

THE CAMBRIDGE-DURHAM BOEOTIA PROJECT 1994

The 1994 season, Prof. A. M. Snodgrass (Cambridge) and Dr J. L. Bintliff (Durham) directing, was essentially a museum study season, with only limited field activity. The ceramic collections were studied by Dr O.T.P.K Dickinson (Durham) and Miss K. Sarri (Heidelberg) for the prehistoric periods, Dr L. Nevett (Durham) for the Classical period, and Mrs T. Lane (Durham) for the medieval to Turkish periods. Although most of the ceramic analysis was directed toward fine-tuning the dating of survey sites, other topics which were investigated during the study season were:

1. the size of sherd samples obtained through surface survey from prehistoric and historic sites. (Hands-and-knees approaches offer the most reliable survey technique for identifying small farm sites of the Bronze Age in Greece!)
2. the functional range of pot forms from Classical farm sites, to assist our understanding of potential variability in activities undertaken at them.
3. the Boeotia survey type series of medieval and post-medieval pottery was enlarged by incorporating types from additional deserted village surface collections, encouraging our belief that we now have an adequate basis for seriating post-Roman sites up to the 18th century, independent of historic sources and the rare datable imports into the region. It continues to be Project wisdom that traditional surveys in other areas of the Mediterranean using imports as a primary dating tool - despite the known variability in access to such external products - are only exacerbating their error by attempting a calibration formula still based on imports; only a detailed, essentially independent series of local ceramic products can provide reliable evidence for the rise and fall of settlement within a survey region.

A large backlog of pot-drawing was dealt with by a small team of skilled and enthusiastic students from Durham and Athens universities (S. Fuller, G. Kopanyas, L. Pinney, C. Stevens). It is intended that the final publication of the Boeotia survey will include as many potsherd illustrations as possible to accompany the complete database of surface ceramics, especially those pieces which are either highly diagnostic or of special interest in terms of local production or activity indication.

Fieldwork was led by Dr M. Gillings (Newcastle, Assistant Director) and had two aims: preparing an EDM survey of the Lower Town of the city of Hyettos, and conducting resistivity survey on a rural farmsite of Classical date to further our understanding of rural farm-plans. Prof. Snodgrass assisted with the EDM survey through mapping and identifying architectural and other ancient standing material across the city area. Relocating a previously published *in situ* inscription to 'Zeus Agoraios', was an important result, since this demonstrated the approximate location of the Agora or Lower Town public centre. Taken with ongoing computer plotting of the tens of thousands of potsherds collected across the 670 grid squares of the city, we hope to be able to relate variations in the forms of ceramic in specific parts of the city (contrasts in proportions of imports and fine ware, localised occurrences of specialist economic, industrial or religious ceramic types) to particular concentrations of monumental material - eg architectural fragments, industrial waste, built terraces and public monuments such as statue and tripod bases.

GIS work on the Project's site database was taken further by Dr Gillings and Dr K. Sbonias (Durham and Cambridge), the latter being also responsible for the computer database of drawn pottery. Slow but steady progress is being made in digitising the survey region at a scale of 1:5000, and fitting digitised site plans into

the regional GIS; sherd material collected on- and off-site is subsequently projected onto these nested levels of GIS as a whole and by sub-category of date and type.

The study season benefitted tremendously from our relocation out of Mavrommati village (our base since 1979) to a monastic research centre owned by the Bishop of Livadhia. Distance, darkness, unmade roads and a supernatural presence haunting the route did not prevent the more determined members of the Project from indulging in the early morning nightlife of the city of Livadhia, although regular and usually unexpected appearances amongst us of the Bishop and his entourage gave rise to greater caution within the monastic precincts (and prompted the refrain "Nobody expects the Bishop of Livadhia..").

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