

The Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Fourteenth Ephorate Epicnemidian Locris Project FINAL REPORT

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The area that was known as Epicnemidian Locris in Antiquity is a region of central Greece lying on the eastern seaboard of the Balkan Peninsula, on the shores of the Aegean Sea. Its borders probably coincided, approximately, with Mount Cnemis in the east, the Callidromus massif in the south and the Spercheius river basin in the west. The waters of the Malian Gulf and the Island of Euboea lay to the North (**Figures 1 and 2**).

From 2004, as part of Research Projects BHA2001-0157, HAR2008-04081/HIST and HAR2011-25443, subsidised by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science, of the Agreement number 028700 (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and Company Ontex Peninsular S.A.), subsidised by the Company Ontex Peninsular S.A. and the Agreement of the Ministry of Culture of the Hellenic Republic Αρ.Πρωτ. ΥΠΠΟ/ΓΔΑΠΚ/ΑΡΧ/Α2/Φ15/73900π.ε./31/2-3-2004, a Spanish-Greek team from the Fourteenth Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, under the direction of Maria-Foteini Papakonstantinou and from the side of University of the staff of the Department of Ancient History,¹ has developed a research project in Epicnemidian Locris (see also A.J. Domínguez, *Teiresias* 35, part 1, 2005). This is the first historic-topographical research in the region and the first joint official Greek-Spanish field work in Greek territory. The results of this research project will be published soon in full by Brill (Leiden) and here we offer a final report with a summary of these ones.

Essentially this study was divided into three parts. In the first the geography of the region is studied, necessary for understanding the area, followed by the topography with the analysis of the information collected and with the intention of revealing the patterns and the evolution of the population and the hierarchy of settlements. The third part was dedicated to the different historical periods from the Neolithic to the end of Antiquity.

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A) Natural Landscape

The geological features, relief, climate, soils, vegetation, drainage pattern, etc. are all elements of the physical environment that have shaped the landscape of the Locrian region. They also determined the subsistence economy and the sites its early inhabitants chose for their settlements in. The region is similar to many other parts of the Mediterranean world in its climate and many other respects: high mountains extending right to the edge of the sea, the predominance of limestone in much of the relief, a pronounced tectonic instability, deep and narrow valleys and highly vulnerable soils due to human impact on the natural environment over thousands of years.

However, the characteristics of the physical environment during the final millennia of the Holocene, and during Antiquity in particular, were not well suited to intense human occupation. In fact, the first farming communities had to adapt to steep and rugged mountainous topography, not at all suited for arable land. The modern coastal plain did not exist and in some places there was only a narrow coastal strip (**Figure 2**). The soil of the steep mountainsides and sheer sides of the valleys was highly vulnerable to erosion. Early human impact contributed to the effects of nature and made the topsoil even more unstable, as vegetation and wooded areas were stripped for pastures, firewood or crops, and vines and olive trees introduced. This combination of natural and anthropogenic factors was responsible for vast amounts of sediment being washed down the mountains. The confined nature of the Malian Gulf and the Euboean Channel prevented this sediment from being washed out to sea by coastal currents, so by the end of Antiquity the coastline had already changed enormously, and what had once been a narrow and rocky coastline for most of the period of our study became one dominated by a wide coastal plain.

The Epicnemidian landscape was dominated in antiquity by two principal mountain chains, Mt. Cnemis (945 m asl) and Mt. Callidromus (1,419 m asl), which determined the distribution of the settlements and the road network and marked the frontiers with neighbouring regions. The northern spurs of the Callidromus Mountains, in the west and centre of the region, marked a series of longitudinal valleys running N-S, while Mt. Cnemis, to the east, defined an especially rugged part of the coast with a series of small transverse W-E valleys into the interior as far as the valley of the river Dipotamos (**Figure 2**).

The longitudinal valleys were by far the most important. Apart from some that were very small, the most notable were, from west to east, the valleys of the rivers Latzorema, Potamia, Liapatorrema (ancient Aphamius) and Platanias/Xerias (ancient Boagrius). In the east of the region, Cnemis defines three different lines of irregular width that run approximately E-W: the coastal strip and the valleys of the Plisorema and Polydendri rivers respectively (**Figure 2**).

Neither, apart from the Boagrius basin, were there alluvial plains of any size and fertility where crops could be grown. A dense river network drained the territory and the progressive tectonic lifting that affected this mountainous margin prevented the riverbeds moving sideways, which would have widened the valleys: all their erosive capacity was concentrated in their beds, causing intensive entrenchment. And despite the preorogenic volcanic activity that occurred during the Mesozoic the region did not have any sizable mineral resources (tin, copper, etc.) that could be exploited in proto-historic times. Finally, earthquakes were relatively frequent, and sometimes very intense, and there would also have been the effects of devastating tsunamis on the coast, which are only recorded from the fifth century BC onwards.

So ignoring the modern coastal plain, when we imagine the ancient relief, we need to envisage a region of rugged and varied topography, with deep valleys and a dense network of narrow streams, its high mountains susceptible to great seismic activity and subject to intense human activity that destroyed the woodland and stripped the vegetation. The ancient coast, up to the Classical period, must have been very rocky, marked by sheer cliffs battered by the sea and by scarce and fragmented river deltas, dotted with marshes.

Epicnemidian Locris is also a relatively small region of *today* about thirty-three kilometres east to west and about sixteen north to south. The region as a whole *now* has an area of c. 374 sq. km and a perimeter of 114 km but it was smaller and more rugged throughout most of Antiquity. If we exclude today's coastal plain, ancient Epicnemidian Locris would have had an area of c. 321 sq. km and a perimeter of 92.5 km, i.e. c. 53 sq. km, or approximately 14% less than its present area. It would thus have measured about thirty-three km NW-SE and some thirteen km N-S. It was two thirds smaller than Opuntian Locris, a fifth of the size of Phocis and a ninth of the size of ancient Boeotia (c. 2,818 sq. km) or Attica (c. 2,450 sq. km), and similar in area to *poleis* such as Sicyon in the Peloponnese, which had an area of 396 sq. km.

It was thus of key importance for reaching the north (Thessaly, Macedonia), centre (Phocis, Boeotia) and south (Attica, Peloponnese) of Greece in Antiquity. The road network consisted of a hierarchy of interconnected transversal (W-E) and longitudinal (N-S) routes, the latter being particularly important for linking the main urban centres of Epicnemidia with Phocis, to the south via the mountain passes in the Callidromus. Thus there were three main routes running W-E: 1) the one close to the coast linked the Thermopylae pass to modern Kamena Vourla, where the coastal route was interrupted; 2) the one through the interior from Alponus to Mendenitsa, Naryca and Anifitsa, and 3) the secondary roads which in the east ran between Mts. Cnemis and Callidromus, coming out in the Dipotamos valley in the east. From N-S, the routes followed the valleys of the rivers Latzorema, Potamia, Aphantius and Boagrius as they flowed towards the sea. The most important was the route along the Boagrius, which connected the cities of Thronium and Naryca with the Vasilika pass.

Other routes that bordered the territory of Epicnemidian Locris were also important, such as the famous Anopaea path described by Herodotus (7.216-218), which was used by the Persians to encircle Thermopylae in 480 BC, and was a typical mountain path.

B) The Sites (Figure 3)

1. Psylopyrgos = Alponus (Alpenus) (Figures 4 and 5)

The Psylopyrgos site occupies a hillock to the right and northern side of what now is the old national highway from Athens to Thessalonica, at the height of kilometre 196. The hill is located at a height of between fifteen and twenty-nine metres above sea level (asl), and its area is approximately a hundred and ninety by fifty metres and 1.5 hectares. It is some eight hundred metres from the East Gate of Thermopylae, a little more than two kilometres from the Colonos hill, the Greeks' last stand in Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.233), and from the site of the modern Thermopylae monument.

Our surface survey showed, in addition to the ubiquitous Bronze Age pottery, the presence of pottery dating to the beginning of the Archaic, possibly even the Late Geometric, Classical black glaze, Hellenistic, Roman and even later pottery, at least the beginnings of the Byzantine period (the sixth century AD). The settlement did not extend to the other side of the modern road, so we can deduce that it was restricted

exclusively to the hill itself, separated somewhat from the final spurs of the Callidromus (trigonometric vertex of sixty-five metres high) by a small hollow through which the “Thermopylae Corridor” passed and is the route taken by the modern road although this is obviously wider.

The situation of Psylopyrgos compares fairly well with what we know of ancient Alponus. It was, according to the current extent of our knowledge, the first Locrian settlement in the west, coming from Malis and was close to Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.176), less than a kilometre away and directly behind the Middle and East Gates. It was also near the Spercheius (Str. 9.4.17), although the course of the river has changed since Antiquity, and it is now 3.5 kilometres from Alponus. This site is less than three kilometres from the final Greek’s stand at the battle of Thermopylae (Hdt. 7.225.2-3), less than an hour’s march away.

2. Roumelio/Platanakos = Nicaea (**Figures 6 and 7**)

To the east of Psylopyrgos/Alponus, and south of the present coastal plain, a line of low hills between twenty and two hundred metres high extends to the river Latzorema. The area is referred to as Roumelio or Platanakos. Opposite, north of the road, extends part of the coastal plain called Karava platania. There is a notable settlement in this hilly area, 1.5 kilometres to the southwest of Agia Triada. Although the material is primarily Hellenistic, Roman and later, our survey also found Classical period black glaze.

The site at Roumelio/Platanakos corresponds well with the location and history of Nicaea,² previously locates under the modern village of Agia Triada which probably was under the sea in Antiquity. It is about three kilometres from the East Gate of Thermopylae and some eight or nine from the western entrance to the Pass. Scarpheia is the next Epicnemidian city to the east, some 5.5 kilometres. The settlement is built at a height of about forty or fifty metres, so it occupied an outstanding defensive position.

A first occupation would date to at least the Classical era. The city acquired greater importance from the Hellenistic period onwards and was also inhabited during the Roman and early Byzantine periods. Its foundation or presence ultimately eclipsed Alponus, which, nevertheless, remained inhabited. In keeping with this, the settlement at Roumelio/Platanakos is considerably larger than Alponus.

A Late Roman rural villa dated from mid-third to late fourth century AD has been excavated to the south of the modern town of Agia Triada. The villa was located on the lower foothills of Mt. Callidromus with excellent views of the Malian Gulf and visual control of the plain, which extended over an area especially suited to farming.

3. Paliokastro Anavras

To the northwest of the existing town of Anavra is the imposing peak of Paliokastro (721 m, **Figure 8**), part of which is surrounded by an impressive trapezoidal wall in regular courses, which is the best preserved in the whole of Epicnemidian Locris (**Figure 9**). The fortified enclosure occupied about five hundred by five hundred metres. It was a large settlement covering an area of between 20 and 30 hectares. Classical period black glaze and Hellenistic and Roman pottery were found, although Hellenistic material predominates.

² Str. 9.4.4, 13; Dem. 6.22; 11.4; Aeschin. 2.132-134, 138, 148, 152; 3.140; Schol. in Aeschin. 2.132; Steph. Byz. s.v. Νίκαια; Did. In Dem. 11.26-51; Diod. 16.59.2-4; Memnon *FGrH* 434 F28; Philochorus *FGrH* 328 F56b; Livy 28.5.18; 32.39.9-12, 35.2-8; Polyb. 10.42.4; 12.4.24, 45.1; 18.1.5-7, 15, 7.7, 8.6; Appian. *Hannibal*. 55.8; Suda s.v. Νίκαια; Harpocration s.v. Νίκαια; Photius *Bibl.* 234 a.

Unfortunately, in the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to identify the ancient name of Paliokastro Anavras with any certainty, perhaps one of several that still have not been located (Calliarus, Tarphe-Pharygae, Augeiae, Bessa or Besa, Phalories or Pyroneia).

4. Trochala/Prosilia/Agios Charalambos = Scarpheia

To the south of modern village of Molos there is an area of hills between the rivers Potamia and Aivlassorema. Just over a kilometre to the south-southeast of Molos and a little to the north of a raised area called Prosilia or Agrosikia (340 m asl), there is a place called Trochala. It is not far from Agios Charalambos, and is also known by this name. Here it is an ancient settlement of considerable size (**Figures 10 and 11**). The settlement covers an area of some one thousand and seven hundred metres northwest-southeast and 35 hectares. Our survey with the Fourteenth Ephorate found here abundant Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine pottery and numerous fragments of tiles. There is no evidence, however, of Bronze Age pottery.

The position of Scarpheia, an important *polis*, second only to Thronium in the whole of Epicnemidian Locris, in Trochala in Agios Charalambos, at the exit of the Potamia valley, fits Strabo's description well (Str. 9.4.4). The place is at least six kilometres from Thronium, further to the north and east. It is also some two or three kilometres from the ancient shore, which must have been to the north of the modern village of Molos.

On the basis of the evidence available to us at present, Scarpheia was founded in the Archaic Period. Towards the end of the Roman period and the beginning of the Byzantine, Scarpheia was gradually abandoned and the population moved to the coastal plain.

5. The Church of Agios Konstantinos and Agia Eleni = Scarpheia's Harbour?

Pritchett (4.166-167) found a considerable number of sherds to the north of the Earth Satellite Station, which is located about eight hundred metres inland (**Figure 12**). About 1500 metres beyond the Earth Satellite Station around the church of Agios Konstantinos and Agia Eleni, sherds were found including many small fragments of Roman combed ware. These were later dated as probably being from the third to sixth centuries AD.

In our opinion these remains do not correspond to the ancient Scarpheia but to the Scarpheia's port in Roman and Byzantine times.

6. Agios Vlassios = A possible ancient sanctuary

Just over a kilometre to the west of Trochala/Scarpheia, after crossing the river Aivlassiorema one comes to the iconostasis of Agios Vlassios (115 m asl). This chapel rests on large rectangular blocks of isodomic masonry (**Figure 13**), and there are also the shafts of some columns (**Figures 13 and 14**). This material may have come from the ancient city, but there could also have been a sanctuary here which was later to become Christianised.

7. Mendenitsa

In the northern part of the modern town of Mendenitsa there is a medieval fortress that is used today for concerts and theatrical performances and is now called Kastro politismou (**Figure 15**). The fortress is built at a considerable height, between 536 and 568 metres, and occupies 8 hectares. Parts of its two concentric walls are preserved. As well as the medieval accretions, the exterior wall contains a good number

of rectangular isodomic ashlar, strengthened with smaller stones and medieval mortar, all or most of them brought from their original location (**Figure 16**). This inner bastion also reuses various ancient materials, such as ashlar blocks and columns, most of which were also brought from their original location (**Figure 17**). So as well as being important in the medieval period, the settlement and walls at Mendenitsa certainly date back to Antiquity; the ancient walls of isodomic masonry can be dated to the Classical period, probably the latter part of the fourth century. Black glaze pottery from the Classical period, mainly late fourth century, and also Hellenistic, Roman and medieval pottery have been documented in the area enclosed by the walls. There are no traces of pottery from earlier periods.

Tentatively we have tried to identify it with Bessa or Augeiae (see *Il.* 2.527, 532; Strabo 8.5.3, 9.4.5; Stephanus of Byzantium *s.v.* Αὔγεια) and we have discarded their identification with Argolas or Tarphe. We thought that Argolas was in Hesperian Locris and perhaps Tarphe could be localized at Trikorfo/Trilofo (see below).

8. Profitis Ilias in Karavydia

In the centre of the Potamia valley the high hill of Karavydia, with the Chapel of Profitis Ilias at the summit (479 m), occupies a strong defensive position controlling the route from Scarpheia to Mendenitsa (**Figure 18**). On the hill are the remains of a fortification, a stretch of wall, fallen ashlar and a tower (**Figure 19**). The rectangular ashlar, the material of the tower and the absence of brick and mortar suggest it was built in the Classical or Hellenistic period. Perhaps Profitis Ilias may have been not only a fortress but also a settlement, a *chorion*, that would farm the small plain on which it is built and that still supplies the modern village.

On the basis of the information available to us at present, we cannot determine the ancient name of Karavydia but Bessa or Augeiae are the best possibilities.

9. The Stefani fortress

The Stefani fortress leads the Kleisoura Pass (861 m asl) to the south of the modern village of Xylikoi. The wall is built of polygonal rubble and encloses an area of half a hectare. There is no datable pottery, so it is impossible to date the fortress, but perhaps the absence of mortar and its visual communication with the neighbouring tower of Skopia/Vigla (Site 10, Figure 3), to the southwest of modern village of Kallidromo, where Classical and Hellenistic pottery has been found, point to an ancient date.

11. Palaikastro ta marmara/Pikraki/Bzika = Thronium (**Figures 20 and 21**)

Immediately to the west of the river Xerias or Platanias, the ancient Boagrius, some two kilometres southwest of Kainourgio and to the south of the present road, there is a notable ancient settlement in Palaiokastro ta marmara or eis ta marmara, also called Pikraki or Bzika which was inhabited from at least the Archaic period. The site extends over a hill along a northwest-southeast axis at a height of between ninety and two hundred and fifty metres NW-SE and some four hundred metres W-E and, with more than 100 hectares, is the largest known site in Epicnemidian Locris.

Palaiokastro in Pikraki fits the description given by the ancient authors for Thronium.³ The site is inland, just on the right bank of the Boagrius, between Cnemides (see below) to the east and Scarpheia to the west. The distance between Scarpheia and

³ *Il.* 2.533; Aeschines 2.132; Str. 1.3.20; 9.4.4; Pliny *NH.* 4.12; Ptolemy *Geog.* 3.15.17; Paus. 5.22.3; Eustathius *Comm. ad Hom. Il.* 1.426.23-25.

Palaiokastro ta marmara, less than six kilometres, agrees with Strabo's thirty stades (9.4.4). It is also the last point in the defence of the route from Thermopylae, where it turns southwards up the Boagrius valley towards Naryca, which is six kilometres south of Palaiokastro.

12. Agios Titos in Kainourgio

Around the church of Agios Titos to the north of modern Kainourgio and some five hundred metres from the present coastline, some remains in the form of pieces of marble and various architectural fragments of an Early Christian Basilica and a palaeo-Christian church of the middle-Byzantine period are preserved. We think that the port of Thronium may have been in this area at that time.

13. Trikorfo/Trilofo Renginiou= Tarphe-Pharygae?

Just where the valley of the river Liapatorrema, flows into the coastal plain, on the eastern side, at least two kilometres southwest of modern Agios Serafeim, is a low hill between 75 and 83 metres high. Behind it is a very rugged area called Trikorfo or Trilofo Renginou (308 metres asl), which gives its name to the ancient settlements here, and opposite it is the small plain, called Bataria. To the west, across the river, is an area of hills known as Agios Dimitrios (**Figures 20 and 22**).

Various ancient sites are known in the Trikorfo/Trilofo area. Hellenistic and Roman pottery was found on the eastern side of the hill and the plain around the exit of the modern railway tunnel. It no doubt originated on the hill itself. The Fourteenth Ephorate has excavated a possible Neolithic settlement and cremation burial here. On the west of the hill we found traces of black glaze, possibly Classical, Hellenistic and Roman pottery and some tiles and scattered ashlar blocks that would have formed part of the same settlement. If so, it would have been a fairly large site inhabited at least during the Hellenistic and Roman periods and probably also the Classical period occupying some one thousand and four hundred (E-W) by nine hundred metres (N-S) with an area of about 30 hectares.

We have tried to identify Trikorfo/Trilofo with ancient Tarphe⁴ which was in our opinion for more its existence a *chorion* of Thronium.

14. Kam(m)ena Vourla

Near the modern spa resort of Kamena Vourla and actually within the modern town, not far from the Athens-Lamia road is a monument that Oldfather (AJA 1940: 108) and Pritchett⁵ interpreted as a rock altar. Under and around the "altar" was some undatable pottery. In our opinion it is much more likely that the "altar" was actually some kind of structure connected with the harbour and was used for keeping watch and protecting the landing stage (**Figure 23**).

To the west, 2 km from Kamena Vourla and close to the mountainside, in Agios Dimitrios Kainourgiou, the Fourteenth Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the Seventh Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities have excavated a Protogeometric and Geometric necropolis with a Byzantine farmhouse above it.

15. Tachtali/Ities

About three kilometres before Agnanti there is an ancient settlement in a place called Tachtali or Ities, southeast of the Dasos peak. The site occupies at least one

⁴ Il. 2.533; Str. 1.3.20; 9.4.6; Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. Τάρπη; *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. Τάρπη.

⁵ W. K. Pritchett (1985): *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography. Part V*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 177-179.

hectare (**Figure 24**). There are abundant remains of pottery, especially late Roman and Byzantine but also Classical and Hellenistic. There is also sign of Bronze Age pottery, EH (I and III), MH and LH. It controls the main W-E route which went from Naryca to Hyampolis through this area and defended the whole of southeast Epicnemidian Locris against a Phocian invasion.

16. Allangi/Voulomeni Petra

Some 2.5 kilometres southeast of Rengini on the road from this village to the Vasilika Pass, there are some Roman remains just on the right of the road at a place called Allangi. There are also Hellenistic and Roman remains five hundred metres further north, in Voulomeni or Voulomeni Petra. They would probably have been part of the same establishment, which had an area of about thousand square metres and which, rather than a roadside inn or a rural villa, was probably a *chorion* that may have belonged to Thronium or Naryca.

17. Palianifitsa, Kalyvia, Agios Ioannis Anifitsas, Anivitsa or Anivitza

Two or three kilometres from Allangi/Voulomeni Petra and six from Rengini, approximately a kilometre off the road to Vasilika, there is a notable hill rising to a height of between 300 and 400 metres in an area called Kalyvia or Palianifitsa. Just on the plain which stretches at the foot of the hill lies the church of Agios Ioannis. There are fragments of Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman pottery on the hill and at one end a series of undoubtedly ancient ashlar are set into the church and scattered around it. Palianifitsa would have been populated from at least the Archaic until the late Roman period, and would have been at least a *chorion* that may have belonged to Naryca or Thronium. We cannot completely rule out the possibility that Palianifitsa was a *polis*.

18. Velona

About 5.5 kilometres to the south of Karya going towards Tachtali there is a small rise between two gullies in an area known as Velona. The hill rises to a height of between 560 and 600 metres, covers between one and two hectares and has fragments of Hellenistic and Roman pottery and probably also some dating to the Classical period. It would, then, be a small settlement or *chorion*, belonging to Thronium, that worked the small area of land which could be used for growing crops and keeping animals that extended between Palianifitsa and Tachtali.

From the information available to us at present, there is no way of knowing the ancient name of Allangi/Voulomeni Petra, Palianifitsa, Velona or Tachtali with any degree of certainty. Perhaps they could include one or more still unidentified places such as Bessa, Calliarus, Phalories, etc.

19. The Metamorphoseos tou Sotiros Monastery of Kamena Vourla

In the Monastery of Metamorphoseos or Metamorphosis tou Sotiros of Kamena Vourla, on a terrace at a height of 310 metres on the north-western end of Mt. Cnemis, several isodomic ashlar in local grey limestone are set into the walls of the present hermitage (**Figure 25**), and other remains and columns are found in the neighbouring garden of the hermitage. Also, just at the entrance of the monastery, the monks have deposited a huge base with a diameter of 1.20 m and beside it a broken column of which nearly two metres remains an ancient temple.

20. Gouvali or Vouvali = Cnemides (Cnemis)

After passing Kamena Vourla between Cape Lithada, ancient Cenaenum, in Euboea and Cape Cnemis, there is a fortified ancient settlement located at the summit of Mt. Gouvali or Vouvali, a promontory that projected from Mt. Cnemis. The wall is built at a height of between 590 and 615 metres and several towers and possibly three gates can still be made out in it. In total, the fortification perhaps covered an area of some five hundred (N-S) by two hundred metres (W-E) and between 1.6 and 1.8 hectares. The whole fortress was apparently built of the same type of masonry and was therefore probably built in the same period, perhaps the latter part of the fourth century or in the Hellenistic period. There is abundant Hellenistic and Roman pottery and also Classical black glaze (**Figure 26**).

The site on the summit of Mt. Gouvali basically matches Strabo's description (9.4.4 cf. 9.3.1, 17) of Cnemides. It is a fortified settlement close to the coast, between Daphnus (next to modern Agios Konstantinos) to the east and Thronium to the west.

On the status of Cnemides we have various possibilities: a fortified place (Strabo) or even, if any of the accounts mentioned refers to it (Ps.-Scylax, Mela, Ptolemy), a *polis*. Its appreciable size suggests that it was more than a simple fortress and the surrounding territory was sufficient to sustain a small settlement and the existence of a small *polis* here is certainly very possible.

21. Mavrolithia-Mavralitharia = Cnemides' Harbour?

Passing Lake Vromolimni on the road from Agios Konstantinos, between kilometric points 172 and 173 some ashlar can be observed that have been semi-submerged by the sea on the western side of the Gouvali and are largely covered by the present highway. These ashlar are black, hence the name Mavrolithia or Mavralitharia by which the area is known, have an isodomic appearance and could perhaps form part of an ancient quay or some kind of building.

22. Palaiokastros/Paliokastri Renginiou or Katafias = Naryca (Naryx)

Paliokastri is situated some 3.5 kilometres to the northwest of the modern town of Rengini and occupies a steep-sided hill between the rivers Katafiorema to the east and Sourlatzorema to the west. The top of the hill is fairly flat and extends from south to north between a height of 323 and 309 metres (**Figure 27**). The acropolis is built on the south of the hill, at a height of some 320-325 metres and preserves traces of a Lesbian style polygonal wall, perhaps from the sixth century or the early fifth century (**Figure 28**); the lower city would have extended northwards along the gentle slope that descends to approximately 309 metres. A second, isodomic wall, which would have surrounded the whole of the city and that can perhaps be dated to between the middle and last third of the fourth century (**Figure 29**). Paliokastri would have occupied approximately five hundred metres north-south and a hundred to two hundred east-west. The site occupies 4 hectares. Pottery fragments, including Minyan ware, dating to the MH, LH (mottle and burnished) and Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods. The presence of the "Lesbian" wall would also suggest Archaic occupation.

Thanks to the excavations of the Greek Archaeological Service and epigraphic finds we know that Paliokastri Renginiou is the site of the ancient polis of Naryca.⁶

⁶ Pappadakis 1920/1: 142; 1923: 143; Karouzos 1926: 10, 12; *IG IX 1*² 3: 706 (late third century BC); *SEG* 3.425-426; *SEG* 51.641 (138 AD). See also Diod. 14.82.7-9; 16.38.3-5; Lyc. *Alex.* 1148; Str. 9.4.2; Verg. *Aen.* 3.399; Plin. *NH.* 4.27; Steph. Byz. s.v. Νάρυξ; Suda s.v. Νάρυξ.

23. The Kastraki Fortress

To the southwest of the modern town of Kallidromo, in the region of Xylikoi and in the narrow and steep-sided valley at the head of the river Liapatorrema in the Callidromus chain, there is an elongated mountain called Kastraki to the west of the valley. On the southern part of the mountain, at a height of around 820 metres, on a small flat peak, is a fortification that occupies an area of approximately a thousand square metres. The walls are of polygonal rubble without mortar and the surface pottery is undatable.

C) *The Dipotamos valley*

To the east of modern Kamena Vourla, between Mt. Cnemis in the west and Mt. Xerovouni in the east, is the valley of the river Dipotamos with an approximate area of about 160 sq. km. The whole of this area belonged, at one time or another, either to Phocis or Opuntian Locris and not Epicnemidian Locris and that the eastern part of the valley has also been studied by J. M. Fossey (1990). However, we feel it should be included, since no study has yet been published on the western part, referred to by J. M. Fossey as the “Phocian Corridor”, which was allegedly carved out by the Phocians to gain access to the Euboean Gulf. It will also link our studies with those already published on the whole of East Locris and Phocis.

The western part of the Dipotamos valley includes four ancient settlements: Isiomata = Daphnus, Agios Konstantinos = Daphnus harbour, Agnanti and Zeli. Of these, possibly Daphnus was a *polis* and perhaps its harbour in the Roman or Late Roman period, as the epigraphical evidence would seem to suggest.

Strabo's statement that Daphnus was at one time a Phocian city (9.3.17), has been used to support the existence of a corridor from Eastern Locris to the coast of Locris, a strip of land under Phocian control. It seems more likely that Daphnus (and also Cnemides and Thronium mentioned by Ps.-Scylax *Per.* 60-61) came under the control of the Phocians during the Third Sacred War, at the time when the Phocians occupied a succession of Locrian cities (Alponus, Nicaea, Thronium) and their mercenaries controlled the whole of Epicnemidian territory.

24. Isiomata = Daphnus

Taking the road inland from the modern coastal resort of Agios Konstantinos, towards Agnanti around the north-eastern side of Mt. Cnemis, after less than two kilometres one comes to a place called Isiomata, southeast of Agios Konstantinos (**Figure 30**). To the south of the road, on the hillside of Mt. Cnemis, the Fourteenth Ephorate excavations have uncovered part of an ancient settlement dating from the Protogeometric to the Late Hellenistic-Early Roman period.

In sector ΣΤ the rescue excavations have discovered a rectangular building complex interpreted as a sanctuary of Asclepius. It consists of two different buildings, A (*katagogeion*) and B (*enkoimeterion*, *abaton*, *loutron*). In a later phase the small temple of the god was attached to building A. A monumental rectangular altar, an *eschara* full of ashes and seven pits (*bothroi*) were found in the open part of the sanctuary. Material from sacrifice and ritual activity was found in the pits and in a thick layer to the east of the altar. Among the finds, a bronze snake figurine, bronze bracelets with snake-headed edges, ritual vases and inscribed sherds bearing the name of the god confirm the attribution. The use of the area as an open-air shrine goes back to the late sixth century BC and the sanctuary was destroyed at the end of the second century/beginning of the first century BC.

Just opposite, to the north of the road, in a strategic position for keeping watch over the mountain, coastal and seafaring routes, there is a high hill with a plateau. The side overlooking the sea is very steep, but the hill is accessible from the south. Classical/Hellenistic pottery has been found there and also scattered blocks, obviously the remains of a fortification wall protecting the naturally fortified hillock.

The position of Isiomata matches the information given by the ancient authors, especially Strabo (Str. 9.3.1, 4.1, 3-4) for Daphnus. The site is some four kilometres, twenty stades, from Cnemis, the first place one reaches from the eastern end of Epicnemidia. It is also less than a kilometre from the coast, on the bay of Agios Konstantinos, which offers good protection to shipping and where, as we shall see, there may have been a small harbour. To the east, Isiomata is four kilometres from the modern town of Longos. A little further on, some seven kilometres away, are the ruins of the church known as the Basilica of Daphnouseion of the Locrians, which has kept the name of the ancient city. Immediately to the south of the church is Kastro Melidoni/Alope, which is in effect the nearest Opuntian *polis*. To the W-NW, on the right and left bank of the River Dipotamos, extends the now fertile plain of Longos, which must be the modern name for the Daphnus plain.

25. Agios Konstantinos = the harbour of Daphnus

The bay of the modern town of Agios Konstantinos offers a privileged natural shelter for mooring, which would not have been neglected in antiquity. Strabo (9.4.3.) situates the harbour of Daphnus at a distance of about ninety stades from Cynus and one hundred and twenty from Elateia. We think that modern Agios Konstantinos was the harbour of Daphnus. Rescue excavations in both the centre and the suburbs of the town have brought to light architectural remains of the Hellenistic, Late Roman, Early Christian and Byzantine periods and graves of the Classical, Roman and later periods, indicating the significance of the area during these periods.

After the site at Isiomata was abandoned in the Early Roman period, Daphnus was not inhabited again. However, archaeological finds suggest that the coastal city was not only inhabited, but obviously flourishing, at least during the Late Roman, Early Christian and Byzantine periods.

26. Agnanti

There are two sites near the modern town of Agnanti. At Agnanti/Profitis Ilias, a steep hill one kilometre to the northeast of the modern village, there are traces of dry-built fortification walls as well as coarse and Roman pottery. At Kritharia, on a hillside just on the southwest edge of the village, several chamber tombs belonging to a necropolis dating to between the LH III A and the Proto-Geometric (including at least LH III A, LH III C, Sub-Mycenaean and Proto-Geometric) have been excavated. Architectural remains and pottery of the Hellenistic and Roman periods are also reported from two locations, in the northeast and to the south of the village.

Agnanti was a small site, probably a *chorion* of Daphnus.

27. Zeli

The modern town of Zeli lies to the south of the confluence of the Dipotamos and the Dafnorema Rivers. On a low hill known as Agios Georgios, 1.5 kilometres to the south-southeast of the village, a Late Bronze Age necropolis from LH II to the LH III C period was excavated beside the road to Kalapodi. Twenty-nine chamber tombs have been documented with evidence of reuse during the Proto-Geometric and Hellenistic periods. Close to the area where the Mycenaean cemetery was excavated, a

Hellenistic tomb was discovered. Four circular cavities had been carved into the soft rock on the north side of the grave. These were found to contain animal bones and Byzantine sherds. Another Late Helladic necropolis with eight plundered rock-cut chamber tombs was excavated at Kvela, 1km to the northeast of the village, on the road leading to Tachtali.

D) Settlement organization and poleis

Ancient Epicnemidian Locris was a mountainous region without the modern coastal plain. The lowest parts of the region, those with an altitude of between 0 and 400 metres, accounted for barely 50% of the total, while 24% of it was between 401 and 600 metres and the area over 601 metres, which we can consider perhaps mountain, accounts for 25%.

The features essential for understanding the habitat in much of Epicnemidia are the delta at the river's mouth, in the north, and the plateau at the head of the valley, in the south, and the same pattern is almost always seen: *polis*/settlement at the river mouth, *polis*/settlement at the head of the valley, although the settlement close to the river delta is usually more important than that at the head of the valleys. The area along the coast, to the north of the Cnemis chain, left only a sandy beach a few metres wide in modern Kamena Vourla and two miniscule plains on either side of Mt. Gouvali. To the south of the Cnemis, the transverse valleys had an undulating and hilly landscape where the settlements, smaller and less significant than those of the transverse valleys, were sited on the banks of the river.

An essential element was the position of settlements beside main routes, over which they kept watch. In fact, these small valleys did not only determine the pattern of settlement, but also communications between the various settlements.

Looking at the structure of settlement, despite the relatively small size of the region, Epicnemidian Locris had a significant number of settlements, some fourteen not counting possible ports. At least five (Alponus, Nicaea, Scarpheia, Thronium and Naryca) were *poleis* and also, in our opinion, Paliokastro Anavras and Cnemides. It is possible that Mendenitsa also constituted a *polis*, while Trikorfo, Velona, Karavydia/Profitis Ilias, Palianifitsa, Allangi/Voulomeni Petra and Tachtali would be *choria*, although we cannot rule out that one of these settlements might also have formed the *asty* of a *polis* at a particular time. In the Dipotamos valley Daphnus was a *polis* and Agnanti and Zeli were *choria*.

The distance between the settlements in Epicnemidian Locris is of some four kilometres, the average being approximately 2.15 and cultivated land could have an area of a little more than 20 sq. km and a perimeter of some 14 km. This area would also correspond to local market expansion and the 2.15 km distance indicates that a half-hour walk from their home would practically be the furthest that a Locrian landworker would have to travel daily to reach the land where he laboured.

All this allows us to classify the Epicnemidian *poleis* into three different categories:

- a) Alponus, Nicaea and Cnemides, which are very small *poleis* of 10-18 sq. km in area, situated on or near the coast.
- b) The medium-sized *poleis* with an area of around 33-36 sq. km. These include Scarpheia, Anavra, Mendenitsa and Naryca. They are all very homogenous inland *poleis*. Scarpheia would have been favoured for its annexation to Mendenitsa and the development of a port in the northeast in the modern-day village of Molos.

c) Thronium forms a category on its own, with c. 140 sq. km, in accordance with its importance in the Classical era. It is the largest *polis* and occupies a third or even half of the total area of the region.

In the small *poleis* it would be difficult to find a secondary settlement and the land tended to be directly exploited from the centre. In the medium-sized *poleis* it would also be difficult to find secondary settlements and these would have been concentrated in the most extreme points and would have been especially ports. Only in the case of Thronium and perhaps Scarpheia do we find secondary settlements.

E) Settlement development and history

As our knowledge stands at present, settlement of the region appears to have started at the beginning of the Neolithic, and Trilofo/Trikorfo is the most ancient settlement known anywhere in Epicnemidian Locris. Throughout the Bronze Age the initial settlement of the region continued to spread, and we have perhaps one known site in the EH (Tachtali), to which can be added Alponus and Naryca in the MH. This would apparently indicate slow and gradual demographic growth during the early Bronze Age. Settlement seems to have doubled in the course of the LH and in addition to the sites already known for earlier periods, by the late Bronze Age, Kastri Agnantiou/Kritharia and Gvela and Agios Georgios Zeliou in the Dipotamos valley and in Epicnemidia, perhaps Cnemides/Neochori, Mnimata Pournaras near Paliokastro Rengini and Pournarotsouba near Thronium had also appeared, until there were at least six or seven settlements.

From the Submycenaean and Protogeometric periods we have the necropoleis of Agios Dimitrios, Isiomata/Daphnus, Kastri Agnantiou and Agios Georgios Zeliou. There is another important necropolis at Fournos in Anavra dating to the Late Geometric period. Palianifitsa and Naryca have also produced material from the Geometric period, the latter from the LG. Alponus may have existed at this time since it was inhabited in the subsequent Archaic period. Settlement probably declined somewhat from the end of the LH onwards and during the Submycenaean and Protogeometric, reaching its lowest point in the MPG. From the LG onwards, the population began to recover.

The Archaic period, especially the sixth century BC, was undoubtedly a time of demographic growth, and by the end of that period we know of between five and seven settlements (Alponus, Thronium, Scarpheia, Naryca, Palianifitsa, Daphnus and perhaps Agios Georgios in Zeli), a similar or even larger number than in the LH.

The Archaic period is undoubtedly a critical part of the history of Epicnemidian Locris because this was when the *poleis* arose in this territory and the consolidation of the Locrian *ethnos* probably took place. Epicnemidian Locris played an important role in the conflicts between Thessalians and Phocians that occurred in that century, since the Thessalian troops usually passed through it.

In 480 BC although at first inclined to accept the Persian conditions, perhaps on similar terms to the Thessalians, the physical presence of the allied army, led by Leonidas, in their territory forced the Locrians to support the allies' cause. In 479, Locrian soldiers fought alongside the Persians against Greek allied troops at the Battle of Plataea. Once the war ended with the Persian defeat, however, this did not prevent the Locrians erecting memorials at Thermopylae to commemorate their brief participation on the Greek side in that battle.

The data suggest that the demographic growth that characterised the Archaic period continued in the Classical period. Despite the conflictive period of the Third Sacred War, by the late fourth and early third century BC we apparently have thirteen or more sites (Alponus, Roumelio/Nicaea, Paliokastro Anavras, Scarpheia, Mendenitsa, Thronium,

Paleokastras Renginou/Naryca, Allangi/Voulomeni Petra, Velona, Palianifitsa, Cnemides, Tachtali, Trikorfo/Tarphe-Pharygae in Epicnemidia and Daphnus and perhaps Kastri Agnantiou and Agios Georgios in Zeli in the Dipotamos valley), doubling the number of known Archaic period settlements.

Because of the strategic importance of the region, which controlled the passes that connected central Greece with the Peloponnese via Thermopylae and offered the possibility of disrupting the maritime traffic in the Euboean Gulf, the different powers that sought hegemony in Greece constantly contended with each other to gain control over it. At various times it came under the control of Lacedaemonians, Athenians and Boeotians and, at the end of the period (338-323), it joined the Hellenic League under the hegemony of Macedonia. The region was also exposed to the ambitions and hostility of its neighbours, particularly the Phocians, who occupied Epicnemidian Locris and the Dipotamos valley in the Third Sacred War, at least between 351 and 346.

With regard to the relationship of the Epicnemidian Locrians with the rest of the Eastern Locrians during the Classical period, the Epicnemidians may, in the course of the fifth century, have belonged to the *koinon* of the Hypocnemidian Locrians under the hegemony of Opus, although this is by no means certain. At the end of the fifth century or perhaps at the beginning of the fourth, Thronium minted coinage bearing its name and Mt. Cnemis on the reverse. Another issue, probably also from Thronium, dating to the late fourth century, bears the legend of the Epicnemidian Locrians. These coins apparently show what was probably one of the basic features of the Classical period: the emergence or crystallisation of an Epicnemidian identity distinct from that of the Eastern Locrians as a whole.

During the Hellenistic period, Epicnemidian Locris was once more a crossroad of even greater strategic importance than in earlier periods. Campaign after campaign, this strategic position attracted the great armies of Macedonia, Aetolia, the Galatas, the Antigonids, and finally Rome, since it gave control not only of Central Greece but of the whole of mainland Greece, as of the main route between Northern and Southern Greece.

The Epicnemidian Locris was probably on the anti-Roman side during the Achaean War. After the war, in the mid-second century BC, the Locrian *koinon* was dissolved and was restored perhaps at the end of that century. It was under the control of Mithridatic troops in the first century BC, although we do not know if its cities were punished by Sulla. The Locrians fought with Caesar at Pharsalus and Marc Anthony controlled the region before Actium. After 31 BC Epicnemidian Locris became part of the Province of Achaia, and continued to be represented in the Amphictyony of Delphi and throughout the Julian-Claudian period it was a member of the Panachaeian League, subsequently renamed the Panhellenic League. In the second and third centuries AD the Epicnemidian Locrians formed part of the Panhellenion and the Boeotian League, which absorbed it.

The region's population appears to have declined from the second century BC onwards, probably reaching its lowest point in the course of the second century AD. The region suffered from incursions by the Costoboci, Heruli, Goths and Huns in the third and fourth centuries AD, which affected at least the farmhouses (Agia Triada, Trilofo) and then enjoyed a century and a half of peace and prosperity in which the Early Christian Basilicas (Agios Titos/Port of Thronium, Agios Konstantinos and Daphnousion in Alope) were built. It was mainly the depredations of the Slavs and Arabs together with other disasters (earthquakes, plagues, financial difficulties, iconoclastic controversy) that led to the abandonment of many settlements in the sixth century AD, especially those on the coast, whose population would have taken refuge in the fortified settlements of the hinterland.

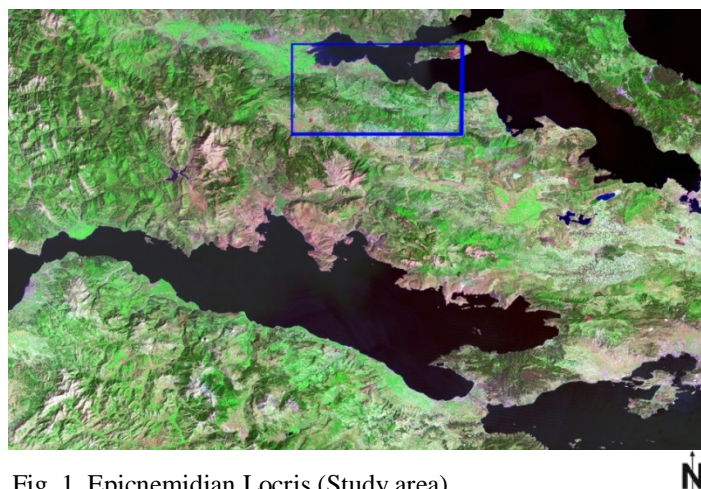


Fig. 1. Epicnemidian Locris (Study area).

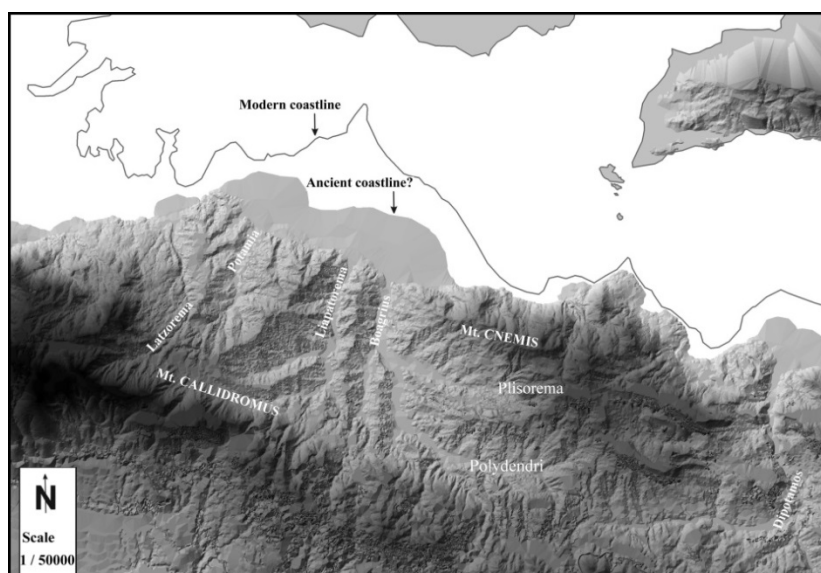


Fig. 2. Epicnemidian Locris. Hipsometry with probably ancient coastline.

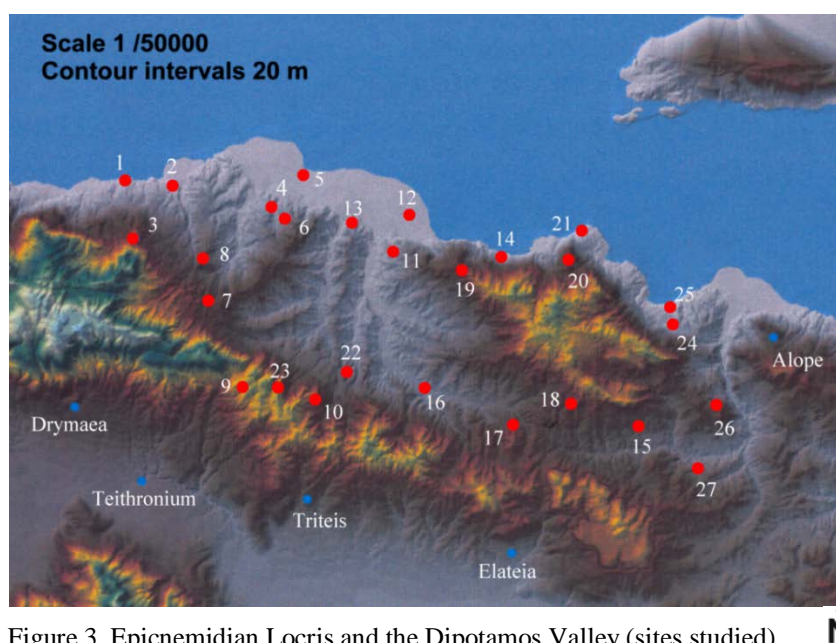


Figure 3. Epicnemidian Locris and the Dipotamos Valley (sites studied).

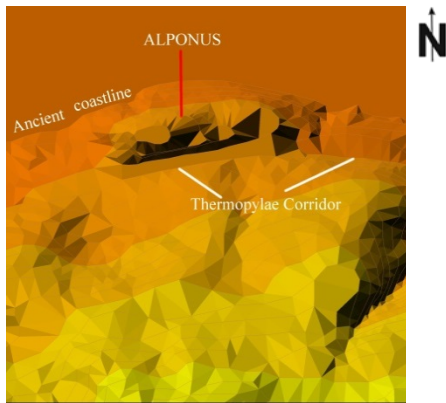


Figure 4. Psylopyrgos/Alponus TIN Model.



Figure 5. Alponus general view from West.

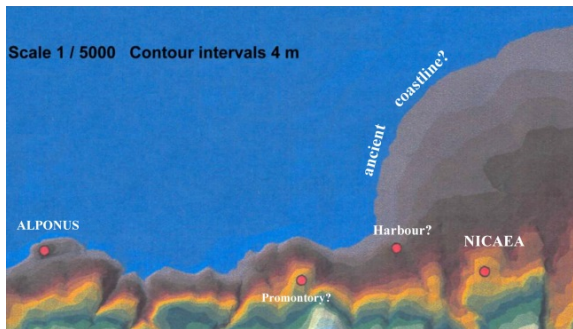


Figure 5. Roumelio/Nicaea and Surroundings. TIN model.



Figure 6. Roumelio/Nicaea from West.



Figure 7. Paliokastro Anavras, general view from South East.



Figure 8. Paliokastro Anavras, isodomic ashlar walling and Tower at the North Gate.

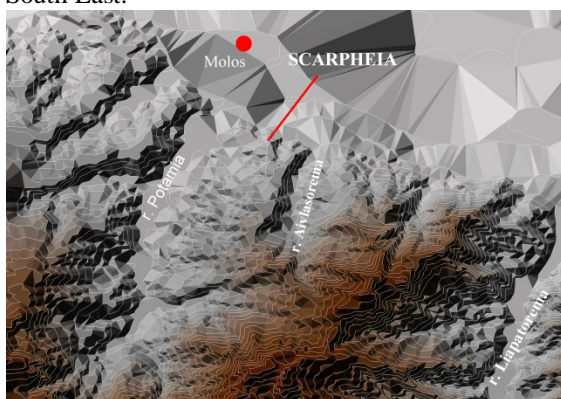


Figure 10. Scarpheia. TIN model.



Figure 11. Scarpheia, general view from North.



Figure 12. The Earth Satellite Station from Trochala/Scarpheia.



Figure 13. Ayios Vlassios square masonry and column shaft.



Figure 14. Ayios Vlassios unfluted column.



Figure 15. Mendenitsa, Kastro.



Figure 16. Mendenitsa, Isodomic ashlar reused in Outer wall.



Figure 17. Large tower in the Inner wall.



Figure 18. Profitis Ilias, general view from West.



Figure 19. Profitis Ilias, ashlar wall and Tower

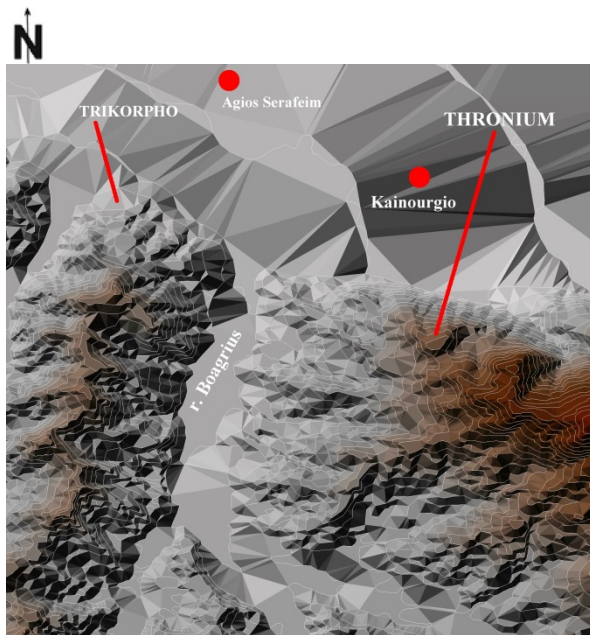


Figure 20. Trikorpho and Thronium. TIN model.



Figure 21. Palaiokastro Pikraki/ Thronium, general view from North East.



Figure 22. Trikorpho/Trilofo, general view from West.



Figure 23.
The so-called "Rock Altar" in Kamena Vourla.



Figure 24. Tachtali, general view from East.



Figure 25. The Monastery of Metamorphosis tou Sotiros of Kamena Vourla, square masonry and column reused.

Figure 26. Gouvali or Vouvali, ancient Cnemides, isodomic ashlar walling. South side.



Figure 27. Paliokastrá Renginiou or Katafias, ancient Naryca (Naryx), general view from North.



Figure 28. Naryca, “lesbian” polygonal Wall on South side.



Figure 29. Naryca, square masonry.



Figure 30. Isiomata / Daphnus to the South of modern Agios Konstantinos, general view from South East.