



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Farinetti, E.

Citation

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

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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

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

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

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the challenges of this work was to make the best use of the data sets available, setting up an environment within which heterogeneous, poor, incoherent and spatio-temporally incomplete data could be integrated in a meaningful way for the study of ancient landscape dynamics.

Different methods of enhancement have been used:

- Careful analysis and critical deconstruction and reconstruction of the archaeological record, as a way of monitoring metadata and constructing meaningful datasets, constituted by the enucleated components of the archaeological landscape.

- Integration with intensive survey results, which offer a more detailed picture of the anthropic use of the landscape through time. Integration primarily helped to provide a meaningful place in the landscape for known activity foci without a specific character, or for the few rural sites/activities discovered in more extensive research traditions. Sites previously floating in the landscape were now given a more meaningful interpretive context.

- Detailed analysis of aspects and levels of settlement and landscape use in the Greco-Roman period, and comparison with earlier or later periods of landscape occupation (Prehistoric and Ottoman-Modern) in order to detect similarities and differences, and enhance significances.

- The choice to analyse relatively small micro-landscapes, focusing primarily on the micro-region (each *polis chora*). This primarily helped to perform a more careful reference to the quality of collected data. It also helped the detection of micro-landscape trends within each micro-region, such as the relationship between the main *polis* and second rank settlements, the meaning of minor activity foci, as well as the evaluation of the use of diverse landscape zones.

- Application of theoretical approaches to the regional landscape, in particular the settlement chamber model, the community area theory and further implications, as a meaningful framework for the analysis of the available data sets and the long-term investigation of locational choices and physical and cultural characteristics of landscape zones and settlement chambers.

- Application of a land evaluation method for the definition of land capability. The results, together with the examination of other environmental variables, were used to evaluate the physical landscape characters of each *chora* landscape and therefore the agro-pastoral potential available for the *polis* territory, as well as to evaluate the

character of less determined archaeological components (activity foci). This analytical framework also allowed qualitative evaluation of clearly defined and potential settlement chambers, and assisted in the process of their detection.

- Management of data within a GIS environment. The use of GIS helped the structured collection and management of the archaeological data, allowing for the integration of cultural and environmental landscape factors, acting as a useful tool for the analysis and assessment of micro-regional and regional landscape trends.

The theoretical approaches to the regional landscape applied in this work and illustrated in chapter I.1 proved to be useful for the understanding of the ancient landscapes of Boeotia. In particular, the concept of community area was central in the development of the settlement dynamic approach applied for the definition of settlement chambers over the Boeotian landscape, at the 1st and 2nd settlement level. It allowed to detect different areas with settlement potential in the long term, by analysing the presence and location of known settlements in different periods. In addition, the approach based on the concept of taskscape, which recognizes signs of tasks over the landscape so enhancing the community area theory which enucleates landscape zones, was applied in the interpretation of the archaeological record available. Within this framework, each single evidence was interpreted according to the character of a particular landscape zone, determined both by environmental characteristics and by the function, use and character of other archaeological landscape components. The analysis of the different activities in the landscape helped also in the detection of the wider settlement chambers.

Those analyses proved to be meaningful at the micro-regional level (see application in each individual *chora* study), provided the critical assessment of the archaeological record available. At a final stage, comparative analysis of the results obtained with the study at the micro-regional level was carried out and proved to be useful to detect settlement trends in different parts of Boeotia with specific environmental and cultural landscape characters (see chapter II.4 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SETTLEMENT NETWORK), and partially enhanced also the comprehension of internal dynamics.

The methodology of assessing, evaluating and analysing the available data proved to be useful in the analysis of Boeotian landscape trends. Firstly, it helped in detecting micro-landscape dynamics and specific use of landscape areas, better evaluating the presence of known activity foci of more-or-less defined character within certain landscape zones.

Secondly, it proved useful in making the second rank settlements more visible, projecting windows in the landscape which would allow the second rank settlements to make their appearance. The second rank settlement level is otherwise somewhat neglected in regional studies in the area, as less clear and visible in comparison to first rank settlements (city centres/*poleis*) and to sites with a specific function (such as a cult place or necropolis).

Thirdly, a local level of analysis, resulting in landscape biographies of the various *chorai*, was integrated into a broad regional perspective. This allowed evaluation of historical patterns in terms of landscape settling in the region of Boeotia, detecting foci in the landscape around which settlement chambers would form, and exploring cultural choices over the regional landscape.