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The Asea Valley Survey

An Arcadian Mountain Valley from
the Palaeolithic Period until Modern Times

by

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APPENDIX IV

MORTUARY DATA: STRUCTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BURIALS, SETTLEMENTS AND THE LANDSCAPE

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The practice of modern surface surveying has its main origins in the settlement archaeology of the 1970s, and its traditional goal has been to discover habitation areas in order to discuss long-term settlement patterns. Traditional surveys have thus not been particularly interested in locating non-habitation features like graves. Burials have traditionally been regarded as material that needs to be excavated to be of importance. Burial archaeology as a sub-discipline generally discusses population ratios, life-spans, social identity, gender relations and social structure by relating burial structures and artefacts within or between areas or time periods. This kind of analysis is hardly possible for burials registered in surveys, due to the paucity of retrievable information. It is therefore not surprising that burials seldom are recognised or explicitly discussed in traditional surface surveys. A quick look at some of the recent published surveys carried out in Greece shows few newly discovered graves in relation to the number of habitation sites and other activity areas.

The numbers of burials in *Fig. 194* are tentative figures and are not directly comparable. Important factors that affect the amount of registered features are the extent of the area that has been surveyed and the detail in which the work has been conducted (intensive/extensive). Another factor is the degree and quality of the information provided by the local villagers. Many graves have certainly been lost due to recent destructive formation processes such as agricultural and building activities, but the major reason for the low number of registered burials in surveys is most likely to be the extremely low visibility of many types of graves. The visibility is dependent on both burial traditions and social aspects. Monumental burials, as in the Bronze Age tholoi and chamber tombs, are obviously more easily spotted than subterranean ones of more modest construction. This factor also skews the balance between different time periods, as the visibility of burials varies according to different burial practices.

The dead may, during some periods, have been disposed of in such a way that the remains are not retrievable in the archaeological record.¹ For instance, some individuals might have been buried at sea or in rivers.² Another related factor is, of course, variations in population ratios and social strategies that only permit parts of the population to be 'properly' buried. Not surprisingly, the majority of recorded burials are either of superterranean type from the prehistoric periods, or graves from later, more populated periods. The time factor is also relevant as stone-built cist graves and, to a lesser extent, tile graves are more durable than, for instance, simple pit or earth-cut graves. The visibility of subterranean burials also depends on the range of modern utilisation of the environment, such as intensive farming or different kinds of construction work.³ Many features are commonly visible in road scarps—or as in one case in Asea, at a modern quarry. Another important factor is the extent of looting; many features would never have been found later if the burials had been left intact.

What we are facing are complex relationships between several unknown factors, which make it hard to draw any substantial conclusions from graves registered in surface surveys. The conditions of such graves are commonly disturbed and seldom contain bones or burial interments, rendering a positive date for the structures difficult to establish. Hence, too, it is sometimes problematic to determine whether the discovered feature *de facto* is a grave at all. For these reasons it might seem a waste of time to devote effort to burials in surface surveys. Nonetheless, burials are not only interesting as objects from an internal point of view. Their location in time and space, and their relationship to other activity areas and elements of the landscape, can also provide interesting social information. The locations of burials are seldom randomly chosen, but are related to the properties of the landscape and to the structuring principles of the particular social formation. These principles are most likely to be a mixture of practical, economic, social and cosmological considerations. From such a time-space perspective, burials can supply valuable social information, as well as enhancing methodological strategies to increase the number of registered features during surface surveys. However, before we approach these matters it is appropriate to have a theoretical discussion regarding the relationships between the landscape and social practice.

MATERIALITIES, LANDSCAPES AND THE SOCIAL

In the social sciences there has been much discussion regarding the social aspects of material objects and physical properties of the landscape. The neo-evolutionist anthropology of the 1950s and 1960s, advocated by anthropologists such as Julian Steward, integrated the concept of culture with the ecological system.⁴ The culture-ecological approach focused on formation processes such as deforestation, coastal variations, or cultural transformations of the environment, stressing adaptation to regional resources. This perspective had great impact on the early settlement archaeology of the 1960s and 1970s. By stressing the concepts of evolution and adaptation, the processual archaeologists argued that the properties of culture are mainly an outcome of specific environmental conditions. They viewed the environment as an abstract space, a provider of the necessities for survival and, to varying extent, constraining human action. The tendency of processual archaeology to stress adaptation as a general uni-

¹ Cf. Morris 1992, 196.

² Bradley 1995, vii, with references.

³ E.g. Kristiansen 1985, 7–8.

⁴ Steward 1955.

Survey	Area	No. of graves	Graves/km ²
Keos	ca. 40 km ²	5–8	0.12–0.20
S. Argolid	ca. 44 km ²	11–16	0.25–0.36
Laconia	ca. 70 km ²	9–11	0.13–0.16
Berbatí–Limnes	ca. 61 km ²	20–23	0.33–0.38
Nemea	ca. 80 km ²	16–19	0.20–0.24
Asea	ca. 40 km ²	18–23	0.45–0.58

Fig. 194. The number of registered graves and grave-like features in recent published surveys (Keos: Cherry, Davis & Mantzourani 1991a; S. Argolid: Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994; Laconia: Cavanagh *et al.* 1996; Berbatí–Limnes: Wells 1996a; Nemea: Cherry, Davis & Mantzourani 1996).

directional law is, needless to say, quite deterministic. Not surprisingly, the functional environmental approach has been criticised by geographers, anthropologists, and archaeologists for neglecting the variability and creativity of human agency.⁵

However, stressing individual agency in contrast to the determining powers of ecological or social structures has not proven to be a sufficient alternative. More elaborate theories are necessary to grasp the intricate relations between agency and structure. One such project that has gained much interest in archaeology during recent decades is the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens. In Giddens' view, the social structure is not a free floating 'invisible hand' superseding and governing individuals. Giddens stresses the double nature of structure—individuals both produce and reproduce social structures through their actions, constrained and enabled by structural properties.⁶ In this view, social structure is both the medium *and* the outcome of social action. This perspective allows, to some extent, improvising and creative abilities of certain agents as well as accounting for the generally slow aspects of social life.⁷

As a sociologist, Giddens puts the main focus on human interaction, but a similar mutual relationship is also valid for the relations between the human and the material world. The study of the 'socialness of things' has in recent decades become a rapidly growing area in the social sciences, including archaeology.⁸ Objects, whether cultural or natural in origin, are not simply things: they can be charged with social significance and become social prime movers, like any human actor. An illustration of how materialities can interact with the social is found in the 'archaeology' of Michel Foucault. For instance, in *The birth of the clinic*, he implies that the very existence of leprosaria in early 16th-century Europe played a part in the process of discerning the mad as a social category.⁹ After the leprosaria became obsolete they perhaps stimulated, if not evoked, that process by their very presence.

A similar example is the hero-cult of the Geometric period. Ian Morris, among others, argues that the Greeks of the Iron Age probably had no accurate apprehension of the prehistoric predecessors who built monumental graves. But by being there, the graves were charged with social significance and came to play an important role in the formation of the early city-state.¹⁰ Richard Bradley has in a similar way suggested that the building of monuments in Neolithic Europe changed the experience of time and place as an unintended consequence of the changes they imposed on the landscape.¹¹ It is not only cultural objects that have a potential to be socially active. Properties of the environment may play a similar role. Such ideas have developed within the new landscape archaeology, the "phenomenology of space", inspired by strands of thought from human geography. This holistic perspective on the natural and cultural environment focuses on the mutual relations between actors and the properties of the local

environment.¹² Landscape in this sense is not just another word for environment, space, or nature. The meaning of the concept stands in general for an integrated perspective on social action and the non-human context. Like social structures, the landscape is both a medium *for* and an outcome *of* social action.¹³

Christopher Tilley, in several case studies, has analysed ritual and ideological aspects of the environment by using a quite different perspective on time and space than the one of positivist archaeology. He rejects the rationalist view of space, stressing its relativity for different social groups.¹⁴ In contrast to culture-ecology, Tilley perceives the landscape as embedded sets of space-time relations: "In learning about the landscape, it acts as a primary medium of socialisation, and from this follows the landscape's importance in the creation and reproduction of power."¹⁵ The phenomenological, cognitive approach is an interesting advance in socio-ecological studies. It somewhat bridges the gap between studies of social formations and the environment. Humans are not simply situated in landscapes; a mutual structuring relation exists where, on the one hand, the properties of the landscape constrain and enable some social practices, but on the other hand the landscape is modified and rearranged by its inhabitants.

In functional archaeology the use of the landscape is commonly seen as unproblematic. Habitation areas are supposed to be placed next to natural resources (fertile soils, areas with plenty of game etc.) or, when appropriate, situated in areas that were easy to defend. Burials are simply thought to be placed in nearby, less attractive areas. Economic and functional aspects are certainly active components of the structuration in many cases of prehistoric landscapes, but are nevertheless not alone sufficient to account for all social principles involved in the process. For instance, tombs or other monumental constructions might be built to enhance the social significance of certain special places. In the anthropological literature we also find reports of how small-scale groups use certain features of the landscapes as 'mnemonic pegs', i.e. as material references for oral histories.¹⁶

The functional, common-sense perspective is not replaced by the phenomenological and existential aspects of the relations between man and nature. They rather complement each other, and together they are likely to present a more holistic perspective of the structuring principles of a certain area. The matrix of the active structuring principles is thus not only a matter of logistics, but involves specific cultural and social practices and apprehensions of the elements of the landscape.

THE PLACING OF THE DEAD

There are a number of theories, more or less based on empirical evidence, regarding the structuring principles involved in plac-

⁵ E.g. Shanks & Tilley 1987; Macnaghten & Urry 1998, 2; Barret 1994.

⁶ Giddens 1984, 162.

⁷ Fahlander 2001, 18–25.

⁸ E.g. Riggins 1994; Miller 1998; Graves-Brown 2000; Cornell & Fahlander 2002.

⁹ Foucault 1994.

¹⁰ Morris 1988, 756.

¹¹ Bradley 1993, 21.

¹² Johnston 1998; Bradley 2000.

¹³ Cf. Tilley 1994, 23.

¹⁴ Tilley 1999, 178.

¹⁵ Tilley 1996, 161–162.

¹⁶ Tilley 1994, 202–204; Tilley 1999, 182.

ing the dead. A popular theme considers the visual aspects of burials. Monumental tombs with high visibility can be placed at boundaries in order to define territorial borders or to claim authority of land.¹⁷ However, in a contrary way, it is also possible that burials sometimes are deliberately 'hidden', situated not to be seen from the settlement or other activity areas.¹⁸ A semi-visual aspect concerns the orientation of the burials in relation to settlements, sanctuaries or other activity areas. For instance, Axel Persson suggested that the Mycenaean burials of Dendra were placed west of the habitation due to religious or superstitious ideas that the dead, if placed in such a direction, would not disturb the living on their journey to Hades.¹⁹ Indeed, the majority of Bronze Age burials seem to have been placed west of the habitation, as in the cases of Berbati²⁰ and Athens,²¹ but there are nevertheless numerous exceptions.²² Persson's explanation of the phenomenon is thus a bit too general, only accounting for the religious or superstitious aspects. What are lacking are probably considerations of the local material conditions, i.e. properties of the local landscape or cultural constructions.

The practice of charging natural elements of the landscape with social significance or content is familiar from the ancient sources as well as from the ethnographic record in general.²³ An example of the importance of natural aspects is the indication that water may function as a separating medium between the living and the dead. Richards has discussed the ritual aspect in relation to Late Neolithic burials in Britain, and Pikoulas has suggested that some burials were placed on the other sides of waters to prevent contamination.²⁴ Also less striking features, like rock outcrops, caves, isolated trees or groves, marshy areas and larger rocks, may have been charged with social significance. In a similar sense, there are examples of how burials are related to cultural elements—for instance, the well-known phenomenon that graves often were placed along main roads.²⁵ The temporal aspect carries some complications here, as the depth of collective memory of pre-literate or protohistoric societies is likely to vary a great deal. Jan Vansina has argued that oral traditions in general are valid for at least 200 years, but in some special cases even for 1,000 years. Of course, some social practices or cosmological ideas might continue unaltered for a long period of time, but their purpose and social significance may very well change. Vansina also discusses the floating divide, a time limit after which first-hand memories are transformed into myth and a temporal history of a distant past.²⁶ In terms of archaeology, it may very well be that new burials are placed close to older ones without knowledge of the former use of the place. A well-known issue of many prehistoric and historical periods is also the deliberate use of older burial grounds for secondary burials, perhaps to relate the present with ancestors of a mythic distant past.²⁷ This practice is well known in relation to monumental and superterranean burials like *tholoi* and chamber tombs, but may apply equally to subterranean burials accidentally discovered or remembered.²⁸

To discuss the relevance of natural and cultural *signifiants* of the landscape, a dot on a map will not be sufficient. That would only provide a general relation to the main elements of the landscape. To be able to grasp any relations between burial sites and properties of the landscape there is a need for a more 'intuitive' or phenomenological approach. This means expanding the registration process beyond the mere properties of the objects themselves (as in their catalogue), and also employing 'phenomenological associations' regarding their place in the natural and cultural landscape. Examples may be the visibilities (sight lines) towards special surrounding elements like activity areas and natu-

ral features. Such relationships need to be explored from an embodied perspective. It is admittedly a bit strange to use the bird's-eye perspective of regional maps, since pre-modern individuals seldom had the ability to act and think through such a perspective. By far the easiest way is the personal experience of the actual site. But embodied maps can also be generated with GIS software in various ways. Interesting complements may be actual visibility maps or accessibility maps, rectified according to topographical features. Such mobility maps are based on degrees of positive and negative 'friction' of waters, hills, marshy areas etc. Positive friction (constraint) might mean a steep slope, dense vegetation etc., while negative friction (enabling) is more closely tied to levels of technology. Different kinds of waters (lakes and rivers) might expand the time-space ratio if one can presume some sort of boat or canoe. This morphological approach is enhanced if combined with identifiable areas of ideological/meta-physical importance, that is, areas which may not have been utilised or crossed due to ideological/cosmological considerations. Examples of these could be burial grounds, shrines, or just places endowed with social significance.²⁹

ASSOCIATING BURIALS WITH SITES AND FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE

It is often tempting to ascribe a burial or a burial ground to a known settlement from approximately the same period. This is more or less a common-sense approach based mainly on similarities in date and closeness in space. There are, however, a number of problems in such arguments, mainly because of the often fragmentary and incomplete information. For instance, if a site not yet discovered had been known, another conclusion might have been drawn. The temporal depth also presents problems, especially when lacking reliable dates for the features. Both habitation sites and burial grounds can be of very short duration and hence situated in the same area, or close to each other, without being directly related.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, is it interesting to discuss the location of a few of the burials at Asea in relation to elements of the landscape and cultural features.³⁰ For instance, Roman burials of S 42 (features 2a–e) are tempting to relate to the nearby Roman *villa rustica* at S 1.³¹ The burials are situated about 300 metres north-east of the site. This would fit well with similar proposed relationships of the Roman burials that are associated with a Roman *villa rustica* at Berbati.³² In this case, orientation may

¹⁷ E.g. Madsen & Jensen 1982, 83.

¹⁸ Cf. Parker Pearson 1999, 124.

¹⁹ Persson 1942, 152–153.

²⁰ Schallin 1996, 171.

²¹ Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 30, 34–36.

²² E.g. Branigan 1998, 17; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 43, 61.

²³ Tilley 1994, 24–25.

²⁴ Richards 1996; Pikoulas 1988, 188–191. See also Parker Pearson 1999, 125, 132; Hall 1976, 361.

²⁵ Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 91–93.

²⁶ Vansina 1965.

²⁷ Cf. Wells 1990, 128; Antonaccio 1994.

²⁸ E.g. Hägg, Hägg & Fossey 1980, 114.

²⁹ Cf. Tilley 1999, 182–183.

³⁰ The burials of Asea are described in greater detail in the appendix of Chapter V.

³¹ Feature 2b (UA-15484) is dated to cal. 530–650 AD (63.8%), AMS.

³² Hahn 1996, 219–220.

be the main structuring principle during the Roman period in the region. A further hypothesis is that the burials were placed along what possibly is an ancient road from the Tegea valley to Asea. The *kalderimi* at S 42 may perhaps be a later reuse of an older road from the Roman period. This hypothesis builds on another discussed relation: the placing of burials along roads. The burials may in either case belong to the *villa rustica* at S I, but be placed according to, or by combining, a different structural principle.

Similar reasoning can be applied to the Roman or Late Roman grave relief (Fig. 177) that was found by villagers west of the Panaitsa ravine at Chorafambela. If this information is correct, a plausible inference is that it indicates a series of undiscovered burials along the suggested ancient road that stretches from Paleokastro to the west.³³ These burials may be related to the Roman site S 22–23 on the other side of the Panaitsa ravine.³⁴ Here, we may be dealing with another set of relations: burials placed along a road and on the opposite side of waters; unlike S I and S 42, they are placed southwest of the settlement. The case of S 22–23 is complex; according to the map (Fig. 98) drawn by a villager, there are many possible burials in the area of which only a few have been located by the AVS. Here we face chronological problems as the burials may be older, contemporary, or younger than the settlement. Unfortunately, the burials of S 22–23 provide no chronological traits or datable material.

Relations to water, roads and orientation are, however, not the only structuring principles that may play a role in choosing the location for burial sites. Another, just as interesting, aspect is the relation between *signifiants* of the landscape and the location of burials. Regardless of which site and period we may associate the burials of S 22–23 with, a relevant natural feature is the oddly shaped rock, popularly referred to as the ‘Gypsy rock’ or the ‘Black Rock’, situated east of Agios Nikolaos.³⁵ This small rock is conspicuous in the landscape and, as hinted by its names, has obviously stimulated people’s imaginations in the construction of local myths. It is plausible that this special feature was, consciously or semi-consciously, ascribed/charged with social significance also in prehistory, operating as a structuring node, and that it seemed appropriate to place burials in its proximity. As a single case, this hypothesis may be stretching such relations too far, but is nonetheless provocative.

Another interesting example is the question of where the inhabitants who lived around the Paleokastro have been buried. When Holmberg excavated the site in the 1940s he discovered a number of intra-site burials on the top of the acropolis. He excavated seven cist graves, two pithoi (with children) and 22 earth-cut graves at the centre of the plateau. One of the cist graves contained a Late Helladic vessel and three of the earth-cut graves contained vessels dated by Holmberg to the Middle Helladic period. Several of the burials are associated with the MH buildings and hence of the same date. The other graves were dated to MH on the premise that the acropolis lacked settlement during LH. Holmberg does, however, also suggest that they may be attributed to another, unknown, nearby settlement. The cist graves were of varying construction. Apart from the common type of lined stone slabs with cover, some were in the form of cists with a floor of smaller flat slabs without cover. Other graves were built-up stone enclosures, similar to burials at Asine, and at least eight individuals were buried underneath the floors of the buildings.³⁶

These burials are the only positively prehistoric burials at Asea; there are no direct parallels among the other registered features in the valley. A curious aspect is that Holmberg did not find

any burials of the Neolithic and Early Helladic settlement phases. “In spite of energetic searching in the slopes of the nearest hills north and north-west of the hill of Asea, we have not succeeded in finding traces of any necropolis there.”³⁷ Also Pikoulas surveyed the area without result.³⁸ Could it be that another structural principle overruled the handiest solution of placing the dead in close proximity to the settlement? Indeed, there are cases where burials are situated quite far away from the settlement. For instance, the distances between Bronze Age settlements and their related burials range from within 100 m up to 1,500 m.³⁹ This is despite the fact, as in the case of Paleokastro, that there are suitable places closer to the settlements.

An alternative is to attribute the graves on the north-western slopes of Tambouria (S 44, features 1a–e) to the settlement around and on the Paleokastro. S 44 is situated ca 800 m east of the Paleokastro on the other side of the Alpheios. The structural principle involved here would be the water of the Alpheios, functioning as a separating medium between the living and the dead. Indeed, the closest area on an opposite side of water is the north-western slopes of Tambouria. The reasons why people would have bothered to transport the dead long distances are far from obvious. It may be as Pikoulas suggests, avoiding contamination, but other metaphysical and religious aspects may also be involved. A factor that contradicts a relation between the early (Neolithic and LH) occupation phases around Paleokastro and the burials at S 44 is the carbon date (UA-15485) of one of the buried individuals (feature 1d, cal. 540–645 AD). However, as previously argued, it is not necessary to attribute all burials to the same period. This single dating may indicate a case of deliberate or unconscious secondary burial in the area.

Moreover, an alternative to the burials at Tambouria would be the graves at Agios Nikolaos (S 22–23), which are separated from the Paleokastro by the Panaitsa ravine. There is a possibility that both concentrations of burials (S 44 and S 22–23) may be attributed to different periods of settlement around the acropolis. The two burial grounds are similar, consisting of cist burials, but differ in visibility. The Tambouria and its eastern slopes are highly visible from Paleokastro, while the small hillock of Agios Nikolaos is less visible. The difference of visibility, too, suggests that the two burial grounds belong to different settlement phases around the Paleokastro. If the carbon date of feature 1d is representative for the whole group of burials at S 44, they might be connected with a Late Roman settlement phase. There is little evidence for a Late Roman occupation phase around Paleokastro, as only a few sherds of that period have been registered; nonetheless, it is not implausible that a settlement existed also at that time, which presently would be buried under the silted area east of Paleokastro.⁴⁰ If this is the case, some of the burials at S 44 may have been placed according to the principle of division by water but also by a principle of visibility from the settlement. The same principles would be true for the burials of S 22–23 but

³³ See B. Forsén, Chapter IV, in this volume.

³⁴ In 2001 a small concentration of tiles was shown to B. and J. Forsén by villagers at the location where the relief is claimed to have been found. This area was not walked during the survey due to heavy vegetation.

³⁵ Pikoulas 1988, 62.

³⁶ Holmberg 1944, 22–26

³⁷ Holmberg 1944, 21.

³⁸ Pikoulas 1988, 56.

³⁹ Cavanagh & Mee 1990, 54; Wells 1990, 128.

⁴⁰ See Forsén & Karivieri, Chapter VIII in this volume.

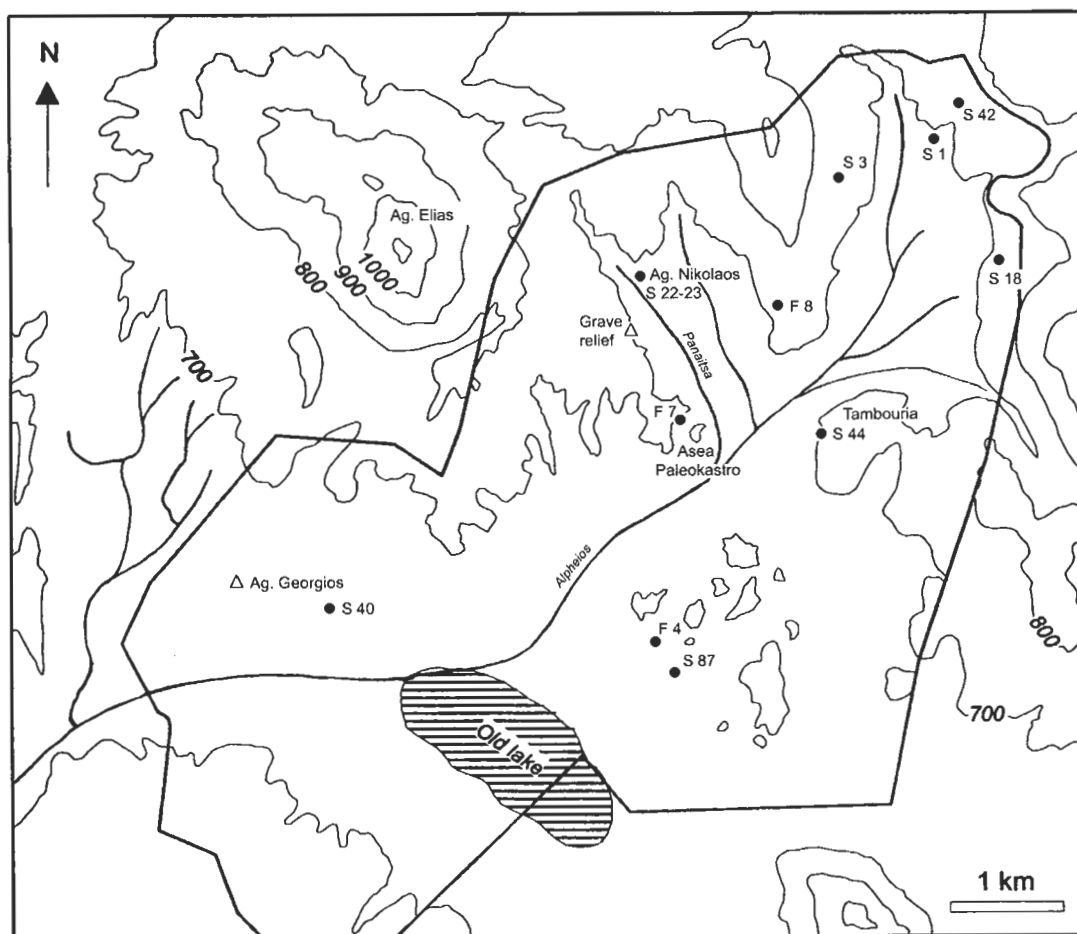


Fig 195. Map over the Asea valley and the locations of discussed features and sites.

with the difference that they are 'hidden' from the settlement. This may indicate a change in structuring principles between different occupational phases, or perhaps a differentiation between social groups.

DATING AND TYPOLOGIES

It is clear that a problem in relating burials to sites is the difficulty of getting proper dates for the graves. The construction elements of the less elaborate burials are unfortunately seldom sufficient for dating—even if they are found nearly intact. Cist graves of stone, for instance, are deployed in prehistory as well as in historical and modern periods.⁴¹ There seems to be no clear chronological correlation between different types (for instance, pits with cover slab, cists built up of rubble, more elaborate cists of larger slabs etc.). The tile graves are no less hard to date; tile graves of varying construction are recorded from the Helladic to Late Roman/Byzantine periods.⁴² Tiles have apparently been deployed in burials for as long as they have been used in buildings. There are no indications of specially designed burial tiles; all these graves seem to be built up of ordinary roof-tiles.⁴³

The tiles themselves can, however, offer a rough date for a burial. For instance, black and red brush-painted tiles are generally ascribed to the Late Archaic to Hellenistic periods, while light-red, dip-painted tiles are a typical Roman feature. Also some incisions, like finger-stroke marks or stamps, can hint at a date. A

problem here is, of course, that the tiles very well may have been reused. The different types of construction (flat tile cover, gabled tile cover, flat tile cover, over and under body, and tile cist)⁴⁴ are represented from different periods, but there are some chronological traits. Hägg, by comparing published Classical to Late Hellenistic material from Corinth, Olynthos and Eridanos, has found correlations between the uses of flat and curved tiles and that of gabled and flat graves. His analysis indicates a change in the late Classical/early Hellenistic period from Laconian towards Corinthian tiles, as well as a more marked change in the same period from gabled graves towards a greater number of flat graves.⁴⁵ However, there are also social aspects involved regard-

⁴¹ E.g. Cavanagh & Mee 1998; Kurtz & Boardman 1971.

⁴² Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 164, 312. E.g. Poulsen 1994, 23; Schallin 1996, 170 (Helladic); Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, 425 (Classical); Hägg & Fossey 1980 (Hellenistic); Coleman 1986, 152; Forsell 1996, 326 (Roman/Late Roman).

⁴³ Coleman 1986, 152; Backe-Forsberg 1978, 124.

⁴⁴ Backe-Forsberg 1978, 124.

⁴⁵ Hägg & Fossey 1980, 119. Hodder (1990) has supported the view that elements of the houses of the living might be symbolically represented in the properties of burials (the 'houses of the dead'). The third type of tile graves (flat tile cover, over and under body) might thus hint that such graves were constructed in periods where the houses were floored with bricks or tiles (i.e. Roman).

ing the type. For instance, at Asine, the gabled constructions are only used for adults, whereas the flat and single tile burials are mainly for infants. Hägg also found some local correlations between the orientations of the graves. In Athens the early (i.e. Classical) gabled graves are mainly orientated east to west, while the later (i.e. Hellenistic) flat burials are of north to south orientation.⁴⁶ Hägg's analysis is altogether interesting, but it also points at the fallacies of pan-Hellenic or regional comparisons. It is a well-known fact that burial practices are very much locally constituted and vary considerably even in quite small regions.

For the case of Asea, as well as most surface surveys, these chronological traits are of minor help. The type of construction or orientation is generally undeterminable or vague. Here the most promising approach is to date the bones when such are present (as has been done with S 44, 1d and S 42, 2b), or to make use of identifiable relations between sites, burials and elements of the landscape.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The suggested relationships between burials, settlement and the landscape are meant only as a tentative discussion. The material from Asea is too small and fragmentary to allow any substantial conclusions. Yet the choice of location for burials seemingly contains interesting information that can be utilised in two respects. The first is the social information that can be extracted. The positions of burial grounds and sanctuaries are particularly interesting, as they are of basically ideological constitution. If some relations that are not purely functional can be established, these may tell us something about the cosmology and power relations of that specific social formation.

The second aspect concerns methodology. In northern Europe, burials have been the main reference for locating settlements, as the latter are more difficult to discover due to the low visibility of domestic material. Such an approach is also possible for the Mediterranean area, although the factors are generally reversed.

Here, sites are easier to find, since concentrations of tiles and sherds are commonly visible on the surface, while subterranean burials demand more thorough efforts to be discovered. If some of the foregoing structural principles can be identified, the known positions of settlements can be used in combination with properties of the local environment to find possible areas for other types of activities, like cult places and burials.

It is, however, important when discussing matrices of structuring principles to view them as multidimensionally related and constituted. Some principles may be active in the long term and span over large areas (that is, also beyond the Greek cultural sphere), while others are of shorter duration and perhaps mainly local practices. Some structuring principles might thus overrule other principles in some regions, but be weaker or irrelevant in others. Structuring principles with different degrees of supremacy might coincide or contradict each other. In short, there can hardly be any clear and unambiguous relations between the structuring principles of a certain time or space.⁴⁷

At present we face a "Catch 22" situation: more data are needed for guidance in order to gather more data. The experience from AVS nevertheless seems promising. As mentioned, most burials recorded in surveys are visible because of construction work or looting, and this is also the case at Asea. The number of registered features, despite the small area, lack of subterranean burials and relatively well preserved rural environment, is the fruit of quite limited efforts. Revisits of areas with one or two registered features have often proved to result in the discovery of additional features, turning single graves into cemeteries (for instance S 44, S 42). This implies that more advanced strategies, built upon structural relations between activity areas and the properties of the local landscape, are likely to yield further burial features that have not been found during ordinary field work.

⁴⁶ Hägg & Fossey 1980, 120.⁴⁷ For an extended discussion, see Cornell & Fahlander 2002 and Cornell & Fahlander in press.

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The Asea Valley Survey
An Arcadian Mountain Valley from
the Palaeolithic Period until Modern Times

Appendix
Catalogue of Sites
The Graves
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Fig. 94. Horizontal wheel of the water mill at Marmaria (SM 1). The water drops onto the spokes of the wheel through the concrete pipe, and the power is transferred back through the vertical shaft to the mill house and grinding stone above.



Fig. 95. The two preserved concrete pipes (in the upper left corner) leading water to the mill SM 2. The rest of the mill was destroyed when the road leading to Papatris was asphalted.

APPENDIX OF GRAVES (F.F.)

In this appendix all the possible graves located by the AVS are collected and described in detail. Some of the graves were found next to settlement sites, and are therefore briefly described already in that context in the site catalogue itself. Some of the graves were considered to belong to cemeteries, which were treated as separate sites, whereby a shorter account of them is also to be found in the site catalogue. A third group of possible graves were considered too uncertain to be included in the site catalogue, and are therefore included only in this appendix. For more detailed entries of location and general site description of the graves considered to belong to cemeteries or found in connection with settlement sites, the reader is referred to the site catalogue.

Features 1a–e (S 44)

Type and description: Cemetery consisting of at least 5 features. Date uncertain, possibly C–R.

Location: The north-western lower slope of Tambouria. The Alpheios and the Megali Vrysi springs is situated ca. 50 m to the north-west, Paleokastro ca. 800 m to the west.

References: Pitkoulas 1988, 56. For similar graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 24 and 32.

Additional information: Villagers claim that there are additional graves in the area, but due to poor visibility, these are not visible. While digging wells and ditches villagers also claim to have found bone and ceramics 2–3 m below the alluvial surface next to Tambouria. There are at least 3 more possible graves in the area; two are visible in the scarp as rough-cut slabs and one as a depression in the road, but there are no artefacts or bones connected with them.

Associated material: A number of tiles were recorded during the survey and a few more on revisit. The tiles are dark red or brown painted, both light-yellow ware and ordinary plain tiles. One tile is painted on both sides (red/black). A few sherds were also recorded: red painted and plain tiles. No direct connection with the graves (they were found further down the road). Black painted tiles were also found in the associated tracts. Tract B 5 (Visibility: 10–20%, 3 tiles, one p. of slag), B 1 (eroded, good visibility, only 2 tiles and 1 sherd). A 119, A 120 (poor visibility, no finds).

Feature 1a: Lined cist grave situated along the natural bedrock. Constructed out of minor lined stones (ca. 20×20 cm each) and partly sealed by an 8cm thick stone slab, which in its turn is covered by 25–30 cm of soil.

Orientation: ENE–WSW.

Dimensions: Ca. 180×65×20 cm.

Status: Plundered and empty, today totally destroyed by a road.

Samples: No samples taken.

Features 1b and 1c: Additional built cist graves. Original shapes are indeterminate due to recent disturbances by bulldozer. The features consist of separate concentrations of bone in relation to large stone slabs along the scarp ca. 50 m uphill from feature 1a.

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Destroyed.

Samples: 3 teeth and 3 small fragments of bone from feature 1b; one p. of bone from 1c.

Feature 1d: Almost intact quadrangular cist grave. The complete remains of a human placed in a slightly contracted position are visible through a small hole in the scarp. Located ca. 50 m uphill from the features 1b and 1c.

Status: Almost intact.

Orientation: SE–NW.

Dimensions: Indeterminable.

Samples: One piece of human vertebra, accelerator dated (UA–15485) to cal. 540–645 AD (68.2%).

Feature 1e: Concentration of dark soil under a stone slab containing one small piece of burned bone, possible the remains of a cremation grave. Located ca. 50 m uphill from feature 1a.

Status: Destroyed.

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Samples: One fragment of bone.

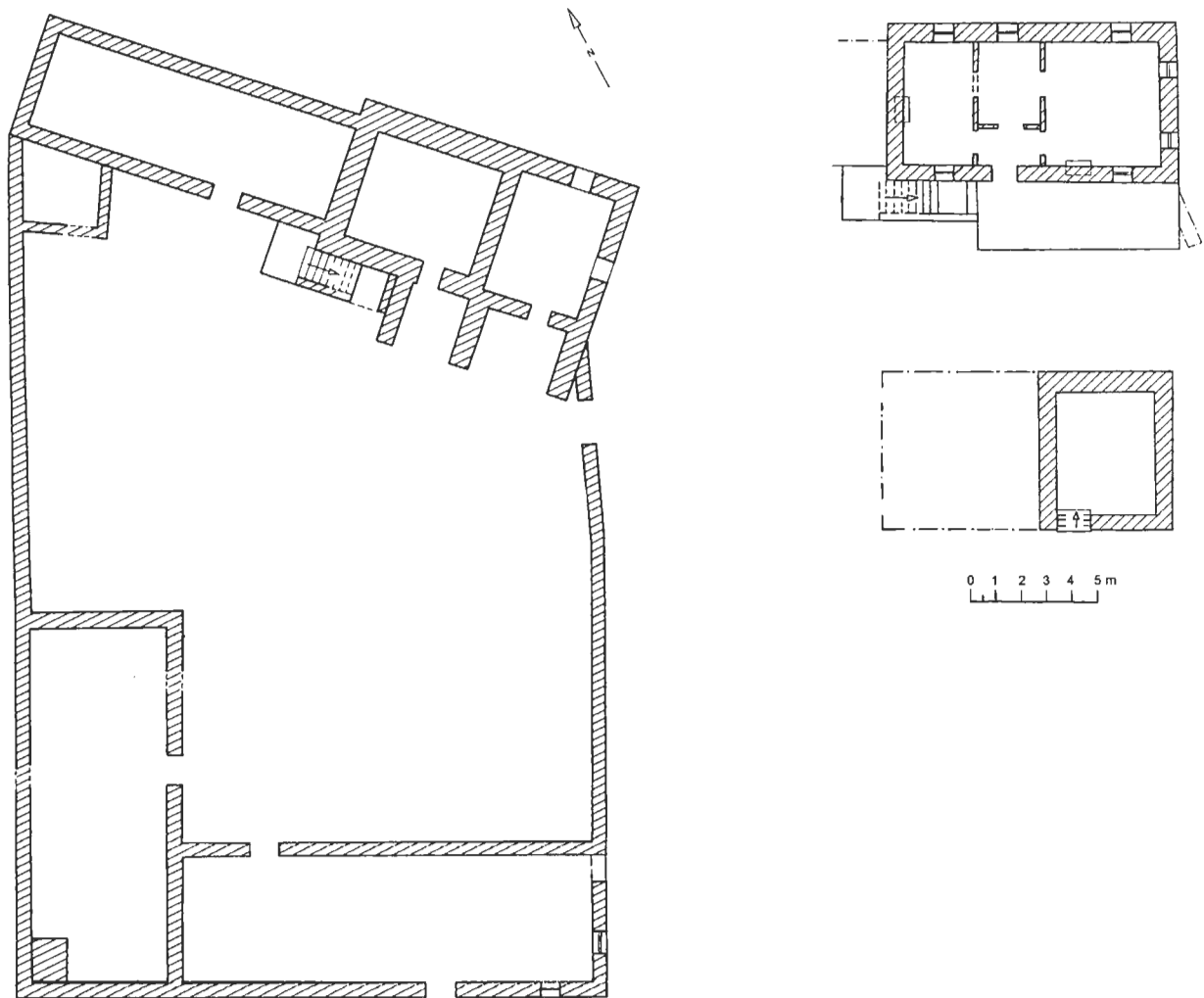


Fig. 96. Talaganis khan of Dorizas (SM 3). To the left is a top plan of the whole khan with the main building in the upper right corner. To the right is a top plan of the first floor (above) and the cellar (below) of the main building. Drawing: Barbara Greiner.

Features 2a–e (S 42)

Type and description: Small R cemetery consisting of five separate features situated ca. 1 m below the surface next to the steep scarp of a modern quarry.

Location: Ca. 50 m west of the Tripolis–Megalopolis highway, near the uppermost ridge of the Ammoutsas hill. The old Tripolis–Megalopolis *kalderimi* runs close to the graves. The R *villa rustica* S 1 is situated ca. 300 m to the south-west.

References: For similar graves, see e.g., Forsell 1996, 288; Coleman 1986, 120–123.

Associated material: Apart from the samples from 2a, a few plain tiles were registered in the surrounding area (Tract A 126–129)

Feature 2a: Cist grave with at least 3 rough cover slabs (ca. 10, 6 and 5 cm thick), which appears to have been lined with minor slabs.

Status: Partly destroyed.

Orientation: ESE–WNW.

Dimensions: Indeterminable.

Samples: One p. of tile and two sherds from the cavity. Undiagnostic.

Features 2b and 2c: Badly damaged, most of the structures and contents have eroded down the steep scarp. However, the remains suggest cist graves of similar construction as 2a. Located ca. 8 m to the east of 2a.

Status: Destroyed.

Orientation: ESE–WNW.

Dimensions: Indeterminable.

Samples: One p. of a long bone from 2b, accelerator dated (UA-15484) to cal. 530–650 AD (63.8%).

Features 2d and 2e: Remains of two additional possible cist graves visible only as parallel vertical stone slabs on the surface to the south-west of the scarp. One stone slab on the surface a few meters away suggests that at least some of the features were covered. The features may have been plundered, but it is also possible that the cover slabs simply have eroded *ex situ*.

Status: Partly destroyed.

Orientation: E–W to SE–NW.

Dimensions: W ca. 65 cm, L and D indeterminable.

Samples: A total of 3 sherds were collected next to the slabs, including an amphora from the 2nd–3rd cent. AD (438).

Features 3a–c, part of, and close to S 22–23

Type and description: Possible cemetery consisting of three registered features. Date uncertain, Hl–Med?

Location: The area surrounding Agios Nikolaos of Asea, close to which there is a homonymous spring. A LR cistern is visible in the Panaitsa ravine ca. 50 m to the south of feature 3a. Associated sites are S 22–23 (MN–EH, R) and S 36–37, a Med village higher up on the slopes, above Agios Nikolaos.

References: Pikoulas 1988, 62; Drakopoulos 1997, 306–307. For similar graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 24, 32.

Associated material: A number of plain tiles are visible along the scarp in close relation to 3a.

Associated tracts and sites: A 73, S 22–23 (3a), A 75, S 36–37 (3b–c).

Additional information: Villagers of Asea inform us that similar features as 3b–c were found while ploughing the fields between the chapel and the Panaitsa ravine. They also claim that features 3b–c once contained human bones. The surrounding area was searched anew at a revisit, but yielded no clear additional features. *Ca.* 60 m to the north of Agios Nikolaos there are however 7 minor and one larger pits dug recently, presumably due to looting. The locations of the pits seem randomly chosen and no artefacts or bone were found in the debris. *Ca.* 2 m to the west of feature 3a there is another smaller, possible cist grave. It is visible as a small cavity beneath a rough cut stone slab.

Drakopoulos (1997, 306–307) mentions that HI, R and Med sherds were found in relation to feature 3b and 3c. He also mentions some 10–15 other burials further north of Agios Nikolaos, which are no longer visible.

Feature 3a: Partly destroyed cist grave situated *ca.* 20 m to the south of Agios Nikolaos of Asea, visible in the scarp along the dirt road between the chapel and the spring of Agios Nikolaos (Fig. 97). The feature consists of a large slab of stone (*ca.* 105×70×8 cm) resting on smaller lined stones. The feature contains no bone or artefacts.

Orientation: N–S or E–W.

Dimensions: 60×50×17 cm.

Status: Disturbed, partly destroyed.

Samples: One tile was sampled from within the grave (maybe tossed inside the cavity at some later point).

Features 3b and 3c: Situated in another scarp of a dirt road, *ca.* 200 m to the north-west of Agios Nikolaos of Asea, at “Tou Gyftou ta kotronia”. According to Pikoulas these graves had been covered and lined by slabs. At present the only visible traces of the features are depressions at the top of the scarp (one small flat slab was found in relation to feature 3c). The features are possible lined cist graves. These features are not included in S 22–23.

Orientation: Appr. E–W.

Dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Destroyed.

Samples: No sample taken.

Feature 4, not related to a site

Type and description: A possible tile grave, visible in the form of a mound of soil mixed with stones and tiles (both rounded and plain). Suggested date: LR–Med.

Location: *Ca.* 200 m to the north-east of Agios Georgios of Daphni, in a cypress grove. At Agios Georgios of Daphni there is a Med–EMod village/hamlet (S 87). The Med site S 51 is located *ca.* 600 m to the north-east of feature 4, while the Roman *villa rustica* S 90 is *ca.* 800 m to the south-west of it.

References: For similar graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 96, 164, 312; Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, 444; Hägg & Fossey 1980, 113–122.

Associated material: *Ca.* 20 tiles visible on and around the mound indicate additional ones underneath the surface.

Associated tract: C 66 yielded *ca.* 50 tiles/sherds (feature uncounted).

Orientation: ENE–WSW.

Dimensions: 200×120×40 cm.

Status: Disturbed, possibly plundered.

Samples: One piece of tile with marks of finger strokes.

Features 5a–c, part of S 3–5–10

Type and description: Scattered concentrations of human bones are exposed in the scarp of a recently constructed road indicating a smaller cemetery. Suggested date: Med/EMod.

Location: 20 m to the north of Agios Nikolaos of Dorizas, on the eastern slope of Sombeti. The features are located within S 3–5–10, a major Med/EMod village, in the subarea S 3.

References: For similar graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 24, 32.

Additional information: Feature 5a was at a revisit found plundered and is now disintegrated, whereas additional concentrations of bones have become visible (Feature 5c).

Associated material: Cf. S 3.

Feature 5a: Concentration of bones in relation to some stone slabs suggesting a built cist grave. The position of the skull, femur and long bones suggest a contracted position. The physiognomy of the skull suggests that the buried was a young female (e.g., rounded eyes, no marked eyebrows). Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Destroyed.



Fig. 97. Cist grave at S 22–23, visible in the scarp of the road between Agios Nikolaos of Asea and the homonymous spring.

Samples: A decorated sherd (possible Med/EMod) and a small fragment of bone.

Feature 5b: A smaller concentration of bone situated *ca.* 3 m to the west of 5a.

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Destroyed.

Samples: 3 teeth.

Feature 5c: Another small concentration of bone situated close to 5a.

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Destroyed.

Samples: One fragment of bone.

Features 6a–b (S 40)

Type and description: Two possible tile graves, HI or R cemetery?

Additional information: A villager claims to have found human bones and pottery in relation to the features, which he described as gabled or vaulted tile graves. At the lowermost slope a trench is dug into the hillock revealing a few similar tiles (possibly another plundered grave).

Location: *Ca.* 500 m to the south of the Megalopolis–Tripolis highway, on the east slope of a small hillock named Dragatsoula. *Ca.* 1 km to the south-east of S 47–61.

References: For similar types of graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 96, 164, 312; Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, 444; Poulsen 1994, 23; Shipley 1996, 386; Hägg & Fossey 1980, 113–122.

Associated material: One sherd (rim) was found 20 m downwards the slope. The tiles show no diagnostic features. In the associated tract, B 165, 40 tiles and 2 sherds were counted (1 tile sampled).

Feature 6a: Concentration of rounded, unpainted tiles together with smaller stones, found plundered at a revisit. A 40 cm deep pit had been dug in the centre of the mound revealing more tiles and a few fragments of human bone.

Orientation: E–W.

Dimensions: *Ca.* 200×120 cm.

Status: Plundered.

Samples: A bone fragment was sampled.

Feature 6b: Construction similar to 6a, but less distinct in shape.

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Possibly plundered.

Samples: No sample taken.

Feature 7, not related to any site

Type and description: Possibly the remains of a plundered tile grave. Suggested date: At earliest C, but more likely HI–R.

Location: Close to the chapel of Agios Demetrios, 170 m to the north-west of Paleokastro, *ca.* 20 m from the road to Asea. A *kalderimi* runs *ca.* 10 m below the feature and the cult place S 60/35–36 is situated *ca.* 150 m to the east–north-east of the feature.

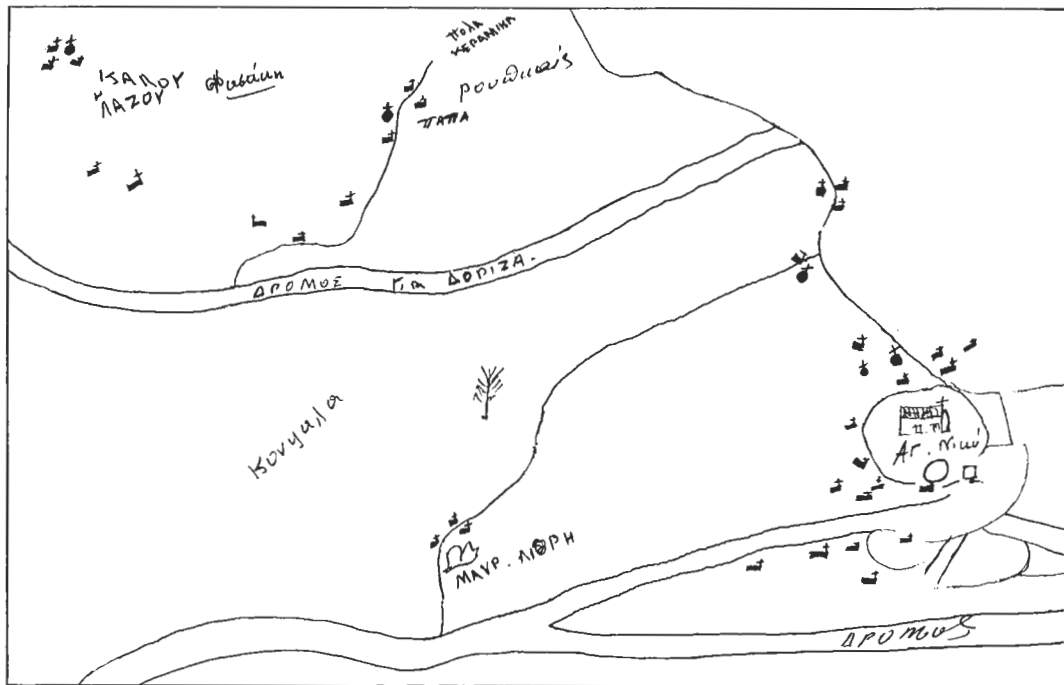


Fig. 98. Map drawn by a villager of Asea, indicating graves found while cultivating the soil in the neighbourhood of Agios Nikolaos of Asea shortly after World War II.

References: For similar types of graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 96, 164, 312; Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, 444; Poulsen 1994, 23; Shipley 1996, 386; Hägg & Fossey 1980, 113–122.

Associated material: See tract B 48.

Narrow concentration of stones and broken tiles (red painted, plain and rounded, and some with traces of plaster). At present it forms a small mound on the slope down to Paleokastro. No sherds or bones were recorded.

Orientation: Indeterminable.

Dimensions: Ca. 1.8×1.8 m.

Status: Possibly plundered, destroyed.

Samples: No sample taken.

Feature 8, not related to any site

Type and description: Four round dug pits filled with small pebbles and stones. No tile or artefacts are registered. Three of the pits are situated close to each other while the fourth is situated ca. 40 m to the north-west of the others.

Location: The western lowermost slope of Sombeti, between two power lines. There is a square formed stone 50×50 cm, ca. 5 m to the south-east from the three pits. There is another bedrock formation ca. 5 m to the north-west, which bears traces of cutting, forming a slightly rectangular depression.

References: For similar types of graves in general, see Kurtz & Boardman 1971, 51.

Associated material: See tracts A 112–114 (only a few tiles) and A 103.

Orientation: Indeterminable.

Dimensions: Ca. 80×80 cm.

Status: Possibly plundered.

Samples: No sample taken.

Feature 9, part of S 18

Type and description: Inhumation burial. During the 1994 season, parts of a human skeleton were found in the scarp of the road leading to Agios Nikolaos of Manaris. At a later revisit neither bones, nor any grave structure remained visible.

Location: Close to the road to Agios Nikolaos of Manaris. Around the chapel, ca. 100 m to the north of the presumed location of the grave, S 18 (LR–Med), called Paliochoraki, is located.

References: Pikoulas 1988, 50.

Associated material: Ca. 50 m south of Agios Nikolaos a number of plain tiles and very worn sherds were registered along the slope (possibly eroded from the hill). Tracts: A 47 (200–300 tiles/sherds), A 48 (100 tiles/sherds).

Sites: S 18, S 19 (Med/EMod pottery, a house foundation).

Orientation and dimensions: Indeterminable.

Status: Possibly plundered, destroyed.

Samples: No sample taken.

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