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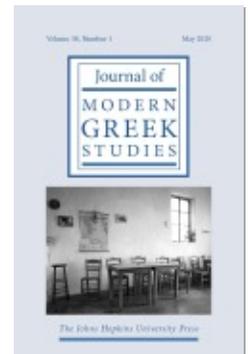
The Village beyond the Village: Communities in Rural
Landscapes in Ancient Greek Countrysides

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The Village beyond the Village: Communities in Rural Landscapes in Ancient Greek Countrysides

Lin Foxhall

Abstract

Villages in the Classical Greek world consisted of more than a nucleated settlement: the human relationships of rural village communities linked together a variety of spaces and locations in the wider countryside. This means that no one site or location in the landscape makes sense without reference to others with which it was entwined. Moreover, these relationships, and hence the uses of particular sites and places, changed rapidly over time. These aspects of the Classical village are most evident in the occupation histories of excavated small, rural sites. Five such sites from across the Greek world are Pyrgouthi (Berbati Valley, near Mycenae), Sant'Angelo Vecchio and Fattoria Fabrizio (chora of Metaponto, Basilicata), the Vari House (Mt. Hymettus, Attica), and the Umbro Greek site (Bova Marina, southern Calabria).

Introduction: The village beyond the village

We normally think of Greek villages, like villages elsewhere, as small, nucleated rural settlements, which serve as the place of residence and the social focus of a small, usually closely-knit, community. However, the concept of the village in the Archaic and Classical Greek world is not straightforward. Certainly there are some archaeologically recognizable village sites in the form of small nucleated settlements, but these are less common in many regions than in other periods of history in Greek-speaking lands. Even in classical times (fifth to fourth centuries BCE) the urban centers of a significant number of *poleis* (city-states) are sufficiently small that they appear to function like villages, with the inhabitants farming the surrounding countryside while living for the most part in the urban settlement (e.g. Bintliff 2014, 203–204). Concomitantly, in some areas further from urban centers or nucleated settlements, clusters of

individual rural sites appear to function in some ways like villages (e.g. Carter and Prieto 2011, 676 and 700–702). Nonetheless, the life of a village, however it is topographically, spatially, or conceptually construed, is usually also played out beyond the settlement space of the village center. Villages have often—though not always—been substantially dependent upon the local landscape for their livelihood. Hence, many aspects of village life are performed in the rural spaces in which a village settlement is usually embedded. This is demonstrably the case in many parts of the ancient Greek world, and in this paper I will explore through several case studies the phenomenon of the village beyond the village, rooted in practice which is particularly evident in the variegated, fragile, and volatile landscapes of the Mediterranean region.

The exploitation of the countryside to which a village belongs—or which belongs to people in a village—therefore becomes a major element in the performance of village life which takes place beyond the nucleated settlement area. At the same time, social interaction in village centers is entwined with the equally complex interactions between rural sites and the people who use them in the surrounding countryside. So, for example, in villages which have a significant degree of autonomy (which has not always been the case in all parts of the Greek world or the Mediterranean region), local, collective decisions may need to be taken about such issues as designating crop rotation areas, critical in regions where fallow land is used as grazing and any crops growing in an area collectively agreed as fallow for that year are at risk of being eaten by animals (Forbes 2007, 195–198; Halstead 2014, 208–209). Often, collective decisions are also needed around key, communally exploited resources such as watercourses and water sources (Halstead 2014, 209–210, 230, and 280–281), grazing lands (Forbes 2007, 187), and the exploitation of forest lands beyond cultivated areas for activities such as charcoal burning and resin-tapping (cf. Grove and Rackham 2001, 184–187). For Classical antiquity and beyond, therefore, how human practices have linked these small rural sites and how practices and uses changed over time provide important information about how village communities may have operated across the wider landscape.

In effect, then, although studies of rural settlement have often taken a broad-brush, top down approach (e.g. Bintliff 2014), the rural territory of a village is also constructed from the bottom up through social practice—the repeated activities of people, households and communities in landscape. Such a territory may be patchy, discontinuous, and irregular. This is not to say that there are no top down constraints or initiatives from political authorities, or that they are unimportant. Far from it. Rather, I am suggesting that we should understand the dynamics of rural habitation and practice as much more

complex than has often been the case. I would argue instead that what we see in the archaeological, historical, and even in the ethnographic record is the outcome of the actions and behaviours of multiple agents shaping village life over time in a larger landscape setting (Foxhall 2015 and 2016). These various actors and their actions differ in their effectiveness and longevity and in the strength of their impacts on both the socio-political and the physical formations of rural landscapes (or territories) as well as on their manifestation and representation in the evidential record. These are dynamic processes and the balance of the impacts of different agents on the landscapes associated with rural communities is constantly changing over time in dialogue with a range of factors (for example, the distance from political centers or ease of access of a political authority to a particular area, significance of the area to higher-level political authorities, strength of local authorities or local resistance, etc.). This is important because these discourses between different agents played out on rural landscapes shape what we perceive as village life, both within and beyond village settlements.

Inhabiting the landscape: The complex dynamics of small rural sites

Several case studies allow us to examine rural landscapes inhabited by rural communities where we also have excavated sites. Although I have focused on the late Archaic through early Hellenistic periods (roughly late sixth through early third centuries BCE), I have tried, where I can, to indicate the dynamism of these sites and landscapes in earlier and later periods. These examples provide a robust body of data that enable us to build a bigger picture of how Classical Greek rural sites and the activities in them were linked together by people and their social, political, and economic relationships, and also of how the dynamics of these relationships changed over time.

The Berbati Valley

The Berbati Valley, in the Plain of Mycenae in the Peloponnese, was the object of an intensive archaeological survey in the late 1980s (Wells and Runnels 1996), revealing a number of small Classical rural sites. The small site at Pyrgouthi (Figure 1), assumed by the excavators to be a Classical-Hellenistic farmhouse with a tower, yielded some surprises when it was excavated in the mid-1990s (Hjohlman, Penttinen, and Wells 2005) and turned out to have a much more complex history of use than anticipated. The site is located on a bedrock outcrop on the northern side of the fertile plain in the midst of good agricultural land,

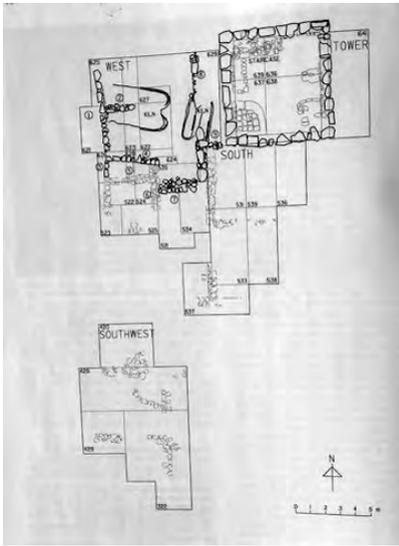


Figure 1. Pyrgouthi, site plan. (After Penttinen 2005, 16, figure 3. Plan by B. Ask. Courtesy of the Swedish Institute in Athens.)

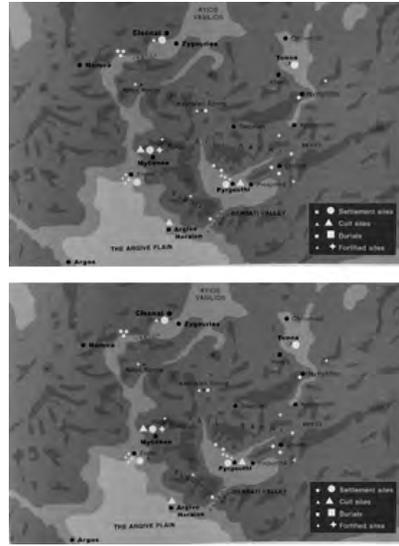


Figure 2a and b. Pyrgouthi in the landscape. A) Fifth century BCE; b) early Hellenistic period. (After Penttinen 2005, 109, figure 109; 113, figure 110. Maps by A. Tóth and J. Falk. Courtesy of the Swedish Institute in Athens.)

very close to other small, agricultural sites of the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Figures 2a and 2b, findspot 506 in the survey: Hjöhlman, Penttinen, and Wells 2005, 9; figs. 109, 110). Apart from a small amount of Early Iron Age pottery which is not contextualized, the first occupation of the site was in the fifth century BCE when two ceramic kilns were built, although there is no evidence that this was a residential site at that time. A variety of utilitarian wares appear to have been fired here, but the most important product seems to have been roof tiles. The tower was built in the late fourth/early third century BCE, but the excavators were not able to identify any other structural remains, e.g. of a house or farm buildings, that went with it at that time. However, it is clear that in the early Hellenistic period, contemporary with the construction of the tower, the site was in close proximity to a settlement cluster identified as a village (*kōmē*) (Penttinen 2005, 113). The tower then became incorporated into a short-lived farm house during the first century BCE, and the one ancient coin found (Argive, second century BCE) belongs to this phase (Hjöhlman, Penttinen, and Wells 2005, 36 and 50). After a period of abandonment starting

in the first quarter of the first century CE, the site was again reoccupied and rebuilt as a farm in Late Antiquity.

The pattern manifest at Pyrgouthi of short intermittent phases of different activities and site functions separated by gaps is characteristic of the use-life of many of these small rural sites in Classical antiquity. Given the relatively coarse-grained dating of the sites detected by survey and the gaps in their occupation, it is impossible to be certain how many of them were simultaneously in use at any particular moment. However, the proximity of numerous other Classical-Hellenistic period sites suggests that Pyrgouthi was intertwined in a volatile and rapidly changing network of such loci, and that the agricultural and other exploitation of its immediate surroundings was in some periods carried out by people living at other nearby locations, including in villages, that were linked in networks which seem to have been quite volatile and which changed rapidly in their shape and reach over very short periods.

In addition to the agricultural and storage functions of Pyrgouthi, there was, of course also the manufacture of ceramics. Two other sites with material indicative of production involving pyrotechnic technologies were also identified in survey: FS504 with a concentration of slag and what seem to be elements of furnace lining (Penttinen 1996, 252), perhaps indicating metal production, and FS510, on the basis of one slag fragment (which could potentially be kiln lining) and a small collection of coarse ware pottery, identified as a workshop site (Penttinen 1996, 263–264 and 278). At FS510, the presence of a single bobbin and a single battered loom weight could suggest pottery production, as these objects are regularly repurposed as kiln separators (cf. Foxhall and Quercia 2016, 255; Foxhall 2018, 1029). The implication of this is that no one of these sites can be considered as functioning socially or productively on its own. Rather, the productive capability of the landscape as a whole emerges from the rapidly changing variety of ways, in different periods, these productive loci were connected and exploited in conjunction with each other through social relations between people operating in multiple spaces.

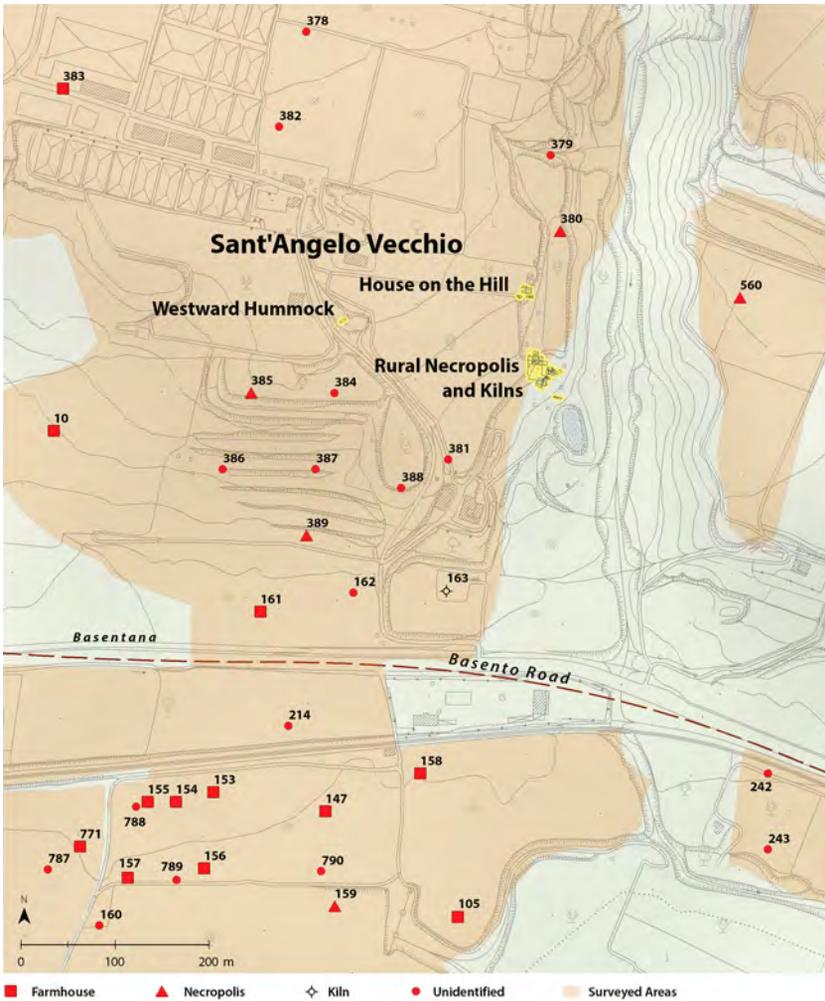
The chora of Metaponto

The sites of Sant'Angelo Vecchio (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016) and Fattoria Fabrizio (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014) in the chora (rural territory) of Metaponto demonstrate that Pyrgouthi is not an isolated example. As with Pyrgouthi, these sites were identified during intensive survey, which provides their larger spatial, landscape, and social contexts, but with excavation their use-lives have emerged as complex and quite different.



Figure 3a (above) and b (right). a) the Metaponto chora showing Sant'Angelo Vecchio and Fattoria Fabrizio; b) Sant'Angelo Vecchio. (After Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 11, figure 1.8 and 12, figure 1.9. Courtesy of the University of Texas Press.)

Sant'Angelo Vecchio (Figures 3a and 3b; for the site plan, see Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 22, fig. 2.2) is part of a network of small sites which changes significantly over the period from the sixth century BCE to the first century CE, and which was identified by the ICA research team as one of several site groupings they called early village clusters in the Metaponto chora (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 13–17). However, given the shortness of occupation in some phases, we can never be certain from survey alone that all sites with material dating to a particular century or phase were occupied simultaneously. As we shall see again with the Metaponto data, these small rural sites can go in and out of use very quickly.



The earliest well-evidenced occupation at Sant'Angelo Vecchio is the so-called House on the Hill, a structure with associated ceramic finds that has been interpreted as a domestic residence, a farm house, occupied from the mid-sixth century BCE through the first quarter of the fifth century BCE or a little later (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 21–23, 56–59, and 61–66). A few kiln wasters in secondary deposits suggest the possibility that small-scale ceramic manufacture took place on or near the site in this period (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 65 and 129–130), but this is far from certain. From at least the middle of the sixth century there is evidence of activity at the permanent

spring below the House on the Hill, and in the later sixth/early fifth century an inscription delimiting the area around the spring as a sanctuary was carved in the natural rock. A retaining wall was built early in the fifth century BCE but is not connected with the earlier *horos* (boundary) stone or the sanctuary. A significant amount of later sixth/early-fifth-century pottery was found in this sloping part of the site, including a deposit of pottery deliberately placed in a pit dating mostly to the first half of the fifth century BCE (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 22–23 and 49–51). As the pit is outside the sanctuary it seems unlikely to be related to ritual activity. The forms are potentially consistent with funerary activity, but it could equally be a trash dump.

During the fifth century, after the abandonment of the House on the Hill, the lower, sloping area of the Sant'Angelo Vecchio site became a small necropolis, with seven graves, in use from about 450 to 420 BCE (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 85–119). This suggests that the agrarian and pastoral potential of the surroundings continued to be exploited, as it had previously been from the House on the Hill structure, but by people living at one of the other sites in the immediate vicinity.

During the later fourth century BCE a workshop, possibly including residential space, and two pottery kilns were erected on the site, but the remains of this phase are not extensively preserved. However, it is clear that in this phase the occupants of the site ignored the fifth-century tombs and appear to have had no knowledge of the graves or their inhabitants. Two additional graves, however, are associated with this later phase of the site. This establishment lasted to the middle of the third century BCE (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 71–75 and 129–133). The main product of these kilns seems to be votive terracotta plaques and (probably) loom weights, although it is possible that tiles, architectural terracottas, and other coarse ware products were made too. One of the loom weights found at the sanctuary at Pantanallo (Foxhall 2018, 1030) matches a mold found at Sant'Angelo Vecchio. The kinds of kiln spacers found (including repurposed loom weights) suggest that fine wares were not manufactured here. The range of different products fired at Sant'Angelo Vecchio could indicate that the kilns of this phase were used by several different pottery workshops in the vicinity.

While these late Classical/early Hellenistic kilns at Sant'Angelo Vecchio specialized in votive and architectural terracottas and coarse wares, it is significant that site 105 nearby, located conveniently close to the probably navigable river, has evidence of black-gloss fine ware production contemporary with these fourth- and/or third-century kilns (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016,

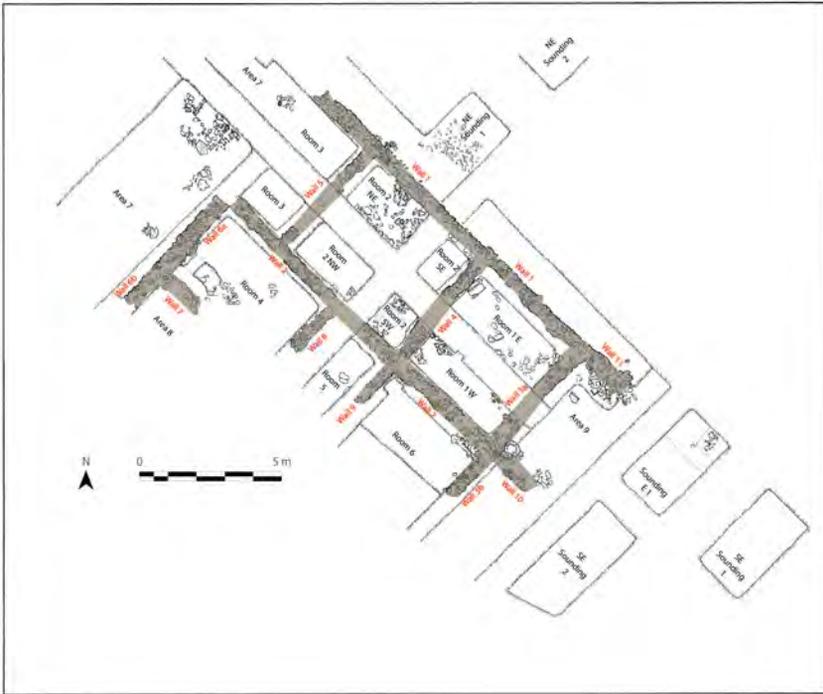


Figure 4. Plan of the Fattoria Fabrizio farmhouse. (After Lanza Catti and Swift, 4, figure 1.2. Courtesy of the University of Texas Press.)

131–132 and 135), suggesting a degree of spatially based specialization and interdependence across the countryside.

After a period of disuse, the site was reoccupied in the late second century BCE when another substantial (350m²) workshop was built on the ruins of the earlier installation (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 75–83 and 133). This consisted of a workshop shed, at least part of which had a tiled roof, a courtyard area, a clay settling basin, and three kilns. The kilns are relatively small (2m diameter). At least one of the products was cooking ware. This could suggest that the kilns were used only by the potters occupying the site, but evidence for the full range of the workshop's production is lacking since the disposal area for kiln wasters was not found. The site was abandoned early in the first century CE. Both the earlier and later kilns may have been built on the slope to catch the wind, and they are in close proximity to the spring and the clay beds associated with it (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 129 and 158).

A number of small ceramic kilns have been identified in the Metaponto countryside as well as in the so-called Kerameikos district of the ancient city, but there are significant differences between urban and rural production (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 129–141). Transport amphorae seem to have been manufactured only in rural areas close to areas of agrarian production, while figured pottery was made exclusively in the city (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 141) though it is used in rural areas, especially in tombs and sanctuaries. In farmhouses, however, only small amounts usually appear, as in the example of the farmhouse at Fattoria Fabrizio (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 171–172), discussed below.

As at Pyrgouthi, occupation at Sant'Angelo Vecchio occurs in short, discontinuous phases, with the site being exploited in quite different ways over its use-life. It was an important base for both agricultural and ceramic production in different periods.

There are good, fertile agricultural soils in the immediate vicinity of Sant'Angelo Vecchio as well (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 154–157), though the archaeobotanical and palynological analyses (Silvestrelli and Edlund-Berry 2016, 163–166) suggest that these were used for tree crops (olives, vines, and possibly walnut) rather than cereals, and there is no evidence that cereals were processed on the site. The presence of carbonized remains of cereals and legumes, as well as straw, chaff, and other impressions in mud brick and ceramics, however, certainly testify that they were used on the site, if not grown or processed there. The presence of fungal spores associated with animal dung and the presence of the eggs of parasites characteristic of herbivores suggests that the land between cultivated or tended trees was used for grazing (though probably not of goats if walnuts were indeed grown). Given the proximity of the spring, it is hardly surprising that plant remains characteristic of wet areas are present, and the existence of a permanent supply of water would support the keeping of livestock. Tree prunings could have supplied both fodder for animals and fuel for kilns. The occupation of Sant'Angelo Vecchio, therefore, only makes sense if it is understood as part of a series of volatile and rapidly changing networks and taskscapes, to use Ingold's (1993) term, encompassing other spatial locations in the immediate vicinity, linked together by human relationships and activities which here include pottery manufacture, livestock keeping, and arboriculture.

The assemblage at the Fattoria Fabrizio farmhouse (Figures 3a and 4) further emphasizes the diverse character and life-histories of small rural sites even within a single area (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014). The structure, which appears to be domestic, is located on a ridge above the Venella Valley, an area of

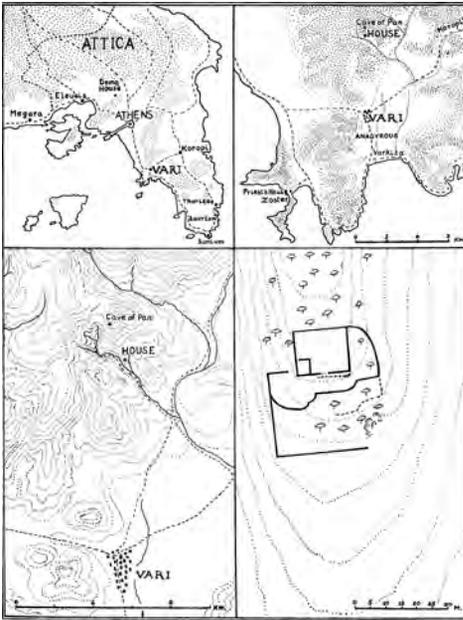


Figure 5. The Vari House. (After Jones et al 1973, 357, figure 1. Courtesy of the British School at Athens.)

relatively flat, fertile agricultural land, planted largely in vines in recent years. It was built very late in the fifth or at the beginning of the fourth century BCE and was abandoned around 300 or very shortly afterwards (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 7–8). There is ceramic evidence of residential use of the site earlier in the second half of the fifth century and in the late sixth/early fifth century (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 10–13), but there are no discernible structures associated with these earlier phases, suggesting that like other small rural sites, this spot too was occupied in short, discontinuous phases. Compared to the area around Sant’Angelo Vecchio, there are fewer small sites in this part of the chora, and none are in the immediate vicinity of the Fattoria Fabrizio farm house that might be associated directly with a village cluster.

The full plan of the house was not recovered, but the best-preserved rooms were used for (among other things) storage of agricultural produce including cereals. Although there were few preserved finds of seeds, pollen, and other environmental remains, Lanza Catti and Swift (2014, 135–136) confirm the presence of cereal production and storage (including pests associated with stored grain) as well as livestock. The palynological data suggest that olives were grown close to the site and there is evidence of other nearby crop trees including plum, hazel, and chestnut. Grapes were entirely absent from the plant remains and pollen samples. However, the transport amphorae at the site are more characteristic

of those used for wine in the Metaponto chora than for oil (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 113): this may indicate that little or no wine was produced by this establishment. It is possible that the occupants produced oil, but if so, it was processed elsewhere, which would not be unusual as olive presses are often not located on farmsteads but in the countryside close to crop trees or in village settlements, and are used by multiple producers (Foxhall 2007, 182–186). This is a site that appears to be entirely geared to agricultural production beyond subsistence, but it is clear that the activities of the occupants must have incorporated other sites and parts of the landscape as well, even if that meant travel to areas beyond the immediate vicinity of the house. The one low-value bronze coin found in one of the storerooms probably also attests connections in the form of cash transactions with agents located elsewhere (Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 366), whether in a village or in the more distant urban center.

Similar patterns of occupation which appear to be largely domestic and residential can be seen at other sites that are primarily agrarian in character. Fattoria Fabrizio shares much in common with, for example, the Vari House in Attica and the Umbro Greek house in Bova Marina, Southern Calabria.

The Vari House in context

The well-known Vari House (Figure 5), excavated in the 1960s, was one of the first rural houses to be investigated (Jones et al. 1973). The house is located in southern Attica, on the edge of the Hymettus range, high on the road to the Cave of Pan at Vari, only a short distance away from the sanctuary, situated on the southern end of a rocky ridge (Jones et al. 1973, 357–358). Ceramic and coin evidence suggest that the site was also in use briefly in the late fifth century BCE, the fourth to fifth centuries CE, and the eleventh to twelfth centuries CE, but the building and its main period of occupation date to the second half of the fourth century BCE (Jones et al. 1973, 415–416). Its presence may in some way be related to activity at the sanctuary, but it is hard to be certain of this. The house consists of rooms arranged around a large courtyard. Area VII in the SW corner may have been a tower and there is also a so-called annex, perhaps for storage or animal housing along the eastern side of the house.

The quality of the ceramics, with a high proportion of black-slipped fine ware, a very small amount of figured ware (fragments of two kraters and a skyphos: Jones et al. 1973, 374), and a quantity of cooking wares and utilitarian vessels, is comparable with the prosperous-looking assemblages of the roughly contemporary Metaponto farmhouses. The assemblage includes a number of storage amphoras and evidence of at least two pithoi (Jones et al. 1973, 389)

found in area XI, which seems to have been used for storage along with the possible tower, area VII, suggesting that, as in the case of Fattoria Fabrizio, storage of agricultural produce was a significant consideration.

Although no environmental samples were taken (except for analysis of the numerous beehive fragments), the enclosure around the house and the broken beehive fragments in the yard immediately suggest the keeping of livestock and bees. It seems unlikely that the beehives were actually in use in the position in which they were found since the whole house would have been full of bees if they were kept immediately outside the entrance so close to the living quarters, and the placement of beehives is in any case normally out in the fields close to the flowering plants and shrubs on which the insects feed. It seems more likely that broken fragments with honey and wax in them were thrown into the yard for stock to lick. In this elevated location, both pasturing animals and beekeeping would have been largely summertime activities, which probably coincided with the periods when visitors were most likely to visit the Cave of Pan. So it is possible that even if this house was occupied all year round, it was more heavily used in the summer, and the inhabitants also exploited other locations or even mostly lived elsewhere, most likely during the winter in the ancient deme village of Anagyrous, lower down and closer to the coast. However, the use of the Vari House makes sense only if we understand it as part of a larger social, political, economic, and sacred landscape where human activities and relationships operated across the sanctuary, the village below, the uncultivated lands of the mountainside, and almost certainly agricultural lands elsewhere.

Bova Marina, southern Calabria

The Umbro Greek House (Foxhall and Yoon 2016), located in southern Calabria near Bova Marina is situated on a flat hilltop overlooking a small upland plateau about 300m a.s.l. (Figures 6a and 6b). There is survey evidence of other small sites around the Umbro Plateau, and a line of springs runs along its north-eastern edge. The old road up to the medieval and modern settlement of Bova Superiore runs alongside the site and it may have had an ancient predecessor, as there is evidence of Classical settlement and other activity at Bova Superiore and even further uphill and inland. In antiquity the entire region was between the rural territories of the city-states of Rhegion and Lokri Epizephyrii, about 50 km from each. The site is intervisible with an ancient village to the east in a location now known as Mazza, several hours' walk away.

There were at least two structures at the site which appear to overlap in date. The better-preserved structure on the western side of the hill seems to

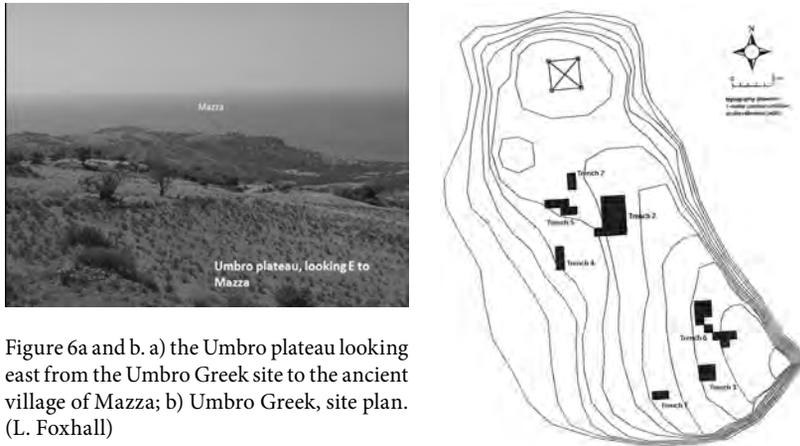


Figure 6a and b. a) the Umbro plateau looking east from the Umbro Greek site to the ancient village of Mazza; b) Umbro Greek, site plan. (L. Foxhall)

be the remains of a multi-roomed structure built, like most of the others I have discussed, of mud brick on a stone socle. The period of occupation of the site lasts from the late fifth century BCE through early years of the third century BCE, in two distinct phases (Figures 7 and 8), though a small amount of ceramic evidence has left traces of earlier use of the site. In its primary phase, the building was residential, with evidence of the storage, processing, and cooking of food, suggesting that at this time it served as a residential farm house. Archaeobotanical analyses have documented cereals and the use of olive wood as fuel, though there is no evidence of olive or wine processing on site, which must have been carried out elsewhere. However, the house was then abandoned for a sufficiently long period that the roof collapsed. A new earth floor was laid directly over the fallen roof tiles and the space was divided into what appear to be small pens for keeping animals and/or compartments for storage. The building clearly retained some kind of storage function although it may not have been residential any longer.

The structure at the top of the hill is poorly preserved and part of it may have been lost to tectonic activity (as at Fattoria Fabrizio). The earliest material associated with this structure dates to the fourth century and continues into the early part of the third century BCE. Its construction may have overlapped with the later part of the first phase of occupation of the lower, better-preserved structure as well as its abandonment phase and the second phase of occupation for keeping animals and storage.

As with the other sites discussed here, the activities represented at the Umbro Greek house only make sense if the occupants of this site were simultaneously exploiting other parts of the wider landscape—at the very least to

graze animals and obtain water, and they were almost certainly cultivating arable and tree crops at other locations in the vicinity. Two small Rhegian bronze coins certainly indicate some cash transactions (Lokri did not have bronze coinage at the time, so this need not indicate a special connection with Rhegion), and these most likely indicate regular contact with or participation in a village community.

*The complexity and interconnectedness of rural landscapes:
The village beyond the village*

These examples demonstrate the complexity, interconnectedness and dynamism of rural landscapes and village life in Classical Greek antiquity. Despite the geographical variation, common themes and interesting patterns emerge.

One obvious but important point that emerges is that not all rural sites are so-called farmhouses although scholars still regularly interpret them as permanent single-family dwellings (McHugh 2017; Zuchtriegel 2018; cf. Small 2018). Zuchtriegel (2018, 132–134 and 154–160), for example, has interpreted the small rural sites in the Metaponto chora as the habitations of “second-class citizens” who were marginalised, spatially and politically, in the governance of the *polis*. However, most of these sites do not serve a single purpose throughout their use life. Critically, this is usually not discernible from survey data alone. Some sites are only briefly, or partly, or even never, residential. Some occupation is certainly seasonal. Activities move from place to place rapidly, and whatever activities happen at any particular place change over quite short time scales. Some elements of crop processing may be physically separated from residences, such as threshing, and often oil/wine production, although the latter can also be archaeologically invisible.

Moreover, even with excavated sites we are only picking up the most archaeologically visible activities, carried out by people whose level of material wealth is such that they leave clear and discernible traces in the landscape. The poorest rural inhabitants are almost certainly not visible in the archaeological record. Where sites display archaeologically visible uses at a level where excavation is feasible, such as domestic occupation, sanctuary use, funerary/burial use, ceramic manufacture, and sometimes crop processing, we should probably assume that we are looking at the wealthier rather than the poorer end of the socio-economic scale. The level of material wealth displayed at these sites is considerable: for example, ceramic assemblages from the Metaponto rural sites contain numerous fine ware vessels as well as small amounts of figured pottery, including imports (e.g. Fattoria Fabrizio figured wares include Attic imports: Lanza Catti and Swift 2014, 171–172).

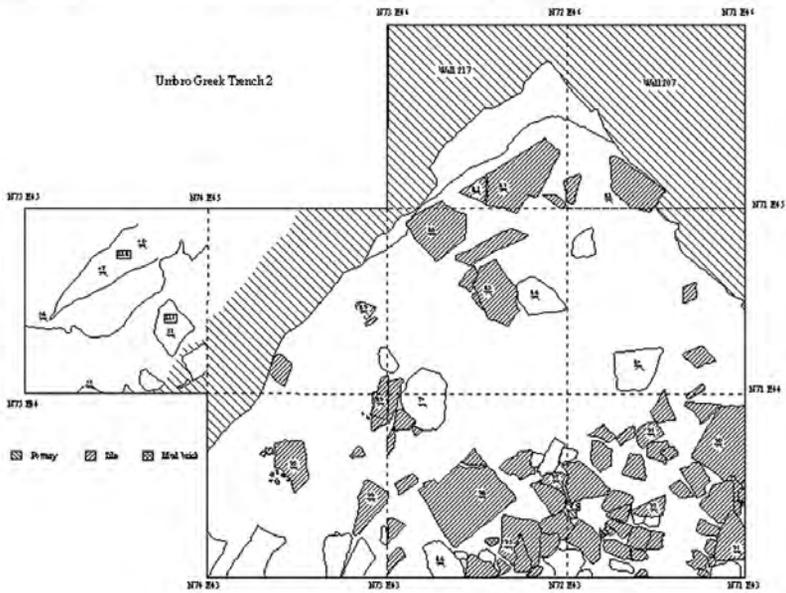


Figure 7. The Umbro Greek house, earlier phase showing roof fall. (L. Foxhall)

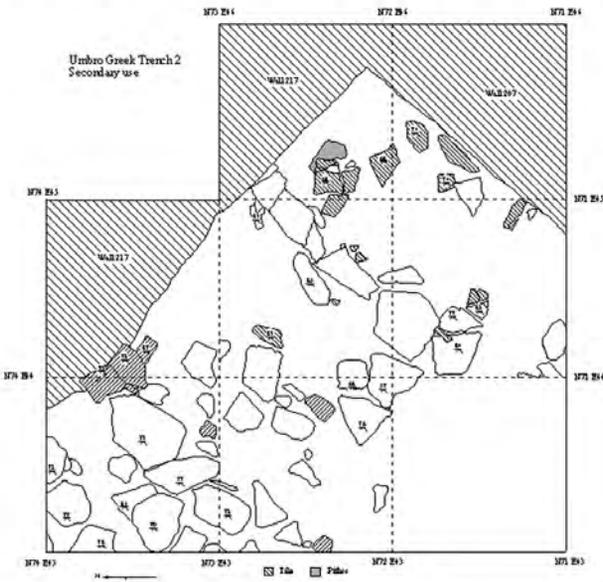


Figure 8. The Umbro Greek house, later phase showing internal divisions. (L. Foxhall)

In Classical Greek countrysides, the taskscape of a group of people, a household, or whatever—let us call them a *taskgroup* for this purpose—engages with and entangles multiple locations which are linked together in various ways within and beyond the vicinity of any particular location, entwining villages, and sometimes urban centers, with the wider countryside. This can be clearly documented, in part by what is *absent* from excavated sites. And of course, taskgroups themselves change over quite short timescales.

The excavated sites discussed here, probably like most of those which archaeologists find, all represent taskgroups that are producing significantly beyond the subsistence level, in productive countrysides, with surplus production stored, going elsewhere in the local vicinity, or possibly ultimately travelling further afield. The poorest cultivators are most likely archaeologically invisible, so the village beyond the village and some of the relationships within it (e.g. dependency, wage labour) are not fully or clearly represented in the archaeological record (although Morris and Papadopoulos 2005 have presented convincing evidence of slave presence at some rural tower sites).

Critically, no one site can be understood in isolation. Activities at one site imply that the actors are practicing complementary activities at other sites and some of these sites may be used by multiple groups of people. Human relationships and engagement with a range of different parts of and features in the landscape span multiple locations, enabling us to see, at least to some extent, the village beyond the village through the active construction of a territory through everyday practice from the bottom up.

These volatile, fragmented, comparatively small-scale patterns and configurations of activity support the view that the rural territories of many, possibly most, ancient Greek communities were exploited in small spatial units which could quite rapidly change in function, change hands, or go in and out of use. This further supports the argument that household and community relationships were performed across rural landscapes as much as in a village center.

The reasons for exploiting the countryside in this fragmented and volatile way are complex. In part, these practices enable households to make use of a range of different kinds of resources and landscapes, suitable for different activities. However, in part it is likely to be an outcome of deeply embedded social behaviours. In most ancient Greek societies, forms of partible inheritance, in which land and other forms of resources and property were divided between heirs, were at the heart of traditions of succession and inheritance. In addition, both literary texts and inscriptions document that, in many areas, land was regularly bought, sold, and leased, though our understanding of these processes beyond Attica is spotty and limited. However, it is clear that both traditions of

inheritance and succession and land transactions must have played key roles in generating the dynamism of these working landscapes, in particular their changing connections to other units via ownership or through other forms of tenure or access. However, we cannot presume that this fragmented, dynamic, and volatile landscape is the outcome of democratic forms of government or ideologies of equality, since outside Athens most of the places we are looking at were rarely, and sometimes never, democracies.

We do, of course, know from Athenian documents such as the so-called Attic Stelae (Pritchett 1956; Foxhall 2007, 40–41 and 44) that wealthy landholders regularly owned widely scattered plots of land which could be aggregated into substantial properties. But we usually have no way of understanding, from the archaeological record in Attica or elsewhere, how this worked at lower levels on a smaller scale—for example, how particular units were linked together, who owned or used which units, or which units were owned by the same individual or household. Hence, as has been suggested in the case of the Metaponto chora, a rather loosely aligned cluster of habitation could in some cases operate as a village (in contrast to the kind of clearly demarcated nucleated settlement we might normally think of). On the other hand, as at the Umbro Greek site, the extent to which these rural communities were controlled by or politically engaged with a nearby village, or even remote Greek urban polis centers, is not at all clear, and we cannot be certain that the occupants of this landscape were always citizens, or even always Greeks (whatever that may have meant in any particular colonialist context). The main focus of their sense of community seems much more likely to have been a village, or even the kind of loose rural cluster of habitation identified in the Metaponto chora.

In conclusion, the Greek village in Classical times was a complex entity. While nucleated village (or sometimes urban) settlements play a key role in some areas, the village also encompasses a set of relationships between households which were expressed and practiced across the wider rural landscape—the village beyond the village.

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