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Small, Rural Farmstead Sites in Ancient Greece: A Material Cultural Analysis^{*})

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the occupancy of small rural sites in ancient Greece, and the activities of their inhabitants by focusing on the material cultural assemblages. I will compare data from the Methana Survey with data from other sites, notably the Vari House, the Dema House and Halieis.

Rural sites and survey

Over the past 25 years archaeological survey in Greece has revealed evidence of a heavily used countryside in classical antiquity. In mainland and island Greece survey work has been carried out in many areas, including Boeotia, Euboea, Attica, Nemea, Methana, the Southern Argolid, Lakonia, Melos, Keos, Messenia and Pylos, (this list is certainly not exhaustive)¹. Very few of these sites have been ex-

^{*} I would like to thank Professor Frank Kolb and the Historisches Kolleg Munich, especially Frau Dr. Müller-Luckner.

¹ Boeotia: *J. Bintliff, A. Snodgrass*, The Cambridge / Bradford Boeotian Expedition: The First Four Years, in: *Journal of Field Archaeology* 12 (1985) 123–61; *J. Bintliff, A. Snodgrass*, Mediterranean Survey and the City, in: *Antiquity* 62, no. 234 (1988) 57–71; Euboea: *D. Keller*, Classical Greek Agricultural Sites: The Karystian Evidence, in: *American Journal of Archaeology* 93 (1989) 275; *D. Keller, M. Wallace*, The Canadian Karystia Project: Two Classical Farmsteads, in: *Echos du Monde Classique / Classical Views* 7 (1988) 151–8; Attica: *H. Lohmann*, Atene: Forschungen zu Siedlungs- und Wirtschaftsstruktur des klassischen Attika (Köln, Weimar, Wien 1993); Nemea: *J. C. Wright, J. F. Cherry, J. L. Davis, E. Mantzourani, S. B. Sutton, R. F. Sutton, Jr.*, The Nemea Valley Archaeological Project: A preliminary Report, in: *Hesperia* 59 (1990) 579–659; Methana: *C. B. Mee, H. A. Forbes*, A Rough and Rocky Place: The Landscape and Settlement History of the Methana Peninsula, Greece (Liverpool 1997); Southern Argolid: *M. H. Jameson, C. N. Runnels, T. H. van Andel*, A Greek Countryside: The Southern Argolid from Prehistory to the Present Day (Stanford 1994); Lakonia: *W. Cavanagh, J. Crowwel, R. W. V. Catling, G. Shipley*, Continuity and

cavated, and the most important excavated rural sites in Greece remain the Vari House and the Dema House in Attica². These finds have dramatically changed the perspectives of archaeologists and ancient historians regarding the rural landscapes and land use of ancient Greece.

The material culture of rural 'farmstead' sites

Most of the discussion of small rural sites discovered by archaeological survey has been in terms of locational and spatial analysis. Archaeologists have focused on examining the patterns of distribution of these small sites across the countryside in relation to each other, natural features and resources (water sources, soils, geology, etc.), and larger, nucleated settlements. Larger archaeological features such as presses and millstones have regularly been used to argue for the existence of particular activities (cereal processing, oil production) on these sites.

In contrast, the ceramic assemblages have been treated largely as chronological indicators. This is hardly surprising, as so much of the pottery found in survey consists of small fragments in poor condition. However, more information about these sites and their occupants can be gained from a closer examination of these material remains in context.

The issue of what these small sites represent, how they relate to land tenure and rural occupation, and who lived in them has been much debated in recent years. When is a 'farmstead' a farmstead? And what does the notion of 'farmstead' mean in any case in the context of ancient Greek countryside³? How do 'sites' relate to background scatter, which in some areas, especially near centres

Change in a Greek Rural Landscape. The Laconia Survey, vol. II (London 1996); Melos: C. Renfrew, J. M. Wagstaff (eds.), *An Island Polity. The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos* (Cambridge 1982); Keos: J. F. Cherry, J. L. Davis, E. Mantzourani, *Landscape Archaeology as Long Term History: Northern Keos in the Cycladic Islands from Earliest Settlement until Modern Times* (Los Angeles 1991); Messenia and Pylos: W. A. MacDonald, G. R. Rapp, *The Minnesota Messenia Expedition: Reconstructing a Bronze Age Regional Environment* (Minneapolis 1972); J. L. Davis, S. E. Alcock, *The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project*, <http://classics.lsa.umich.edu/PRAP.html>.

² Dema House: J. E. Jones, L. H. Sackett, A. J. Graham, *The Dema House in Attica*, in: BSA 57 (1962) 75–114; Vari House: J. E. Jones, A. J. Graham, L. H. Sackett, *An Attic Country House Below the Cave of Pan at Vari*, in: BSA 68 (1973) 355–452. The Berbati-Limnes Project has recently excavated and published a 'farmstead' site: D. J. Blackman, *Archaeology in Greece 1997–98*, in: *Archaeological Reports* 44 (1998) 1–128; A. Penttinen, *Berbat between Argos and Corinth: The Excavations at Pyrgouthi in 1995 and 1997 from the Early Iron Age to the Early Roman Period* (Stockholm 2001).

³ See R. Osborne, *Is it a Farm? The Definition of Agricultural Sites and Settlements in Ancient Greece*, in: B. Wells (ed.), *Agriculture in Ancient Greece* (Stockholm 1992) 21–8; D. K. Pettigrew, *Chasing the Classical Farmstead: Assessing the Formation and Signature of Rural Settlement in Greek Landscape Archaeology*, in: *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 14.2 (December 2001), with responses by Robin Osborne and Lin Foxhall.

of dense population is nearly as heavy as the artefact density found on 'sites'⁴? Surprisingly, detailed analyses of ceramic assemblages have barely ever been used to address these questions.

Problems of interpretation

Collections of survey pottery suffer from a number of in-built biases. Because pottery is so important for dating, archaeologists in the field have tended to see, collect, keep and analyse those sherds most likely to serve as diagnostic chronological benchmarks. The ceramic styles of some periods (notable classical and late Roman) are more likely to be seen, collected, and dated than those of other periods⁵. Within these periods, some wares and shapes are more immediately identified than others and are thus more likely to be collected (the combed and grooved ware amphorae of the Roman and Late Roman periods offer a good example). Also, the total ceramic repertoire of different periods varies enormously: on all kinds of sites some periods display a greater range and diversity of shapes in use than other periods⁶. Finally, it is important to remember that pottery found in survey (and generally also in excavation) must normally represent discarded items which were either broken in use and thrown away, or else left behind when the site was abandoned. Obviously, these were not usually valuable items. However, unlike the pottery assemblages found on domestic sites in towns, it is more likely that on rural sites generally, especially those in remote locations, there was probably relatively little post-abandonment deposition of material, even if some material might relate to secondary or less intensive uses of a site.

Research questions

The following analysis is based upon the detailed comparison of datable artefact assemblages from what appear to be several different kinds of site in order to address the following questions:

⁴ An important issue that will not be addressed in this paper. See *J. Bintliff, A Snodgrass, Off Site Pottery Distributions: A Regional and Interregional Perspective*, in: *Current Anthropology* 29 (1988) 506–13; *S. E. Alcock, J. F. Cherry, J. E. Davis, Intensive Survey, Agricultural Practice and the Classical Landscape of Greece*, in: *I. Morris* (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge 1994) 137–70; *Pettigrew, Chasing the Classical Farmstead* (n. 3).

⁵ E.g. *J. Bintliff, P. Howard, A. Snodgrass, The Hidden Landscape of Prehistoric Greece*, in: *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 12 (1999) 139–68.

⁶ *R. F. Sutton, Jr., Ceramic Evidence for Settlement and Land Use in the Geometric to Hellenistic Periods*, in: *Cherry et al., Landscape Archaeology* (n. 1) 245–63.

- How well does survey pick up these activities, in contrast to excavation?
- Are assemblages derived from survey and excavation comparable?
- What if any thing is distinctive about assemblages of small rural sites?
- How do the ceramic assemblages of isolated 'farmstead' sites compare with those from other domestic sites, in villages or towns?
- Do assemblages provide clues to activities carried out at these sites?
- Do assemblages offer evidence of kinds of people who inhabited these sites, e.g. in terms of status, gender, etc.
- Do artefact assemblages provide evidence for different uses of these sites in different periods?

Composite rural sites: Methana

In order to produce comparable bodies of data some clustering of material was essential. The body of small rural 'farmstead' sites' which I have analysed are those from Methana⁷. I have selected my sample from two groups of site clusters (fig.1):

- 1) Three groups at 400–500 m altitude:
 - A) above Kaimenikhora and Makrilongos (MS120, MS121, MS122, MS123)
 - B) above Megalochori (MS214, MS215, MS216, MS218)
 - C) above Vromolimni (MS109, MS110)
 - 2) Sites and groups of sites associated with relatively flat land at lower altitudes
 - A) MS18, very small site on good agricultural land near Ogha (MS67)
 - B) plain of Throni – largest area of flat land in Methana (MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6)
 - C) MS7, between the polis site (MS10) and the modern village of Meghalokhori
- These sites have been analysed individually (see Appendix), but because no one site has very large amounts of material associated with it, I have carried out much of the analysis using a composite of all of these individual assemblages combined in order to compile a 'critical mass' of material for statistical credibility (figs. 2, 3). I realise that this will blur the differences between the sites (and demands further work), but my working hypothesis (which I think is borne out by the results) was that there are more differences between these small isolated rural sites, on the one hand, and nucleated settlement sites, on the other hand, than there are between the individual small rural sites themselves.

⁷ *Mee, Forbes, Rough and Rocky Place* (n. 1).

Figure 1: Map of Sites Discussed, and Small Rural Sites in Composite Sample on Methana.

Figure 2: Methana Small Rural Sites: Composite Sample (C-HE%).

Figure 3: Methana Small Rural Sites: Composite Sample (R-LR%).

Comparanda

Within Methana I have compared the composite sample of small rural sites to a larger site which appears to have been a 'village' during classical times, but was resettled as a 'farmstead' in the late Roman period. MS67 (Ogha) is situated on a small defensible hill near the coast. It was an important settlement from the early iron age through hellenistic times, but also served as a centre of prehistoric activity (figs. 4, 5).

The other sites on which I have drawn for comparative material are:

1) Dema House. This was a 'suburban' country house, located near the Dema Wall in Attica, dating to the later fifth century BC, excavated in the 1950s (fig. 6)⁸.

2) Vari House (Jones et al. 1974). This was a relatively remote Attic farmstead on Mt Hymettos on the way up to the sanctuary of Pan, dating to the fourth c. BC, excavated during the 1960s (fig. 7)⁹

3) Halieis houses: House 7, House A, House D (Ault 1994). Halieis was a small to medium sized polis in Southern Argolid, Peloponnese. During the fourth century a considerable amount of housing was built in a grid plan. these houses were excavated during the 1970s and have been carefully studied by Brad Ault (figs. 8-10)¹⁰.

Figure 4: Methana MS67 (C-HE%).

⁸ Jones et al., The Dema House (n. 2).

⁹ Jones et al., An Attic Country House (n. 2).

¹⁰ B. Ault, Classical Houses and Households: An Architectural and Artifactual Case Study from Halieis, Greece (Ph.D. Thesis, Indiana University 1994).

Figure 5: Methana MS67 (R-LR%).

Figure 6: Dema House (%).

Figure 7: Vari House (%).

Figure 8: Halieis House A (%).

Figure 9: Halieis House D (%).

Figure 10: Halieis House 7 (%).

Background assumptions

With survey material, I have assumed for the sake of the analysis that one sherd = one pot. This is almost certainly not strictly true, but the assumption is counter-balanced by large numbers of indeterminate sherds and sherds which can only be specified as originating from 'open' or 'closed' vessels. Sherd counts derived from excavated material are by vessel (one pot = one pot).

I have also assumed that, generally, open vessels in the Greek/Roman repertoire are for eating, drinking, cooking, processing, serving food and wine. Closed vessels, in contrast, are for storage, transport, serving, food, liquids, and other commodities (e.g. perfume). Again, this is not always strictly true, and we do not always know the full range of primary and secondary uses for which particular ceramic vessels (and tiles) were employed. Pottery fabrics have also been crudely categorised (often by the original investigators) as fine (F), medium (M) and coarse (C) wares. This might offer some indication of possible functions, e.g. table wares vs. cooking/processing/storage.

Because of the relatively small numbers involved, and the difficulties of closely dating much of the ceramic material (especially from survey, but sometimes also from excavation – some plain black glazed, plain ware and coarseware shapes had a very long lifespan), artefacts have been crudely grouped chronologically as Classical-Hellenistic and Roman-Late Roman. The problems of assessing the significance of sherds which can be dated only to within two or even three ceramic periods (e.g. A-C, A-HE, C-HE) have been thoroughly discussed by Cherry, Davis and Mantzourani in relation to survey on Keos¹¹. The findings in this case are fairly typical of all survey projects in the Greek world: a considerable proportion of finds can only be roughly dated within 'classical' times, *sensu lato*, but can with certainty be assigned to this era. For the Methana material, the C-HE chronological range has been the main focus of this investigation, though I have discussed these in comparison to the R-LR assemblages at the end of this paper. Often both elements are present on the same site, although the balance varies. On many survey sites other elements are present as well (e.g. prehistoric, early iron age/archaic, mediaeval) – for the purposes of the present analysis these other elements have been ignored.

For the purposes of this paper I have not attempted to apply any statistical methods beyond simple comparison of percentages. The available data are very crude, and the sample used here is so small that more sophisticated analyses are likely to lack statistical validity. Nonetheless, simple tabulation of this ceramic material produces some interesting and significant results, even if it is not safe to push the evidence too far.

¹¹ J. F. Cherry, J. L. Davis, E. Mantzourani, Greek and Roman Settlement and Land Use, in: Cherry et al., *Landscape Archaeology* (n. 1) 327–33.

Results

Some important differences between data derived from excavation and that from survey, of course, emerge from the analysis. Not surprisingly, excavation generally produces greater quantities of material, and some (but not always a great many) more 'diagnostics'. Again it is not surprising that pottery from excavated sites is generally better preserved. The large numbers of vessels which can be identified as only 'open' or 'closed', and the significant numbers of indeterminate sherds found in survey data, form much smaller categories in excavated material. However, many isolated 'farmsteads' are shallow sites, which have often been subjected to erosional processes, and were occupied for only a relatively short time in any particular period or phase (even if they were occupied in more than one period). In consequence, the comparison of excavated and survey data is perhaps more straightforward than it might appear initially.

It is clear from this exercise that virtually the same range of pottery, in broadly similar proportions, has been collected from both survey and excavation, where the contexts are broadly comparable. In other words, nucleated/urban/suburban sites, whether represented by survey or excavated material, present a different profile of ceramic assemblages from isolated rural sites (again, irrespective of whether these are represented by survey or excavated material). This demonstrates what most of those engaged in archaeological survey suspected already, that surface survey picks up a reasonably good sample of the pottery that was originally associated with a site.

Comparison of the relative proportions of particular types of pottery within assemblages clearly demonstrates that different kinds of sites have discernably different kinds of assemblages. Most strikingly, it emerges that the sites analysed can be classified along a 'rural-urban' continuum, with the Vari House and the Methana rural sites at the extreme 'rural' end and the Halieis houses at the extreme 'urban' end. This analysis suggests considerable differences in the types of assemblage found at the Vari and Dema houses, with the Dema house assemblage displaying a significantly more 'urban' character.

Within the category of isolated rural sites, the range of pottery found is very similar. Plain black glazed (BG) finewares are ubiquitous, even if they are present in any individual site in very small amounts. Only two Methana sites, located in close proximity to each other, produced BG stamped ware (Megarian bowls) in small quantities: MS120 (2) and MS121 (1) (see Appendix). However, MS120 is a largish and complex multiperiod site which may be somewhat unusual. This pattern strongly suggests that BG fineware pottery, broadly speaking is *not* a status indicator, confirming the arguments of Vickers and Gill¹². *Figured* pottery, however, is another matter. Black figured (BF) and red figured (RF) wares are entirely absent on the small rural sites studied here (on Methana a few pieces show up on

¹² M. Vickers, D. Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery* (Oxford 1994).

Halieis House 7	13
Halieis House A	9
Halieis House D	16
Dema House	6
Vari House	2
Methana MS10	1
Methana MS60	5
Methana MS67	5
Methana rural sites	0

Figure 11: Numbers of Figured Pots/Sherds from Halieis Houses, Dema and Vari Houses and Methana sites.

MS 10, the polis site). In contrast, BF and RF wares are present, sometimes in substantial amounts, on more suburban and urban sites, such as the Dema House, and the urban houses in Halieis (fig. 11).

The proportion of fineware cups in the assemblage, and the range of ceramic types found appear to be the most two significant features differentiating isolated rural sites from nucleated villages or urban houses. For Methana, roughly the same range of pottery (including cup) types appears in the nucleated settlement (MS67) as on isolated rural sites, though significantly the proportion of fineware cups is nearly three times as great on MS67 (25.5% as compared with 9.6% for the composite rural sites)¹³. The figure for MS67 (25.5%) is very close to that for the Dema House (24.5%), and a little lower than for Halieis houses A (30%), D (30%) and 7 (27%). The figure for the Methana rural sites (9.6%) is, however, much closer to that for the Vari House (13.7%) (fig 12).

Similarly, the proportions of skyphoi are clearly substantially higher on the more 'urban' sites (MS67, Dema House) than on the more 'rural' sites (Methana composite, Vari House) (fig.13, 14). The available data from Halieis do not allow the calculation of what percentage of the total assemblage is comprised of any particular shape, however it is clear from the percentage of skyphoi among the catalogued finds (the nicest and most diagnostic pottery) that the proportion of skyphoi was at the higher end of the scale, in line with the pattern at Methana MS67 and the Dema House (fig. 15–17). Some less common shapes appear almost exclusively in more 'urban' contexts, among them the lekythos, pyxis, lebes gamikos and askos (fig. 14). The kylix appears only in the fifth century Dema house, but never in isolated rural sites. Kantharoi, to some extent the fourth century and Hellenistic equivalent of the kylix, appear more regularly but in very small numbers everywhere (figs. 14–17).

¹³ For both MS67 and for the Methana composite rural sites figures, a proportion of the vessels classed simply as 'open' shapes were probably fineware cups, so the proportions given are probably on the low side. The figure for Methana rural sites includes the three Megarian bowls (the only other high quality fineware); without these the percentage of fineware cups in this sample of sites is 7.6%.

Figure 12: Percentage of Fineware Cups in the Ceramic Assemblages from Methana, Vari House, Dema House and Haleis Houses.

In contrast, the ceramic assemblages of the Vari house and the Methana rural sites appear to have slightly higher proportions of 'cooking/processing' pots compared to 'serving/eating' or even storage vessels (figs. 2, 4, 6, 7). In this regard the Dema House is interesting for the very high proportion of amphorae (22.7%) compared to other sites, nearly twice as high a proportion as the Vari House (12.1%) and Methana rural sites (12.8%) and over three times as high as Methana

Figure 13: Proportion of Skyphoi in Assemblages from Methana, Vari House and Dema House (%).

	skyphos	kylix	kantharos	krater	lebes gamikos	pyxis	lekythos	askos
Methana rural sites	2.8	0	2.4	0.8	0	0	0	0
Vari House	0.8	0	0	1.5	0	0	0	0
Dema House	9.7	1.5	0	0.7	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.7
Methana MS67	11.9	0	2.5	1.4	0	0	0	0

Figure 14: Unusual Fineware Shapes in Assemblages from Methana, Vari House and Dema House (%).

Figure 15: Halieis House A: Catalogued Ceramic Finds (C-HE%).

MS67 (6.5%)¹⁴. Relatively larger proportions of lekanis/lekane in the Vari house, Dema house or Methana rural sites may suggest that these vessels were used for both cooking and serving/eating, especially in the last case where proportion of bowls is very low. Among the catalogued finds from the Halieis houses there are relatively few of these vessels, but it is impossible to ascertain what percentage of the total assemblage they comprise (figs. 15–17). Though storage and food processing appear to have been relatively important activities on rural sites, they were

¹⁴ Figures for the percentage of amphorae as a proportion of the total assemblage are not available for the Halieis houses, but might, especially in the case of House 7, be nearly as high, see *Ault*, *Classical Houses and Households* (n. 10) 103.

Figure 16: Halieis House D: Catalogued Ceramic Finds (C-HE%).

Figure 17: Halieis House 7: Catalogued Ceramic Finds (C-HE%).

plainly important on more urban sites too. Certainly storage and processing does not appear to be the only, or even necessarily the main, function of C-HE rural sites.

Loom weights and spindle whorls form another interesting category of material, notable in some cases by their absence. Proper comparison across sites is not feasible because the numbers are too small¹⁵. On Methana, a few were found off site, but none were discovered on any site. Two loom weights and two spindle whorls were found in the Dema house and one spindle whorl was found outside the Vari house. In contrast, small numbers of conical and trapezoidal loomweights, one distaff top, two spools, but no spindle whorls, were found in the Halieis houses (fig. 18). The finds at Halieis are paralleled at Olynthos, where many

	conical loomweight	pyramidal loomweight	distaff top	spool	spindle whorl
Halieis House 7	5	5			
Halieis House A	2	6	1		
Halieis House D	7	5		2	
Dema House	2				2
Vari House					1 off-site
Methana		1 off-site			

Figure 18: Finds associated with Textile Production from Halieis, Dema House, Vari House and Methana.

loomweights and spindle whorls were found all over the urban houses, and in very large numbers in a few houses¹⁶. It is not easy to explain this pattern of finds convincingly. It is possible that textile production was predominantly an urban activity, only rarely located in the countryside. Or, perhaps when houses were abandoned and cleared, more effort was given to removing equipment for textile production from rural houses than from urban ones (many more relatively valuable and 'high status' items such as metal and coins are found on urban sites than on rural sites). Whatever the explanation, the 'urban-rural' continuum emerges clearly in the pattern of distribution of textile related finds.

¹⁵ Other survey projects also record only small numbers of loomweights, spindle whorls and other weaving equipment, cf. *R. F. Sutton, Jr.*, *Ceramic Evidence for Settlement and Land Use* (n. 6) 255–6.

¹⁶ *N. D. Cahill*, *Olynthus: Social and Spatial Planning in a Greek City* (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley 1991) 355–6; *Olynthus and Greek Town Planning in: Classical World 93* (2000) 504–5.

Roman-Late Roman 'farmsteads' on Methana

The Roman-Late Roman (the bulk of the material is LR) occupation of rural sites on Methana is very different in character from that of the C-HE era. Most of the pressing equipment for wine and oil production discovered on the peninsula dates to this period. In some cases architectural remains are more evident in the LR period. 'Farmstead' assemblages exhibit more coarse ware and fewer fine wares, and there are far more closed, storage vessels in proportion to open vessels for serving and consuming food and drink in comparison with the C-HE assemblages. Amphorae alone comprise a remarkable 48.6% of the pottery on Methana rural sites (and probably some proportion of the 20.6% of closed vessels), while on MS67, now a 'farmstead' site, amphorae represent 59.1% of the pottery (figs. 3, 5). Though this trend must be partially a reflection of the fact that the R-LR ceramic repertoire was quite different from that of the C-HE period, the differences in types with the assemblages seem too extreme for this to be the whole explanation.

These differences from C-HE times underpin the idea that rural sites served different functions in these two periods. The material evidence suggests that the R-LR occupants of remote rural sites have less contact with the one remaining nucleated settlement (MS10, the polis site) than in the C-HE period. They may be of lower status in the overall Roman hierarchy in comparison with C-HE inhabitants. The evidence suggests a landscape which is much more centrally controlled, with more emphasis on production for outside the immediate area than on internal subsistence.

Conclusions

Similar 'domestic' assemblages emanate from both systematic, intensive surface collection and from excavation on rural sites of the C-HE period, including pottery for drinking, eating and cooking. BG fine wares are relatively common, especially fineware cups. However, there are discernable and (I would argue) significant internal differences in ceramic assemblages along what one might call an 'urban-rural' continuum. This suggests the existence of complex and volatile settlement hierarchies in poleis and their territories, where the countryside is inhabited in quite a different way than the nucleated settlement centres, in some cases by people of rather different socio-economic statuses. If the inhabitants of the Halieis houses can be called 'urban', the occupants of the Dema House might be called 'suburban': the material remains suggest that this is a country house belonging to relatively wealthy owners. In contrast, the isolated rural sites on Methana, like the Vari house, present a rather different level of material cultural remains and wealth. Rural sites like these were not as intensively occupied as Greek town and 'suburban' houses. The scarcity of weaving equipment may suggest that

the full range of domestic activities was not carried out at these small rural dwellings. The use of some of these sites might have been combined with habitation in a nucleated settlement such as MS67¹⁷. The low level of material remains on many of these sites suggests that most of the small rural sites documented were not occupied for very long at any one time, and it is likely that not all were occupied simultaneously. The 'life cycles' of these sites may have been complex, with sites going in and out of use, or with use varying in intensity, over very short periods of time.

Remarkably few rural sites of the C-HE period provide evidence of agricultural processing on any substantial scale, probably because many of these activities would not be documented by ceramic evidence alone (all that survives in many cases), and because of the small scale and portable, transitory nature of classical processing equipment. However, even activities such as textile production, which we might expect to be associated with rural life, are more poorly documented on rural than on urban sites.

The material cultural patterns of the C-HE period, on the one hand, suggest the values of a Greek polis, in which the urban centre and the territory were perceived as a continuum, unified within a single, self-contained political entity. Though integrated into the wider Aegean world, there is a network of closely connected small, medium, and large sites, linked by individual moving between them. The R-LR pattern suggests that we are looking at a landscape which is now only a small part of a much larger hierarchy of Aegean occupation. Though the urban inhabitants may have identified themselves with Rome, they do not appear to identify themselves closely with their own countryside, despite the apparent density of rural occupation.

This paper is really only the start of a much larger project. Plainly, the detailed analysis of small site assemblages of the kind I have undertaken here demands much further work and larger samples. However it is clear that such analyses can contribute much to our understanding of Greek countrysides and polis territories over time.

¹⁷ Methana had three nucleated settlements in classical times: MS60, MS67 and MS10 the polis site and largest of these settlements, see *Mee, Forbes, Rough and Rocky Place* 65.

Appendix: Methana Rural Sites: Raw Data

(Derived from C. Mee and H. Forbes, *Rough and Rocky Place*, Appendix 4, 283–343.)

METHANA MS1				closed	1		
	F	M	C	amphora	7		4
C-HE				indeterminate	2		1
open							
kantharos	1			METHANA MS4			
lekane	1				F	M	C
closed				C-HE			
amphora	1			open			
R-LR				krater	1		
open				lekane	1		
mug	1			louterion			1
dish	1			closed	2		
closed	3	1		R-LR			
amphora	13	1		closed			
lamp	1			amphora	1		
METHANA MS2				METHANA MS5			
	F	M	C		F	M	C
C-HE				C-HE			
open	2			open	5		
skyphos	1			skyphos	3		
krater	1			kantharos	2		
indeterminate	1			bowl	1		
closed	1			fishplate	1		
jar	2			lekane	1		
amphora	3			cooking pot		1	
R-LR				indeterminate	1		
closed	7			closed			
amphora	1			amphora	2		
jar	1			jug	1		
				jar	1		
METHANA MS3				METHANA MS6			
	F	M	C		F	M	C
C-HE				C-HE			
open	1			open	1		
lekane	2		1	bosal/skyphos	1		
basin			1	cup	2		
mortar		1		bowl	2		
closed				lekane	1		
hydria			1	basin	1		
amphora	2		3	closed		1	
jar			1	amphora	1		
indeterminate	1			jug	2		
R-LR				jar	2	2	
open			3	indeterminate	2		
lekane			1				

R-LR				METHANA MS110			
open				F	M	C	
bowl	2			C-HE			
closed	1			open			
amphora	1	2		lekane	2		
				lopas	1	1	
METHANA MS7				closed			
F		M	C	amphora	7	2	
C-HE				jug	3		
open	4	2		jar	3		
skyphos	1			pithos			1
kantharos	1						
cup	1			METHANA MS120			
bowl	1			F	M	C	
lekane	2			C-EHE			
lopas			3	open	12	1	
chytra			1	skyphos	1		
cooking pot			1	1-handler	1		
closed	1			kantharos	1		
hydria	2			lekane	1	1	
indeterminate	6			lopas		5	
R-LR				chytra	1	1	
open	5			cooking pot		6	
kantharos	1			closed	1		
1-handled mug		1	1	amphora	1		
bowl		1		jug	3		
dish	1			lamp	3		
cooking pot		2		indeterminate	2		
closed	20	2		HE			
amphora	16	1	3	open	3		
jug		1	1	Meg. bowl	2		
				closed	3		
				amphora	1		
METHANA MS18				jug	1		
F		M	C	R-LR			
C-HE				open	1		
open	4			beaker	1		
plate	1			chytra		1	
cooking pot		1		cooking pot		1	
indeterminate	3			closed	7	2	
				amphora	5	6	
				jug		1	
METHANA MS109				lamp	1		
F		M	C				
C-HE				METHANA MS121			
open		2		F	M	C	
closed		3		C-HE			
R-LR				open	7		
open	2	2		Meg. bowl	1		
lekane	1			lopas		1	
cooking pot			1	closed			
closed		2		jug	1		
amphora	6		2	amphora	1		

METHANA MS122				indeterminate	1		
F	M	C	R-LR				
C-HE			open	3			
open	3		closed				
kantharos	1		amphora		2		
indeterminate	1		jug	1			
R-LR							
open	3	1	METHANA MS 215				
bowl	1		F		M	C	
lekane	1	1	C-HE				
chytra		1	open	7	3		
cooking pot		4	R-LR				
closed	5		closed				
amphora	21	1	amphora		1		
jug	3						
jar	3		METHANA MS216				
lamp	1		F		M	C	
			C-HE				
METHANA MS 123			open				
F	M	C	lekane	1			
C-HE			closed				
open	7	1	amphora	1			
bowl	1		R-LR				
lekane	2		open	3			
lopas	1		bowl	2			
cooking pot		3	lekane	1			
closed	1		cooking pot	1			
amphora	5	1	basin		1		
jug	4	1	closed	1	1		
indeterminate		1	amphora	9	5		
R-LR			flagon	1			
open	4		jar	1			
cooking pot		1	indeterminate	1			
closed		1					
amphora	6		METHANA MS218				
			F		M	C	
METHANA MS214			HE				
F	M	C	open				
C-HE			bowl	1			
open	10		lekane		1		
bosal	2		R-LR				
Meg. bowl	2		open	2			
bowl	1		dish	2			
chytra		1	lekane	1	1		
lid		1	closed	1			
cooking pot		2	amphora		9		
closed			flagon		3		
amphora		1	jug	1			