

1

INTRODUCTION TO THE REGION AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Not so long ago, the Euboean Gulf area (Figures 1.1; 1.2) was seen as rather marginal to the study of Mycenaean culture and archaeology: although the site of Lefkandi, excavated in the 1960s, had provided unexpected evidence of a thriving LH IIIC settlement,¹ Lefkandi seemed the exception in a region otherwise unknown for its Mycenaean remains. In recent years this has changed, with excavations at Mitrou informing us about the earlier Mycenaean phases, and those at Kynos confirming the importance of the LH IIIC period and the transition to the Early Iron Age in the Euboean Gulf area. In addition, excavations of the cemetery at Elateia and the sanctuary at Kalapodi, both further inland but in areas equally “provincial,” indicate that in the interior, too, there was virtually no break between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Early Iron Age. This stands in stark contrast to the situation in, for example, the Argolid, Messenia, and central Boeotia.

These major excavations have ensured that the Euboean Gulf area is nowadays rightfully considered an area of paramount importance for the understanding of several crucial phases of the Late Bronze Age: the transition from the MH to the LH and the accompanying “Mycenaeanization” outside the core areas of the Argolid and Messenia, the transition from the palatial period (LH IIIA₂–IIIB) to the postpalatial LH IIIC period, and the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Despite this recent increased interest, the Euboean Gulf area has not been subject to the amount of scholarly investigation and interpretation as, for example, the Argolid, Messenia, or even Attica. This book is the first attempt to write a social-historical analysis of this area and its relation to the main centers of the Mycenaean world (Mycenae, Thebes) in the Late Bronze Age.

¹ See Table 1.1 for the Mycenaean chronology. The absolute dates for the earlier part of the sequence (MH–LH IIIA₁) are disputed, with an alternative “high chronology” favoring a starting date of LH I closer to 1700 BCE; see Shelmerdine 2008a for a brief overview. I follow here the traditional “low chronology.”

TABLE 1.1. *Chronological framework for the Mycenaean period (adapted from Shelmerdine 2008a, 4 fig. 1.1 and 5 fig. 1.2)*

Cultural phase	Pottery phase	Calendar dates BCE
Prepalatial (ca. 1750–1400)	Middle Helladic III (MH III)	1700–1600
	Late Helladic I (LH I)	1600–1500
	Late Helladic II A (LH IIA)	1500–1430
	Late Helladic II B (LH IIB)	1430–1390
	Late Helladic III A1 (LH IIIA1)	1390–1370/60
Palatial (ca. 1400–1200)	Late Helladic III A2 (LH IIIA2)	1360–1300
	Late Helladic III B (LH IIIB)	1300–1200
Postpalatial (ca. 1200–1000)	Late Helladic III C (LH IIIC)	1200–1070
	Submycenaean	1070–1000



FIGURE 1.1. Map of Central Greece, with places mentioned in the text indicated.

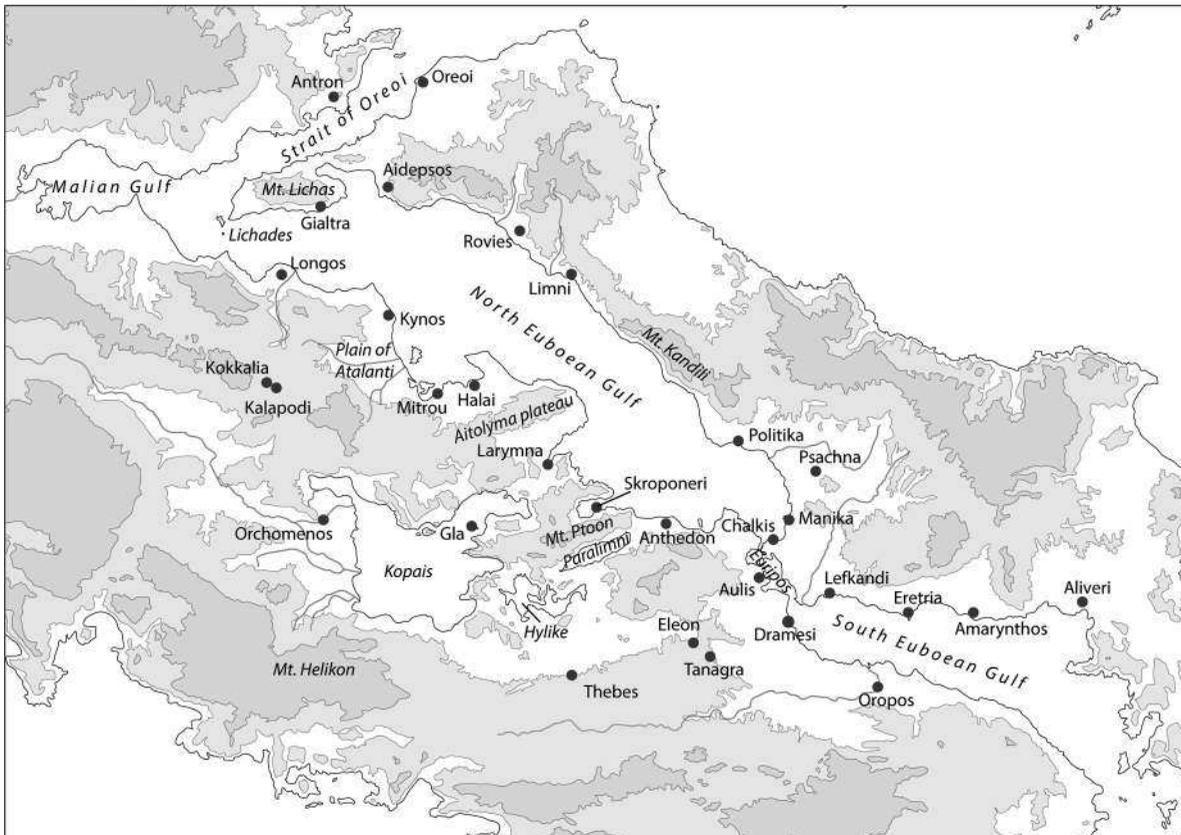


FIGURE 1.2. The Euboean Gulf area in Central Greece, with places mentioned in the text indicated. Elevation lines at 200m. The Kopaic Basin is shown in its original (undrained) state.

It is also the first to draw attention to and attempt to provide a holistic explanation for the drastically different trajectories of the coasts compared to the interior of Boeotia. Employing a coastscape approach (see Pullen and Tartaron 2007), it juxtaposes the coasts with the interior, exploring the relationship between the core areas of the Mycenaean world (the Mycenaean palatial areas) with more marginal areas, the coasts of the Euboean Gulf.

In the cosmopolitan world of the Late Bronze Age, the Euboean Gulf coasts were strategically located, with ready maritime access to distant resources. It is therefore unsurprising that in the early Mycenaean period they followed the same trajectory as, for example, the Argolid. Yet, they suffered cultural decline during the palatial period. They flourished again only in the postpalatial period, after the collapse of the palaces. It is evident that somehow the palaces were responsible for the decline of the coasts in the palatial period, and this makes Mycenaean Central Greece fertile ground for investigating power dynamics and cultural interaction models. In this book, the Euboean Gulf area is used as a case study for investigating the reactions of the “hinterland” to the emergence of organized states, the manners in which these states attempted to incorporate or marginalize the province, and the violence, but also the vibrant creativity, which may result from a sudden collapse of the organized state. By looking at the Euboean Gulf region of Central Greece, important questions bearing on the emergence of Mycenaean identity outside the Mycenaean core areas, the interaction between palaces and provinces, and the end of the Bronze Age are thus addressed.

In order to understand the changes that happen over time in the relative status of the Euboean Gulf coasts, and the curiously “out of sync” pattern mentioned earlier, this book invokes aspects of network theory. It focuses especially on the transitions between network types to illuminate the changes in social-political structures taking place between periods. I will argue that large-scale changes in culture and society (such as the emergence of an identifiable Mycenaean identity, the emergence of palaces, their collapse, and the new order that forms after their collapse) can be understood by analyzing changes in network structure, diameter, and orientation.

To understand the reasons for these changes in network types, I turn to the rich iconographic record of Mycenaean Greece. Artifacts like frescoes, engraved seals, and display pottery project the values of the elites commissioning and using them, and understanding these values aids in understanding changes in society. The same is true for exotic imports: changes in import consumption throughout time reflect changing ideologies, concerns, and relations. Using the two approaches together then allows us to link actors: in network theory the individuals or groups constituting nodes that may have various links to each other, with agents, the individuals or groups responsible

for introducing new technological, artistic, or cultural changes in agency theory. Reconstruction of networks allows us to see the relations between actors, whereas agency theory allows us to formulate agents' motives. Together, the two approaches allow for as comprehensive a reconstruction of social histories as one may hope for in prehistoric societies.

THE EUBOEAN GULF COASTS AND CENTRAL GREECE: AN OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The coverage of fieldwork in the area has been rather uneven. Major recent excavations are limited to the mainland (Kynos, Mitrou, Kalapodi, Gla, Thebes, and Eleon) and to Central Euboea (Lefkandi); several other sites have been excavated either earlier or are published rather unevenly (Orchomenos, Tanagra).² In addition to these major excavations, the Greek Archaeological Service has in previous decades undertaken many rescue excavations of Mycenaean chamber tombs especially in East Lokris (Figure 1.3; Kramer-Hajos 2008, 35–72). Although these have so far been published only in preliminary reports, they have done much to illuminate the history of Mycenaean settlement in that area, illustrating burial customs, ideologies, and the degree of incorporation of the area into the Mycenaean koine. In most cases, associated settlements are yet to be located, but these cemeteries, many of which are large and relatively wealthy, suggest that the interior of East Lokris was densely populated.

For North Euboea the picture is worse: the only excavations of Mycenaean sites that have taken place have been poorly published, either because they took place early in the twentieth century (tombs around Chalkis),³ or because publication is limited to perfunctory annual reports (the settlement at Aidepsos).⁴ Therefore, the major source of information for Mycenaean North Euboea remains, unfortunately, the half-century-old survey report by Sackett and his colleagues (Sackett et al. 1966).

Several other surveys have taken place in the area, some in conjunction with established excavations or as preliminaries to excavation. Extensive one-man surveys by Fossey in the 1980s covered East Lokris and Boeotia.⁵ The Cambridge/Bradford Boeotian Expedition, directed by John Bintliff and Anthony Snodgrass, focused between 1978 and 1999 on diachronic landscape use of large swaths of Boeotia (Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985, 1988; Bintliff et al. 2007); it was followed in 2000 by the Leiden-Ljubljana Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project that is ongoing as of 2016 (yearly reports are published in *Pharos*, the journal of the Netherlands Institute at Athens). Since both

² References for each site are given on pp. 8–11.

³ Papavasileios 1910, pp. 21–24, 52, 60, 65, and 71–72; Hankey 1952.

⁴ AR 49 [2002–2003] p. 48 and AR 51 [2004–2005] p. 52.

⁵ Fossey 1988, 1990a. The entire area is also covered by Hope Simpson and Dickinson (1979).

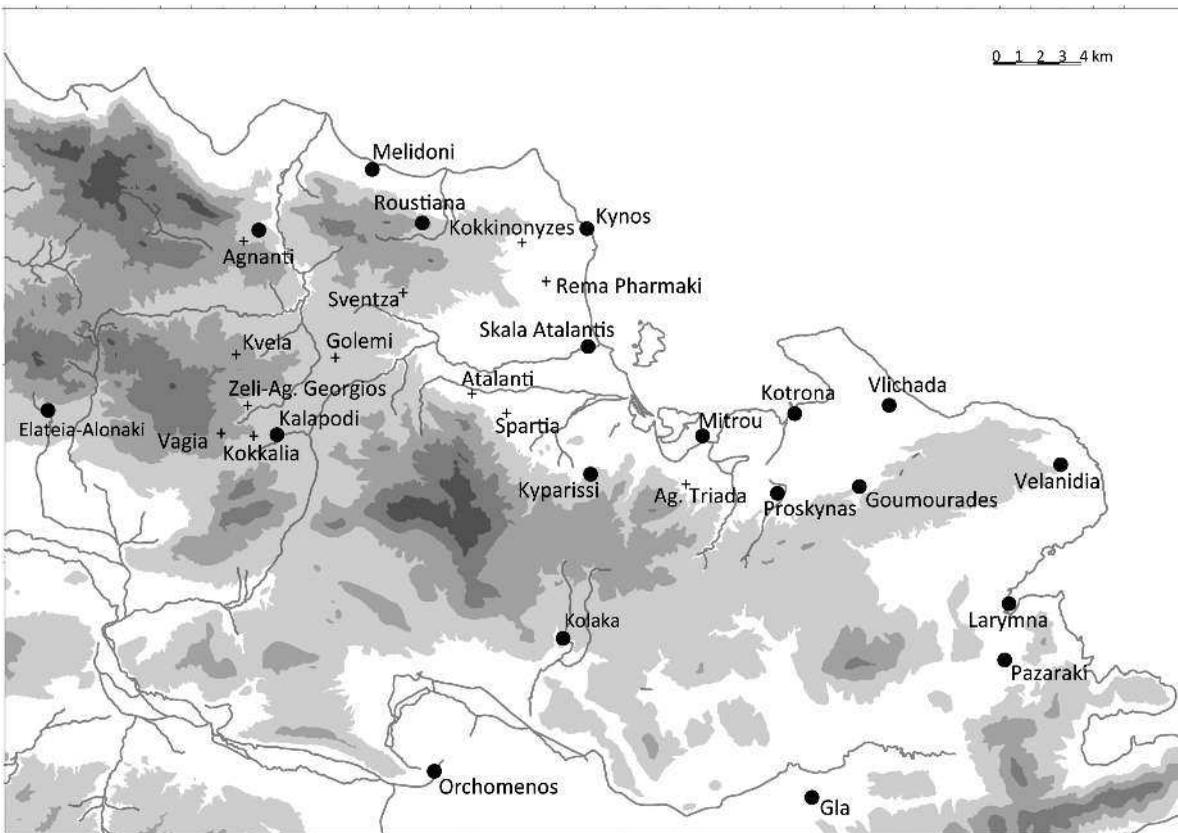


FIGURE 1.3. Map of East Lokris with sites mentioned in the text indicated (+ indicates a burial site/cemetery). Elevation li

projects focus on the historical periods and on theoretical questions and approaches, their use for the Late Bronze Age is largely limited to questions of landscape use and settlement density (e.g., Bintliff forthcoming). Similarly, the intensive Oropos Survey Project, directed by Michael Cosmopoulos, focused on the rural history of ancient Greek city-states, although the final publication does present and discuss data pertaining to the Late Bronze Age (Cosmopoulos 2001). A small-scale survey by the Cornell Halai and East Lokris Project (CHELP) in 1988–1989 of the area around Halai did not yield many results for the Mycenaean era, except for the part of this survey focusing on the site of Mitrou.⁶ The Eastern Boeotia Archaeological Project (EBAP) started out with a survey of the plains surrounding the modern towns of Arma, Eleon, and Tanagra (Burke 2007) before commencing excavation at Eleon.

Although Karystos appears in Linear B tablets from Thebes (as ka-ru-to), the southernmost area of Euboea is conspicuously lacking in significant Mycenaean material: after several surveys, a mere five LH II–IIIA Mycenaean sherds have been identified, all from Agios Nikolaos, northeast of Karystos (Tankosić and Mathioudaki 2009, 2011, 135–136). The dearth or complete lack of Mycenaean material is noted by the South Euboea Exploration Project (SEEP), active since 1984 and directed until 1995 by Donald Keller and the late Malcolm Wallace; the Norwegian Archaeological Survey in the Karystia (NASK), started in 2012 under the direction of Žarko Tankosić; and the Plakari Archaeological Project, focusing on the site of Plakari near Karystos since 2009 and directed by Jan Paul Crielaard and, until 2014, the late Maria Kosma (Crielaard et al. 2012, 96; Cullen et al. 2011, 38, 2012; Talalay et al. 2005; Tankosić and Chiridoglou 2010; Wallace et al. 2006).

Several recent studies attest to the emergence of Central Greece onto the scholarly scene. Farinetti discusses the long-term Boeotian settlement landscape by integrating archaeological, historical, and environmental data in a GIS-based approach (Farinetti 2011). Phialon gives a thorough and up-to-date overview over all of Central Greece in the early Mycenaean periods (MH III–LH IIIA; Phialon 2011). Knodell picks up where Phialon leaves off, and gives a synthesis of the entire area from the Mycenaean palatial period through the Early Iron Age (Knodell 2013). Less detailed regarding the empirical evidence, the strength of this dissertation is its use of network theory to interpret the evidence. Knodell's observations and interpretations regarding the LH IIIB and IIIC periods correspond well to the arguments in this book. Two other studies are limited to smaller areas within Central Greece:

⁶ The extensive CHELP survey of the Halai area is unpublished. It should be noted that informal excursions by John Coleman in recent years have led to the chance discovery of several sites (Vlichada, Goumourades, Kotrona) in this area (Kramer-Hajos 2008, 49, 51, and 53). For the intensive survey of Mitrou, see Kramer-Hajos and O'Neill 2008.

Kramer-Hajos provides a synthesis of Late Bronze Age East Lokris (Kramer-Hajos 2008), and Privitera treats the Mycenaean period in Attica in admirable detail (Privitera 2013). Lemos gives a useful brief overview focusing on Euboea and Central Greece in the postpalatial period (Lemos 2012).

BRIEF GAZETTEER OF IMPORTANT SITES

Since most of the arguments in this book are based on evidence from a select number of sites, this section gives a brief archaeological and historical account of these key sites, going from north to south. Other relevant sites will be introduced throughout the text.

Kynos (Pyrgos Livanaton) was excavated between 1985 and 1995 by the Greek Archaeological Service under the direction of Fanouria Dakoronia.⁷ It is a high mound site located directly on the coast, inhabited from the Early Helladic to the Byzantine period. The most significant evidence excavated dates to the LH IIIC Middle period, when Kynos was a thriving settlement with household production of pottery, metals, and textiles; a transport stirrup jar attests to connections with Crete (Stockhammer 2007, 280). Locally produced pictorial pottery, predominantly with depictions of warriors and ships (Dakoronia 1987, 1996b, 1999), shows stylistic and thematic similarities with pottery from Volos, Kalapodi, Lefkandi, and Amarynthos; impressed pithoi are similar to those found at Mitrou and Kalapodi (Lis and Rückl 2011). Evidence for levels predating LH IIIC is not as clear, but the LH IIIC settlement was built at a different angle than that of the preceding IIIB settlement, suggesting a break in habitation. It has been suggested that Kynos served as harbor for the nearby site of Palaiokastro or possibly Roustiana (Dakoronia 1993, 125–126; see also Kramer-Hajos 2008, 72), located several kilometers inland from Kynos, in a pattern that is also prevalent in Greece today, with a main settlement having a subsidiary settlement on the coast. Whether or not this was the case, the main settlement would have been close enough to the coast to be part of the coastal sphere and would be closely linked to its harbor.

Mitrou has been excavated since 2001 by the Mitrou Archaeological Project, codirected by Aleydis Van de Moortel and Eleni Zahou.⁸ The site is located on a small tidal islet in a bay; in the Bronze Age, it would have been

⁷ Kynos has been published only in preliminary reports: see Dakoronia 1987, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2002b, 2003, 2006, 2007a; Dakoronia and Kounoukias 2009; and the annual reports in the *Archaialogikon Deltion (ArchDelt)* and the *Archaeological Reports (AR)*.

⁸ Preliminary reports: Van de Moortel and Zahou 2005, 2011; Rutter 2007; Van de Moortel 2007, 2009; Vitale 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Lis 2009; Lis and Rückl 2011; Maran and Van de Moortel 2014; and the annual reports in the *AR* for the years 2004–2005 through 2010–2011. The results of the earlier surface survey are published in Kramer-Hajos and O'Neill 2008.

a peninsula (Kramer-Hajos 2008, 23–28).⁹ The site was continuously inhabited from the Early Bronze Age through the Early Iron Age. Especially the early Mycenaean evidence is important, as settlement remains from this period are relatively rare. Mitrou flourished during the early Mycenaean period, with evidence for emerging elites, monumental architecture, and a purple dye industry (Vykukal 2011). During the LH IIIA2 period the settlement was destroyed and afterward not rebuilt in the same location: although roof tiles and palatial-style pottery (Vitale 2013b) suggest the continued importance, including monumental architecture, of the site, the locus for this building has not yet been found. In LH IIIC, a new monumental building was built directly on top of the earlier destroyed structure, suggesting a conscious reverting to prepalatial symbols of power. Despite a thriving settlement in LH IIIC, Mitrou lacks so far pictorial pottery or imports in this period. It becomes a rural settlement in LH IIIC Late.

The sanctuary of Kalapodi was continuously in use from at least LH IIIA1 (and possibly as early as MH) through the Archaic period and is therefore one of the most important sites with evidence for Bronze Age–Early Iron Age continuity. The site was excavated between 1973 and 1982 and again from 2004 by Rainer Felsch and Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier.¹⁰ Initially identified as the sanctuary of Apollo Hyampolis and Artemis Elaphebolos, Niemeier has now identified the temple as that of Apollo of Abai (*AR* 53 [2006–2007], 41). Under the Archaic temple of Apollo, successive strata have revealed an uninterrupted sequence going back to Mycenaean times. The Mycenaean evidence consists of the remains of a temple (South Temple 1; *Chronique des Fouilles* 2012) built of large limestone blocks, including an altar and offering table; seals and beads are among the votives, and numerous pottery fragments date this temple to LH IIIA1–2. After its destruction, an LH IIIB temple (South Temple 2) was built in its place, with a horseshoe shaped clay altar, probably for libations, and a wooden offering table. The temple continued into LH IIIC but was violently destroyed in the eleventh century BCE, judging from the spread of sherds belonging to a bovine figure dating to the LH IIIC phase (*Chronique* 2011). An early (LH IIA–IIIA1) chamber tomb cemetery at the nearby site of Kokkalia provides evidence, consisting of weapons and jewelry, for the presence of early Mycenaean elites (Dakoronia 2007b; Kramer-Hajos 2008, 59–60).

⁹ This inspires a cautionary note: it is possible that parts of the Late Bronze Age coastline are now submerged because of local tectonic activity; this may be one of the reasons that it is so difficult to identify Bronze Age harbor installations (Tartaron 2013, 140–143).

¹⁰ See Felsch 1996, the annual reports in the *AR* for the years 2004–2005 through 2008–2009, and the *Chronique des Fouilles* 2005–2012.

The palace of Orchomenos is of paramount importance in the northern part of Mycenaean Boeotia. Heinrich Schliemann excavated a monumental tholos tomb, the so-called Treasury of Minyas, in 1880 (Schliemann 1881); subsequently Heinrich Bulle and Adolf Furtwängler conducted excavations in 1903–1905 (Bulle 1907). Theodoros Spyropoulos excavated at the palace in 1970–1973 (annual reports in the *Arch. Delt.*). Given the early date of some of these excavations and the preliminary character of publications on the more recent excavations, Orchomenos is a difficult site to understand. The tholos tomb, rivaled only by the so-called Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae and probably, like it, dating to LH IIIB, suggests Orchomenos' status as first-order center, and LH IIIB fresco fragments depicting warriors and chariots, a boar hunt, and possible bull leapers (Immerwahr 1990, 195; Spyropoulos 2015) are indicative of palatial status; however, no traces of Linear B tablets or monumental palatial architecture have been found. Both Knodell and Maggidis have suggested that Orchomenos may have shifted its center of political power in the thirteenth century BCE to Gla, designating Orchomenos mainly as an ancestral burial ground (Knodell 2013; Maggidis 2014).

The palatial site of Gla, first excavated in 1893 by T.A. de Ridder, continues to pose new questions and to inspire new field projects. The initial excavation was followed by excavations in 1955–1961 by I. Threpsiades and in 1981–1983 and 1990–1991 by Spiridon Iakovidis (Iakovidis 1989, 1998, 2001). This work showed that the Cyclopean citadel of Gla was built early in LH IIIB and destroyed at the end of this period, about a century later, after which it was no longer inhabited. Buildings included storage rooms and rulers' or administrators' quarters (a "melathron" consisting of two wings of roughly equal size and layout), and among the finds were fresco fragments, horns of consecration, and roof tiles. Yet, the large citadel seemed largely devoid of buildings. Recent work, directed by Christofilis Maggidis for the Dickinson Excavation Project and Archaeological Survey of Glas (DEPAS), has discovered a large number of hitherto unknown structures (including residential buildings, a cistern, and sally ports) within the citadel walls (Maggidis 2014). Another recent project, Archaeological Reconnaissance of Uninvestigated Remains of Agriculture (AROURA), directed by Michael Lane and Vassilios Aravantinos, investigated the rural polder landscape around Gla in a geophysical survey between 2010 and 2012 (Lane 2011, 2012).

Mycenaean Thebes is located under the modern town of the same name, on a low hill in the alluvial plains of eastern Boeotia; excavations have taken place since 1900 in various areas of the modern town (Dakouri-Hild 2010, 690–691).¹¹ They have revealed a site of major importance, where in the early Mycenaean period elites were buried with swords and prestige goods in

¹¹ Dakouri-Hild 2010 gives a succinct overview over the site and lists the extensive relevant literature.