

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE MYCENAEAN STATE IN LACONIA: EVIDENCE FROM THE LACONIA SURVEY

This paper will reflect on issues which have been considered by many others at this conference. In particular there is a question of scale, partly in the sense of the size of the sites but more especially in the sense of the inter-relationship between larger and smaller communities, and there is also the theme of regional variation, that the history of the development of the Mycenaean states differed from region to region. I have in mind not variation in a gross sense and due to major environmental and climatic differences<sup>1</sup>, but between areas such as Messenia, Laconia, the Argolid, Boeotia and Central Greece, where the land-forms and productive potential are comparable, and where differences are more likely to be a consequence of historical and political variation<sup>2</sup>.

I shall start with a statement with which few, I believe, would quarrel. Recently Dickinson has stated "it is clear that the Third Palace Period [sc. LH IIB–IIIB] sees the greatest expansion of settlement in the Bronze Age. Surveys have presented a generally consistent picture of the establishment of many new settlements ranging in size from likely villages to farmsteads"<sup>3</sup>. Indeed more extreme views in the 1970's and 1980's reconstructed pictures of a disastrous expansion during LH IIIA–B into marginal lands, thereby setting the scene for agricultural crisis<sup>4</sup>. The catastrophe view was especially based on the results of the UMME survey.

On closer inspection there might be discrepancies and problems of interpretation, and these can be illustrated with the data set summarised in Table 1, taken from area D of the *Gazetteer*. On the face of it 51 sites occupied in the Middle Bronze Age more than double to 117 in the Late Bronze Age. Caution is required, however, and on closer inspection it is possible to refine. If we look at the evidence from the excavated sites, for example, the increase is only 27%. Could it be that the overall total is skewed and the evidence from excavated sites is more reliable than that from surface finds? The sample of artefacts from excavation is very much larger than that from survey; moreover some uncertainty is expressed over the dating of the pottery which was collected at a number of the surveyed sites<sup>5</sup>. In addition it is noteworthy that the cemeteries show a different profile, with a notable increase in LH I–II, and relatively little continuity from MH to LH. Plainly these figures reflect changes in the popularity of certain burial customs, with tholos tombs and chamber tombs barely going back into the Middle Bronze Age, rather than

1 Compare the larger scale review P. HALSTEAD, "The North-South Divide: Regional Paths to Complexity in Prehistoric Greece", in C. MATHERS and S. STODDART (eds.), *Development and Decline in the Mediterranean Bronze Age* (1994), 195–219.

2 Of course there are differences from area to area in the mosaic of environmental niches, notably under the effect of the cline in rainfall from West to East, see O. RACKHAM, "Observations on the Historical Ecology of Boeotia", *BSA* 78 (1983), 291–351.

3 O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, *The Aegean Bronze Age* (1994), 77–8.

4 E.g. J.S. HUTCHINSON, "Mycenaean Kingdoms and Medieval Estates", *Historia* 26 (1977), 1–23.

5 There are, for example, the references to coarse wares of "Margeli" type which may be MH: see, for example, R. HOPE SIMPSON and O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, *A Gazetteer of Aegean Civilization in the Bronze Age, I The Mainland and Islands* (1979), 164 and *passim* (quoted hereafter as *Gazetteer*).

trends in population and settlement.

Messenia <i>Gazetteer</i> Map D	Cemeteries excavated	Cemeteries not exc.	Settlements excavated	Settlements not exc.	Totals
MH	2 11%	2 50%		4 5%	8 6%
MH-LH II	1 5%				1 1%
MH-LH III	3 16%		11 79%	28 32%	42 34%
LH I-II	1 5%	1 25%			2 2%
LH I-III	6 32%			4 5%	10 8%
LH III	6 32%	1 25%	3 21%	52 59%	62 50%
TOTAL	19	4	14	88	125

TABLE 1: Figures are based on *Gazetteer*. Sites where the dating is vague (e.g. simply "LH") have been omitted; phases where the date is uncertain (e.g. "MH?") have not been counted. 121 sites in the *Gazetteer* are either purely EH or uncertain enough in date not to suit our purposes here. Where sites are recorded as e.g. "MH LH III (A-B)" occupation is assumed to be continuous.

Of course these arguments can be countered and a case argued for accepting the Messenia statistics. The sites selected for excavation do not properly reflect the norm, but include an exceptional concentration of large and important sites such as Pylos and Peristeria. On these grounds the survey evidence, which dominates the statistics, would be more trustworthy as representing the general trend. If we turn to the results from intensive surveys, which we hope will overcome the biases in counting funerary evidence, and benefit from the recent advances in our understanding of the dating of MH pottery<sup>6</sup>, perhaps some, at least, of these concerns can be met. Table 2 presents the counts of MH and LH sites known from a number of intensive surveys, and the relative increases from one period to another<sup>7</sup>. Again some words of caution are required: most of these figures are based on preliminary reports, and therefore open to misconstruction and to correction in the light of more detailed analysis. If I am guilty of misrepresenting their data I apologize in advance to the many scholars involved. Secondly there is the theoretical possibility that different survey methods will lead to different results. Taken at face value, however, there is a remarkable range in the results, with massive increases in the Berbati and S. Argolid areas, for example, and with, on average, the number of sites almost tripling in the LH period; but the Laconia Survey, paradoxically, shows a slight fall. Paradoxically, that is to say, at least in the light of the Homeric tradition of Lakedaimon:

σὺ γὰρ πεδίοιο ἀνάσσεις  
εὐρέος, ᾧ ἔνι μὲν λῶτὸς πολὺς, ἐν δὲ κύπειρον  
πυροὶ τε ζειαὶ τε ἰδ' εὐρυφυῆς κρὶ λευκόν.

- 6 E.g. S. DIETZ, *Asine II. Results of the Excavations East of the Acropolis 1970-1974*. Fasc. 2: *The Middle Helladic Cemetery, the Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean Deposits* (1980); R.J. HOWELL, "The Middle Helladic Settlement: Pottery", in W.A. McDONALD and N.C. WILKIE (eds.), *Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece II: The Bronze Age Occupation* (1992), 43-204; J. MARAN, *Die deutschen Ausgrabungen auf der Pevkakia Magula in Thessalien III. Die mittlere Bronzezeit* (1992), and *Kiapha Thiti: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, II 2 (*Marburger Winckelmann-Programm* 1990) (1992); G. NORDQUIST, "The Middle Helladic Pottery from the Southern Argolid", *Hydra* 5 (1988), 17-31; J. RUTTER, "Pottery Groups from Tzoungiza of the End of the Middle Bronze Age", *Hesperia* 59 (1990), 375-458; C. ZERNER, "Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I Pottery from Lerna", *Hydra* 2 (1986), 28-74, and "Middle Helladic and Late Helladic I Pottery from Lerna. Part II, Shapes", *Hydra* 4 (1988), 1-44.
- 7 Based on the figures compiled by J. RUTTER, "Review of Aegean Prehistory II: The Pre-palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland", *AJA* 97 (1993), 745-97 esp. 748.

as Telemachos said to Menelaos, contrasting the prosperity of Lakedaïmon with the poverty of Ithake.

INTENSIVE SURVEYS	MH SITES	LH SITES	INCREASE
Laconia (70)	10	9	x 0.9
Boeotia (21)	9	8-17	x 1-2
Oropos (15)	2	3	x 1.5
Pylos (12)	2-4	6	x 1.5-3
Methana (10)	3-4	5-8	x 2
Skourta Plain (32)	3-6	14-18	x 3-4
Nemea (50)	2	8	x 4
S. Argolid (44)	5	27-37	x 5-7
Berbati (25)	0	19	∞
TOTAL	36-41	99-124	x 2.4-3.4
UMME	58-107	168-195	x 1.6-3.4

TABLE 2: Increases in the number of sites in the MH and LH periods. Figures taken from Rutter 1993 (see n. 7 though the Laconia Survey figures are updated).

How, then, are the Laconia Survey results to be understood, and what insight do they allow in understanding the emergence and development of the Mycenaean state?

### Laconia Survey

The survey was carried out within an area covering just over 70 km<sup>2</sup> in central Laconia. The River Evrotas forms its western boundary, and it stretches from the site of Palaïogoulas, usually identified with ancient Sellasia in the north to the Menelaion in the South and as far as the modern (and mediaeval) village of Chrysapha in the east. A great variety of soil types can be distinguished, derived from the predominant rock types: limestone in the north, north-west and south-east extremities, a large expanse of schist forming the northern half of the area and a complex of marls and conglomerates making up the southern part. The whole area has been divided into 79 small catchment zones of differing characteristics, but we might generalize by mentioning the northerly sector 400-800 m above sea level with thin limestone soils, or deeper but rather unstable schist-derived soils, the westerly riverine zone, close to modern Sparta (200-400 m asl), which today are most intensively cultivated with many citrus orchards and olive groves, and the inland plateau around Chrysapha (300-400 m), to the East, with marls and a limestone karst basin. Thus the survey area can be expected to include settlements which exploit primary soils, and those located in more marginal environments (the schist soils poorer for arable, or the higher altitudes, marginal for olive culture). Furthermore, in the Bronze Age, the survey area includes the Menelaion, and hence might be expected to reveal the impact of that important site in terms of political developments. Communications can also be examined, with major routes northwards to Tegea, and south-eastwards towards Geraki, and ultimately the SE coast of the Peloponnese and the important Bronze Age port of Epidavros Limera. The inland route, on the other hand, through Chrysapha, can never have been of strategic significance. For these reasons, therefore, of varying agricultural potential, political importance and strategic significance the survey area can be considered a useful test bed for the kites which were flown at the start of this article.

As a starting point we might trace, very briefly, developments during the prehistoric periods before the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. During the early farming stage, whilst the site of Kouphovouno, just SW of Sparta, flourished from the Middle Neolithic period

onwards, the survey area was deserted until the Late/Final Neolithic<sup>8</sup>. When eventually colonized, moreover, the sites founded showed a very curious tendency to occupy rather barren locations, such as limestone massifs, which today serve as sites only for shepherds' mandras, and they avoid the richer agricultural land. There follows another period of sparse habitation, and only in the EH II phase does a major expansion into the richer agricultural zones occur. Some 30 sites of EH II date have been located, concentrated in the area towards Chrysapha, but with a group of sites also exploiting the high schist area in the north. The following EH III period is unknown not only in the survey area, but for the whole of Laconia. It might in theory be possible to postulate a 'sub EH II' phase for the region, during which ceramics typical of the earlier phase persisted, and those distinctive of EH III elsewhere, for example of the Argolid and Elis, did not reach Laconia. Suffice it to say that the pottery evidence from Laconia does not support this theory<sup>9</sup>.

It is worth noting, therefore, that the survey area's history of settlement in these early periods is marked by major discontinuities, in contrast with the picture of smooth and regular development sketched, for example, in Renfrew's model of the emergence of civilization in Greece<sup>10</sup>.

### The Middle and Late Bronze Ages in the Laconia Survey Area

There was therefore a re-occupation of the LS area in the Middle Bronze Age. Ten sites are datable to that period: M322, M349, N191, N413, Q360 (the Menelaion), R292, R457, S 434, S478 and U514. In addition just one or two MH sherds were found at a few locations which we are not prepared to call a site. Whilst not restricted to the favoured marl soils, it is noteworthy that no sites were located in the northern part of the Survey area, though there is a small isolated occurrence of MH pottery, indicating some activity in the north. It might in theory be possible to postulate that this absence of sites from the north is due to erosion of the unstable schist-derived soils; we reject this hypothesis, however, on the grounds that Early Bronze Age sites do occur in the northern area, and because sites in the southern half, such as N413, are nevertheless located on schist.

In the pottery which was collected, nothing could with certainty be ascribed to MH I. The pottery was not thrown on the fast wheel. It included Dark-burnished wares with kantharoi, cups and two-handled bowls, matt-painted on Lustrous-Decorated wares, a few sherds with the distinctive gold-mica inclusions thought to come from Aegina, and numerous coarse wares, including the distinctive incised wares which at Nichoria are placed in MH I-II. In general terms, therefore, it is possible to date the recolonisation of the survey area to MH II-III. We should, nevertheless, be cautious of claiming high precision: thus nothing distinctively early was collected from the Menelaion (site Q360) though possible MH I has been reported from the excavations at the site<sup>11</sup>.

Some notion of the variety of types of site can be conveyed by mentioning just a few.

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- 8 Note that other surveys have found Early and Middle Neolithic sites, see in particular the Nemea Survey finds J.F. CHERRY, J.L. DAVIS *et al.*, "Archaeological Survey in an Artifact-rich Landscape: a Middle-Neolithic Example from Nemea, Greece", *AJA* 92 (1988), 159-76.
  - 9 W.G. CAVANAGH and R.R. LAXTON, "Seriation of Noisy Data from the Laconia Survey: a Knowledge Engineering Approach", in *Actes du XIIe Congrès International des Sciences Préhistoriques et Protohistoriques: Bratislava, 1-7 Septembre 1991* 1 (1993), 350-66.
  - 10 C. RENFREW, *The Emergence of Civilization* (1972).
  - 11 O.T.P.K. DICKINSON, in J. SANDERS (ed.), *ΦΙΛΟΛΑΚΩΝ. Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector W. Catling* (1992), 110 n. 7. Excavation indicates that the earliest occupation of the Aetos Hill was in MH II: *AR* 27 (1980-81), 16.



Pride of place goes to the Menelaion itself: Middle Bronze Age pottery was found in most areas of the site, indicating that the MH settlement covered much the same extent as the Mycenaean town<sup>12</sup>. In other words the site's importance, at least to judge from its size, was already established at the latest by the end of the Middle Bronze Age. Next we might mention site M349, just two kilometres north of the Menelaion. This site seemed eroded and may have suffered somewhat from the loss of sherds due to comminution and abrasion<sup>13</sup>. All the same it was a small settlement of perhaps 0.1 ha. Although close to a ridge top, the site can in no way be described as defensive. It is situated to exploit the deep marl soils in the area just to the East of the Evrotas. Although small and undefended the site has pottery from MH II to LH IIIB, indicating an unexpected stability of occupation lasting perhaps 500 years. Site N413, by way of contrast, was larger, with artefacts covering (albeit rather interruptedly) 0.4 ha. It occupies a narrow precipitous spur, with steep cliffs overlooking the modern road to Chrysapha. Certainly defensive in siting, it cannot be said to command an important artery, this is just a route of local significance, serving the Chrysapha basin and the hinterland of Parnon. Again evidently founded in MH II this site seems to have been abandoned at the end of LH II. R291 resembles the preceding site in its location on a spur with steep sides, a natural acropolis, if you will, with easy access only from the north. It covers 0.25 ha mainly on top of the spur, though extending a little onto lower terraces. It appears that this site, like M349, was long-lived, though the extent of the settlement in LH III, to judge from the distribution of surface finds, was notably less than that in the MH period. Satellites of MH (R457) and LH (R424) date were found respectively to the South and to the North.

In the LH III period the overall figures stay approximately the same. As indicated above there is no sign of a burgeoning growth of population. As in MH so in the LH period, the northern area, whilst producing a few sherd scatters, yielded no clear evidence of permanent settlement sites. It cannot be claimed on the survey evidence that population was forced to occupy marginal lands. It is probable that three sites (M322, N413 and R457, and maybe N191) were abandoned. New sites in LH III include U490, H45 and R424, all of them located in more open ground, with direct access to reasonable arable land.

## Conclusions

Taken at face value these findings suggest that the essential pattern of settlement goes back to the MH period; this unsurprising finding serves to underline the point that the roots of the Mycenaean political system go back to the Middle Bronze Age. Already at that stage there is a variety of sites including small 'farmsteads', hamlet sized settlements of a quarter to half a hectare in size, and extensive sites such as the Menelaion, in the survey area, or Palaiopyrgi (Vapheio) on the other side of the Evrotas.

In the second place we would expect certain changes given our present understanding of the history of the development of the Mycenaean state. One might distinguish phases such as (1) the initial expansion in the Middle Helladic phase, (2) the Shaft Grave period and the first wave of strong Minoan influence, (3) an early palace

12 This extent of the site may date to MH III, see the important comment by H.W. CATLING, *AR* 23 (1976-7), 28; the surface finds collected by the Laconia Survey also appear to be later MH. Material has been recovered from the southern end of the site to the North Hill.

13 For these factors see T.M. WHITELOW, "Investigations at the Neolithic Sites of Kephala and Paoura", in J.F. CHERRY, J.L. DAVIS and E. MANTZOURANI (eds.), *Landscape Archaeology as Long-Term History: Northern Keos in the Cycladic Islands* (1991), 199-216.

period in LH IIB–IIIA1, symbolized not least by Mansions I and II at the Menelaion<sup>14</sup>, and (4) the Mycenaean Empire in LH IIIA2–B. Evidence from other surveys fit in with such a schema. Thus the Nemea survey evidence indicates a late phase of colonisation, roughly in the Shaft Grave period, and linked with the new political power emanating from Mycenae<sup>15</sup>. This has been extended by Rutter to a broader picture of late MH settlement in the hinterland of the Argolid and Central Greece<sup>16</sup>. The great expansion of settlement, on the other hand, indicated in Table 2, it seems more appropriate to link with stages (3) and (4), and the development of the mature Mycenaean state.

How to explain the discrepancies from region to region? The average figure envisages a doubling or even tripling of the number of sites. This need not imply a staggering increase in population; the somewhat comparable increase in the number of small rural sites in the Classical/Hellenistic periods, has, in some cases at least, been seen as affecting just some 20–30% of the total population<sup>17</sup>. Of course it is not intended to imply that the structure of settlement in Bronze Age was like that in Classical Greece, quite the contrary<sup>18</sup>, but the classical example serves to warn us not to make simplistic assumptions about changes in population numbers. In addition it is possible that those areas which show an increase greatly in excess of the mean reflect not so much a very dense population in the LH III phase, as a very sparse population in MH. Such a conclusion is compatible, for example, with the picture of a late phase of colonisation evident in the findings from the Nemea Valley project. The Laconia Survey data for stages (1) and (2) (MH–LH IIA) indicate a density of settlement quite in line with that from other regions (see Table 2), all the more striking because the sites are concentrated in the southern half of the survey area. Stage (3) (LH IIB–IIIA1) sees some sites deserted, N413 and M322, for example, barely surviving LH II. The fiscal reforms implied by the design of the new buildings at the Menelaion would have had political consequences which led to the abandonment of a few sites, and, evidently as part of the same process, the establishment of new settlements (U490, H45, R424). The interesting site at Melathria<sup>19</sup>,

14 H.W. CATLING, "Excavations of the British School at Athens at the Menelaion, Sparta 1973–1975", *Λακωνικά Σπουδαί* 2 (1975), 258–69; "Excavations at the Menelaion, 1976–1977", *Λακωνικά Σπουδαί* 3 (1976), 408–16; "Excavations at the Menelaion, Sparta 1973–1977", *AR* 23 (1976–7), 24–42; H.W. and E.A. CATLING, "'Barbarian' Pottery from the Mycenaean Settlement at the Menelaion, Sparta", *BSA* 76 (1981), 71–81; *AR* 27 (1980–1), 16–19; *AR* 32 (1985–6), 29–30; *AR* 35 (1988–9), 36; G. HIESEL *Späthelladische Hausarchitektur: Studien zur Architekturgeschichte des griechischen Festlandes in der späten Bronzezeit* (1990) has also stressed the importance of the Menelaion in indicating the first adoption of the full bureaucratic system on the mainland.

15 J.C. WRIGHT *et al.*, "The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A preliminary Report", *Hesperia* 59 (1990), 579–659, esp. 641: "the entire History of Mycenaean occupation in the area appears closely bound to the development and collapse of the larger centers of the northeastern Peloponnesos".

16 RUTTER (*supra* n. 6), 781: "a widespread episode of colonization of the interior. Such resettlement may have occurred not only in other valleys of the northeastern Peloponnese... but perhaps also in valley systems as far away as Attica (e.g. Kiapha Thiti just inland of Vari, Panakton in the Skourta plain), Phocis (e.g. Koumoula, just northeast of and above Delphi), and the southeastern Argolid".

17 S. ALCOCK, *Graecia Capta* (1993) has commented (p. 96): "In one recent archaeological survey, of the polis of Koressos on Keos, survey and epigraphic evidence combined to demonstrate that, even in the period of maximally dispersed settlement, only some 25 percent (at most) of the total population chose to live full-time in the *chora*, as opposed to the *astu*. Classical and Early Hellenistic evidence from the town of Hyettos, intensively studied in the Boeotia survey, likewise suggests that some 70 percent of the population lived within the urban center itself".

18 See W.G. CAVANAGH and R. LAXTON, "The Rank-size Dimension and the History of Site Structure from Survey Data", *Journal of Quantitative Anthropology* (forthcoming).

19 W.G. CAVANAGH and J.H. CROUWEL, "Melathria: a Small Mycenaean Rural Settlement in Laconia", in J. SANDERS (ed.), *ΦΙΛΟΛΑΚΩΝ. Lakonian Studies in Honour of Hector W. Catling* (1992), 77–86.

just beyond the survey area proper, was also founded in LH IIIA1. The impact of central control over the subsidiary rural settlements is stamped on these changes.

The fact that LH IIIA2-B1 is relatively poorly attested from the excavations at the Menelaion should act as a caution to us not to over-interpret the small samples of poorly preserved pottery which are the staple of archaeological survey. All the same the LH IIIA2-B period (stage 4), is one of stability in the Laconia Survey area. It is particularly in this phase, it would seem, that the difference is recognisable between the Laconia area and those covered by other surveys. Now the discovery of sealings and continuing central storage in the LH IIIB destruction levels of the Menelaion<sup>20</sup>, confirms a continuation of bureaucratic control from that centre. In the light of this it would be wise to avoid extreme claims: the region continued to prosper in LH IIIA-B, there was no expansion of settlement, but neither was there a decline. Our present evidence hints that there was a set-back at the Menelaion at the end of LH IIIA1; it may well be, of course, that the centre of operations moved from the Mansion to elsewhere on the site, but if this evidence is taken at face value, then the static picture of settlement in the Laconia Survey area will again reflect how closely bound up was the history of the development of the region with that of the centre at the Menelaion. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the Menelaion seems to continue only just into LH IIIC, and the rural settlements located by the Laconia Survey likewise come to an end in the 12th century BC.

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20 R.M. DAWKINS, "The Mycenaean City near the Menelaion", *BSA* 16 (1909-10), 4-11. *CMS* V, 340 no. 348; cf. also the seal found in a dump of LH IIIB2 date but including earlier material *AR* 22 (1975-6), 14, *CMS* V, 339 no. 347.

## DISCUSSION

**S. Deger-Jalkotzy:** I would like to ask you about the Menelaion. I think you are right that this establishment indicates a move towards bureaucratic government, which would indicate that it was a state in the usual sense. But it was abandoned in LH III A:1. Do you have any indications that there was a palace in LH IIIA and B, and where it could have been situated? We all assume that there was a palace in Laconia, too; but where could it have been? The second question is what is the evidence for LH IIIC, after the end of the palace period?

**W. Cavanagh:** I am afraid, I do not know the answer to your first question. There have been many suggestions, but we have no clear evidence. Really, only excavation can uncover certain evidence. Possible candidates would be Palaiopyrgi, the settlement associated with the Vapheio tomb; unfortunately there has not been much survey there. Obviously, Hope-Simpson looked at the site. It is plainly a large site. I think he estimates there are about 25 hectares, which is about the same size as the Menelaion in terms of area. He found some LH IIIB pottery. I walked across the site; and my impression is that there is a great deal of pottery up to LH IIIA:1 but rather less LH IIIB pottery. Other suggestions have been the site of Amyclae, Ayia Kiriaki, but again I do not know that the evidence is strong. There is certainly a LH IIIB settlement on the Menelaion site, the Mansion itself seems to be reoccupied which does not seem to be a palatial thing to do. But I suppose it is not impossible. As to LH IIIC our surveys have found nothing. We found no IIIC pottery on the survey, but all the sites I mentioned seem to come to an end in LH IIIB. There is only some LH IIIC pottery on the Menelaion and at Amyclae.

**J. Maran:** Concerning the earlier periods that were presented in your survey: are there any new clues concerning the geomorphological development in Laconia? I am asking this because in the Argolid you have in Early Helladic II a major advance in soil erosion in different parts of the Argolid. So it would be interesting to know if similar processes were also underway in Laconia. Secondly, if this were the case could it be that the Neolithic settlements are covered by eroded soil and invisible on the surface?

**W. Cavanagh:** That is certainly important as a possibility. Our Dutch colleagues did a soil study, but they were unable to find sections which would give the sort of detail which was possible in the southern Argolid survey. Nevertheless, they have been able to develop a model of the types of erosion that were possible given the land forms in the region. It looks as though burial sites may be a problem in the area close to the Eurotas, but elsewhere if anything, it looks as though the erosion would loosen soil but would probably leave the pottery behind. I do not think that that has had sufficient effect to indicate extensive neolithic occupation of that type. Obviously Kouphovouno seems to be a major site on the other side of the Eurotas. I am fairly convinced that these large areas either were not occupied or have been so severely eroded that the pottery has been completely destroyed.

**J.C. Wright:** I know you did not give a survey of southern Laconia, but I just wondered if you would talk, maybe even speculate a little bit, about possible differences in site development in southern Laconia as opposed to your survey area. I am thinking particularly of the site of Geraki with that huge cyclopean terrace or fortification wall.

**W. Cavanagh:** I know that people disagree whether the Cyclopean wall is a genuine one or not. Surely Geraki is an important site, comparable with the Menelaion. But the evidence is so slight. There is a grave with a couple of pots in it, there is a bit of survey evidence, but we certainly do not have enough pottery to be able to say, in what stages of the Middle Bronze Age it was occupied. There are interesting parallels in our survey to Ayios Stephanos. We find for example some of the white coated LH I wares that have been found at Ayios Stephanos, also in our survey area.