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THE SPOTIA EXPEDITION II ENVIRONMENT AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS



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Cover: Megalo Karvounari seen from the northeast. Courtesy of the 32nd Ephorate for
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The Emerging Settlement Patterns of the Kokytos Valley

Björn Forsén

The Kokytos valley, which is located at the very heart of Thesprotia, is one of the most fertile parts of the region.¹ The valley, whose width varies between about two and five km, follows the course of the Kokytos river which originates somewhat to the north of the modern town of Paramythia and the Roman *colonia* Photike, thereafter flowing southwards for some 20 km until it reaches the Acheron river. The dramatic Paramythia mountain range, rising to a height well over 1000 masl, demarcates the Kokytos valley in the east from the Souli valley, whereas a series of lower hills separates it in the west from the valley of Margariti and Parga. In the north the Kokytos valley is connected via Neochori to the Kalamas river, Thesprotia's second largest river after the Acheron.

The aim of the Thesprotia Expedition is to write the history of the central part of the Kokytos valley from prehistoric to modern times on the basis of new data provided by archaeology, history and geology. Even though the focus of the project is on the central Kokytos valley, we have also included studies putting our study area into the larger context of Thesprotia or studies concerning Thesprotia in its entirety, when this helps in understanding the trajectories of the Kokytos valley. Therefore this volume, in the same way as the first volume of the final publication series of the Thesprotia Expedition, contains apart from specific results of our own research also chapters by colleagues working in the region.

The northern limit of the study area is drawn at a line between the modern villages of Chrysaugi and Pankratai, whereas the southern limit roughly corresponds to a line between the villages of Agora and Skandalo (Fig. 1). Between the villages of Sevasto and Xirolophos the study area protrudes like an appendix towards the west. The redbeds of Karvounari were surveyed separately in collaboration with the 32nd Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. The size of the study area is in total ca. seven km in north to south direction and four km in west to east direction, in addition to which should be added the ca. 2x3 km large appendix protruding towards the west between Sevasto and Xirolophos.

The research aims of the Thesprotia Expedition were presented already in the previous volume² and will therefore not be reiterated in their entirety here. The project has encompassed, apart from an intensive archaeological and geological survey, also trial excavations in a number of locations of special interest, as well as palynological work in the Chotkova, Prontani and Morphi lakes to the north and west of the study area. Efforts have also been put into re-studying inscriptions from Photike and collecting archival sources concerning Thesprotia in Istanbul and Venice.

¹ I am grateful to Evangelia Balta, William Bowden, Jack Davis, Vivi Deckwirth, Jeannette Forsén, Nena Galanidou, Mika Hakkarainen, Curtis Runnels and Esko Tikkala for helping and/or commenting on different drafts of this chapter. All figures have been made by Esko Tikkala.

² Forsén 2009, 1-5. In general on the project see also <http://www.thesprotiaexpedition.com>.

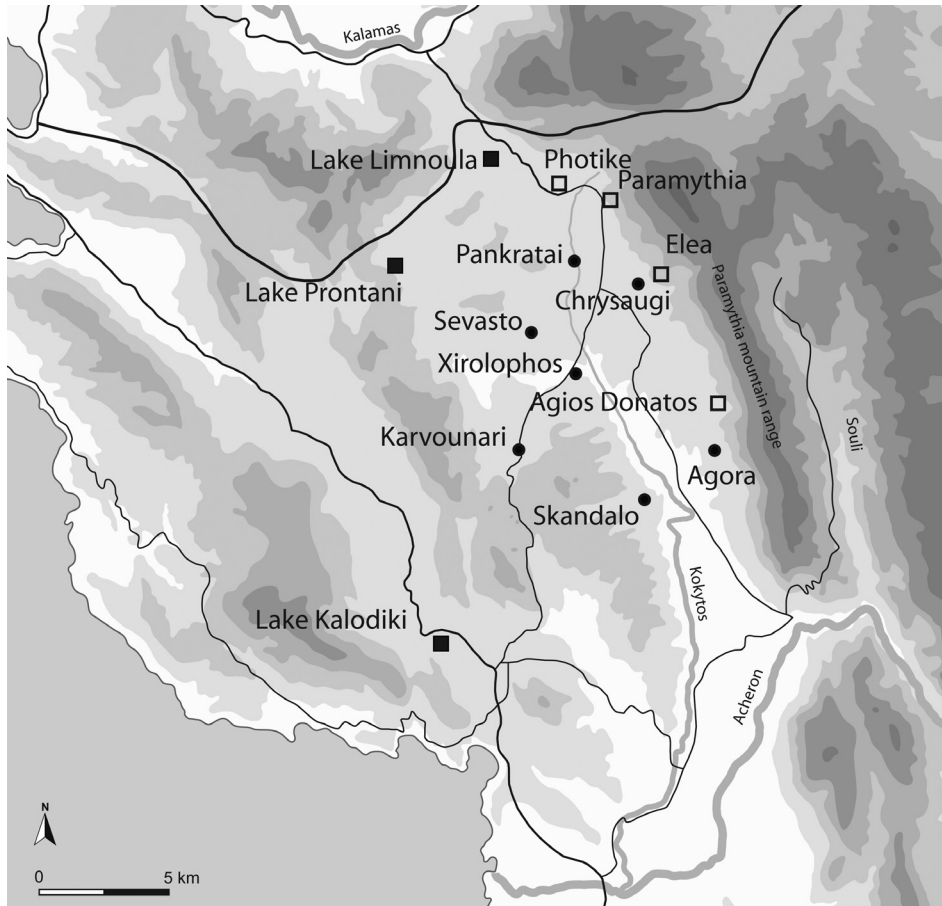


Fig. 1. General map of the Kokytyos valley, including some of the main sites and the modern villages that demarcate the study area.

One of the aims of the Thesprotia Expedition was to throw light on periods previously considered ‘Dark Ages’ in the region. Already in the first volume we took several steps in this direction, introducing the first settlements dating to the Mesolithic period, the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period.³ This volume contributes in a different way to fulfilling the aims of the project; here we publish a catalogue of sites in the central Kokytyos valley, consisting of a total of 72 sites, 45 of which have been studied by us, the rest by the Greek Archaeological Service. On the basis of this catalogue in conjunction with the other chapters focusing on specific sites, find categories or archival sources, the diachronic settlement patterns of the central Kokytyos valley are slowly beginning to emerge in front of us.

Further detailed studies of single sites, find categories and sampling methodology in the final third volume, as well as new finds continually being made, will in the future fine-tune the broad outlines of settlement patterns put together in this chapter. Thanks to the new knowledge concerning the change of environment and vegetation throughout

³ Tourloukis and Palli 2009; Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009; J. Forsén 2009.

history that the Dutch team collaborating with the Thesprotia Expedition has brought forward, the main results of which are published in this volume, we can now also make a first attempt to corroborate the picture of the ever-changing diachronic settlement patterns with some of the major changes in environment. This is however an aspect that only can be further elucidated by more research in the future.

An overview of previous research and publications of importance for the Thesprotia Expedition was already given in the first volume.⁴ Since then two important new publications have appeared. The first one is the *Historical and Geographical Atlas of the Greek-Albanian Border*,⁵ which is of great help in putting the central part of the Kokytos valley into a larger perspective. The second one is the impressive catalogue of the new Archaeological Museum of Igoumenitsa,⁶ which gives a general overview of the most important archaeological finds from the region stretching diachronically in time from the Middle Palaeolithic period until the Byzantine period.

From hunting-gathering groups to agricultural societies

When planning the Thesprotia Expedition back in 2003 the region was well known for the rich Middle to Upper Palaeolithic finds collected in its characteristic *terra rossa* areas.⁷ This wealth was in a strange way juxtaposed with the total lack of Mesolithic finds and the surprisingly poor evidence for occupation during the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age, thus raising the question whether the shift from hunting/gathering groups to agricultural societies followed a different path here than in the rest of Greece, where there generally are few Palaeolithic finds but rich Neolithic and Bronze Age remains. Our work has thrown new light not only on the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic periods *per se*, but also on the very shift from hunting/gathering groups to agricultural societies.⁸

Two of the large Palaeolithic *terra rossa* sites detected by Higgs in the 1960s are located just to the west of the study area of the Thesprotia Expedition. In 2005 it was decided to conduct the first intensive survey ever of these two sites in collaboration with the 32nd Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. One of the reasons for surveying these sites, Megalo Karvounari (PS 22) and Mikro Karvounari (PS 23), was the threat that the planned new main garbage dump of Thesprotia might destroy them.⁹

Megalo Karvounari was divided into 34 different units, out of which the assemblage from the largest and find-richest Unit 24 (producing more than half of all the collected finds) was studied in detail, revealing apart from a very rich Middle Palaeolithic

⁴ Forsén 2009, 3-4.

⁵ *HGAtlas* 2008. It can in a way be considered as an updated version of the classic Dakaris 1972, although encompassing a larger area in geographical terms.

⁶ Kanta-Kitsou *et al.* 2008.

⁷ Higgs recorded mainly Middle Palaeolithic finds from the *terra rossa* areas (Dakaris *et al.* 1964; Higgs and Vita-Finzi 1966; Higgs *et al.* 1967), but later studies had also revealed Upper Palaeolithic finds in some of these sites (Bailey *et al.* 1997).

⁸ However, it should be emphasised that the dates of our sites are based on morphotechnological attributes that await further chronological refinement by means of absolute dating of finds deriving from closed archaeological contexts.

⁹ The garbage dump was finally located at a distance from these remarkable sites, thus preserving them for future generations.

component an equally rich Aurignacian component and some probably Gravettian/Epigravettian tools. A similar pattern can be observed in some other *terra rossa* sites to the north of the Kokytos valley. This proves that these open-air sites were in use not only by the *Homo neanderthalensis* (Middle Palaeolithic period), but also by *Homo sapiens* (Upper Palaeolithic period). It also throws light on the hitherto poorly recorded early phase of the Upper Palaeolithic period not only in Thesprotia but in Greece in general.¹⁰

In Mikro Karvounari no Aurignacian artefacts were recorded. Here the majority of the finds belongs to the Middle Palaeolithic period, although there is a smaller post-Mousterian assemblage, probably late Upper Palaeolithic or Mesolithic in date. The exceptionally large number of Levallois points, most of which were collected in Unit 1 (the narrow entrance to the *terra rossa* area), implies hunting activities, although other tools indicate tool manufacturing, hide processing, food preparation and consumption as well. Points were also common finds in the neighbouring sites Megalo Karvounari and Morphi.¹¹

Christina Papoulia suggests that the sites of Megalo Karvounari and Morphi were chosen because of their location next to the route connecting the Kokytos valley with Lake Kalodiki, thereby offering excellent hunting stands for the early hominids preying on animals moving in order to reach the best water resources. Mikro Karvounari likewise had to be passed by animals moving from the Kokytos valley to the polje of Saita, today a small seasonal lake.¹² Palynological work conducted in Lake Kalodiki shows that the environment in the Middle Palaeolithic period was very different from today, the landscape being covered by a *Quercus*-dominated dense forest,¹³ which together with the rich water resources of the region must have offered excellent living conditions for the game.

Another factor making Thesprotia attractive for the early hominids were rich local flint resources. In the intensive field survey we detected a multifunctional site including a flint “quarry”, PS 4, which mainly dates to the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic periods, although also producing some finds that may be Mesolithic, Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. This site, which is located on the lower slopes of a hill facing the very Kokytos valley, is covered by a thick carpet of flint nodules, naturally broken flint nodules, but also artefacts from early and later stages of reduction sequences (cores, debitage and tools).¹⁴

PS 4 differs from Megalo Karvounari and Mikro Karvounari in not being a *terra rossa* site, but rather located close to the very bottom of the Kokytos valley in the alluvial fan on the foot of a small hill. The Kokytos valley was already by the expedition of Higgs in the mid-1960s considered to be very rich in prehistoric sites with flint tools.¹⁵ Dakaris describes the valley from Neochori in the north until Skandalo and Gardiki in the south as one of the richest areas in stone tools in all of Greece and marks the area on his site distribution maps as a ca. 17-18x4-5 km continuous carpet of dispersed finds.¹⁶ The sites

¹⁰ Ligkovanlis, this volume.

¹¹ Papoulia, this volume.

¹² Papoulia, this volume.

¹³ Kluiving *et al.*, this volume.

¹⁴ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 4. The assemblage from the site will be published in more detail by Stefanos Ligkovanlis in Thesprotia Expedition III.

¹⁵ Dakaris *et al.* 1964; Higgs and Vita-Finzi 1966.

¹⁶ Dakaris 1972, 44-70, figs. 12-20.

identified by Higgs in this area and later referred to by Dakaris (including a total of 10 flint “quarries”) cannot, unfortunately, be located any longer.

Although most of the fields surveyed by us in the Kokytos valley produced lithics, we still managed on the basis of e.g. find density to localize some clear concentrations that have been interpreted as sites.¹⁷ They are all located on alluvium, at least some way away from the surrounding hills. Among them there are one probably Upper Palaeolithic site (PS 45) and three sites possibly dating to the Mesolithic period (PS 1, PS 3, PS 43). Two of the three later sites also included a smaller Palaeolithic component (PS 3, PS 43). The main lithic assemblage of PS 3 was studied by Tourloukis and Palli and considered Mesolithic in date,¹⁸ whereas a similar assemblage, according to Nena Galanidou who is preparing PS 43 for publication, “could have been manufactured and used either by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers or Early Neolithic agriculturalists with no pottery”.¹⁹

A tentative pattern can be seen already on the basis of the seven sites discussed so far. Palaeolithic sites often include smaller Mesolithic/Early Holocene components (Mikro Karvounari and PS 4) and Mesolithic/Early Holocene sites in their turn smaller Palaeolithic components (PS 3 and PS 43) – or to put it another way; Palaeolithic and Mesolithic/Early Holocene activities seem to take place in roughly similar settings in the landscape (Fig. 2). Notable is also the fact that only one of these seven sites produced some Neolithic and Bronze Age finds, and that was PS 4 which has the special character of a “quarry” site.

Six sites datable to the Neolithic and/or Bronze Age were detected by us in the Kokytos valley (PS 12, PS 17, PS 18, PS 20, PS 21 and PS 28). Due to problems with dating of the lithics and the very abraded pottery, the finds can only occasionally be assigned more detailed dates. So far there are no clear finds datable to the Early Neolithic period, whereas small quantities of possibly Middle, Late and Final Neolithic finds have been recorded at three of the sites (PS 12, PS 20 and PS 28).²⁰ All these three sites also have Bronze Age components, in the case of PS 12, where several trial trenches were excavated, a rather rich one spanning the Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age.²¹ Another site that produced finds from all subphases of the Bronze Age was PS 17,²² whereas in PS 18 and PS 20 we recorded finds at least from the Early and Middle Bronze Age.²³

None of the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites produced more than small amounts of Palaeolithic flakes. Much more conspicuous is the fact that four of the six sites also produced Early Iron Age pottery (PS 12, PS 17, PS 18 and PS 20), and three of them

¹⁷ While defining sites we have in the main followed the criteria set up by the Keos survey (Cherry *et al.* 1991, 28), i.e., *find density*, which at a site should be anomalously high in relation to the background find levels; *discreteness*, which means that a site has edges where the density falls off markedly; and *continuity*, meaning that a site consists of a contiguous area with higher density. A full description of sampling methodology and find densities will be published in Thesprotia Expedition III. The more general spread of lithics in the valley may be due to post-depositional processes.

¹⁸ Tourloukis and Palli 2009.

¹⁹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 43. We hope to resolve the question of dating by taking optically stimulated luminescence samples from the site in 2011.

²⁰ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 12, PS 20 and PS 28.

²¹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 12. For some of the Early Bronze Age pottery, see also J. Forsén forthcoming.

²² Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 17. Some of the pottery from this site was published already by J. Forsén 2009.

²³ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 18 and PS 20.

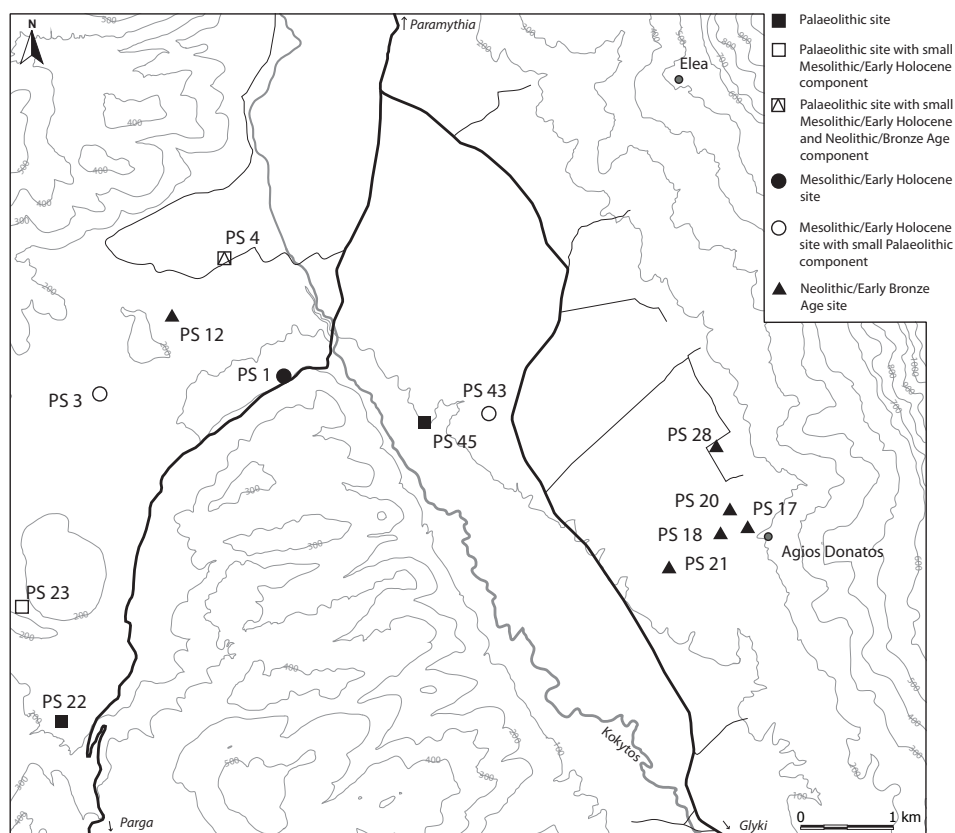


Fig. 2. Location of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic/Early Holocene sites.

single Archaic to Classical (PS 12) or Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sherds (PS 18 and PS 20).²⁴ Moreover, all the sites are located close to either the Early Hellenistic fortress Agios Donatos of Zervochori or to what later developed into two of the large clusters of Early Iron Age/Archaic to Hellenistic sites (at Kyra Panagia and Agora).²⁵ Finally it should be stressed that single Neolithic/Bronze Age finds also were found next to the cluster of Early Iron Age to Early Roman sites at Mavromandilia (a polished celt and some sherds from PS 36 and PS 46)²⁶ and on the acropolis of Elea (an arrowhead)²⁷, indicating the possibility that these locations also may conceal settlements of the Neolithic period or the Bronze Age (Fig. 3).

The fact that the location of the Neolithic and Bronze Age sites differs from that of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites, at the same time as it shows great similarity with the Early Iron Age/Archaic to Hellenistic sites, is hardly surprising as agriculture rather than hunting/gathering was the main way of living already during the Neolithic period

²⁴ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 12, PS 17, PS 18 and PS 20.

²⁵ Further on Agios Donatos and these clusters of sites, see below.

²⁶ The celt was found out of context in the Later Roman site PS 32. See Forsén *et al.*, this volume.

²⁷ Riginos and Lazari 2007, 83 with photograph. I owe thanks to Curtis Runnels for suggesting that the arrowhead might be Late Neolithic in date.

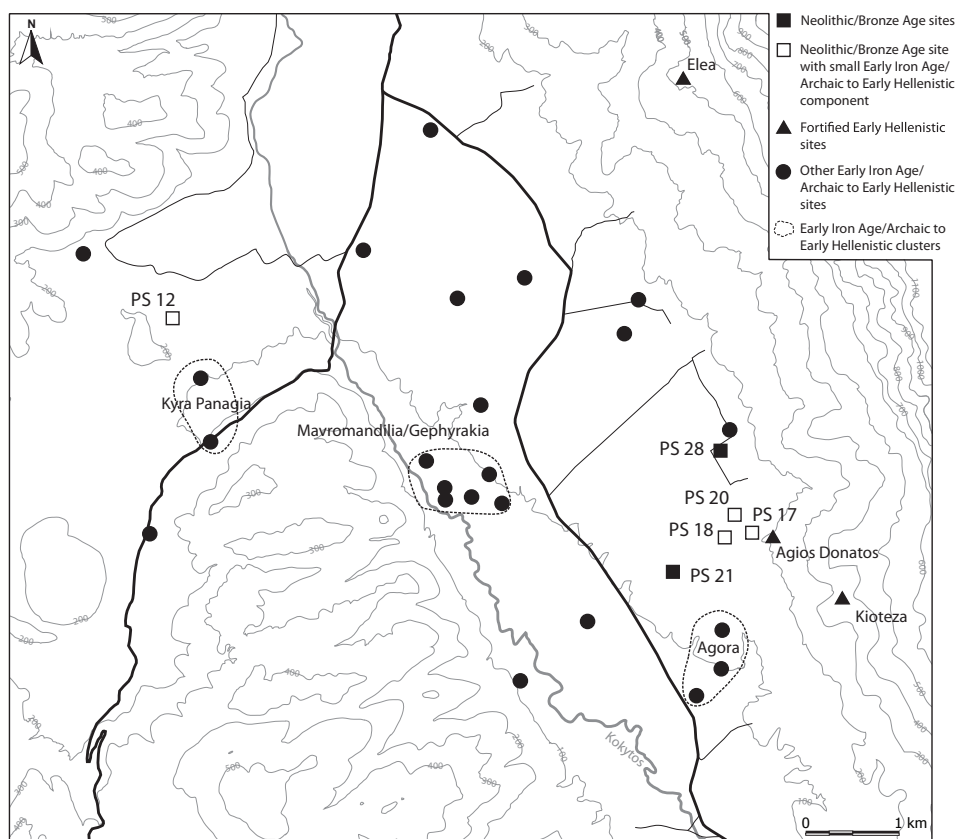


Fig. 3. Location of Neolithic/Bronze Age sites as compared to Early Iron Age/Archaic to Early Hellenistic sites.

and Bronze Age. The find of sickle elements on blades with silica gloss in two of the Neolithic to Bronze Age sites (PS 12 and PS 18, in PS 12 in the Early Bronze Age levels) and further possible sickle elements in two additional sites (PS 18 and PS 20) bear witness to the advent of agriculture. However, hunting seems to have continued to hold a certain importance, as arrowheads were found at a total of five of the six Neolithic to Bronze Age sites (PS 17, PS 18, PS 20, PS 21 and PS 28).²⁸

The rich Early Bronze Age cultural layer of PS 12 with remains of wattle and daub, sickle elements with silica gloss, and large amounts of animal bones, several spindle whorls as well as some bobbins and bone needles will when studied more in detail give us a better picture of the agricultural life at that time. The few preserved carbonized seeds found in the excavations indicate cultivation of *Lathyrus sativus*/grass pea (in the Early Bronze Age layer) and emmer wheat (in a Late Bronze Age context).²⁹

²⁸ For the occurrence of sickle elements and arrow heads at these sites, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume.

²⁹ See T. Tenhunen, *Macrofossile analysis results 2007*, unpublished report (*Lathyrus sativus* seeds found in A1; Loc. 2, P. 1), and M. Lempiäinen, *Thesprotia Expedition 2009-2010. Macrofossile analysis report*, unpublished report (*Triticum dicoccum* (emmer wheat) seeds found in Late Bronze Age layers of PS 12, Area 3).

On the basis of our scant archaeological data, agriculture was without doubt practised on a larger scale at least beginning in the Early Bronze Age, a period when the number of sites and finds clearly grows in number. According to the palynological studies conducted in Lake Kalodiki, a degradation of the natural vegetation combined with a probable increase of open ground vegetation and cultivated plants is visible beginning at ca. 3250 cal. BC, i.e. during the early phases of the Early Bronze Age. In a similar study made in Lake Ioannina, the forest vegetation decreased between ca. 4500 and 2400 cal. BC.³⁰ These changes most likely are due to human impact on the environment and indicate increased human presence and agricultural practices, thus seemingly correlating with our archaeological data.

Too far-reaching conclusions regarding the arrival of agriculture in Thesprotia should not, however, be drawn on the basis of the palynological work conducted in Lake Kalodiki and Lake Ioannina. Both lakes are located at some distance (some 15 and 40 km respectively) from the fertile Kokytos valley, Lake Ioannina at a much higher altitude (470 masl) and Lake Kalodiki in a part of Thesprotia that could be described as rather marginal when compared to the fertile Kokytos valley. Our knowledge of the arrival and beginnings of agriculture in the Kokytos valley during the Neolithic period has thus to be based on further archaeological work in the valley itself.

From villages to fortified urban settlements

Next to the Palaeolithic *terra rossa* open air sites, the fortified acropoleis – some of them with the size of urban centres (such as Elea, Gitana, Phanote (Doliani), Elina (Dimokastro) and Mastilitsa) – have since the days of Hammond and Dakaris belonged to the most well-known archaeological remains of Thesprotia. These sites, which seemed to have been fortified in the second half of the fourth or the first half of the third century BC, continued to flourish until the destruction caused by Aemilius Paullus's troops in 167 BC. However, until some ten years ago we had almost no knowledge of what preceded these fortified sites and whether there existed smaller unfortified sites such as villages and isolated farmsteads parallel to them in the landscape. On the basis of new results reached by the Greek Archaeological Service and the Thesprotia Expedition, the outlines of the urbanization process begin to unravel.

Although no clear earlier settlement levels have been found in any of the large fortified urban centres, recent excavations in several of them have revealed indications of earlier activities. Most remarkable in this sense are the recent finds from Phanote (a Late Geometric cup from the cemetery, an Early Archaic kantharos and Late Archaic pottery sherds from the settlement)³¹ and Mastilitsa (a Late Archaic building and a rich Late Archaic cemetery), which may have been a Corinthian or Elean colonial settlement.³² The smaller fortress Pyrgos Ragiou follows the same pattern as the one of Phanote and Mastilitsa, producing nine figurines dating between the late sixth and mid-fifth century BC.³³

³⁰ Lelivelt, this volume, with further references.

³¹ See e.g. *HGAtlas* 2008, 55, figs. 68-70 or Kanta-Kitsou *et al.* 2008, 35-37.

³² For Mastilitsa see Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009, 46-50 with further references.

³³ Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009, 45-46 with further references.

The pattern emerging from the recent excavations at Phanote, Mastilitsa and Pyrgos Ragiou can now also be observed in the two main fortified sites of the central Kokytos valley. Thus, the excavations on the acropolis of Elea have yielded two silver pins of Archaic date, and the fortress of Agios Donatos a male, probably Early Iron Age, figurine.³⁴ Even though the early finds so far are rather few, they still indicate that Elea and Agios Donatos may very well have been settled before they were fortified in the mid-fourth and early third century respectively.³⁵ Further work at these sites (especially in the form of deep trenches) will hopefully reveal more of their earlier settlement phases.

Finds predating the urbanization in Thesprotia, i.e. finds from the Early Iron Age as well as the Archaic and Classical periods, have also recently begun to turn up outside the fortified sites, not only inside our study area, but also elsewhere in the region. Before going into details about our study area I want to emphasize the site excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service in connection with the construction of the Egnatia highway at Neochori, some seven km to the north of our study area. This site produced a small assemblage of Corinthian vases and a female figurine, all dating to the sixth century BC. Some of the vases were found in a grave, but it remains unclear whether the grave was connected with an isolated farmstead or a small village.³⁶

Inside our study area in the Kokytos valley, recent archaeological work has revealed at least three clusters of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites which originate before the urbanisation phase (Fig. 4). The first one is located in Kyra Panagia at the foot of the Liminari hill. At this site the Greek Archaeological Service has excavated a small rural sanctuary and next to it four houses (I-IV) on the lowermost south slope of the hill to the west of the sanctuary, the westernmost house located at a distance of 600 m from the sanctuary. Graves were also reported in between houses III and IV. In our intensive surface survey we managed to localize another two possible houses of Classical to Hellenistic date (PS 5, square 7; PS 6).³⁷ Finally, some 500 m to the south of the small sanctuary, at the northern slopes of the hills next to Kyra Panagia, another three buildings of Late Classical and Early Hellenistic date, one of monumental size, were recently found.³⁸

The small sanctuary and houses I-II and IV, as well as the probable buildings in PS 5, square 7 and PS 6, together clearly seem to form a village with two houses adjacent to each other, whereas the distance between the other buildings is ca. 100 m. The total area covered by this village would be approximately 6 ha. Due to thick vegetation the surroundings of the small rural sanctuary could not be surveyed intensively, and there probably existed further houses that we therefore could not localize. House III, which

³⁴ For the silver pins from Elea see e.g. Riginos and Lazari 2007, 73 or Kanta-Kitsou *et al.* 2008, 108, nos. 3-4 (in both cases regarded as Hellenistic); for the date of the silver pins, see Forsén 2009, 12, esp. n. 34. For the male figurine from Agios Donatos, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 25. Several coins dating to the sixth and fifth centuries BC were recorded by Hammond (1967, 717, 719, 721) in Paramythia, possibly originating from the castle of Paramythia, which in that case also would go back to at least the Late Archaic period (cf. also Dakaris 1972, 80, 99 and 123; Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009, 44).

³⁵ For the fortification walls of Elea, see e.g. Hammond 1967, 71-72 (dating them to between 230 and 167 BC); Dakaris 1972, 97-99 and 123 (preferring the mid-fourth century BC); for the walls of Agios Donatos, see Suha 2009 and Suha, this volume.

³⁶ For the site see Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009, 43-44 with further references.

³⁷ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 5-6.

³⁸ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 15. For the location of the sites, see also Fig. 8 in Forsén *et al.*, this volume.

is located at a distance of ca. 300 m to the west from house IV, may not belong to the village proper, but is rather to be interpreted as a single farmstead located in the close neighbourhood of the village.

How to interpret E 15 is more problematic. The monumental building, taken together with the fact that at least remains of two further buildings were found, shows that we are not dealing with an isolated farmstead. This is rather to be interpreted as a separate small village, although the distance to the village/small sanctuary on the south slope of the Liminari hill is only some 500 m. It seems unlikely that there existed very many buildings in between these two villages, as the fields here are low-lying and prone to collect water in the winter. But as the distance between E 15 and the small rural sanctuary is only 500 m, one would still assume that there existed some connection between the two sites.

It is difficult to date the floruit of the villages at Kyra Panagia, although on the basis of the pottery found it seems clear that the peak of population occurred in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period. The small rural sanctuary, to which all these buildings in some way must have been connected, had cult activity which according to Irini Svana extended from the early fifth century BC to the first century AD.³⁹ I would argue that this most likely also indicates continuity of settlement in the village adjacent to the rural sanctuary, although it cannot be proven before the pottery from the excavations is studied in more detail.

But let us proceed to the second cluster of sites, which is located at Gephyrakia and Mavromandilia (Fig. 4). Here in the survey we identified a total of six sites with black glazed pottery of the Classical through Early Hellenistic period (PS 31, PS 35, PS 36, PS 37, PS 44 and PS 46). At Gephyrakia (PS 35) the Greek Archaeological Service had excavated two houses of Late Classical through Early Hellenistic date, between which we found four other concentrations of tiles, iron slag, cooking pots, lekanai, black glazed pottery and one piece of a basalt grinding stone, most likely representing the location of further houses, at a distance of ca. 30 m from each other. The total size of the site is ca. 200x150 m and thus covers 2.5-3 ha.⁴⁰

Some 200 m to the southeast of Gephyrakia follows the site PS 36 at Mavromandilia, including finds stretching back as far as the Late Helladic period or Early Iron Age and continuing to the Hellenistic period. The main phase of occupation at PS 36 is the Early Iron Age and more specifically the eighth century BC. Trial trenches have been opened in the site by both the Greek Archaeological Service and the Thesprotia Expedition, revealing remains of a settlement located on both sides of a small stream and covering an area of at least 100x60 m. A large spot of dark soil filled with animal bones and pottery as well as some smaller pits filled with similar material were excavated. The large spot may constitute the remains of a temporary wattle and daub shelter, although no clear postholes were found. Corinthian cover tiles indicate the existence of a better-built house somewhere in the neighbourhood at a later stage, perhaps in the Archaic or Classical period. The site could be described as a small village or hamlet.⁴¹

Moving some 150 m to the southeast from PS 36 follows another site, PS 46, which is rather similar to PS 35. PS 46 covers a total area of ca. 140x150 m, i.e., some 2 ha, inside of which there are four clear concentrations of Late Classical through

³⁹ Svana 2009 with further references. For finds from the sanctuary see now also Kanta-Kitsou *et al.* 2008, 67-69.

⁴⁰ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 35.

⁴¹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 36. See also J. Forsén 2009 and Tzortzatou and Fatsiou 2009.

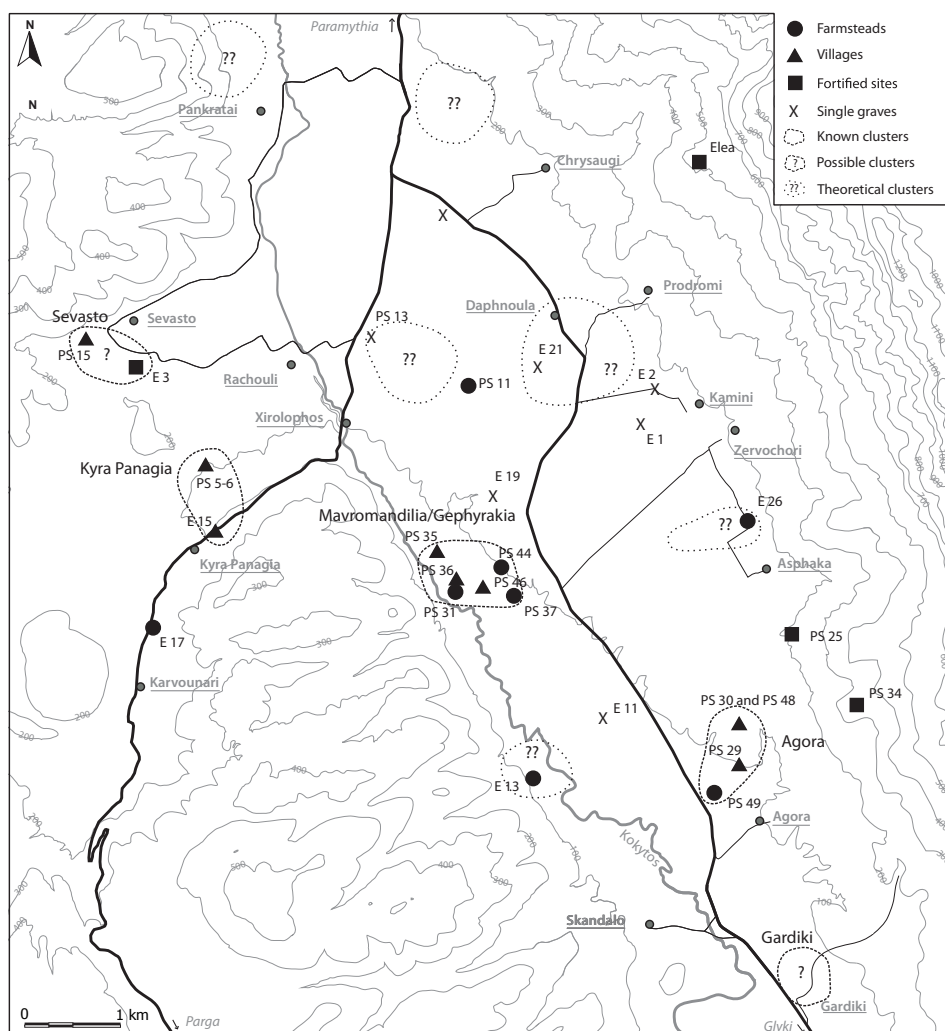


Fig. 4. Location of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites and site clusters. Sites with only smaller components of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic finds are not included.

Hellenistic pottery (black glazed fine ware as well as semi-coarse and coarse ware), roof tiles, iron slag, a loom-weight and part of a basalt grinding stone. The distance between these obvious houses is ca. 30-40 m. A handful of Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age sherds were also collected at the site, which during the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic period could be described as a village.⁴²

Ca. 150-200 m to the west, northeast and east from PS 46 there are three further sites dating to the Classical and/or Early Hellenistic period which apparently represent single farmsteads. At one of them (PS 37) we localized, with the help of a magnetometer prospection, a pottery kiln. Pottery wastes and slag collected at PS 31 may indicate that there existed another pottery kiln there. Finally, PS 44 produced a rich variety of pottery,

⁴² Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 46.

including parts of a skyphos, a small bowl, a lamp, a small flask, a mortar, a possible hydria and a conical loom-weight. Possible graves have also been recorded close to PS 44.⁴³

How should the cluster of sites at Gephyrakia and Mavromandilia be interpreted? PS 35 and PS 46, and possibly also PS 36, must have been small villages of their own, close to which some separate farmsteads (PS 31, PS 37 and PS 44) were located. However, one should emphasise that even though the field surveying conditions in the neighbourhood of Gephyrakia and Mavromandilia were excellent, several fields were still overgrown and could not be surveyed. There may thus have existed further separate farmsteads between the sites detected. Anyway, the cluster is in many ways very similar to that of Kyra Panagia, and one is tempted to assume that some kind of connection existed between the sites belonging to it.

The peak of population in the cluster of sites at Gephyrakia and Mavromandilia clearly occurred in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period. The finds from PS 36 and PS 31 (and partly also PS 46) on the other hand indicate that the settlement originated much earlier, at least in the eighth century BC, but possibly even during the end of the Late Bronze Age. The available finds suggest that the settlement was initially small and did not expand until during the Late Classical and/or Early Hellenistic period.

The third cluster of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites is to be found just to the north of the modern village Agora (Fig. 4). Most information is available about PS 29, where excavations have been conducted by the Thesprotia Expedition concurrently with the Greek Archaeological Service. At least three and possibly even more buildings exist at this site, whose total size is 120x80 m.⁴⁴ Two of the buildings were exactly located during the intensive field survey and a magnetometer prospection, the distance between them being ca. 40 m. Both houses were later excavated. The first one (ca. 20x12 m large), located in a ploughed field, was badly preserved. The second house (18x14 m large) was better preserved with the stone wall foundations partly remaining. This house had been built on top of a rather well preserved pottery kiln. Some 50-60 m to the south from these two houses, a spread of roof tiles in another field indicates the probable location of a third building.

The two excavated houses date to the Late Classical through Early Hellenistic period. The find assemblages are typical for farmsteads of this date, including lots of storage jars such as pithoi, jugs and amphorae, but also cooking pots, loom-weights and black glazed fine ware (lamps, skyphoi, kantharoi and small bowls). A coin cut by the Molossoi and dating to between 360 and 330/325 BC belongs to the earliest finds of the main horizon of activity at the site. Unfortunately we have no date for the pottery kiln below the second house, but the chance find of a Laconian pithos rim dating to between 550 and 525 BC indicates that the site may have been settled already as early as during the Late Archaic period.⁴⁵

Two further sites of Late Classical or Early Hellenistic date were located close to PS 29. The first one, PS 49, is located ca. 300 m to the southwest of PS 29, and probably was a single building. The second one, PS 30 and PS 48, is located ca. 300 m to the north of PS 29. This site consists of three concentrations of roof tiles and pottery in the

⁴³ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 31, PS 37 and PS 44.

⁴⁴ For this site, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 29.

⁴⁵ For the coin, see Talvio, this volume, no. 14; for the rest of the finds see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 29.

fields, each one probably indicating the location of a building. The distance between the buildings (PS 30, PS 48A and PS 48B) is ca. 90-100 m and the whole site covers an area of ca. 100x100 m.⁴⁶ PS 49 could theoretically be interpreted as a farmstead, PS 29 and PS 30 and PS 48 as small villages or hamlets. However, one has to bear in mind that we could not walk the fields to the north of Agora as intensively as the fields in the neighbourhood of Mavromandilia, thus making it rather likely that there existed further concentrations of roof tiles and pottery that we may have missed. This goes especially for the surroundings of PS 49, where several fields could not be searched at all due to thick vegetation.

The cluster of sites at Agora is in many ways very similar to those already described at Kyra Panagia and Mavromandilia/Gephyrakia. It consisted of a group of small villages and separate farmsteads all located rather close together, on the crest of a low ridge demarcated to the northwest and southeast by two parallel ravines originating at the foothills of the Paramythia mountain range and descending towards the Kokytos in the southwest of the valley. Like the two other clusters of sites described above, the peak of the population in the cluster at Agora seems to have occurred during the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period, although the origin of settlement may go back as early as to the second half of the sixth century BC.

Having identified the three clusters of sites at Kyra Panagia, Mavromandilia/Gephyrakia and Agora, the first question that arises is whether similar clusters of sites may exist elsewhere in the Kokytos valley. Although the rest of the valley has not been searched as intensively, some other possible candidates can still be suggested (Fig. 4). Another cluster most likely existed at the modern village of Gardiki, where a Late Classical to Early Hellenistic cemetery with at least 23 cist graves was excavated some 40 years ago next to the Paramythia-Glyki highway. Further graves and orthogonal limestone blocks have been reported further east near the Middle Byzantine church of Gardiki.⁴⁷ Another possible candidate may be located at the modern village of Sevasto, where an Early Hellenistic house has been excavated, but where graves and a small fortress also have been recorded.⁴⁸

A certain pattern appears when we mark all these clusters of sites on the map. Thus, the distance between the cluster at Kyra Panagia and the one at Mavromandilia/Gephyrakia is ca. 2 km, whereas the distance between the cluster at Mavromandilia/Gephyrakia and the one at Agora is ca. 2.5 km. Furthermore, the distance between the cluster at Agora and the one at Gardiki is ca. 2 km, whereas the distance between the clusters at Kyra Panagia and Sevasto would be only ca. 1 km. Now, does such a settlement pattern find any parallels elsewhere in the Greek world?

Recent survey work has revealed that a large part of the population of ancient Greece lived in second-order, politically subordinated villages/hamlets not only in large *poleis* such as Athens, but also elsewhere, e.g. in Boiotia, Arcadia, the Argolid and the Cyclades. The distance between these villages/hamlets varies, depending on topography and other factors, between 1-2 and 4-5 km. This settlement pattern, which probably is

⁴⁶ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 49 as well as PS 30 and PS 48.

⁴⁷ For the rich finds from the graves, dating from the second half of the fourth and third century BC, see Vokotopoulou 1971, 332-333; Vokotopoulou 1972, 443-444. For further graves in Gardiki see Dakaris 1972, 138, no. 399.

⁴⁸ For the house, see Turmo, this volume. For other finds close to this house, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 15 and E 3, with further references.

based upon kinship groups, tends to originate in the Geometric or Archaic period and continue throughout the Hellenistic period, although some of the centres meanwhile develop into *poleis*, sometimes incorporating other villages/hamlets into their territories.⁴⁹

The similarity of distribution of the clusters in the Kokytos valley with the villages observed elsewhere in the Greek landscape makes it tempting to interpret the clusters as non-nucleated settlement centres inhabited by kinship groups, occupying the same space of the valley beginning from the Geometric and Archaic periods. If this is the case, then further settlement centres could be suggested on the basis of the average distance between the centres in the valley, which as we have seen is ca. 1.5-2 km, although sometimes only 1 and sometimes as much as 2.5-3 km.

The urban centre at Elea and the fortress of Agios Donatos of Zervochori may well have originated as smaller villages or non-nucleated settlement centres, although we have no clear indication of this, except for the fact that both sites have produced a handful of finds going back to the Early Iron Age or Archaic period (Fig. 4).⁵⁰ One could also imagine a similar settlement cluster at the favourable location of Sternari or Delvitsi on the western side of the Kokytos (with the only excavated site being a Middle to Late Roman farmstead built on the foundations of an Early Hellenistic farmstead in which also an Early Iron Age kanthariskos was found),⁵¹ or even at the modern village of Daphnoula, where black glazed pottery is said to be found in nearly every backyard garden (Fig. 4). The graves E 1, E 2 and E 21 may also have a connection to such a settlement cluster at Daphnoula.⁵²

If one assumes a fairly even distribution of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic settlement clusters in the landscape, one would expect further conglomerates of sites close to the modern village of Zervochori (could sites E 25 and E 26 perhaps be parts of it?), somewhere to the east of the modern village of Rachouli (and not far from the monumental grave PS 13), near the modern village of Pankratai and also close to the modern village of Karyoti with its very rich springs (Fig. 4).

The settlement pattern suggested for the Kokytos valley, from the Early Iron Age throughout to 167 BC, is thus one centred on kinship groups living scattered over the landscape with a certain average distance between them. The kinship groups seem to have lived in clusters of villages and farmsteads all located close to each others. The sizes of the sites described as villages (PS 15, PS 5-6, E 15, PS 35, PS 36, PS 46, PS 30 and PS 48, PS 29) vary between 0.5 and 3 ha, whereas the farmsteads (E 17, PS 11, PS 31, PS 44, PS 37, E 26, PS 49, E 13) typically cover an area of only 0.01-0.2 ha.⁵³ Due to the

⁴⁹ For Boiotia, see e.g. Bintliff 1999a or Bintliff 1999b; for Arcadia, Forsén and Forsén 2003, 260-265; for the Argolid, e.g. Mee and Forbes 1997; for the Cyclades, Hoepfner 1999, 132-133. In Boiotia the average distance between the villages/hamlets is ca. 5 km, on Thera in the Cyclades 4-5 km, whereas in Arcadia it varies between 1-2 and 3-5 km.

⁵⁰ For Agios Donatos in general, see e.g. Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 25; Suha 2009; Suha, this volume; Forsén and Reynolds, this volume, with further references, for Elea in general, see e.g. Dakaris 1972, 97-99 and 139; Riginos and Lazari 2007 with further references. For the early finds from these sites, see n. 34 above.

⁵¹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 13 with further references. The spread in date of the finds from this site speaks for a more complex and long-lived site than an isolated farmstead.

⁵² Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites E 1, E 2 and E 21.

⁵³ These sizes confirm those suggested by other survey projects, where the size of farmsteads usually has been suggested as below 0.5 or 0.3 ha and that of hamlets and villages as between 1.0 and 5.0 ha. See e.g. Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985, 136-137, 139-140; Snodgrass 1990, 125-134 (Boiotia); Jameson *et al.* 1994, 249 and 383 (Southern Argolid); or Mee and Forbes 1997, fig. 2. In Laconia Catling (2002, 187-195) divides the farmsteads

closeness to the other sites in the clusters, most of the farmsteads cannot be considered as isolated as elsewhere in Greece during the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic period, but should rather perhaps be described as “satellite farmsteads”,⁵⁴ heavily dependent on adjacent villages or hamlets.

Most of the settlement centres of the Kokytos valley seem to originate in the Early Iron Age or the Archaic period, and they all seem to continue being settled until at least the Early Hellenistic period. However, the apogee of these centres occurs in the Late Classical or Early Hellenistic period, when the valley most likely also was experiencing a peak in population.⁵⁵ This is also the time when Elea developed into an urban centre, and when Agios Donatos of Zervochori (as well as Kioteza) was fortified. It should be noted that there is no sign of abandonment of any of the other settlement centres (rather they all flourish) concurrently with the development of Elea into an urban centre – thus indicating that the main factor behind the urbanisation process was a strong population increase, and not a *synoikismos* where the population from several villages would have been forced to move together to a new urban centre.

Apart from the fortified urban centres, another new feature appears in the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic landscape, namely the monumental graves. Two graves of this type have been excavated in the Kokytos valley: the Prodromi grave (E 1)⁵⁶ and the Marmara grave (E 11).⁵⁷ Remains of two further possible monumental graves were detected by the Thesprotia Expedition (PS 13 and PS 25).⁵⁸ The monumental graves indicate an increased social stratification and the appearance of a well-off local aristocracy. However, no luxurious buildings belonging to such an aristocracy have been found, unless one interprets the small Early Hellenistic fortresses Agios Donatos (PS 25) and Kioteza (PS 34) as seats for the local aristocracy.⁵⁹

Après le Déluge – the Late Hellenistic to Early Roman periods

Towards the end of the Third Macedonian War, Aemilius Paullus on his way home to Rome, after the victory against Perseus in the battle at Pydna, gave his army orders to pillage Epirus, so as to punish the Molossians and those Thesprotians who had supported Macedonia in the war. The devastation was of epic proportions; 70 *oppida* are said to

into smaller farms (0.01-0.15 ha) and large farms or villas (0.16-0.30 ha) and the villages into hamlets (0.40-2.0 ha) or villages/towns/forts (>3.0 ha).

⁵⁴ For the term “satellite farmstead”, see Forsén and Forsén 2003, 318-319, who use it to describe Medieval to Early Modern farmsteads of a similar character in Arcadia. Of all the sites detected by the Thesprotia Expedition there are only two, PS 11 and E 17, which perhaps could be described as isolated farmstead. Unfortunately our knowledge of these sites and their closest surroundings is very superficial due to the cultivation of the fields in question.

⁵⁵ All of Epirus and Illyria seem to have experienced a population peak in the fourth and third centuries BC. Cf. e.g. Stocker 2009, 866-877 for the area around Apollonia, where however the isolated farmstead represents the typical site outside the urban centre.

⁵⁶ Choremis 1980.

⁵⁷ Riginos 1999, 172-174; Pietilä-Castrén 2008, 42-47. Cremation was used in both of these monumental graves. Further on the difference between cremation and inhumation, see Aidonis, this volume.

⁵⁸ Tikka 2009 for the possibility that the frieze-epistyle blocks on Agios Donatos may have belonged to a barrel-vaulted tomb.

⁵⁹ Baatz 1999 describes the Hellenistic fortress at Nekyomanteion near the Acheron river as an “Adelssitz”, i.e. as the seat of a local aristocratic family.

have been sacked and 150,000 inhabitants carried off as slaves, making it the largest slave-hunting operation in Roman history.⁶⁰ Epirus was, according to Strabo (7.7.3), left desolate and abandoned.

The destruction inflicted by Aemilius Paullus's troops on Epirus has been taken as a starting point for all archaeological conclusions drawn concerning the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman period in Thesprotia. The fortified urban settlements have been considered abandoned and the countryside desolated, and new inhabitants have been expected to move in only slowly, in connection with Caesar establishing colonies at Butrint and possibly also at Photike and with Augustus somewhat later at Nikopolis.⁶¹ New work during the last decade, including that of the Thesprotia Expedition, is however slowly giving us a more nuanced picture of the changes taking place after 167 BC – a reality which is no longer dominated by absolute desolation, but by continued settlement, although on a much reduced scale. This goes e.g. for several of the fortified urban centres, such as Dimokastro, Phanote and Gitane, where habitation lingers on at least until the first century AD.⁶² A similar pattern is followed by cemeteries in the countryside, such as those at Kephalochoi and Neochori.⁶³ Recent research also shows that some of the destruction layers noted by excavators may in fact date to the late third century rather than 167 BC.⁶⁴

In the more systematically studied Kokytos valley, we can today follow the settlement patterns of the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman period in greater detail. The urban centre of Elea seems to have been destroyed by the Romans in 167 BC and only sporadic coin finds bear testimony to some activity after that date.⁶⁵ A clearer continuation of settlement can be seen at two of the three clusters of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites that we have identified in the valley. In the cluster of sites at the foot of the Liminari hill at Kyra Panagia, some kind of continuation seems obvious on the basis of the finds from the small rural sanctuary, where no break or change in cult is visible after 167 BC. The sanctuary was not abandoned until a later stage, probably towards the end of the first century or in the second century AD.⁶⁶ One of the single cist graves near Daphnoulia might also include burials dating after 167 BC.⁶⁷

In the second cluster of sites at Mavromandilia/Gephyrakia, some kind of continuation is visible in the two villages identified by us (PS 35 and PS 46). In PS 35

⁶⁰ Liv. 45.34.1-6; Plut. *Aem.* 29; Pol. 30.16. See also Hammond 1967, 628-635, 685-688; Gruen 1984, 512-513, 516-517 or Ziolkowski 1986, 69-80. Only part of the Thesprotians supported the Macedonians, the rest being pro-Roman. However, we do not know which and how large a part of the Thesprotians was pro-Roman and thus apparently would not have been punished.

⁶¹ In general see e.g. Cabanes 1997 with further references. For the Roman period in Epirus see also Karatzeni 2001, Lambrou 2006a, Gravani 2007 and Bowden 2009 with further references. For the question whether Nikopolis ever had the status of a *colonia*, see Bowden 2011, 102-104 with further references.

⁶² In general, see Lambrou 2006a, 258-263 and Riginos 2007. For more details on Dimokastro, see now also Lazari *et al.* 2008, and in general for Phanote, see Lambrou 2006b.

⁶³ For Kephalochoi, see e.g. Riginos 1999, 175-180; for Neochori, see Lambrou 2006a, 263.

⁶⁴ See Turmo, this volume. The turn of the third to second century seems to have been even more of a period of changes for the Illyrians in modern Albania. See e.g. Stocker 2009, 872-873 and 877.

⁶⁵ Riginos and Lazari 2007, 26 and 79.

⁶⁶ According to Svana 2009 the last figurines date to the first century BC, but according to Lambrou 2006a, 263, they continue until the second century AD. Lambrou in the same context (2006a, 263, fig. 2Δ) publishes a photograph of Italian *terra sigillata* dating to the first century AD, probably originating from the sanctuary.

⁶⁷ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 21, where the cist includes one burial dating to the late third, and another dating to the second century BC. Unfortunately no exacter date for the second burial is obtainable.

the excavations of the building with the channel produced at least one coin struck by the Epirotic League between 148 and the second half of the first century BC.⁶⁸ Roman pottery was also found in connection with one of the other houses of PS 35 that we localized in the survey.⁶⁹ In PS 46 the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman finds are concentrated to the western margins of the village in an area where no Late Classical to Early Hellenistic finds were made. This part was later excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service and was therefore treated as a site of its own (E 9).

The Greek excavations at E 9 revealed parts of a farmstead with a size of 30x9.5 m and at least four rooms. The foundations of the walls were constructed of worked limestone blocks, the rest of the walls probably consisting of mudbricks. The finds from the excavation have not yet been studied in detail nor published, but the farmstead can be provisionally dated on the basis of a silver coin from the first century BC or the first century AD. This date is supported by bulbous unguentaria and Italian *terra sigillata*, some of which already was found before the excavation in connection with the survey.⁷⁰

The most interesting Late Hellenistic to Early Roman site of the central Kokytos valley is Agios Donatos of Zervochori (PS 25). At some stage shortly after the Roman destruction in 167 BC a large villa was constructed inside this Early Hellenistic fortress. The villa is built on three different terraces and has a size of at least 90x40 m. The walls of the villa are constructed in *opus incertum*. Further evidence of Italian workmanship is given by the high-quality wall paintings found in one of the rooms (Trench D) that were excavated. They represent the Second Pompeian style and find their best parallels in Pompeii and Rome between 50 and 30 BC.⁷¹ The villa on Agios Donatos is apparently older than the wall paintings of Trench D, as evidenced by the closed deposit found in Trench F which dates to between the late second and early first century BC.⁷² The earliest single find seemingly belonging to the villa is a coin minted by Prusias II of Bithynia between ca. 183 and 149 BC.⁷³ The apogee of the villa is clearly in the first century BC and the first century AD, although some kind of continued activity, on a much smaller scale, is evident also during the second and third centuries AD.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, fig. 18. The coin is similar to those published by Talvio, this volume, nos. 16-17 (one of the coins is from PS 25, and the second one, obviously a chance find originates from PS 15). It should be noted that Riginos and Lazari 2007, 94-95, refer to several coins dating after 167 BC that were found in the building with the channel.

⁶⁹ Roman pottery was catalogued only from PS 35/27, 35/26 and 35/28, i.e., the squares next to the spot that the Greek Archaeological Service had excavated under the name Agioi. The pottery, which could not be dated more exactly, is probably Early Roman in date. Further, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 35.

⁷⁰ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 9. It should be noted that this is the only site except for PS 25 (Agios Donatos of Zervochori) where the survey teams managed to find *terra sigillata*.

⁷¹ For the villa in general, see Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 25.

⁷² Forsén and Reynolds, this volume.

⁷³ Talvio, this volume, no. 20. Other early coins that can be given an exact date include a Roman denarius of 56 BC (no. 22) and a coin minted by Kleopatra between 50 and 31 BC (no. 21).

⁷⁴ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 25. A handful of fragments of cooking pots dating to the fifth and sixth centuries AD were also found, but the very small quantity of these late finds rather indicates the presence of squatters or temporary visitors on the site. There are certain parallels concerning phases of occupation with the villa at Diaporit outside Butrint (cf. Bowden and Përzhita 2004). The earliest building phase at Diaporit dates to the Late Hellenistic/Republican period (second century BC to early first century AD) and pre-dates the apogee of the villa that dates to between the second half of the first and the late second century AD. Thereafter activity at the site dwindles until it is deserted around 250AD and later resettled between the late fifth and mid-sixth century AD.

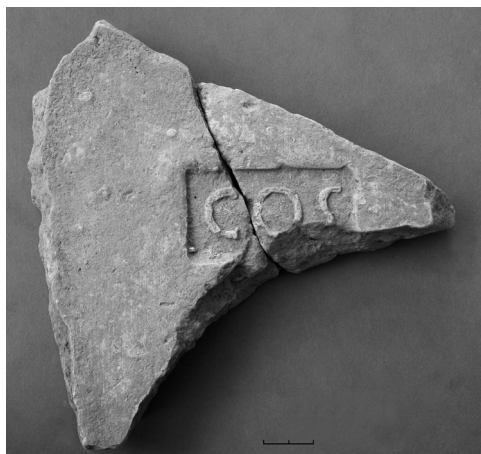


Fig. 5. Tile stamp reading COS from PS 25 (Agios Donatos of Zervochori).

There are several details in the villa of Agios Donatos that point to very good contacts with the Italian peninsula, such as the *opus incertum* walls, the wall paintings and a large amount of imported Italian *terra sigillata* dating to the first half of the first century AD. Do these finds indicate that the owner of this large villa, and perhaps also some of his workmen and the other inhabitants of the villa, were Roman settlers who had moved to Thesprotia? This may very well be the case, although it should not be forgotten that the early closed deposit in Trench F mainly consisted of locally produced pottery.

We know from Cicero's correspondence with T. Pomponius Atticus and from Varro's *De re rustica* that large villas were owned in Epirus by affluent Romans, the *synepeirotae*, by the early first century BC (Atticus owned his villa at Butrint already in 68 BC).⁷⁵ Some of these early Roman settlers are even known by name through Varro, whose treatise on stock breeding in *De re rustica* is presented in the form of a dialogue between himself and Roman villa owners in Epirus such as T. Pomponius Atticus, L. Cossinius, Murrius and Cn. Tremellius Scrofa. The villa on Agios Donatos probably belonged to one of the early Roman land-owners described by Cicero and Varro. One of the tile stamps occurring at Agios Donatos reads COS (Fig. 5),⁷⁶ which perhaps could be a shortening of L. Cossinius,⁷⁷ in that case indicating that the villa belonged to him or that the tile had been produced on his domains in Epirus. L. Cossinius, who died in 45 BC is also mentioned by Cicero (*Att.* 1.19.11; 1.20.6; 2.1.1) in connection with Atticus in 60 BC,⁷⁸ and his involvement in Epirus probably goes back to the first half of the first century BC, which would fit well with the date of the villa on Agios Donatos.

The remarkable Italian traits of building technique, wall paintings and pottery in the villa of Agios Donatos stand out better if compared with other possible villas or farmsteads of the same period. In the farmstead E 9, Italian *terra sigillata* was found, but no wall paintings, whereas the walls were constructed in the traditional Greek way, i.e. with foundations built of worked limestone blocks, rather than in *opus incertum*.

⁷⁵ For the *synepeirotae*, see e.g. Cabanes 1997, 124-126; Bowden 2003, 73-74; Bowden 2009, 169 or Hernandez 2010, 76-80.

⁷⁶ The tile stamps and the graffiti from Agios Donatos will be published in *Thesprotia Expedition III*. The late second to early first century closed deposit in Trench F on Agios Donatos also includes one COS-stamp (Forsén and Reynolds, this volume), thus probably indicating that the stamp is synchronous with the first building phase of the villa.

⁷⁷ Roman names beginning with COS are rather rare (cf. Solin and Salomies 1988, 61-62). Stamps beginning with COSS or COS do however appear in Rome in the second century AD: Coss () Amb (), Cos () Fla (), Cos () Grat () or Cos () Sulp (). There are also stamps with the names Cosinius Satrianus and C. Cosconius written out. Cf. e.g. Bloch 1948, 26 and Steinby 1974, 90.

⁷⁸ For L. Cossinius, see Münzer 1901, 1671-1672.

This could be explained in two different ways. Either the owner of E 9 was poorer than the one of the larger establishment on Agios Donatos (a clear villa), something which could be supported by the fact that the farmstead E 9 is smaller (30x9.5 m) than the villa PS 25. The discrepancy may, however, also be explained by suggesting that the owner of E 9 was a local aristocrat, who stuck to the architectural traditions of the region or who did not have access to the new Roman technical know-how.

Another reference point to the villa of Agios Donatos is the farmstead excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service on the hill of Mastilita next to the delta of the Kalamas river.⁷⁹ This building with large storage and work spaces, as well as one room with mosaic (*opus spicatum*) floor, seems to originate during the second half of the second century BC, the earliest find being a coin of the Thessalian League dating to between 196 and 148 BC. The building was in continuous use until at least the first half of the third century AD⁸⁰ and contained large quantities of Arretine *terra sigillata* of high quality, as well as Roman coins of the second and third century AD. No wall paintings were found, however, and judging by the published photographs, the walls were mainly constructed in the traditional Greek way with the foundation consisting of worked limestone blocks. The size of the farmstead (23x16 m) is also more in line with that of E 9 than the villa on Agios Donatos and should thus be considered a large farmstead rather than a villa.

The archaeological evidence from the Kokytos valley seems to indicate a decline of population after the Roman destruction of 167 BC (Fig. 6). Life continues, however,

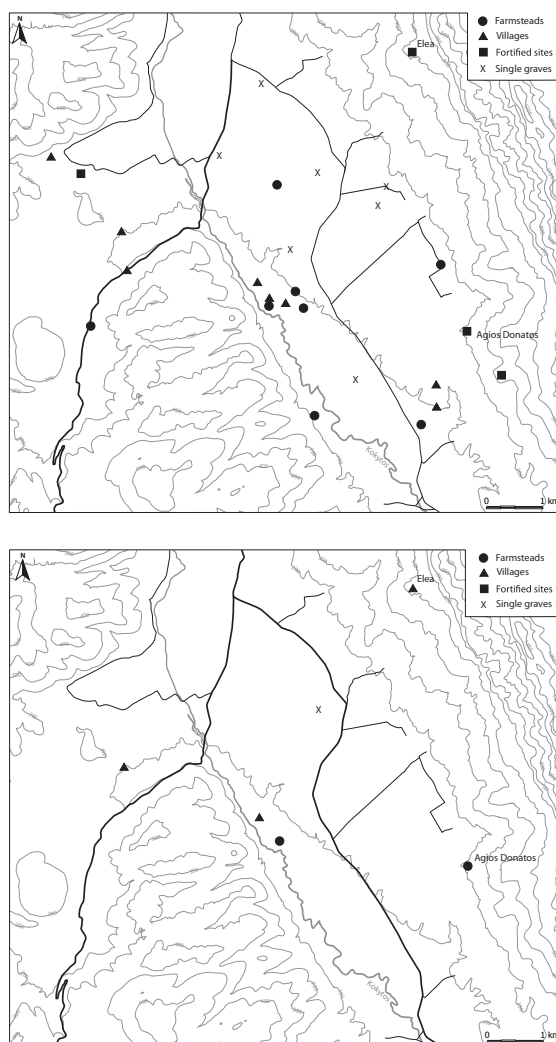


Fig. 6. Two parallel maps marking the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites (above) as compared with the Late Hellenistic to Early Roman sites (below).

⁷⁹ Preka-Alexandri 1994, Lambrou 2006a, 260 and *HGAtlas* 2008, 95 with a photograph.

⁸⁰ Lambrou 2006a, 260, also mentions a handful of Early Christian pottery (i.e., of fifth to sixth century date).

although on a smaller scale, above all in the countryside, where two of the three clusters of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic sites studied persist throughout the Late Hellenistic and into the Early Roman period. Some activity can also be seen in the urban centre of Elea after 167 BC, although the site soon is totally abandoned, perhaps in connection with the foundation of Photike.

The first signs of Roman colonisation in Thesprotia may go back as far as to the late second or early first century BC as exemplified by the villa of Agios Donatos. Further and perhaps clearer indications of Roman immigration can be found during the first century BC in the *colonia* Photike and the recently discovered Roman settlement/cemetery of Mazarakia, where primary cremations for the first time are introduced to Thesprotia.⁸¹ It is, of course, possible that people from the countryside concurrently moved to new nucleated sites like these,⁸² thus strengthening the impression of a depopulation that can be observed in the Kokytos valley. Anyway, the Roman immigration must at least have led to a slow recuperation of the population, beginning in the first century BC, although this is not visible in the archaeological record of the Kokytos valley.

The old settlement pattern going back all the way to the Early Iron Age or Archaic period was not obliterated at once in 167 BC, but lingered rather on for another couple of centuries – at the same time as new elements were introduced, such as the *colonia* Photike or the Roman village/cemetery at Mazarakia just to the west of our study area. Another new element consists of large villas or farmsteads, which bear testimony of a concentration of wealth in the hands of a small group of people.⁸³ Some of the owners of these new countryside estates were affluent Romans, while some of them may have been local aristocrats.

The rate of desolation after 167 BC and the arrival of immigrants and slow resurgence of population is also evident – except in the diminished number of sites – from a comparison of the preserved animal bones from PS 36, a mainly Early Iron Age site and from PS 25 (Agios Donatos). Together these two sites give us a picture of the changing animal-based subsistence through time, as shown by Markku Niskanen and Vivi Deckwirth.⁸⁴ In PS 36, cattle were more abundant than ovicaprids, with pigs and horsees in a minority. In PS 25 three different layers with remains of animal bones could be identified, the first one dating to the late second and early first century BC, the second one to the first century AD, and the third one to the late second and third century AD. In

⁸¹ Our knowledge of Photike is mainly based on the published inscriptions (cf. Hatzopoulos 1980; Samsaris 1994 and Sironen 2009). It was founded during the reign of either Caesar or Augustus (Samsaris 1994, 20-21 and Rizakis 1996, 270-271). The cemetery at Mazarakia dates between the first century BC and the second century AD (cf. *HGAtlas* 2008, 137 with photographs of some of the finds). I owe thanks to Ourania Palli and Asterios Aidonis for further information concerning the cemetery at Mazarakia, where the typical Roman primary cremations dominate as contrasted to the Hellenistic type of cremation burials in Thesprotia (for the latter one, see Aidonis, this volume).

⁸² This seems at least to be the picture around Apollonia, where the depopulation of the countryside is paralleled by an increase in urban residence (cf. Stocker 2009, 877-888). Unfortunately our knowledge of Photike is much too limited for such conclusions to be made. See also Gravani 2007, who argues that even some Thesprotians were forced to take part in the *synoikismos* of Nikopolis, or Bowden 2011, who discusses to which extent the new settlers really were Romans.

⁸³ According to Cabanes 1997, 124, the manumission acts of Butrint, which date to between the third and first century BC, also indicate an increasing degree of social stratification, with a progressive reduction in the number of group manumittors and a corresponding increase in the number of individual slave-owners.

⁸⁴ Niskanen 2009; Deckwirth, this volume.

all three layers, ovicaprids were the most common animals. In the late second to early first century, *Cervus* is the second most commonly occurring animal species group, making up 20-31% of the bones depending on whether the teeth are included or not. In the layer of the first century AD, 10.2-17.2% of the bones represent wild mammals (*Cervus* and *Lepus*), whereas they are absent altogether from the late second to third century AD layers. The amount of pigs and cattle rises when moving from the late second to first century BC layer to the first century AD layer, but falls drastically to the lowest percentages in the late second to third century layers, which are dominated by the ovicaprids.

Written sources indicate that the economy of Epirus after 167 BC was specialized on animal husbandry and secondary products such as milk, cheese, wool and skins. The surplus in livestock, and especially in ovicaprids, may even have been the factor that attracted affluent Romans to invest in villas in Epirus in the first century BC, as suggested by David Hernandez.⁸⁵ The difference in subsistence between PS 36 and PS 25, which implies a change to an economy with ovicaprids as the most common animals, could be related to this process. It cannot, on the other hand, be excluded that the change took place already several centuries before 167 BC, as ovicaprids in Kassope were the most commonly occurring animals throughout between 360 and 30 BC.⁸⁶

A parallel to the noticed shift to a larger percentage of wild mammals on Agios Donatos can be found during the last centuries BC in Kassope.⁸⁷ This shift could indicate a sharply decreasing population combined with a rise in numbers of wild animals. On the other hand, one should not forget that wild game was part of the subsistence of higher social classes in the Roman period. This could partly explain their appearance in the bone assemblage of Agios Donatos, although not in Kassope. The total lack of wild mammals and the dominance of ovicaprids among the bones from the late second to third century AD should, in turn, rather be connected with the obvious loss of wealth and social status that characterizes the late stages of the villa on Agios Donatos.⁸⁸

The new reality of the Middle and Late Roman periods

The surprisingly static settlement pattern originating in the Early Iron Age/Archaic period, seemingly even surviving the havoc of 167 BC, was not completely abandoned until the Middle Roman period, giving way to a totally new settlement pattern representing the third to the sixth century AD. Thus two of the three clusters of sites identified by us and dating between the Early Iron Age/Archaic and the Early Hellenistic period continued, as we have seen, to be settled during the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman period, but none any longer during the Middle and Late Roman period.

Three sites of the Late Classical and Hellenistic period seem on the other hand to have been resettled during the Middle and/or Late Roman period. Thus, E 13 (Delvitsi or Sternari), which produced some evidence of settlement during the Early

⁸⁵ Hernandez 2010, 65-80.

⁸⁶ Boessneck 1986.

⁸⁷ Boessneck 1986.

⁸⁸ According to Powell 2007, 306, 313 and 318 wild mammals were part of the subsistence in the Triconch Palace at Butrint during the late third to fourth century AD, indicating that game at least was available for people belonging to the higher social classes.

and Late Hellenistic period, was resettled as a farmstead from the late third until fifth century AD.⁸⁹ The two Early Hellenistic fortresses Agios Donatos of Zervochori (PS 25) and Kioteza (PS 34) show a similar pattern. Inside the fortress of Agios Donatos a Roman villa was built which flourished in the first centuries BC and AD, followed by a contraction of the quantity and quality of finds in the second to third century. The villa was probably abandoned in the third century AD. A handful of pottery dating to the fifth and sixth centuries AD indicates some kind of later activity at the site. Kioteza in its turn is not reused until the fourth and fifth centuries AD.⁹⁰ The small amount of pottery dating mainly to the Late Roman period seems to indicate a short usage of Agios Donatos and Kioteza, perhaps as temporary hilltop refuges. Similar hilltop refuges and fortresses are a common feature of Epirus in the sixth century, when Photike also was moved from the valley bottom to the fortress Agios Donatos above modern Paramythia.⁹¹

The new sites mainly dating to the Middle and Late Roman period can be divided into two different types. First of all there are typical farmsteads (PS 7, E 7, PS 16, E 4, PS 39, PS 41, E 6, E 12, E 13, and possibly also PS 40 and PS 42). Graves were found very near several of the farmsteads (E 7, PS 16, E 4, PS 41, E 6, E 12 and E 13). Four of the farmsteads were intensively surveyed, turning up as 10-20x10-20 m large concentrations of tiles, stones and pottery, although the finds in some cases, probably due to recent agricultural work, were spread beyond the core area itself as a carpet with lower find density, in one case covering almost 0.4 ha (PS 41).⁹²

Apart from the typical farmsteads there are also larger sites with several concentrations of finds, obviously indicating the location of different buildings (PS 14, PS 10, PS 32, PS 27, PS 38, and possibly also E 18). The number of buildings documented in these sites through find density distribution (counted in 10-20x10-20 m large areas) or magnetometer surveying varies between two and six,⁹³ but it should be stressed that there may have been further buildings that could not be recorded on the surface. The area covered by these sites varies between one and three ha. The only exception is PS 38 which covers ca. 0.4 ha although revealing as many as four find concentrations.

The sites of the second category could be interpreted either as large villas consisting of several buildings or alternatively as villages. Due to the absence of any indicators of wealth such as mosaics or larger amounts of imported fine ware⁹⁴ I am

⁸⁹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 13.

⁹⁰ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 25 and PS 34 with further references.

⁹¹ In general for the hilltop refuges and fortresses of the sixth century, see Bowden 2003, 180-185 and Bowden 2009, 177-178 with further references. For Photike and Agios Donatos of Paramythia, see Triantaphyllopoulos 1984 and Bowden 2003, 175 with further references.

⁹² For details on the farmsteads, see the description of the single sites by Forsén *et al.*, this volume. PS 41 could on the basis of its total size possibly be regarded as a small village. It has still been treated as a farmstead since there is only one very clear find concentration inside the site, this core area covering just 10x10 m. There are also three sites that only have revealed possibly Late Roman graves (E 8, PS 33 and E 23). E 23 could perhaps be connected to the farmstead PS 39 and PS 33 to the village PS 32, whereas one would assume yet another farmstead somewhere near E 8.

⁹³ PS 14 having two, PS 10 five, PS 32 three (or possibly four) and PS 38 four find concentrations. In PS 27 six possible buildings were spotted by magnetometer. Further see Forsén *et al.*, this volume. It should be noted that PS 38 theoretically also may include the farmstead PS 39, which was located only 70-80 m from PS 38. The total size of PS 38 would then be closer to 1 ha.

⁹⁴ According to Alcock 1993, 63-71, tables 5 and 6, Roman villas are characterized by "elite features" such as kilns, ashlar walls, standing remains, mosaics, imported ceramics and baths.

inclined to regard them as villages. Further indications as to their function can be deduced from their location in relation to other sites and buildings. Thus the six buildings of PS 27 were built in close proximity to a Late Roman basilica. A similar village may have existed next to the second known Late Roman basilica in our study area, i.e., E 18. A milestone of the third century AD, which was found near this basilica, indicates that the main road leading through the Kokytos valley from north to south must have passed by close to it.⁹⁵

The main road leading through the Kokytos valley in the Middle and Late Roman period connected Photike to Butrint in the north, and to Euroia and Nikopolis in the south, and might as a matter of fact even have been indicated on the Peutinger Table.⁹⁶ It is likely that the road in some way influenced the settlement pattern in the valley. The known Late Roman basilicas are located as a string from north to south through the valley with the basilica at Krystallopiigi some four km to the northwest of Photike,⁹⁷ whereas the basilicas of Chrysaugi and Zervochori are some six and ten km to the south-southwest of Photike respectively. Allowing for some kind of average distance between the basilicas, the following one towards the south would be located somewhere at Gardiki, where none so far has been found.

Most of the Middle and Late Roman sites in our survey area are, just like the two Late Roman basilicas, located in the middle of the valley and not along the slopes of the Paramythia mountain range or along the Kokytos as previously (the exceptions being PS 41, E 12 and E 13). The sites are not evenly spread, but rather form clusters with a distance of ca. two km from each other – one around the basilica of Chrysaugi, another one between Xirolophos and Daphnoula, a third around Paliokklisi of Zervochori and a fourth to the north of Skandalo (Fig. 7). The area around Paliokklisi of Zervochori was most intensively surveyed. Therefore the cluster around this basilica is also best known, consisting of at least three villages (PS 27 next to the basilica, PS 32 and PS 38) and possibly as many as seven farmsteads (E 4, PS 16, PS 39, PS 40 (?), PS 41, PS 42 (?) and E 6), all of which lay within a radius of ca. one km from the basilica. The second cluster between Xirolophos and Daphnoula consists of at least two villages (PS 10 and PS 14) and one farmstead (E 7), whereas the first and fourth possible clusters are known only through excavations.

The pottery from the Middle and Late Roman sites mainly consist of cooking pots and storage vessels, and only to a small degree of imported fine ware. Thanks to the partly unpublished cooking pot chronology established by Paul Reynolds for northwestern Greece and Albania, the badly worn sherds from a total of 14 Middle to Late Roman sites could be dated to specific centuries. In Fig. 8 the numbers of these sites that produced pottery dating to the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh centuries AD are indicated. Although the sample is small and the dates to a large extent depend on the very poor state of preservation of the pottery, Fig. 8 still gives us a pretty good picture of the general trends of settlement during the Middle and Late Roman periods. Thus only two of

⁹⁵ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 27 and E 18.

⁹⁶ The exact route of the road between Butrint and Nikopolis is, however, disputed and dependent on where to localize the station *ad Dianam*. According to Stadtmüller 1954, 246-248 this station was located at Photike, whereby the road would have passed through the Kokytos valley. Hammond 1967, 86, on the other hand prefers to place *ad Dianam* about a kilometre west of Gitane. From here he suggests that the road would have continued roughly along the modern highway via modern Igoumenitsa and Margariti to Nikopolis. Hammond is followed by Soustal 1981, 90 and Bowden 2003, 16.

⁹⁷ Vasilikou 2009.

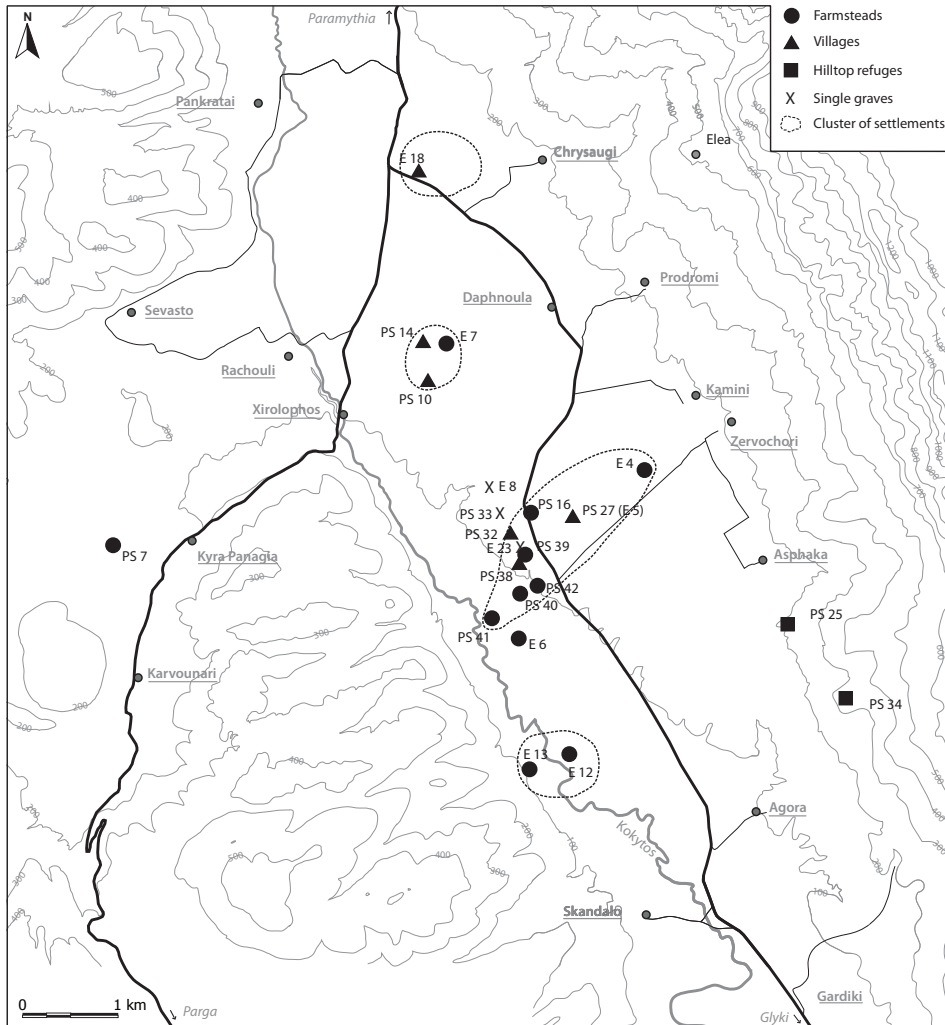


Fig. 7. Location of Middle to Late Roman sites.

the 14 sites were settled in the second century as compared to five in the third and seven in the fourth century. The peak is reached in the fifth century with 14 sites, whereas the number in the sixth century has fallen slightly, to nine. Finally, none of the sites is settled any longer in the seventh century AD.

Fig. 8 does not include any of the Early Roman sites that were abandoned before the new settlement pattern was created (PS 25, however, is included as a hilltop refuge of the fifth and sixth centuries AD). Of these, the small sanctuary at PS 5-6 and the farmstead E 9 seem on the basis of our present knowledge to have been abandoned by the second century, whereas the large villa of Agios Donatos (PS 25) after its apogee in the first century BC and AD continued in some kind of use, although on a much smaller scale, also during the second and third centuries AD. The general picture given in Fig. 8 is also slightly biased by the fact that another two of the Middle to Late Roman sites (PS 32 and PS 38) produced a handful of Hellenistic and Early Roman sherds that could not be dated

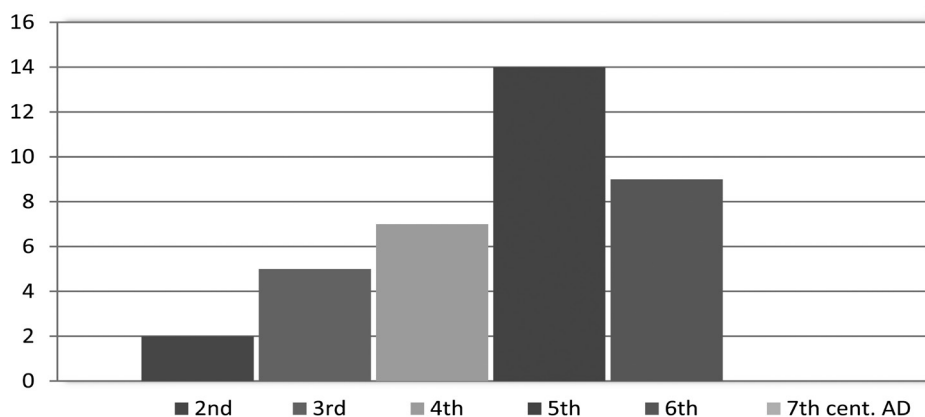


Fig. 8. The rise and fall of the Middle to Late Roman settlement pattern in the Kokytos valley as reflected in number of settled sites.

explicitly to a certain century. The number of the sites already settled in the second, or even first, century may thus be larger.

The change of settlement pattern in the Kokytos valley seems to have been gradual, taking place during the second and third centuries AD. The evidence seems to speak for a peak of settlement in the fifth century AD, after which a slow retardation already can be seen in the sixth century before the arrival of the Slavic Dark Ages that lasted for several centuries. This picture is further strengthened by the fact that the largest amount of Middle to Late Roman sherds, which can be assigned to a definite century, date to the fifth century AD, whereas, for instance, few can be dated to the second or third centuries AD.

Other intensive field surveys conducted in the neighbourhood of Butrint and Nikopolis give an only slightly different picture. There the landscape is characterised by a rather static Roman and Late Antique settlement pattern, obviously taking form in the late first century AD.⁹⁸ In Nikopolis a clear change of clay resources used for cooking ware, combined with a standardization of certain pottery shapes, takes place at the same time.⁹⁹ Major residential building in the countryside in the form of large villas seems mainly to occur in the first and second centuries AD and then to diminish during the third century. No major construction phases of private dwellings are then discernible for the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries.¹⁰⁰ The Roman and Late Antique settlement pattern survives until the sixth century. Thereafter follow the Slavic Dark Ages between the seventh and ninth centuries AD.

The formation of the Middle and Late Roman settlement pattern in the Kokytos valley seems thus to have taken place only about a century later than in Butrint and Nikopolis, a time lag that does not seem altogether impossible. The increase in the

⁹⁸ For the static settlement pattern and Butrint, see Bowden 2003, 79-81 and Pluciennik 2004, 54-57. Wiseman 2001 is still the best overview of the results of the historical periods collected by the Nikopolis project (although not giving any date for the formation of the static Roman settlement pattern). For the indications that the settlement of the countryside next to Butrint develops towards the end of the first century AD, see Hodges and Hansen 2007, 8 and 10.

⁹⁹ Moore 2000, 211-212, 243-244, 251; Moore 2001, 83-86. Interestingly enough, no changes in the ceramic repertoire following directly upon the Roman conquest of Epirus in 167 BC could be noted in Nikopolis.

¹⁰⁰ Bowden 2003, 81.

number of sites during the Late Roman period finds parallels in several other regions of Greece, where it generally has been interpreted as an increase in population.¹⁰¹ The preliminary results of the surveys in Nikopolis and Butrint did not seem to support a similar increase, thus leading Bowden to form his thesis of a rather static Roman and Late Antique settlement pattern.¹⁰² This picture may however have to be refined when the results of the surveys are published in detail.¹⁰³

Epirus was all throughout the ancient period characterised by huge estates mainly specialised on stockbreeding. The owners in the Middle and Late Roman periods were typically absentee landlords who lived in the cities, the most affluent even outside Epirus. A good example is the Thesprotian Klearchos family. One member of the family enjoyed a long career as a top-ranking government official and member of the Senate in Constantinople under the reigns of Valens and Theodosius I. As *praefectus urbis Constantinopolitanae* he was even associated with the building of an aqueduct and the public library of Constantinople. His son also had a magnificent career, becoming *praefectus urbis Constantinopolitanae* and praetorian prefect of Illyricum in the early fifth century AD.¹⁰⁴

The interest of the aristocratic class in the urban life is visible in the construction of private dwellings, sometimes of palatial dimensions, in the urban centres, beginning from the late third and continuing until the mid-fifth century.¹⁰⁵ The tendency of the ruling class to show off its wealth in this way probably is connected with the concurrent absence of investments in private dwellings in the countryside. The contraction of and final abandonment of the luxurious villa of Agios Donatos in the second and third centuries AD should be related to this general trend. Thereafter the landscape was mainly settled by small farmers and slaves, living and working on domains probably largely belonging to absentee landlords.

The Kokytos valley was an integral part of Late Roman Epirus. Two of the ten settlements in the province Epirus Vetus that in the *Synekdemos* of Hierokles ca. 527/528 are described as having the status of *poleis* were located in or close to the valley (Photike in the north part of the valley and Euroia just to the south of it). Both sites were bishoprics, the latter one well known for the fact that the relics of Agios Donatos were kept there.¹⁰⁶ Christianity had become firmly established in Epirus by the second quarter of the fifth century, with several bishops from the region attending the council of Ephesus in 431 and that of Chalcedon in 451 AD. As shown by Bowden, the majority of the large number

¹⁰¹ For an early overview, see Alcock 1993, 33-49. For a more recent overview and discussions on how to interpret the increase of finds (partly due to increased visibility etc.), see Kosso 2003, Pettegrew 2007 and Bintliff *et al.* 2007, 155-167.

¹⁰² Bowden 2003, 79-82.

¹⁰³ Crowson and Gilkes 2007, 122-123, now speak of a general revival of the settlement in the unwallled suburb outside Butrint after AD 400. In Apollonia to the north of Butrint an infilling of the rural landscape also occurred in the Late Roman period. The process of infilling apparently began already towards the end of the Middle Roman period. Cf. Stocker 2009, 885-886.

¹⁰⁴ For Klearchos, see *PLRE* I, s.v. Clearchus 1 and Clearchus 2. For the economic and social conditions of Epirus in the Middle and Late Roman periods, see e.g. Chrysos 1997, 156-160.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. e.g. Bowden 2003, 46-58. Gilkes *et al.* 2007 or Bowden and Hodges 2011 define a new kind of “grand” housing that was constructed from the mid-fifth century onwards, i.e. two-storey houses with working spaces on the first floor and living quarters and dining rooms on the second floor.

¹⁰⁶ For Photike and Euroia, see Soustal 1981, 236-237 and 158. Euroia is generally located at Glyki next to the Acheron, although Bowden 2003, 108 expresses doubts as to the validity of this suggestion.

of palaeochristian churches that are found all over the region, both in towns and in the countryside, were built between the mid-fifth (and especially from 475) and the mid-sixth century AD. Interestingly enough, this boom in ecclesiastical construction followed upon the apparent decline in the construction of grandiose urban private dwellings, thus indicating a shift in where surplus wealth was invested.¹⁰⁷

Through the Epirote bishoprics, or rather through the papal correspondence with them, we can trace the end of the ancient period in Thesprotia fairly well. Epirus had been hit by several barbarian invasions in the fourth to early sixth century, but the decisive strike was apparently caused by the Slavic invasion of 586/587 AD. The bishop of Euroia escaped with his clerics (and part of the population?) to Corfu, taking with him the relics of Agios Donatos. By 596 there were only five bishops left in Epirus Vetus as compared to the eight mentioned by Hierokles in the 520s, and by 603/604 four of these bishops were already guests of the fifth, Alkison of Corfu.¹⁰⁸ A second incursion by Slavs in 614-616 to Epirus and other parts of Greece merely confirmed the fact: Thesprotia and the Kokytos valley had moved into a new phase of history, the Slavic Dark Ages.

The Medieval and Early Modern centuries

The settlement patterns of the Medieval and Early Modern periods are difficult to trace in archaeological terms in the Kokytos valley. The number of known excavated sites and standing monuments belonging to these centuries is very small.¹⁰⁹ The intensive field survey did not help much in enlarging the number of known sites of these periods, partly because the settlements then were located higher up on the mountain slopes, in locations that nowadays are either superimposed by modern villages or badly overgrown by impenetrable vegetation. It is not until the twentieth century and the advent of modern roads and cars that the villages once again move down closer to the valley bottom.

The catalogue of sites in our study area includes ten sites with remains from the Medieval or Early Modern periods. Most of these sites are Early Modern in date (PS 23¹¹⁰, PS 2, PS 8, PS 9, PS 47, E 14, PS 24 and PS 26) and only two produced remains of Medieval date (E 10 and PS 25). No clearly identifiable Medieval pottery was found at any site, and the church ruins at E 10 have thus been suggested to be Medieval in date only on the basis of a handful of cast window panes found next to them. The location of this site is strange and atypical for the Medieval period: it lies in the middle of the valley bottom not far away from the Late Roman village and basilica PS 27.¹¹¹ Most

¹⁰⁷ Bowden 2003, 105-159.

¹⁰⁸ For the papal correspondence see e.g. Soustal 1981, 51; Chrysos *et al.* 1997, 182-184 or Bowden 2003, 197-198 with further references.

¹⁰⁹ For an overview of recent archaeological finds from elsewhere in Thesprotia that date between the tenth and fifteenth centuries, see Drosou 2006, 284-293. The most interesting excavations have been made along the Kalamas river with several important cemeteries, such as the one of Korytiani dating to the tenth and eleventh centuries and the one of Doliani dating to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For the latter one, see also Aidonis and Emmanouil 2009.

¹¹⁰ PS 23, Mikro Karvounari, is actually a Palaeolithic to Mesolithic site, located in the terra rossa badlands to the west of Karvounari. The Early Modern house built on this site is probably was a seasonally settled hut for shepherds.

¹¹¹ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site E 10.

likely E 10 has been an isolated chapel next to the main road through the valley, perhaps commemorating the existence of a village near-by more than half a millennium earlier.

The second site that has revealed Late Medieval remains is Agios Donatos of Zervochori (PS 25). Next to the chapel dating to the seventeenth century, a small cemetery was detected. Only one grave was excavated, revealing a woman buried with her head towards the west. There were no grave goods, but a C-14 sample taken from a bone dates the burial to 1310-1435 cal. AD.¹¹² The date of the grave suggests that the chapel originated already in the Medieval period. However, no remains of a synchronous settlement have been found on Agios Donatos although the hillock was thoroughly surveyed and several trial trenches dug. Ca. 200 m to the south of Agios Donatos there is, however, an Early Modern to Modern seasonal Vlach camp-site (PS 26), which might indicate that transhumantic tribes already during the Late Medieval period camped in the surroundings of Agios Donatos during the winter and perhaps buried their dead at the chapel.

Only one Early Modern village site (PS 24) was surveyed and it was located high up on the Paramythia mountain range slope, at a level of 594 masl (i.e. more than 500 m above the valley bottom). The village PS 24 (Koutsiates) had been constructed on an easily defensible outcrop that could be reached from the east through a gate, thus emphasizing the importance put on security at that time. The site seems even to be marked on Aravantinos' late nineteenth century map as Logkates (previous name of present village Agora).¹¹³

In general the Early Modern sites located on or near the valley bottom seem to have a special function. For example, the site E14 (Ganadia) is a water cistern, whereas PS 2 and PS 8 possibly belonged to one and the same tile and/or pottery manufacture, known from nineteenth-century Ottoman sources and dated by thermoluminescence analyses to the second half of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁴ The remaining two sites (PS 9 and PS 47), which are both located close to the Kokytos on the very valley bottom, have been described in the site catalogue as farmsteads although their exact function is unclear.¹¹⁵ They may well have had some special function (e.g. as a khan or a seasonal hut) which however cannot be ascertained on the basis of the available data.

While planning the Thesprotia Expedition it was clear that there existed Venetian and Ottoman archives with extensive written sources which could give us more information concerning the Early Modern period in Thesprotia. Above all we wanted to enlarge our knowledge of the administrative subdivision of the region and its settlement patterns in general, including the social and economic realities, the ethnic and religious composition of the population, and the development of demographic trajectories throughout the centuries. We also wanted to throw more light on the cultural clashes that occurred because of the fact that the region was located on the crossroads between west and east (represented by the Venetians on Corfu and Parga and the Ottoman Empire on the mainland).

Most information concerning the encounter between east and west and how the local Thesprotians were affected by living on the crossroads can be found in the Venetian

¹¹² Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 25.

¹¹³ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, site PS 24.

¹¹⁴ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites E 14, PS 2 and PS 8. For PS 8, see also Forsén 2009, 6-7.

¹¹⁵ Forsén *et al.*, this volume, sites PS 9 and PS 47.

archives. In this volume Mika Hakkarainen concentrates on describing the perhaps best known single event belonging to the not infrequent border skirmishes between the Venetians and Ottomans in the region, i.e., the Venetian short conquest of the Ottoman fortress of Margariti during the War of Cyprus in the early 1570s. This event very well describes the conflicting interests attached to the relations, where even during open war parts of the Venetian and Ottoman authorities as well as the local population had an interest in, and tried to avoid, larger conflicts that might lead to a change of the status quo.

The Venetians were dependent on grain import from the mainland in order to feed the large population of Corfu, and any larger military conflicts could have direct effects on the supply, causing famine.¹¹⁶ Therefore the Venetians were interested in avoiding open conflict at the same time as they maintained a kind of no-man's zone along the border, where the Ottoman authorities had but limited influence. This was done by supporting local tribes, especially the Souliotes by funds and arms, thus creating confusion in the region. No large-scale attempts were undertaken, however, at enrolling the martial, to a great extent Christian, Albanians as Venetian mercenaries, thus differing completely from the Venetian and Spanish policy against the Christian Albanians from Chimara further north of Butrint in modern Albania.¹¹⁷

The team directed by Evangelia Balta that has worked in the Ottoman archives has managed to clarify the administrative structure of the region, as well as to shed new light on the ethnic and religious composition of the population and the development of demographic trajectories. The Albanian tribes (the Chams or Tsamides) that had settled in Thesprotia in the fourteenth century were still mainly Christian in 1551 according to the defter *TT* 273, but during the centuries of Ottoman rule large parts of them converted to the Muslim faith,¹¹⁸ especially in the kaza of Margariti, until nearly every second inhabitant in Thesprotia in 1902 was Muslim.¹¹⁹ Large-scale conversions to Islam are known to have taken place in the Balkans especially in the seventeenth century,¹²⁰ but we now know that this process began in Thesprotia already during the late sixteenth century, as there are Muslim inhabitants in nearly a third of the Thesprotian villages recorded in the defter *TT* 608 of 1613.¹²¹

The two defters published by Evangelia Balta and her team, *TT* 273 of 1551 and *TT* 608 from 1613, seem to indicate an increase of population during the second half of the sixteenth century, continuing into the early seventeenth century.¹²² The total number of *neferan* (i.e. taxpayers including both married men and bachelors above 15 years old)

¹¹⁶ Hakkarainen 2009.

¹¹⁷ For the Souliotes, a Christian Albanian tribe living in the mountains to the east of the Kokytos valley, see now Psimouli 2006. For an overview of Chimara and its relation to Venice and Spain, see e.g. Bartl 1991.

¹¹⁸ Balta *et al.*, this volume.

¹¹⁹ Balta *et al.* 2009, 253, 256 and 259 giving the following figures for the kazas of Aydonat/Paramythia (9000 C, 6000 M), Filyat/Philiates (15000 C, 10000 M) and Margaliç/Margariti (9000 C, 15000 M). It should be stressed that these numbers are based on Greek sources.

¹²⁰ In general see e.g. Minkov 2004. For the same process in neighbouring Chimara, see Bartl 1991, 323-326.

¹²¹ According to Balta *et al.*, this volume, 12 villages of 87 in the nahiye of Aydonat had Muslim inhabitants, 38 villages of 53 in the nahiye of Parakalamo and finally 7 of 35 in the nahiye of Mazaraki.

¹²² Balta *et al.*, this volume. It needs to be stressed that the defters are taxation lists and not census lists, which implies that no definite demographic figures can be extracted from them. However, the situation is not much better concerning early censuses, which in several cases really cannot be taken at face value. Cf. e.g. the discussion concerning the validity of the figures given by the Grimani census of 1700 by Forsén and Forsén 2003, 328-329.

rose, for instance in the nahiye of Aydonat (Paramythia) from 5411 in 1551 to 6800 in 1613, which implies a yearly increase of 0.37% per year. This figure should be compared with what we know from the rest of Early Modern Greece, where the population on the basis of the figures given by the defters doubled, or in some cases even quadrupled, between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. In general the population began to decline already during the late sixteenth century, although in some cases – such as in the Megarid, the Cycladic and Ionian islands as well as in Crete – the decline is less sharp and does not begin until during the seventeenth century.¹²³

The question is whether the population in Thesprotia really continued growing until 1613, or whether it reached a peak some 20-30 years before and already was in a stage of decline in 1613. There are certain factors that may speak for the second option, although this cannot be proven with certainty. First, the rate of yearly increase between 1551 and 1613 is surprisingly low: only 0.37% per year as compared to a rate of 0.7% which would be needed for the population to double in a hundred years and which confirms to the general trend in Europe and large parts of Early Modern Greece (with much higher rates of increase having been measured e.g. for Boiotia and Thasos).¹²⁴



Fig. 9. Group of Vlach families in 1913 on their way to the summer pastures in the mountains (F. Boissonas 1913, after Thesprotia 2004, 89).

¹²³ For general overviews with further references, see e.g. Forsén 2007, 239-240 and Forsén 2008, 192-193, arguing for a considerable migration from the Greek mainland to the islands.

¹²⁴ For different rates of increase measured for the sixteenth century, see Forsén 2009, 192. For the average European increase of population between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century, see e.g. Braudel 1972, 420.

Second, the ratio between bachelors and households changes from ca. 1/7 in 1551 to 1/3 in 1613,¹²⁵ indicating that the population had moved from a stage of rapid increase in 1551 to one of stagnation or even decrease in 1613.¹²⁶ In pre-modern societies a larger number of unmarried men is symptomatic of a peaking population, where attempts are made to react to overpopulation by reducing the amount of children.¹²⁷

There is one well-known part of Medieval and Early Modern Thesprotia that is difficult to trace not only in the archaeological record, but also in the archival sources, namely the Vlachs (Fig. 9) – a people living on transhumance, i.e. the seasonal migration of livestock in order to provide the animals with food, during the summer in the mountains and during the winters in lowland valleys. We know that these transhumant societies played an important role in Epirus, including the Kokytos valley, since at least the eleventh century AD.¹²⁸ Transhumance most likely also formed part of ancient Thesprotia although mostly representing what Horden and Purcell describe as “‘vertical’ transhumance, by which herds of only moderate size move seasonally to nearby upland pastures” rather than “the far grander ‘horizontal’ transhumance associated with the Spanish Mesta or the Neapolitan Dogana, involving at the extreme the seasonal movement of millions of sheep over several hundred miles”.¹²⁹

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, on the basis of the results reached by the Thesprotia Expedition and by the 32nd Ephorate for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities during the last 10 years, I have tried to sketch the general outlines of the Braudelian *longue durée* oscillations in settlement patterns of the Kokytos valley beginning from the Middle Palaeolithic period and continuing until the advent of the modern era. The fertile Kokytos valley has most likely been settled by human beings throughout these millennia. Some dark ages still remain even though we have managed to fill in several of the previous gaps in the history of the valley.

The interpretations suggested in this chapter should not be seen as any final truth. The third volume of the Thesprotia Expedition will produce more results from special categories of finds and sites that will help in fine-tuning the broad lines sketched here. The same, of course, also goes for future excavations and research. The purpose of this chapter is thus more to stimulate discussion and to function as a stepping-stone for further research in the history of the Kokytos valley, as well as of Thesprotia in more general terms.

¹²⁵ These ratios have been calculated on the basis of 2294 *neferan* from the nahiye of Aydonat in 1551 and 1999 *neferan* from the same nahiye in 1613, data that most kindly were supplied to me by Evangelia Balta.

¹²⁶ Cook 1972, 25-27, was the first to use this ratio for demographic observations, noting an increase of the ratio of bachelors to adult males in some parts of Anatolia from ca. 3% in the late fifteenth century to 48% in the late sixteenth century. For similar ratios in the Peloponnese, see Forsén and Forsén 2003, 328.

¹²⁷ The easiest way to do this is to raise the marriage age, something that automatically would give a higher ratio of bachelors. For the influence of the average marriage age on population growth and the ability of pre-modern societies to change the pattern of marriage age, see Livi Bacci 1999, 95-107.

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