# The More Unusual Dots on the Map: "Special-Purpose" Sites and the Texture of Landscape

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Mediterranean survey archaeologists would prefer not to talk about "dots on the map" anymore, believing we have moved past the days when reconstructions of ancient settlement patterns consisted primarily of uniform black dots scattered over a distribution map. It is certainly true that, over the past three decades, regional projects in the Mediterranean have greatly improved on methods of both interpretation and representation. Refinements have ranged from tracing site boundaries by more sensitive means, to being more specific about types and quantities of artifacts present on sites, to embedding sites in their "off-site" context, thus defining them against their "background scatter". As a result ancient landscapes today look far less like a bad case of the measles, and more like a world where people lived, and lived differently, through time.

So why does this chapter's title resurrect the notion of "dots"? Our explanation is this. Most sites identified by Mediterranean survey projects fall broadly into the category of "settlements". They are usually identified by a mix of domestic pottery (fine wares and coarse wares), agricultural equipment or other household implements (such as loom weights or spindle whorls), together with tiles that in most cases indicate the presence of roofed structures. These settlements are denoted in various ways; they are named as farmsteads, habitations, hamlets, villages, or towns, depending on the size of the overall scatter or the extent of building foundations. Their number and distribution are usually analyzed in terms of their implications for economic (principally agricultural) activity and, to a lesser extent, political organization, as well as in terms of regional demographic patterns. Without question, settlements are the most common as well as the most fundamental category of site for archaeologists to recognize and to place on the map, as best we can. Such settlements, however, are not the target of this discussion.

Rather, our discussion here concerns entities that do not fall within such a classification. Since the beginning of regional exploration in the Mediterranean, places or things have been discovered that do not belong in that category of settlement − whether farmstead, hamlet, or village. These include: sanctuaries and shrines (of all types and sizes), graves, quarries, caves, kilns,

cisterns, agricultural processing sites, mines, dumps, lithic knapping debris, roads and paths, threshing floors, check dams, drainage ditches, bridges, sheepfolds, and more. One catch-all label that has been applied to this mélange is "special-purpose site" − a term that covers a multitude of sins, but also masks a host of possibilities.

The ambition here is to focus attention on these more unusual dots on the map, exploring what they can potentially offer to the study of *chora*, catchment and communication, and thus to the broader domain of landscape archaeology. The discussion begins by examining how Mediterranean projects have recognized and treated such places, from survey's inception in the region to more recent times. Next, we will try to account for the developments thus observed, before presenting two case studies where special-purpose sites provide a texture, or nuance, to our understanding of particular historical landscapes. The ultimate goal, from a Mediterranean perspective, is to stimulate thinking about what such special sites might contribute to the future of landscape archaeology in the Black Sea area.

## *"Old" and "New" approaches to special-purpose sites*

Since trying to review the results of all Mediterranean survey projects would be an overwhelming task, for the sake of clarity we have decided simply to compare two survey publications, one from the "early days" (by which is meant work in the 1950s and 1960s), and one recently published project report (reflecting research conducted in the 1980s). From this comparison, we can observe how the study and interpretation of special-purpose sites have developed, especially how such places have, or have not, been integrated into overall structures of regional analysis. The comparison also provides a springboard for identifying the larger theoretical and methodological forces at work in Mediterranean (and indeed global) archaeology, forces which have profoundly affected our treatment of these unusual dots on the map.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that the discussion in this chapter essentially concentrates on regional projects in Greece, and on studies of historic periods (roughly, the Archaic to the Roman eras). In part this is personal preference on the part of the authors. Yet it is also true that Greece provides arguably the best laboratory of survey work in the Mediterranean, with numerous projects conducted in recent decades: a flurry of activity that stimulated intense methodological debate, especially in the 1980s and 1990s[1] (Figs. 1-2). Sadly, for a variety of reasons, regional projects in Greece have become less common today.

On one side of this comparison of projects stands the acknowledged grandfather of Greek surveys, the Minnesota Messenia Expedition. This work, carried out in the course of the 1950s and 1960s, was published in 1972 as *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Regional Environment*.[2] On

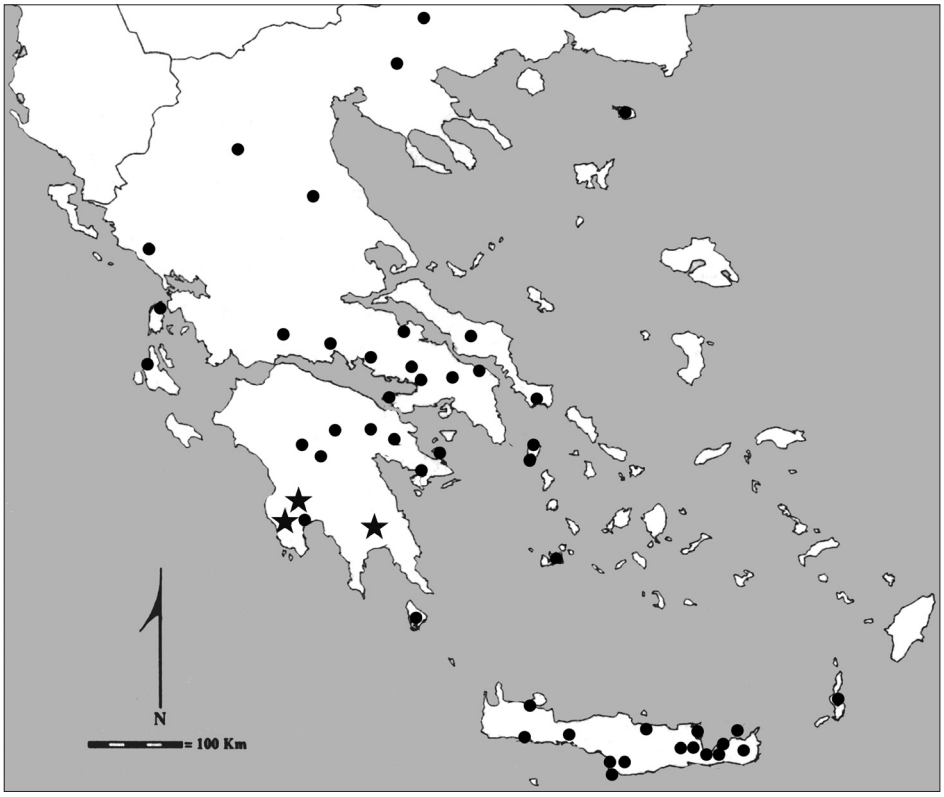


*Fig. 1. The distribution of recent surface surveys in Greece. Stars indicate the location of the University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition, the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, and the Laconia Survey (after Cherry 2003, fig. 9.4)*

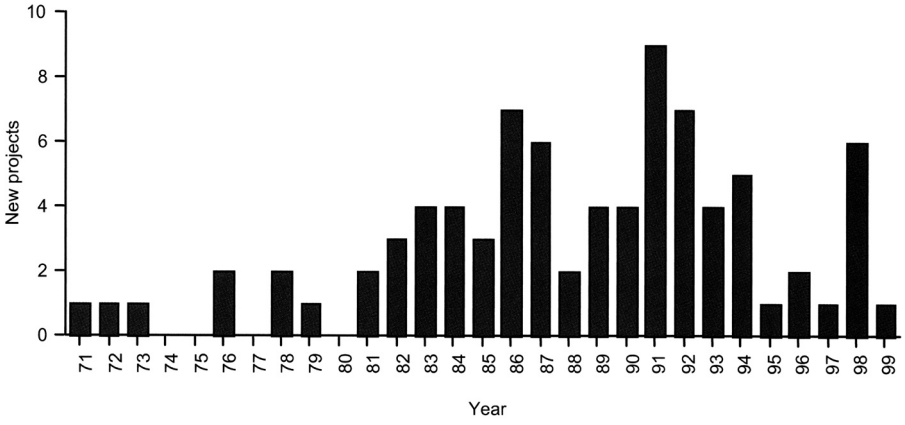


*Fig. 2. Annual start-ups of new survey projects in Greece, 1971-1999 (after Alcock and Cherry 2004a, fig. 1.3)*

the other side stands the Laconia Survey, the fieldwork for which was done in the course of the 1980s, with two impressive volumes now produced.[3] These two surveys, obviously, are geographically related, being located in adjacent prongs of the southern Greek Peloponnesos; moreover, their histories have been closely intertwined, with the Spartans of Laconia controlling the territory and population of Messenia for centuries (see below, pp. 36-39).

As one might expect, given the project's execution in the early days of Mediterranean survey, the Minnesota Messenia Expedition represents a less methodologically rigorous, more extensive stage of fieldwork, characterized by non-systematic, non-intensive reconnaissance. On the other hand, the team worked in the region for years, amassing a sizable data set, albeit one with a distinctly prehistoric bias. In their distribution maps the investigators indicated two types of site: habitation (HAB) and cemetery (CEM) (Fig. 3); in the more detailed site gazetteer their listing of "archaeological descriptions" adds the category of SHRINE.[4] Each of these functional categories was distinguished through fairly predictable means: domestic pottery and roof tiles indicated a habitation; figurines or other obvious votive material meant a shrine; the identification of graves normally depended on tomb architecture (cist, chamber or *tholos*). Significantly, many of the special-purpose sites thus identified − especially in the case of shrines − are large and often significant places, in many cases, such as the pan Hellenic sanctuary at Olympia, long known through previous exploration or ancient testimonia.

All this leads to an entirely sensible, but nonetheless crude, tripartite classification of human life in Messenia. Moreover, the role played by such sites in the project's reconstruction of diachronic regional activity emerges as relatively limited. Little was made of the discovery of shrines, beyond the desire to associate them with places named in ancient textual sources, such as Strabon or Pausanias. Cemeteries were used either to locate "missing villages" in order to calculate the degree and extent of agricultural activity, or to help assess the size of particular communities, and thus of regional population levels. In other words, special-purpose sites were either places already known and merely to be rediscovered; or they were employed as proxy indicators for economic and demographic questions.

By contrast we can "flash forward" some thirty years to the Laconia Survey. The nature and degree of data presentation have changed a great deal, with much more, and more tightly compressed, information.[5] More importantly, however, the spectrum of just what might be imagined to lie out in the countryside has also changed enormously. Distribution maps for the historic periods (Fig. 4) routinely depict: large site (village, fort); hamlet, cluster of farms; "villa", large farm; farmstead; large sanctuary; shrine/small sanctuary; spring. Assigning these functions rested on a detailed and explicit assessment of what was actually found at each site, and where precisely the site was located. One example can serve to demonstrate this practice. Part of a miniature vase was discovered at Laconia Survey site B103, a find that would

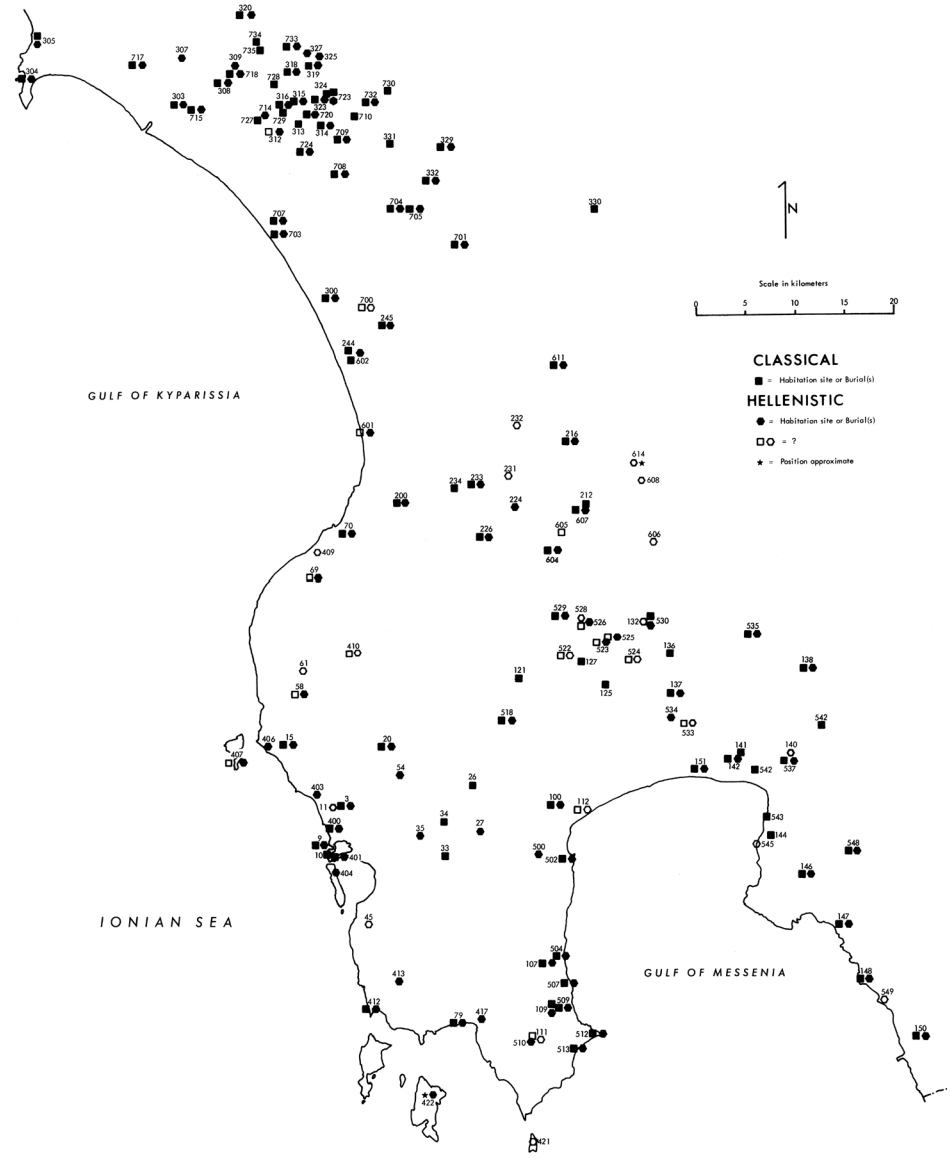


*Fig. 3. Distribution of Classical and Hellenistic sites, University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition (McDonald and Rapp 1972, Pocket Map 8-17; Courtesy The University of Minnesota Press)*

once have been all that was necessary to declare the site a shrine. Instead, the Laconia Survey employed more rigorous criteria for their categorizations − in this case noting, for example, the presence of numerous table-wares, coupled with the lack of anything to indicate food storage or preparation, together

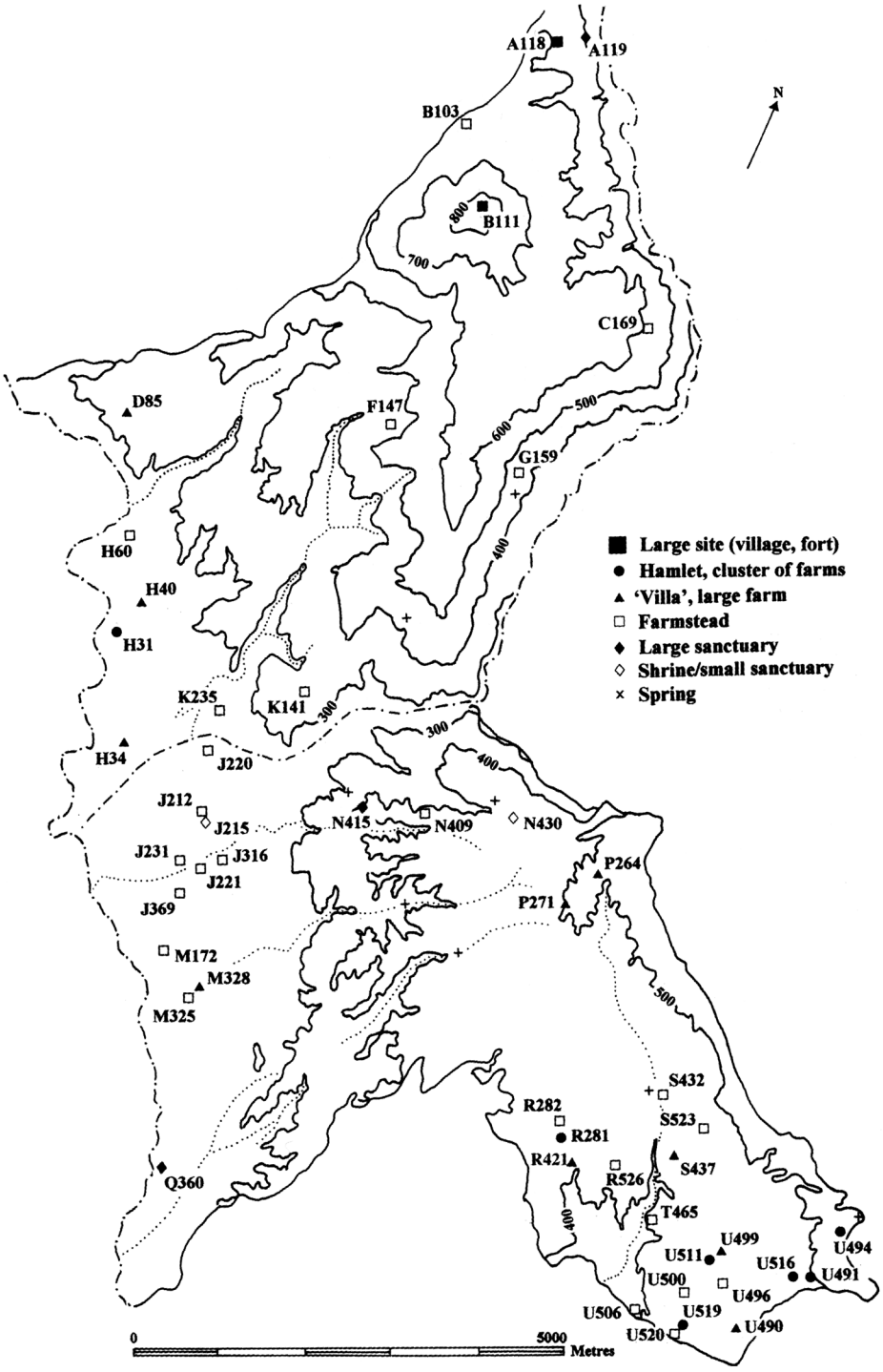


*Fig. 4. Distribution of Classical sites, Laconia Survey (Catling 2002, Ill. 5.3; Courtesy Richard Catling and The British School at Athens)*

with the site's location on an established route, on the edges of Spartiate territory.[6] Even taking into account such considerations, B103 was adjudged only a "possible" cult place.

As for how such data were integrated into the overall conclusions of the Laconia Survey, discussion of the "religious landscape" earned independent sections in the final publications.[7] Here specifically cultic sites were placed in relation to each other, to communication routes, and to settlement sites − in other words, in relation to the other dots on the map. The distribution and chronological patterning of sanctuaries in the countryside was also used to comment on political and social trajectories: in this case, the control of Sparta over its hinterland, and especially Spartiate relations with other dependent groups such as the *perioikoi* and Helots. Everywhere implicit in these interpretations is the now widely accepted role of sanctuaries and rituals as creators of social cohesion and social distance in the human landscape. These are arguments, of course, reflecting the influence of the pioneering work of François de Polignac, first published as *La naissance de la cité grecque* in 1984.[8]

### *The "New Wave" of survey and special-purpose sites*

What, then, changed between the Messenia and Laconia surveys, two projects separated only by some three decades? Before tackling that question, two points should be made. First, the intention here is not to criticize, unfairly and anachronistically, the work of the Minnesota Messenia Expedition; recent additional work in that region by the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (see below, pp. 36-39) has only underscored the magnitude of their early achievement.[9] Second, there are manifestly many visible stages of development in Greek survey between the two stark poles outlined here. Nevertheless, it remains apparent that a revolution − or a "new wave" of survey, as John Cherry has called it[10] − stands between those two poles, and that new wave directly involves and affects our use and understanding of special-purpose sites.

So what are these changes? We should probably first consider the fundamental issue of field methodology. The Minnesota Messenia Expedition, on the one hand, relied primarily on vehicular transport and talking to local informants in their extensive explorations; the Laconia Survey was entirely oriented around systematic pedestrian fieldwalking, with individual walkers spaced some 20 meters apart. Between the two projects lay the recognition that just *how* one surveys directly affects just *what* one finds: an observation stimulated by comparisons with regional work in other parts of the world.[11] The corollary development was an increasing Mediterranean trend towards an ever-higher intensity in fieldwalking tactics − usually represented by ever-closer spacing of pedestrian fieldwalkers and by ever-greater attention paid to the observation and analysis of individual finds.

This growing intensity of reconnaissance is directly relevant to the issue of special-purpose sites, for these are, on the whole, usually quite small, often

only c. 0.2 ha. or less in size.[12] The nature of sites such as caves, kilns, discrete graves, and so on, may also require more careful, systematic exploration to locate; they are frequently not visible from a distance, or a trained eye might be needed to spot them. Increased intensity in investigation is thus key to the discovery of our "unusual dots", yet increased intensity has other − and in the eyes of some − potentially negative consequences, a point to which we must return (pp. 41-42).

Methodological change is vital to consider here, but it should not be taken as the only factor behind the new wave under examination. Another element has been a growing realization and acceptance of the sheer variety of possible rural activities. Cultural anthropologists have been involved in Greek survey projects from their very beginnings (indeed, from the days of the Minnesota Messenia Expedition); interdisciplinarity has been one of the prouder hallmarks of regional work in Greece. Much excellent ethnographic work took place, for example, in conjunction with the Argolid Exploration Project, carried out in the Akte Peninsula of the Southern Argolid during the 1970s and 1980s.[13] Perhaps as a result, that project displayed an early awareness of the existence and significance of special-purpose sites. Ethno-archaeological work, not least a "modern site survey" which essentially treated the modern countryside as an archaeological landscape, was also conducted in this same Southern Argolid Peninsula.[14] Through its recovery of a surprising variety of rural activities and their traces of material discard, such research stimulated increasingly adventurous reconstructions of the past, more closely reflecting the "busyness" of the countryside.

Just as provocative was the need to explain the appearance and meaning of off-site finds − the low-level scatter, or "carpet", of artifactual material discovered by the majority of intensive survey projects in Greece (for a representative mapping of such data, see Fig. 5). The manuring of agricultural fields has been one popular explanation for this phenomenon, but many other everyday practices and routine causes must surely have been involved.[15] Ethnographic observations and off-site material together thus pushed the edges of the envelope for survey archaeologists, encouraging them to look for − indeed, to expect − evidence of practices other than merely habitation in the countryside. Special-purpose dots on the map have benefited from this new sensitivity.

Aligned with this wider range of imaginable rural activities is a critically expanded range of the questions thought appropriate to ask of survey data. In the early years of regional work, as represented by the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, the principal issues addressed revolved around economy, demography and survival: how many people were there at different periods, where did they live, and how did they farm? Sorting out "settlement and land use" was the overriding concern of Mediterranean survey archaeology, and by and large that remains the case today. But additional elements have now

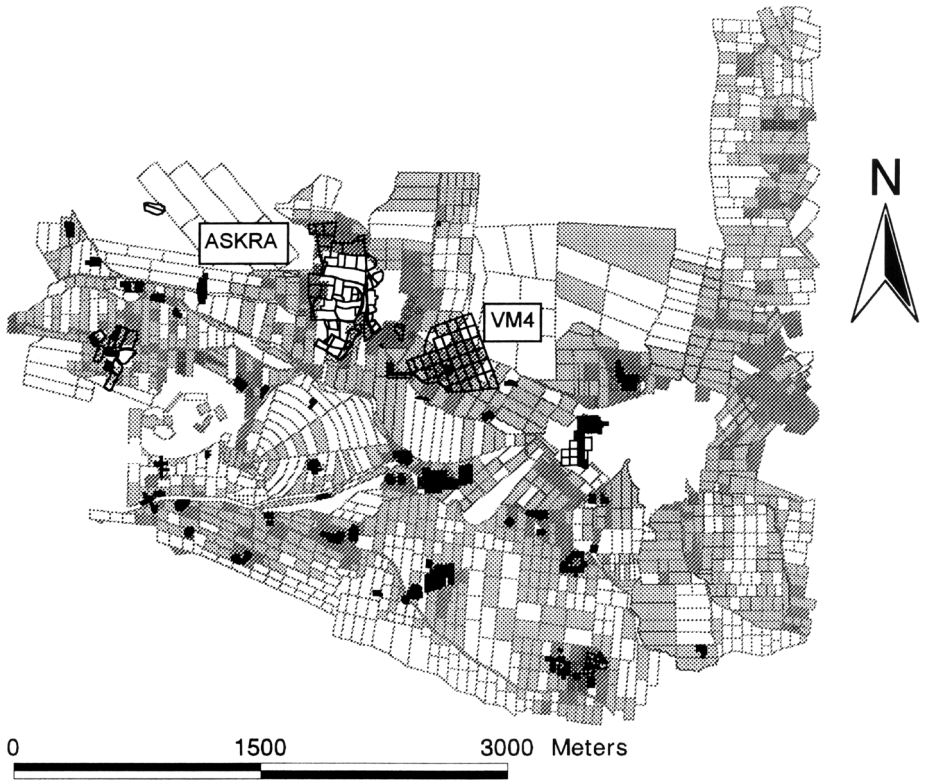


*Fig. 5. Map of sherd densities, Valley of the Muses, Boeotia Survey (Bintliff and Sbonias 2000, fig. 23.1; courtesy John Bintliff)*

been added to that rubric − as the Laconia Survey put it, the goal now is to investigate "settlement, land use, and other forms of human activity in the survey area".[16] "Other forms of human activity" is a somewhat open-ended construction, of course, but it at least allows for the deployment of regional data in new ways, and on new controversies.

To take but one example, we could consider the question of a region's external trade links. A phenomenon noted by the Argolid Exploration Project was the appearance of late Roman pottery kilns in coastal locations − a phenomenon, it is worth underlining, recognized in this era *only* through the work of intensive survey.[17] The investigators linked these kilns to the period's development of extended external contacts, notably through an enhanced outside market for the peninsula's olive oil production. Amphora studies on Crete, and the study of the Cretan wine trade in Roman times, have similarly profited from regional exploration and kiln mapping;[18] other, similar examples could be adduced. This willingness to expand the use of regional survey data reflects, no doubt, a growing confidence in its quality − or, paradoxically, a

growing acceptance of the problems inherent in all archaeological data sets, be they from excavation or survey. David Clarke's famous 1973 meditation on his discipline's "loss of innocence" reached the world of Mediterranean archaeology during these same decades.[19]

One final, and extremely influential, theoretical development can be identified at work behind the new wave of Mediterranean survey. That is the rise in popularity, especially in European and North American archaeology, of post-processualism.[20] Without attempting to define or delimit the post-processual school (an impossible task), for our purposes it is enough to point to its emphasis on individual experience and perception, on the power of ritual and symbols, and on the complexity and ambiguity of the material record. These concerns, mediated through regional studies elsewhere (notably in prehistoric Europe), have percolated into Mediterranean survey.[21] "Other forms of human activity", for many Mediterranean survey archaeologists, now include ritual practice, emotional attachment, and commemorative behavior, aspects of life which inflect and are affected by our traditional (and still entirely valid) research objectives of settlement and land use studies.

It is, we suspect, largely thanks to this influence that an increasing number of Mediterranean scholars talk today not about "survey archaeology" or even "regional settlement studies", but about landscape archaeology. Landscape, it is felt, better encompasses those additional extra-economic, non-functionalist parts of life that many of us believe can be captured, however dimly, through good survey practice. Not surprisingly, a vital component of this landscape approach in the ancient Mediterranean revolves around the identification and interpretation of sacred places (sanctuaries, shrines, venerated tombs and monuments) in the countryside. A willingness to "place the gods" within the landscape adds a particularly provocative dimension to regional analysis and to the integration of special-purpose sites into broader historical reconstructions.[22] That statement can be reinforced by two brief, impressionistic case studies, drawn from the research of one of the authors (Alcock), before the Mediterranean situation is briefly compared to research trajectories in the Black Sea by the other (Rempel).

### *Case studies*

The first is a local study, drawn from the 1990s work (co-directed by Alcock) of the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, one goal of which was intensively to re-survey a portion of the territory covered by the Minnesota Messenia Expedition. Unlike that earlier endeavor, however, this project was equally interested in post-prehistoric Messenia − a region with a very unusual classical history.[23]

In Archaic and Classical times (roughly the 7th to the early 4th centuries BC), Messenia was controlled by the neighboring power of Sparta in Laconia. Much of the region was inhabited by Helots, a dependent community whose

purpose in life was to feed and serve the Spartiate warrior class. Helots have suffered the usual fate of subordinate peoples in antiquity, receiving little attention in our ancient sources and even less from modern archaeologists. Asking where and how Helots lived in the Messenian landscape was thus one of the project's principal research questions. The answer we received was quite intriguing. Most of the (few) historians who speculated on this question had predicted a highly dispersed scatter of isolated Helot farmsteads. By contrast, at least in the territory we explored, Helots appear to have chosen a community-oriented settlement pattern, with people nucleated in only a few villages (Fig. 6). This nucleation in settlement arguably helps to explain the "solidarity" of the Messenian Helots: their apparent sense of communal identity under Spartan rule, and their ability to organize revolt. Following Messenia's liberation by the Theban general Epaminondas in 369 BC, settlement in the region took on an entirely new cast, with more sites discovered, more broadly distributed across the study region and now of variable sizes (from villages to farmsteads; Fig. 7). The political fortunes of the region are thus dramatically reflected in its landscape.

What, however, about any more "unusual dots on the map", and what they can reveal about life in Messenia before and after liberation? It was already clear, through investigation of Bronze Age remains, that Helots practiced tomb cult (at Mycenaean graves) during the years of Spartan control, a practice

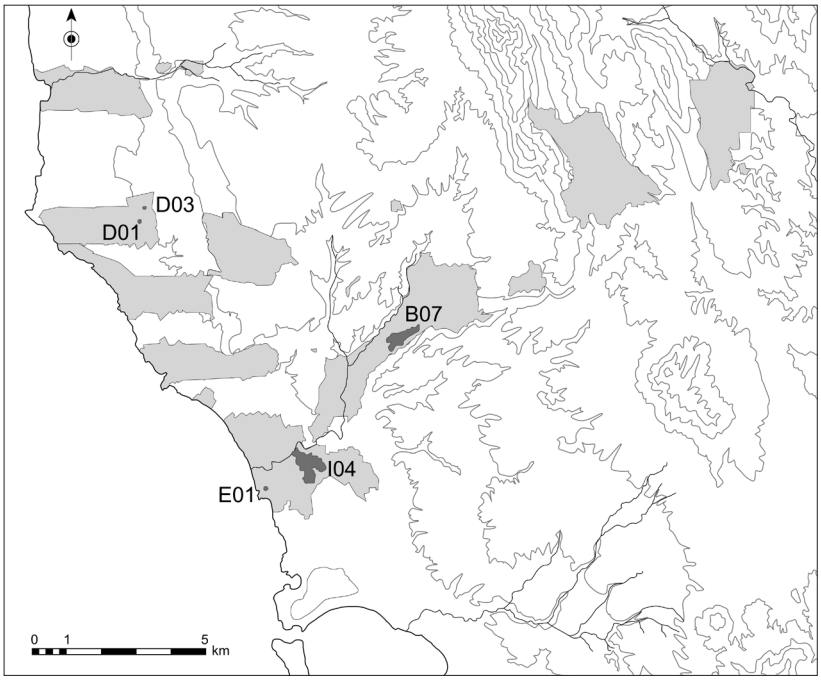


*Fig. 6. Distribution of Archaic sites, Pylos Regional Archaeology Project (Courtesy Pylos Regional Archaeological Project; Graphics: Rosemary J. Robertson)*

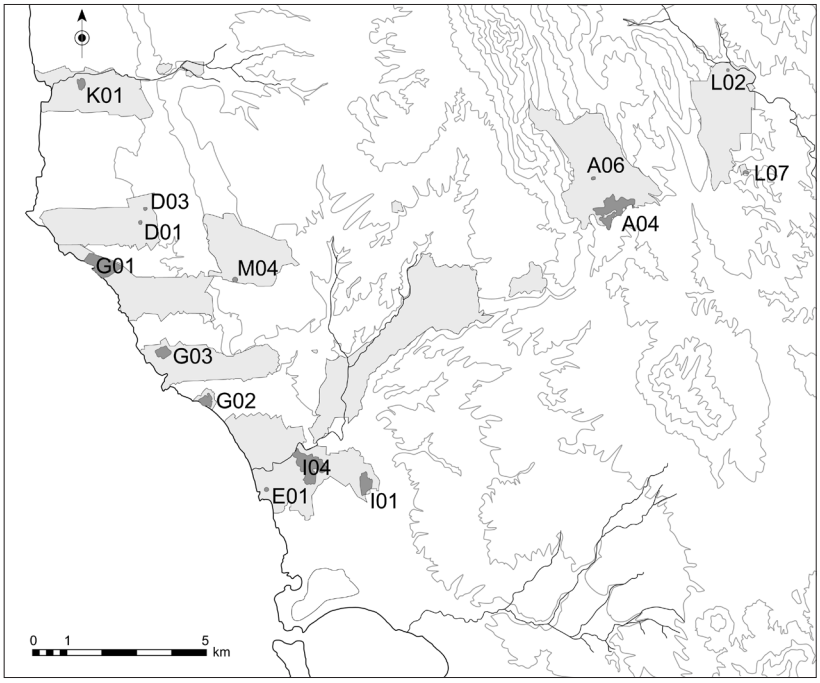


*Fig. 7. Distribution of Hellenistic sites, Pylos Regional Archaeology Project (Courtesy Pylos Regional Archaeological Project; Graphics: Rosemary J. Robertson)*

thought to reflect ancestor worship and to provide a source of resistance to Spartan domination. Survey work now fleshes out the ritual landscape of the Helots, with the discovery of a handful of small rural shrines as well. Shrines and tombs provided communal meeting points in the landscape, supplying shared places for communication and mutual support, much like the choice of nucleated settlement. All of this ritual activity, perhaps not surprisingly, was at a very small scale and quite unobtrusive in character.

Such unobtrusiveness seems to disappear with the liberation of Epaminondas; we see as abrupt a change in special-purpose sites as in residential patterns. First, the number of tomb cults sharply increases in post-liberation, Hellenistic Messenia. Second, survey teams have located the remains of additional rural shrines. What is perhaps most striking is that these appear now in higher, more visible locations: that is, in places where they could see and be seen. At least two such sanctuaries were intervisible: one in a substantial community, the other on an isolated summit − perhaps signaling some new kind of boundary relation.[24]

What this evidence suggests is that, following liberation, ritual visibility was no longer to be avoided. Indeed, the prominence of such cult places may have been increasingly important, as Messenian communities now sought to mark territory as their own, in a manner familiar in other parts of Greece for

centuries, but long forbidden to the inhabitants of Messenia. Settlement pattern change alone would be sufficient to signal significant transformation in the Messenian landscape, but the patterning of cult and tomb cult adds additional nuance, additional "texture" to its understanding. All in all, the integration of settlement and special-purpose sites goes some way to recovering the previously "invisible" world of the Messenian Helots, before and after liberation.

Our second case study is broader in its scope, and relies on comparative or "side-by-side" survey − that is, the combination of several survey data sets to illuminate macro-regional developments in human landscapes. Side-by-side survey represents a very promising, if still far from unproblematic, development in the Mediterranean world with its many available data sets.[25]

In this context, we can focus on one particular phenomenon: the chronological patterning of rural cult places in the Greek countryside. Numerous regional projects, from all over Greece, have found instances of this particular kind of "unusual dot". The numbers are nowhere very great, and it is clear that many survey archaeologists have been extremely (and perhaps overly) cautious about such identifications. Yet careful surface reconnaissance has unquestionably sprinkled a dusting of rural cults − shrines not mentioned in any textual source and otherwise completely invisible to us − across the countryside.

The geographical range and number of these shrines is briefly outlined in Table 1.[26] Without entering into detail on any individual examples, identifications here rested on some combination of the nature of finds and their quantities, coupled with the site's placement, whether in isolation or in relation to factors such as borders or unusual natural features. These shrines are usually (if not always) very small indeed; they appear at different points in time; and they endure for variable lengths of time. But in almost every instance they obey one firm chronological rule: they are visible and active at some point during the Archaic to Hellenistic epochs (c. 6th to 1st centuries BC), and al-

Table 1.
*Numbers and density/hectare of shrines identified by Greek survey projects*

| Project | No. of shrines identified | Density/hectare |
|---|---|---|
| Argolid Exploration Project | 17 | 0.4 |
| Methana Survey | 3 | 0.3 |
| Laconia Survey | 14 | 0.2 |
| Southern Euboea Survey | 6 | 0.15 |
| Berbati-Limes Archaeological Survey | 2 | 0.08 |
| Pylos Regional Archaeological Project | 3 | 0.08 |
| Nemea Valley Archaeological Project | 2 | 0.04 |
| Boeotia Survey | 1 | 0.02 |
| University of Minnesota Messenia Expedition | 5 | 0.001 |

most none of them continues into the early Roman period (c. 1st century BC to 3rd century AD). A similar trend is visible in related ritual practices, for example in tomb cult and in the ritual use of caves, leaving us to explain an apparent pattern of abandonment in early imperial times.

One place to begin is by noting that this pattern is accompanied by a parallel abandonment of the great majority of rural settlements. Archaeological survey results, from almost all projects so far available, point to a very real decline in the number of people dwelling in the early Roman countryside.[27] It might seem simple enough, then, to bundle all these changes together, allowing the diminution of more practical, economic rural activities to account for the decline in other, ritual or symbolic sets of behavior. That the two are connected is not in question, but not, perhaps, at such a simplistic and mechanical level. Simply because people no longer lived in the countryside, it cannot automatically be assumed that they would naturally discard all other senses of belonging to it, or forms of interaction with it. Certainly, ancient textual sources continually underscore the fact that locales such as rural shrines, ancient tombs, and caves served to anchor people to the land, and reminded them of its history, and their history.

The abandonment of the countryside must thus point to a deep-running change in attitudes, emotions and memories. Part of what was given up with such places, it seems, was a sense of being rooted in the countryside and in a highly local past. This same epoch, the early imperial period in Greece, is usually assumed to be an age in which "the past" is glorified above all else; classicism and nostalgia are dominant characteristics of the so-called "Second Sophistic". What survey evidence forces us to realize, however, is that not all pasts were created equal. The memories and traditions of the rural countryside, what we might call the "backyard pasts" of various communities, did not flourish, compared to those of the cities and their elites.[28] That conclusion has some noteworthy repercussions for our understanding of attitudes toward the countryside, of the control of memory by imperial or local elites, of the commemorative landscape of Greece under Roman rule − all central issues in probing the nature of a new provincial society. Such observations spring from our ability to recognize, to have confidence in, and to "think with" our unusual dots on the map.

### *Black Sea reflections*

The list of issues originally raised for discussion by the organizers of this conference included the definition of a city's rural territory; its borders and how they altered over time; avenues of communication; changes in settlement patterns and hierarchies; and variations in demographic numbers and demographic balance. These issues reflect concerns that have long dominated survey archaeology in the Black Sea region, particularly on the north coast, where field survey, or *razvedka*, has been an important component of archaeological

investigation since the 1950s. Particularly in relation to the Greek *poleis* on the Black Sea, survey has provided an important tool for investigating the agricultural territory of the colonies and fueled the comprehensive understanding of the *polis* and *chora* as a unified system.[29]

Until recently, the bulk of survey conducted in the region was extensive and variably systematic, and primarily concerned with establishing systems of settlement and land use.[30] The distribution of settlements (identified by sherd scatters and architectural remains) and cemeteries (as well as individual *kurgan* burials) have been the primary foci of surveys, but projects have also identified extensive road networks, systems of land division and fortifications.[31] Site typologies and settlement hierarchies, based on pottery finds, site size and relationships to road networks, have also been established.[32]

Although there has been a movement towards more intensive, systematic and small-scale survey projects, such as the Polish-Ukrainian Nymphaion Project,[33] survey in this region has yet to be dominated by an interest in recognizing "off-site" phenomena or "special-purpose sites" *per se*. In addition, post-processualism has not yet reached the shores of the Black Sea, and interest in "landscape archaeology" and the affective power of a landscape is there only just beginning.[34] As a result, the methodological awareness that *how* one surveys directly affects *what* one finds is only just now developing, and with it the growing recognition that, in addition to settlement patterns and land use, it is also possible to investigate "other forms of human activity". Although there are very real difficulties in comparing surveyed landscapes in the Black Sea region, and a marked distrust of survey evidence that has not been ground-truthed, the question of defining territory and borders, as well as changes in settlement patterns, would benefit from careful inclusion and integration of special-purpose places.

## *Conclusion*

One could conclude here on an unequivocally positive note, celebrating how similar careful inclusion and integration of special-purpose places could benefit a rich mix of questions − in the Black Sea, just as in the Mediterranean. It must be admitted, however, that a potential cost is involved here. A landmark, five-volume publication — *The Archaeology of Mediterranean Landscapes* − has recently appeared, the product of an initiative sponsored by the European Union Human Capital and Mobility Programme, as part of the Populus Project.[35] These are very comprehensive, up-to-date volumes which advertise the achievements of Mediterranean survey. Yet they were roundly criticized in the journal *Antiquity* (as was, indeed, the entire program of Mediterranean survey) by the New World archaeologist Richard Blanton in a review entitled "Mediterranean myopia".[36] Blanton's basic point is that, in the quest for ever-higher levels of intensity (ever-closer walker spacing, ever-more precise counts of artifacts, ever-more intensive collection strategies), survey archaeology in the

Mediterranean has slowed to a snail's pace. He has a valid point − considering only a few of the projects mentioned already, the Minnesota Messenia Expedition covered approximately 3,800 km$^2$, of which the subsequent Pylos Project re-investigated only about 1%; the Laconia Survey intensively studied some 70 km$^2$; the Southern Argolid some 44 km$^2$, and so on. To Blanton's eyes, and to his consternation, Mediterranean surveyors choose to sample only infinitesimal parts of a landscape rapidly disappearing through the forces of urban development, hotel building, road construction, and deep ploughing. His assertion − that this myopia is blindness − has acquired advocates among some practitioners of Mediterranean survey, who urge swifter coverage and who ask pointedly "what are we counting for?".[37]

It is difficult not to feel some sympathy for this position, especially when one considers the power of survey as a form of rescue or salvage archaeology. Yet it is equally difficult to avoid the conclusion that less intensive forms of exploration will directly jeopardize our ability to identify, and to make sense of, our often very small, insignificant, special-purpose sites. "Speeding up" would sacrifice much of the texture of the landscapes we hope to study and understand. This poses, of course, a long-standing question: how does one collect the best data possible, as efficiently as possible? In all archaeological fieldwork, the answer is always a compromise. Turning to the Black Sea again, large portions of the coast have been surveyed extensively (over 4,000 km$^2$ on the Kerch and Taman' peninsulas alone) and these projects have provided an important impression of settlement patterns and land use in this region. It is clear, however, from the wealth of detail provided by the more intensive and systematic surveys (such as the 70 km$^2$ of the Nymphaion Project) that increased intensity of investigation, and the detailed data it provides, allows for the recognition and interrogation of a much more busy, "textured" landscape. In the end, we land on the side of intensive work (within reason), emphasizing the special value of special-purpose sites: wells, threshing floors, burial mounds, kilns, bridges, mills, knapping debris, drainage ditches, pathways, caves, quarries, terraces, shrines, and dumps. Without the nuance they provide, the questions we can ask of our regional data become unnecessarily limited, reverting largely to the purely economic, the demographic, the functional: the more untextured blocks of life. Such a choice short-changes the people whose lives we seek to investigate and reconstruct − unless we define those lives very narrowly indeed by limiting the variety of human behavior, by ignoring the possibility of human mobility, by denying the existence of past traditions and rituals. If we are not willing to turn to regional evidence, and to teasing as much as possible from the texture of landscape, then we are cast back, willy-nilly, on the urban, the elite and the excavated. The study of *chora*, catchment, and communications, within the Mediterranean or the Black Sea, deserves better than that.[38]

## Notes

1 Cherry 1994; 2003.
2 McDonald & Rapp 1972.
3 Cavanagh et al. 1996; 2002.
4 McDonald & Rapp 1972, 264-321.
5 Shipley 1996.
6 Shipley 1996, 328-329; Catling 2002, 192-194.
7 See, for example, Catling 2002, 218-224.
8 de Polignac 1984; see also Alcock & Osborne 1994; Ashmore & Knapp 1999.
9 Spencer 1998.
10 Cherry 1994, 91-95.
11 Plog, Plog & Wait 1978; Cherry 1983; Wilkinson 2004.
12 See, for example, Jameson et al. 1994, 248-257.
13 See, for example, papers in Dimen & Friedl 1976; Sutton 2000.
14 Murray & Kardulias 1986.
15 Alcock et al. 1994.
16 Catling 2002, 131.
17 Jameson et al. 1994, 256, 400-404.
18 Marangou-Lerat 1995; Markoulaki et al. 1989.
19 Clarke 1973.
20 For a helpful overview of the concept, see Johnson 1999, 98-115.
21 E.g. Bradley 1998; for a west Mediterranean example, see van Dommelen 1998.
22 Alcock & Osborne 1994; de Polignac 1995.
23 Davis et al. 1997; Zangger et al. 1997.
24 For more detailed discussion of all these data, see Alcock 2002, 132-175; Alcock et al. in press.
25 Alcock & Cherry 2004b.
26 The data for this table are derived from Jameson et al. 1994; Mee & Forbes 1997; Cavanagh et al. 1996; 2002; Keller 1985; Wells 1996; Davis et al. 1997; Alcock et al. 2005; Wright 1990; Bintliff & Snodgrass 1985; McDonald & Rapp 1972.
27 Alcock 1993, 33-92; Shipley 2002, 309-310.
28 Alcock 2002, 36-98; Swain 1996.
29 Butjagin & Solovyov 2001, 262.
30 See Ščeglov 1983 for a detailed description of survey methodologies used in the territory of Greek colonies.
31 E.g., Ja.M. Paromov's survey of the Taman' Peninsula and the long established plan of the *chora* of Chersonesos.
32 E.g., Abramov & Paromov 1993.
33 Scholl & Zin'ko 1999.
34 Rempel in Alcock et al. 2003.
35 Barker & Mattingly 1999-2000.
36 Blanton 2001.
37 Fentress 2000; Terrenato 2004.
38 We would like to extend our thanks to the organizers for their invitation to the conference "Chora, Catchment and Communication", held at the beautiful Sandbjerg Estate, as well as to all the meeting's participants for their thoughts and their singing. John F. Cherry offered very helpful comments on the paper, but all mistakes remain our own.

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