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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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II.3.12

The Theban plain and the area of the lakes: Thebais

TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The area of Thebes is mainly comprised of the Aeonian (properly the ‘Theban’) plain, though the Teneric plain (at least partially if not all¹) and the area of lakes Yliki and Paralimni to the N also form a part of it, though the latter constitutes a topographical unit on its own.

The W part of the plain of Thebes, once named the Teneric plain (*Tenerikon pedion*), extends up to 10km up to the hills of Onchestos (see chapter II.3.8) and is 4km wide. It has no river flowing through, and a *katavothra* at the N end. The Eastern part is 100m asl while the W is 91m asl. Only a low col separates the E side of the Copais basin from the NW edge of the Theban (Teneric) plain, which, in this NW corner, is lower than the Copais basin (91m asl – appendix II-iB; Philippson 1951: 468) and in winter often becomes marshy, as surface water collects in the large Variko marsh. Further E towards Thebes are also lower flat marshy areas: just W of the outlet of the Kanavaris river into the plain of Thebes (see below), immediately below and N of the Tertiary *tafel* of Thebes (see appendix II -iB- and chapter II.3.9; Philippson 1951: 502ff). The S border of the Teneric plain is constituted by the rises of the Tertiary *tafel*, whose N slopes are marked by the presence of a fertile talus formation made of colluvial deposits.

The E part of the plain of Thebes, named the Aeonian plain and much larger (the ‘Theban’ plain proper), extends 11km E-W and 6km N-S (from Yliki lake to Thebes). From Thebes to Yliki the elevation range varies from 130m to 100m asl. It is very fertile, with no marshes², since the water of the Kanavaris and Lefkos

streams, which respectively cross the W part of the plain in a N direction and the E part in a W direction, flow into the Yliki lake through one of the two gaps between the hills bordering the lake (Philippson 1951: 408). The S border of the Aeonian plain is constituted by the rises of the Tertiary *tafel*, whose N slopes are marked by the presence of fertile marls.

The landscape of the NE edge of the Theban plain is marked by the presence of Mt.Sagmatas (746m asl), which extends into the plain of Thebes from the Messapion/Ktipas chain (see chapter II.1) and stops abruptly, creating a passage from the area of Thebes towards Eastern Boeotia (see chapter II.3.14). The mountain, named Ypaton in ancient times, indeed marks the landscape picture, so that its ancient name, meaning ‘the highest (mountain)’, makes sense (Philippson 1951: 497). Below the W slope is the modern village of Sirtzi/Ypaton, recently renamed after the mountain, with a large spring at its edge.

From Ypaton to the plain of Mouriki (by lake Yliki, see below) is an area where serpentine runs between gentle slopes, fertile red soils and *elluvia* formations, which the eye can easily distinguish from the surrounding grey limestone. Towards the W, the serpentine forms the pass (211m) between the plain of Mouriki and Thebes, as far as the E bank of Yliki lake where limestone again appears (Philippson 1951: 497).

The Yliki (otherwise called Likeri) lake has an articulated perimeter and follows an E direction. The promontories around the lake form a group of limestone hills, such as Stroulongo and Kokkinovrachos, which rise as islets in the Theban plain, and the majority of which are visible from Thebes (Philippson 1951: 494). On the S side of the lake, between the rocky hills, are two gaps through which the plain of Thebes reaches the lake. The lake is separated to the NW from the Karditsa/Akraiphnion bay (see chapter II.3.7) and the Copais basin by a low pass³, reaching the Sengaina bay (Philippson 1951: 495). Theban access to the Yliki lake is either slow, from the E side of the lake through the hills and the hamlet of Yliki, or more direct from the S shore.

The elongated Paralimni lake, extending in a SW-NE direction, lies to the NE of Yliki. The continuation from one lake to the other is not straight, and between them is a distance of approximately 2km. There are two passes from Yliki lake to the SW side of Paralimni lake: the W

¹ See below and chapter II.3.8. The Eastern part belonged to Thebes with more certainty.

² The Aeonian plain is very fertile but with no marshes, according to Philippson (1951: 408). On the other hand, Fossey (1988: 199) notes “a tendency of the Aeonian plain to marshiness has been controlled in modern times by the cutting of a few drainage channels”, and Ulrichs (1840) reports some ancient dams in the E part of the plain of Thebes. In the 1:50,000 GYS map, channels are clearly visible, especially the channeled Kanavaris river crossing S-N the W part of the Aeonian plain. These channels could, however, also be linked to the great withdrawal of water for irrigation, greatly increasing in the last few decades, when irrigated cultures have progressively taken the place of wheat and cereals, still marking the agricultural landscape in Philippson’s time (Philippson 1951: 508). Philippson (1951: 508) notes that springs, which today allow for vegetable garden cultivation, can be found in the vicinity of Thebes. Otherwise, he says, the plain is mostly cultivated with cereals.

³ Along the W coast opens up a road that leads to Karditsa/Akraiphnion (Philippson 1951: 495).

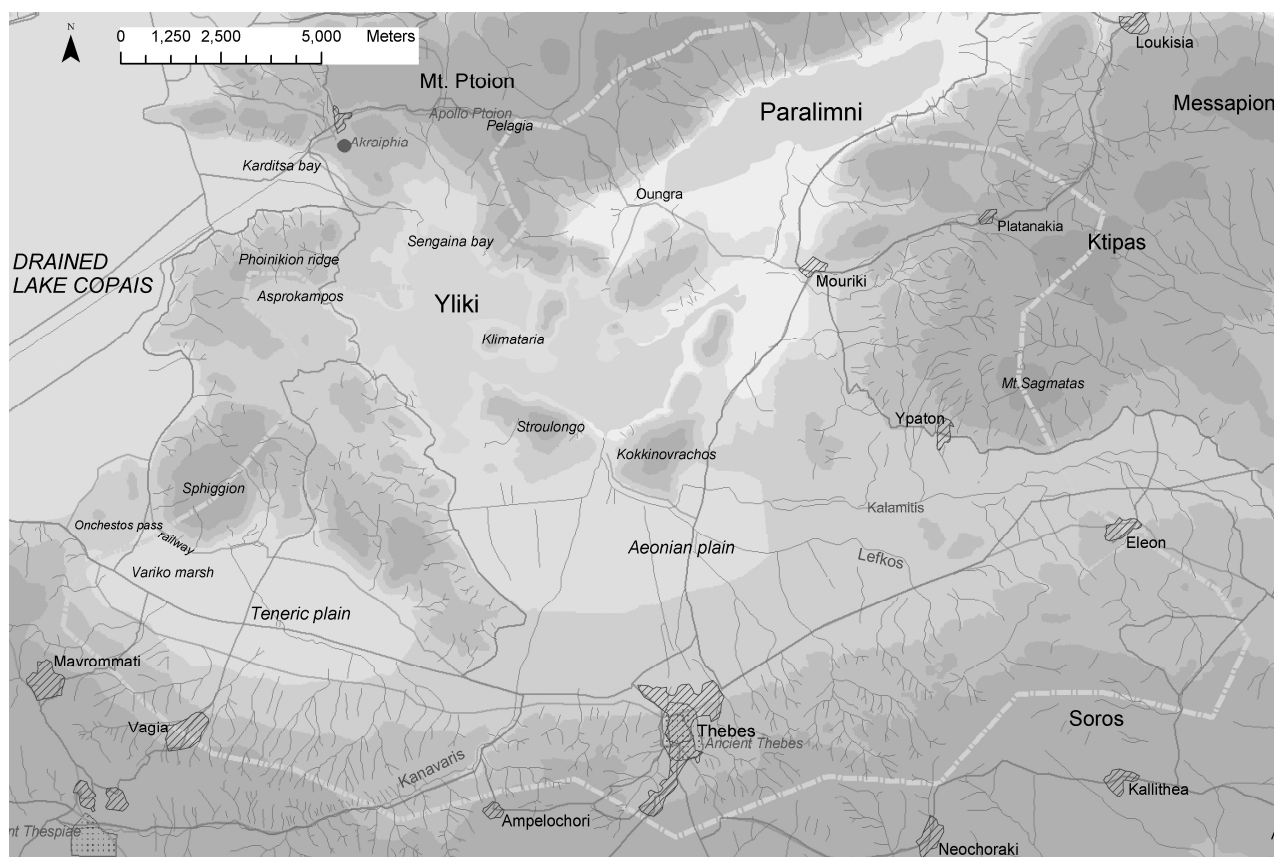


Fig.1. Topographical setting of the chora of Thebes

pass leads to the small plain of the hamlet of Yliki (formerly Oungra), at the W end of Paralimni; the E pass crosses the area before the modern village of Mouriki. As Philipsson (1951: 495) notes, conglomerate and serpentine were revealed by the cut of the channel between the two lakes⁴.

Boundaries

The borders of the area of Thebes are marked to the W by Mt. Phagas (Sphinx-Sphiggion), to the NW by the hills separating Yliki lake from the Copais basin, to the N by Mt. Ptoion rising above Paralimni lake, to the E the S ridge of Mt. Messapion/Ktipas with Mt. Sagmatas, and to the SE the Soros mountain range (Fossey 1988: 248).

Open boundaries remain the Paralimni lake itself (treated here as part of the Anthedon *chora* for its NE half) as well as the passage to the S of Mt. Sagmatas towards E Boeotia, and, primarily, the border to the S with the Parasopia area, which remains somewhat unclear. Conventionally, I have located the border line as crossing the elevated area of the Tertiary *tafel* running to the S of Thebes (see above). The Teneric plain also still remains an open question⁵, especially its W part, which could

have belonged to Haliartos⁶. As stated recently (Aravantinos – Godart - Sacconi 2001: 355-358), during the Bronze Age (and in particular in the LH period), the whole of SE Boeotia, from Mt. Helicon to the W and extending across the Euboean Strait to Karystos and possibly beyond, belonged to the territories ruled by the palace at Thebes.

PHYSICAL LAND UNITS

The mountainous segment is almost absent, elevations higher than 600m asl being present only in the highest border areas on the Messapion and Ptoion chains.

Within plain and hilly segments, apart from the largest represented class, P1_P2 (Teneric and Aeonian plain, the bays around the lakes, the inner plain of Mouriki), the rest of the land zones are quite balanced. The plain morphology of the wider plain area is in contrast with the variegated character of the hilly landscape constituting the elevated area surrounding the plain.

Plateau features within the hilly landscape are quite well represented, and small plateaus constitute the main feature of the landscape of the elevated area of the Tertiary *tafel* running below Thebes to the E and the W (see table 1 and fig.2 in chapter II.1).

⁴ For a detailed description of the lake area see also chapter II.1, as well as chapter III.1 for an examination of the lake water's behaviour.

⁵ Fossey (1988: 249) considers it as geographically not strictly belonging to the Thebais.

⁶ Attempts have been also made to assign it to the Thespike *chora* (Fossey 1988: 249).

<i>Hilly landscape</i>	33.3%
<i>Mountainous landscape</i>	1.4%
<i>Plain</i>	65.3%

1	P1_P2	lacustrine basin, valley	44.4%
2	P3	gentle slope	6.6%
3	P4	foothill	14.2%
4	H1	plateau	12.3 %
5	H2	gentle slope	1.5%
6	H3	moderate slope	5%
7	H4	severe slope	7.1%
8	H5	very severe slope	7.5%
9	M1	plateau	0.5%
10	M2	plateau/gentle slope	0.3%
11	M3	moderate slope	0.5%
12	M4	very severe slope	0.2%

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

RESOURCES

Generally speaking, the wider area of the *chora* of Thebes is mainly comprised of class F (fertile) areas, being constituted by the Teneric and Aeonian plains, the bays around the lakes, the inner plain of Mouriki, as well as most of the elevated area of the Tertiary *tafel* running behind Thebes⁷. Thebes took away (426 BC) most of the upland plateau to its S towards Plataea, so its wealth derived from its lowland N plain of pre-Holocene colluvia/alluvia and its southern uplands of Neogen formation, in addition to the abundant local water. Elevated limestone areas represent the class U (unfertile), not suitable for agriculture but often used for grazing. Some areas can be considered as class LF (low fertile) in the N half of the *chora*, and are mainly constituted by some limestone and sandstone formations which are not available for agriculture in the more elevated and steep areas (for instance on the Sagmatas/Ktipas ridge to the NE)⁸ – see fig.6.

Apart from grazing activities in some rocky or elevated areas, the area of the lakes would also have provided a valuable resource for fishing.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

1	THEBES	<i>Components T_1 to T_14</i>
2 – 7	LH burials	<i>Components T_15 (2), T_16 (3), T_17 (4), T_35 (5), T_45 (6), T_46 (7)</i>
5	Ismenion	<i>Components T_30 to T_34 and T_36 and T_37</i>
8 – 14	Historical period burials	<i>Components T_18 (8), T_142 (9), T_143 (10), T_28 and T_29 (11), T_36</i>

		(LR tombs at Ismenion - 5), T_24 to T_27 and T_47 (12), T_141 (13), T_20 to T_23 at Pyri (14)
15	Pyri	<i>Component T_19</i>
16	Kapanitsa	<i>Component T_139</i>
17	Thebes Railway	<i>Components T_153 to T_154</i>
18	Tachi	<i>Components T_38 to T_43; T_148 and T_149</i>
19	Thebes W	<i>Component T_44</i>
20	Kabeirion	<i>Components T_49 to T_54</i>
21	Kabeirion - Agios Nikolaos	<i>Component T_48</i>
22	Vagia-Provatari	<i>Components T_144 to T_147</i>
23 – 25	Vagia-Mavrokampos, Vagia-Kritsola and Vagia-Darani	<i>Components T_55 (23), T_56 (24), T_57 (25)</i>
26	Toumpi	<i>Component T_58</i>
27/28	Lithares	<i>Components T_60 to T_68 (27), and T_69 (28)</i>
29/30	Lithares Stroulongo	<i>Components T_70 to T_72 (29) and T_151 (30)</i>
31	Vouliagma	<i>Component T_59</i>
32/33	Mouriki	<i>Components T_75 to T_76 (32) and T_78 (33)</i>
34	Yliki E peninsula	<i>Components T_73 to T_74</i>
35/36	Klimataria	<i>Components T_109, T_110 and T_140 (35); Components T_111 (36)</i>
37	Klimataria N	<i>Components T_112</i>
38	Klimataria W	<i>Components T_113 and T_114</i>
39/40	Yliki Sengaina	<i>Components T_104 and 105 (39), T_106 (40)</i>
41/42	Yliki Boubali	<i>Components T_107 (41) and T_108 (42)</i>
43	Oungra Chelonokastro	<i>Components T_85 and T_86</i>
44/45	Paralimni Oungra (lake shore site)	<i>Components T_87 to T_91 (44); T_92 to T_95 (45)</i>
46	Paralimni Oungra N	<i>Components T_96 to T_98</i>
47	Paralimni Oungra area	<i>Component T_99</i>
48	Paralimni S hills	<i>Components T_100 to T_102</i>
49/50	Paralimni Yliki	<i>Components T_116 (49) and T_117 (50)</i>
51	Mouriki Kamelovrisi	<i>Components T_103 and T_152</i>
52	Platanaki	<i>Components T_80 to T_84 and T_79</i>
53	Sambali	<i>Component T_115</i>
54/55/56	Ypaton	<i>Components T_118 (54), T_129 (55) and T_119 to T_129 (56)</i>
57	Moni Sagmata	<i>Component T_130</i>
58	Mesovouni	<i>Components T_131 to T_135</i>
59	Stroma	<i>Components T_155 and T_136 to T_138</i>

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

⁷ Fertile talus and fertile marls are to be found on the S edge of the Teneric and Aeonian plains respectively.

⁸ For the classes see chapter I.2.1.

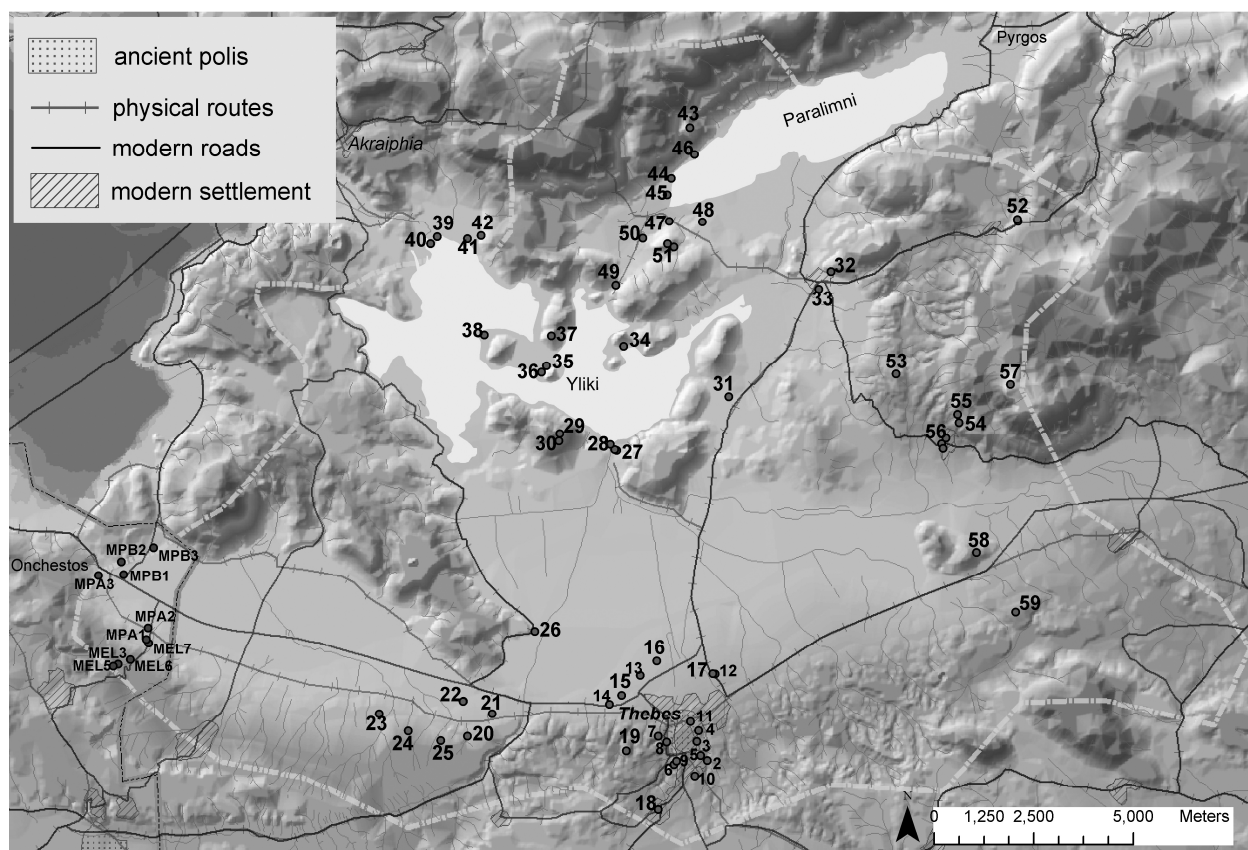


Fig.2. Archaeological map of Thebais chora. In the SW corner of the map the area intensively and systematically surveyed is marked (The extension of the lower town of Thebes is hard to determine with certainty and may vary considerably throughout the periods. What is suggested in the map is just a possibility to give an idea to the reader of the city's considerable extension. Within it, the Kadmeia is marked).

Rescue excavation constitutes one of the major providers of archaeological discoveries in the area (graph in fig.3) see , and this is due to various factors: the extended rescue excavation work in the modern town of Thebes, as both the prehistoric and the Greco-Roman settlement lie below it; rescue excavation in the vicinity of the major town sites, or in the surrounding areas, for roads or building activities, occurring due to the vicinity of Thebes. The set up of the natural gas pipeline (*Agogos Physikou Aeriou*) in the last decade, running from NW Boeotia and crossing the area of Thebes, constituted an important opportunity for the discovery of significant archaeological remains (such as, for instance, the Vagia-Provatari cemetery – components T_144 to T_147).

Within the wide *chora*, the situation in the area of the lakes is quite different, and gives us a different picture with regards to archaeological discoveries, mainly due to personal research interest and accidental discoveries, during the lowering of the water level of the lakes in the late 1980s and occasionally earlier (1965-66 for instance), which uncovered some previously unknown sites and clarified the extension of some settlement sites bordering the lakes (Yliki E peninsula, Klimataria, Yliki Sengaina, Yliki Boubali, Paralimni Oungra N). Generally speaking, settlement sites are quite well known in the area of Thebes, compared to other *chorai*.

We can note that 'personal or group interest' discoveries constitute the majority of the entries, mainly represented by the discoveries around the lakes or by research at

specific well known sites (such as Lithares or Pyri by Thebes).

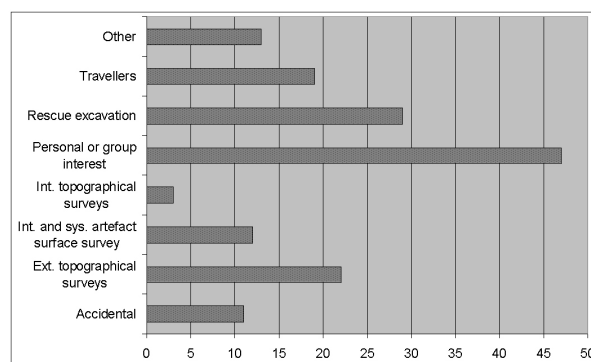


Fig.3. Graph illustrating the proportion of components discovered within different research frameworks.

A Systematic Intensive Surface Survey carried out in a small area in the *chora* of Thebes (area surveyed mapped in fig.2) in the 1980s by J.L. Bintliff A.M.Snodgrass and their team discovered sites listed in appendix I.12 (table SURVEY SITES) and mapped in fig.2.

The inclusion in the graph of the results of the intensive and systematic surface survey changes the picture only slightly, as only a small part of the *chora* has been investigated by intensive survey work.

In fig.4 we can see the relationship between known archaeological sites and the distance from the modern road network. Especially for the area of the lake, there is no connection between the two variables, the archaeological knowledge of that area being mainly due to specific archaeological questions and interest. This, in addition to rescue excavation activities in the area, which, as seen earlier, theoretically provide less biased discoveries, would tend to make the archaeological record less biased, at least in part.

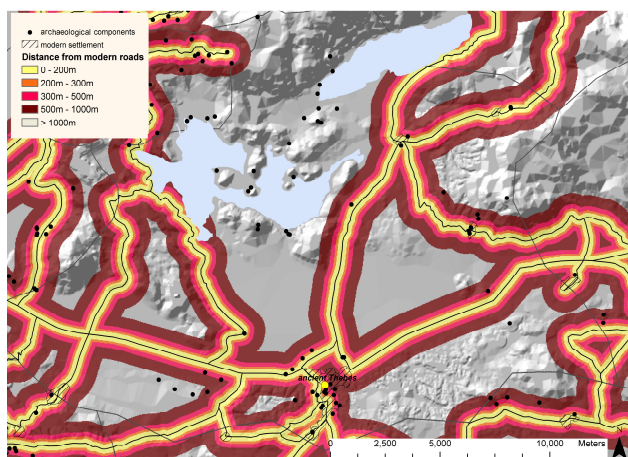


Fig.4. Relationship between components and modern road network

The ratio of known Prehistoric to Greco-Roman components is 48 to 101 (1:2.1), while among the historical periods, 53% are dated Archaic to Hellenistic, 21% Roman-Late Roman, and 13% are attributed to the general Greco-Roman period. As noted above, particularly for the case of Thebes, Bronze Age periods are certainly the most examined and investigated, due to the personal research interests of scholars and the availability of a rich archaeological record (Thebes and Lithares especially, but also the area of the lakes, rich in Prehistoric remains). As for the relative proportions of the historical periods, the picture of this area corresponds to that offered by the majority of *chorai* in the wider Boeotia region (see Thespieae *chora*, for instance).

ANALYSIS OF THE CHORA LANDSCAPE

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

As noted earlier, the prehistoric period (especially the Bronze Age) is quite well known for the *chora* of Thebes, due to the personal specific research interests of scholars as well as the availability of a rich prehistoric record.

Besides the important Neolithic settlement site at Toumpi, at the W end of the Aeonian plain (*component T_58*), few Neolithic sites are known in the area: on the Kadmeia (Thebes – *component T_1*); in the area of the modern centre of Thebes (*components T_19* and *T_153*, respectively to the NW –Pyri- and N -by the railway- of the Kadmeia); activity foci have also been reported by the

Kabeirion sanctuary (*component T_49*), at Ypaton Tourleza (*component T_119*) and on Stroma hill (*component T_155*) – see fig.5 in chapter II.3.11.

For the EH period, the settlement by the railway line N of Thebes (*component T_154*) belongs to the series of settlements that exploited the natural resources of the wider area around Thebes before the foundation of the EH settlement on the Kadmeia (Thebes – *components T_2* and *T_13*), since the Neolithic period (see above). The wider region was also occupied in the EH period, as apparently attested by the probable EH activity focus at Platanaki (*component T_80*) and the activity focus at Mesovouni (*component T_131*), as well as the settlement recognized at Ypaton Tourleza (with associated burials – *components T_120* and *T_121*), together with the EH occupation in the area of the lakes (see below) – see fig.6 in chapter II.3.11.

Apart from the large extended MH settlement on the Kadmeia (Thebes - *components T_3* and *T_14*), the picture from the MH period for the region is quite poor, being limited to the activity focus at Ypaton Tourleza (*component T_122*), and can be enriched adding the MH sites and activity foci known in the area of the lakes, to which can be added the probable activity focus at Platanaki (*component T_81*) – see fig.7 in chapter II.3.11.

The LH landscape of the region is mainly known through burials, in particular the chamber tombs (*components T_15* to *T_17*, *T_35*, *T_45*, *T_46*, *T_149*) situated on the hills surrounding the main citadel on the Kadmeia (*component T_4*), with the addition of the tombs at Vouliagma, as usual facing the settlement site (at Lithares – *components T_63*, *T_68* and *T_59*). Other LH activity foci are known in the region, such as *component T_123* at Ypaton Tourleza and *component T_136* on Stroma hill – see fig.8 in chapter II.3.11.

The prehistoric landscape of the *chora* is enriched by the archaeological record available for the area of the lakes, which offers a good example of settlement strategy in a peculiar landscape (see chapter II.1).

In the area of Yliki lake, Neolithic is known at Lithares (*component T_60*)⁹ and just as a flint concentration on the E peninsula (*component T_73*), while in the area of Paralimni lake Neolithic is reported in the NE bay (Paralimni Pyrgos – *component AN_26*)¹⁰ and only probably in the SW bay (Paralimni Oungra – *component T_87*) – see fig.5 in chapter II.3.11.

The well known settlement site of Lithares marks the landscape of Yliki lake in the EH period (*component T_61* with associated burials *component T_66*), along with the activity foci attested on the nearby Stroulongo hill (*component T_70*), on the Klimataria peninsula (*component T_113*) and in the NW Sengaina bay (*component T_104*). On the shore of Paralimni, EH is

⁹ The prehistoric village of Lithares marks the edge of the plateau where the Theban Plain descends into Yliki lake.

¹⁰ The Paralimni - Pyrgos site at the E end of the lake is included in the Anthedon *chora* in the present work, while the Paralimni - Oungra bay at the SW end of Lake is included here in the Thebais *chora*.

reported in the SW Oungra bay (*component T_88*) as well as in the Paralimni NE bay (Paralimni Pyrgos – *component AN_27*- along with a burial place –*component AN_38*) – see fig.6 in chapter II.3.11.

By the Yliki lake, MH is known at Lithares (*component T_62* with burials *T_67*) and at the very end of the Klimataria peninsula (*component T_114*), probably with a settlement status, while on the shore of Paralimni MH is reported in the SW Oungra bay together with a burial place to the N (*components T_89 and T_96*, see also *component T_152*), as well as in the Paralimni NE bay (Paralimni Pyrgos – *component AN_28*) – see fig.7 in chapter II.3.11.

LH is attested at Lithares (*component T_63* with burials *T_68*), as well as on the Stroulongo hill (*component T_71*), while LH chamber tombs are known at Vouliagma (*component T_59*). As for the area of Paralimni lake, a LH fort is known at Oungra-Chelonokastro – *component T_85*- along with material on the Paralimni shore and burials –*components T_90 and T_97*, as well as *component T_103*, while a settlement site is reported in the NE bay (Paralimni Pyrgos – *component AN_29*- along with a burial place –*component AN_37*) – see fig.8 in chapter II.3.11.

GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY¹¹

Town level

Thebes was the major city of Boeotia for most of its history (see appendix I.12). It also lay in a central position geographically within the region of Boeotia. As Fossey remarks (1988: 199), and as is visible in the physical route map (fig.1 in chapter II.1), routes converge in the area, leading to Anthedon and the coast, to Athens and to Chalkis, joining Attica to Euboea, to the ports on the S coast and through the Kithaeron route to the Peloponnese, to the N of Greece round Copais and joining N and S Greece. The city had much land available and, as many Boeotian cities (such as Levadeia, Koroneia), lay between mixed land types.

Thebes lies at the edge of a line of hills running E-W and forming central Boeotia (Tertiary *tafel* of Thebes). The exact position chosen by the settlement along this line is mainly due to the presence of rich water springs. The site was always the main centre of the area, except during the Dark Ages when, after the fall of the Mycenaean palace, the reduced population was probably absorbed by rural communities in the surroundings¹². This is testified by the apparent absence of archaeological remains on the *Kadmeia* from the 11th to 9th C BC, with the exception of a burial area.

¹¹ Period maps are included in chapter II.4, figs.18-20-22-24-26-28.

¹² According to Papadaki (2000), the population would have moved to the lower surroundings, and probably to the S. This could explain the mention in the Catalogue of Ships (Iliad B505) of Ypothebai and not of Thebes itself (see among others Hope Simpson-Lazenby 1970: 31ff). Symeonoglou (1985: 60-63, 66, 89-91) suggests that Ypothebai must have been the N part of the *Kadmeia*, named Gourna.

Village level

The city of Thebes was highly nucleated, thus not leaving much space for other nucleated settlements, unlike the city of Athens, for instance, spread all over the region of Attica through dispersed *demoi* (see Bintliff 1997b). Nevertheless, the *polis* probably had some small satellite settlements very close to the city (Tachi for instance¹³). The 350ha suggested by Bintliff (1997b) as a probable extension of the city of Thebes in the Classical period would probably incorporate the suburbs.

In the wider Theban region, some 2nd rank small nucleated settlements are represented in the available archaeological record. At Vagia-Provatari, the distance of the Archaic/Classical cemetery (*components T_144 and T_145*) from the ancient town of Thebes, suggests that it probably belonged to another 2nd rank settlement in the vicinity (quite flourishing according to AD49 1994: 284-286), which in the Roman period would have been substituted by large rural sites (*components T_146 and T_147*). Ancient sources mention several towns which would have been in the *chora* of Thebes, such as *Peteon* (referred to by Strabo IX 410 - see E. Kirsten, RE 1937, s.v. *Peteon*: 1128), *Teumessos* (see Fossey, Topography 1988: 213-7 and Wallace 1979: 96-8), and *Glisas* (see Fossey 1988: 221-3). Attempts have been made to identify those towns with known archaeological evidence which could indicate nucleated settlements in the Greco-Roman period: a probable settlement site at Ypaton (*components T_125 and T_126*, only guessed from burials, *components T_124, T_127 and T_129*, and fortified hilltop *component T_118 - Glisas?*), a possible settlement at Platanaki (*component T_83 - Peteon?*), settlement evidence at Mesovouni (Classical and Late Roman - *components T_133 to T_135 - Teumessos?*) and Stroma (Classical/Hellenistic - *components T_137 and T_138 - Teumessos?*) - see appendix I.12. For settlement in the area of the lakes, see below.

Rural segment

The picture of the rural landscape of the Greco-Roman period available for the *chora* of Thebes comprises little evidence which could be interpreted as rural sites/activities. For the Classical period, a farmstead W of Thebes (*component T_44*) and three sites with uncertain function at Vagia-Mavrokampos (*components T_55 to T_57*¹⁴); for the Hellenistic period, the evidence at Lithares (*component T_64*) and Lithares Stroulongo (*component T_72*) could be from rural sites; for the Roman period, two *villae rusticae* found at Vagia-Provatari - *components T_146 and T_147*. The panorama is slightly enriched by the sites discovered by the Boeotia survey project (which covered a small area of the *chora* - see above), mainly represented by farms of Classical/Hellenistic date (see map in fig.2). We have evidence of rural settlement in the area of the lakes as

¹³ *Components T_38 to T_43 and T_148*. The area of Tachi today is incorporated into the urban area of Thebes itself.

¹⁴ Probably to be interpreted as activity focuses probably to be linked with the rural settlement system in the area lining S the Teneric plain.

well, mainly concentrated in small hamlets exploiting the bays (see below).

Burial areas

The picture of burials in the *chora* of Thebes shows city cemeteries (such as at Pyri or by the railway) or burial areas somehow linked to the Thebes city site, ranging from Geometric to Late Roman times, well represented in the available archaeological record¹⁵. There is evidence of a monumental Macedonian-type tomb of the Hellenistic period W of Thebes (*component T_139*). Mazonaki and Faraklas (AE 1967: 15-19) suggest that the Classical/Hellenistic burial areas of the city would be in the Eastern and central part of the Theban plain (Kapanitsa), while the Archaic cemeteries would be mainly in the W part.

The archaeological record also includes burial evidence that could correspond to settlement sites, such as at Tachi (*components T_38 to T_43 and T_148*) and Vagia-Provatari (*components T_144 and T_145*).

Cult places/Religious areas

There have been several attempts to locate the extra-urban sanctuaries of Thebes mentioned especially by Pausanias. Some of them are clearly recognizable, such as the extramural sanctuary of Apollo Ismenios (*components T_30 to T_33*) or the Kabeirion (strictly linked to the city of Thebes, from the Geometric to the Roman period - *components T_50 to T_54*). Some others are less easily identifiable, such as the sanctuary of Herakles Hippiodetes (*component T_55*) located at Morokampos, or the sanctuary of Demeter Cabiria, located to the N of the Kabeirion¹⁶, or the sanctuary of the healing hero Amphiaraos - Paus IX 8.3, located by modern Tachi by Symeonoglou 1985.

The landscape of the NE edge of the Theban plain is marked by the presence of Mt. Sagmatas/Ypaton (746m asl), which juts into the plain of Thebes from Messapion chain and stops abruptly, creating a passage from the area of Thebes towards Eastern Boeotia (see chapter II.3.14). The limestone mountain, named Ypaton in ancient times¹⁷, indeed dominates the landscape, so that its ancient name, meaning 'the highest (mountain)', would make sense (Philippson 1951: 497). On its top, the existence of a temple of Zeus *Ypatos*¹⁸ has been suggested¹⁹, on the site of the Sagmata monastery, where a Byzantine church is recorded. The epithet and the character of the divinity worshipped there could be linked to the character of the mountain, which would seem to be visible from many different areas of Boeotia and would be marked by distinctive cultural values, i.e. by both a high sacral and at the same time a socio-political

meaning, as suggested by Schachter in his monograph on the cults of Boeotia (Schachter 1994).

The Onchestos sanctuary, listed in the *chora* of Haliartos (*components HA_28 to HA_32*), to which it geographically belongs, can in fact be considered as belonging to the Theban landscape of cults for historical and political reasons. Being situated on the Onchestos pass, between the Teneric plain and the Copais area, the federal sanctuary dedicated to Poseidon constitutes a landmark within the regional landscape, giving sensitive value to the distinction between NW and SE Boeotia for geographical and historical reasons (see chapter III.2).

Forts and fortifications

Thebes controlled the 4th-C system of forts and fortifications all over Boeotia, constructed to control the wider Boeotia area under the control of Thebes by means of a system of inter-communications (see final chapter). In the *chora* of Thebes, Sambali (*component T_115*) is an example, while the Classical/Hellenistic fortification above Ypaton should probably be linked with the settlement below (*component T_118*). A probably earlier -Archaic?- fort is known in the area of the lakes, at Oungra-Chelonokastro, at the SW end of Paralimni lake (*component T_86*), as well as the fortified acropolis at Paralimni Pyrgos (*components AN_32 and AN_33*), showing the importance of this pass from Anthedon to Copais and Thebes, which consequently gives strategic meaning to the area of Paralimni and in general to the area of the lakes.

LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS IN THE CHORA LANDSCAPE

The Thebais area is shared today by a number of village communities which occupy the natural settlement chambers around the Teneric and Aeonian plains, and the bays and inner plains around the lakes.

The W part of the plain today forms the territory of the modern village of Vagia (registered also in the Ottoman period in 1506-1642), situated on the hills S of the plain. In the Ottoman period, however, this area was divided among several communities occupying small settlement chambers across the elevated area of the Tertiary *tafel* south of the plain (deserted village of Darani and possibly also Porovanka). In the area between Thebes and Vagia several places have perhaps disappeared and remain identified. On the northern side of the plain lies the deserted village of Mazaraki in a sheltered valley immediately east of Sphiggion Mountain (recorded 1466-1646). For antiquity, archaeological evidence seems to suggest the presence of a second-rank settlement on the hills S of the Teneric plain close to Vagia (Vagia-Provatari) occupied in the Archaic/Classical period, showing that these settlement chambers were also inhabited in antiquity. As is clear from the map resulting from a cost-distance analysis based on first and second rank Greco-Roman settlement (fig.5)²⁰, there is enough room for at least one settlement chamber between Thebes

¹⁵ See appendix I.12: *components T_18; T_24 to T_29 and T_47; T_20 to T_23* at Pyri; *T_36; T_141; T_142 and T_143*.

¹⁶ On the map drawn by Judeich AM 1988: 83

¹⁷ The mountain is known also by the name of Mt. Sagmatas, and the same name is taken by a monastery -Moni Sagmata- which lies atop it.

¹⁸ i.e. Zeus the highest, mentioned by Pausanias.

¹⁹ There is no real archaeological evidence for it, though it could be buried beneath the monastery - see *component T_130*.

²⁰ See chapter II.3.1 - LONG TERM SETTLEMENT TRENDS.

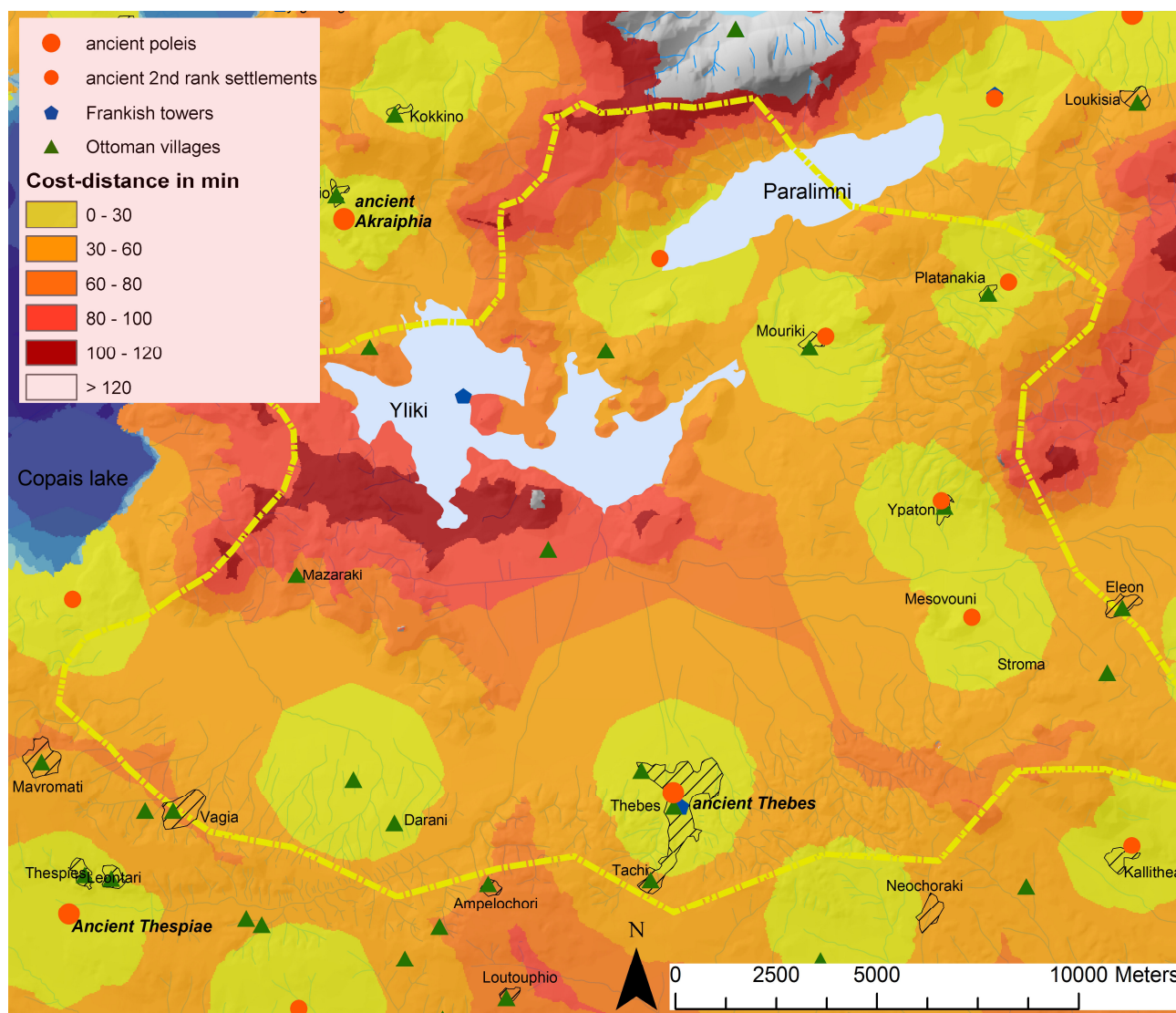


Fig.5. Classified surface representing the cost-weighted distance (1/2 h walking and further ranges) from recognised 1st and 2nd rank ancient settlements (represented by larger and smaller dots). Areas without dots indicate potential settlement chambers. Ottoman villages as well as Frankish towers and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

and the W edge of the Teneric plain, exploited by rural farms/small nucleations (*components T_55 to T_57; T_144 and T_145*) or cult places (Kabeirion) and villas in the Roman period (*components T_146 and T_147*) – see fig.6.

The large plain of Thebes is occupied by the city of Thebes, which has always been a large administrative centre, continuing from late antiquity through the Medieval and Ottoman periods. The status of Thebes as a large city is reflected in the absence of secondary villages in its territory, with the exception of two possible Ottoman villages at the northern and southern edges of its territory. For antiquity, however, we could postulate a different picture. In the area around the city of Thebes most of the landscape must have been farmed by citizens resident in the city. Yet despite this, the present archaeological evidence shows the existence of additional rural nucleations close to the city (e.g. Tachi). Evidence of settlements can be found at Tachi (today a suburb of the town of Thebes), as well as at Mesovouni and Stroma

to the W (see above VILLAGE LEVEL and appendix I.12)²¹. Additional settlement chambers exist in the upland plateau S of the city towards Plataea, which belonged to Thebes in some periods of antiquity (see chapter II.3.11). This conforms to the picture from the Boeotia survey at Thespieae, where a predominance of medium-sized farms and hamlets was recorded in the vicinity of the urban landscape of Thespieae and Askra, representing either hamlets composed of several farming families, or the centres of wealthy estates related to the issue of oligarchic class in the countryside (chapter II.3.9 and Bintliff-Howard-Snodgrass 2007: 134-35, 150). Yet in

²¹ A potential settlement chamber in the area of Mesovouni and Stroma (E side of the Aeonian plain) has been marked on the map in fig.5 and included in the cost-distance analysis performed on first and second rank settlement sites, although the archaeological evidence could also represent rural nucleations rather than proper village sites, if one considers the significant presence of the city of Thebes.

the *chora* of Thespieae, imbalances were observed in the outer *chora*, which produced slim evidence for rural settlement. In the case of Thebais a number of rural nucleations are recorded, associated with the settlement chambers of modern communities (see fig.6). Today the eastern part of the plain is occupied by the modern village of Ypaton (formerly Syrtsi, recorded in the Ottoman defters in 1466-1642 and in 1688), a second-rank settlement also in the Greco-Roman period (see above VILLAGE LEVEL and appendix I.12). W of it, settlement chambers are created around the bays and inner plains in the area of the lakes, forming village communities occupied in the modern and pre-modern period as well as in ancient times (see below).

Also taking into account the evidence for the ancient village by Vagia (see above), we could infer a rural landscape of hamlets or small villages, rather than one of small and medium Classical farms at a distance from the city. This is also strengthened by the results of the Boeotia survey which covered a small part of the W section of the Teneric plain, and found only limited evidence for rural settlement, in contrast to the dense rural landscape N of the city of Thespieae and in the valley of the Muses. Probably also thinly inhabited was the eastern edge of the Aeonian plain, indicating possible imbalances in the rural settlement on the extremities of the *chora*.

The precise location chosen for the settlement of Thebes along the line of hills running E-W across central Boeotia (see above) is mainly due to the presence of rich water springs, which would also condition the position of some of the other settlements in an area without strong physical constraints defining community areas (see also chapter II.3.11).

The settlement in the area of the lakes

The landscape of the Yliki and Paralimni areas, which constitutes a peculiar landscape within the larger *chora* of Thebes, is described in chapter II.1.

In the area of the lakes, some activity foci of historical periods are known, mainly to be related with agro-pastoral activities, such as at the edges of Yliki by Lithares *components T_64, T_65 and T_72* and some burials of earlier periods (*component T_69 and T_151* – Archaic and Geometric) which could lead one to assume the presence of a settlement (or large rural site) in the area. Several small settlements or rural sites exploited the different bays around the Yliki lake and at the edges of Paralimni, such as: the quite extended settlement at Mouriki (*components T_75 to T_77*) with associated burials (*component T_78*) from Archaic to Hellenistic; the Roman settlement known on the Klimataria peninsula (*component T_110* with associated burials *T_111*, with traces of an earlier occupation in Hellenistic times *component T_109*); the large settlement site at the SW end of Paralimni lake (from the Protogeometric/Geometric to the Archaic/Classical period - Paralimni Oungra *components T_92 to T_95*- jointly with a burial place to the N –*components T_98 and T_99 to T_101, T_116 and T_117*); the settlement known at Paralimni Pyrgos, at the NE end of Paralimni

lake (from the Geometric to the Hellenistic period - *components AN_30 to AN_33*²²); the rural site on the easternmost peninsula jutting from the N into the Yliki lake (*component T_74* - H); the small settlement (hamlet) in the NW bay, at Sengaina (*components T_105 and T_106* - Classical to Hellenistic) and the similar one on the N shore, at Boubali locality, dated to the Classical period (*component T_107*). Roman period settlement is known only at Klimataria (*component T_110* –Roman settlement- and *T_140* –Late Roman activity focus-), and in the form of burial evidence at Boubali (*component T_108*), and only as possible at Paralimni Pyrgos (*components AN_34* –Roman- and *AN_35* –Late Roman)²³.

As seen earlier, on the basis of the archaeological record the settlement picture in the area of the lakes is quite clear for the Greco-Roman period regarding the settlement chambers which were in use. The edges of the lake were densely inhabited in almost every bay and peninsula. The existing evidence for antiquity would point possibly to the existence of an even denser ancient rural pattern than that represented by the modern and Ottoman and Medieval villages. An examination of the known settlement in the Ottoman period until the 19th century shows by the lake the secondary village of Yliki, formerly Oungra, recorded 1466-1688 (the village of Oungra/Yliki is more towards Yliki rather than Paralimni, in comparison with the Greco-Roman settlement, by the SW edge of Paralimni – see map in figs.5-6²⁴), the deserted village of Sengaina on the NW edge of the lake²⁵, and the modern village of Mouriki around an inner plain, recorded 1466-1646; E of Yliki Lake the secondary village of Platanakia is recorded in 1521-1688. All these locations were occupied in antiquity by settlement sites²⁶.

²² The Paralimni - Pyrgos site at the E end of the lake is included in the Anhedon *chora* in the present work, while the Paralimni - Oungra bay at the SW end of Lake is included here in the Thebais *chora*.

²³ For problems of settlement in the Yliki Paralimni area see also Fossey 1988: 225ff and Philippson-Kirsten 1951: 495.

²⁴ A fairly wide settlement chamber can therefore be located in this bridge-area between Yliki and Paralimni lake, where the settlement *focus* shifts through time. For antiquity, Fossey (1988: 239) suggests that the settlement was at Oungra/Yliki by the end of the 4th C BC, then moved to Klimataria. Fossey (1988: 243) also notes that the Hellenistic site found on the Yliki E peninsula (*component T_74*) may be part of the settlement organization in the area of the lakes which took place after the abandonment of the Oungra site. As noted above in the text, the Ottoman settlement is much closer to Yliki lake (see map), while in modern times (until the first half of the 20th century) at Paralimni Oungra was a family hamlet.

²⁵ A small hamlet existed in the Sengaina bay before it was swallowed up by the rise in water level of the Yliki lake resulting from the drainage of Copais (Philippson 1951: 495), while the small hamlet of Paralimni Oungra disappeared by the mid 20th century. In Philippson's days (Philippson 1951: 495) the area of the lake was already deserted, as it appears today.

²⁶ Poor archaeological evidence may attest the existence of a possible settlement site at Platanakia (see appendix I.12). The cost-distance allocation analysis performed on the basis of first and second rank Greco-Roman settlement (map in fig.5) would seem to allow for a small settlement gap in that area, already

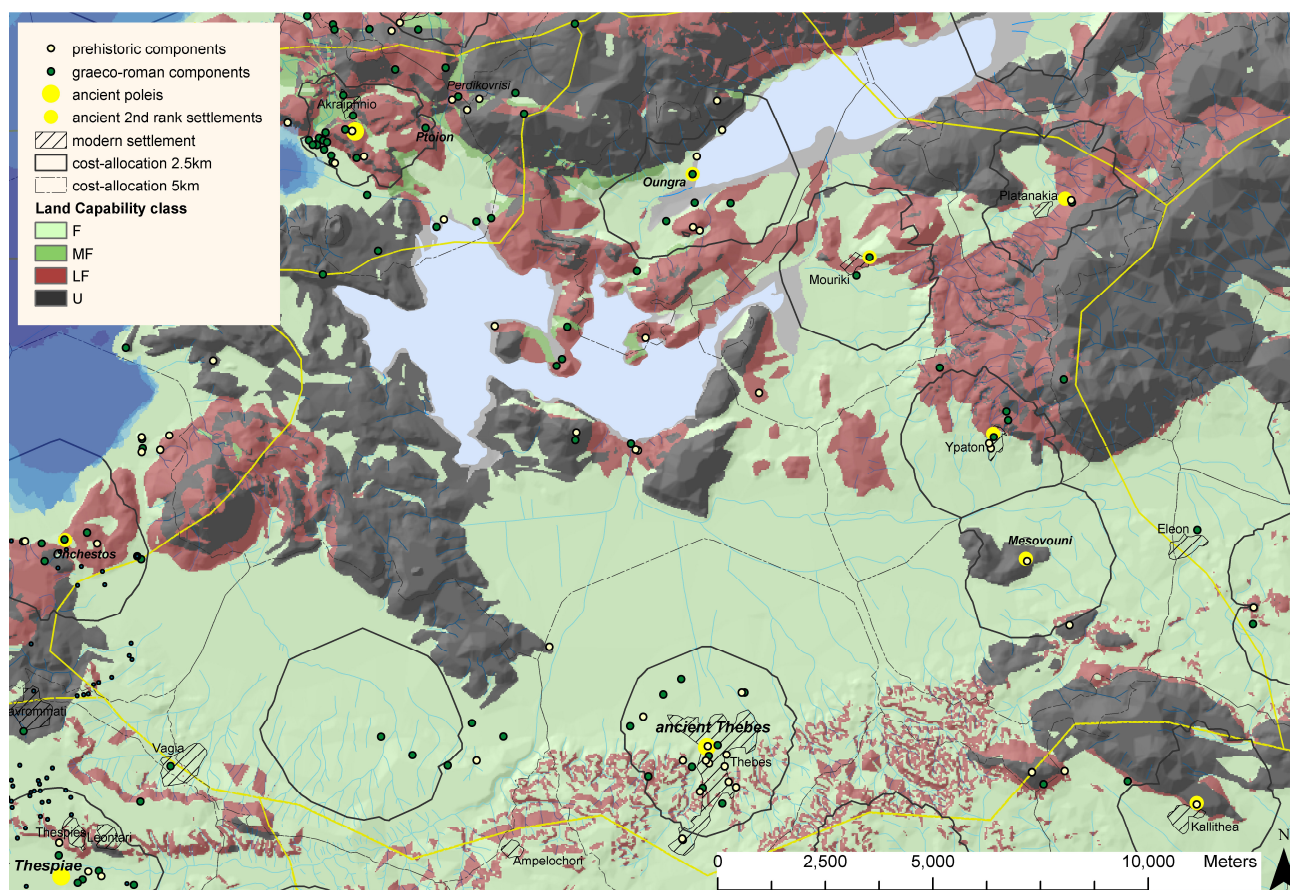


Fig.6. Map showing the Greco-Roman settlement network, the polygons resulting from the cost-distance analysis (marking half an hour and one hour walking time distance) and dots representing the known archaeological components (same as in fig.2), with land capability information underlain.

The known medieval (Frankish) settlement in the area is slightly different, related to the watchtowers located in strategic positions at the top of the Klimataria peninsula²⁷ and at Paralimni Pyrgos at the NE edge of the lake, on the route towards the Euboic sea. For both locations there is no evidence of settlement in the Ottoman and modern settlement pattern, while there is for Greco-Roman periods. The Greco-Roman occupation therefore shows a significant presence in habitation and economic activities around the lakes due to the distance from the main centre of Thebes but also to the peculiar character of the landscape, which allows for integrated and mixed economies but does not really allow for a larger settlement which can have either town or *proto-polis* status. The micro-landscapes at the edge of the lakes are potentially complete settlement chambers, i.e. they have within them all the necessary elements for settlement life: the water of the lake, upland/higher area, and the cultivable plain. Some of the settlement chambers available around the lakes disappeared as such after

drainage of the Copais at the end of the 19th century²⁸. We should, however, include them as dry fertile land in our reconstruction of past landscapes' behaviour. Each patch of available land was exploited,²⁹ and water and marsh based economies were performed (see chapter III.1). I would suggest that in the area of the lakes, constituting a very peculiar micro-environment, in antiquity the landscape was marked by mainly rural nucleations, such as hamlets or small villages, rather than real nucleated second rank settlements, and they would create a small-scale settlement system on their own.

²⁸ The Yliki and Paralimni lakes are now considerably larger than they used to be, due to the drainage (of the 19th century) of the Copais lake. As noticed earlier, the majority of the known remains of settlement and activities (which were along the shores) lie underwater and were visible in dry periods of low water level (Fossey mentions the dry season of 1965-66 but there was also one in the late 1980s).

²⁹ Along with the larger cultivable areas, such as the bridge-zone between the lakes and the wider areas to the E (Mouriki and Platanaki), the Greco-Roman hamlets at Sengaina and Boubali, exploiting small bays at the edge of Yliki lake, were also linked to agricultural activities (AD 36 1981: 194), exploiting the fertile valley which was swallowed by water after the drainage of Copais and the subsequent increase of the water level of Yliki lake.

isolated by Bintliff 1994b fig.20, and corresponding to a small inner plain exploited by the modern and the Ottoman village located there (see in text).

²⁷ The Frankish bridge at Klimataria (on the E side of the lake) seems to run in a S direction to the S edge of the lake to allow direct travel across the Theban Plain southwards.