

Of Micro-, Meso- and Macro-Regions: Regional Space in the Middle and Early Late Bronze Age Ionian Islands

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Abstract: Recent landscape archaeological research on the island of Zakynthos has resulted in the identification of a number of sites with pottery from the Middle Helladic and the early Mycenaean periods. In this article we will look at these archaeological materials and at the geographical location of the sites. Zakynthos will then be compared with other parts of western Greece and beyond, in order to identify similarities and differences in material strategies in the landscape. The analysis will result in a discussion on the intensity of interactions in regions of different scale, in which Zakynthos participated.

Keywords: Zakynthos, Bronze Age, Mycenaean archaeology, archaeological survey, Ionian Islands

Introduction

Already in 1934, Sylvia Benton and Hilda Lorimer identified early Mycenaean habitation on the island of Zakynthos.⁵ Since then, only very few additional finds from the Middle Bronze Age or early Mycenaean periods have been published. In 1999, Christina Souyoudzoglou-Haywood stated that there are no MH finds on the island, but she does mention two LH II vessels from a tomb at Keri.⁶ The idea that sites and finds from the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period are virtually absent on Zakynthos can now be corrected by the results of the intensive landscape archaeological research on the island, which took place from 2005 to 2015. The goal of this contribution is to evaluate the presence of Middle Bronze Age and LH I–II material on Zakynthos and place this in the wider context of the Ionian Islands and beyond. In order to do so, a comparison will be made of sites of this period on Zakynthos with sites from the same periods in adjacent areas and further away (see catalogue in the appendix).

Regions

The term ‘region’ is very popular in archaeology. Think of ‘regional survey’, ‘regional analysis’ or ‘regional exchange’. Exactly what is meant by region, however, is often not very clear. The most common use of the word appears to denote something else than ‘national’, or ‘international’, i.e. supra-regional. And the boundaries with what is considered to be ‘local’ are particularly fuzzy.⁷ In

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⁵ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5.

⁶ Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122.

⁷ On the concept of region in archaeology, see Duff 2000, 74; Kantner 2008, 41; Kowaleski 2008, 226.

order to begin to operationalise the concept of region, the notion of micro-ecology is important, introduced by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell as the basis of Mediterranean historical geography.⁸ Regions based on such micro-ecologies, i.e. ‘micro-regions’, can be conceived of as areas where the natural constraints evoke specific and similar human strategies. In other words, micro-regions are spatially defined areas with distinctive social practices resulting from interactions with the landscape. These spaces are not constant, but their size and boundaries may vary over time because of changes in ecology and, especially, in social practices. Thus defined, micro-regions are strongly linked to social identities of people, which originate in the sharing of social and material practices in a specific landscape. Therefore, in order to identify such micro-regions archaeologically, we should look not just for landscapes with specific natural geographies, but, especially, for corresponding social and material practices.

When the spatial sharing of social and material strategies in the landscape constitutes the basis for regions, it is possible to explore this on different scales. As distances increase, social interaction can be expected to be less intensive. Because the spatial sharing of social and material practices is an important measure of identity, regional identities will vary in larger areas of interaction.⁹ Archaeologically, we should be able to distinguish between micro-, meso- and macro-regions according to the degree of correspondence in material and social practice in the landscape. Of course, it is not possible to mark clear boundaries between these subcategories, and, in any case, they would change over time. In this article, we will include a very limited number of archaeological parameters to define such regions: the presence of certain classes of archaeological materials, the landscape settings of sites and the presence of specific burial customs, notably tumuli. The degree of similarity between areas in these aspects and the geographical scale on which similarities can be traced will result in a distinction between micro-, meso- or macro-regions in which Zakynthos participated during the later Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean period.

The Zakynthos Archaeology Project

Since 2005, landscape archaeological research has been conducted on the island of Zakynthos, with the aim of relating the distribution of archaeological materials to the island’s geography.¹⁰ The core of the project is a comparison between three geographically different areas with regards to the presence of archaeology in the landscape (Fig. 1). Due to the extremely dynamic nature of the landscape at Zakynthos,¹¹ the archaeological record is, unfortunately, very fragmented. Archaeological classifications can therefore often be made in very general terms only.

Much of the prehistoric pottery that has been found during the fieldwork is coarse with a dark-grey to black core and orange to red surfaces, comparable to the Balkan ‘Red Ware’ or Epirote K II–K III pottery.¹² This material is notoriously difficult to date and we refer to it as ‘general prehistoric pottery’.¹³ Such prehistoric pottery is fairly ubiquitous and is widely distributed in all three research areas. Archaeological finds that can specifically be assigned to the Middle Bronze Age and the earlier phases of the Late Bronze Age are much less abundant. In the southern part of the island, MH–LH II finds occur on six sites (Tab. 1). In our Research Area B in the interior

⁸ Horden – Purcell 2000, 77–80.

⁹ On the topic of scale in archaeology, see Mathieu-Scott, 2004; Lock – Molyneux 2006, and, especially, Molloy 2016.

¹⁰ The project is carried out by the Netherlands Institute at Athens in cooperation with the responsible Greek Ephorates of Antiquities. For an overview and full bibliography of the project, see the project’s website: <<https://www.uva.nl/en/discipline/archaeology/research/zakynthos/the-zakynthos-archaeology-project-2006-2010.html?cb>> (last access 6 Feb. 2021). Fieldwork has finished and final publication is in preparation.

¹¹ Lagios et al. 2007; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a.

¹² Hammond 1967, 299–302; Tartaron 2004, 71–84.

¹³ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a, 444.

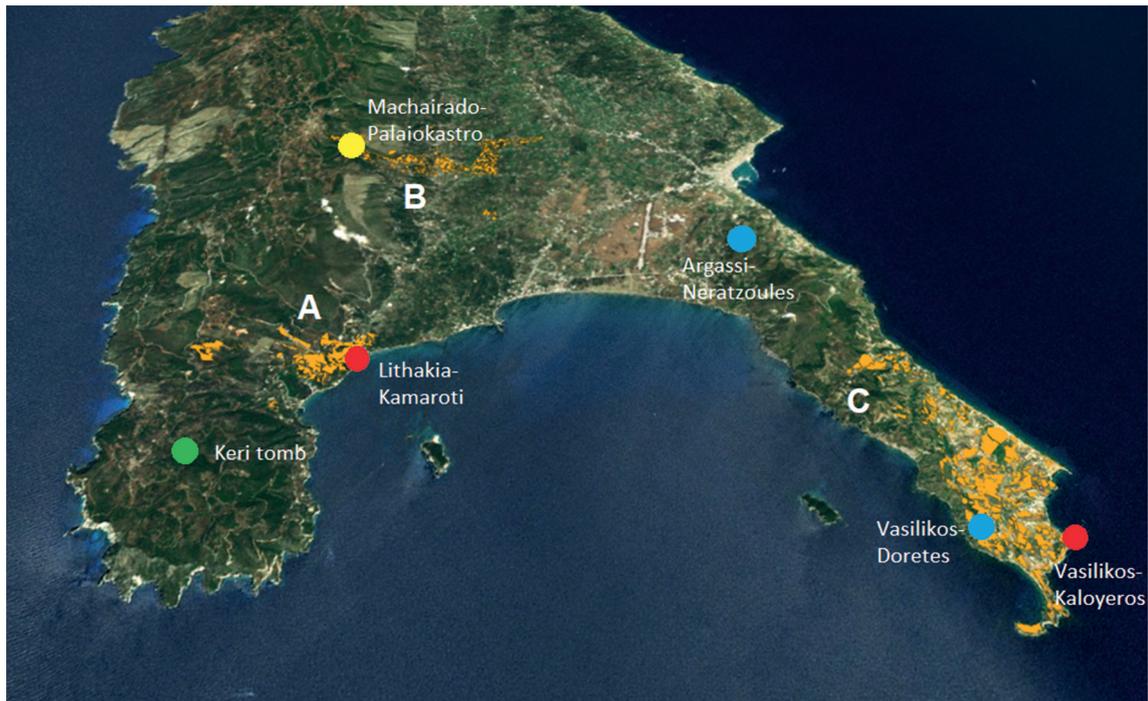


Fig. 1: Southern and central Zakynthos with sites mentioned in the text. The research areas covered by surface survey are indicated in orange and assigned A, B and C

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Vasilikos-Kaloyeros	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Cape in Sea
Vasilikos-Doretas	Preh, MH, LH	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Argassi-Neratzoules	Preh, MH	Settlement?	Hilltop near coast
Keri	LH IIA	Funerary	Slope near coast
Planos	LH IIB	Funerary	
Lithakia-Kamaroti	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Hilltop and slope near coast

Tab. 1: Sites on Zakynthos with materials from the MH and early Mycenaean periods (Preh = general prehistoric pottery; MH = material of Middle Helladic tradition; LH = Late Helladic pottery). See also the catalogue in the appendix

of the island, such material has not been found. However, this area has yielded general prehistoric pottery. It is possible, or even likely, that some of the general prehistoric pottery is actually from the periods that interest us here.

The Peninsula of Vasilikos

In 1934, Benton and Lorimer carried out excavations at the site of Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, a site situated on a cape at the southern edge of the peninsula of Vasilikos, part of our Research Area C.¹⁴ These excavations have never been properly published, but Benton and Lorimer reported Mycenaean architecture and “fragments of more than twenty small cups of L.M. I and L.M. II types.”¹⁵ William Taylour gave a description of Vapheio cups shown to him by Benton, probably of LH I–II

¹⁴ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5. See also Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012, 65–66.

¹⁵ Benton – Lorimer 1933/1934, 5.

date.¹⁶ Even though Benton and Lorimer stated that the floors of the houses contained LH III pottery, the site has since then been known as one of the very few early Mycenaean settlement sites on the Ionian Islands.¹⁷ In 2005, 2006 and 2010, we visited the site and conducted a surface survey.¹⁸ It is clear that the cape has suffered much from erosion and building activities. Many of the finds that we made at Kaloyeros were, in fact, from the beach at the bottom of the cape, or from soil dumps near building trenches. In addition to the surface survey, we managed to clear away the vegetation in the area of Benton and Lorimer's excavation trenches, exposing a wall with associated prehistoric finds. In all likelihood, this is the ruined wall referred to by Benton in her survey report, near which she had excavated.¹⁹

The archaeological material on and around the cape ranges from the Early Bronze Age to Roman Imperial times, indicating continuous use for several millennia. Against the background of coarse pottery that can be labelled as general prehistoric, there are only very few finds which certainly belong to the Middle Bronze Age or the early Mycenaean period. There is the flaring rim of a bowl or krater (Fig. 2a), which appears to be a local production of Minyan-type pottery. Moreover, there are some wall fragments of similar fabric with linear decoration. In addition, there is a high-swung vertical handle with impressed decoration, which may be MH in date.²⁰ What has not been found at the site during our survey is pottery that can clearly be dated to LH I or LH II, such as the Vapheio cups that were described by Taylour. There is ample Mycenaean pottery at the site from later periods, but the earliest recognisable material dates from LH IIB–IIIA1 onwards. On the basis of our research, then, we are not able to corroborate the existence of an early Mycenaean settlement at Vasilikos-Kaloyeros. However, Benton and Lorimer's reports and the presence of general prehistoric material as well as the few MH fragments discussed here, make it likely that Kaloyeros was inhabited during that time.

Not far away from Kaloyeros, about 2 km inland, the survey teams have discovered a concentration of materials at the location of Vasilikos-Doretos.²¹ Doretos is situated on top of a ridge, high in the hills, with majestic views of the coasts on either side of the peninsula. Concentrations of prehistoric materials were found scattered across two plateaus on the ridge and on the eastern and southeastern slopes of the hill. As everywhere on Zakynthos, the material is very fragmentary and much of it cannot be classified any more specifically than generally prehistoric. The latest material recognised is a LH IIIB kylix, suggesting that the site was frequented until the Mycenaean Palatial period.

Pottery that can clearly be assigned to LH I–II has not been found at Doretos. However, there is some grey pottery of Minyan type and technology, from which the rim of a possible small jar is illustrated here (Fig. 2b). Moreover, there are fragments in a local fabric with linear, matt-painted decoration. In addition, we have found various high-looped strap handles and a possible example of a wishbone handle. Altogether, this inland hilltop site of Doretos shows a much wider repertoire of Middle Bronze Age/early Mycenaean finds than the coastal site of Kaloyeros.

The situation at Vasilikos-Doretos is paralleled at a site referred to as Argassi-Neratzoules, which we explored in 2006 on the basis of the analysis of old aerial photographs.²² Neratzoules is situated to the north of our Research Area C, north of the Skopos Mountain.²³ Just like Vasilikos-Doretos, it is a hilltop site with excellent views of the nearby coasts. At various spots, we

¹⁶ Taylour 1958, 186–187. He remarks only that the pottery he was shown by Benton was from Zante, without specifying Kaloyeros.

¹⁷ Hope Simpson – Dickinson 1979, 193–194; Hope Simpson 1981, 155–156.

¹⁸ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2006, 69–71; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2007, 36; Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012, 67–70.

¹⁹ Benton 1931/1932, 215.

²⁰ The handle is comparable to a jug handle from the MH III settlement at Asine, see Frödin – Persson 1938, 293–295, fig. 203.2.

²¹ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 43–46.

²² Stoker 2010, 36 and fig. 4.4–6.

²³ Aerial photographs indicated that bulldozing had recently taken place in the area. We visited the site in the presence of Andreas Sotiriou and collected pottery in a non-systematic manner.

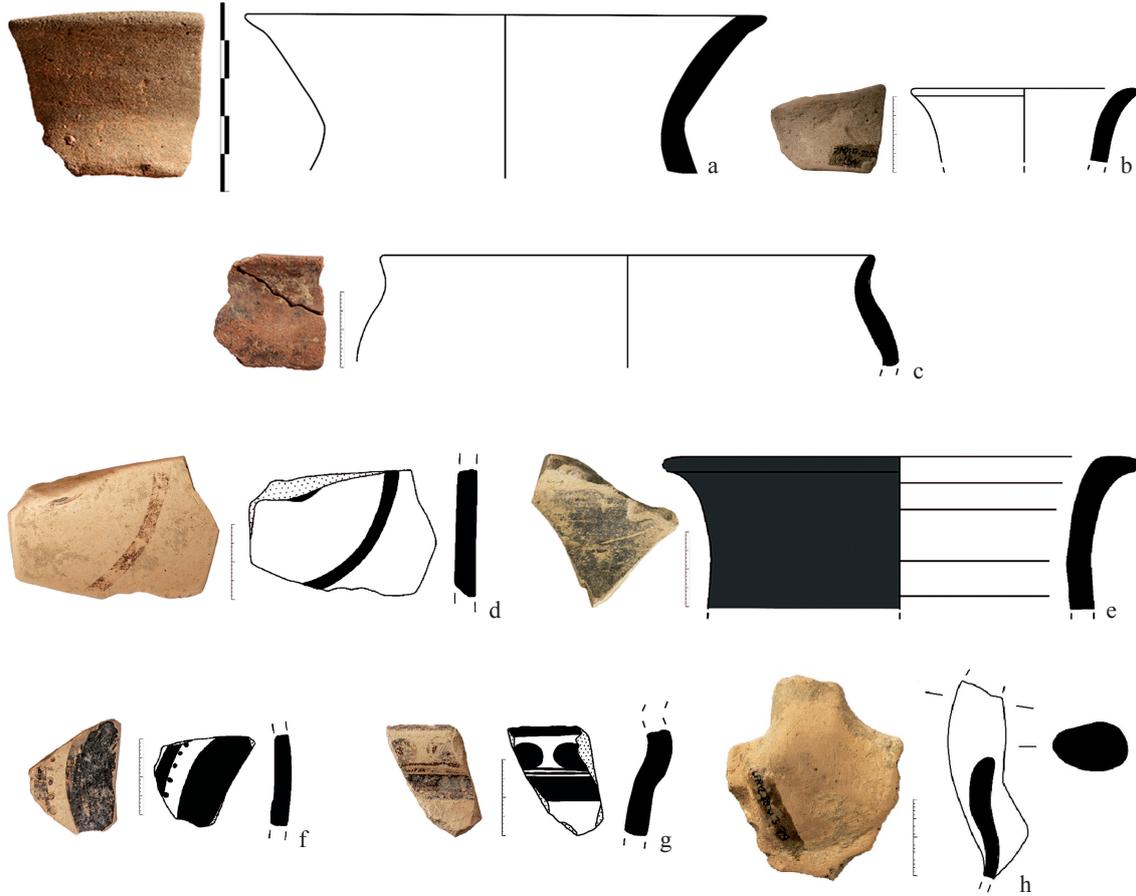


Fig. 2: a. Ceramic fragment of the rim of a bowl or krater from Vasilikos-Kaloyeros (ZaS05_3.17.001); b. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Vasilikos-Doretas (ZAP10_2203.34); c. Rim fragment of a coarse ware jar from Argassi-Neratzoules (ZAP06_0063.1.17); d. Matt-painted wall fragment of a closed vessel from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZaS05_251.4); e. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_5004.1.10); f. Fragment of a decorated closed vessel found on the surface at Lithakia-Kamaroti; g. Wall fragment of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_6007.3A); h. Fragment of a dipper from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_8004.3.78) (photos: A. Dekker, drawings: O. Hoogzaad, O. Metaxas, N. Pieters, L. Opgenhaffen)

encountered concentrations of prehistoric materials, of which only a selection was collected. Much of the material, which, of course, is very fragmentary, cannot be more closely dated than generally prehistoric. However, there are several grey-coloured fragments of Minyan type and technology. Also, there is a matt-painted fragment and the rim of a coarse MH jar (Fig. 2c).²⁴ In contrast to Doretas, there is no evidence at Neratzoules for any Mycenaean material, whether it be early Mycenaean or LH III.

The two hilltop sites of Vasilikos-Doretas and Argassi-Neratzoules correspond in their location and in the presence of materials in the Middle Bronze Age tradition. In addition, pottery in LH I–II style is absent at both sites. The landscape setting and the pottery repertoire is different from the coastal site at Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, which has yielded early Mycenaean pottery in addition to (a few) MH finds.

²⁴ Cf. a jar from Nichoria: Howell 1992, fig. 3.77, nos. P2840–2841.

Lithakia-Kamaroti

The site of Lithakia-Kamaroti is situated in our Research Area A (Fig. 1), not far from the natural harbour of Limni Keriou. It is a Mycenaean settlement site that we discovered during the pilot survey of 2005 and investigated systematically in 2009.²⁵ The find distribution shows three main concentrations. The most extensive find concentration covers the top of a low hill near the coast. Two other find concentrations have been identified near the bottom of the hill, to the southeast and to the north respectively. In 2012, we were able to carry out excavations in a limited number of test trenches near the top of the hill.²⁶ The excavations have yielded the remains of a building of LH IIIB–IIIC date. However, the surface material and a pottery dump also showed human presence at the site in earlier phases of the Mycenaean period. The site was also used in later times, notably in the Classical or Hellenistic periods.

As always on Zakynthos, the pottery is very fragmentary and difficult to classify. However, it is clear that in addition to material that can be classified as ‘general prehistoric’, the survey and the excavations have yielded pottery that belongs to Middle Helladic traditions, such as black-burnished wares, various wheel-fashioned coarse wares, grey-coloured fragments of Minyan type and technology and a few matt-painted fragments (Fig. 2d).²⁷ Characteristic is the flaring rim of a jar in a local dark-grey fabric of Minyan type (Fig. 2e).²⁸ Also, there are many fragments of early Mycenaean vessels. One small fragment of a closed vessel, which was found during the survey, can be associated with a hard-baked fabric with lustrous paint that probably shows an ogival canopy (FM 13) (Fig. 2f). It can be dated to LH IIA.²⁹ There are several fragments of Vapheio cups, some of them with a pronounced mid-rib (Fig. 2g). The repertoire of LH I–II vessels at Lithakia-Kamaroti is actually quite wide, including many goblets (FS 254) and even a fragment of the spout of a bridge-spouted jug (FS 103).

The funerary evidence at Zakynthos provides very little additional information on the Middle Helladic or early Mycenaean period. Near the town of Keri, some 8 km to the southwest of Lithakia-Kamaroti, a small built tomb was excavated in 1967 (Fig. 1).³⁰ Eyewitnesses stated that the chamber contained the remains of two individuals in a crouched position. There were not many burial gifts in the chamber, but two pots have been preserved: an alabastron with spirals and stone pattern and a squat jug with running spirals. Both have been dated to LH IIA.³¹ There is very little other evidence of this period on Zakynthos.³² What is clear, however, is that tumuli such as those on Lefkas or at various places in Achaia and Elis are lacking on Zakynthos.³³

Micro-regions on Zakynthos

The surveys on the island show that prehistoric pottery is not abundant in general, but that it is fairly widely distributed in all three research areas of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project.³⁴ However, material that can clearly be assigned to the MH or early Mycenaean tradition has not been recognised at sites other than those mentioned above. Such material is also not clearly present at the prominent

²⁵ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2006, 68; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2010b, 75–79.

²⁶ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014b.

²⁷ Cf. Zerner 2008, 258, nos. 1691–1692, fig. 5.31. I thank Birgitta Eder for the reference.

²⁸ Cf. similar vessels from Nichoria: Howell 1992, fig. 3.50.

²⁹ Mountjoy 1986, 27, fig. 24.1.

³⁰ Agallopoulou 1977, 212.

³¹ RMDP, 480–481, fig. 176 no. 1–2. See, however, Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 121, who assigns a LH IIB–IIIA1 date. Considering the stone patterns (FM 76) on the alabastron, we think a LH IIA date most likely.

³² A tholos tomb excavated in 1974 at Planos reportedly contained LH IIB pottery; see Souyoudzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122. A small tholos tomb at Vasilikos explored by the Zakynthos Archaeology Project held Mycenaean pottery, which, unfortunately, cannot be dated. See Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 48–49.

³³ Cf. Müller 1989; Merkouri – Kouli 2011; Oikonomidis et al. 2011.

³⁴ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014a, 444.

site of Machairado-Palaiokastro, in Research Area B, in the interior of the island.³⁵ Palaiokastro does have general prehistoric pottery and some LH III pottery, which suggests that there may also have been human activities during the Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean period.

The settlements on Zakynthos with clearly recognisable material from the Middle Bronze Age/early Mycenaean period have yielded a rather confusing picture. In fact, we have three different situations.

1. In the interior of the island there are sites with pottery of general prehistoric character but without any distinctive Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean types (yellow in Fig. 1).
2. At Vasilikos, pottery recognisable as Middle Bronze Age is present, concentrated on a few steep hilltop sites away from the coast but with an overview of maritime and land routes; early Mycenaean material is scarce (blue in Fig. 1).
3. Lithakia-Kamaroti, and most likely also Vasilikos-Kaloyeros, are examples of coastal sites which have MH-type and early Mycenaean materials (red in Fig. 1).

These three different situations could, perhaps, be interpreted in terms of chronology. However, the general prehistoric pottery covers a very long period and material in the MH tradition continued to be produced and used in the Mycenaean period.³⁶ It is therefore possible that these three situations occurred simultaneously. Indeed, with the exception of Argassi-Neratzoules, all sites also have probable Early Bronze Age pottery and Mycenaean palatial pottery, and this makes it very likely that they were contemporaneously in use in the MH and LH I–II periods. Therefore, it is better to understand these three types of sites as different modes in social and material practices in the landscape.

The Other Ionian Islands

In order to be able to identify on a meso-scale regions in which Zakynthos participated during the Middle Bronze Age and the early Mycenaean periods, we should look at similar material and social strategies in the landscape in regions close to Zakynthos. It is logical to look first to the other Ionian Islands, in particular Kephallenia and Ithaka, but also Lefkas and Meganisi. Tab. 2 lists sites with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean remains on these islands, indicating their geographical situation and the type of material found.

The majority of the settlement sites on these Ionian Islands with Middle Bronze Age material are situated somewhat away from the coast, either on hill slopes, or on ridges and hilltops. Often there is a view of the coast. With regard to the landscape setting and the presence of distinctive MH pottery, they correspond to Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules on Zakynthos. As far as the burial record is concerned, these islands differ considerably from Zakynthos in terms of burial practices, because Lefkas and Kephallenia (Oikopeda) feature burial mounds.

Also in contrast to Zakynthos, Kephallenia lacks early Mycenaean material. The earliest Mycenaean finds date to LH IIB–IIIA1 and come from the tumulus at Oikopeda on the peninsula of Paliki.³⁷ This may be different on Ithaka, where a few fragments at the settlement of Tris Langades near Stavros have been tentatively dated to LH IIB.³⁸ But here too, the bulk of the material is LH IIIA1. Tris Langades on Ithaka is interesting in the sense that it is situated not far away from the coast and does have much pottery in the MH tradition: several rims in local versions of Grey and Yellow Minyan pottery, some matt-painted pottery and a carinated kantharos.³⁹ Since the LH IIIA1 pottery occurred in the same layers as these pottery types of MH tradition, it is likely that the absence of LH I and LH II pottery is not so much due to a hiatus in occupation, but to the fact that this material was not present.

³⁵ Van Wijngaarden et al. 2009, 49–52; Van Wijngaarden et al. 2010a, 68–72.

³⁶ See e.g. Dietz 1991, 300–303.

³⁷ Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43, 47–48, 61.

³⁸ Benton – Waterhouse 1973, 4, fig. 3.20; 6, fig. 4.44; 12, fig. 6.131; Dickinson 1977, 94–95.

³⁹ Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 101–102.

Island	Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Lefkas	Skaros	Preh, MH	Settlement	Foothill
	Skaros: Family Grave S	Preh, MH II–III	Funerary	Foothill
	Nidri: Family Grave F	Preh, MH III	Funerary	Plain near coast
	Evgiros	Preh, LH IIIA1		Cave
Kephallenia	Korneli	Preh, MH	Settlement	Lower slopes of inland site
	Peratata	Preh, MH		Cave
	Krani	Preh, MH?	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
	Koulourata-Kako Langadi	Preh, MH		Cave
	Kokkolata Junction	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hilltop in plain
	Kokkolata- Kouroupata	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hillslope in plain
	Kokkolata- Kangelisses	Preh, MH–LH	Funerary	Plateau in plain
	Paliki-Oikopeda	LH II–III A1	Funerary	Hillslope in hills
Ithaka	Pelikata	Preh, MH	Settlement	Hilltop inland
	Stavros	Preh, MH	Settlement	Ridge near coast
	Polis Cave	Preh, MH	Settlement	Cave
	Tris Langades	Preh, MH, LH IIB–III A1	Settlement	Slope near coast

Tab. 2: Sites in the central Ionian Islands with MH and early Mycenaean remains
(see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Summing up, it can be said that in terms of material practices in the landscape, we can see clear similarities between the second mode of material practice that we distinguished on Zakynthos (Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules) and the other Ionian Islands. However, with regards to the presence of Mycenaean materials at coastal sites and the presence of tumuli as a burial practice, there are also clear differences between Zakynthos and the other Ionian Islands.

Elis and Western Achaia

The second region to compare Zakynthos with in terms of similarities in landscape and materials is the nearby coast of western Achaia and Elis on the Peloponnese. Tab. 3 lists sites with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean remains in these areas, indicating the type of material found and the geographical situation of the site.

Bearing in mind that the geography of this area has changed significantly due to erosion and sedimentation,⁴⁰ it is nevertheless interesting to look at the location of the few settlements with Middle Bronze Age and early Mycenaean material. They are all situated on the slopes and summits of hills and in the case of Chlemoutsi,⁴¹ Patras-Pagona and Kleidi-Samikon, the hills are in the immediate vicinity of the coast. Patras-Pagona has yielded a mixture of MH IIIA and LH I pottery.⁴² Several of the published finds from this site provide parallels for material from Litha-

⁴⁰ Fouache 2006, 156–159.

⁴¹ Servais 1964, 22–25.

⁴² Dietz – Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2010, 122.

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Portes	LH I–IIA	Funerary	Inland plain
Chalandritsa-Agriapidies	LH I–II	Funerary	
Makrysia-Prophitis Ilias	MH III, LH I	Funerary	
Chlemoutsi	Preh, MH II/III	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Kleidi-Samikon	Preh, MH II/III, LH I–II	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Kleidi-Samikon	LH I–LH II	Funerary	Slope of hill near coast
Kallithea-Laganidia	LH IIA and later	Funerary	
Kakovatos	Preh, LH I–IIA	Funerary	Slope near coast
Patras-Pagona	Preh, MH III–LH I	Settlement	Slope near coast
Katarraktis-Ayios Athanasios	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	On slope inland
Katarraktis-Drakotrypa	Preh, MH	Settlement	On slope inland
Thea-Rhodista	MH III–LH I	Funerary	

Tab. 3: Sites with MH and/or early Mycenaean materials in western Achaia and Elis (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

kia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos. An example is a dipper,⁴³ of which several fragments were found at Kamaroti as well (Fig. 2h). Several sites in Elis and western Achaia therefore seem to be comparable at best with the third mode of settlement on Zakynthos, that of Lithakia-Kamaroti. However, the sites in the area of Katarraktis that are situated in the hills away from the coast and have mostly pottery in the general prehistoric or MH tradition may better be compared to Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules.

Different from Zakynthos is the fact that the majority of the sites with material from these periods in Elis and western Achaia are funerary sites (Tab. 3). Among these are at least two sites with tumuli: Portes and Chalandritsa-Agriapidies. More numerous are tholos tombs with early Mycenaean pottery, such as those at Kakovatos.⁴⁴ The LH I material that is present in the tholoi at Kakovatos in fact predates the LH IIA material from Keri at Zakynthos.

In terms of material practices in the landscape during this period, Elis and western Achaia show similar complexity to Zakynthos. A major difference to Zakynthos consists in the presence of tumuli. However, with regard to settlements, it should be noted that sites comparable to all three modes that we distinguished in Zakynthos also occur in Elis/western Achaia.

Messenia

A third region Zakynthos can be compared to is Messenia (Tab. 4). In contrast to Zakynthos, all sites with MH II–III pottery in Messenia have also yielded LH I–II materials.⁴⁵ In terms of material, these sites can be compared very well with Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos, which has also yielded MH and LH I–II materials. In fact, some of the best parallels for the pottery from Kamaroti are from Messenia. Consider, for example the LH IIA fragment with a probable ogival canopy (Fig. 2f), which closely resembles a similar sherd from Peristeria.⁴⁶

However, the landscape situation of the Messenian sites is altogether different from Lithakia-Kamaroti: most sites are situated on hills and ridges, somewhat away from the coast, resembling the situation of Vasilikos-Doretos and Argassi-Neratzoules. Another clear difference between

⁴³ Cf. Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2001, 33, pl. 2.28.

⁴⁴ Müller 1909, 269–328; Lolos 1987, 213–215; cf. de Vreé, this volume; Huber et al., this volume.

⁴⁵ Zavadil 2010.

⁴⁶ Lolos 1987, fig. 439 upper right.

Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Malthi	MH–LH II	Settlement	Hilltop, river valley, inland
Philiatra-Stomion	Preh, MH II	Settlement	Hillslope, river valley, inland
Iklaina	Preh, MH, LH II	Settlement	Hilltop away from coast
Peristeria	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Hill slope, river valley, inland
Pylos (Epano Englianos)	Preh, MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Hill top inland
Nichoria	MH, LH I–II	Settlement	Top of ridge, near the coast
Volimidia	MH III–LH I	Funerary	Inland plain
Tragana-Voroulia	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Slope of ridge, inland
Koukounara-Katarrachaki	MH–LH	Settlement	Hilltop in river valley, inland

Tab. 4: Sites with MH and early Mycenaean materials in western Messenia (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Messenia and Zakynthos is the prominent role of tumuli in the burial record of this period in Messenia.⁴⁷ Several of the tumuli appear to have been used from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age onwards.

In terms of social and material strategies in the landscape of Messenia, we cannot make the same distinctions as on Zakynthos and Elis/western Achaia. The relatively abundant early Mycenaean pottery in Messenia is also present at more remote inland sites, whereas on Zakynthos it occurs only on sites near the coast.

Macro-Regions: Aitolo-Akarnania, Epirus, Corfu, Albania and Southeastern Italy

When we zoom out to the level of macro-regions, it is more difficult to recognise material strategies in the landscape that can be compared to those on Zakynthos (Tab. 5). Along the Aitolian coast of the Corinthian Gulf are a few sites, such as Ayia Triada and Chania-Gavrolimni, which are situated on low hills near the coast and have yielded MH and early Mycenaean pottery.⁴⁸ These sites could be compared to Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos. However, it should be noted that more to the north, in Epirus, southern Albania and on Corfu, early Mycenaean materials have not been found.⁴⁹ There are many sites in this area with local handmade pottery and with local pottery of MH inspiration, mostly situated on slopes and hilltops, near river valleys and fertile plains.⁵⁰ They may be compared to Machairado-Palaiokastro on Zakynthos, which, likewise, has yielded a wide repertoire of local handmade pottery in a tradition that encompasses a wide geographical area.⁵¹

Considering the absence of early Mycenaean pottery in Epirus and Albania, the quantity of LH I–II finds in southeastern Italy is actually surprising.⁵² In addition to Mycenaean pottery with lustrous decoration, there are also vessels of MH inspiration. The imported pottery is easily distinguished from the local handmade impasto, which forms the great majority of material on all these sites. In respect of the topographical situation, it has to be noted that all settlement sites with early Mycenaean finds are situated on promontories on the coast. They could, perhaps, best be compared to Lithakia-Kamaroti.

⁴⁷ Boyd 2002, 36–46; Zavdil 2010, 158–159.

⁴⁸ For Ayia Triada (Chalkis Aitolias), see Dietz – Moschos 2006; for Chania-Gavrolimni, see Saranti 2004, 229.

⁴⁹ Wardle 1977, 156; Tartaron 2004, 154. An exception may be the Vapheio cup from a tomb in Pazhok, Albania, see Sueref 1989, 67.

⁵⁰ Tartaron 2004, 33–70.

⁵¹ Van Wijngaarden – Pieters 2017.

⁵² Jones et al. 2014, 16–18.

Island/Area	Site	Materials	Type of site	Landscape situation
Aitolio-Akarnania	Chalkis Aitolias-Ayia Triada	MH III–LH I	Settlement	Low hilltop in plain near coast
	Chania-Gavrolimni	MH III–LH I	Settlement	
	Ayios Ilias	MH	Settlement	
	Thermon	LH IIA	Settlement	
Corfu	Kephali	Preh, MBA–LBA	Settlement	Cape in sea
	Ermones	Preh, MBA–LBA	Settlement	Hilltop near coast
Epirus and Albania	Ephyra	MBA	Settlement	Ridge near coast
	Koulia-Grove	MBA	Settlement	Hill near lagoon
	Vouvopotamos	MBA	Settlement	Slope inland
	Xirolophos	MBA	Settlement	Hill near lagoon
Southeastern Italy (Apulia)	Manacorra	MBA, LH I–II	Cave	Cave near coast
	Molinella	LH II	Settlement	Plain near coast
	Giovinazzo, Via Marco Polo	MBA, LH I	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Giovinazzo-San Silvestro	MBA, LH I–II	Funerary	Plain away from coast
	Punta Le Terrare	LH II	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Rocavecchia	MBA, LH II	Settlement	Promontory in sea
	Porto Perone	MBA, LH I–II	Settlement	Promontory in sea

Tab. 5: Sites with MBA – LH I–II materials in Aitolio-Akarnania, Corfu, Epirus, Albania and southeastern Italy (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Discussion

The basic assumption of this article was that similarities in social and material practices in the landscape point to regions where people interacted through the exchange of goods, people, knowledge, ideas and information. On different scales, the intensity of these interactions would lead to different degrees in the sharing of material culture and different practices in the landscape. In this article, these social and material practices have been explored through a very limited number of dimensions, notably the presence of specific types of ceramics, the landscape situation of sites and the occurrence of specific funerary monuments, notably tumuli.

On Zakynthos itself, the material strategies in the landscape during the MH and early Mycenaean period are not uniform. Prehistoric pottery in general is widely present in all parts of the island, but distinctive MH pottery occurs on hilltop sites somewhat away from the coasts, while a combination of MH and early Mycenaean pottery is found at coastal sites. These three modalities on the island itself overlap spatially, as is clear from the close proximity of Vasilikos-Kaloyeros and Vasilikos-Doretos. Moreover, the presence of similar types of prehistoric coarse ware pottery on the island suggest interaction among the inhabitants of these sites. Despite the differences among these sites, it seems best to consider the island itself a micro-region of interaction.

On Zakynthos, distinctive MH pottery is present on hilltop sites, somewhat away from the coast. A similar pattern of material strategies in the landscape can be seen on the Ionian Islands, in western Achaia and Elis. Nevertheless, there are also clear differences among the material record of this period on Zakynthos and these areas, in particular with regard to the presence of distinctive burial customs involving tumuli. These are absent on Zakynthos, but do occur on the Ionian Islands, western Achaia and Elis. Another important difference between Zakynthos and the other Ionian Islands is the absence of sites with early Mycenaean material on Kephallenia, Ithaka and Lefkas. In contrast, early Mycenaean material is present in western Achaia and Elis,

and, as on Zakynthos, it occurs exclusively at coastal sites. In terms of material strategies in the landscape during this period, the similarities are strongest between Zakynthos and western Achaia and Elis and we may consider this a separate region. Considering the strong similarities in materials and landscape setting and the small distances involved, we would consider calling this a micro-region.⁵³ It appears to overlap with a larger region of interaction on the meso-scale that also includes the Ionian Islands, as is indicated by the pottery of MH type.

The presence of early Mycenaean pottery exclusively at coastal sites on Zakynthos and in western Achaia and Elis is not seen in Messenia, where this type of material also occurs together with pottery of MH tradition at inland sites. Another difference is the presence of tumuli in Messenia in the burial record of this period. Interestingly, the Zakynthian early Mycenaean pottery has good parallels with regard to typo-morphology in Messenia, which suggests that exchanges of materials and information took place between Zakynthos and Messenia. However, because the material practices in the landscape are so different, we would consider the interactions between Messenia and Zakynthos as a region on a macro-scale.

The wide distribution of locally made coarse ware pottery on Zakynthos of types that are prevalent in western Greece, the southern Balkans and the Adriatic from the Early Bronze Age onwards, indicates that Zakynthos participated in the extensive networks existing in this area and in which knowledge about pottery manufacture and use was exchanged.⁵⁴ The existence of extensive sites such as Machairado-Palaiokastro, with much of this material, suggests that interactions in this macro-region continued during the MH and early Mycenaean periods. Distinctive MH and early Mycenaean pottery may have become part of the interactions in this macro-region as well. In southeastern Italy, these types of pottery have been found exclusively on coastal sites, which may well be compared to sites such as Vasilikos-Kaloyeros and Lithakia-Kamaroti on Zakynthos.

Conclusion

Whether apparent similarities and differences in material practices in the landscape are to be labelled as micro-, meso- or macro-regions in a spatially limited area is a matter of scale and definition and will always be somewhat tentative. The attempt made here to interpret the material culture of Zakynthos from the MH and early Mycenaean periods in these scalar terms, has produced some clear results. First, we have shown that the island was inhabited during these periods. Considering the difficulties in recognising MH–LH II material, especially when dealing with surface finds, we may postulate that habitation was actually more intense than currently visible. Second, the differences in material culture and landscape settings of sites from these periods on Zakynthos suggest different modes of intra-island interactions. Finally, it has become clear that Zakynthos participated in exchanges of materials and information with other areas in western Greece and beyond. The intensity of these interactions was strongest with western Achaia and Elis, and progressively less so with the other Ionian Islands, with Messenia, northwestern Greece and the Adriatic.

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⁵³ The distinction between micro- and meso-scale is difficult to objectify. The same is the case for the distinction between meso- and macro-scale.

⁵⁴ See also Van Wijngaarden – Pieters 2017.

Appendix: Catalogue of Sites Mentioned in the Text

The bibliography is not exhaustive, but presents general literature that should provide full referencing.

Area	Site	Chronology	Bibliography
Zakynthos	Vasilikos-Kaloyeros	MBA–LH I–II	Von Stein – Van Wijngaarden 2012.
	Vasilikos-Doretos	MBA–LH	Van Wijngaarden et al. 2012, 43–46.
	Argassi-Neratzoules	MBA	
	Keri	LH IIA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 121.
	Planos	LH IIB	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 122.
	Lithakia-Kamaroti	MBA, LBA	Van Wijngaarden et al. 2014b.
Lefkas	Skaros	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18.
	Skaros: Family Grave S	MBA II–III	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18.
	Nidri: Family Grave F	Late MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 18–19.
	Evgiros	LH IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 17.
Kephallenia	Korneli	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 44.
	Peratata	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43.
	Krani	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 38.
	Koulourata-Kako Langadi	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 45.
	Kokkolata Junction	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 40–41.
	Kokkolata-Kouroupata	MBA?	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 40.
	Kokkolata-Kangelisses	MBA(–LBA)	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 39.
	Paliki-Oikopeda	LH II–IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 43.
Ithaka	Pelikata	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93.
	Stavros	MBA	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93.
	Polis Cave	MBA	Deoudi 2008.
	Tris Langades	MBA–LH IIB–IIIA1	Souyouzoglou-Haywood 1999, 93–94.
Western Achaia/ Elis	Portes	LH I–IIA	Moschos 2000.
	Chalandritsa-Agriapidies	LH I–II	Kyparisses 1932, 85.
	Makryisia-Prophitis Ilias	MH III/LH I	Boyd 2002, 191.
	Chlemoutsi	MH II/III	Servais 1964.
	Kleidi-Samikon	MH II/III, LH I–II	Boyd 2002, 186–188; Nikolentzos – Moutzouridis, this volume.
	Kallithea-Laganidia	LH IIA and later	Papadopoulos 2000.
	Kakovatos	LH I–IIB	Müller 1909, 269–328; Eder – Hadzi-Spiliopoulou, this volume; de Vreé, this volume; Huber et al., this volume.
	Patras-Pagona	MH III–LH I	Stavropoulou-Gatsi 2001.
	Katarraktis-Ayios Athanasios	MH, LH I–II	Zapheiropoulos 1965, 172.
	Katarraktis-Drakotrypa	MH	Giannopoulos 2008, 47.
Thea-Rhodista	MH III–LH I	Giannopoulos 2008, 49.	

Messenia	Malthi	MH–LH II	Valmin 1938.
	Philiatra-Stomion	MH II	Zavadil 2010, 158.
	Iklaina	Preh, MH, LH II	Cosmopoulos, this volume.
	Peristeria	MH III–LH I	Lolos 1987, 211.
	Pylos (Epano Englianos)	MH, LH I–II	Davis – Stocker 2010, 101–106; Karapanagiotou et al., this volume; Vitale et al., this volume.
	Nichoria	MH, LH I–II	McDonald – Wilkie 1992.
	Volimidia	MH III–LH I	Boyd 2002, 138–146; Vlachopoulos, this volume.
	Tragana-Voroulia	MH III–LH I	Lolos 1987, 60–90.
Koukounara-Katarrachaki	MH–LH	Arapojanni et al. 2002, 173–174.	
Aitolio-Akarnania	Chalkis Aitolias-Ayia Triada	MH III–LH I	Dietz – Moschos 2006, 48–55.
	Chania-Gavrolimni	MH III–LH I	Saranti 2004.
	Ayios Ilias	MH	Dietz – Moschos 2006, 55.
	Thermon	LH IIA	Wardle 1972, 47–92.
Corfu	Kephali	Preh, MBA– LBA	Metallinou 2010.
	Ermones	Preh, MBA– LBA	Metallinou 2010.
Epirus and Albania	Ephyra	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 43.
	Koulia-Grove	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 49.
	Vouvopotamos	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 54.
	Xirolophos	MBA	Tartaron 2004, 57.
Southeastern Italy (Apulia)	Manacorra	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 23.
	Molinella	LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 23.
	Giovinazzo, Via Marco Polo	MBA, LH I	Jones et al. 2014, 26–27.
	Giovinazzo-San Silvestro	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 27.
	Punta Le Terrare	LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 28–29.
	Rocavecchia	MBA, LH II	Jones et al. 2014, 29.
	Porto Perone	MBA, LH I–II	Jones et al. 2014, 31–32.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Southern and central Zakynthos with sites mentioned in the text. The research areas covered by surface survey are indicated in orange and assigned A, B and C

Fig. 2: a. Ceramic fragment of the rim of a bowl or krater from Vasilikos-Kaloyeros (ZaS05_3.17.001) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: N. Pieters); b. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Vasilikos-Doretos (ZAP10_2203.34) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Hoogzaad); c. Rim fragment of a coarse ware jar from Argassi-Neratzoules (ZAP06_0063.1.17) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); d. Matt-painted wall fragment of a closed vessel from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZaS05_251.4) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); e. Fragment of the rim of a jar from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_5004.1.10) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: L. Opgenhaffen); f. Fragment of a decorated closed vessel found on the surface at Lithakia-Kamaroti (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); g. Wall fragment of a Vapheio cup (FS 224) from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_6007.3A) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas); h. Fragment of a dipper from Lithakia-Kamaroti (ZAP12_8004.3.78) (photo: A. Dekker, drawing: O. Metaxas)

Tables

Tab. 1: Sites on Zakynthos with materials from the MH and early Mycenaean periods (Preh = general prehistoric pottery; MH = material of Middle Helladic tradition; LH = Late Helladic pottery). See also the catalogue in the appendix

Tab. 2: Sites in the central Ionian Islands with MH and early Mycenaean remains (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 3: Sites with MH and/or early Mycenaean materials in western Achaia and Elis (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 4: Sites with MH and early Mycenaean materials in western Messenia (see also the catalogue in the appendix)

Tab. 5: Sites with MBA – LH I–II materials in Aitolo-Akarnania, Corfu, Epirus, Albania and southeastern Italy (see also the catalogue in the appendix)