

## Re-Reading of Rural Fortifications: Resource Exploitation and the (Shifting) Dynamics of Identity in the Attic-Boeotian Borderlands

The Kithairon-Parnes mountain range defined the somewhat loose border between Attica and Boeotia, comprising complex micro-regions that fostered flexible identities and cross-border interactions. Prior to the Classical period, the Attic-Boeotian borderlands were utilized as common grazing grounds for the livestock of the “international elite” beyond the strict control of the states. This is supported by the evidence found in the peak sanctuaries in the borderlands, which features prestige offerings showing the diverse utilization of the sanctuary by the Athenian, Boeotian and Megarian elite. The construction and the gradual proliferation of rural fortifications, however, demonstrate a shift in the mode of resource exploitation in the borderlands. The newly constructed fortresses and towers increased the level of state oversight, and facilitated an intensification of settlement, agriculture, forestry, and other extractive activities in the borderlands. The encroachment of state oversight gradually replaced shared elite grazing with more intensive agricultural production and resource extraction. This shift enabled Athens and Boeotia to exploit the borderland’s agricultural, silvicultural, and mineral resources more intensively, which, in turn, supported important industries (for example the silver mines in Laurion) and the imperial ambitions (Athens’ naval power), and redefined the relationships of local populations to their land and to one another.

This study re-examines the network of rural fortifications in the mountainous borderlands between Attica and Boeotia, challenging their traditional interpretation as components of a centrally planned defensive strategy for the territorial defense of the city-states. Drawing on relatively recent scholarship (Knodell et al., 2017; Fachard et al. 2014), archaeological evidence (Fachard et al. 2020; Munn 2010; Munn and Zimmermann-Munn. 1990), and landscape-oriented

methodologies (Fachard, 2016a; 2016b), I aim to highlight the economic underpinnings of rural fortifications in the mountainous borderlands between Attica and Boeotia. Ultimately, by safeguarding resource exploitation and enabling the enforcement of state interests, rural fortifications played a central role in intensifying the economic exploitation of the borderland's resources. Their presence did not merely reflect military purposes, as they have been interpreted before as integral elements of a centrally planned defensive strategy devised by the state of Athens to secure Attica after their defeat in the Peloponnesian War (Ober 1985; Ober 1989; Ober 1991); but actively reshaped the ecological, economic, and social landscape, underpinning both the ambitions of Athens and its neighbors. This study underscores the need to reinterpret the fortified landscape of Attic-Boeotian borderlands as a body of critical infrastructure for ancient economic control as much as for territorial defense.

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