

Explorations in the Northern Megarid II: The Koundoura Valley

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Introduction

In recent years the archaeological data regarding the nature of the rural landscape of Classical Greece has been widely appreciated by ancient historians who are trying to answer old questions with new evidence. As has been pointed out by Snodgrass and others, a strong incentive for examining ancient rural Greece is the fact that ancient sources rarely refer to it, while the importance of the countryside as the mainstay of city-states is well-recognized¹⁾. In response to this scholarly tendency, several intensive field surveys are now being carried out on various geographical scales²⁾. The present paper too aims at presenting and elucidating the economic geography of a rural district on the Attic-Megarian frontier.

In Part 1 of this series, which dealt with the Kryphtis region, I suggested the existence of a hitherto unnoticed route which connects the northern Megarid with NW Attica³⁾. This route leaves the Megarian plain about halfway from Megara to Pagai, ascends the southern slope of the Pateras range through a *charadra*, heads to Aetopholia to enter either Mikros Kryphtis or Megalos Kryphtis. While the former route further follows the ascent directly toward the Koundoura valley via Mylos tower, the latter route takes a more gentle course and enters the Koundoura valley from its westernmost end across a saddle which is the watershed between the Koundoura valley and the Vathychoria region. In Part 2, I will examine the various ancient remains left in and around this remote valley through which both routes descend to enter the Attic territory.

I. The Koundoura valley (Pl. 1-a)

The northern Megarid is dissected by parallel steep ranges which run generally east-westward forming a natural boundary between central and southern Greece. The northernmost one is the massive Kithairon-Pastra range and the southernmost one is the Pateras ridge.

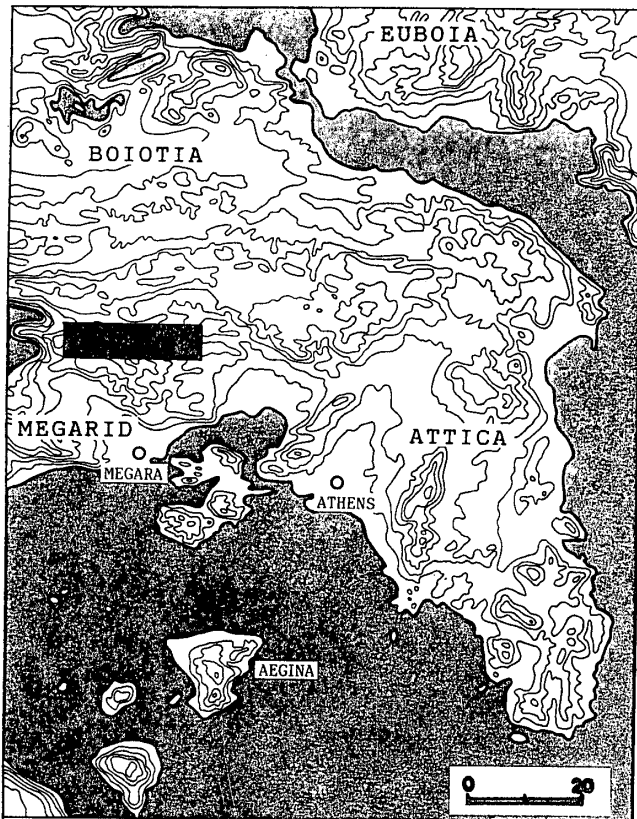


Fig. 1 Attica and the Koundoura valley (shaded)

Between them there is a third narrow ridge, which is aptly named Makron Oros, the *long mountain*. The Koundoura valley extends for ca. 10 km along this ridge on its southern side. Today, an asphalt road forks off from the main Eleusis-Thebes road in the vicinity of Palaiochori, an almost deserted *old village*, and leads west to Ag. Georgios.

Archaeological remains of this valley were first brought to light early this century by Sarris, who took notice of the rubble fortification above the village of Ag. Georgios and identified it with Megarian Ereneia mentioned by Pausanias (I. 44. 5)⁴⁾. Later, this site was also investigated briefly by

McCredie in relation to other rubble fortifications in Attica⁵⁾. Although several isolated sites have been further reported since then, the most comprehensive publication is that of Lohmann, which appeared recently in the series *Attische Forschungen*⁶⁾. To our regret, his interpretations of the sites in their wider socio-economic contexts seem not to be worthy of his precise field observations and detailed references to earlier works because of some doubtful assumptions on which his rather lengthy arguments are entirely based. This point will be discussed later.

II. Conspectus of sites

1. Prophitis Elias

Near the summit of the easternmost ridge of Makron Oros, the white-washed church of Prophitis Elias dominates the entrance to the valley from the north (Pl. 1-a, b). From Palaiochori a well-engineered road zigzags up to the church. The terrace, on which the church now stands, may have been once fortified with a rubble wall which is now largely demolished and visible only on its western slope⁷⁾. Although the village of Palaiochori has been considered to date back at most to medieval times, several Classical sherds found below

in a field near Palaiochori suggest the existence of an ancient habitation site there. Thus the fortification might have been the acropolis of this site, though the wall itself cannot be securely dated.

More important is the fact that the Prophitis Elias ridge seems to be the only place in the Koundoura valley which clearly indicates the presence of a prehistoric settlement. Lohmann reported the existence of Middle Helladic material, but some sherds may even be Neolithic. The nearest Neolithic settlement has been found in the vicinity of ancient Eleutherai (Gyphtokastro) to the north⁹⁾. It should be noted that the location of our site is very similar to that of Gyphtokastro.

2. Hill 592

A prominent hill, 592m high, rises on the southern side of the entrance to the valley. Van de Maele reported that the summit of this hill is crowned with the vestige of a round tower⁹⁾. There are indeed several foundations on the flat summit of the hill, but we could not locate the round tower. On the gentle slope toward Ag. Panteleimon to the southeast, however, there are meager remains of a round tower. This site commands a fine view toward the Thriasian plain and Salamis and is suitable for a watchtower, while the slope seems to have been once extensively cultivated; the connection with an ancient farm cannot be excluded. In any case, the tower is small with a diameter of less than 4m and cannot be dated with any certainty.

3. Kyparissi

To the south of Hill 592, a narrow valley called Likorrema runs parallel to the main valley of Koundoura for ca. 4km. This *revma* ends in a open plateau called Marina Spela or Spilia on the northern slope of the Pateras range. This is the site first reported by Van de Maele as Kyparissi¹⁰⁾. Kyparissi is perhaps the most interesting site with its building complex still well preserved above ground and terraced fields west of it which the inhabitants of these buildings must have exploited.

Two units of buildings are noted by Van de Maele. Building A is a typical towered complex centered on a square tower. The walls of this tower are 0.8m thick, while the rest of the buildings have walls 0.6m thick. There is a pear-shaped cistern in the back yard (Pl. 2-a). Building B might have originally been composed of two independent houses provided with their own cisterns. Van de Maele attributed most of the diagnostic surface sherds to the fourth century.

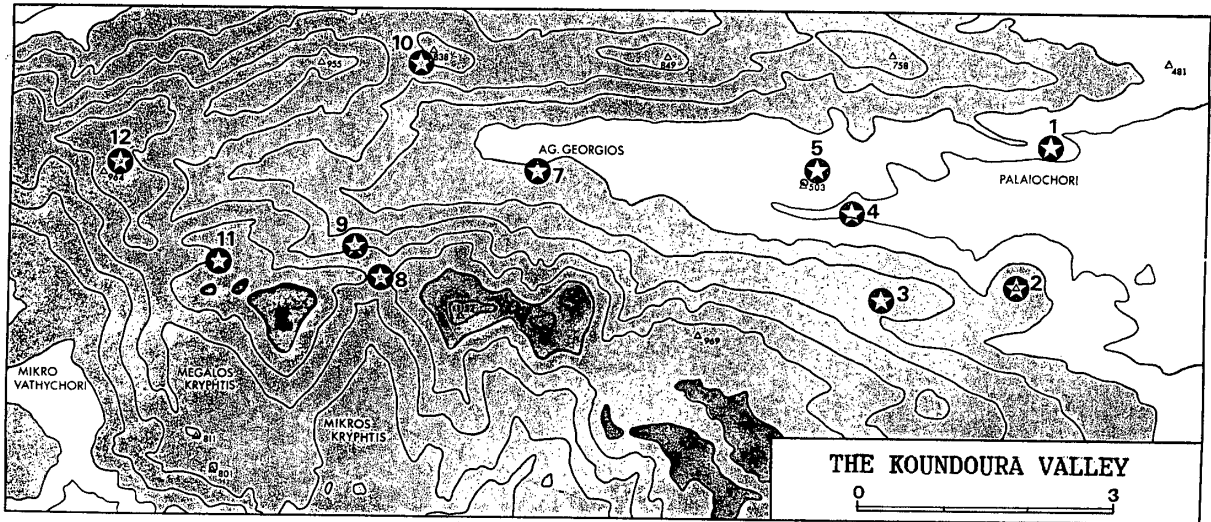


Fig. 2 The Koundoura valley and the sites mentioned in the text.

A round tower, 5.4m in diameter, is located to the west of this building complex (Pl. 1-c). Van de Maele reported an enclosure with which the tower is allegedly connected¹¹⁾. We could not confirm this because of heavy snowfall when we visited in winter, neither could we make minute observation in summer being hindered by discouraging bush. If his observation was correct, we have here another towered complex very similar to one in the Kryptis region (Part 1, Site 7).

Kyparissi is considered to have been established in the sixth century and developed in the fourth century. The buildings now visible on the site may date from the latter period, when towered farms became common on the periphery of Attica.

4. The road-side tower

Several finely-shaped limestone blocks are scattered by the modern asphalt road to Ag. Georgios on the left side just southeast of Hill 503 (Pl. 2-b). These blocks are derived from a round tower once ca. 7m in diameter, which was recently destroyed by road construction work. According to Edmonson the tower was built in isodomic quasi-polygonal style, which can be verified through the shape of the remaining blocks. There are copious glazed tile fragments in the vicinity indicating the existence of other structures nearby. While Edmonson tentatively identified it as an Athenian post on the border between Attica and Megara, Ober has suggested that it was probably part of a farm complex and Lohmann has even insisted that "Die Situation spricht eindeutig für ein Turmgehöft"¹²⁾. In my belief, it is not sufficient to judge the function of a tower from its locational features alone. Both the dimensions and masonry of the tower show a close similarity with other

towers standing by ancient roadways¹³). Thus the primary function of this tower must have been to control the route through the Koundoura valley, which connected Megarid with Attica. This point may be supported by the fact that in the Koundoura valley the habitation sites tend to avoid the flat bottom of the valley (see below).

5. Hill 503

A round hill 503m high interrupts the valley almost at its mid-point (Pl. 1-a). The summit, with a foundation of a square tower which measures 10.5m by 9.2m, is located on the western end of the hill (Pl. 2-c). Ober considered that the 503 tower presumably served as a signal post since it sits on the peak of the most prominent hill in the valley¹⁴). I prefer the view of Lohmann who has rightly linked it with the several ancient buildings on the flat area to the east¹⁵). His hypothesis is that there were three to four farms on the hill and the tower served as a refuge for the inhabitants in case of emergency. Although his interpretation may be correct, the direction of the axis, east-west, also allows the possibility that this structure may be a local shrine, as has been attested at Trapuria near Attic Olympos¹⁶).

On the lower southern slope of hill 503, there is a section of an ancient road which is retained on the downhill side by rubble walls.

6. Between Kyparissi and Ag. Georgios

Several ancient sites have been reported on the southern slope of the valley between Kyparissi and Ag. Georgios. *Two ancient Megarian towers* were noted by Sarris, though these towers have not been seen since then and Ober cites the suggestion by Edmonson that Sarris misread the *Karten von Attika*¹⁷). Van de Maele, however, insists that what Sarris had seen was not *une tour* (sic) but a rectangular construction which measures 16m x 13m. This site is also called Kato Ag. Georgios¹⁸). Further, Van de Maele speaks of many vestiges of isolated farms in this area. Intensive field survey is especially indispensable on this part of the valley in order to correct the apparent inconsistency among various reports.

7. Ag. Georgios

This is a rubble fortification and settlement below it, which was identified long ago as Ereneia by Sarris (Part I, Pl. 1-a)¹⁹). Although this identification is now generally rejected, the site itself remains of central significance in the Koundoura valley. The suggestion by Edmonson that Ag. Georgios was a considerable settlement inhabited throughout classical

antiquity is now supported by Ober, who has examined the ASCSA sherds collection, though, as has been pointed out by Lohmann, all the sherds examined by Ober belong to the fifth to fourth centuries²⁰⁾.

The site of Ag. Georgios is composed of a habitation area on the low hill near the eponymous church, Lohmann's so-called *Demos*, and a fortification with three circular towers on its southern wall halfway up Mt. Liondari or Elatos, fairly high above the *Demos* site. Among the architectural remains in the settlement area, the foundation of a rectangular building 26.65m x 9.75m is most impressive with the walls in rough polygonal masonry. Ober considered the fortification to be certainly an Athenian defensive position, since the towered south wall was clearly built against an attack from the south, thus from Megara²¹⁾. This may be not the case, because the easiest access route to the fortress is naturally from the south. It is rather tempting to see the fortification as an ordinary acropolis corresponding to the settlement.

8. The Mylos tower

The Mylos tower with its rubble circuit is located on an isolated knob between Liondari and Megali Kolosoura²²⁾. It is reported to have once been 10m high and this information is verified through the vast heap of fallen blocks around the tower (Pl. 2-d). I have briefly mentioned this tower in the previous paper in relation to a general explanatory model about the function of ancient towers²³⁾. While Van de Maele suggested in his original report that this tower was Megarian and used as a guard post of the Kryptis region (Megarid) against an attack from the Attic settlement at Ag. Georgios and as a signal tower between Aegosthena and Megara, Ober and Lohmann are of the opinion that it was Attic²⁴⁾.

9. The Kome of Mylos

This settlement, first discovered and published by Lohmann, is the most enigmatic site in the Koundoura valley²⁵⁾. The foundations of houses are concentrated on a barren and fairly steep ridge not far from the tower just mentioned above (Pl. 2-e). The location is undoubtedly strategic and not suitable for an ordinary habitation. Situated high on the northern slope of Mt. Pateras, the settlement must have been often covered with snow in winter²⁶⁾. The assumption that this settlement was used only in summer has been discarded by Lohmann himself on the ground that constructions are too solid to have been used only seasonally. Lohmann may be right in relating this site with the nearby Mylos tower. It should be noted that typical Attic masonry can be seen in a wall. To the best of my knowledge,

the nearest site which shows the same masonry is Plakoto on the edge of the Thriasian plain. Interestingly enough, Plakoto is the very site on which the round tower of the Mylos type stands.

10. **The Panagia saddle**

Two independent sites have been noted in the vicinity of the Panagia church, which stands on a saddle on the Makron Oros (Pl. 1-a). Here an ancient route from Ag. Georgios must have crossed the ridge and descended to Ag. Vasilios in the Villia valley to the north. This assumption may be supported by an ancient square tower at the exact point where this route joins the modern and probably also ancient road from Eleutherai to Aegosthena.

The rubble enclosure, which was suggested by Edmonson to be a fort, is on the northern side of the ridge at some distance from the church²⁷⁾. Lohmann, in contrast to Edmonson and Ober, assigned it to late antiquity to medieval times and thought it to be a shepherd's shelter²⁸⁾.

The round tower 4m in diameter and other walls are on the edge overlooking the Koundoura valley, ca. 150m east of the church (Pl. 2-f)²⁹⁾. The interpretation by Ober that it may be a farm is least sustainable since it is located on a rocky ridge far from any kind of arable land³⁰⁾. Thus it is embarrassing to find Lohmann regard it as a towered farm (Turmgehöft) through the ambiguous argument that there are other traces of farms on the ridge. Lohmann also speaks of a fortified farm from the nature of this site³¹⁾. The tower faces the Mylos tower across the valley and its function should be considered in relation to the latter. In this case, a watch post and/or signal tower may be the only reasonable explanation.

11. **Mikri Kolosoura**

At the western end of the valley, on the northern slope of the Mikri Kolosoura, there are extensive remains of terrace walls with some foundations of square buildings. These vestiges cannot be dated with certainty, though it is rather astonishing that even such rocky highland was once exploited by way of laborious terracing. These remains suggest cultivation of olives and possibly of grape. I have already mentioned a set of olive presses at Site 1-b in Megalos Kryptis³²⁾. That site is situated on the southwestern slope of Mikri Kolosoura, thus it should now be considered to have been part of the present site.

12. **Achladokoryphi or Karydi**

A round tower 7m in diameter has been reported to stand on secondary peak of Achladokoryphi, which is surrounded by an enclosure measuring 30m x 27m. While Ober thought it to be an Attic watchpost against Megarian Vathychoria, Lohmann thought that the site was an antique or medieval *Mandra* (shepherds' shelter) built over an ancient fortified farm, like the one near Panagia church³³⁾. Lohmann also noted a square tower at h. 973 ESE of the site mentioned above and related it with such fortifications as Mylos or Plakoto³⁴⁾.

III. Discussion

As was stated at the outset, the most comprehensive study to date on the topography and settlement pattern of Koundoura valley is that of Lohmann. His arguments, however, stand on several one-sided assumptions which seem to be so problematic as to distort the results of his invaluable field observations. Among them the following two hypotheses are of special relevance here, (1) that the Koundoura valley was part of Attica in a constitutional sense, and (2) that there was no important traffic route through the valley. I will reconsider the problem of the identification of the Koundoura valley from new aspects in section (3), and evaluate the archaeological remains of the Koundoura valley in relation to the Attic-Megarian border in section (4).

(1) An Attic deme?

In his effort to indentify the Koundoura valley, Lohmann starts from the major premise that geographically the valley is part of Attica³⁵⁾. A minor premise is that the Attic *chora* was reorganized by Kleisthenes at the end of the sixth century into his famous three-tiered edifice, i. e. *demes-trittyes-tribes*³⁶⁾. It follows that some Attic deme, or demes, should be identified wherever there was a substantial settlement so long as it had already been established in Attica by the time of Kleisthenes' reform. Since the *Demos* of Ag. Georgios must have been founded well before the time of Kleisthenes and they are *geographically* inside Attica, we should allot here some demes which remain still unlocated. Apparently such demes must have formed the tribe of Hippothontis, whose inland trittyes were located on the northern periphery of Attica and whose coastal trittyes centered on Eleusis. In the light of the principle of compact geographical trittyes, the candidates must be chosen from those demes of Hippothontis whose locations are unknown. Lohmann further argues that the Koundoura valley is fitting for a deme which sent at least two *bouleutai* to the city council. Consequently, possible candidates are largely reduced and Lohmann names the deme Anakaia with three *bouleutai* for the Koundoura valley³⁷⁾.

At first sight the reasoning of Lohmann seems consistently clear-cut and persuasive. But to what extent can his both major and minor premises be proven? As for the minor premise, this is surely not the place to go into the complicated problems of the Kleisthenes' reform, though it may not be justified to keep out of the long-standing scholarly debate on the nature of his organization of Attica. The traditional view is that Kleisthenes' procedure was indeed one of territorial division³⁸). This view has been directly supported by Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21. 4, though it must have been a painstaking and time-consuming task in reality to fix all the boundaries of demes. It would have also make it prerequisite to define the whole territory of Attica in one way or another. Theoretically, this procedure would also have involved the division of every bit of remote land even in the mountainous area inside the border of Athens.

An alternative interpretation of the procedure, which argues that Kleisthenes dealt with the demes as a series of isolated villages not as blocks of territory, seems more rational when we appreciate Kleisthenes' fundamental aim to mix the *people*, not to break up the country³⁹). With this alternative view we can also be saved the troublesome task of deciding the border on a map, since, in the constitutional sense, Attica was the spatial area in which the Kleisthenic demes were by and large continuously distributed. In other words, the border of Attica should be sought where the Kleisthenic demes end, irrespective of the geographical border of Attica. Thus Lohmann's minor premise is no longer sustainable without some restrictions. Of course, this line of argument has nothing to do with the possibility that many settlements could have been founded later on the Attic frontier which was not inhabited at the time of Kleisthenes, thus did not have their own deme designation⁴⁰).

The above suggestion on the nature of the Kleisthenic reform directly concerns the problem of the physical border of Athens. The Koundoura valley may or may not be Attic in the geographical sense, but whether it may also be Attic in the constitutional sense is an open question. According to Traill's map of the organization of Attica, relatively few demes are thought to have existed in northwestern Attica, while archaeological remains which indicate ancient habitation are no less plentiful here than in the rest of Attica. Were most of the settlements founded only after the fifth century? Although this assumption is quite conceivable, several sites did yield evidence of pre-Kleisthenic habitation. This situation may suggest, from another way, that the Kleisthenic reform did not aim at the division of territory but there might have even been some peripheral settlements which were not included in the demes organization though they were situated inside Attica in a geographical sense. Or otherwise the Koundoura valley might have simply been part of Megarid, as was

suggested long ago by Sarris⁴¹). Now it is time to examine Lohmann's major premise.

Today scholars seem to be unanimously in agreement with the view that the Koundoura valley is geographically part of Attica. This line of naive argument was first advocated by Beloch, who rejected the identification of Ereneia by Sarris, insisting that the Megarian territory could never have extended so deep beyond the watershed of Pateras, since the range which separates the Koundoura valley from the Megarian plain rises over 1000m⁴²). Beloch made his assertion by reference to the map by Kaupert (*Karte von Attika*, Sect. Eleusis), on which the border was put on the watershed in the mountain area and along the Iapis river in the coastal area south of the entrance to Kandili pass. This view was inherited by Kahrstedt who concentrated on the problem of the Attic-Megarian border in connection with Orgas but paid little attention to the north toward the Koundoura valley⁴³). Also Van de Maele insists that Kyparissi demonstrates how far ancient settlements extended to the Koundoura valley and that this newly revealed site was nothing but an Attic deme⁴⁴).

So the Koundoura valley was geographically part of Attica. We must now inquire to what extent this geographical argument can be verified through the archaeological evidence at hand.

In the first place, we must note that at some time around the fifth to fourth centuries a distinct mode of land exploitation had been established on the highland and *Hochtal* of the mountainous area between Attica and Megarid, irrespective of the constitutional or geographical border between these hostile poleis. This mode of exploitation is marked through the presence of isolated, usually towered, farmsteads which were widely scattered in this region. Isolated farms have not gone unnoticed inside Attica, while the degree of their diffusion throughout the Attic *chora* has usually been only negatively appreciated⁴⁵). A decisive natural impediment against the development of isolated farms in southern Greece is clearly the problem of water⁴⁶). In this respect, it is notable that pear-shaped cisterns are also ubiquitous in this region, and they sometimes coincide evidently with farmhouses, as has been demonstrated at Kyparissi⁴⁷). This archaeologically homogeneous area may have been extended as far as modern Mandra on the edge of the Thriasian plain to the east and perhaps to Psatha to the west⁴⁸). But the center of this mode of exploitation was apparently the three basins around the Pateras range, i.e. the Megalo and Mikro Vathychori, the Megalos and Mikros Kryptis, and the Koundoura valley⁴⁹). Thus neither the geographical nor the constitutional border between Athens and Megara seems to have divided this archaeologically distinct cultural unity. Surely the constitutional border may have traversed this area, but it is misleading to stress its significance too much, ignoring the archaeological

reality.

Secondly, we must take the road network through this borderland into consideration. This was illuminated first by Hammond and is now being investigated by Van de Maele and others⁵⁰). In Part I, I proposed a hypothesis that the Kryphtis road and the road through the Koundoura valley are the two ends of the same road, which connected the northern Megarid and inland Attica⁵¹). This hypothesis clearly goes against Lohmann's second assumption.

(2) The Koundoura road

The existence of a road through the Koundoura valley has already been noted by Ober⁵²). He reported that there were three routes toward the Koundoura valley: a) from Vathychoria branching off Hammond's road at tower C; b) from the Villia valley over the Panagia saddle; and c) from the Megarian plain via Mikros Kryphtis. All these routes have been considered not to be practicable. Lohmann has decisively argued that the Koundoura valley is not suitable for an attack on Attica, thus was *kein Durch-und Aufmarschgebiet*⁵³). Since we have already assumed an alternative western end of the Koundoura valley road, which takes a more gentle course than the other three routes suggested by Ober, we should now reinforce our previous hypothesis with the results of field observations.

The most conspicuous feature of the settlement pattern in the Koundoura valley is the fact that most habitation sites tend to avoid occupying the flat bottom of the valley (Sites 2, 3, 5, 9, and possibly 10). In the case of those two larger settlements near the bottom of the valley (1? and 7), they were furnished with walled acropoleis behind them. This pattern might have been determined by the paucity of arable land which was too precious to be used for something other than cultivation. But the situations of Sites 2, 3, and 5 strongly suggest that they are better explained as *Fluchtburgen*, or settlements which were set intentionally against possible attacks⁵⁴). Since these farms were located on the frontier the most dreadful attacks expected must have been caused by large invading armies. If the Koundoura road was also an important route for military activities in Classical times, as we have already suggested, these settlements had good reasons to be located a little out of sight of the road itself.

Secondly, Site 4 is not only a road-side tower in the modern sense, but it must also have been a road-side tower in antiquity. Elsewhere I have suggested that those towers with ashlar masonry, whose locations are not specifically strategic, might have had a road-controlling function. The nearest counterpart for the Site 4 tower is tower F north of

Megalo Vathychori, the only round tower in the Greek mainland which today remains almost intact. This tower has been variously interpreted, though Ober may be right in judging it to have probably been a military post rather than a farm site⁵⁵). This tower, together with the square tower C just to the east, was situated on the important intersection of Hammond's Road, the main ancient inland route between Megara and Boiotia. Thus it is reasonable to assume that Site 4 indicates the presence of another such communication route of some significance through the Koundoura valley.

Thirdly, as has been just pointed out, this Attica-Megara frontier is archaeologically a homogeneous area, characterized by a common mode of cultivation based on extensive terrace farming with towered isolated farmsteads. This homogeneity could not have been brought forth without a due road network which went through this largely rugged terrain and served the transportation, not only of farm products but also of information crucial for the inhabitants.

All these observations support our original hypothesis that a not insignificant road must have run through the Koundoura valley, although most of the physical remains of it have been obliterated except for some sections of retaining wall near hill 503.

(3) The identification of Ereneia

The problem of identification is surely not an appropriate task for an argument based primarily on archaeological data, though some remarks should be attempted here.

While the original suggestion by Sarris that our Site 7 was Megarian Ereneia still survives on official maps and commentaries on Pausanias' *Periegesis*⁵⁶), scholarly opinion has recently tended toward the view that Ereneia should be sought inside Megarid proper, not in the part which is apparently, i. e. geographically, Attica⁵⁷). The best candidate is Vathychoria with many ancient remains, and this identification is now supported by both Ober and Muller, who independently made general surveys of this basin⁵⁸). Muller even made some inferences from Pausanias' text itself and argued that Ereneia must have been located on the principal route between Megara and Boiotia, thus Ereneia was in Vathychoria through which Hammond's road winds up toward Boiotia. On the other hand, Van de Mael has suggested that Kryptes must have been the site of ancient Ereneia⁵⁸).

We should note that all these three candidates are in reality the main constituents of the same archaeologically homogeneous area on the Attica-Megara border zone mentioned above. The Koundoura valley may indeed open toward Attica and Kryptes is surely on the Megarian side of the Pateras range, while Vathychoria is well inside Megarid. But, to

reiterate the point, what is significant for us is the fact that from the archaeological aspects we cannot draw a division in these three areas.

In this light, the original proposal of Sarris still cannot be dismissed, since Site 7 is surely the only substantial settlement in this area which was worthy of the reference to *Autonoos mnema*, and this monument was perhaps the very motive why Pausanias made his excursion to Ereneia. Although many ancient remains have been reported also from Vathychoria and Kryphtes, they are mostly isolated farms and seem not to be suitable candidates for a village worth visiting by Pausanias. Muller, being in opposition to this identification, stressed that the Koundoura valley is difficult to access from Megarid⁶⁰. But maintaining this, Muller not only paid no attention to the presence of the distinctive archaeological similarities among these areas, but also neglected the extensive road network through the Attica-Megara border. As for the word *kome* used by Pausanias for Ereneia, we should not give it any constitutional sense like the Attic deme, but should understand it in a nontechnical sense.

My inclination is to say that Site 7 was Ereneia. This hypothesis will remain the most probable one until this problem is solved with secure epigraphical evidence.

(4) The Attic-Megarian frontier

We have already observed that the mountainous region between Attica and Megarid was extensively cultivated in antiquity, especially in the fifth to fourth centuries. For the moment, we are not able to tell whether this area belonged to Athens or to Megara in a constitutional sense. But the point is that this area might have been potentially of great economic significance to both poleis. If this hypothesis follows the right course of argument, our next step is to search for some historical reference of this area in the ancient texts.

Epigraphical evidence dated 352/351 shows that in the late 350s Athens had a dispute with Megara on the borderland between them, which was a sacred ground called Orgas and allegedly had been occupied and cultivated illegally by the Megarians⁶¹. This Orgas was a temple estate of Demeter at Eleusis, and apparently the same land which had caused the dispute between these two poleis and made the Athenians pass the famous Megarian decree(s) in 432, which closed the Athenian markets to the Megarians⁶². In 350/349 the Athenians invaded the Megarid in order to prevent the cultivation of this land and consequently seems to have succeeded in readjusting the borderline⁶³.

This sacred Orgas has been identified with the inland plain on the Kandili pass near Ayios Meletios or Meletaki⁶⁴. It was Kahrstedt who suggested this identification for the

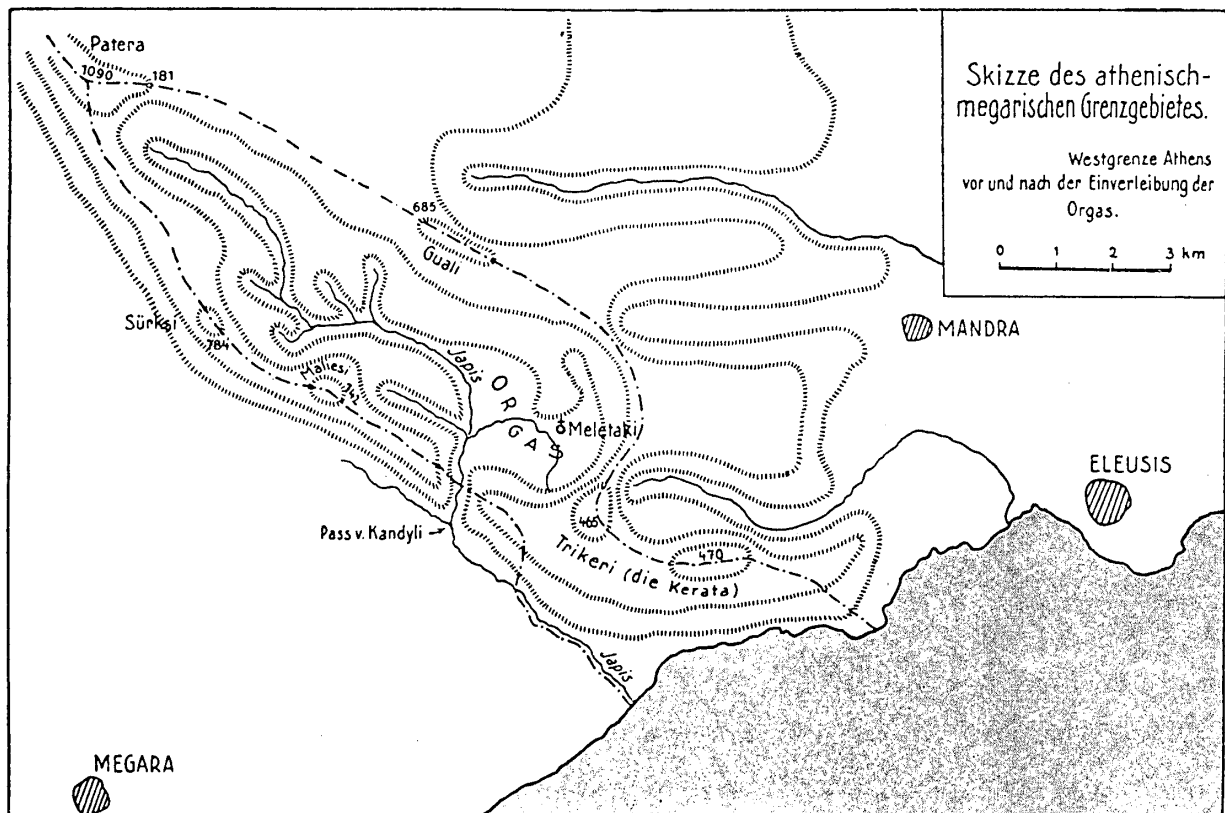


Fig. 3 Map of Orgas by Kahrstedt, AM 57, Abb. 2

first time when studying the borderline of Athens⁶⁵). His reasoning seems to have started from the existence of two seemingly conflicting ancient testimonies on the Attic-Megarian border, one of which puts the border on the Kerata range and the other on the river Iapis to the west (Fig. 3). These two hypothetical borderlines leave a narrow belt of land unsettled, which must have offered the pretext of dispute for both poleis. Thus Orgas should be sought within this belt.

This argument may be based on a typical misconception through modernized interpretation of the ancient testimony. The texts should rather be read in the following way. If a traveller heads for Megara from Athens along the coast, the most conspicuous geographical feature which *appears* in front of him is the Kerata range, which seems like Kerata (horns) only from some distance in the Thriasian plain, most preferably from Eleusis. Then these horns become invisible behind the precipitous terrain and the real geographical feature which the traveller must *come across* is the Iapis river. To put it another way, the Kerata range was an ideal symbol for the border but was not suitable for a real borderline, since no routes crossed the ridge itself. Thus we need not confine ourselves to take only the narrow belt near the Kandili pass area into consideration.

Explorations in the Northern Megarid II

Because of this, Orgas ought to be sought in the wide area between Attica and Megarid including the intensively cultivated area around the Pateras range. As a matter of fact, the area on the Kandili pass and Koulouriotiko Monopati might have been a mere extension of this area, which had been exploited also by means of isolated farmsteads. I have already ascertained two such towered farms on the Kandili pass, and more remains reported by Van de Maele may have relation to this category of farm sites⁶⁶⁾.

It is very tempting to propose that this cultivable borderland was collectively called Orgas, in which there were also the temple estates of Eleusis. It lies well out of Attica in a constitutional sense and thus sometimes it was called *Megarian* Orgas. The Megarians might have called the same land differently. The philological references to Orgas, which usually represent an overwhelmingly pro-Athenian view⁶⁴⁾, recurrently speak of the illegal cultivation of Orgas by the Megarians, though serious sanctions were rarely considered by the Athenians except for times when hostility culminated between these poleis. These circumstances may suggest that there was general common interest not only in cultivable land but also in something else which was potentially very significant.

In my view, nothing but the strategic routes through this frontier made these poleis extremely sensitive to this area especially in time of crisis. The very juxtaposition of many military installations, either Attic or Megarian, and farm sites may be explained only by this assumption. I have already stressed the importance of the Koundoura valley road in the preceding chapter, and the significance of the Kandili pass has been well appreciated. In peacetime, these routes may have served the transportation of the products of isolated farms, which had possibly been established keeping the large urban center of consumption in Athens in mind. In this sense, the strategic roads, military installations, and market-oriented isolated farms are parts of a socio-economic trinity of the borderland between Attica and Megarid.

IV. Conclusions

The most important result of the explorations in the northern Megarid is without doubt the detection of the wide diffusion of the distinctive mode of land exploitation based on isolated and often towered farmsteads on the frontier between Athens and Megara. At first sight, only the limited scale of flat land in the basins were suitable for cultivation, but close examination makes it evident that the seemingly barren slopes of the mountains had once been extensively developed for terraced fields. Clearly tree crops as well as cereals had been intensively cultivated there. In the light of the economic importance of the Megarian

woollen garments, which might have been shipped to the Pontic colonies in exchange for grain, the role of stock breeding on the rocky hills should not be underestimated⁶⁸).

It may surely be unjust to connect this phenomenon only with the special nature of the borderland, since apparently the same mode of production also flourished at the other end of the Attic *chora*, in the southern tip of the peninsula near Sounion. Several isolated farms first reported by Young are well-known and the presence of many such terraced fields and farmhouses have been reported recently in the deme Atene near Sounion⁶⁹). In this case the position is absolutely inside Attica in both a geographical and constitutional sense. Nevertheless both areas have something in common with each other. In the first place, they are located in the remotest region from the *asty* of Athens, on the frontier in the wide sense of the word. In the second, those isolated farms seem to have been established along important ancient traffic routes. As for the two towered farms in the Agrileza valley, they face the famous *Astike Hodos*⁷⁰).

These conditions may remind us of the enlightening observation by Balcer, who studied the frontier of the Ionian city-states in the fifth century⁷¹). He suggested that there was political and military bipolarity in the Ionian city-states at that time, and the aristocrats (oligarchs) held power based upon their strong rural agricultural estates, the towered and fortified manors, while the democratic and pro-Athenian masses were centered on urban districts. Was this perhaps also the case for fifth to fourth century Athens?

In any case, with the loss of the fifth century empire, the Athenians must have been obliged to exploit more and more the resources of Attica⁷²). In view of the known archaeological evidence, it is highly plausible that this shift of economic base gave impetus to the establishment of the market-oriented mode of production on the frontier, where the orthodox ideal of Attic landholding and mode of cultivation, characterized by the overwhelming role of *autourgoi*, might have already deteriorated to a certain extent.

Acknowledgements.

I am especially grateful to Y. Furuyama, in whose company I visited almost all the sites mentioned here. I would like to express my warm thanks to Professors Chr. Doumas, T. Yuge, K. Baba, S. Ito, and M. Sakurai for their constant encouragement, to Y. Kagimoto and M. Niimi for their kind assistance, and to K. Oka and N. Nonaka for their hospitality in Athens. Thanks are also due to M. Hudson, who kindly helped me to improve the English text.

Notes.

All dates in this paper are B. C. Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:
Lohmann, H. Giorgios = H. Lohmann, Das Kastro von H. Giorgios (Ereneia): Zum Verhältnis von

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Festungswesen und Siedlungsmorphologie im Koundoura-Tal, *Marburger Winckelmann-Programm, Attische Forschungen* 3, 1989, 34-66.

Ober, FA=J. Ober, *Fortress Attika: Defence of the Athenian Land Frontier, 404-322 B. C.* (Mnemosyne Suppl. 84) Leiden 1985

Ober, PMA=J. Ober, Pottery and Miscellaneous Artifacts from Fortified Sites in Northern and Western Attica, *Hesperia* 56, 1987, 197-227.

Van de Maele, Kyparissi=S. Van de Maele, Kyparissi, Hameau antique en attique du nordouest, *Echos de monde classique* 5, 1986, 129-135.

Van de Maele, Kandili=S. Van de Maele, La route antique de Megare à Thèbes par le défilé du Kandili, *BCH* 111, 1987, 191-205.

- 1) A. M. Snodgrass, *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1987, especially chap. 3 and 4.; *idem*, Archaeology and the Study of the Greek City, in J. Rich and A. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.) *City and Country in the Ancient World*, London and New York 1991, 1-24.; R. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures: The Ancient Greek City and its Countryside*, London 1987.
- 2) Snodgrass, *op. cit.*, chap. 4 (south Boiotia); H. Lohmann, Landleben im klassischen Attika: Ergebnisse und Probleme einer archäologischen Landesaufnahme des Demos Atene, *Ruhr-Universität Bochum Jahrbuch*, 1985, 71-96 (south Attica).
- 3) Y. Suto, Explorations in the Northern Megarid I: The Kryptis Region, *The University of Tokyo, Bulletin of the Department of Archaeology*, 9, 1990, 121-135.
- 4) I. Sarris, Ereneia, *ArchEph* 1910, 151-158 (in Greek).
- 5) J. R. McCredie, Fortified Military Camps in Attica, *Hesp. suppl.* 11, 1966.
- 6) Lohmann, H. Giorgios.
- 7) Lohmann, *op. cit.* 54.
- 8) Ober, PMA, 215. On the terrace of Prophitis Elias I picked up several obsidian blades, which have been reported also from the fortress hill of Eleutherai. Ober, *op. cit.*, 215.
- 9) Van de Maele, Kandili, 201, Site R. Cf. also Van de Maele, kyparissi, 134, where the tower was noted as *entièrement ruinée*.
- 10) Van de Maele, Kyparissi. The site is also referred to in Van de Maele, Kandili, 199, Site O.
- 11) Van de Maele, Kandili, 201.
- 12) Ober, FA, 173; Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 36 (n. 17), 59.
- 13) The best example is Tower C of Vathychoria. Usually a tower of an isolated farm measures at most 5 to 6 meters in diameter and shows rubble masonry.
- 14) Ober, FA, 173.
- 15) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 60.
- 16) H. Lauter, Ein landliches Heiligtum hellenistischer Zeit in Trapuria, *AA* 1980, 242-255. This site was once thought to have been a tower, Milchhöfer, *Erläuterungen zu KvA*, Heft III, 1889, 19.
- 17) Sarris, supra n. 5, 157.; Ober, FA, 173-174.
- 18) Van de Maele, Kyparissi, 134, n. 4.; *idem*, Kandili, 201, Site Q.
- 19) Sarris, supra n. 5.
- 20) Ober, FA, 171-172.; *idem*, PMA, 223.; McCredie, supra n. 6. 85-87; Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 36-47.
- 21) Ober, FA, 172.
- 22) S. Van de Maele, An Unreported Ancient Tower on Mount Pateras, *AJA* 85, 1981, 325-327.

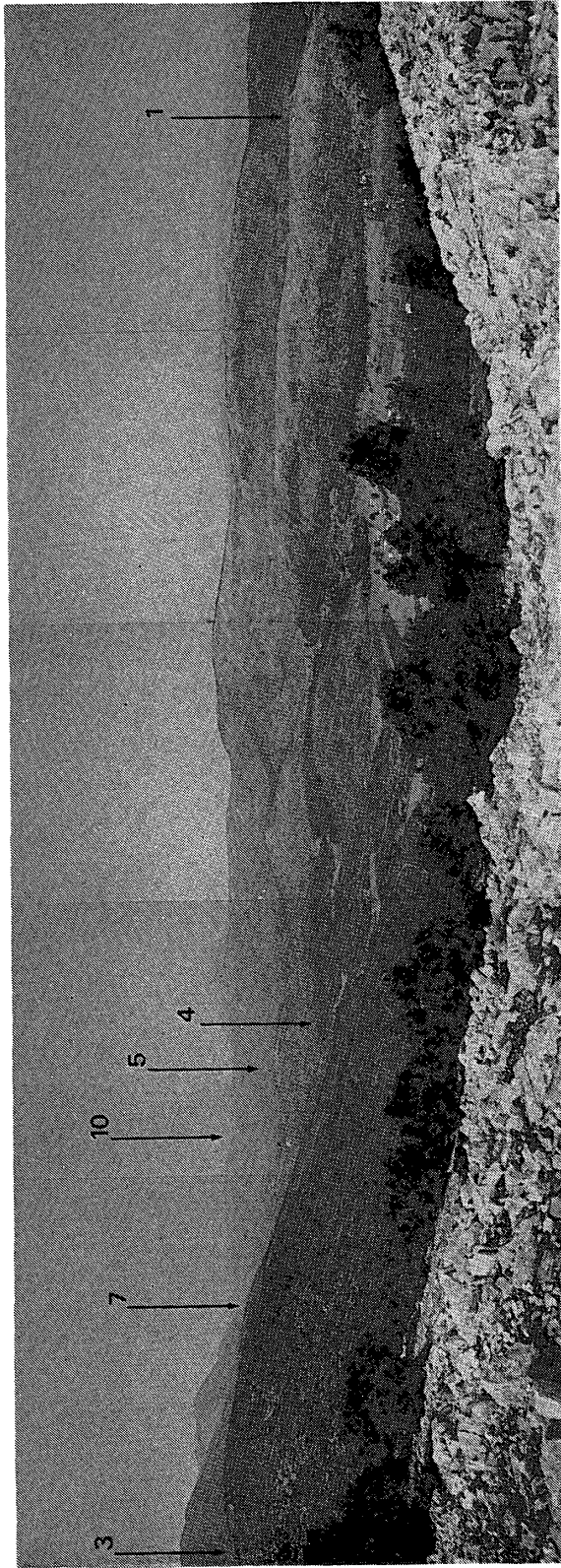
- 23) Part I, 130.
- 24) Van de Maele, supra n. 23, 327.; Ober, *FA*, 173.; Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 53.
- 25) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 56-59.
- 26) In reality we could not access the site because of snow on 3 Feb. 1991.
- 27) Ober, *FA*, 174. I could see this ruin only from a distance in fear of baying sheep dogs.
- 28) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 53.
- 29) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 60. Lohmann wrote that the tower is 500-600m southeast of the church, but this is mere exaggeration.
- 30) Ober, *FA*, 174.
- 31) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 61.
- 32) Part I, Fig. 3.
- 33) Ober, *FA*, 164-165.; Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 53-54.
- 34) Lohmann says WSW, but it may be a mistake.
- 35) "Doch gehört das Koundoura-Tal auf Grund seiner Geographischen Situation zweifellos Attika." Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 37.
- 36) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 55, 61-63.
- 37) As has been admitted by Lohmann himself, an etymological reasoning betrays this line of argument, since Anakaia is thought to have been derived from the proto-Greek word (W) anax, while the archaeological evidence fails to ascertain any occupation of this area in the Late Bronze Age. Lohmann, H. Giorgios 63. Trail has put Anakaia to the north of Pentelikon. J. S. Trail, *Demos and Trittys: Epigraphical and Topographical Studies in the Organization of Attica*, Toronto 1986, 137 and map.
- 38) D. Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica 508/7-ca. 250 B.C.: A Political and Social Study*, Princeton 1986, 27.
- 39) W. E. Thompson, The Deme in Kleisthenes' Reforms, *Symbolae Osloenses* 46, 1971, 72-79. His theory has been criticized by Langdon, who stresses the territorial nature of the demes. M. K. Langdon, The Territorial Basis of the Attic Demes, *Symbolae Osloenses* 60, 1985, 5-15.
- 40) The figure of demes, 139, was not augmented after the time of Kleisthenes until 224/3. Whitehead, supra n. 39, 20.
- 41) In connection with this distributive pattern of demes, I was struck recently by the map of Attica attached to the latest work of M. H. Hansen, on which Hansen designated the land west of Eleusinian Kephisos boldly "Megaris." M. H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles and Ideology*, Oxford and Cambridge, Mass. 1991.
- 42) K. J. Beloch, Zur Karte von Griechenland, *Klio* 11, 1911, 438.
- 43) U. Kahrstedt, Die Landgrenzen Athens, *AM* 57, 1932, 8-28.
- 44) Van de Maele, Kyparissi, 135.; *idem*, Kandili, 201, n. 21.
- 45) R. Osborne, *Demos: The Discovery of Classical Attika*, Cambridge 1985, 34. This problem will be discussed elsewhere.
- 46) V. D. Hanson, *Warfare and Agriculture in Classical Greece*, Pisa 1983, 38.
- 47) Part I, 131.
- 48) I have seen a modern (?) sheepfold on a hill near Mandra, in which several worked rocks apparently from ancient buildings are reused. In Psatha, there is an ancient blockhouse with several cisterns and at least two olive presses.
- 49) For Vathychoria, cf. J. Ober, Ancient Farms on the Attica-Megara Border: A Reconnaissance of

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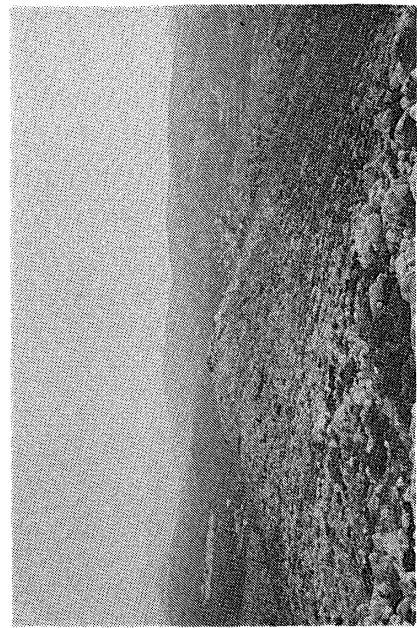
- the Megalo and Mikro Vathychoria, *AJA* 86, 1982, 280.
- 50) N. G. L. Hammond, The Main Road from Boeotia to the Peloponnese through the Northern Megarid, *BSA* 49, 1954, 103-122.; Ober, *FA*, 111-129.; Van de Maele, Kandili.; *idem*, La route antique du port mégarien de Pagai à la fortrese d' Aigosthènes, *EMC* 8, 1989, 183-188.
 - 51) Part I, 132.
 - 52) Ober, *FA*, 125-126.
 - 53) Lohmann, H. Giorgios, 63.
 - 54) Hanson, *supra* n. 47, 94.
 - 55) Ober, *supra* n. 50.; *idem*, *FA*, 166-167.
 - 56) 1/50000 scale map of sheet *Erithrai*, Hellenic Army Geographical Service (Athens 1976); N. Papachatzis, *Pausaniou Ellados Periegesis; Attika*, 514, n. 1.
 - 57) The only exception appears to be E. Meyer, *RE*, s. v. Megara (Geographie), which takes the suggestion by Sarris very plausible.
 - 58) Ober, *supra* n. 50.; A. Muller, Megarika, *BCH* 106, 379-407.
 - 59) S. van de Maele, Le site d' Erenea et la frontière attico-mégarienne, *Phoenix* 34, 1980, 153-159.
 - 60) Muller, *supra* n. 58, 382.
 - 61) IG II² 204.; R. Legon, *Megara: The Political History of a Greek City-State to 336 B. C.*, Ithaca and London 1981, 287.
 - 62) E. L. Highbarger, *The History and Civilization of Ancient Megara*, Baltimore 1927, chap. 12.; Legon, *op. cit.*, chap. 9; D. Kagan, *The Archidamian War*, Cornell U. P. 1974, chap. 15.
 - 63) *FGrH* 328 Philocoros, F. 155, cf. *FGrH* 324 Androtion, F. 30.; Ober, *FA*, 216.
 - 64) Ober, *FA*, 225-226.; W. R. Connor, Charinus' Megarian Decree, *AJP* 83, 236-237.
 - 65) Kahrstedt, *supra* n. 44, 9.
 - 66) Van de Maele, Kandili, 194, Site D. One of the two round towers is well known and visible from the modern road. The other round tower, which is now largely demolished, should not be confused with the square tower mentioned by Ober, *FA*, 177 and PMA, 223, as did Van de Maele, Kandili, 194, n. 13. Apparently there are at least three, two round and one square, towers in this area.
 - 67) Legon, *supra* n. 68, 288.
 - 68) Xen. *Memorabilia*, 2.7.6.
 - 69) J. H. Young, Studies in South Attica: Country Estates at Sounion, *Hesperia* 25, 1956, 122-146.; H. Lohmann, Atene, eine attische Landgemeinde klassischer Zeit, *Hellenika Jahrbuch*, 1983, 98-116.; *idem*, *supra* n. 2.
 - 70) J. H. Young, Greek Roads in South Attica, *Antiquity* 30, 1956, 94-97. Young surely foresaw the current interest in rural Greece and made the following remark: "To understand an ancient area, we must begin with a modern map; then, when we have lived some time in the region, we may know it as it is to-day. But if we are lucky enough, as I was at Sunium, to establish the courses of its ancient roads, we have taken a final and indispensable step toward looking upon our area from the point of view, and thus through the eyes, of antiquity."
 - 71) J. M. Balcer, Fifth Century B. C. Ionia: A Frontier Redefined, *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 87, 1986, 31-42.
 - 72) Recently Osborne made the claim that fourth-century rich Athenian citizens were heavily involved in the market in order to meet the huge demands for cash which they faced. R. Osborne, *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Subsistence: Exchange and Society in the Greek City*, J. Rich and A.

Y. Suto

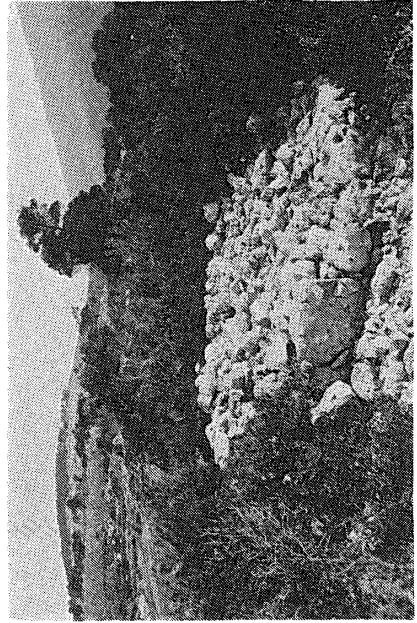
Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *supra* n. 1, 119-145. The ardent exploitation of the frontier just argued here may have had some relevance to this demand.



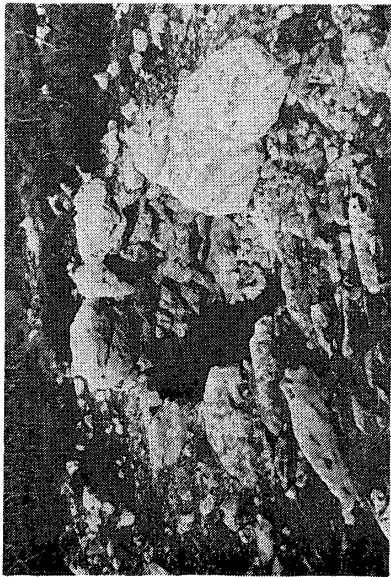
a. The Koundoura valley, from Site 2



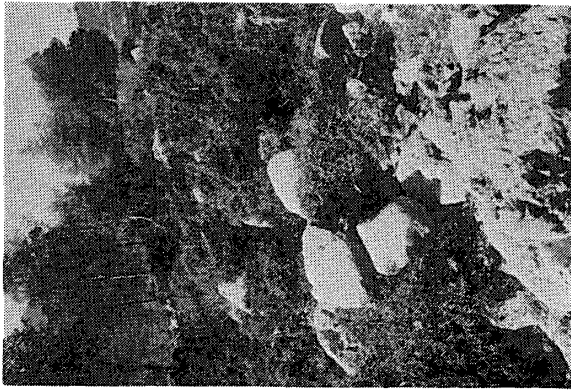
b. Site 1, from west



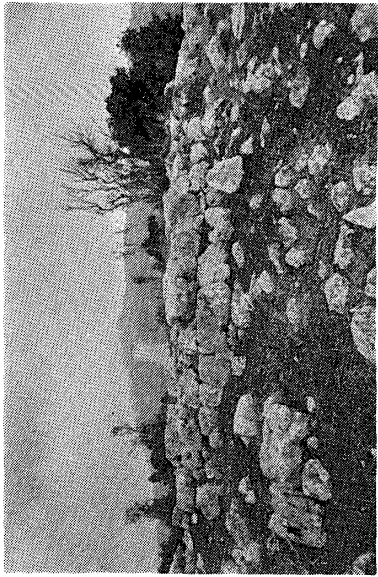
c. Site 3, the round tower



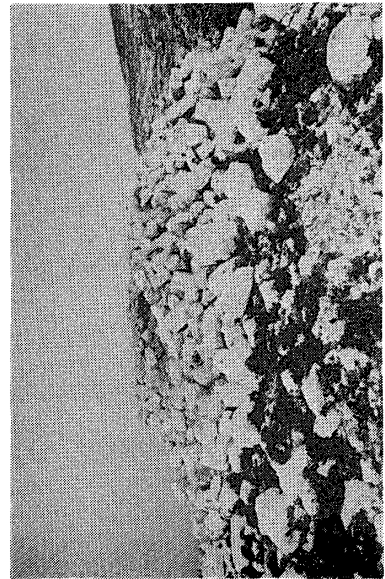
a. Site 3, a pear-shaped cistern



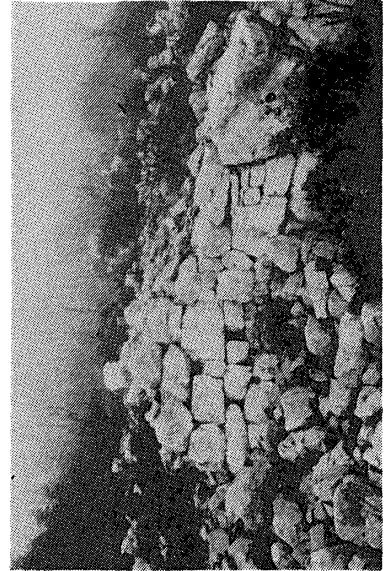
b. Site 4, from east



c. Site 5



d. Site 8



e. Site 9



f. Site 10, the round tower