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HOUSE – SETTLEMENT – PROVINCE.
SOCIAL SPACE IN MIDDLE- AND LATE HELLADIC KORAKOU AND CORINTHIA*
(PL. 17-18)

Introduction

Research on settlements in prehistoric Greece is often limited to the study of large political and administrative centres (KILIAN 1984; BLOEDOW 1995), settlement patterns and trade contacts (THOMAS 1995; CHERRY, DAVIS 2001), architectural typology (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969; DARQUE 1980a; DARQUE 1980b; HIESEL 1990) or building techniques and materials (PRESS 1986; GUEST-PAPAMANOLI 1987; TZAVELLA-EVJEN, ROHER 1990; IAKOVIDIS 1990; KÜPPER 1996). Other aspects which are sometimes examined include the spatial organisation of settlements (WALSH, McDONALD 1992; cf. SMITH 2003), social features of habitation and functioning of settlements (cf. KEITH 2003), domestic architecture (SINOS 1971; MYLONAS SHEAR 1987; TOURNAVITOU 1995; SHELMERDINE 1997), workshops and production buildings (TOURNAVITOU 1988), cult buildings (HÄGG 1981; ALBERS 1994; WHITTAKER 1996; WHITTAKER 1997) public places, alleys, squares and courts (CAVANAGH 2001).

Studies of Mycenaean society usually concern provinces or principalities (DYCZEK 1994; HÄGG 1995; BENNET 1995; BENNET 1999), palaces (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1983; DE FIDIO 1987; GRAZIADO 1991; STAVRIANOPOULOU 1995) or the position of various social groups (DEGER-JALKOTZY 1995; WRIGHT 1995; GREGERSEN 1997; PALAIMA 1997; DEGER-JALKOTZY 1999), when analysis is

based mostly on written documents (WUNDSAM 1968; CHADWICK 1976; YAMAKAWA 1988; HOOKER 1995; KAZANSKIENE 1995). On the other hand, very little information is available about people who lived in settlements surrounding the palaces and citadels, or the smaller villages in the countryside, from which no written documents have been recovered¹. One might pose a number of questions about ordinary people's lives: how is their social situation reflected in appearance and furnishing of their houses?; was the spatial and social organisation of settlements the product of political and cultural processes at work in the MH and LH periods?; was there a single broad pattern of settlement which pertained throughout Mycenaean Greece, with similar characteristics of spatial and social organisation?; what did everyday life look like, what kind of activities took place in dwellings and villages, and what were the social roles of the people who lived there?; and finally, how far does our knowledge let us reconstruct the living conditions of that period?

This paper will only partly answer these questions. It will analyse social space in MH and LH settlement in the region of Corinthia using of archaeological data from excavations and surveys, with particular emphasis on the site of Korakou. My aim is to discover to what extent it is possible, using available archaeological data and sociological theories, to create a comprehensive picture of cultural and economic relations among settlements in Corinthia, to locate the province's Mycenaean political centres, and to characterise the spatial and social organisation of the settlement at Korakou.

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Chronology according to: RUTTER 2001: 106, table 2 and SHELMERDINE 2001: 332, table 1

MH I	2050/2000-1950/1900
MH II	1950/1900-1750/1720
MH III	1750/1720-1680
LH I	1680-1600/1580
LH IIA	1600/1580-1520/1480
LH IIB	1520/1480-1445/1415
LH IIIA1	1445/1415-1390/1370
LH IIIA2	1390/1370-1340/1330

LH IIIB	1340/1330-1190/1180
LH IIIC	1190/1180-1065/1060

LH IIIC	1190/1180-1065/1060
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Early Mycenaean phase – MH/LH-LH IIB

Late Mycenaean phase – LH IIIA1-LH IIIC

Abbreviations used in the paper:

EH – Early Helladic

MH – Middle Helladic

LH – Late Helladic

¹Tablets inscribed in Linear B have been uncovered e. g. only in the so-called Ivory Houses at the foot of the citadel at Mycenae (TOURNAVITOU 1985), as well as in the vicinity of the Petsas' House at Mycenae (PAPADIMITRIOU, PETSAS 1950: 214-215, fig. 18) and in the staircase M-Γ of the Petsas' House (IAKOVIDIS 2000: 65-66, fig. 2)

Social Space – a Theoretical Approach

“Social space” is the term commonly employed by scholars who seek to describe culturally specific patterns in the use of particular sorts of areas or places (TANNER 1991: 21-22; GRØN 1991: 105; KEITH 2003: 59-61). It has been suggested that the spatial organisation of dwellings, settlements and regions reflects not merely practical considerations, but also interpersonal relationships among members of the community and the overall social organisation of the society (ENGELSTAD 1991: 50). Social space can be understood as a group’s behaviour demonstrating non-random spatial patterning. These patterns can be seen not only in places where people live, but also in the distribution of the objects they use. Whatever the origin of these patterns may be, and whatever may be their function in particular situations, it should be assumed that these patterns have been accepted, learned and adopted by the group. The space where social activities take place will be profoundly affected by the nature of those activities and by social relationships in the community generally (TANNER 1991: 21).

In archaeological research three stages of social space can be examined: 1. Relationships between settlements in large regions/provinces; 2. Relations among particular buildings within hamlets/villages/towns; 3. Social relations inside buildings (houses, administrative or political buildings, cult structures). The types of evidence to be taken into account are as follows: settlement patterns, remains of architectural structures, and the distribution of artefacts inside buildings (GRØN 1991: 100). Keith believes that the different levels of socio-spatial organisation are interdependent and each level affects and is affected by others. It means that no level of spatial organisation can be understood in isolation (KEITH 2003: 59).

Social space at the regional level is primarily concerned with settlement patterns and hierarchies, the identification of political, cultural, cult and trade centres, types of contact between settlements, and routes of commerce and communication. Data from the survey or excavation of particular sites will form the bulk of the evidence from which observations can be drawn about these subjects, and it will be on the basis of such information that scholars attempt to describe relations between political centres, large settlements and small villages, and to identify settlements of social and political importance (RENFREW, BAHN 1991: 158-159, 182; BERNBECK 1997: 153-180).

Research on social space and spatial organisation within individual settlements will be based on analysis of the plans of buildings and of the settlement as a whole, as well as of the lines of communication within settlements (BERNBECK 1997: 189-195). The spatial relationships between houses, workshops, public and religious buildings, as well as among whole districts or quarters within

larger settlements, can be described (KEITH 2003: 58-59). The analysis will make it possible to identify places of particular significance within a settlement, such as the residence of the local chief or a building with cult functions. We know from ethnographic sources that some patterns of using space within a village such as the placement and orientation of dwellings, obey rules which offer insight into the social structure of a society (GRØN 1991: 105). In cases of large settlements, which are physically and visually open, located on plains, and lack well-defined or centralised plans, dominant dwellings and buildings of public importance will be located in the centre of village. In settlements that are not situated on plains (e.g. tells), the status of buildings and their importance within a settlement may vary according to their elevation and centrality (GRØN 1991: 106-108). According to Chapman the form of settlement represents a spatial order and is not just an expression of the social system of a community. The form of settlement remains a most important factor in the regulation of social relations and it is integral to social life. It is also important to remember that a settlement in most cases is built up progressively, and that changes are made to its surrounding over time. Every new generation inherits an existing social landscape that is full of social meaning and must decide whether to accept and adopt the existing ideological use of landscape (i.e. to maintain its previously developed features) or to change it (CHAPMAN 1991: 80-81).

An analysis of buildings and dwellings may enable us to characterise social relations inside individual households (ENGELSTAD 1991; BERNBECK 1997: 195-201), to determine which areas were used by the various inhabitants (MØBJERG 1991: 45), and to draw conclusions about the functions of interiors, as well as patterns of using them (CANTER 1991: 12; BERNBECK 1997: 185-189). It should be assumed, therefore, that space plays an important role in defining interpersonal relationships. One could expect that inside households it would be reflected by using conventional patterns in which the position of every individual is precisely defined and reflects his social role in the community. While some aspects of spatial organization within dwellings seem to be universal, many others vary from culture to culture. Perhaps different patterns of using space are the result of differences in the social roles of the inhabitants. For example the status of men and women may be entirely different in various cultures, while the dimensions and appearance of interiors may influence the way that the owners use space. According to Grøn, this consideration is particularly important in reference to smaller dwellings where space is at a premium and circumstances force all inhabitants to make use of space in similar ways during the meals, or while sleeping and working. In larger buildings where there is more space available, persons involved in different household activities can work in different parts of the building. Grøn supposes that if it is possible

to distinguish rules of spatial behaviour within prehistoric houses, these rules not only give us information about social structure in the particular dwellings, but they also allow us to draw more general conclusions about social behaviour in prehistoric societies (GRØN 1991: 100-101, cf. SMITH 2003: 20).

Unfortunately, most generic models² created to describe social structures and patterns of space usage across many cultures are too general, inflexible, or problematic to really be useful (GRØN 1991: 100). Many factors contribute to these difficulties, but the most serious of these seems to lie in the theoretical approach itself. A model is a generalised picture or scheme and is not always able to render reality accurately. Thanks to creating and using them, however, we can perceive societies and space as a set of individual, but simultaneously occurring factors, forming an integrated unit. It stands to reason that once a probable model of space usage within a community has been developed, it should be transferable to contemporary settlements within the same culture, and that such models should be employed in research to help scholars make new observations about past cultures. Possibly the approach commonly applied to societies that are known only from partly preserved archaeological remains would be more practical. However, it should be noted that describing prehistoric societies in terms of modern thinking or Western cultural categories, would be inappropriate (cf. BURKE 2000: 61; SMITH 2003: 28). It would not be possible to compare all aspects of modern life with prehistoric circumstances, although it seems that some general and the most basic problems of past communities can be examined even through modern analogies.

In case of MH and LH settlements in Corinthia, the single greatest problem in studying social space is the fact that no one settlement has been completely excavated. Incomplete publication of finds from dwellings and individual interiors, as well as poor documentation of settlement patterns (particularly in the North), are another difficulty. Models, which are supposed to enable researchers to identify the most significant buildings within a settlement or to characterise mutual relations among households and the various parts of a village, might be neither suitable for nor readily adaptable to this kind of study. One should also remember that it is entirely possible that many structures, including some potentially significant ones, may be as yet undiscovered, and that any conclusions which we draw about the social structure of a given village must therefore be open to reinterpretation if new discoveries are made (cf. GRØN 1991: 106-108). Since no large-scale survey has been conducted in the

North Corinthia, any reconstruction of settlement patterns and hierarchies in this province must be highly tentative. Blegen's survey of the area around the site of Korakou, performed synchronic with the excavations at Korakou from 1915 to 1916, remains to this day one of the most useful sources of information about this region (ROTHAUS 1998). The trial excavations at Gonia were the result of Blegen's observations on settlement pattern in Corinthia (BLEGEN 1931: 55-80; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 70-71). Nevertheless, our knowledge about settlement patterns in North Corinthia is still unsatisfying. According to Rothaus et al.: "It is scarcely possible to form a coherent picture of life in prehistoric Corinthia from this scattered and uneven information" (ROTHAUS, REINHARDT, TARTARON, NOLLER 2003: 37).

A similar difficulty concerns the site of Korakou. Blegen's excavations of 1915-1916 (BLEGEN 1921) have been conducted in an extensive scale and uncovered a large part of a Late Bronze Age settlement. The research would give us a great opportunity to understand spatial organisation of the settlement, but unfortunately the publication is frequently very imprecise and unclear in descriptions of architectural phases of buildings, movable material (e.g. pottery) and fixed equipments. Thus one can never be sure, if the walls and constructions described by the excavator as belonging to the same phase, were truly synchronic, and in consequence reconstructions of use of given spaces are neither always possible nor satisfactory. Material from Korakou was reexamined by Dickinson (1972), Rutter (1974), Davis (1979) and Lambropoulou (1991), therefore the chronology and stratigraphy of the site have been better understood. Despite this, some chronological problems have not been solved, and in several situations the picture of the MH and LH IIIB-C settlement remains unclear.

Social Space in Corinthia (Fig. 1)

Settlements in the MH and LH periods in Corinthia were fairly dense, particularly in its northern part (the coast of the Corinthian Gulf) (SIENNICKA 2003a). Apart from Korakou, a number of sites inhabited in the MH and LH periods are known (RUTTER 2003). Aghios Gerasimos is situated on a mound to the west of Korakou on the coast of the Corinthian Gulf. There is evidence for habitation in the MH period (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 63), Early and Late Mycenaean phases (LH I/II-LH IIIB), as well as funerary usage – i.e. a chamber tomb dating from LH IIIA2/B1 in the neighbourhood of the site or at Xerokastelli and

² Definition of a model: a mental construction which simplifies reality to make it comprehensible (BURKE 2000: 41)

Pitsa (a chamber tomb of LH IIB) (MORGAN 1999: 357, 469). At New Corinth several graves have been uncovered: a tomb dates from LH IIIA (?), a chamber tomb from LH II-III B near the railway station, as well as what are probably two dromoi of chamber tombs at Aghios Spyridhon (MORGAN 1999: 470). The settlement at Gonia was probably inhabited from the Neolithic to LH III B. Ceramic finds from the MH period are common at the site, although architectural remains are rather scarce. Evidence for the early MH period comes from eastern and central part of the mound and for the middle and late phases mainly from central area of the site (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 70-72, 107-108). Remains of defensive walls, as well as domestic architecture reminiscent of that from Korakou, date from the Late Mycenaean phase (BLEGEN 1921: 116; BLEGEN 1931; RUTTER 1974: 529-535). According to Hope Simpson and Dickinson, the finds from Gonia do not indicate that the settlement was of great importance (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 63), while according to other scholars Gonia appears to form part of a centre of considerable late prehistoric activity. During the 1998 season of the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey some Mycenaean material was also revealed on a hill at Giriza, near Gonia (TARTARON 2000). It seems possible that a cemetery of chamber tombs, found in Hexamilia-Giriza, belonged to the settlement of Gonia (MORGAN 1999: 474). Other MH ceramic material comes from Aetopetra (HATZIPOULIOU-KALLIRI 1978), Arapiza and Pedikaria (BLEGEN 1920, 3-7). At Aetopetra and Arapiza both earlier and later MH (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 144), as well as LH II-III pottery types are represented (MORGAN 1999: 470, 474). According to the report of the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey, the Perdikaria-Rachi Boska site was located in a strategic position – it straddled the junction of the routes leading to/from both Isthmia and Kenchrai (BLEGEN 1920: 7). In LH III B it might have been one of a series of fortified settlements, including also Korakou (TARTARON 2000), since a 30-meter long fragment of a cyclopean wall has been found (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 64). Mylos Cheliotou was located in the western part of Korinthia on the route leading to the Argolid (BLEGEN 1920: 3; TARTARON 2000). The site was inhabited from EH I to LH III B (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 62) and perhaps related to the North Cemetery, which indicates a prosperous society in the late MH period (BLEGEN, YOUNG, PALMER 1964; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 147; RUTTER 2003: 78; cf. LAVEZZI

2003: 73). A settlement existed at Ancient Corinth as early as EH and possibly in MH (LAVEZZI 2003). Mycenaean pottery (LH III B - IIIC Middle) has been preserved in the fill from a pit found in the ancient city. A chamber tomb cemetery was situated on the hillside of the ancient city (MOUNTJOY 1999: 197), and on the northern slopes of Acrocorinth, in the area later occupied by the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, there was probably a small farming hamlet of which a single dwelling has been preserved. It has been stated on the basis of ceramic evidence that this building remained in use in the LH III B - IIIC periods (RUTTER 1979). A recently discovered (unexcavated) site at Dorati, which can be possibly identified as Corinthian Orneai mentioned by Homer and Strabo (MARCHAND 2002), is another worth mentioning settlement³. The location on a hill overlooking the Nemea River, large size of the site, as well as quantity and quality of the surface material and architectural remains make Dorati probably one of the major Mycenaean settlements in the Korinthia. Excavation project would be here highly appreciated in order to confirm a status of the site and its relations with the Argolid and with other Corinthian centres.

It seems that a different situation existed in southern Korinthia, where Tsoungiza in the Nemea Valley (WRIGHT 1990; WRIGHT et al. 1990), Aidonia in Phleious Basin (MARAN 2001b; MARAN 2003), and Zygorouries in Longopotamos Valley (BLEGEN 1928; THOMAS 1992) were of the greatest importance beginning probably from the end of MH. At the end of EH a distinctive habitation break occurred and the sites were resettled no earlier than the end of MH (WRIGHT et al. 1990: 629, 641; WRIGHT 1990). Rutter suggests that North Korinthia or perhaps Arcadia are the most likely sources for the new settlers of Tsoungiza and Zygorouries. He compares the ceramic assemblages of Tsoungiza and the North Cemetery of Corinth and notes that they share several characteristics among which are the absence of Aegean imports, and of Minoanizing and Grey Minyan wares (RUTTER 1990: 452-455). According to Lambropoulou the absence or presence of any given type of ware might not be a decisive criterion for identifying potential sources of origin. The lack of systematic surveys in the region of North Korinthia does not allow us to study the diachronic development of settlement patterns in that area. On the other hand, information from the North Cemetery of Corinth indicates that some sort of a “power” group had emerged in the region by the late MH phase. Lambropoulou does not believe, however, that any elite was responsible for a revival of settlements

³ I thank Prof. J. Wright for turning my attention to this site.

in the south of Corinthia. There is no evidence for an increase in population in the north and an expansion of settlement to adjacent areas (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 288-289). The pottery uncovered in Early Mycenaean levels in South Corinthia indicates limited ties with the Argolid (MORGAN 1999: 199-200) and Aegina (LINDBLOM 2001: 41, 108); the contacts with the Argolid were closer in the Late Mycenaean phase (MORGAN 1999: 200). This was probably associated with the increasing political and economical importance of Mycenae and the economic subordination of the nearby Nemea Valley as early as the Early Mycenaean phase (MORGAN 1999: 358-361; CHERRY, DAVIS 2001)⁴.

It seems reasonable to divide the region of Corinthia into two cultural sub-regions: northern (coastal) and southern (inland). According to Lambropoulou, such division can be based not only on geographical differences, but more importantly on significant differences in settlement pattern, as well as kind of isolation of the inland part from the rest of the Aegean world, particularly in MH period (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 144). It appears that especially in the inland (south) part of Corinthia the prehistoric habitation was concentrated around valleys, among which Nemea, Phleious and Kleonai played the most important role (MARAN 2001a, 2001b, 2003; WRIGHT et al. 1990).

Settlements in Corinthia, like in other regions in Bronze Age Greece, were usually situated on low hills or mounds, and at several sites the remains of architecture and fortifications have been preserved (Korakou, Zygouries, Aetopetra, Mylos Cheliotou, Acrocorinth, Gonia, Tsoungiza). Material collected in excavations and surveys indicates a denser settlement pattern in the Mycenaean period and particular during the latter part of this period (MORGAN 1999: 361). Given the present state of research, one can say with some confidence that Korakou was one of the largest and the most significant settlements in Corinthia (ROTHAUS 2000: 21), and it was inhabited almost without interruption from EH to the end of LH IIIC Advanced (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 144; RUTTER 1974). The settlement was situated on a mound, on the southern coast of the Corinthian Gulf (Fig. 2). Due to its exposed location and a panoramic view over the plain, the settlement was able to control a nearby area. Fortifications erected possibly in LH IIIB-C (BLEGEN 1921: 98; cf. RUTTER 1974: 414-420)

formed a defensive system of settlement and at the same time indicate the prominent position of Korakou in the region (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 61). The area directly around the site remains largely unexplored, but it can be assumed that there were small villages and so-called satellite settlements in close proximity. On the land owned by the Gkilla-Argyri family, ca 700 m from the site, trial trenches have been opened. Two walls preserved to the height of two rows and LH IIIB - IIIC pottery have been uncovered (BANAKA-DIMAKI 1982: 101). It seems possible therefore that some buildings, and perhaps even a lower town, were constructed at the foot of the knoll, and the actual inhabited area of late Mycenaean settlement was much more extensive than the excavations from the mound itself would suggest⁵.

Within the MH and LH periods Korakou probably maintained trade and/or cultural contacts with settlements located in the surrounding area (Mylos Cheliotou, New Corinth, Ancient Corinth, Gonia), as well as with other more distant centres (Zygouries, Tsoungiza, Mycenae; FRENCH 2002: fig. 3). The presence of arable plains and proximity to the Corinthian Gulf may have determined the location of many of the settlements in the coastal region, which in turn encouraged an increase in trade and fishing⁶. Further, the region has been a major point of passage throughout its history – the land connecting the Peloponnese and the mainland to the north and south, as well as the major sea route in the northern half of the eastern Mediterranean (ROTHAUS 1998; ROTHAUS, REINHARDT, TARTARON, NOLLER 2003: 37). Trading routes linking North Corinthia with the Argolid (CHERRY, DAVIS 2001: 143, fig. 10.1; JANSEN 2002: 16-18, 31-47), and the Saronic Gulf with Mainland Greece on the opposite side of the Corinthian Gulf⁷, must have been of great importance (BLEGEN 1920: 8-9). It is known that MH pottery from Aegina (with a characteristic “gold mica” inclusion) reached the Corinthian sites, i.e. Korakou, Gonia, and Tsoungiza (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 145; LINDBLOM 2001: 107-108, table 43). According to Lambropoulou it is clear that Corinthia was rather isolated from the rest of the Aegean during the MH period, since there is no Minoan and Cycladic pottery at the Corinthian sites, whereas ceramics from Aegina were present (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 335-336, 346). Aeginetan ware became even more popular in the Mycenaean period (Korakou, Zygouries,

⁴ I thank Prof. J. Maran for this suggestion.

⁵ Hope Simpson and Dickinson estimate the size of the settlement at over 225000 m² (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 61), while the excavated area was of ca 2700 m²

⁶ For research on Bronze Age harbours in Corinthia see: ROTHAUS 2000; TARTARON, ROTHAUS, PULLEN 2003;

ROTHAUS, REINHARDT, TARTARON, NOLLER 2003

⁷ E.g. possibly with the site at Livadostro: Kastro (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 250-251), situated on the small coastal plain in the northern part of the Corinthian Gulf, on the river, inhabited in EH-LH IIIB. I thank Prof. J. Wright for this information.

Tsougiza, Gonia, Aetopetra, Arapiza, Isthmia (LINDBLOM 2001: 41-43, 107-108). It seems probable that in the Early Mycenaean phase (since LH I) Corinthia maintained commercial relations with the Saronic Gulf (Aegina), Boeotia and, either directly or indirectly through Aegina, with the Cycladic islands and Crete, which can be confirmed by pottery found at Corinthian sites (Korakou, Gonia, Tsougiza, Zygouries) (DICKINSON 1972; DAVIS 1979; MORGAN 1999: 360, 199; LINDBLOM 2001: 41, 107-108). More intense contacts with the Argolid, indicated by ceramic imports, can be dated for LH IIA-LH IIIC (MOUNTJOY 1999: 199-201), while the Aeginetan ware of Late Mycenaean phase reached this region in smaller amounts (LINDBLOM 2001: 41). Scarce material from Ancient Corinth indicates that the settlement maintained contacts with Phocis (MOUNTJOY 1999: 201).

At this point we need to ask whether the archaeological evidence allows us to identify a particular political and economic centre for Corinthia and to establish a hierarchy of settlements in this region. No remains of monumental or palatial architecture, or *tholoi* tombs, which might indicate the emergence of political elite or royal families in the province (DARCQUE 1987; CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 44-46, 55-56), have been uncovered in the northern part of the Corinthia so far (CHERRY, DAVIS 2001: 143, 156). The only known tholos tomb comes from Phleious valley (inland part of Corinthia) and may be probably related to the settlement (acropolis) and the cemetery of Aidonia (MARAN 2003: 22). Only at Korakou have architectural remains been uncovered which might have formed a part of a monumental structure of greater importance. A monumental stone threshold and a wall fragment that could belong to a Mycenaean important complex or even palace (as Blegen suggested; BLEGEN 1921: 97) have been preserved in the northern part of the site. We cannot therefore exclude the possibility that there was a representative building in the settlement, although it is still unclear if it belonged to a local chief or rather to a rich citizen (see below for the discussion). House P was another exceptional building, noticeably larger than others and with a more complicated plan, although the analysis of its arrangement and furnishing indicates that the dwelling did not differ seriously from others in these respects (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 303). There are also other indications that some members of this community could have enjoyed a relatively high social and economic status: a fresco fragment uncovered to the south of House O, and a number of worked and unworked bronze fragments

– perhaps from a production area – from the north of House O (BLEGEN 1921: 94, 97; MORGAN 1999: 358). Unfortunately, the fresco fragment was too small to say anything about the subject of the painting, and thus possibly more about the status of the house (cf. TOURNAVITOU 1999a).

Other buildings at Korakou seem to be of unexceptional construction, size and furnishing. Nevertheless, it remains possible that the settlement served as a centre for several satellite-settlements, which formed an agriculture or economic base for Korakou.

If it is unclear that Korakou was politically supreme in the Late Bronze Age (and the lack of any known chamber or *tholoi* tombs in the vicinity certainly casts doubt on this assumption; MORGAN 1999: 358), is it possible to point to other candidates for the role of political centre of Corinthia in MH and LH? It seems possible that it could have been located at New Corinth (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 147), because in LH II-IIIIB a chamber tombs cemetery functioned there (HOPE SIMPSON, DICKINSON 1979: 61; MORGAN 1999: 470). No architecture dating from the Bronze Age has been preserved in the modern town of Corinth (New Corinth), but it was quite possibly the main political centre of Corinthia as early as the MH period (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 147). Its strategic location in proximity to the Corinthian Gulf and a communication route leading from Corinthia to Argolid (DICKINSON 1999: fig. 5.34, CHERRY, DAVIS 2001: fig. 10.1), as well as a chamber tombs cemetery speak in favour for that possibility (cf. CAVANAGH, MEE 1998: 61-62).

The absence of any intensive survey of North Corinthia, which would give us more details about development in this province within MH and LH periods, forms a real obstacle to the reconstruction of settlement patterns. The results of a survey conducted in the Nemea Valley and the Phleious Basin in Southwestern Corinthia indicate intensive habitation from the end of MH down to the end of Late Mycenaean phase. The distribution of pottery indicates a hierarchy of settlements in this area: large settlements – over 2 ha (Tsougiza – ca 7,5 ha⁸, Zygouries, Phleious?, Aidonia?), average – ca 1,5-2 ha (Aghia Irini) and small farming hamlets (CHERRY, DAVIS 2001: 148-152; MARAN 2003: 22). Supposedly a similar situation obtained on the coast of the Corinthian Gulf, although it appears that in this area there is a greater number of large sites (Korakou, Gonia, Ancient Corinth, Aetopetra, Mylos Cheliotou), and all of them could have fulfilled important functions in the

⁸ This figure is based on the survey data and may not represent actual size of the settlement, which was probably not larger than

3 ha (J. Wright, personal communication).

region⁹. It seems possible that smaller satellite-settlements were located in the areas around large centres, including small hamlets consisting of only a few households. At this stage of research it seems impossible to state with a certainty whether we are dealing with a situation in which one of known settlements (Korakou, Mylos Cheliotou or Gonia) dominated, or whether we have a loose regional integration of relatively equal centres (MORGAN 1999: 361; ROTHHAUS, REINHARDT, TARTARON, NOLLER 2003: 37-38). It may be possible that these settlements were of great importance as political and economic centres, but without the citadels and palaces which excavations e.g. in the Argolid have lead us to expect¹⁰.

Organisation of the Settlement at Korakou (Fig. 3)

The settlement of Korakou is located on a mound measuring ca 260 x 115 m and rising for about 15 m above the surrounding plain. The site was partly excavated by the American School of Classical Studies in 1915-1916 (BLEGEN 1921: 1). Architectonic remains dating from EH (BLEGEN 1921: 75-75), MH (BLEGEN 1921: 76-79) and LH (BLEGEN 1921: 79-99) have been uncovered on the plateau of the hill. Pottery from the “East Alley sounding” between Late Mycenaean Houses M and L (BLEGEN 1921: table 1, fig. 134) proved that the settlement existed almost without interruption from EH until LH IIIC Advanced period (DAVIS 1979: 236-238; MORGAN 1999: 357. MH levels at Korakou: LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 34-67; LH I pottery: DAVIS 1979; LH II pottery: DICKINSON 1972; LH IIIB-C levels: RUTTER 1974).

As it was said above, the picture of the settlement is not satisfying due to insufficient information given in the final publication of the site. The general plan of the settlement is somewhat complicated, because all the phases of habitation have been depicted together. In many cases the publication is unclear in describing the following phases of given establishments, as well as types and quantities of movable equipment. The Lambropoulou’s study on MH phases (1991) and Rutter’s study on the ceramic and other material from LH IIIB-C levels at Korakou (1974), even if very helpful, could not fill this gap. The researchers have re-examined the material preserved from the excavations in a limited number and stored in the Museum of Corinth, and reconstructed the

stratigraphy according to Blegen’s notebooks and on stylistic grounds of pottery. Since most of the pottery and potsherds from the excavations has been thrown away by Blegen, our knowledge about the MH and LH levels at Korakou remains very limited. Despite this chronological and stratigraphic difficulties let us try to summarize the evidence for the MH and LH periods at Korakou (Table 1).

Korakou was inhabited during most of the MH period, although the architectural remains of that phase are very scarce. Only four buildings have been partly uncovered and their relative dates within the MH period cannot be clearly determined. Lambropoulou suggests that all structures and deposits in the eastern part of the site belong to the earlier part of the MH period and range in date from MH I-II (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 51, 67). In the area to the west of LH House H, two walls forming an apse have been found, but no pottery has been published (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 47-48). To the south-east of House H the remains of a rectangular building have been preserved (BLEGEN 1921: 78-79; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 50-51), which are partially covered by House F (a building with an apsidal plan) together with the smaller building B which is separated from House F by a narrow passageway and may have served a subsidiary purpose (BLEGEN 1921: 76-78, fig. 110; MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 307). To the south of buildings F and B there was an area of 1,6-2m, paved with pebbles. According to Blegen it was a street, other traces of which have been uncovered to the east and west of this section (BLEGEN 1921: 78). Another building of MH date was situated below House P, although nothing but the clay floor and large quantity of Grey Minyan potsherds have been preserved (RUTTER 1974: 140-141; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 35-39). Remains dated for MH at Korakou seem to be too scarce to support a discussion on spatial organisation of the settlement, although the presence of a paved street and the average-size dwelling F (ca 40 m²) suggests that the settlement was well planned and consisted of small (?) buildings situated along alleys.

Additional data pertain to the levels dating from the Late Mycenaean phase. The settlement in LH IIIB-C Advanced (RUTTER 1974) consisted of rectangular, probably ground-floor dwellings (cf. WHITTAKER 1997: 122) of average dimensions and small numbers of rooms (three is typical). It should be noted, however, that most of the buildings might have contained additional

⁹ According to Lambropoulou, Korakou and Gonia give a stronger impression of organization than do Tsoungiza and Zygouries (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 147)

¹⁰ Compare with the results of the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey (ROTHHAUS 1998)

rooms which have either not been excavated or have not been preserved: for example the walls of House H continue to the north, the walls of House M to the south and east, and the walls of House P to the east and southern-west, where other rooms probably existed. House O is supposed to form part of a larger complex extending north from the currently excavated area, as Blegen suggested (BLEGEN 1921: 94), while houses M and H may in fact form one dwelling (cf. HIESEL 1990: 49). Thus we should keep in mind that households often had quite complicated plans, which may not yet be fully understood, and that building now thought of as separate structures may in fact have been part of a larger, connected complex. The settlement was densely inhabited and the plans of its buildings were irregular, which was probably a reaction to the need to adapt dwellings arrangements to fit the available space. Mylonas Shear noted for instance, that an area east of Room 2 in House P might not have belonged to this complex, as Blegen suggested (BLEGEN 1921: 89), but instead could have formed a part of an independent building, consisting of large rectangular room to the north-west, a smaller square room to the north-east and the aforementioned area to the east of House P (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 305). According to Blegen dwellings in the settlement were frequently repaired, rebuilt, remodelled and enlarged (BLEGEN 1921: 79).

There were few large architectonic complexes at the LH IIIB-C Korakou: House P with a plan reconstructable to a certain degree; probably a building in area K; and a complex consisting of House O and remains to the north of it. None of these dwellings contain features characteristic of a residence of local ruler, although their sizes and furnishings suggest the high social and economic status of their inhabitants. To the north of House P the remains of a large building which might have

belonged to the complex, have been preserved, including a monumental threshold, a wall fragment and a possible cult construction¹¹. Unfortunately, the edge of the mound fell away toward the seashore and the building foundation has been destroyed¹². The threshold may indicate that a large residence or – as Blegen suggested – even a palace existed at Korakou (BLEGEN 1921: 97). Such large thresholds of conglomerate (as well as of other stones) and of similar dimensions were used for instance in palaces at Mycenae and Tiryns (KÜPPER 1996: 115-118), and were probably related to a structural hierarchy in the Mycenaean architecture¹³. In non-palatial settlements large stone thresholds have not been used as a rule (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 442). The question if the remains at Korakou could be interpreted in the similar way as the examples from the palaces, must remain unanswered. We should consider, however, the possibility that an establishment of some special significance existed at Korakou.

Besides domestic architecture, two alleys running along houses have been uncovered: between houses L and M and between houses K and L. There were possibly also other passages: running between houses K and O, as well as north of House L, west of House O and south-east of House P (BLEGEN 1921: 89, 94-95, 97). No traces of a public square/court¹⁴, structures of evidently special functions (e.g. a workshop¹⁵), administrative building, sanctuary or cult place have been exposed¹⁶.

It does not seem possible to identify any single building on the basis of localisation or architectonic features, or by comparison with others structures within the settlement, as the dominant structure at Korakou (cf. GRØN 1991: 106-114). Unquestionably the largest complex for which we have a partially reconstructed plan, was House P, dated to LH IIIB/C-C Advanced (RUTTER 1974: 134-314). According to Darcque House P measured 19,8 m (N-S) x 16,5 m (E-W)

¹¹ A massive flat block of hard conglomerate formed a door threshold (block measurements: 1.74 x 0.87 m). The block had a cutting for the doorsill of a width of 1.48 m, as well as a round pivot hole (diameter: 0.08 m, depth: 0.05 m). 3,75 m to the south of the monumental threshold a small circular construction of rough stones with a diameter of 0.95 m has been excavated. It was covered with a thick layer of ash containing animal bones and potsherds (10 complete vases have been restored). According to the excavator, the level of the foundation corresponds well with the threshold and belonged to the building with the monumental threshold. The area to the south of the threshold could have served as a court and the circular construction as an altar (BLEGEN 1921: 97-98). A similar structure has been unearthed in the Cult Centre at Mycenae (MYLONAS 1972: 122-123; MYLONAS 1973: 101-102; ALBERS 1994: 18-19). The re-examination of the material from Korakou from the Area R showed that the stratification and chronology of its strata, as well as character of the whole area

are not clear (RUTTER 1974: 351-381)

¹² According to Blegen the hill probably extended 8-10 m farther north (BLEGEN 1921: 97)

¹³ On the use of conglomerate in residential and sepulchral architecture see: WRIGHT 1982: 191-192; WRIGHT 1987: 177-184

¹⁴ To the south of House P, i.e. in the area supposed by Blegen to have been the entrance to the building, a stone paved area has been preserved (BLEGEN 1921: 85). This place can be interpreted as court or square in the front of the building, or as activity area (see section: Space inside buildings).

¹⁵ With the possible exception of House H, where a workshop might have existed (RUTTER 1974: 317; HIESEL 1990: 49). It seems, however, that this building served also as a regular house.

¹⁶ Except for the supposed altar to the north of House P (BLEGEN 1921: 97-98)

(DARCQUE 1980b: 62). The building was erected on the top of the hill (i.e. in an exposed place) and was easily visible within the settlement (MORGAN 1999: 357). It might be suggested, therefore, that it belonged to the most significant resident, or even to a chief or ruler. On the other hand, the house was probably not isolated from other buildings by a wall or empty space surrounding it (cf. DARCQUE 1980b: 62). The excavation did not continue further west, so House P is the last unearthed structure in that area. Blegen believed that the house belonged to a substantial inhabitant of the settlement (BLEGEN 1921: 89), but it is probably more accurate to surmise that a rich family lived here over a period of several generations. If we accept the interpretation of Hiesel (HIESEL 1990: 90), features in the largest room of the house (Blegen's "megaron") were associated with the processing of agricultural products, but it must be kept in mind that they were constructed in the structure's final phase of occupation (RUTTER 1974: 314). On the other hand, if the constructions in the main room were of cult character, as Blegen asserts (BLEGEN 1921: 86), we would be dealing with the only case at Korakou where there was a cult structure inside a dwelling. To be fair though, we should note that the chronology and stratification of House P is extremely unclear. It is very difficult to distinguish the successive phases of the establishment's occupation. It seems that "(...) Blegen's plan of House P is a combination of the architecture to be associated with both floor 1 and floor 2" (RUTTER 1974: 547), that is levels belonging to two different phases of LH IIIC (Early and Advanced). Nevertheless, House P, even with its unclear chronology, had the most complicated plan and consisted of rooms, which almost certainly had specialised functions (kitchen, cabinet/storeroom, bedroom/guestroom, interior of manufacture or cult character). One should also notice the unique plan of the house, especially regarding expended breadth wise two north rooms, each with a door opening to the main room and with a hearth.

Most of the other buildings were of a domestic character, although production functions can be suggested in two cases. North of House O a few bronze fragments (some of them were worked) have been found, which according to Morgan indicate the presence of a production area (MORGAN 1999: 358). Furthermore, a pair of bronze chisels belonging to two phases of the westernmost room of House H could suggest a workshop (RUTTER 1974: 317; HIESEL 1990: 49). If we accept these features as signs that these buildings were workshops (cf. TOURNAVITOU 1988), we would be dealing with production sites situated within habitation areas, which were probably neither self-sufficient nor separated from other dwellings. The workshops may have been local, their owners producing articles of everyday use for themselves and for the inhabitants of the settlement. There is no reason to believe that this kind of activity was

ever the basis for the economic growth of the settlement.

Cult buildings or constructions present similar problems. It is impossible to point to buildings, that were of an unequivocally ritual nature, although scholars have identified the features of two structures as ceremonial. Blegen interpreted the stone structure north of House P as an altar, although it also seems possible, given the fact that animal bones and potsherds from used and broken vases were found in it, that it was simply a stone hearth. Neither construction from the main room of House P indicates cult functions, even though it is very difficult to explain their purpose. No movable material, which might have been associated with religious ceremonies (i.e. drinking vessels, rhytons, terracotta figurines. Cf. PILAFIDOU-WILLIAMS 1998: 210-215) has been uncovered.

The similarity of the dimensions of the houses at Korakou, the number of rooms, and their furnishings suggest that dwellings were inhabited by people of comparable social status. Frequent restorations and modernizations of the buildings show that new generations used the previously constructed houses (cf. CHAPMAN 1991: 81). Morgan remarks that there is no evidence to suggest that the spatial organisation of the settlement in the Late Mycenaean phase changed radically, as occurred in palatial centres in other parts of Greece in this period (MORGAN 1999: 357).

Space Inside Buildings

On the basis of the architectonic features, fixed furnishings and movable equipment of houses it is possible to analyse individual interiors of buildings and make an attempt to describe their functions, although this task can be very problematic due to inadequate publication of the site.

Despite this difficulty, in my view a functional analysis can be made on the basis of the architectural plans of buildings. Thus we can distinguish the interiors of the buildings as porticoes, vestibules, rooms equipped with hearths and other fixed structures, as well as rear rooms. Other items (pottery, small objects) enable us to characterise individual interiors and activities performed by inhabitants in different parts of buildings.

Porticoes and vestibules

Most of buildings at Korakou consisted of three parts: vestibule (House H, House L, House O) and/or portico (House L, House O), main chamber (cf. DARCQUE 1980a: 61) and rear room, situated farthest away from the entrance of the building. The porches and vestibules might have been of private, semi-private or semi-public in character. In cases where a vestibule was placed next to an alley (House H) or public area (paved area in the front of House P?), we can assume that people who were passing by the building could look into its interior, and thus

the place had limited private character. Whittaker notes that a porch or anteroom might have formed a shaded extension of an outer court, and also it might have protected the inner rooms from wind and rain (WHITTAKER 1997: 127). The entrance of House L, which was equipped with a portico and vestibule, did not lead directly from the street, that ran along its eastern wall. It is not unlikely that another alley ran to the south of the house, but the excavation did not continue in that direction. If there was no street here, the portico must have been of a semi-private nature. Blegen noticed that the openings between the vestibule and portico, and between vestibule and the main room, were not placed on the same axis. Perhaps this arrangement was designed to prevent passers-by from looking into the main room of the building and thus to ensure the privacy of its residents. An additional explanation can be also given: such a combination of the openings would protect the hearth in the main room from draughts (BLEGEN 1921: 81-82). Anterooms and porticoes could be described as passageways by means of which the inhabitants controlled the comings and goings of visitors to the house (SANDERS 1990: 54-71; WHITTAKER 1997: 128). A porch and vestibule are also found in House O. In these cases (House L, House O) porticoes seem to have been semi-public places used for household activities or spending free time. Therefore a vestibule that was situated behind a porch remained more private than in cases it fronted the street directly.

The publication indicates that all vestibules and porticoes at Korakou were free of movable material (pottery, small objects). The vestibule of House L (the second room of the dwelling) was furnished with a stone platform (0.97 m x 0.57 m), raised slightly above floor level. Its function is difficult to ascertain, with a role as a shelf or bench being the best guess. The vestibule was a relatively small and shallow room (1,2-1,36 m x ca 4,8 m – ca 6m²); its floor was at least partly paved with stones, while the portico remained unpaved. The porch of House O was also shallow (1,5 m), and no movable objects have been preserved inside. The “vestibule” of House P was relatively large and deep, and was most likely a separate room where the entrance was placed, or a room situated next to the corridor or staircase. Mylonas Shear noticed, however, that the presence of a staircase or corridor in this place cannot be reasonably explained, and the double-wall there may be the product of two separate

building phases (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 304-305). It may be that the room situated in the front part of the dwelling, next to the hypothetical street or at least the edge of a cobblestone pavement, was not a vestibule, but served as a production area, or perhaps a kind of semi-public area of distribution. An oval container of limestone, which was uncovered in the front of the entrance, might have been related with this activity. It could have been used for water or other liquids, but its function remains uncertain. In the bottom there was a hole to let out water¹⁷, and the container may have played a role in some kind of production activity¹⁸. It is hard to imagine that it was used as bathtub given its location near the entrance to the house, although its size could support this interpretation¹⁹. The paved area could also be related to the regular use of water. Since House P was not entirely excavated, it should be kept in mind that the main entrance could have been located elsewhere, and the “vestibule” formed a part of a side wing of the complex. If the central room of the dwelling was used in some kind of production or food products processing, perhaps the south part of the house had an industrial character, while the north and east remained more private.

There was probably no porch or vestibule in House M, and the entrance to the main room led directly from the alley. Therefore this interior could not have remained entirely private, because the door, which was the main source of light and fresh air, was in all likelihood open most of the time. Mylonas Shear proposed a different localisation of the main entrance: it might have been placed in the south part of the room, and further south a portico or vestibule can be reconstructed (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 302). Another localisation can be suggested in the destroyed east wall of the main room based on the plan of the building.

To sum up, it appears that vestibules and porches mainly served as extended passageways, as open spaces that sheltered inner and more private rooms (transitional function) and possibly as areas suitable for the storage of household items (vases, containers, tools), as well as places for various household activities.

Interiors with hearths

Hearths have been preserved in most of the buildings at Korakou (except for House O)²⁰. Excluding houses P and H, where more than one hearth has been

¹⁷ Container's measurement: 0.75 m x 1.43 m, depth: 0.35 m, wall thickness: ca 0.10 m (BLEGEN 1921: 85, fig. 115)

¹⁸ At Kanakia (Salamis) in the Industrial Unit IA large parts of two clay bath-tubs have been found, one of which had remnants of lime-plaster on its inner surface (LOLOS 2003: 21, 50)

¹⁹ Clay bath-tubs are known from several Mycenaean sites, e.g. Aghios Kosmas (MYLONAS 1959: 53, fig. 31, 171) and Zygouries (BLEGEN 1928: 142, fig. 134)

²⁰ On hearths in the Late Bronze Age settlements in Peloponnese see: TOURNAVITOU 1999b

uncovered, hearths were located in main rooms of the dwellings. Whittaker believes that the main habitation areas of the houses are to be found on the ground floor, because hearths were placed there. She also suggests that in dwellings with unpreserved permanent hearths braziers might have been used for heating and cooking (cf. HOCHSTETTER 1984: 155-164), or the fire was put directly on the floor (including construction techniques other than the normal composite of pebbles and pot sherds) (WHITTAKER 1997: 130).

Hearths were of quadrangular or irregular shape, although in several cases their original form is impossible to reconstruct. In the central part of House L two hearths belonging to succeeding phases have been preserved. Both were of irregular, roughly square shape. The centre of the earlier construction was slightly depressed, which was probably caused by the intense heat from the fire (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 298). The later construction (diameter: ca 1m) consisted of layers of clay, broken vases and pebbles, covered with layer of ash. An irregular hearth has also been preserved in House M: in the south part of the building, slightly north of the centre of the chamber, a hearth of 1.5 m diameter and construction reminiscent of houses L and P, has been found. Next to it an irregular flat stone, possibly a sort of base has been preserved which may have been meant to hold pots while they cooled after having been removed from the fire. Similar stands or stone bases were found in House H. Here in the first phase a large, irregular hearth (diameter: 1.2 m) has been exposed in the central room. After the area was divided into two separate rooms a hearth was constructed in each: a smaller one, irregular in shape, with a stone stand beside it in west room, and a larger one in east (central) part of the house. House P was furnished with three constructions, which seem to have been used in the same phase (RUTTER 1974: 314): one in the main room and one each in the two rear rooms. The largest one was placed in the middle of the main interior. It was roughly square in shape (1.36 m x 1.37 m), and made of pebbles and potsherds laid over a layer of clay. It was slightly depressed in the centre with a clay rim around its edge. In the northeast room the hearth was roughly square and was placed approximately in the middle of the room. In the northwest room the hearth was oval, and also situated in the centre.

We can safely assume that hearths were used mainly for cooking. This fact is most apparent in dwellings equipped with only one hearth. The presence of

vases and stone supports for vessels can confirm this interpretation. The rooms with hearths were the largest spaces in houses L, H and M. This was possibly a result of the fact that the largest and most important room was the centre of domestic activity and the hearth was its focal point. According to Whittaker, the placement of hearths in the middle of room improved heating – particularly if the entrance to the room was located on the shorter side. Moreover, most hearths were situated at a distance from entrances and thus were better protected from drafts (WHITTAKER 1997: 127). It is logical to assume that one result of this arrangement was that family life would have centred around the fire, since family members would have gathered around the hearth to enjoy its warmth and light²¹.

Rooms with hearths might have served other purposes as well. In House L fragments of a large *pitthos* and several broken vases have been found, while in the southwest corner of the same room a construction made of stones (measuring ca 1-1.3 m x 1.3 m²²) has been preserved. It is difficult to identify its function, but probably it served as a shelf or kind of tabletop. These features would indicate that storage or other household activities took place here.

In dwellings which had more than one hearth in use synchronously, a greater degree of specialisation can be suggested (House P, House H – second phase). In the second phase of House H (BLEGEN 1921: 92-93; RUTTER 1974: 317-349) hearths were present in two rooms. In a smaller room a construction of irregular shape has been uncovered next to the south wall. Even if we accept, following Hiesel, that this room served as a workshop (because of the chisel found here) (HIESEL 1990: 48-49), it does not exclude a cooking function of the hearth, especially since a stone (which may have served as a stand) was found nearby. In the other room there was a large, irregular hearth. There are no details in the Blegen's publication about movable material from that interior, its functions are therefore difficult to interpret. Perhaps the smaller hearth in the neighbouring room has been involved with some kind of production, while the large one with cooking and other everyday activities.

It has been already mentioned that House P was furnished with three hearths. Those placed in the north rooms were probably devoted to cooking. A small flat stone, a saddle-quern and many broken vases (of which 24 have been reconstructed, cf. RUTTER 1974: 178-205) were uncovered in the northeastern chamber. A stone

²¹ Darcque notices that hearth does not necessarily indicate the main room of a dwelling or kitchen function of a given interior (DARCQUE 1980a: 62)

²² Measurements are based on the plan (BLEGEN 1921: fig. 112). Darcque gives different measurement of the construction: 0.95 m x 0.77 m (DARCQUE 1980b: 62)

paved area has been preserved by the east wall opposite the hearth. A paved area which is not raised above the floor level but is otherwise similar, has been unearthed in the southwest corner of the chamber. The functions of these structures remain unknown, although according to Blegen the paved area found in the corner might have served as a bed. Pottery has been also uncovered in the northwestern room and a semi-circular pavement has been found in the southwestern corner, also interpreted by Blegen as a bed. He believed that this chamber was a bedroom or guestroom (BLEGEN 1921: 88-89), but it can also be imagined that both rooms formed separate apartments attached to the main chamber of the house. Each was large enough to accommodate a family (eastern room was ca 25 m², western room ca 23 m²).

House P was relatively large and complex, and hence it seems possible that individual chambers might have had their own specific character. The biggest hearth has been uncovered in the central room, but there is no detailed description of the objects found here. While it seems that the hearth was used in the same phase as the hearth from the northeastern room, there is no certainty that other constructions uncovered in the "megaron" come from the same period (cf. RUTTER 1974: 547). A roughly square construction (1.10m on a side) made of earth and potsherds with sea pebbles on the top, has been uncovered, which belongs to the last phase of the occupation this dwelling – LH IIIC Advanced (RUTTER 1974: 311-314). The platform was situated ca 0.20 m from the column base, north of the hearth. Many carbonised olive stones have been found at the edge of the platform and near the base of the column. There was also a bronze knife on the platform. This construction was raised ca 0.15-0.2 m from the floor and supported on the west side by a retaining wall made of three stone slabs set on edge. According to the excavator the platform might have been used as an altar or sacrificial table. West of the platform there was a low wall, consisting of two parts (one 3 meters long, the other 1.5 m long) with an unpreserved corner. The wall was 0.05 m high and made of pebbles and coarse sherds set in clay. It is difficult to understand the date and the function of this unusual structure. Blegen suggests that it served as a foundation for a low bench made of wood or brick and was associated with the platform and column (BLEGEN 1921: 86-87). According to Hiesel, the constructions in the main chamber were associated with food processing (HIESEL 1990: 90). Blegen suggested that the hearth from the chamber could have been of ceremonial character and have been related to the column or altar, while the hearths from northern parts fulfilled kitchen functions (BLEGEN 1921: 89). The central chamber of House P was very large (64 m²), but it appears that most of this space was occupied by permanent constructions (even if it is not clear in which phases of the occupation). There are no grounds to support Blegen's interpretation about

a cult purpose for the hearth, since no objects related with rituals have been uncovered. The function of the platform and the low wall also remain unclear.

Rooms with other fixed constructions

A few dwellings at Korakou were furnished with permanent constructions, such as stone pavements (northeast and northwest room in House P) or stone platforms (the room with hearth and vestibule of House L), perhaps serving as beds, benches or shelves (cf. WHITTAKER 1997: 129-130). Only in houses H and O were stone structures preserved in interiors without hearths. In the case of House H we are dealing with a small area covered with sea pebbles, which was interpreted by Blegen as a supporting substructure for a column base (BLEGEN 1921: 92) and in my opinion it should not be counted among permanent structures. In the chamber a number of broken vessels of domestic character (for drinking and eating) has been unearthed (BLEGEN 1921: 92-93; RUTTER 1974: 322-323), indicating that this room might have served as a "dining room". In House O, where no hearth has been preserved, in the northwest corner of the central chamber a rectangular, stone foundation has been uncovered (measurements: 1.80 x 1 m). According to Blegen it probably served as bench or bed and not a cupboard (BLEGEN 1921: 93-94). Apart from this construction no information about other equipment in the house has been given. Rutter describes only two vessels found in the area outside of House O, which cannot help us understand the functions of the rooms of House O (RUTTER 1974: 410-413).

Rooms with no fixed constructions

Most of the houses at Korakou had so-called "rear rooms", which were located farthest from the building's entrance. In three cases a building has two rear chambers: in a house in area K, in House P, and (tentatively) in a building lying east of House P (MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 305). The rear rooms were not furnished with permanent features. Several fragments of a large *pitthos* have been identified in House L, which may indicate that the interior had storage functions. Together with the *pitthos*, the remains of two flat stones of unrecognised purpose (possibly querns) have been uncovered. The room was ca 18 m² (according to Blegen's reconstruction; BLEGEN 1921: 83). In the rear room of House M there were no fixed features, and no movable objects have been described. A narrow space (ca 0.5 m deep and ca 3 m long) in the northwest part seems to be an important feature of the interior. A staircase (according to Blegen) or kind of separated cupboard (although no pottery or other objects have been found inside) may be indicated by these findings. Mylonas Shear has noticed that a wall forming a partition appeared not to bond into the west wall of the room and it may have belonged to a later phase of the house's construction (MYLONAS

SHEAR 1969: 302). In House P two rooms lacking permanent structures can be indicated. One of them was placed in the southwest part of the area and according to Blegen did not belong to the building²³. No doorways have been preserved and for that reason it is not possible to say whether there was access to this space from other rooms of House P. The function of the room remains unclear. The eastern room of the same building was oblong in shape (ca 22 m²) and does not seem to belong to the rest of the house (cf. MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 305). Blegen suggested that it was a stable (BLEGEN 1921: 89), although the possibility of a domestic function can be entertained as well²⁴.

Conclusions

The foregoing analysis of social space within regions, settlements and individual buildings has demonstrated that the social, political and economic processes occurring in Corinthia and Korakou in Middle and Late Bronze age can only partly be reconstructed from the data available from excavations, surveys, topographic research and other sources (e.g. sociological and ethnoarchaeological studies). The single greatest obstacle, as noted above, is the incomplete and unsatisfactory status of the archaeological record. A thorough exploration of the unexcavated part of the settlement at Korakou, as well as the surrounding area, in order to reveal other buildings, streets, public places, perhaps production districts, sanctuaries, or even the residence of local ruler, would be certainly the best solution. Detailed and comprehensive documentation of the area already researched, as well as of the objects collected during excavation, might enable us to accomplish a functional analysis of the buildings and their interiors, and to describe social relations within the settlement. Intensive survey in the immediate vicinity of Korakou of the area of North Corinthia would also be very useful. However, in spite of the difficulties presented by the evidence as we have it, several useful conclusions can be drawn.

By the MH period the region of North Corinthia was characterised by evenly distributed settlement patterns and a greater degree of political independence, particularly of the centres of the Argolid. Its strategic position on the coast of the Corinthian Gulf to the north, and the Saronic Gulf to the east, as well as its location athwart the trade routes connecting the northern Peloponnese with Attica, mainland Greece (on the opposite side of the Corinthian Gulf) and Argolid, had

the greatest influence on this region's development. Its location may explain significant economic and cultural development of settlements independently of the Argolid centres. Habitation continuity from the EH to the LH period at a number of sites confirms the prosperity of the province. It is difficult to identify a single political centre for Corinthia on the grounds of available evidence, although New Corinth seems to be the best candidate. It should be noted though that other settlements also achieved a high level of development, particularly in the Late Mycenaean phase, and seem to have remained independent. Tartaron suggests that Korakou and Perdikaria might have belonged to a system of defensive settlements and guarded the autonomy of Corinthia (TARTARON 2000). This would be solid evidence of the political significance of these settlements. Since North Corinthia has not been intensively surveyed, it would be premature to even speculate too much about the hierarchy of settlements in this area. It can be assumed, however, that in addition to the large sites already identified, i.e. Korakou, Corinth, Gonia and Mylos Cheliotou, there were also minor settlements and small villages which had economic, commercial and political ties with the larger communities. Korakou probably already played an important role in the settlement hierarchy of Corinthia by the MH period. The architectural remains, although scarce, demonstrate the advanced level of the MH settlement's organisation. Moreover, the pottery assemblage shows that indirect or direct relations with Aegina have been maintained during this period. Trade contacts between Korakou and other settlements of North Corinthia, and the rest of the Aegean world have been intense during the Early Mycenaean phase. This fits well with the general pattern of development for Mycenaean principalities in this period, as indicates the great commercial importance of Corinthia. It remains unclear whether Corinthian settlements specialised in exporting particular products or objects, or if their prosperity rested on their role as middlemen in the trade between the Peloponnese and other parts of Greece. The development of Corinthia might have been related to the emergence and growth of sea harbours in the Corinthian, and particularly in the Saronic Gulf. Korakou itself was poorly situated for a harbour, but it might have been enjoyed some sort of special relationship with the harbour of Lechaion (ROTHAUS 2000: 21-22). Korakou might have exchanged commodities among contractors and thus benefited from the development of other harbours, as well as from overland trade.

²³ Darcque includes it to the residence (DARCQUE 1980b: 62)

²⁴ The room was not excavated, so no details concerning its furnishing and equipment can be given (BLEGEN 1920: 89)

Analysis of settlement pattern and relations among individual buildings at Korakou turned up to be relatively difficult, mainly due to the insufficiently detailed publication of the architecture (stratigraphic/chronological doubtfulness), as well as movable material from the buildings. The studies of Rutter and Lambropoulou cleared somehow this uncertain picture and enabled us, where it was possible, to describe the following phases of the settlement's history within MH and LH period. As the ceramic evidence indicates, the site was occupied from EH to LH IIIC Advanced period, the architectural remains come, however, only from MH and LH IIIB-C period, so only this phases could have been discussed. It is quite difficult to identify, which houses have been used in exactly the same phases (cf. **Table 1**). It seems that the settlement was inhabited during most of the MH period (LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 67), while the architectural remains cover only two phases of this period (MH I-II. LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 51). From the LH period only LH IIIB-C architecture is known and it seems that most of the excavated houses and other architectural remains can be dated to LH IIIC Early-Advanced period.

Movable equipment was similar across the various dwellings and no luxury items have been preserved. No public, administrative or cult buildings have been identified within the excavated part of the site. Structures serving exclusively for storage or production have not been recognised in any phase and it might mean that these functions were carried out in the interiors of individual houses, or were located in other parts of the site. It is not possible to identify the residence of a local chief. The only complexes which differed from other establishments in regard to their sizes, furnishing or movable objects were House P and remains of the building in Area R. In House P with the most complex plan, the north rooms might have served as independent apartments, because both were equipped with hearths. It may also be possible however, that these chambers (particularly the northwestern one) had other purposes. It appears that the larger number of rooms in a house, the greater the degree of specialization those rooms revealed. In spite of that it can be suggested that in House P both the main room with its large hearth and the two northern chambers were used for a variety of activities. It is unclear whether the size of this household, as well as greater number of rooms, was the result of the higher social or economic status of its owner, or of the fact that the house was occupied by large extended family. House P is without doubt the largest of the preserved buildings at Korakou and its size

and plan distinguish it among other buildings of the settlement, but it seems that it was used only for habitation or perhaps also for manufacturing purposes (in the latest phase?). The unpreserved building in Area R appears to might have been an important structure in the settlement, and it is very unfortunate that its date could not be precisely indicated (RUTTER 1974: 351-352). The use of a large threshold made of conglomerate cannot be meaningless, however. It would be interesting to know, if this building and House P remained in use in the same phase²⁵.

In the analysis of the settlement's organisation it was not possible to attempt any secure identification of districts or areas with different kind of constructions, or to identify groups of buildings of a non-residential character. Two parallel streets and possibly other alleys inside the village imply a carefully considered spatial organisation. Streets and alleys likely separated residential or other quarters. Squares or open spaces, which might have been used by inhabitants during meetings, celebrations or for recreation, as well as work have not been recognised.

Information concerning fixed constructions and movable equipment in individual buildings were not sufficient to let us reconstruct purposes of particular parts of buildings in satisfying degree. It appears that chambers with hearths were of greatest importance and in most cases we could consider them as main interiors (cf. SIENNICKA 2003b). They were usually the largest rooms and possibly lives of the inhabitants has been concentrated here. Stone constructions (platforms, benches), as well as pavements located in the corners or adjoined to the walls, can be interpreted as serving for households activities. In three cases sizes of stone structure (House O) and pavements (north rooms of House P) seem to have been large enough to be used as beds, although other purposes should be considered, too. Stone pavements might have served as areas appropriate for work requiring isolation from the ground, or as storing places for products kept in dryness.

In regard to social space within houses it can be noted that rear chambers were of more intimate nature than other interiors, because they were placed at the greatest distance from the building entrance. They might have served as bedrooms, although their furnishing and equipment cannot confirm this (e.g. *pitios* in House L, hypothetical staircase in House M). Whittaker suggests that rear chambers in Mycenaean houses may have been used for storing food products, household equipment,

²⁵ If the remains of the building in Area R and around the "altar" belonged to the same phase (BLEGEN 1921: 97),

remains unclear (cf. RUTTER 1974: 351-381)

tools, or other objects. She also supposes that these additional chambers were constructed in order to separate the living space within the building (i.e. main rooms) from storage area, and not to enlarge the living space itself. She notices that chambers placed in the rear of a structure were the darkest areas of the buildings – if we assume that windows were few and narrow, and that the main doorway was the principle source of light. This would suggest that the rear chambers were inappropriate for household activities. It also seems very significant that these interiors were entered only from the main rooms, so that access for strangers or visitors was restricted and controlled (WHITTAKER 1997: 125-126). It should be noted, however, that features related with storage (i.e. benches, shelves, platforms or storage vessels and containers), are very uncommon in rear chambers at Korakou. Only in House L were fragments of large *pithoi* preserved in the rear rooms, thus indicating storing in these interiors.

There is very little evidence of workshops or other production/craftsmanship areas. In Korakou there were relatively few tools or features associated with production activities (or at least there were few which were described in the publication). Ordinary household activities, as well as tool production for personal use, probably took place in all houses, while the manufacture of pottery and metalworking might have occurred in other parts of the settlement, as yet unidentified in excavations. The only evidence of metallurgical activity at Korakou comes from the vicinity of House O (fragments of bronze), although it remains unknown where and how bronze has been processed. Pottery production (both fine and coarse ware) and baking might have taken place in individual buildings, although kilns were probably very fragile and easily destructible, and as a consequence not preserved in archaeological context (cf. TOURNAVITOU 1988, cf. SJÖBERG 1997: 95-96). Baking could have also occurred in other parts of the village, for example in a public kiln, like at the outskirts of the settlement at Dimini (ADRYMI-SISMANI 1999) or in a potter's quarter, similar to that found in the settlement at Berbati (SCHALLIN 1997). It is also possible that workshops were located in the unexcavated part of the village, in the lower town, or in other settlements, which provided Korakou with pottery and other objects of everyday use.

There is very little information concerning the use of interior space for storage. No storage vases or

containers have been preserved *in situ* inside rooms, on courts or in vestibules/porticoes. The only examples of *pithoi* came from House L. Stone platforms might have served as storing areas, too, although none of those uncovered at Korakou contained *in situ* pottery, storage jars or other equipment. It appears that many vases were stored in the northern chambers of House P (particularly in the northeast room), but these were not storage jars, but rather ordinary vessels being used in everyday household activities.

It is not possible to say anything certain about bathrooms or latrines in the settlement, since no drains, pipes and bathtubs have been preserved inside houses. The only example of a container, which can be connected with liquids (possibly with water), comes from the southern area of House P. It can be suggested, however, that it served another purpose, e.g. in production/processing. The only example of a pipe comes from east of area K and possibly served to drain the paved area of what may have been a megaron or court in an unpreserved building (BLEGEN 1921: 95).

Information about areas reserved for animals, such as stables, cowsheds and stockyards, is lacking. In the winter months animals were probably kept in domestic buildings while in the summer they were kept on grazing land outside the settlement. If there were any stockyards within the settlement, they may have been located in parts of the village which lay at some distance from the houses – e.g. along the fortification walls, as was the case at Malthi in Messenia (VALMIN 1932: 21). Enclosed areas for animals could have been made of wood which would explain why no remains have been preserved. It appears, however, that in the excavated part of Korakou there was no available space for keeping stock in separate enclosures.

Despite incomplete and unsatisfactory evidence from the site of Korakou and Corinthia, a picture of the settlement and region can be outlined, and social space can be characterised on three basic levels. It has been demonstrated that on the grounds of detailed examination of the commercial and political relations of the province, the architectonic remains, and the furnishing and equipment of the various settlements, it is possible to reconstruct – at least in part – the conditions of life and to better understand the mechanisms which drove the development of the settlement, and of the region in general.

Table 1. Phases of the occupation at MH-LH Korakou

House/Area	Mycenaean	MH	LH I*	LH II**	LH IIIA	LH IIIB	LH IIIC
House F		architecture, pottery ¹					
House F Area		architecture, pottery ²				pottery, architecture ³	
House B		architecture ⁴					
House P						architecture, pottery ⁵	architecture, pottery ⁶
House P Area		architecture?, pottery ⁷		graves ⁸			
House H							architecture, pottery ⁹
House H Area		architecture, pottery ¹⁰					
House L						architecture, pottery ¹¹	pottery ¹²
House L Area		pottery ¹³	pottery*	pottery**			
House M						architecture? ¹⁴	architecture? ¹⁵
House O						architecture, pottery? ¹⁶	architecture, pottery ¹⁷
House K							architecture, pottery ¹⁸
Area S		pottery ¹⁹			pottery ²⁰	pottery ²¹	pottery ²²
Area N							pottery ²³
Area X	architecture? ²⁴						pottery ²⁵
?		grave ²⁶					
Area Q						pottery ²⁷	
Area R		pottery, grave ²⁸				pottery ²⁹	pottery, architecture ³⁰

* LH I pottery has been identified in the 'East Alley sounding'. DAVIS 1979

** LH II pottery has been identified in the 'East Alley sounding'. DICKINSON 1972

¹ BLEGEN 1921: 76-78, fig. 110; MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 307; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 48-49

² BLEGEN 1921: 78-79; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 50-51

³ RUTTER 1974: 395-396

⁴ BLEGEN 1921: 76-78; MYLONAS SHEAR 1969: 307; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 49

⁵ BLEGEN 1921: RUTTER 1974: 134-314

⁶ RUTTER 1974: 134-314

⁷ RUTTER 1974: 140-141; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 35-39

⁸ BLEGEN 1921: 102; LEWARTOWSKI 2000: 81

⁹ RUTTER 1974: 348-349

¹⁰ LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 47-48

¹¹ BLEGEN 1921: 80-83; RUTTER 1974: 105-132

¹² RUTTER 1974: 131-132

¹³ LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 45

¹⁴ BLEGEN 1921: 89-91; HIESEL 1990: 107

¹⁵ BLEGEN 1921: 89-91; HIESEL 1990: 107

¹⁶ BLEGEN 1921: 93-94; RUTTER 1974: 410-413

¹⁷ BLEGEN 1921: 93-94; RUTTER 1974: 410-413

¹⁸ BLEGEN 1921: 94-96; RUTTER 1974: 396-410

¹⁹ RUTTER 1974: 387-388; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 39-41

²⁰ RUTTER 1974: 189-190

²¹ RUTTER 1974: 389-390

²² RUTTER 1974: 389-390

²³ RUTTER 1974: 390-395

²⁴ BLEGEN 1921: 98; RUTTER 1974: 414-420

²⁵ RUTTER 1974: 420

²⁶ 'Near the north edge of the hill, underneath two walls of the Late Helladic Period' – BLEGEN 1921: 100

²⁷ BLEGEN 1921: Pl. 8; RUTTER 1974: 413-414

²⁸ BLEGEN 1921: 101; LAMBROPOULOU 1991: 43-44

²⁹ RUTTER 1974: 351-381

³⁰ BLEGEN 1921: 97-98; RUTTER 1974: 351-381

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Fig. 1. MH and LH settlements in Corinthia (M. Siennicka, graphics: P. Berezowski):

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Tsoungiza | 5. Mylos Cheliotou | 9. New Corinth | 13. Isthmia |
| 2. Zygories | 6. Aghios Gerasimos | 10. Gonia | 14. Kolonna (Aegina) |
| 3. Ancient Corinth | 7. Arapiza | 11. Perdikarria | |
| 4. Aetopetra | 8. Korakou | 12. Galataki | |



Fig. 2. Korakou. Looking west toward the harbour at Lechaion (M. Siennicka)

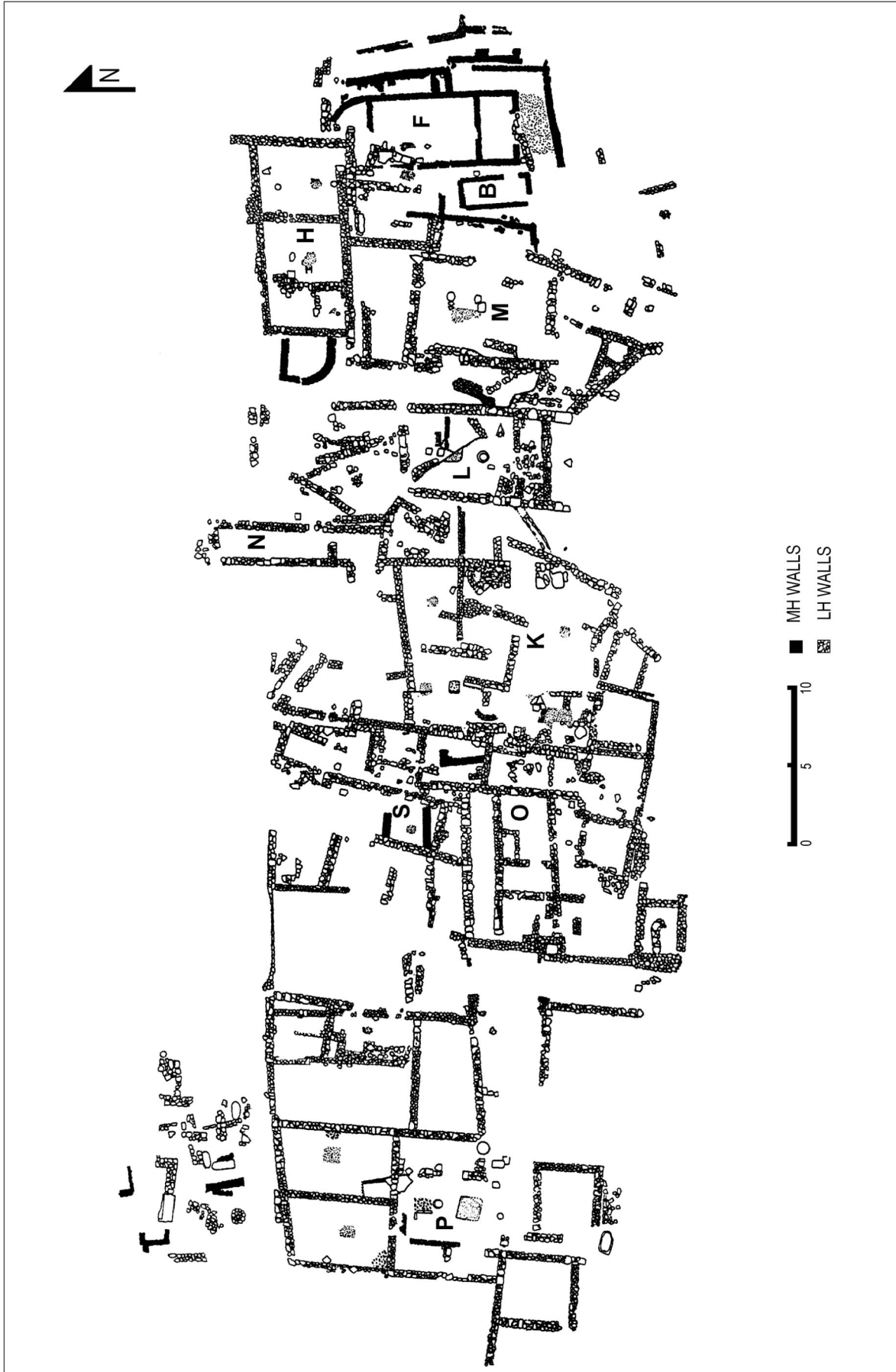


Fig. 3. Plan of Korakou in MH and LH (based on BLEGEN 1921, pl. VIII)