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## SOMMARIO

### SAGGI

- Vasiliki Eleni Dimitriou The Athenian Acropolis in Prehistory. The Neolithic “hut”:  
ceramic assemblage and stratigraphic evidence . . . . . 9
- Simona Todaro “Rationalising” redistribution in the Late EBA Aegean: plain cups  
and the mobilization of collective labour in the EM III Mesara (Crete) . 33
- Γεωργία Αλεξοπούλου,  
Σοφία Κασκαντίρη Τα μυκηναϊκά νεκροταφεία στο Βρυσάρι και στο Μάνεσι  
Καλαβρύτων: νεώτερα ανασκαφικά ευρήματα. . . . . 54
- Salvatore Vitale,  
Toula Marketou,  
Calla McNamee,  
Maria Michailidou The Kos Archaeological Survey Project and the site of Ayios  
Panteleimon in the northeast Koan region . . . . . 108
- Athanasios Kalpaxis,  
Christina Tsigonaki,  
Nikolia Spanou,  
Ioannis Bitis Of Gods and Men: continuities and disruptions in the sacred  
topography of the Acropolis at Eleutherna . . . . . 143
- Germano Sarcone A flower for Nikandre. On the iconography of the first *kore* . . . . 193
- Giulia Rocco Una *prothesis* tra celebrazione rituale e mito: su due placchette  
eburnee da Sparta. . . . . 215
- Nassi-Athanasia Malagardis Une *katabasis* d’Heracles sur un vase du Louvre . . . . . 233
- Annalisa Lo Monaco Recinti nei recinti: *temene*, *phragmata* e periboli nei santuari  
in Grecia. . . . . 253
- Giovanni Marginesu Manutenzione delle “macchine” e manualità dell’architetto  
nella Grecia antica. Note epigrafiche . . . . . 277
- Giuseppe Rignanese Un capitello ionico nel British Museum. Modelli, forma e contesto . 284
- Dario Anelli ΘΕΟΙΣ ΛΑΒΕ. Appunti per lo studio di una particolare classe  
di *thymiateria* di produzione cnidia . . . . . 309
- Benedetta Adembri,  
Luca Cipriani,  
Filippo Fantini Prime riflessioni sulla sala ottagonale delle Piccole Terme di Villa  
Adriana alla luce dei recenti restauri . . . . . 327
- Giuseppe Mazzilli Da Atene a Berlino e viceversa: su un capitello ionico del tipo  
“Eretteo” presso l’Antikensammlung. . . . . 344
- Paolo Baronio Capitelli corinzi a Kos tra V e VI secolo d.C. . . . . 371
- Manolis Petrakis More Erechtheian echoes and the Temple of Apollo *Patroos* . . . . 404

Nadia Coutsinas, Marianna Katifori, Konstantinos Roussos, Athanasios Argyriou	The settlement patterns of the Praisos region (East Crete) from the Classical to the Venetian periods, as revealed through the <i>SettleInEastCrete</i> program. . . . . 420
Elisabetta Giorgi	Gestire l'acqua, costruire il paesaggio. L'impatto ecologico dell'acquedotto romano-bizantino di Gortina sull'ambiente naturale e l'insediamento umano . . . . . 443
Carmelo Di Nicuolo	Le ricerche di Domenico Valentino Zancani nel territorio di Ialysos (Rodi) . . . . . 462

LOCAL RESPONSES TO THE ROMAN IMPACT  
ON THE GREEK LANDSCAPE

Emeri Farinetti	Local responses to the Roman impact on the Greek landscape. An introduction . . . . . 485
Vasilis Evangelidis	The impact of Rome on the landscapes of Aegean Thrace: an archaeological approach . . . . . 503
Sophia Karapanou, Gioacchino Francesco La Torre	Skoutoussa after the battle of Kynoskephalai (197 BC) . . . . . 517
Philip Bes, Patrick Monsieur, Jeroen Poblome	A rising tide lifts all boats? Republican and Roman Imperial Italian pottery in Boeotia and the Central Greek landscape . . . . . 524
Kalomira Mataranga	Kephallenia: the “mysterious island” of the Ionian Sea between East and West . . . . . 541
Amedeo Rossi	Phaistos and the Western Messara in the Roman Age: the agrarian land-use . . . . . 552
David Gilman Romano	Some considerations of the land between Corinth and Sikyon during the II and I centuries B.C. . . . . 565
Yannis Lolos	Sikyon during the “interim period” and the Early Roman era: literary tradition and material record. . . . . 577
Kyriakos Loulakoudis	Archeological evidence for wine and oil production in agricultural complexes of Southern Greece in the Roman period. . . . . 589
Michalis Karambinis	Urban developments in Roman Greece: an overview . . . . . 603

# LOCAL RESPONSES TO THE ROMAN IMPACT ON THE GREEK LANDSCAPE. AN INTRODUCTION\*

EMERI FARINETTI

**Riassunto.** L'11 ottobre 2019 la Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene ha organizzato un convegno scientifico sul tema *Risposte locali all'impatto romano sul paesaggio greco* con particolare attenzione alle trasformazioni avvenute nel II e I secolo a.C., come possono essere rintracciate nella densità, nella dimensione e nel carattere dei siti rurali, nel paesaggio urbano e nelle biografie urbane, nei comportamenti spaziali e nell'organizzazione territoriale, nelle forme di interazione uomo-ambiente e città-campagna, nel ruolo delle élite e degli investimenti economici che coinvolgono diversi scenari di attività nelle campagne, così come nei cambiamenti culturali e socio-politici e nelle diverse risposte di resilienza. I risultati della giornata di studi sono presentati in questa sede sotto forma di una raccolta di articoli, e il presente contributo costituisce insieme un'introduzione e una panoramica sui risultati della vivace discussione intavolata in seno al convegno.

**Περίληψη.** Στις 11 Οκτωβρίου 2019 η Ιταλική Αρχαιολογική Σχολή στην Αθήνα διοργάνωσε μια επιστημονική συνάντηση με θέμα *Τοπικές αντιδράσεις στη ρωμαϊκή επίδραση στο ελληνικό τοπίο* με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στους μετασχηματισμούς που σημειώθηκαν τον 2ο και 1ο αι. π.Χ., όπως μπορούν να εντοπιστούν στην πυκνότητα, το μέγεθος και τον χαρακτήρα των αγροτικών περιοχών, στο αστικό τοπίο και στις αστικές βιογραφίες, στις χωρικές συμπεριφορές και στην εδαφική οργάνωση, στις μορφές αλληλεπίδρασης ανθρώπου-περιβάλλοντος και πόλης-υπαιθρου, στο ρόλο των élit και των οικονομικών επενδύσεων που περιλαμβάνουν διαφορετικές δράσεις στην ύπαιθρο, καθώς και στις πολιτιστικές και κοινωνικοπολιτικές αλλαγές και τα διαφορετικά πρότυπα ανθεκτικότητας που μπορεί να αντικατοπτρίζουν οι προαναφερθείσες πτυχές. Τα αποτελέσματα της ημερίδας παρουσιάζονται εδώ, με τη μορφή συλλογής άρθρων, και το παρόν άρθρο χρησιμεύει ως εισαγωγή και ως επισκόπηση των αποτελεσμάτων της ζωντανής συζήτησης που πραγματοποιήθηκε στην διάρκεια της ημερίδας.

**Abstract.** On the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2019 the Italian Archaeological School at Athens organized a scientific meeting on *Local responses to the Roman impact on the Greek landscape* with particular focus on the transformations occurring in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> C BC, as they can be traced in density, size and character of rural sites, in the cityscape and urban biography, in spatial behaviours and territorial organization, in the forms of man-environment and city-countryside interaction, in the role of the élites and of economic investments involving different taskscapes in the countryside, as well as in the cultural and socio-political changes and diverse patterns of resilience the above-mentioned aspects may reflect. The results of the workshop are presented here, in the form of a collection of papers, and this paper serves as an introduction and as an overview on the results of the lively discussion in which took part the participants to the meeting.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD was a period that brought major change to the entire Mediterranean. Some of the changes were gradual; others were sudden, but the Roman Empire that eventually emerged out of these turbulent times was to have a profound impact on centuries to come. In tandem with the growing political, administrative and military frameworks of the Late Roman Republic, the early impact of the Roman power in Greece can be observed through a series of transformations that can also be traced in the landscape and territorial structures.

The search for signs of interregional variability, within a landscape with surprising characteristics of uniformity, as the Greek landscape was defined in Roman times, compared to the variegated Italian landscape in the same period, was already one of the objectives of S. Alcock's research on Roman Greece<sup>1</sup>. The comment on the uniformity of the landscape, as in Greece, was mainly due to the general persistence of

\* Warm thanks go to all the participants to the scientific meeting for their lively presence and their fruitful contribution to the debate as well as the Italian Archaeological School at Athens for the support in logistics and organization. I am particularly grateful to Emanuele Papi for his support for the initiative and to Athanasios Rizakis for joining and leading the debate which concluded the workshop. The

publication of the Proceedings was carried out with the contribution of the Department of Humanities (Roma Tre University) and the Italian Ministry of University and Research (in the framework of the "Rita Levi-Montalcini programme").

<sup>1</sup> ALCOCK 1993 (*Graecia Capta*); 1999, 169.

the higher levels of nucleated settlements, based on the traditional polis system, and also to the general impression of a rural abandonment that would have characterized the landscape of the early Empire, compared to previous periods. Scholars agree that, while a shrinking in the rural landscape seems a recurrent phenomenon, the explanation for the transformations in the countryside may vary from region to region, and spatial and chronological variations can be detected<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the increased knowledge we now have of the period, recent trends put the accent on what happens in the very first periods of impact with the Roman power, trying to identify processes that sometimes begin in the immediately preceding period and continue at least until the first imperial age, while other times, instead, change direction quite quickly. Spatial and chronological variations are enhanced<sup>3</sup>.

The best way to observe changes in territorial arrangements and settlement behaviours in detail appears to be the choice of reading local contexts, to be examined separately before inserting them into the general trends, following a dynamic that for the geography of the time could be defined as local-global<sup>4</sup>. In a period when a historical set of forces of transformation may affect the way human beings shape space through their collective activities, with a look at what happens in the entirety of Greece, and then slowly in the whole Roman sphere of influence and the empire that was forming, the specific attention to the local dimension allows us to read variability and to grasp the factors of transformation, which sometimes are linked to the specific physical-anthropic characteristics of a territory, but sometimes they are to be related to external factors or to the influence of the dominant power.

Although “global” and “local” mainly exist for the observer operating with these concepts, as the sociologists of contemporary globalization often point out, in the attempt to spatially define the “local” dimension, what would suit best as a target for landscape analyses is the territory of the Greek poleis, still functioning as an attracting central pole in the Roman period. Nevertheless, such a ‘local’ dimension should be thought of as a place, instead of binding it in terms of space<sup>5</sup>. Due to both the geographical and cultural characteristics of the Greek landscape<sup>6</sup>, the *chorai* of the Greek poleis, functioning as micro-landscapes within wider regions, would work best as contexts “local” enough to be examined as comparative samples units. Through these lenses, the processes of space-shaping and place-making, resulting from older processes which have roots in the archaic-classical Greek polis, as well as interlaced with new external wider dynamics, may be read within the polis *chora*, as a preferred analytical unit apt to grasp the moments or the paths of change in the local answers to external influences.

#### THE WORKSHOP: CONSIDERATIONS ON INTER-REGIONAL AND INTRA-REGIONAL VARIABILITY

In order to address these issues, the Italian Archaeological School at Athens organized a scientific meeting, held on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2019 on the School premises, on *Local responses to the Roman impact on the Greek landscape*<sup>7</sup> with particular focus on the transformations occurring in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. The workshop focused on the transformations occurring in this period in the Greek landscape, as they can be traced in density, size and character of rural sites, in the cityscape and urban biography, in spatial behaviours and territorial organization, in the forms of man-environment and city-countryside interaction, in the role of the élites and of economic investments involving different taskscape in the countryside, as well as in the cultural and socio-political changes and diverse patterns of resilience the above mentioned aspects may reflect.

New data on the Roman period in Greece had already come out from the conference *What's new in Roman Greece* organized by the Roman Seminar group in Athens in 2015, whose proceedings were recently published<sup>8</sup>. The specific goal of the Italian School workshop, and of the present collection of papers,

<sup>2</sup> BINTLIFF 1997, 1-38; 2008; RIZAKIS 2014; FARINETTI 2018.

<sup>3</sup> STEWART 2010 and 2013; RIZAKIS 2014. The stress on a complex mechanism of transformations, as the key issue which should lead the reading of the Greek landscape after the advent of the Romans, is highlighted in KARABINIS 2020.

<sup>4</sup> GERAGHTY 2007; BINTLIFF 2019.

<sup>5</sup> In the current discourse around globalization, global and local are not only spatial structures (levels, scales, places, distances, etc.), but different representations of space competing against each other in a process to

determine within society the reality that society is (GUY 2009).

<sup>6</sup> FARINETTI 2011, chapter I.1.

<sup>7</sup> The workshop was organized in the framework of the research project *Roman landscapes of Greece* conducted by the University of Roma Tre (P.I. Emeri Farinetti) and funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MIUR) “Rita Levi-Montalcini research programme”.

<sup>8</sup> DI NAPOLI *et alii* 2018.

was to focus mainly on landscape issues and on how landscape reflected socio-political changes. Special attention is given to the very first periods of interaction with the Roman influence when it is possible to grasp them in the available archaeological record. New data from recent survey projects and excavations, which confirm, reassess, or modify the current picture, were particularly welcome, as well as the results of syntheses or re-reading of legacy data. The final aim is to assess a comparative framework suitable for the Greek area, with an eye on regional variations and local responses to global trends which can help the historical interpretation of the landscape characters in the selected period.

In the results of the workshop, published here as a collection of papers, classical approaches to settlement pattern studies are spacing out by transversal approaches needful to understand the impact on the landscape of environmental, socio-economic and historical phenomena. I refer in particular to material culture and pottery studies, paleo-environmental approaches, the critical reading of ancient sources, the examination of agro-industrial production technology. The papers follow a geographical order, from North to South, allowing us to detect elements of inter-regional variability in different “dimensions” of the landscape.

### Northern and Central Greece

The case studies from Thrace, Thessaly and Boeotia offer us the index of inter-regional variability in northern and mainland Greece.

Vasilis Evangelidis’s paper focuses on the impact of Rome on the landscape of Aegean Thrace, the long strip of land that stretches between the river Nestos and Evros and fell into the grasp of Roman power almost immediately after the submission of Macedonia in 168 BC. As the author points out, the intricate relationships of Rome with the Greek cities along the North Aegean coast and the rival royal Thracian houses ranged from the exercise of brute force to the production of different alliances and the support of a Thracian client kingdom. As elsewhere the impact of Rome has been regarded to have had a tremendous effect on the organization of the area with changes in the existing hierarchies. The question is what changes the advent of Rome brought to the settlement pattern and the rural landscape of this culturally diverse area, which in many aspects was radically different from that of central and southern Greece. As Evangelidis remarks, tumuli, open air sanctuaries, native settlements, megalithic monuments and rock cut graves, strongholds and enclosures along with more conventional Greek type sites belonging to the coastal Greek cities like Abdera or Maroneia dotted a landscape that was dominated by the Rhodope range in the north and the alluvial plain in the south. Any comment on the changes in the landscape due to the Roman influence is partially biased by significant gaps in the archaeological knowledge mainly due to the fact that for many years the academic interest was focused on the Greek colonies on the littoral and only limited research has been conducted on rural sites. Nevertheless, Evangelidis makes a significant attempt to present an overview of the rural landscape of the area, to discuss issues regarding site typology, site hierarchy and identification problems but also to examine to what degree this multivariate environment changed over the Late Republican and the Imperial period.

In Thessaly, after the battle of Kynoskephales (197 BC), the land was lost to Macedonian rule and the major cities of the region established the Thessalian *Koinon*, based in Larissa. On the other hand, in many areas the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC are characterized by a period of urban crisis, as we can see in Pharsala, for instance. The paper written by the Italian and Greek scholars working on the ancient Thessalian town of Skotoussa (Gioacchino Francesco La Torre, Sophia Karapanou) points to high levels of occupation and organized urban life during this period, known through both survey and excavation, while a deep crisis is attested in later periods within the Roman era, the Early and Middle Imperial periods. Skotoussa follows the fate of the *koinon*, being a very important city during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. As the authors point out, its large fields still produced a large amount of cereal provision which fed both Caesar and Pompeus troops before the battle of Pharsala in 48 BC. The situation changed completely in the Imperial period, when Skotoussa seems to have been deserted and to have lost its role.

Boeotia, the mainland region that can be considered a paradigm, in terms of landscape history, of the transformations which characterized mainland Greece in antiquity<sup>9</sup> and which traditionally reflects the major landscape trends of the Greek area, is examined both in Bes *et alii*’s paper and in the present contribution. The region was surveyed, and pottery was recorded and collected over forty years of surface

<sup>9</sup> FARINETTI 2011.

survey by the Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project<sup>10</sup>. As the authors remark, Boeotia was severely affected during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and especially the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC for being one of the scenes where internal conflicts within Rome as well as engagements with other powers were played out. Bes *et alii* approach landscape trajectories in the period of interest through the reading of material culture, mainly pottery, and changes in the manufacture, distribution and consumption of goods as well as ideas. As they state, pottery that was manufactured in Italy was increasingly widely distributed as the centuries progressed, and it is often perceived to reflect the emergence of Rome in a broader sense. The same is true for (Central) Greece, where Italian pottery has been and still is regularly attested at both urban and rural sites. Whilst sufficient data is available that merit their presentation and discussion in relation to some of the topics addressed by the “Local Responses” meeting, the authors are cautious of a (too) positivistic perception and interpretation: as such, their thoughts and questions focus on typological/functional and chronological dimensions, on the places where pottery was found and their location in the landscape, and on whether and to what extent this Italian pottery reflects mingling in regional political and economic affairs<sup>11</sup>. Intra-regional variability is quite evident in Boeotia<sup>12</sup> and can be appreciated approaching the “local” at the polis and polis *chora* level, for instance through the comparison of urban material assemblages, as Bes *et alii* do in their paper.

The local response to the economic globalization is suggested by the renewed characteristics of the market<sup>13</sup>, and import from Rome cocirculated with an enhanced intra-regional exchange of vessels and products. The reorientation of the economy goes along with a renewed spread of cultural inputs and social behaviours, visible in material culture and in changes in the rural economy. Transformation involves urban and rural areas, where enhanced is the importance of the ‘connectivity’ factor, which permeates the forms of socio-economic behaviours<sup>14</sup>. Rural sites slowly moved closer to the city sites, sign of a renewed «symbiosis between urban hubs and their productive countryside»<sup>15</sup>. Coastal or well-connected towns prospered and were economically more integrated<sup>16</sup>.

## The islands

In the quest of “local” responses, special interest has to be given to island landscapes, which, far from being marginal or isolated, can offer insights into connection patterns, market trajectories and communication routes, as well as peculiar local responses. The development of coastal sites, characteristic of the Roman period even in the smallest and most remote (apparently) islands, will burst slightly later in time, promoted by the conditions surrounding the *Pax Romana*, but certainly maritime routes began earlier to be explored by the Roman fleet or commercial boats, involving especially the islands in the West of the Greek world. Small islands are already involved in long-distance commercial traffic with the East of the Aegean Sea, too, as we will see below.

Down to the Southern Aegean, Crete, the island that later in the mature Roman period would play a crucial role as part of the *Provincia Cyrenaica*, certainly contributes to the picture of intra-regional variability.

After the Roman conquest of Crete (67 BC) Gortys, in a favourable position and favoured by the Romans for its loyalty, soon become the capital of Crete and Cyrenaica. Centre of extraordinary importance, as shown by its monumental public buildings (four theaters, an amphitheater, two Nymphaeums, an *odeion*, a hippodrome, a stadium, four bath complexes), the city of Gortys is fairly known within its urban perimeter, thanks to the Italian research on the site<sup>17</sup>. After the destruction of Phaistos by Gortys in ca. 150 BC<sup>18</sup>, its former harbour-town, Matala, gradually became the largest population centre in the valley of Messara west of Gortys; in early Roman times, it reached its maximum size of about 15 ha.<sup>19</sup> Landscape

<sup>10</sup> BINTLIFF *et alii* 2007; 2017; POBLOME *et alii* 2012.

<sup>11</sup> With increasing frequency, we see research studies careful to trace territorial dynamics through the examination of commercial patterns, by «understanding objects in motion», to quote an expression used by VERSLUYS 2014.

<sup>12</sup> BINTLIFF 1997; FARINETTI 2011; 2018; BES-POBLOME 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Markets are dynamic as were the connected worlds of Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times (BES *et alii* this volume). BRUGHMANS-POBLOME 2016 have argued on the level of integration in markets in the Roman world.

<sup>14</sup> It has to be pointed out, with Karambinis (this volume), how the connectivity factor enhanced in the Roman period (certainly more

critical for the fate of a given city in comparison with the Greek word in the Classical-Hellenistic period, less “connected” at an inter-regional level) has to be intended differently compared to the diachronic connectivity between different landscape components theorised by Horden and Purcell (HORDEN-PURCELL 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Bes *et alii* this volume. This phenomenon will be more evident in the mature Roman era (BES 2015, 144; BINTLIFF *et alii* 2017; RIZAKIS 2014; FARINETTI 2018).

<sup>16</sup> See below and Karambinis this volume.

<sup>17</sup> ALLEGRO 2004; DI VITA 2010.

<sup>18</sup> STR. 10.4.14.

<sup>19</sup> WATROUS *et alii* 2004, 355.

research projects in the wider area of Gortys and central Crete<sup>20</sup> have contributed to locally analyse landscape transformations in the long term. They also threw light on the changes occurred in the landscape in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC, and Amedeo Rossi in his paper brings forth the example of the city and the *chora* of Phaistos, covered by a recent Italian-Greek survey project within the same methodological framework<sup>21</sup>. Although the recent survey was not able to clearly differentiate the material from the sites within the larger category of Late Hellenistic-Early Roman to Roman Imperial period, the results can be inserted into the interpretive context delineated by Watrous *et alii*<sup>22</sup> (Western Mesara survey and Kommos survey), who stressed on the changes that occurred in the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman period in the area, following the annexation of the land of Phaistos to the wider territory of Gortys. During that period the micro-region was marked by an increasing number of sites and a dispersed settlement (even in poor-land areas), linked to the production and the increasing marketing of oil. Watrous *et alii* refer to Phaistos as one of the large villages (newly created hamlets associated with good arable land) which populated the western Mesara, in which the population of the former town of Phaistos would have spread. The very small Hellenistic farms would disappear, allowing for a slow demographic nucleation during the early Roman period, which did not lead, though, to the formation of large estates. Although in Matala archaeological data testify for the appearance of expensive and decorated buildings, and the city of Gortys may become an attractor of élitarian investment, Watrous *et alii* point out that at this early stage Roman businessmen did not seem to arrive and specifically invest in the area and in large estates, unlike in mainland Greece<sup>23</sup>. They suggest that this could be due to the fact that the transition to roman control was fairly smooth, with far fewer changes, considering that the cities of Crete had already been hierarchically structured and quite élitarian since the Hellenistic period.

In eastern Crete too, an overall intensification of the rural occupation from the Hellenistic period onwards shows up from the results of intensive surveys (summarized in COUTSINAS 2018). The landscape is more densely occupied in the late-Hellenistic/Early Roman period (compared to earlier, Classical or later, Late Roman-periods when a decline in site numbers is reported for some areas [*ibid.*]). As far as the network of cities is concerned, after the Roman conquest in 67 BC only coastal cities remained as urban centres (except Lyttos and Biannos, West of the Lasithi mountains). Already in the immediately preceding period, since the third century BC, the first level of settlement (the cities) had been affected by significant changes, which had seen the annexation by emerging cities of other urban centers (for instance Praisos was conquered and his territory annexed by Hierapytna at the middle of the second century BC, in parallel with what happened in the area of Gortys in western Crete). As Scott Gallimore has pointed out in his book on the city of Hierapytna in south-eastern Crete, there are differences between the northern and southern part of the island during the early impact with Rome, and there is evidence that Crete had already been involved in wider economic trajectories in the Hellenistic period<sup>24</sup>. It is this connectivity pattern that determined the city rise and decline. Cities such as Hierapytna, which grew from a promising Hellenistic centre into a major Roman metropolis, seem to be very connected<sup>25</sup>, especially with the eastern Mediterranean exchange networks, thanks to the strategic control on the Isthmus, located on the Rhodes-Alexandria route. As Coutsinas points out<sup>26</sup>, the role played by the city in the transshipments of goods led to the agricultural and pastoral exploitation of the surrounding plain, following the trend many scholars have detected. Although signs of a re-orientation of economy can be traced already in Hellenistic times, the Roman occupation marked a turning point towards an inter-systemic economy, characterized by intensive exploitation of resources in order to create surplus products for export (especially wine, oil and herbs)<sup>27</sup>.

The island of Crete traditionally constitutes a bridge towards the East. Conversely, a bridge to the West are the Ionian islands, and in particular at the turning from the third to the second centuries BC an important role is played by the *tetrapolis* island of Kephallenia. An early inclusion of the island into the area

<sup>20</sup> Landscape research was carried out in the western Messara just behind the coast (SIMPSON *et alii* 2014; SHAW-SHAW 1995), in the plain of Phaistos (WATROUS *et alii* 2004), in the valley of Aghios Farangos to the south and along the coast between Lasia and Lebena and, recently, in the area of Moni Odigitria (VASILAKIS-BRANIGAN 2010; GKIASTA 2008).

<sup>21</sup> BREDAKI *et alii* 2009.

<sup>22</sup> WATROUS *et alii* 2004, 352-358.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>24</sup> GALLIMORE 2015; WATROUS 2012, 79; VOGELKOFF-BROGAN 2012, 82.

<sup>25</sup> Material from Rhodes and Knidos was found in the urban context, and the arrival of grain ships from the Levant and Egypt is attested after the Roman conquest in 69/67 BC (GALLIMORE 2015).

<sup>26</sup> COUTSINAS 2018.

<sup>27</sup> MARANGOU 1999; CHANIOTIS 2008, 85-91; KOUREMENOS 2018, 46-53; GALLIMORE 2019, 601-612; Karambinis this volume.

of influence of Rome during the Aetolian Wars (190-189 BC) followed the gradual expansion of Rome to western Greece inaugurated with the First Macedonian War (212-211 BC). Epirus and the Ionian islands became poles of attraction for Romans and Italians, who moved there in order to exploit local resources already in Late Hellenistic times<sup>28</sup>. As pointed out in the article by Mirella Mataranga, the Ionian islands at an early stage (in the period between the Late Hellenistic and the Early Roman times) played a high strategic role and harbour sites developed along reinforcing sea routes, and a careful examination of the developments occurring in the Hellenistic period on the island of Kephallenia can throw light on the very early moments of interaction of western Greece with the Roman power.

The paper refers to the role of the island within the wider context of piracy, a crucial phenomenon for the period of interest, concerning the control and the security of the seas. Romans looked carefully over piracy, as it was important for them to create forms of control and interaction with it, in order to ensure an eastern Mediterranean safer for the forces in the game and certainly easier to control<sup>29</sup>. The phenomenon of piracy materializes the close interconnection, typical of the Mediterranean landscape, between human groups and different environments, in particular seas, islands, coasts, and mountainous hinterland. The latter, the mountainous hinterland at a short distance from the coast (personified by the Aetolians, mountain people involved in piratical activities thanks to their link with the Kephallenians<sup>30</sup>), along with the presence of jagged coasts that lend themselves well to secluded landing points and pirate activities (along the coasts of Epirus and the Ionian islands, for instance), accompany the role of the islands exposed to the traffic of men and things along intense sea routes.

## The Peloponnese

Research on Roman Peloponnese was represented in the workshop by several scholars: Anton Bonnier, who presented a paper on data from the Swedish project *Domesticated landscapes of the Peloponnese*, and offered data on different sampling areas in the Peloponnese; David Gilman Romano, who discussed the land between Corinth and Sikyon; Yannis Lolos, who presented results of his research on ancient Sykion and the transformations that had occurred in the urban layout and in the relationship town-countryside; and Kyriakos Loulakoudis, who offered insights into the rural landscape of production<sup>31</sup>.

In the paper presented at the workshop, entitled «Human-environment dynamics and (micro)regional landscape trajectories in the Hellenistic and Roman Peloponnese», Anton Bonnier reviewed the evidence provided by paleo-environmental proxy data derived from sediment cores, pollen archives and speleothem records and examined how such data can be correlated with socio-economic developments visible in the later Hellenistic and Roman Peloponnese. As many others, Bonnier pointed out how the differences in settlement trajectories produced by various survey projects suggest that we should avoid a grand narrative of Roman Greece, and instead concentrate on microregional developments – an observation which demands an increasing focus on human-environment dialectics<sup>32</sup>. While the primary focus has often (rightly) been directed towards political factors behind recognisable trajectories, environmental factors have also been considered as part of landscape dynamics in Hellenistic and Roman Greece<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, in the scholars' thoughts, any investigation on the potential impact of climate variability needs to consider regional and microregional variability, in order to examine local developments and responses to environmental change using a wide range of human and environmental archives, and this is true especially in the Peloponnese, where multiple microclimates exist, and the peninsula is generally characterised by a high degree of environmental fragmentation, visible also in the settlement

<sup>28</sup> Karambinis this volume and Mataranga this volume; ZOUMBAKI 2018, 98; FARINETTI 2018, 12-13. For a survey project on the island see ΣΜΠΟΝΙΑΣ 2013.

<sup>29</sup> The political propaganda that is hidden in interventions aimed at controlling the piracy phenomenon in the last two centuries of the Republic is well underlined by DE SOUZA 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Mataranga this volume.

<sup>31</sup> In the meanwhile, an important work on the Roman landscape of the Peloponnese is being carried out in the framework of the Western Argolid Regional Project (WARP) under the aegis of the Canadian Institute in Greece. In particular, Joseph Frankl and Machal Gradoz, members of the WARP team, organised a conference session on

*Graecia Capta revisited: recent approaches to the rural landscapes of Roman Greece* at AIA 2020. Furthermore, important work on the Roman impact on the northern Peloponnese have been carried out in the last decades by Athanasios Rizakis, with a special focus on the Achaia region (RIZAKIS 2013; 2014; PONTRANDOLFO 2016) and a significant work focused on the rural landscape was recently published (STEWART 2013).

<sup>32</sup> For a renewed archaeological approach to micro-landscapes, traditionally prerogative of research in physical geography, see FARINETTI 2011, chapter 1.

<sup>33</sup> VAN ANDEL *et alii* 1986; RUNNELS-VAN ANDEL 1987; JAMESON *et alii* 1994, 398-400; FUCHS 2007.

pattern and in the spatial configuration of land use<sup>34</sup>. In a very recent article, Bonnier and Finné suggest that although climatic variability alone did not drive socio-economic change, drying conditions may have influenced the relocation of agricultural production in the Late Hellenistic and Roman (ca. 150 BC–AD 300) periods<sup>35</sup>.

Southern Greece is examined also in Kyriakos Loulakoudis's paper<sup>36</sup>, that focuses on rural landscape on the basis of archaeological remains of buildings and technological means of production. The production and storage facilities for wine and oil are examined, with a special interest in the location of the farms, the agricultural complexes and the warehouses in which they had been found, within the rural landscape of South Roman Greece. Although inner chronological differentiations within the wider Roman period are not easy to make, the tremendous job of recording the attested facilities (following a bibliography mainly in Greek otherwise unavailable to the wider scientific community), as well as the focus on this specific category/class of material culture, is of great value as a source of information for shifting economic trends and rural patterns in the landscape of southern Greece.

Southern Greece, together with a large part of central Greece, to a large extent remained outside the hectic mobility and change, characterizing the period, as Karambinis points out. An exception was «the penetrating corridor of the Patraic and Corinthian gulfs that culminated in the core-city of the region, Corinth»<sup>37</sup>. The defeat of Corinth in 146 BC and the consequent emergence of the neighbouring city of Sikyon had as a result the reorganization of their territories and the article of David Gilman Romano<sup>38</sup> presents some considerations on the land between Corinth and Sikyon during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. After the defeat of Corinth in 146 BC Sikyon is reported by ancient sources to have taken over most of the Corinthian *chora*<sup>39</sup>. Archaeological data may confirm this and evidence of centuriation to the North of Corinth may have been the result of a land division after the defeat. In the meanwhile, in the period that Yannis Lolos in his paper names the «interim period»<sup>40</sup> the city of Sikyon flourished and reached a peak in urban population, building activity intensified and economy grew mostly through exportation of Sikyonian products, as the author examines thoroughly, and the results of the artifact surface survey confirm.

### Landscape of cities

An overview on the cities of Roman Greece is outlined by Michalis Karambinis in his paper, organized in geographical sections. As many other scholars do in this collection of papers, and elsewhere, Karambinis points out the high degree of inter-regional variability, remarking how several factors affected the different trajectories characterized by regional divergences, with first and foremost that of connectivity<sup>41</sup>. Conversely, the urban landscape and the changes in the city layout that occurred as local responses to the Roman impact or influence are exemplified in the papers by Yannis Lolos on Sykion and by La Torre – Karapanou on Skotoussa.

Concerning the appearance and disappearance of nucleated settlements in the Roman era, it has been noted earlier how in many regions of Greece the first and second-rank settlements (cities and satellite settlements) do not change much as regards the location and density compared to previous periods (in Boeotia, for instance<sup>42</sup>). On the other hand, as it has been already noticed about Thessaly, and Crete, the biographies of cities are quite affected by inter-regional and intra-regional variability. Furthermore, the measure of changes at the highest settlement level in the Late Hellenistic/Early Roman or Early Imperial period is often feeble and can be appreciated only by means of either systematic surveys on urban areas or extensive excavations, which both can give information about changes in spatial extent and rank of the site, as well as its internal organisation of space. It can be noticed that larger cities as well as medium-size urban centres attracted minor members of the countryside's *élite* because they offered better possibilities<sup>43</sup>. Nevertheless, as Karambinis points out, «while in western and northern Greece, we noticed significant reconfigurations, with many new foundations and/or colonies appearing in the landscape and taking the reins in the urban

<sup>34</sup> WEIBERG *et alii* 2019.

<sup>35</sup> BONNIER-FINNÉ 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Loulakoudis this volume.

<sup>37</sup> Karambinis this volume.

<sup>38</sup> Romano this volume.

<sup>39</sup> Livy, Cicero, Strabo (see Romano this volume for exact references).

<sup>40</sup> Lolos this volume. The «interim period», between 146 and 44 BC, is the period intercurrent between the destruction of Corinth and the *deductio* of the Roman colony.

<sup>41</sup> See fn. 14.

<sup>42</sup> FARINETTI 2018.

<sup>43</sup> RIZAKIS 2014; ALCOCK 1989.

hierarchy, in central and southern Greece nothing similar happened and Roman intervention was minimal»<sup>44</sup>. In some regions a significant role may play the disappearance of the secondary level of nucleated settlements, which sometimes were absorbed by the main urban centre<sup>45</sup> while sometimes minor nucleated centres are assigned an urban status, and all this can be interpreted as a product of the general shifting of balance which removes the centre of power from the polis.

As seen earlier, it has been demonstrated that the traditional interdependence of urban centres and rural communities progressively declined, certainly with regional variations, from the Late Hellenistic period as a result of the Roman conquest<sup>46</sup>. As Rizakis points out<sup>47</sup>, the situation of each city varied according to the circumstances of each conquest, to the history and geographical location, but above all, depending on the strategy and aims of the imperial power in the immediately succeeding period. A common trend however is that a large part of the land progressively ended up in the hands of the urban *élites*, both Italian and local, which monopolized wealth, prestige and power almost everywhere in the Roman empire. Rome's indifference to the fate of the Greek world during the very Late Hellenistic - Early Roman period (146-31 BC), but also civil wars, various interventions in territorial conflicts between cities<sup>48</sup>, as it has been stated by Burton<sup>49</sup>, as well as abuses of power combined to cause the economic decline of many cities.

The vast network of connecting routes between the Mediterranean provinces and the imperial heartland in central-western Italy, that operated later on as a crucial factor for the transformation of structure, spatial distribution and fate of the urban centers of the provinces, finds its roots in these first moments of interface, which also partly determine the location of cities in areas inside or outside the connecting routes, as well as areas having an economic interest for the Romans or not. The different urban development of every region is linked to all this. Illuminating examples in that sense are the coastal cities of Crete and Kephallenia, as we saw earlier, as well as the urban centres of western Greece.

#### THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OF EARLY ROMAN GREECE: CONSIDERATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

With the belief that a comparative framework is needed in order to assess the available Greek landscape data critically and meaningfully, in this section of the article special attention will be paid to the ways in which rural sites appear in the survey record, aiming at the detection of distinctive characteristics of the sites and at the critical reading of meaningful details which could allow for a fruitful comparison. In this respect, issues of chronological attribution and site classification will be examined as factors of potential biases, in the effort of avoiding the application in the Greek context of semantic categories born elsewhere within the Roman world<sup>50</sup>. Focus will be placed on to the ways of reading the rural segment of the landscape, having as reference the examination of the archaeological landscape record from the Boeotia region, with an eye on the wider Greek context, and with special interest in the very early moments of Roman influence.

As mentioned earlier, although reductions in site numbers are evident in certain regions, we do get a more varied picture elsewhere<sup>51</sup>. A general indifference of Rome especially for the rural areas and the rural people, the peasants, has been noticed throughout the periods of Roman presence in Greece, especially in the imperial period<sup>52</sup>, and the variegated forms of transformations in the rural segment of the landscape represents the gradual shifting from the "essential countryside"<sup>53</sup> to what we could name a productive countryside. We assist a shifting from a countryside essential to the life of the Greek polis of the Classical period, to a productive countryside interconnected with both the city and the wider world in a completely different manner. In order to detect such transformations, either slighter or stronger, we may try to detect the ways in which the transitional period in question, i.e. the very early moments of Roman influence, become visible in the archaeological record.

<sup>44</sup> Karambinis this volume.

<sup>45</sup> RIZAKIS 2014.

<sup>46</sup> BINTLIFF 1997; RIZAKIS 2014; STEWART 2010, 220-229; 2013.

<sup>47</sup> RIZAKIS 2014.

<sup>48</sup> See CAMIA 2009; for a Boeotian example see FARINETTI 2011, 68 fn. 12.

<sup>49</sup> BURTON 2000.

<sup>50</sup> FARINETTI 2018.

<sup>51</sup> BINTLIFF 1997; 2008, 24; STEWART 2013.

<sup>52</sup> RIZAKIS 2014.

<sup>53</sup> ALCOCK-OSBORNE 2007, chapter 4.

## The issue of periodization and chronological attribution

As discussed elsewhere<sup>54</sup> diverse factors limit the archaeological visibility of the period in question. In some contexts, the long-term history of urban sites or the further dense layer representing Late Roman activity in the countryside can veil or hide the very early period of Roman influence. The presence, or the lack of presence, of distinctive categories of material culture can bias the recognition of sites, especially in the Late Hellenistic to the Early imperial period, for which mainly distinctive types of wares are known, which were not always accessible to everyone and therefore not retrievable in every type and rank of sites, and this affects site interpretation and recognition<sup>55</sup>.

Therefore, first of all, we need to assess the criteria of chronological attribution to material from survey, and to (re-)define the chronological ranges according to representativeness in terms of landscape reconstruction. Chronological ranges used in Greek surveys have changed. Generally speaking, a stronger emphasis on the Roman period is placed and differentiation within the Roman era is attempted. The wider chronological classes related to the Hellenistic and the Roman periods, used in the majority of the survey projects in the 1990s and 2000s, are currently more often split up into sub-classes or specific ranges, in the attempt to bring forth the material record which may represent the Early Roman phase (separated from the Roman Imperial and Late Roman material).

Coarse wares of this period in Greece are often less recognised and less visible and not always kept on record. Amphora sherds (especially the one of Italian production, as seen earlier) have proved to be a good indicator of the pottery exchange in the period, marked by a regional and supra-regional distribution and exchange of goods and materials. Alongside, fabric analysis has shown to be able to bring hidden landscapes to light and the careful fabric examination as well as the material comparison from different survey projects help the process, thanks to the larger record available. A broad debate on these issues developed on the occasion of the recent conference *Fields, Sherds and Scholars. Recording and Interpreting Survey Ceramics*, held in Athens in 2017<sup>56</sup>. Current categories used in cross-period mapping display, such as Late Hellenistic – Early Roman, Early Roman - Mid Roman, try to compromise between the long-lasting use of ceramic fabrics (marked by the chronological attribution to sherds: lhell-er, lhell-mr. er-mr, pure er, pure mr, mr-lr) and the reading of the transformations in the landscape which characterise the period in question. In addition to specific fabric issues, distinctive historical issues are to be involved, according to the moment and the degree of involvement of the Romans in the different regions.

On the light of these considerations, we may ask ourselves to what degree can we still rely on legacy data, in particular pottery data coming from early survey projects, without re-dating the material according to the new increased knowledge. Would re-dating be a worth-doing job? A lot of re-dating work is being done for early survey projects not yet fully published, although the process may be really time-consuming yet worth doing<sup>57</sup>.

## Distinctive character and representativity of sites

Furthermore, in order to avoid potential biases in the comparison of rural survey data and regional datasets, we should focus on issues concerning the classification of the rural sites and the actual site biographies as they appear through a critical reading of the surface pottery concentrations and collected assemblages. The evaluation of the off-site impact over the landscape and of the ways rural sites appear in the archaeological survey record through the background noise, has proved to be a crucial issue in the recognition of less visible sites and of less visible periods within a site biography. The challenge is twofold: to extract information by eliminating background noise and to recognise the presence of human activities at various levels in the periods previous and subsequent to the site main period(s)<sup>58</sup>.

With today's increasingly precise recordings of the surface record by many survey projects, a growing complexity and variety of ceramic surface assemblages can be observed. Nevertheless, this tendency in many cases is not matched by a greater variety in the site categories adopted, which too often is still

<sup>54</sup> FARINETTI 2018, 4-5.

<sup>55</sup> The discussion on this issue is lively since ATTOLINI-CAMBI *et alii* 1991.

<sup>56</sup> A. Meens - M. Nazou - W. van de Put, *Fields, Sherds and Scholars. Recording and Interpreting Survey Ceramics*, International conference,

Athens 2017. An open access database to serve as reference collection would be a very useful tool for research.

<sup>57</sup> For instance, the Boeotia Survey project is dealing with this issue as far as the early surveys in the Boeotia region are concerned.

<sup>58</sup> BINTLIFF *et alii* 2007; in press; ATTEMA *et alii* 2020.

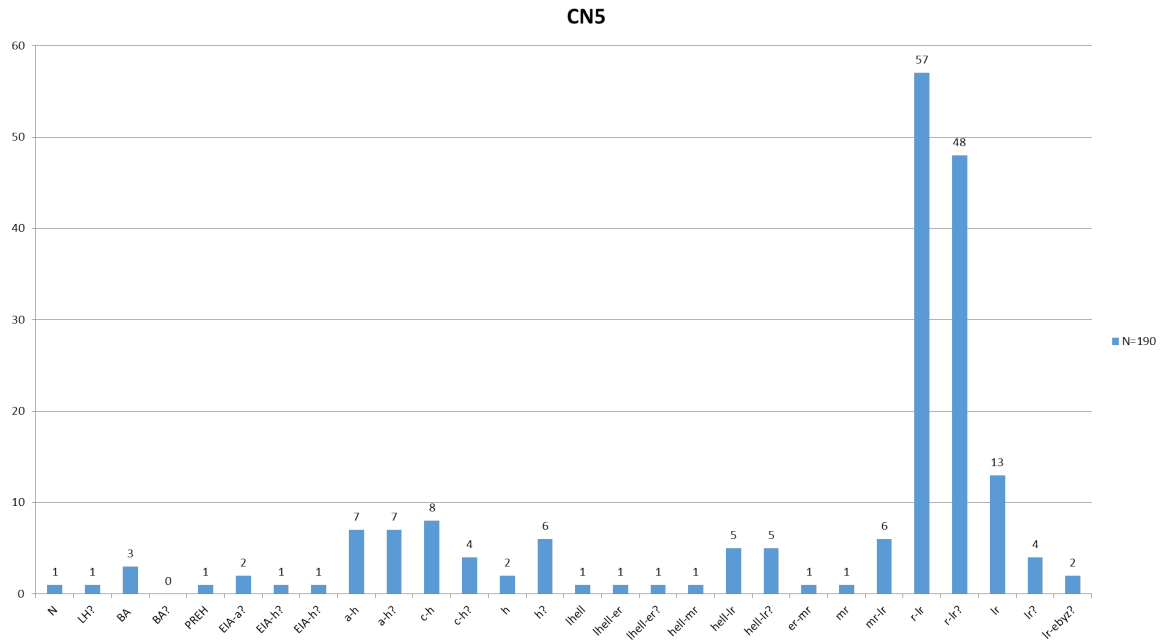


Fig. 1. Site CN5 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): histogram showing the representation of dated sherds by period (el. A.).

restricted to a simplistic urban/rural dichotomy, or to the simple classification small farm/large farm/villa. This issue has been pointed out clearly by Peter Attema and Gunther Schorner in their introduction to a recent volume on the Roman rural landscape of Italy<sup>59</sup> and an interesting step in this direction as regarding Roman Italy has been made by Witcher<sup>60</sup>.

Analyses of the density of sites and the settlement pattern should be performed after a correct differentiation of sites in order to avoid the risk of standardization, which can end up with significantly biased results, such as the creation of apparent filled-in landscapes or apparent relatively empty landscapes. For instance, large Late Roman villa sites tend to hide earlier smaller sites. We do have cases of excavated rural sites with occupation phases from the Early Roman period<sup>61</sup>, and data from rescue excavations confirm their precious value, but the challenge is to be able to recognise those “less visible” phases during survey and make them visible when possible.

A common biography of a site in the Greek rural countryside would look like the one shown in Fig. 1, concerning a site detected in the hinterland of the ancient city of Hyettos, in Boeotia, an area surveyed in the 90's. Hyettos site CN5 is a Classical-Hellenistic rural site spotted at the NE edge of a Roman villa. The site was abandoned in the Early Roman - Mid Roman period. It seems to follow the usual well known pattern of Classical-Hellenistic sites abandoned in the Early Roman period and often reoccupied in LR times. In the survey record, we often face farming sites which are Late Roman as main occupation period but they could possibly go back to earlier Roman times<sup>62</sup>. On other occasions, we encounter sites established in the Classical-Hellenistic period which continue their life into the Early Roman period, or some Classical-Hellenistic farms which were completely abandoned in the Roman period (Fig. 2). Once more, we should ask ourselves about the visibility issue that the archaeological record carries with it as far as the Early Roman period is concerned. With a close eye through the intensive survey results, there are some sites that may give us clues of a Late Hellenistic-Early Roman presence: CN6, in the Hyettos area, is a typical Archaic-Hellenistic farm of a medium – or larger – size and then a Roman-Late Roman large farm/villa, but we can spot a possible continuity of the site as a small Late Hellenistic-Early Roman focus in the between period, that appears through a careful examination of the material and its distribution pattern (the large rural site perhaps receded to the level of a non-residential

<sup>59</sup> ATTEMA-SCHORNER 2012.

<sup>60</sup> WITCHER 2012. See also FARINETTI 2018 for comments on this.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, the excavated farm in locality Sellades, near Arta, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC (ΑΝΔΡΕΑΔΑΚΗ-ΒΛΑΖΑΚΗ 2012, 343-344).

<sup>62</sup> In the Boeotia record, see for instance sites Ts2, Ts3, Ts4 in the countryside of ancient Tanagra (BINTLIFF *et alii* 2008, 561-569; POBLOME *et alii* 2012, 394-395).

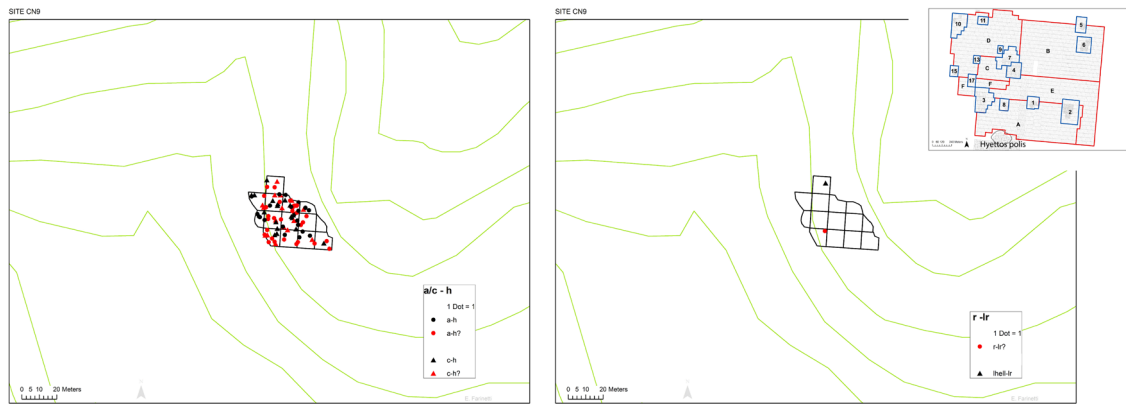


Fig. 2 a-b. Site CN9 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): distribution of finds dated to the Archaic to Hellenistic period, compared with the map for the Roman era (el. A.).

agrarian activity focus) (Figs. 3-4). Something similar happens in site CN2, a Classical-Hellenistic farm which shrinks perhaps about half its size in Late Hellenistic and Early Roman times, but possibly never recovers during the Late Roman period (Fig. 5). The various ceramic sub-categories on Fig. 6 may help to inform us of whether the “R-LR” material largely belongs to the earlier Roman centuries, even to the final phase of the Hellenistic era, when a shrinkage in the site may have occurred, towards the centre and the northern zones<sup>63</sup>.

### The villa system and the family farms

In addition, it should be emphasized that the presence and functioning of the villa system in Greece remains still poorly explored and in need of a careful examination. This new type of rural sites and forms of rural installations (the *villae rusticae*) appear in most Greek regions from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and are linked to the appearance of a new *élite* of landowners and to the increasing tendency on different agricultural strategies resulting into fewer and larger landholdings. Their spread in the Greek countryside vary considerably in size and complexity, as well as in the time of appearance<sup>64</sup>. Boeotia shows a massive disappearance of small farms, and the rise of villas in the first centuries of the empire, not earlier<sup>65</sup>.

An important step in this direction has been made by the results of the international conference *Villae Rusticae* held in Patras in 2010 and a further effort has been undertaken by Athanasios Rizakis, aiming at the classification of villa and farm sites of the Roman period in the light of recent excavations results<sup>66</sup>. As far as the representativity of surface survey data is concerned, the question remains as to how we can classify the material assemblages in terms of which kind of buried archaeological landscape features they represent. The incorporation of the sites into their landscape context, i.e. the recording of their geo-environmental situation in order to detect preferred locations that can be used in the process of site classification, as suggested by R. Witcher for Roman Italy, as well as the spatial relationship with the city site, could be taken into account, for instance.

Particularly effective in the landscape setting of this period in the whole Roman Empire is the role of the market, which directly affects farming and agricultural practices, and consequently landscape structures.

In the mature Roman period, the reference market of the large *villae suburbanae* (located by the city sites or long-connecting roads) are the cities themselves *in primis*, with the emerging large *domus*, while the requests of the wider market come later. Because of this, villa sites were situated at a close distance from the city, but also along long-distance roads (the example of the sites along the Egnatia odos, crossing northern Greece, is quite striking). Full changes in the agrarian strategies, linked to the re-organisation of the market, will appear clearly later in time, but it is interesting to note how in some Greek regions the process started earlier: Crete was involved in economic trajectories already in the Hellenistic period, while after the Roman conquest (69/67 BC) grain ships are attested in Crete coming from the Levant and Egypt, as pointed out by Scott Gallimore<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> BINTLIFF *et alii* in press, chapter 4.

<sup>64</sup> RIZAKIS-TOURATSOGLOU 2013.

<sup>65</sup> BINTLIFF *et alii* 2007.

<sup>66</sup> RIZAKIS 2013; ΡΙΖΑΚΗΣ 2018.

<sup>67</sup> GALLIMORE 2015.

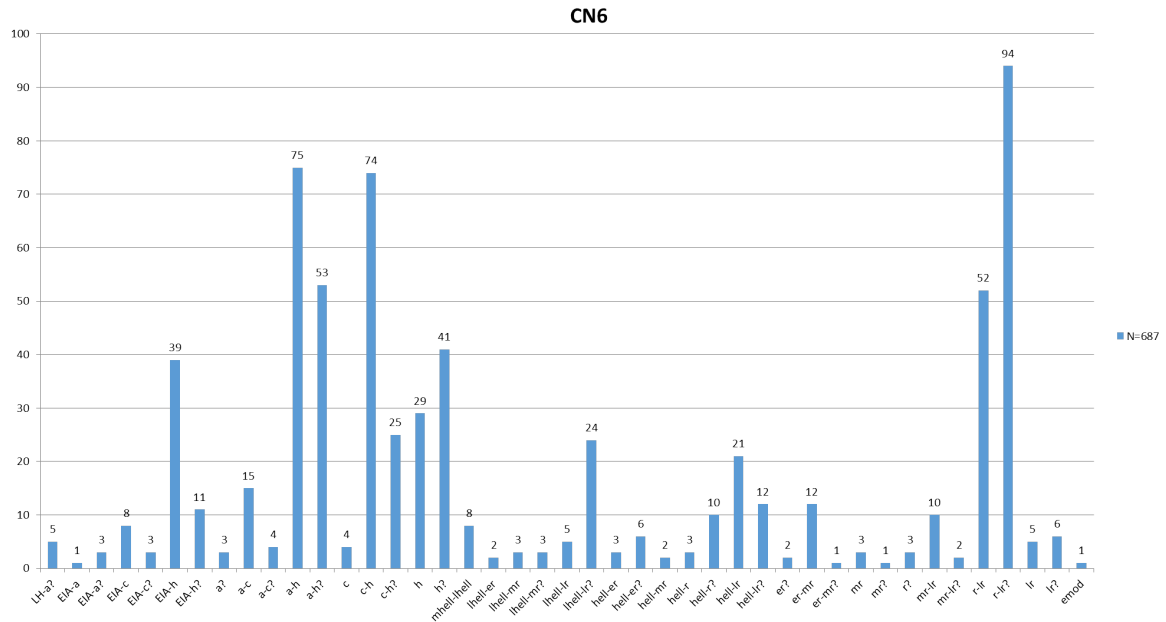


Fig. 3. Site CN6 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): histogram showing the representation of dated sherds by period (el. A.).

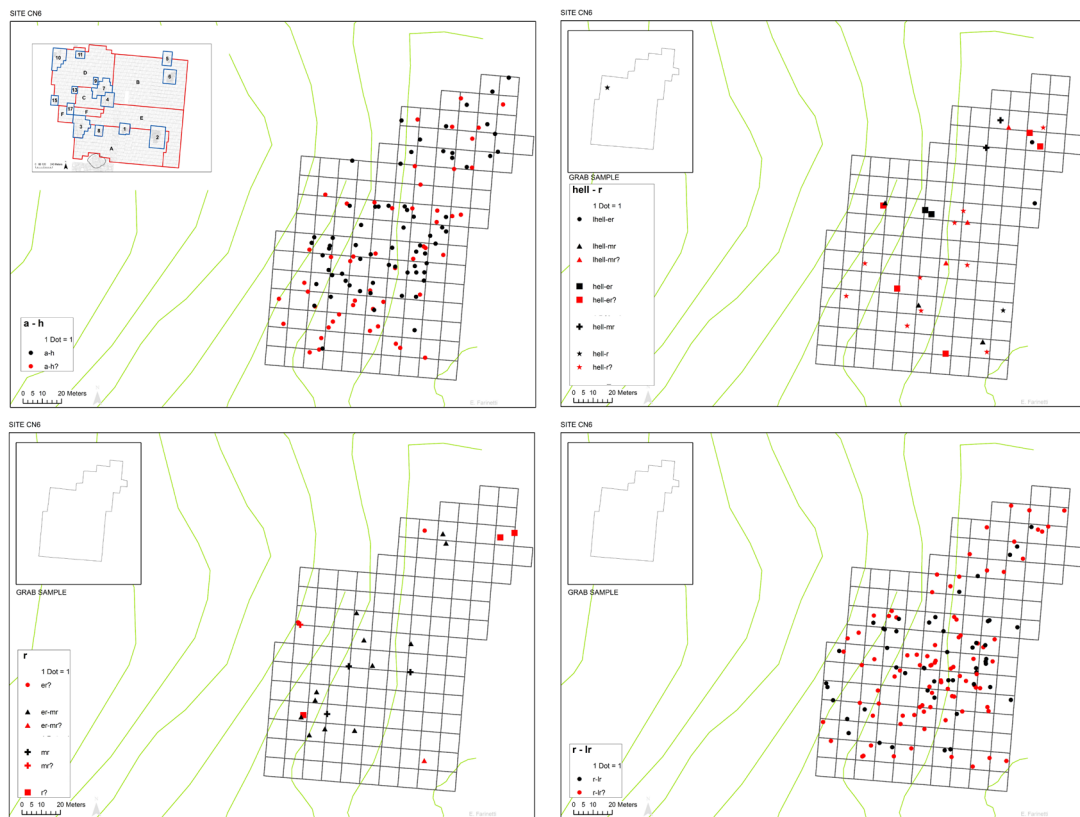


Fig. 4. Site CN6 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): period maps (el. A.).

Strictly connected to the presence and characters of the villa sites in Greece is the debate on the family farms, typical structures of the Greek rural landscape of earlier periods and an integral part of the *asty-chora* system forming the Greek polis. Did the family farm sites all disappear during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC or were they transformed into larger ‘villa’ sites? Or rather, did the family farm run by free peasants continue in the Early Roman period?

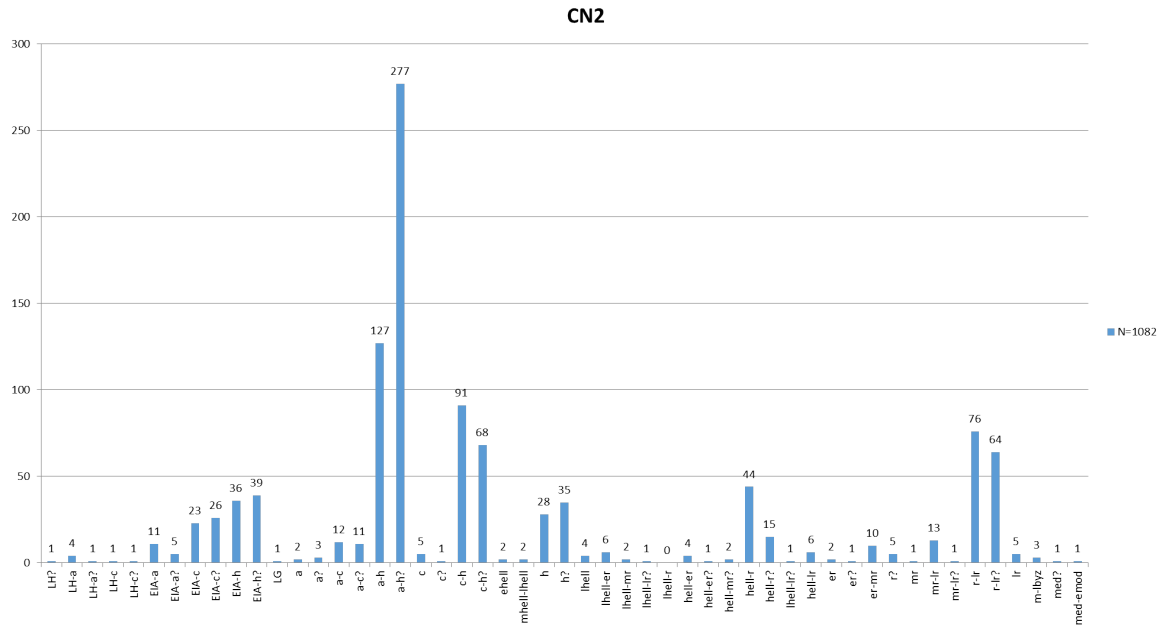


Fig. 5. Site CN2 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): histogram showing the representation of dated sherds by period (el. A.).

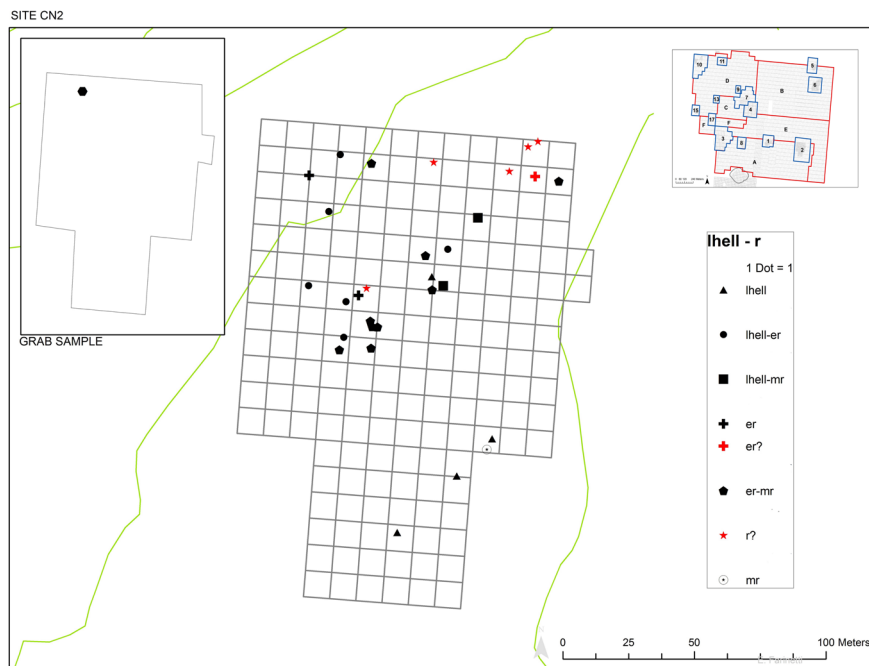


Fig. 6. Site CN2 in the *chora* of the ancient town of Hyettos (Boeotia): distribution of finds dated to the Late Hellenistic and Roman period (el. A.).

Despite the general diffusion of larger estates and the widespread re-organization of land properties, the “family farms” (less than 100 sqm in size)<sup>68</sup>, corresponding to small and middle-size estates, did not cease to exist as part of the Greek rural landscape, especially in more remote or less wealthy areas, such as Epirus, for instance. As Rizakis suggests<sup>69</sup>, in some regions traditional small rural farms coexist with the newly

<sup>68</sup> Discussions of ancient sources for typical family-farm estates in Classical times, combined with estimates of crop yields under contemporary conditions, produce a typical range from 3.6ha to 5.5ha

of farmed land per family (BURFORD COOPER 1977/78; BINTLIFF-SNODGRASS 1985; DE ANGELIS 2000).

<sup>69</sup> RIZAKIS 2014; 2018.

established villas and larger estates, continuing to apply long established agricultural strategies<sup>70</sup>. In this respect, it has to be pointed out that there is no evidence that the Greek countryside experienced the same degree of change or “capitalistic revolution”, often connected with the Romanization process, as in other provinces of the Empire<sup>71</sup>. According to this, the family farms could be considered an element of continuity in the Greek landscape, which can distinguish the Greek countryside, or at least some areas of it, in comparison to the phenomena of capitalistic revolution occurring at a large scale elsewhere (in Roman Imperial Italy for instance, or in Roman North Africa). The archaeological record is still far from giving a clear answer to those questions, and we once again remain with a high degree of regional variability to deal with.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Bintliff highlights three leading factors which play a role in the landscape transformations in Late Hellenistic-Early Roman times<sup>72</sup>: ecological crisis, following the period of overexploitation of the land in the Classical period; socio-economic dislocation, involving larger estates and wider market strategies as well as wider distance movement of peasants and labour forces; core-periphery effects, involving the shifting of the main geographical interest towards the West of Greece and Greece becoming a peripheral region of Rome<sup>73</sup>. Those factors may characterise the “global” dimension of the landscape transformation which occurred in Greece in the last two centuries in the BC era, and they were interlaced with the ‘local’ effects in different ways and along different paths.

Generally speaking, the progressive abandonment of the rural landscape, with a peak in the Imperial period almost everywhere, has often different local historical reasons, showing once again how the regional and micro-regional variability has to be examined carefully in the twofold spatio-temporal dimension. In addition, an explanation of the deserted rural landscape as a result of emerging urbanization – the “nucleation factor” suggested by S. Alcock<sup>74</sup> based on the example of Phlius – does not fit other regions, such as Boeotia, where rural and urban shrinking chronologically coincide<sup>75</sup>. Roman Greece never reaches the completely reversed 70% - 30% rural to urban population ratio marking Early Imperial Roman Italy<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore, changes in the property system, with the consequent abandonment of the countryside, appear earlier in certain areas already in the Hellenistic period and involve local *élites*. The examination of aspects of social differentiation, which can be traced in the landscape through the property system and the relationship town and country, as well as in the inner urban layout and domestic architecture – a quite easy task for the mature Imperial era – need further inquiries into the very Early Roman period.

In particular, in the Early Roman period we can follow traces of transformations in the landscape along two main lines: the slow one and the abrupt one.

Slow transformations in the landscape reflect slow transformations in social relationships with a starting point in the Hellenistic-Late Hellenistic period. The impact with Rome does not stop the process but rather enhances and sharpens it. Signs of slow changes can be traced in the urban layout and house plans, in the changes in the property system with the appearance of larger estates in the countryside (often coexisting with relatively small rural sites, mirroring an early social differentiation), in traces of wealth appearing in the rural sites. In the survey record they can be detected in the Hellenistic phases of Early Roman sites, as a possible index of social resilience. In Boeotia, although the really dramatic site loss seems to take place at the turn of the millennium BC/AD, results of intensive artifact surveys in various Boeotian areas show that the drastic decline in site use sees its inception in Late Hellenistic times (around 200 BC). Elsewhere, local factors lead to slightly different patterns. Changes in the property system, with the consequent abandonment of the countryside, appear earlier in certain areas of Greece already in the Hellenistic period, such as in Central Greece in Thessaly for instance<sup>77</sup>; the same, although due to different reasons,

<sup>70</sup> FOXHALL 2004; RIZAKIS 2013; 2014.

<sup>71</sup> RIZAKIS 2013; 2014.

<sup>72</sup> BINTLIFF 2008, 30.

<sup>73</sup> BINTLIFF 2008, fig. 32.

<sup>74</sup> ALCOCK 1993, 169.

<sup>75</sup> BINTLIFF 2008; BINTLIFF *et alii* 2017.

<sup>76</sup> DE GRAAF 2012; BINTLIFF 2012.

<sup>77</sup> An early appearance of slight transformations can be noticed in

other Greek regions (led by the Macedonian *élites*, according to BINTLIFF 2012, 318), as discussed in FARINETTI 2018, where the examples of the islands of Thera and Therasia are presented. There, the rural landscape is characterised by large properties connected with fairly small sites, already in the Hellenistic Ptolemaic period, mirroring an early social differentiation which can be appreciated in surface pottery trends (ΣΜΙΤΟΝΙΑΣ - FARINETTI - ΚΟΡΑΑΤΖΑΚΗ 2015). In Lohmann's survey of the deme of Athene, he noticed the drastic disappearance of rural settlement from Hellenistic times (LOHMANN 1993).



Fig. 7. The site of Haliartos (Boeotia), with the acropolis (the smaller walled area on the left) and the lower extension of the city (on the right), built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and occupied until the 171 BC, when Haliartos was destroyed by the Romans (airphoto by D. Grossman).

occurs on the island of Lemnos, where, as attested epigraphically for the western district, Athenian *élites* in the Early Hellenistic period (late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC) held large estates in the immediate surroundings of the town of Myrina<sup>78</sup>. In the slow transformation process, the Romans and the Roman-izing local *élites* would play the role of influencers, contributing to the gradually changing attributions of different meanings to landscape structures.

On the other hand, abrupt transformations occurred in the landscape, due to effects of war or political events. In this respect, the Roman impact, on the built landscape especially, could be analysed within the framework of the eventful archaeology<sup>79</sup>. In this respect, the Romans play an important role in terms of political and military history. Their political actions become showcases to demonstrate their interest not only as military in the short term but also as cultural rulers in the long term. But at what extent can a historical event affect landscape trajectories? Which are the events that can activate resilience patterns in the landscape? Following Bolender<sup>80</sup>, when does an event become significant? Could the significance be read, for instance, in a radical transformation of the rural landscape?

Taking as example the Boeotian polis of Haliartos, the destruction of the town by the Romans in 171 BC during the Third Macedonian war is followed by a spectacular collapse which also affects the rural landscape, and the land of the city is given to the Athenians (Fig. 7)<sup>81</sup>. Examples of heavy destructions and strong landscape transformations are certainly to be considered in the area of Corinth, destroyed in 146

<sup>78</sup> FICUCIELLO 2013; FARINETTI 2018.

<sup>79</sup> See the volume edited by BOLENDER in 2010.

<sup>80</sup> *Id.* 2010.

<sup>81</sup> The reconstruction of the city site of ancient Haliartos, and of its inner urban layout, in the period preceding the destruction (171 BC) is in preparation (DONNELLAN *et alii* in preparation).

BC, or the Epirus region, where the cities were destroyed by Aemilius Paulus in 167 BC. In those cases, the role of the short term and of the *histoire événementielle* can be seen to be crucial to the way each city and each *chora* landscape reacts to general trends in the medium term<sup>82</sup>.

In conclusion, can we disentangle the historical interpretation of the landscape narratives facing the transformations in the Greek landscape in the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman period as local responses to global trends? Are the changes so radical or deep that we can study the Roman impact on the rural landscape of Greece within the framework of the eventful archaeology<sup>83</sup>? Or should we rather study patterns of resilience<sup>84</sup> following complex adaptive cycles, by interpreting the cultural (prior to the political and economic) role in landscape transformations of the external power differently?

emeri.farinetti@uniroma3.it

Università Roma Tre - Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene

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<sup>82</sup> BINTLIFF 1999.

<sup>83</sup> BOLENDER 2010.

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