**	*Components PP_25 to PP_28*
13	**Soros**	*Components PP_32 and PP_74*

14	**Soros SE**	*Components PP_29 to PP_31*
15/16	**Asopia**	*Components PP_56 and PP_57* (15); *PP_58 to PP_64* (16);
17	**Asopia vicinity**	*Components PP_65 and PP_66*
18	**Asopia E**	*Components PP_67 to PP_69*
19	**Asopia S**	*Component PP_70*
20/21/ 22	**Asopia S**	*Components PP_78* (20)*; PP_79* (21)*; PP_80* (22)
23	**Daphni Kastron**	*Components PP_47 to PP_ 49*
24	**Daphni plateau (ancient ERYTHRAI?)**	*Components PP_50 to PP_54*
25	**Daphni**	*Component PP_ 55*
26	**Erythrai – Pantanassa**	*Components PP_34 to PP_38*
27	**Erythrai - Pantanassa foothill**	*Components PP_ 39 to PP_40*
28	**Erythrai - Pantanassa area**	*Components PP_41 and PP_42*
29	**Erythrai – Pyrgos**	*Component PP_43*
30	**Erythrai - Pantanassa NE**	*Components PP_44 to PP_46*

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

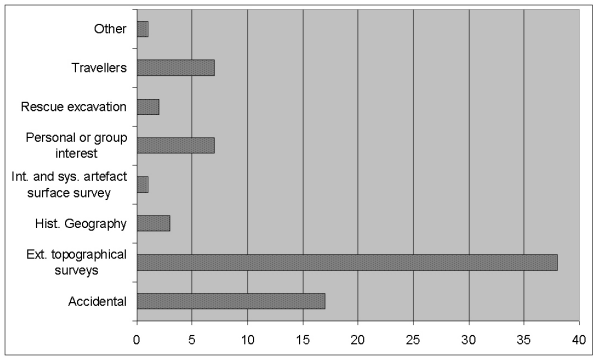

Fig.3. *Graph illustrating the proportion of components discovered within different research frameworks.*

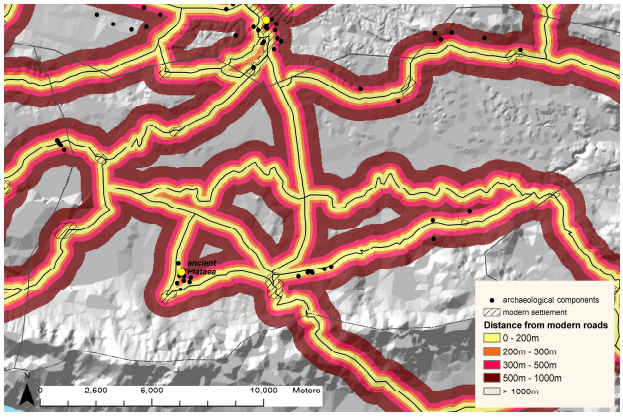

Fig.4. *Relationship between components and modern road network.*

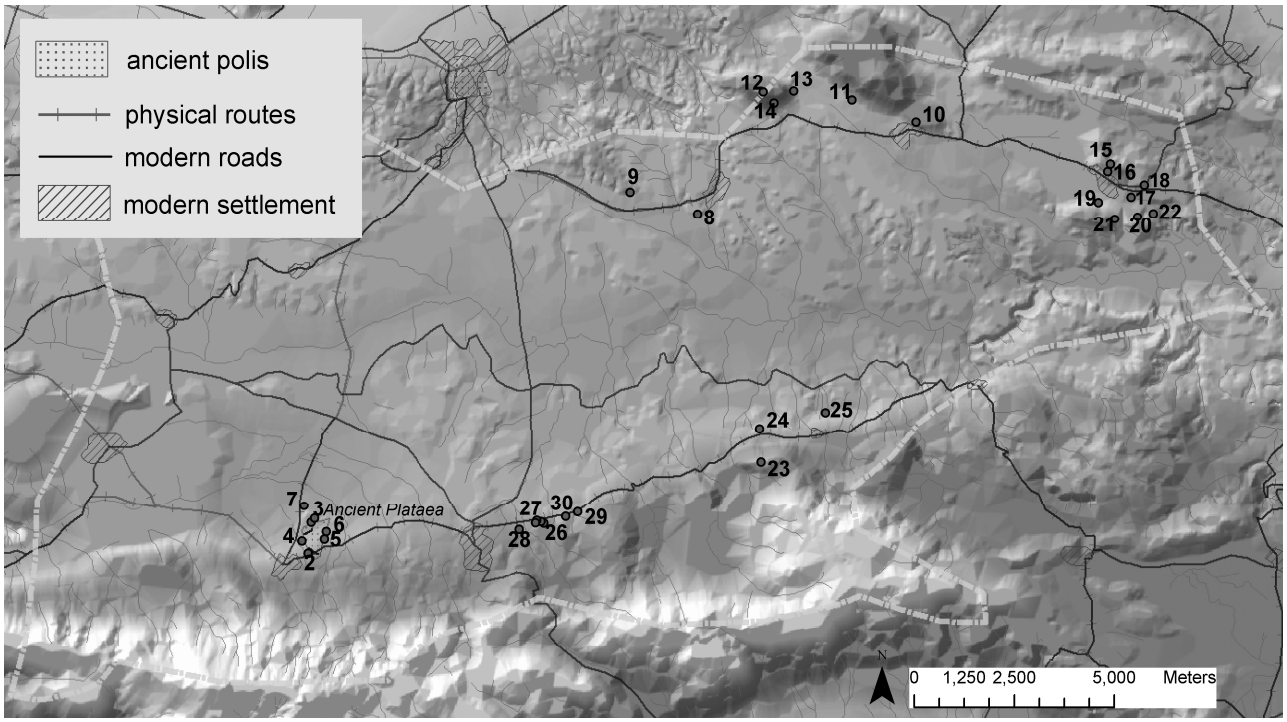

Fig.2. *Archaeological map of Parasopia and Plataea region.*

The archaeological record available for the area is concentrated along the foothills of Kithairon and Soros, respectively the S and the N edges of the *chora*, and archaeological research has focused mainly on hilltop locations, possible acropolis sites for the settlement known for the area from historical sources.
Conversely, the middle Asopos valley and the wide surrounding plain, constituting the central part of the area crossing the Plataea-Parasopia *chora* transversally, is archaeologically less known. This is due mainly to the absence of an intensive and systematic artefact surface survey carried out in the area.
The location of the known archaeological record (as evident in the maps) is due mainly to research focused on the settlement site (actual or probable/possible) in the area. As so often happens, the rural segment of the landscape is missing.
Rescue excavation is also poorly represented in the discovery panorama (see graph in fig.3); its presence being due only to works for the gas pipe-line to the S of the village of Asopia, which brought to light, apart from burials, also a rural site.

In fig.4 we can see the relationship between known archaeological sites and the distance from the modern road network. The correspondence seems striking, and the archaeological record available would indeed appear to be biased by proximity to the modern road network. This is mainly due to the absence of research carried out in the wide plain crossed by the Asopos river, and to interest in prominent sites at the edge of the basin, as well as the fact that the modern road through the foothills most probably follows an ancient route, and this could also, albeit partially, explain the location of known sites along it.

The ratio of known Prehistoric to Greco-Roman components is 14 to 60 (1:4.3), while among the historical periods, 31% are dated Archaic to Hellenistic, 14% Roman-Late Roman, and 12% are attributed to the general Greco-Roman period.

ANALYSIS OF THE *CHORA* LANDSCAPE

PREHISTORIC PERIOD
For the Prehistoric period, we are missing a potentially large quantity of data, considering the suitable landscape that the Asopos river would offer to Prehistoric settlement, especially in its middle course. Sites which may have been by the tributaries of the Asopos, or on upper terraces of the river itself (see the Prehistoric settlement pattern for Tanagra) elude our knowledge.
Only one earlier site, Neolithic and Early Helladic, has been identified N of Plataea in the Kotronaki locality (*components PP_15 and PP_16*). There is a LH activity focus at the site of historical Plataea, while MH is only probable; LH activity foci can also be located at Erythrai – Pantanassa (*component PP_34*) and at the Daphni plateau (*component PP_50*) sites. Prehistoric occupation is attested also at the Asopia site (*components PP_61 to PP_63*), since Prehistoric potsherds were found on the slopes, probably washed down from the top of the Prophitis Ilias hill (see figs.5 to 8).
LH burials are known from the areas of Soros (*component PP_74*) and Moustaphades/Kallithea (*component PP_23*), linked to a settlement nearby. An attempt has been made to identify it with the Soros Easter peak (see Soros –*component PP_25*- and also the discussion of the Moustaphades/Kallithea site).

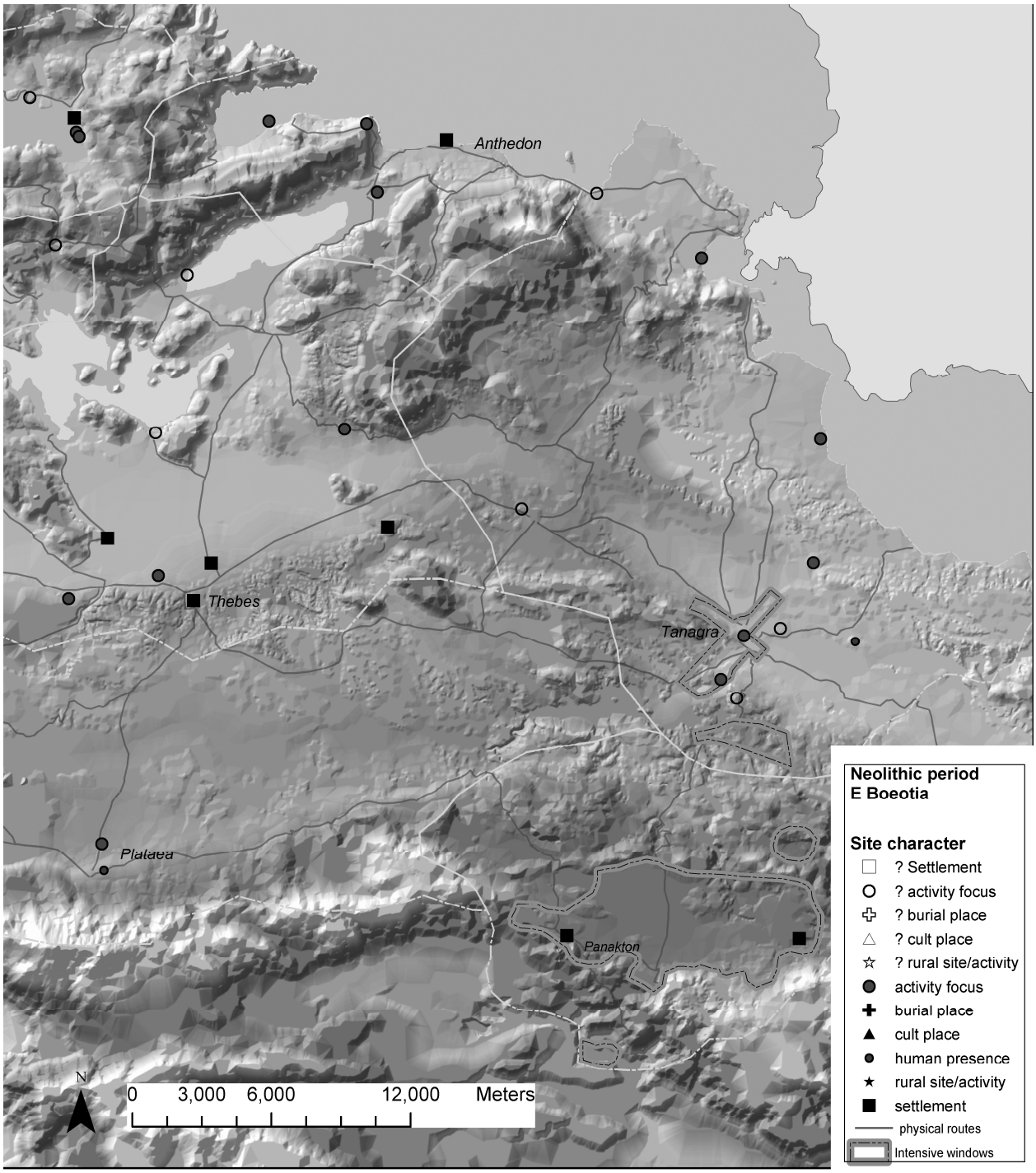

Fig.5. *Neolithic map of E Boeotia*

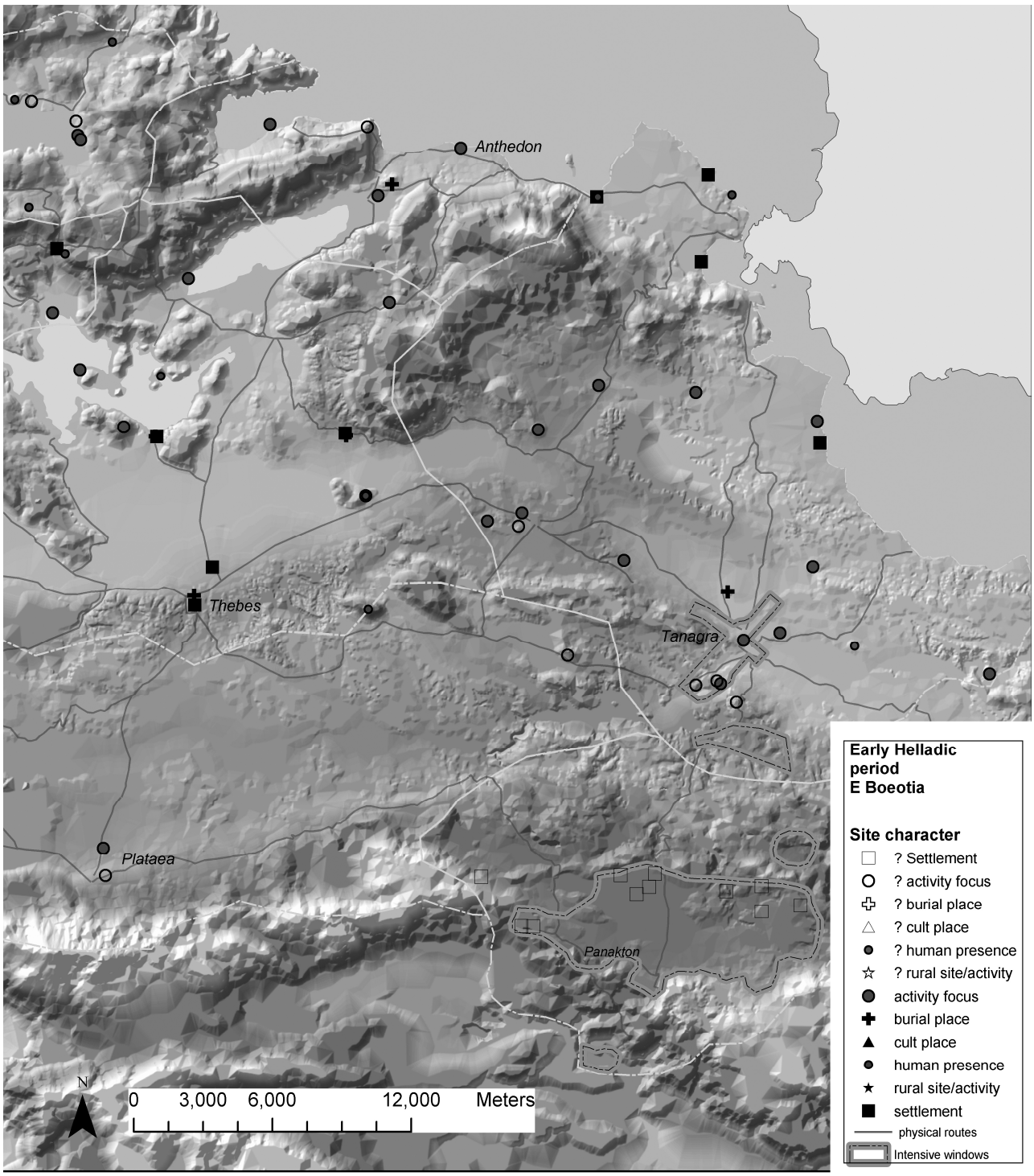

Fig.6. *EH map of E Boeotia*

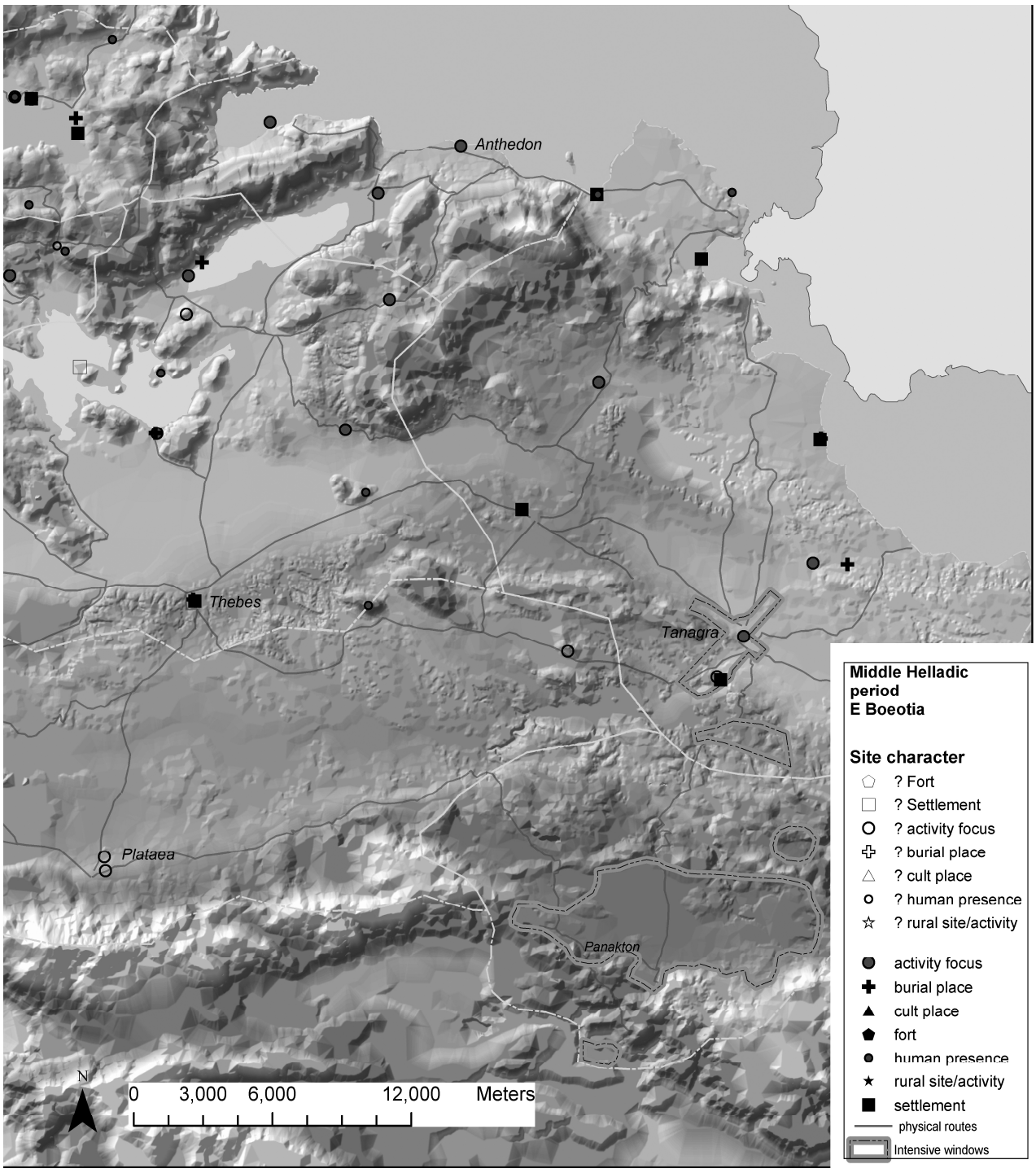

Fig.7. *MH map of E Boeotia*

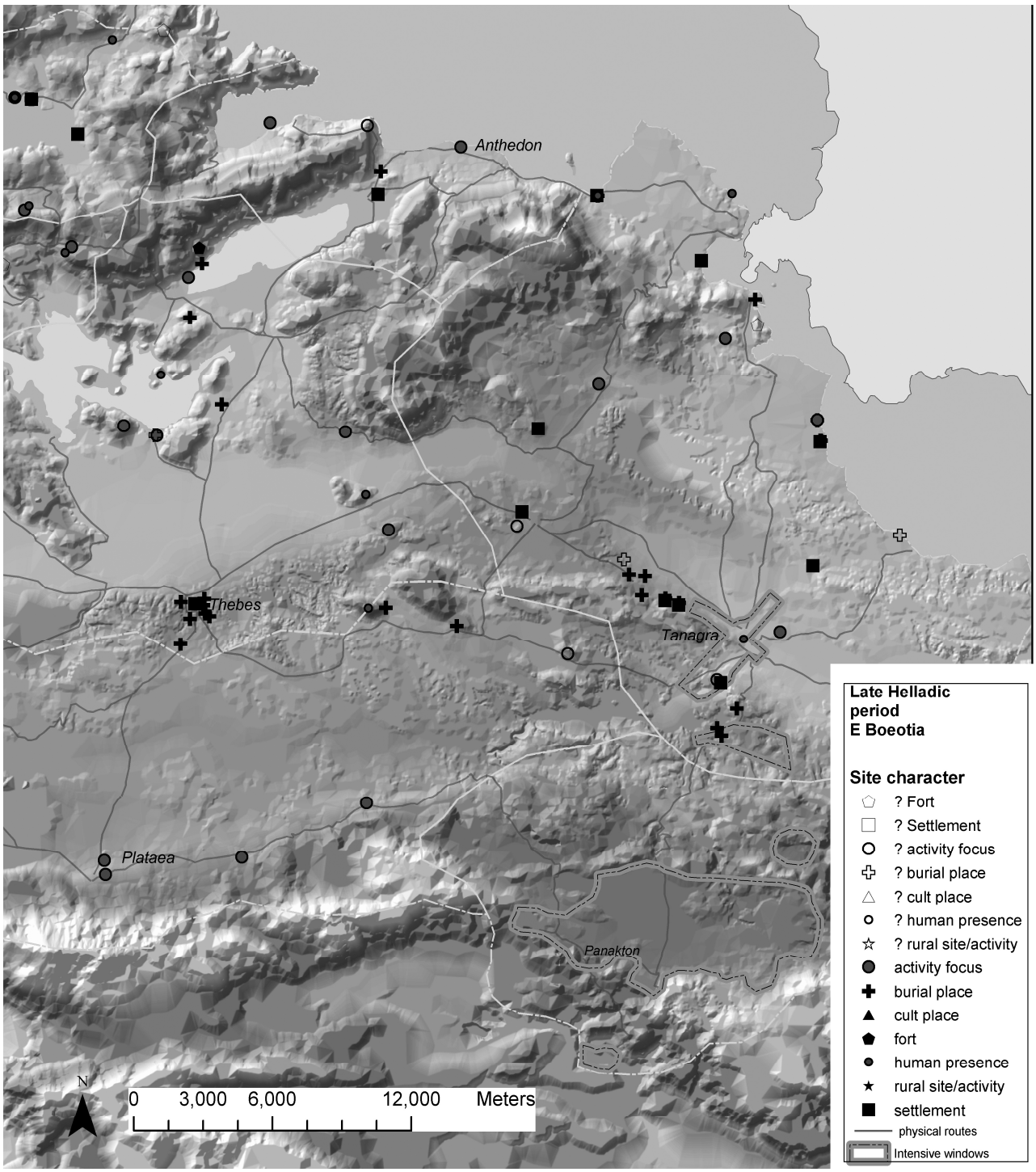

Fig.8. *LH map of E Boeotia*

GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY[1]

Town level

The town of Plataea is the main centre in the area, with the status of *polis* and the right of participation in the Boeotian confederation. The larger walled area of Plataea corresponds to the 5th C BC city. Occupation in early periods of history is poorly known in the area, with the exception of the intensively studied city site of Plataea, where Geometric and Archaic occupation is also attested with certainty and in detail. Its position close to Thebes (without physically well-defined borders with Theban territory – see above) and the wide fertile land available to it (see above – RESOURCES), made it and its area an object of interest to Thebes. Despite Thebes taking over half its land after its victory over the Plataeans in 426 BC, the large size of Plataea during the 4th C can be explained by the fertility of the still available land. Also in Late Roman-Medieval times the place had a status, as attested archaeologically (see appendix I.11).

The importance of the city of Plataea is also based on the central position between the valley road to the port of Kreusis/Livadostra and the important route through the pass above Kithairon to Eleusis, Megara and Athens (=the modern road to Athens and Vilia), and Thebes was certainly interested in this area of crucial strategic importance against Athens.

Village level

The existence of two villages in Greco-Roman times might be supposed for the area including the modern villages of Moustaphades/Kallithea and Neochoraki, and the Soros hilltop area, along the N edge of the wider Parasopia region, based on the existence of fortified hilltops and burial areas (see appendix I.11 for discussion). Another village might have been located in the Klembotsari/Asopia area, mainly because of the existence of burials in the surroundings (see appendix I.11, under Asopia). A potential gap can also be located in the area of Loutouphio[2].

Along the S edge, at the foot of Kithairon, three settlements are mentioned by ancient sources, from E to W: Erythrai (located at the site of Daphni), Hysiai (identified with the Erythrai-Pantanassa site) and Plataea. Only for Plataea can a clear nucleated settlement status be archaeologically defined with certainty. For the others, only hilltop fortifications are known, which we can only guess were in connection with a settlement (see above under Daphni Kastron and Daphni plateau, and Erythrai-Pantanassa sites).

Rural segment

As noted earlier, the rural segment is poorly represented in the archaeological record of the *chora*. *Components PP_44 to PP_46* might be interpreted as a probable rural site, occupied from the Classical to Roman period, while recent discoveries during gas pipeline works to the S of the village of Klembotsari/Asopiae indicate a rural site probably linked to pastoral activities (*component PP_78,* with probable rural burials – *components PP_79 and PP_80*).

Burial areas

Several burial areas are known in connection with the city site (*components PP_11 to PP_14 and PP_17 to PP_19*), from all periods of Greco-Roman history. Within the city area, outside the NW 'acropolis', Late Roman tombs are reported (*component PP_11*). They could be an indication of the shrinking of the city at that time (probably to the NW), as happens elsewhere in Boeotia.

Other burial areas are known in the vicinity of possible settlement sites: *component PP_32*, *components PP_20 to PP_22, PP_33 and PP_75*, *component PP_55*, *components PP_65 to PP_70*. Some burials might be associated with agro-pastoral activities and habitation (*components PP_79 and PP_80*).

Cult places/Religious areas

An attempt has been made to identify *component PP_29* (Soros SE) with a cult place, though there is too little evidence. A similar case is that of *component PP_40* (Erythrai - Pantanassa foothill).

Forts and fortifications

Several forts and/or fortified sites are known from the area. In the majority of cases, attempts have been made to identify the fortifications reported as connected with a settlement or as containing a small refuge settlement within (see *components PP_26 to PP_28*; *PP_ 35 to PP_37; PP_47; PP_59 and PP_60*), while in a few cases they could be single forts or watchtowers (*component PP_47*, *component PP_43* of uncertain date though, *components PP_50 and PP_60*).

The fortification on the Soros easterly higher peak (*components PP_26 to PP_28*) is probably to be considered as just a fort (and not the acropolis of a settlement) in historical periods.

LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS IN THE CHORA *LANDSCAPE*

Settlement chambers are difficult to recognise in this long, wide area, where there are no clear physical borders to define topographical units available for a settlement. The great availability of water sources make the area easily settled anywhere one might choose, and the high land potential characterising the area in its entirety (see above – RESOURCES) would not allow the identification of local patches available for potential settlements. In order to enucleate a pattern feasible for antiquity, an examination of the modern and traditional settlement pattern could help.

In the area of Parasopia there are today a series of village territories, centred on fairly regularly spaced settlements on both sides of the Asopos valley. The community borders fall on the Asopos river, so that settlement chambers are created on both sides of the Asopos valley,

[1] Period maps are included in chapter II.4, figs.18-20-22-24-26-28.

[2] For a discussion of the settlement history in the area see below in the text – LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS.

containing part of the plain and the hilly country N and S of it[3].

N of the Asopos river we find six modern villages, some of which go back to the Ottoman period. In many cases additional villages are recorded in these territories in the Ottoman period, indicating the existence of several settlement chambers in this area (see fig.9). Modern Asopia (formerly Chlebotsari) goes back to the Ottoman period (1466-1646). An additional village is registered in the Ottoman archives in the southern part of the modern village territory. Modern Kallithea (formerly Moustaphades) has no predecessor in the Ottoman period. Yet nearby, by a torrent W of Kallithea, is located the deserted village of Likouresi registered in 1506-1646. The settlement chamber of modern Neochoraki was occupied probably in the Ottoman period by the village of Golemi, recorded in the 16th and 17th centuries. Modern Loutouphio has also an Ottoman predecessor (Luta, recorded 1466-1688). In the settlement chamber of modern Ampelochori to its N, the deserted village of Samari goes back to the Ottoman period (16th-17th centuries). A second Ottoman village (Kokinaris Likores, founded 1506) is possibly located SE, by the northern border of the settlement territory of modern Melissochori. Modern Melissochori (formerly Baltsa/Baltsia, recorded 1521-1688) occupies the last settlement chamber N of the Asopos river in the W part of the territory of ancient Parasopia. Its territory includes a large part of the Asopos plain, also exploited in the past by the deserted village of Khalki, E of Melissochori (recorded 1506-1688).
On the southern side of the Asopos river, settlement today is comprised of three villages in the foothills, from W to E Plataies (formerly Kokla – no more than a village), Erythrai (formerly Kriekouki, recorded 1466-1646 and today administratively within Attica) and Daphni (formerly Darimari, recorded in 1646) to the SE[4]. To the W of Plataea is the large village of Kaparelli (recorded in 1466-1688), located at the end of the S edge of the tertiary *tafel* of Thebes and controlling part of the plain and the nearby slopes of Kithairon, with a smaller village/hamlet, Melissochori, to its N, in the middle of the wide Asopos plain.

All these modern villages, the majority of which go back to the Ottoman period, contain in their territories part of the fertile plain of Asopos, the Livadostra basin and the southern slopes of Kithairon, by the foot of which they are situated. The most favourable is the settlement chamber of Plataies, which contains a large plain. This settlement chamber, occupied in antiquity by the settlement of Plataea, with the status of a city, continued to be an important focus of habitation in the medieval and postmedieval period (considerable Byzantine and Frankish remains outside the city walls[5]), recolonised by Albanians after a gap in the Frankish period (Bintliff-Kiel in preparation). A pair of Ottoman villages named Kokla Kebir and Sagir is recorded in this area in 1466-1688 and 1540-1680 respectively (Bintliff-Kiel in preparation), continuing in the Early Modern and Modern periods (modern Plataies, formerly Kokkla). North of Plataies (within the village territory of modern Kaparelli) the 19th century village of Pyrgos, with a Frankish and a possible Ottoman village, constitutes a further settlement chamber in this area.

A cost-distance analysis[6] performed for the *chora* might help to indicate the potential areas gravitating onto a settlement focus potentially shifting through time. As there are no physical constraints to the forming of settlement chambers, they could be determined arbitrarily by proximity relationships, and within them settlements would seem to have been very mobile through time, without firm constraints on the location of the centre and yet always within the same wider area and probably without changing much, with regards to the number of nucleated settlements exploiting the large amount of available fertile land and resources.

The *polis* settlement of Plataea is the major centre in the area, though the actual limits of its territory against other possible nucleated centres within the wider area, which would certainly have existed, are not easy to define. The wider Tertiary plateau which mostly constitutes the *chora* landscape has always been densely populated, with its potential able to support a large number of inhabitants.
One might suppose, for instance, the existence of two villages in the area of Neochoraki-Soros-Kallithea (see appendix I.11 and above - *village level*). In the modern settlement pattern, the distance between the two modern villages of Neochoraki and Kallithea is 5 km. Kallithea's physical landscape comprises mostly excellent land in Neogen, and the village has plenty of fresh water too. Certainly this area would have suited a settlement in antiquity. On the other hand, as there is space today for two villages whose economy is based mainly on agricultural activities, there must have been space for two settlements in the wider area of Neochoraki and Kallithea

[3] For the boundaries of modern *koinotites* and settlement structure in the area see also discussion and comparison of the modern settlement pattern and the supposed ancient one in chapter II.4 for the wider Boeotia region and figs. 1 and 14 (chapter II.4). The *koinotita* of Thebes goes behind the low series of hill to the S of the town, and exploits part of the Asopos valley, to the Asopos itself. It can be noted also that the Asopos river actually works as border for the other *koinotites* gravitating towards its valley as well (fig.1 in chapter II.4).

[4] In SE Parasopia, the only sizeable village, as noted by Fossey (1988: 116), is the modern village of Darimari/Daphni. In the recent past in SE Parasopia, there was also the hamlet of Katsoula/Rapendosa (Daphnoula on the map), with only 52 inhabitants by 1961, and having disappeared from the statistical book of *demoi* by 1981 (in 1967 Fossey (1988: 116) saw only 2 people resident). The majority of the inhabitants seem to have moved to the Skourta plain, while still farming the Parasopia land (Fossey 1988: 116).

[5] See also recent systematic work on the city by the Austrian team lead by A.Konečny (preliminary report in Konečny et al. 2008).

[6] See chapter II.3.1 – LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS.

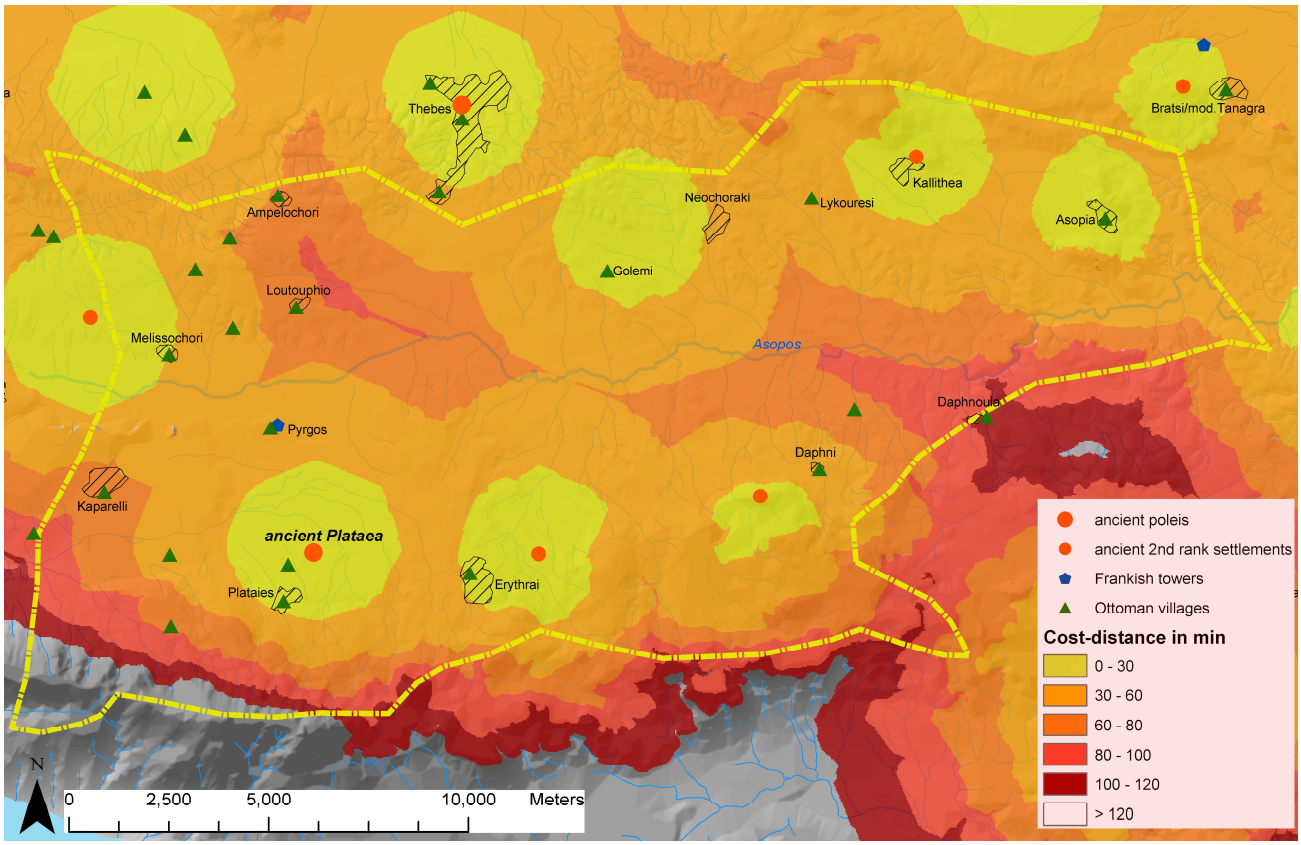

Fig.9. *Classified surface representing the cost-weighted distance (1/2 h walking and further ranges) from recognised 1st and 2nd rank ancient settlements (represented by larger and smaller dots). Areas without dots indicate potential settlement chambers. Ottoman villages and Frankish towers have also been added to the map to show their spatial relationship with the Greco-Roman settlement network and to appreciate potential settlement chambers.*

in the past also[7]. This can be supported by the existence of village settlements recorded in the Ottoman defters, within the settlement chambers occupied by the modern villages (Lykouresi by Kallithea and Golemi, not far from Neochoraki). The weakness of a natural logic of space due to the lack of physical constraints in the area determining settlement chambers has as a result a much freer shifting in location of the settlement focus within zones delimited only by the existence of and proximity to neighbouring settlements. There is no need, therefore, to suppose the sites of ancient village settlements in the same locations as the modern ones, as later periods' settlement histories seem to suggest. In the cases of Kallithea and Neochoraki, the Greco-Roman occupation (attested mainly by burial evidence[8]) could have been elsewhere within the wider area.

Today along the N limit of the *chora*, to the E, is also the village of Klembotsari/Asopia, also 5km ca from Kallithea. There would have been space here for another settlement in the past as well, whose existence seems to be attested by burials among other slight evidence. In the NW part of the *chora* are situated today the small hamlets of Loutouphio and Ampelochori. Here once again the existence of modern and Ottoman settlement foci might help to identify at least one potential settlement niche in the past, although in this case the archaeological evidence is completely lacking. The gap can easily be evaluated on a map showing a cost-distance allocation analysis from the recognisable or supposed (on the basis of evidence) Greco-Roman settlement sites. On the other hand, one should also consider and evaluate the proximity of Thebes and its satellite villages, expanding onto and exploiting the Tertiary *tafel*. As pointed out earlier, the definition of the settlement structure of the landscape in this area, without physical constraints and very close to Thebes, powerful in the Greco-Roman period, can not be easily performed.

On the S side of the *chora*, along the foothills of Kithairon, as seen above (*village level*), there would have been at least two other settlements to the E of Plataea (ancient Hysiai and ancient Erythrai, according to historical sources, which could be represented by the archaeological evidence at Erythres and Daphni[9]). An examination of the landscape and land availability would fit with the indication of the historical sources, as there is enough land and resources for two villages in addition to

[7] See also Bintliff 1994b (fig.20), who locates a village settlement in antiquity in the area of Kallithea and evaluates a potential gap in the Neochoraki area, as well as in the Asopia and Loutouphio areas (see below in the text).
[8] See appendix I.11 for details.
[9] See appendix I.11 for details; table 2 and the map in fig.2 for location.

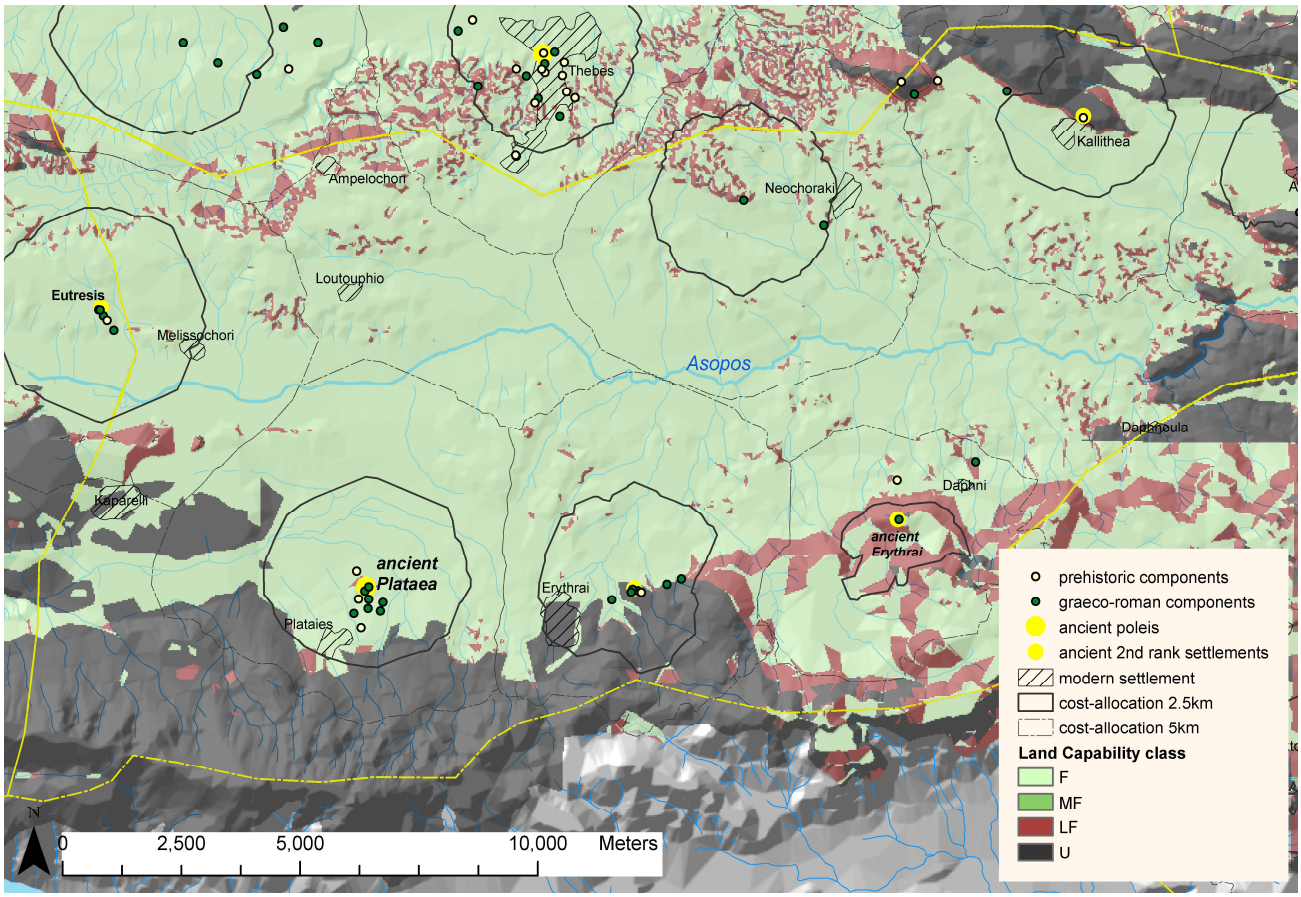

Fig.10. *Map showing the Greco-Roman settlement network, the polygons resulting from the cost-distance analysis (marking half an hour and one hour walking time distance) and dots representing the known archaeological components (same as in fig.2), with land capability information underlain* (the very E part of the *chora* is missing as there is no available geological map at the 1:50,000 scale – the Chalkis sheet is missing from the available IGME maps).

the *polis* of Plataea, as the traditional and Ottoman settlement pattern (examined earlier) would also testify.

Yet, as we have already noted, as there are no physical constraints to the forming of settlement chambers, they could be determined arbitrarily by proximity relations. For example, as Philippson (1951: 502) notes, in the interior part of the Tertiary *tafel* of Thebes, in the immediate hinterland of the city, are only four small villages: Ampelochori, Loutouphio, Melissochori, Neochoraki[10]. The presence of Thebes influences the surroundings, whose landscape is marked by a few small villages[11]. On the other hand, in the Ottoman period, it seems that a more dispersed settlement pattern existed, with many small villages especially in the W part of the *chora*. The existing archaeological evidence would indicate for antiquity a more nucleated pattern consisting of Plataea and a number of villages at regular distances, more or less comparable to the modern settlement pattern. Yet, future work at the rural level might change this picture. The Thespiae survey, for example, recorded regional differences in the urban/rural population in different parts of the *chora*, e.g. presence of hamlets and small villages in the inner zone by the city and very low densities in the outer zone of the *chora*. As for the Parasopia area, the gaps at its W and E edges, occupied by the modern village of Kaparelli to the SW, Ampelochori to the NW, and Daphni to the SE, might reflect real low densities in the outer zone of the *chora*.

[10] The villages record inhabitants in 1889 – 625 (all together), and in 1928 - 1544 (383 each village), while, e.g., Kaparelli to the S had in 1889 – 883 and in 1928 – 1752 (Philippson 1951: 502).

[11] In general, as Philippson (1951: 502) notes, the settlement in the landscape gives a primitive and backward impression.