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Mediterranean Landscape Archaeology Past and Present

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Mediterranean Archaeological Landscapes: Current Issues

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Mediterranean Landscape Archaeology
Past and Present

Effie F. Athanassopoulos and LuAnn Wandsnider

Recent studies of Mediterranean landscapes have emphasized their diversity, their fragmentation, and the high degree of contact between their diverse areas, that is, their connectivity (Horden and Purcell 2000). Moreover, the Mediterranean landscape record is recognized for its length and richness and the opportunity it offers to study long-term interaction between humans and their landscape, however landscape is defined. At the same time, the particular histories of archaeological perspectives that have dominated fieldwork in the region make it difficult to compare with other areas, for example, the New World. Thus, with this volume, our intent is to address issues of relevance not only to Mediterranean archaeology but to landscape archaeology in general.

There has been a dramatic expansion in the theoretical approaches—both anthropological and classical—assumed by researchers here over the last 25 years. As well, over the same time span, a huge volume of field survey projects have been carried out in the Mediterranean arena (summarized in Cherry 2003:138–40). For these two reasons, it is appropriate to take stock of what we have learned, identify lacunae, and consider new approaches to our understanding of the rich surface landscape record of the Mediterranean. Where the Archaeology of Mediterranean Landscapes volumes (Barker and Mattingly 1999) emphasize technique and method geared toward understanding population processes, our goal with this volume is to explore theoretically diverse interpretative themes and the methods that make those approachable. The Side by Side volume (Alcock and Cherry 2004) strives to make comparative sense of the many intensive Mediterranean surveys that have been conducted over the last twenty years. Complementarily, this volume deliberately explores paradigms—from anthropology, history, and other disciplines—within which Mediterranean landscape studies are currently being conducted.

Mediterranean Archaeology: A Brief History

Until recently, the paradigm within which most archaeological research has been conducted in the Mediterranean was strongly tied to the classical tradition and stressed the primacy of texts over material remains. Archaeology’s concern was to provide the material evidence of the truth revealed in texts
(Kardulias 1994b). Furthermore, since the eighteenth century, Mediterranean archaeology developed in close association with art history. The interplay of classicism and romanticism (e.g., Winckelmann [Marchland 1996:7–16]) came to define archaeological practice and interest in monumental architecture and objects of art.

In addition, archaeology in the Mediterranean has had strong ties to nationalism. Most excavation projects tended to concentrate on periods of the greatest past glory as modern nations sought to recreate their past in the nineteenth century (e.g., Abu El-Haj 2001; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998; Morris 1994; Shanks 1996; Silberman 1990; 1995). Thus, lines were drawn, dividing the continuous flow of past time into periods of greater and lesser importance and, therefore, of greater and lesser scholarly interest. Given these trends, it is important to examine the growth of archaeology in the Mediterranean in its historical and social context.

Archaeology's subservient relationship to philology significantly influenced the direction of fieldwork. The prevailing model since the end of the nineteenth century has been large-scale excavations at urban or religious sites. The interest concentrated on the elites, while the archaeologically invisible (e.g., rural population) were excluded from the picture. Furthermore, archaeology's task was seen primarily as an organizational one, to generate and order a vast body of data. Substantial effort has been invested in the compilation and classification of excavated data in multi-volume site reports and catalogues (Morris 1994). The production of such reports created the need for large numbers of specialists who dedicated their energies to the analysis of particular categories of material culture. Dyson argues that the "big-dig" was built on the organizational model of corporations and encouraged specialization and fragmentation. Preoccupation with artifact typologies and chronology building were on the top of the research agenda. Thus, "students were sent to study the fragments of red figure vase painting in some college museum or to produce a corpus of loomweights from some major site..." (Dyson 1982:89).

In the post–World War II period, patterns of archaeological fieldwork changed. The prohibitive cost of the "big-dig" along with new perspectives of scientific humanism (Fotiadis 1995) led to the rise of surface survey as a cheaper and faster alternative, albeit still second-class, form of field archaeology. To a large extent this new kind of fieldwork capitalized on the strong topographic tradition that had developed in the region since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Regional surveys in the New World (Willey 1953) and in Mesopotamia (Adams 1965; Adams and Nissen 1972) preceded the development of similar approaches in the Mediterranean. However, the early Mediterranean regional surveys were primarily an outgrowth of local research traditions and concerns, often with textual impetus (Cherry 2003:141–42) and framed by a pervasive scientific humanism (see below).
In Italy the first systematic regional project was the survey of South Etruria (Potter 1979; Ward-Perkins 1962; 1972; Ward-Perkins et al. 1968). In the 1950s and 1960s it was amongst the first in the Mediterranean to use surface survey as a tool for writing landscape history. It was undertaken by the British School at Rome and built on a long tradition of archaeological research in the region (e.g., Ashby 1927). It took place at a time when suburban growth and agricultural activity were bringing sites to the surface at an unprecedented rate (Potter 1979; Ward-Perkins 1955). It started as a small-scale field-walking program and gradually increased in intensity. Over a period of twenty years it served as a laboratory for the development of field survey methodology, integrating field-walking with the study of extant rural remains, excavations at selected sites, paleoenvironmental studies, and documentary research. It produced a record of settlement and land use from late Prehistoric to Medieval times (Barker 1991:1–2).

The South Etruria survey represents one of the most significant achievements of Mediterranean landscape archaeology in the postwar period. It provided the model and inspiration for the next generation of survey projects organized from the 1970s on (e.g., Attema et al. 2002; Barker 1995a; 1995b; Barker and Lloyd 1991; Coccia and Mattingly 1992; 1996; Dyson 1978; 1981a; 1981b; Hayes and Martini 1994; Malone and Stoddart 1994). Currently, the South Etruria evidence is being re-analyzed. Advances in ceramic analysis and the availability of computer technology (e.g., Geographic Information Systems or GIS) have led to the re-evaluation and enhancement of this important data set (Belcher et al. 1999; Patterson and Millett 1998; Patterson et al. 2000).

A comparably signal project is the Minnesota Messenia Expedition (MME) in Greece. This regional survey started in the 1950s and continued until the mid-1970s (McDonald and Rupp 1972), serving as a model for the Aegean in subsequent decades. The innovations introduced piecemeal by MME included the adoption of a regional approach, attention to the environmental setting and its economic potential, interest in sites and settlements of all periods, ethnographic studies, and concern with later periods that were traditionally the domain of history. Guiding all of these studies (and evident in archaeological regional studies into the 1980s) was an over-riding concern for demographic and economic processes, consistent with the scientific humanism (Fotiadis 1995) that pervaded social sciences. The apparent success of MME led to the proliferation of regional surveys in Greece.

In 1981, a conference (see Keller and Rupp 1983) on survey archaeology in the Mediterranean was held in Athens, Greece, underlining the increasing role of survey in Mediterranean archaeological fieldwork. The papers covered a wide range of topics including research strategies, field methods, and interpretation. They demonstrated that archaeological survey was widely employed, although in highly variable ways for highly varying purposes (Cherry 2003:138–41; see also Dyson 1982). In a thoughtful essay concluding that volume, John Cherry (1983) reflected on the unique contributions of survey in the Mediterranean and offered
a series of prescriptions for improved survey—diachronic perspective, regional scope, multi-disciplinary team effort. In the main, these recommendations, along with other innovations, have been implemented by a variety of Mediterranean survey projects over the last twenty years, all of them primarily oriented toward understanding past demography, economy, and political organization.

Intensive surface exploration has now become as common as excavation in the Aegean. A large number of the first generation of regional surveys that built upon the foundations laid by MME has been completed with results published (Boeotia [Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985], Berbati-Limnes [Wells and Runnels 1996] Northern Keos [Cherry, Davis, and Mantzourani 1991], Laconia [Cavanagh et al. 1996; 2002], Methana [Mee and Forbes 1997], Nemea [Wright et al. 1990], Pylos [Davis et al. 1997; Davis 1998], Southern Argolid [Jameson et al. 1994; Van Andel and Runnels 1987]).

Mediterranean Archaeological Landscapes: Current Issues

Following two decades of intensive archaeological survey in the Mediterranean, it is possible to recognize several issues that require attention. The early extensive surveys in the Mediterranean comprised isolated studies with interests in particular chronological periods. In contrast, the “New Wave” (Cherry 1994) of intensive surveys of the 1980s and 1990s have produced a rich diachronic record of the prehistoric as well as the historic countryside, meaning that issues of change and stability over the medium and long term can be addressed. How to render and interpret that change and stability is an important matter. Athanassopoulos (this volume) suggests that the Annales framework may be usefully employed in this capacity, given its emphasis on the articulation of the general and the particular and the linking of different time scales into an integrated narrative.

A second significant contribution is the incorporation of geomorphological studies, which have become a standard component of regional field surveys around the world, albeit to meet a variety of goals. The diachronic perspective in combination with geomorphological study has focused attention on the links between changing landscape and changing human occupation. Questions regarding human-environmental interaction have led to the development of new perspectives. Thus, currently, changes in the environment are more likely to be attributed to anthropogenic factors rather than simply to climatic fluctuations (e.g., Van Andel and Runnels 1987, but see Rackham and Moody 1996). McGlade’s (1995; 1999a) eco-dynamics looks specifically at the convolution of anthropogenic and climatic forces as they play out in Mediterranean landscape contexts. Similarly, multi-disciplinary co-operation and increasingly sophisticated techniques (Gillings et al. 1999) have led to the creation of complex spatial databases, facilitated by innovations in GIS hardware and software, that can answer a broad range of demographic and environmental questions (Barker and Mattingly 1999).
Nevertheless, in several other areas field surveys have been less effective. In general, a significant portion of the work has been dedicated to the development of methods and research design, as well as to issues of site definition and collection strategies. Less explicit effort has been directed to interpretation. Social and economic inferences based on survey data tend to be limited and post hoc. Interpretive models remain general with little concern for specific chronological or regional contexts. The prevalent model identifies alternating phases of dispersed and nucleated settlement patterns (e.g., Bintliff 1999b). Invariably, dispersed patterns of settlement have been associated with small holdings, intensive forms of agriculture, and periods of economic expansion (e.g., Cherry et al. 1991; Halstead 1987; Runnels and Van Andel 1987). In contrast, nucleated patterns represent control of the land by an elite or the imposition of political control by an external power (e.g., Alcock 1993; Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982). This binary opposition of dispersed and nucleated patterns pays little attention to different land-use histories and imposes a uniformity in interpretation at the expense of regional diversity. Several chapters in this volume (Barton and colleagues, Kardulias and Yerkes, and Hill) consider similar patterns but with respect to other interpretative frameworks that are explicitly grounded in bodies of robust theory.

To some extent these basic patterns may be an artifact of the methodology as well as the topography of the surveyed areas. For one, different surveys, with different conventions and varying survey intensities, report dramatically different numbers and qualities of archaeological sites (Cherry 1994; 2003). Secondly, the selection of regions in part determines the nature of the settlement record and even the date of the recorded remains. For example, survey in upland areas can produce meaningful results only if attention is paid to landscape taphonomy. Downslope movement, erosion, or terracing are all factors that complicate the picture, making the distinction between site and off-site material tenuous. On the other hand, survey in the lowlands where long-term settlement and intensive land use have been pervasive might produce an incomplete picture of earlier remains (Bintliff et al. 1999; Wilkinson, this volume), underscoring again the importance of geomorphological considerations seen in current Mediterranean work (Barton and colleagues, this volume; Doonan, this volume; Given, this volume; Gregory, this volume).

Furthermore, implicit assumptions about “pottery rich” and “pottery poor” periods remain to be clarified. The supply and consumption of pottery and other artifacts is known to fluctuate significantly in different chronological periods (Millett 1991). Still, lack of readily identifiable material from particular periods is often taken at face value, leading to inferences about depopulation or abandonment of a region. Factors related to high or low ceramic visibility need to be addressed in order to interpret social and economic patterns that are period specific. After all, the “one size fits all” generalizing approach has resulted in an over-simplified interpretive scheme where very different social and economic structures may be homogenized. The model of alternating cycles of demographic-
economic growth and contraction pays little attention to social and historical context. Moreover, such analysis is not sensitive enough to issues of scale. Whether we are dealing with a prehistoric, small-scale society or a multi-regional empire ought to be important in interpretation since the social structures of production, control, and distribution are radically different in each case (Crumley and Marquardt 1987). Kardulias and Yerkes (this volume) incorporate scale in their study of the Malloura Valley and link local processes and supra-regional structures in dynamic relationships.

A final important issue is the integration of the results. Field surveys started as low-budget operations of a small team of researchers and by now have grown to expensive multi-disciplinary efforts. The teams consist of a large number of specialists who operate in a setting similar to the "big-dig" model discussed earlier. The danger here is that the "big dig" approach will also prevail in the publication of the results, with emphasis placed on the organization and presentation of massive amounts of data generated by multi-year field efforts. Thus, integration of the varied databases and data sources should be on the top of the agenda of the next generation of surveys. Doonan (this volume) and Athanassopoulos (this volume) explicitly consider the integration of survey results in the spatial and temporal domains, respectively.

The Broader Picture

Other issues become apparent when Mediterranean archaeological landscape studies are considered within the context of the grand sweep of archaeological history. Pervasive changes in Anglo-American archaeology over the last four decades have affected all aspects of the paradigm within which archaeological landscapes have been approached, from metaphysical principles, to theoretically based interpretative frameworks, to methods and techniques.

As noted above, current archaeological landscape studies in the Mediterranean are in part a continuation of earlier local practices (Cherry 2003). More recent studies also reflect the evolution of landscape studies within archaeology, themselves an outgrowth of two related trends. The first is the early 1900s emphasis on geographical method and interpretation in Britain seen in O.G.S. Crawford's (1953) work, later evolving into a British emphasis on environmental and economic archaeology seen in the work of Vita-Finzi and Higgs (1970). Second is the scientific humanism (Fotiadis 1995) of the post-WWII era, expressed as environmental functionalism in Anglo-Americanist archaeology (Trigger 1989) and made operational in the 1950s New World settlement archaeology (e.g., Virú valley project in Peru [Willey 1953]; Lower Mississippi valley survey [Phillips et al. 1951]). The stimulus for the latter was provided by Steward's cultural ecological studies in the American Great Basin (Steward 1937; 1938), although it rapidly assumed its own dynamic.
Importantly, in settlement archaeology, individual sites no longer are viewed as representative of a culture. Rather, sites are considered part of a larger integrated network and play diverse and complementary roles. Moreover, settlement patterns represent a powerful abstraction of reality that allows for the integration of complex detailed information (Fish 1999), thus allowing the application of demographic, cultural ecological, political, and economic geographic principles to archaeological data (Trigger 1989). Changes in the settlement patterns were viewed in terms of internal transformations, sometimes driven by population growth. Settlement patterns, thus, became fundamental in the study of social, economic, and political transformations over the long term (Trigger 1989:284).

Regional survey is the primary vehicle for obtaining a portrait of regional settlement patterns (Fish 1999). After some delay, survey projects based on the Virú valley model multiplied rapidly in Latin America, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean, as described above. Emphasis was placed on systematic extensive surface survey of regions ranging from several hundred to several thousand square miles. The goal was to define the extent of “the settlement system,” delineate broad problems, formulate hypotheses regarding site function, demography, land use, and polity that could be tested and refined through subsequent intensified investigation (Parsons 1972:133-34). Under the influence of the New Archaeology, problem-oriented, processual questions encouraged the adoption of a systemic framework and the study of past human societies within ecological and economic paradigms. Scientific positivism placed emphasis on research design, analytical models, and explanation (Watson et al. 1971). Regional research goals promoted the use of locational models and quantitative forms of spatial analysis. Techniques for the reconstruction of demographic trends and population dynamics were incorporated into the research design. Many methodological issues, especially sampling strategies, became the subject of lengthy polemical debates whose spirit was captured in Flannery’s famous parody (Flannery 1976).

Overall, Americanist New Archaeology contributed significantly to the refinement of field survey methodology. It offered the tools to investigate the material record of all social groups including the archaeologically invisible, the rural population, that earlier elite-centered archaeological research had ignored. However, in general its explanatory framework placed emphasis on change as adaptive response where humans fulfill system needs and react to environmental stimuli. It did not leave room for human agency and, although it “sought to locate the peasant farmstead and to produce accounts of daily life, the epistemological framework of New Archaeology in effect also denied history to people in the past” (Moreland 1991:14).

The New Archaeology was soon challenged by other charges of environmental determinism and universalism as well as for its de facto emphasis on the economic and ecological (Trigger 1989). Since the early 1980s, numerous critiques of the New Archaeology have resulted in studies that emphasize other aspects of the archaeological record and that explore other theoretical approaches as evidenced by the expansion of “settlement pattern studies” to “landscape studies.”
Current Mediterranean landscape studies also differentially reflect changes in archaeological epistemology. The avowed scientific positivism explicitly embraced by the early New Archaeology during the 1960s and 1970s has been supplanted by a mitigated objectivism (Wylie 1989a; 1989b; 1992; 1995) in which knowledge about the past is constituted in terms of independently and provisionally substantiated inferential tools. Understanding emerges as these tools are applied and the hermeneutic spiral is traversed (Hodder 1999).

In classic settlement archaeology applications, two sorts of inferences are needed: one to establish settlement role and the other to establish settlement occupation time (Binford 1992). Settlement role is often approached in terms of settlement size as measured by site size, made operational in terms of area of distribution, mound size, or relative frequencies of ceramic sherds. For example, Sanders and colleagues (Sanders 1965; Sanders et al. 1979) explicitly ground these middle-range tools in ancillary studies that relate settlement size to these proxy measures. To establish time of occupation, ceramic sherd presence (and, recently, absence; Dewar 1991) is used. All sites with sherds from a particular time period are then assumed to be contemporaneous and the settlement pattern for that particular time period can thus be reconstructed. These settlement inferential tools, however, do not consider the many formation processes besides settlement that influence area of distribution, mound size and ceramic sherd frequency. Nor do they substantially engage the assumption of contemporaneity (Chapman 1999; Wandsnider 2004). In part because of the poverty of available inferential tools, settlement archaeology is no longer the only approach to the archaeological landscape.

Finally, just as we have seen change in the frameworks and inferential tools available in archaeology, the conceptualization of the archaeological record has changed radically. In the late 1800s, it was construed as a powerful testimony to human achievement, demonstrating progress and sometimes regression (Daniel 1975). At least in the Americas in the early 1900s, it is referred to as a degraded residual of the rich, textured past (Dixon 1913). Because of the multiple roles that material culture plays in social, political, and ideational domains (as articulated by the New Archaeologists) and because of its reflexive nature (as elaborated upon by workers in postprocessual archaeology), the archaeological record is now perceived of as a rich record of past conditions and of human agency. Beyond monuments, the information potential of mundane cultural phenomena such as domestic architecture, terraces, and ceramic distributions as well as of geological deposits has been recognized. Moreover, formation process research (summarized in Schiffer 1987) has gone far to articulate the parameters of material history, which records events and processes in time very differently than do oral or textual histories. In spite of this more expansive understanding of the archaeological record, it remains for scholarship to address the integration of diverse material records, textual records, and ethnographic records, each with their very different strengths and weaknesses.
Approaches to Mediterranean Archaeological Landscapes

These interpretative elaborations and epistemological and ontological shifts are reflected in the evolving conduct of landscape archaeological studies in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. In the new millennium, the windfall of postmodernism, the critique of the New Archaeology, and the ongoing critique of that critique (!) have resulted in a healthy diversity of archaeological approaches, as recently surveyed in Americanist archaeology (Hegmon 2003). Reflecting this diversity as well as shifts in epistemology and the understanding of the archaeological record, we see at least four rather different approaches to the archaeological landscape, each depending to varying degrees on surface survey.

The first is the modified continuation of environmental functionalist settlement pattern study already discussed above. Again, such studies, which rely heavily upon regional surface survey, further the goal of demographic, economic, or political reconstruction (Billman and Feinman 1999; Bintliff and Sbonias 1999; Fish and Kowalewski 1990). Current settlement pattern approaches are technically very sophisticated and pay attention to sampling issues and the impact of geomorphology on site preservation (e.g., Bintliff et al. 1999; Wells 2001) and landscape formation (Barton et al. 1999). They incorporate remote sensing and GPS technology to locate and describe settlements, and geographic information systems technology is used to represent and analyze settlement distributions. In their study of the Burgundian landscape of France, Crumley and Marquardt (1987) also considered issues of scale, region, and boundary and how these changed through time. In the Mediterranean, settlement pattern studies abound as evidenced in the recent Mediterranean Landscapes series (Barker and Mattingly 1999).

Second is the approach that emphasizes human agency and the reflexivity of landscape monuments, which so far has been little explored in Mediterranean landscape studies. In this approach, landscape is not merely the external world we see but a construction, a way of seeing the world. It is closely linked with broader historical structures and processes and represents a historically specific way of experiencing the world developed by and meaningful to certain social groups (Anshuetz et al. 2001; Cosgrove 1984:13–15; Knapp and Ashmore 1999). While ecological approaches treat the landscape as an object external to perception, social and symbolic approaches view it as a social construct, the expression of ideas that the analyst must attempt to understand. Several studies (Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Bender 1993; Bradley 1998; Tilley 1994) exemplify this shift in approach. These studies offer a contextual analysis of monuments, natural places, and historical landscapes (Leone 1988; Kealhofer 1999; Yamin and Metheny 1996). In the Mediterranean, Alcock's analysis of the sacred landscape (Alcock and Osborne 1994) and Chapman's (1994) analysis of recent Balkan monuments are two such examples. In both of these cases, the focus is on monuments and little use is made of survey data per se. Given (this volume) attempts to correct this situation.
A third approach focuses on the archaeological landscape, its taphonomy and evolution (McGlade 1995; 1999a; 1999b; Rossignol and Wandsnider 1992; Wandsnider 1998) over the medium and long term. Settlement archaeologists emphasize the geomorphological aspect of landscape taphonomy and how this impacts settlement pattern reconstruction and thus functional interpretations of demographic, economic, and political processes. The aspect of landscape taphonomy we aim to highlight here, however, incorporates a more broad definition of taphonomy (à la Dibble et al. 1997; see Barton and colleagues, this volume, and Wilkinson, this volume), one that focuses on the evolution of the landscape as it participates in necessarily interlinked cultural and natural processes. This approach sees the past knowable in terms of a constellation of conjoined processes operating with different temporalities; the material histories of artifacts, monuments, and surfaces offer a means to learn about these conjoined processes (Wandsnider 2004). Such an approach relies on survey as well as excavation data. Other than McGlade’s work in Spain (1995; 1999a) and recent work in southern Turkey by the Rough Cilicia team, this approach is little evidenced in the Mediterranean. Wandsnider (this volume) deals with the metaphysics behind this approach and Hill (this volume) offers a case study.

Finally, attempts to relate landscape monument construction to evolutionary principles, e.g., in terms of costly signaling (Neiman 1997) or cultural elaboration (Dunnell 1999), or to institutional theory (Earle et al. 1998) have been little explored in the Mediterranean. Arguing from a group selectionist stance, Sterling (1999) sees Early Dynastic pyramid construction as a “wasteful” activity that depressed population levels to a point below which they were significantly affected by unpredictable Nile flood events, resulting in overall increased reproductive fitness. Such an approach could be tied into topographic survey of monuments in the Mediterranean, but to date has not.

Mediterranean Archaeological Landscapes: The Volume

From the 1960s onward, Mediterranean archaeological practice increasingly reflects an awareness and incorporation of perspectives emanating from anthropological archaeology as practiced in Britain and the Americas. Current practice in the Mediterranean, while certainly not uniform, tends to emphasize intensive survey for the location of settlements and the reconstruction of settlement patterns. Interpretation of past social, economic, and political processes follows, sometimes rather intuitively as noted above, from the portrait of the settlement system yielded by survey. Because of shifts in metaphysical, epistemological, and ontological domains, we see modification and enhancement to the regional studies or settlement approach to Mediterranean archaeological landscapes, but also the appearance of other approaches.

With this volume, we explore issues fundamental to the study of the Mediterranean landscape as revealed through systematic survey. As well, interpretative
studies of the archaeological landscape that reflect enhanced settlement studies and other approaches are presented. Cross-cutting and recurring methodological themes center on matters of temporal and spatial scale, both of data collection and interpretation, and on unit design. In their discussions, authors consider the relationship among and between the information provided by archaeological landscape documentation, excavation, historical texts and the varying temporalities of these different sources of data. They also reflect on the units used for describing and interpreting past landscapes, which in the past have been derived from anthropology, geography, and history. They consider the importance of the diachronic perspective, the role of geomorphological studies, the meaning of sherd presence/absence, and the nature of integrating multiple records. In that the larger questions addressed by Mediterranean researchers entail comparative analysis, another recurring theme is that of data quality and comparability.

Finally, with this volume, we do not attempt to cover the full geographical breadth of the Mediterranean. Rather, we emphasize particular methods and interpretations in the context of specific archaeological Mediterranean landscapes. The case studies involve data sets from Prehistoric as well as Historic periods. Regarding the latter, our goal is to focus on “non-traditional,” “later” eras (Medieval, Ottoman, Modern) and address the complexities of archaeological fieldwork and interpretation in textually rich contexts (Athanassopoulos, this volume; Diacopoulos, this volume; Given, this volume).

Fundamental Issues

In the first part of the volume, methodological issues fundamental to Mediterranean landscape studies are considered. The control of time in surface contexts is essential for the diachronic approach to be successful. Gregory addresses the issue of the temporal quality of ceramic data, the backbone of survey analysis and interpretation in the Mediterranean. He introduces ChronoTypes as methodological units that necessarily affect interpretation. Gregory also proposes a low-impact scheme that preserves archaeological artifacts in their context.

Landscape surfaces and subsurfaces cannot all be documented at the same level of intensity. Hence, integration of results across different spatial scales is critical. Here, Doonan discusses issues of sampling design and nested survey in the diverse environment of the Black Sea region of the port of Sinop. Regional survey here has employed a combination of general and intensive strategies in conjunction with excavation and systematic underwater survey to study the hinterland of the most important port on the south shore of the Black Sea from the mid-first millennium BC to the first millennium AD.

The next chapter by Wilkinson highlights another fundamental issue, that of landscape taphonomy. Through an examination of the imbalance and lack of comparability between Near Eastern and Mediterranean surveys, Wilkinson considers landscape taphonomy and its relation to settlement pattern reconstruc-
tion. To a large extent this disparity seems to be a result of different regional research traditions but also reflects different aspects of landscape taphonomy, discussed further by Barton and colleagues and Hill in their chapters.

Building on the issue of ceramic presence/absence, Wandsnider considers the nature of surface remains and archaeological interpretation in light of the palimpsest nature of archaeological landscapes. This chapter considers the formation of site and non-site deposits, arguing that their histories are equally problematic, but also temporally variable and rich.

Finally, Athanassopoulos discusses the temporal integration of survey and other data sources. She considers the relation between textual sources and regional survey data and examines the utility of integrative schemes like the Annales that recognize the varying temporalities of these diverse databases. This chapter delineates patterns of socioeconomic change in the Medieval period.

**Interpreting Mediterranean Archaeological Landscapes**

The second portion of the volume offers interpretations of specific Mediterranean archaeological landscapes that transcend standard settlement approaches. Barton, Hill, and Kardulias and Yerkes all present enhanced settlement approaches that are theoretically well situated; sophisticated interpretation is enabled because the theoretical framework is explicit and well tied to field procedures. Given explores the meaning of the ceramic landscape while Diacopoulos looks at modern landscape phenomena. In all of these case studies, matters discussed at length in the Mediterranean Landscapes series (Barker and Mattingly 1999)—geomorphology, data cataloging, GIS applications—are of necessity incorporated, reflecting the state of the art in Mediterranean studies.

Expanding upon other work (Barton et al. 1999) to survey the neolithization process in several valleys, Barton and colleagues emphasize the dynamic relationship between humans and their landscapes and examine the spatio/temporal dynamics of human ecology in five valleys of Mediterranean Spain during the first half of the Holocene. Integrating results from multiple seasons of study, they find that there is considerable variation across small distances and suggest that neolithization, even at this small regional scale, was not a uniform process.

Using similar ecological concepts, but with an explicit concern for temporal scales of analysis, Hill uses settlement data spanning Holocene agro-pastoralism in the Wadi-al-Hasa, west-central Jordan. This study compares and contrasts settlement histories of adjacent ecological zones and evaluates different models of settlement change in conjunction with ecological and culture history. Hill argues that different theoretical approaches are suited to interpret data with different temporal scales of analysis.

Kardulias and Yerkes explore the utility of world-systems theory as an interpretive framework that cross-cuts economic, political, and social dimensions. Within
this framework, the authors examine the settlement dynamics of the Malloura Valley in central Cyprus as a case study.

Given identifies a disjunction between methods and interpretation in Mediterranean regional surveys. Rich survey data sets are rarely utilized to answer questions as to how people perceived the landscapes in which they lived and worked. He argues that a phenomenological approach based on artifact distribution patterns is possible and long overdue.

Finally, Diacopoulos adds another dimension to Mediterranean landscape studies, that of the present cultural landscape. She argues for the expansion of current survey techniques and the need to incorporate the Modern periods in regional archaeological studies. Her study emphasizes the necessity of considering the human aspect of the present cultural landscape, including indigenous perceptions of heritage, history, and national identity.

Cherry (2003) opines that this generation may be the last to effectively document the rich Mediterranean surface record, which is in jeopardy as development continues apace. As the Mediterranean landscape evolves, reflecting the values and impact of the modern world, our efforts to elicit meaning and make sense of this rich heritage must intensify. Our labors today, both in the field and in interpretation, greatly affect future research in the kinds of questions that can be posed and the degree to which they can be answered. We hope that the issues addressed in this volume will further the development of effective research strategies in Mediterranean landscape archaeology.