

# PYLOS REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, PART IV

## CHANGE AND THE HUMAN LANDSCAPE IN A MODERN GREEK VILLAGE IN MESSE니아

### ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of fieldwork, interviews, and archival research into how land use and agricultural choices in the post-1829 era have affected the landscape around the village of Maryeli in Messenia, Greece. Although relatively isolated, and never demographically significant, Maryeli's landscape bears visible marks of the ebbs and flows of world trade. While in many ways the methods of land use in Maryeli are still visibly preindustrial, the goals of land use have long been "modern" in their relationship to capitalism and international market forces. Those goals repeatedly have reshaped the land.

From 1992 to 1994 the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project (PRAP) conducted an intensive archaeological survey in southwest Messenia, Greece. Some of the results of that project have already been published in this journal.<sup>1</sup> During PRAP's final field season, our experiences while fieldwalking in and around the small mountain village of Maryeli encouraged us to conduct a deeper investigation of that village and its surrounding area (see Figs. 1 and 3). A first, unthinking look at Maryeli seemed to reveal a kind of "pristine" landscape, one conforming to all the stereotypes of a remote peasant village. The survey team found a village tightly nucleated around a central spring, and comprised of homes that were excellent examples of 19th- and early-20th-century Peloponnesian architecture (see Fig. 2). Furthermore, Maryeli's many abandoned fields, relatively limited bulldozer use, and numerous preconcrete field structures all contrasted sharply with most of the other areas in which PRAP had worked. While less prosperous and less demographically robust than the study region as a whole, Maryeli's better-preserved material record of the prewar era provided an excellent opportunity to examine change and the human presence in the landscape since Greek independence in 1829.

Studies of modern Greek villages typically have fallen into one of two camps: the ethnographic or the ethnoarchaeological. The ethnographers, relying on interviews, participant-observation, and local statistics (particularly of landholding patterns), have tended to emphasize such things as village belief systems, social structures, and kinship networks. Recent ethnographic work of a materialist vein has correctly pointed out the tre-

1. Davis et al. 1997; Zangger et al. 1997.

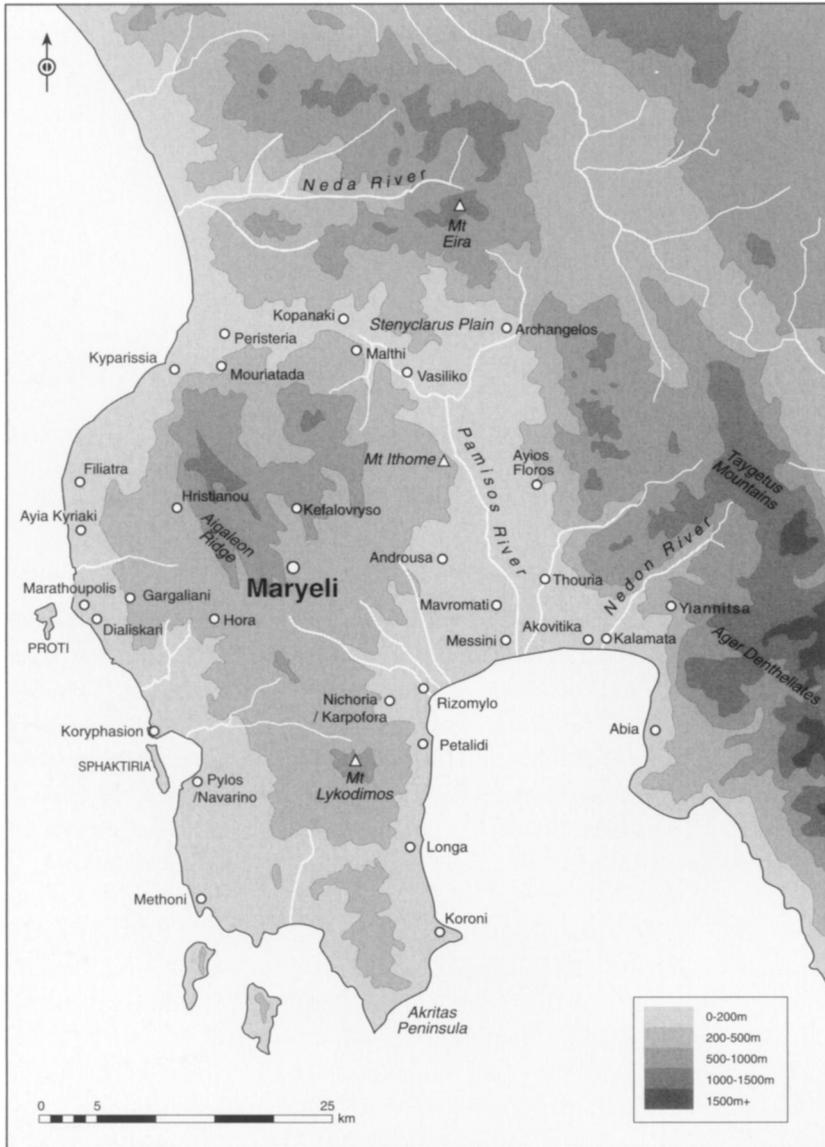
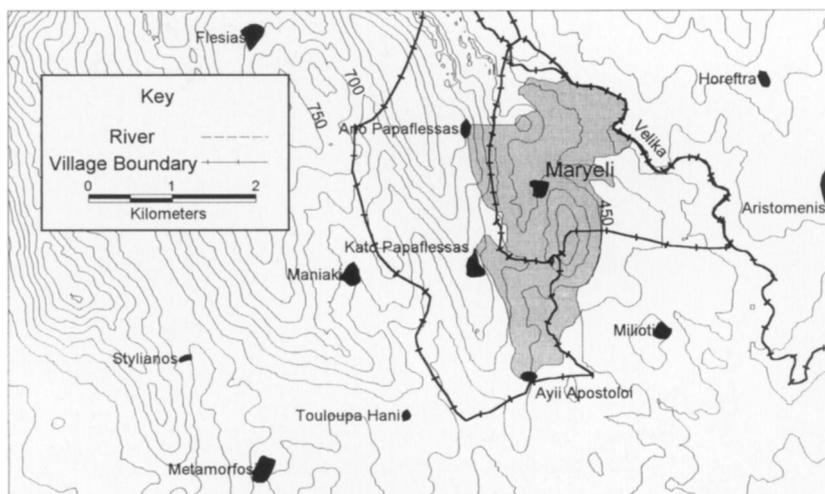


Figure 1. Southwest Messenia.  
R. J. Robertson



Figure 2. View of Maryeli from the southwest. W. Lee

**Figure 3. Maryeli and the boundaries of Kondogonaika and Maryelaika. Survey area shaded; elevations in meters. See note 12. W. Lee**



mendous mutability of the Greek village, and how such social structures have shifted, whether actively or passively, in response to the pressures of modernization.<sup>2</sup> Ethnoarchaeologists, on the other hand, were initially drawn to studies of modern practices (usually agricultural) primarily to build or test models of parallel ancient practices.<sup>3</sup> The gap between the two camps has narrowed in recent years as ethnoarchaeologists have tapped into the efforts of ethnographers and have acknowledged that the Greek village is not static, and that there is need for significant caution in the use of modern studies as analogs for ancient practices. Meanwhile, ethnographers have begun extending their coverage into the past, acknowledging the earlier incorporation of Greece into the world system.<sup>4</sup> As Sue Sutton has pointed out, “even the most seemingly isolated villages today have long been affected by the marketization of the Greek economy. . . . To assert that contemporary villages are only just now becoming aware of, or involved in, the forces of change is to follow a very selective application of historical principles.”<sup>5</sup> Thus while the ethnoarchaeologists have been dragged toward the new ethnographies in their acknowledgment of change, there has also recently been a call for the ethnographers to provide a deeper historical understanding of material or ecological concerns.<sup>6</sup> Within these two bodies of work, however, there are relatively few studies that focus on modern material culture over the last 150 years, and most of those are not well integrated into a narrative of economic change.<sup>7</sup>

2. Examples of classic village ethnographies include McNall 1978; Du Boulay 1974; Friedl 1962; Campbell 1964; Herzfeld 1985; Hart 1992. For materialist work see: Bialor 1976; Allen 1976, 1997; Aschenbrenner 1986; Slaughter and Kasimis 1986; Forbes 1976, 1989, 1997; Shutes 1994, 1997, 1999.

3. See, for example, Chang 1981, 1993 (her forthcoming work calls for much more caution in using ethnoarchaeological parallels); Aschenbrenner 1972; Foxhall 1996; Halstead 1987; Murray and Kardulias 1986; Wagstaff

and Cherry 1981. For other views on the problems of accepting the modern Greek village as timeless, see Sutton 1994 and Fotiadis 1995.

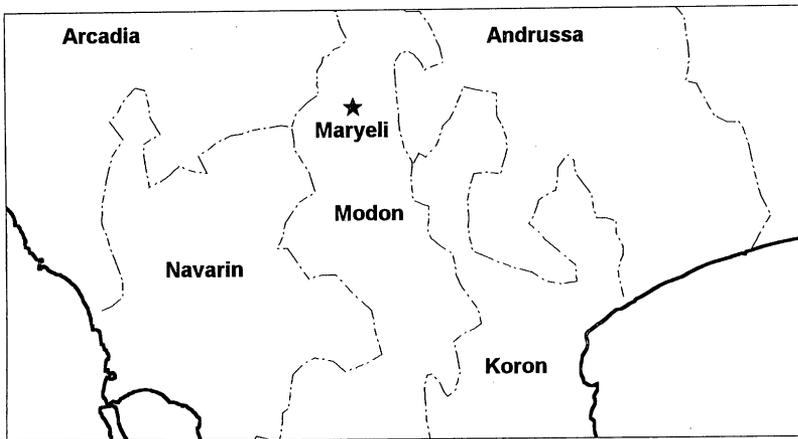
4. Sutton 1988, esp. pp. 197, 204; Sutton in Wright et al. 1990; Bennett 1988, p. 229; Davis and Sutton 1995, p. 121; Halstead 1987, p. 78; Botsas 1987, p. 212; Costa 1988; Athanassopoulos 1997.

5. Sutton in Wright et al. 1990, p. 595.

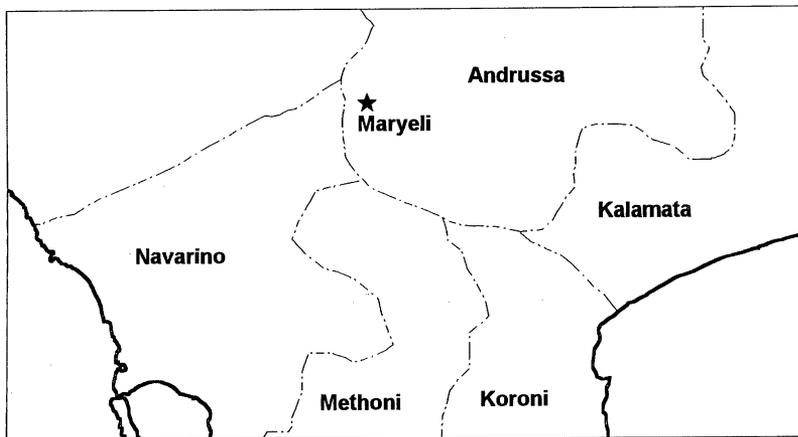
6. Kardulias and Shutes 1997, p. xiii. Hart 1992 is one of the few true ethno-

graphies to spend much time on any aspect of material culture, in her case domestic architecture and furnishings.

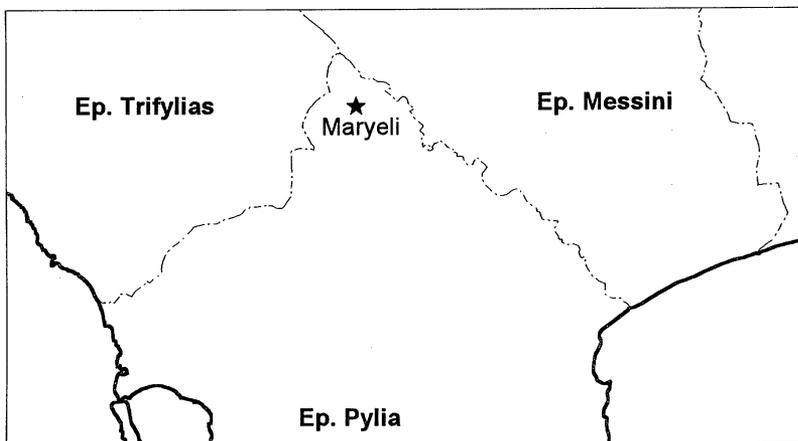
7. Stedman 1996; Clark 1994–1995; Wagstaff 1965a, 1965b. While Sutton’s regional landscape studies *are* well integrated into a narrative of economic change, they focus mostly on settlement location rather than specific issues of material culture; Sutton 1988, 1991. Whitelaw 1991, dealing with modern Kea, is an exception in its treatment of both material culture and economic change.



Venetian provinces, after Sauerwein 1969



1829 provinces, after Bory de Saint-Vincent 1834



Modern eparchies

Figure 4. Boundaries, southwest Messenia. W. Lee

The present study, like Sutton's, begins with the ethnographers' concern over the impact of international forces on local social and economic structures (particularly agricultural choices), while pushing back the timescale from the traditional postwar emphasis to the beginning of Greek independence. For evidence, this study focuses on the material record of human construction in, and modification of, the landscape, and archival

data and interviews are used to supplement that record.<sup>8</sup> Along the way, we contribute to the notion that the Greek village and the Greek “peasant” are far from timeless, and we also explore the way the human landscape can reveal processes of economic change.<sup>9</sup> In the end, we find that while we can describe the landscape of Maryeli as more “preindustrial” (less affected, for example, by mechanized farming or modern irrigation projects) than other areas of Europe (or even of Greece), to term it precapitalist or unaffected by the industrialization of other countries would be most unwise. In a nutshell, while in many ways the *methods* of land use in Maryeli are still visibly preindustrial, the *goals* of land use have long been “modern” in their relationship to capitalism and international market forces.<sup>10</sup> Although the means of land use have somewhat restricted the ability of the villagers of Maryeli physically to transform their landscape, nevertheless it has changed, in accordance both with their own goals and with their relationship to the wider world.

Before moving on to the results of the investigation, it is essential to point out the limits of this project. The region covered by fieldwork (the “area surveyed”) was determined initially by the coverage of the standard PRAP intensive survey, carried out in 1994.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately that area did not include the entire village territory of Maryeli (Maryelaika; that is, the land outside the village proper, but still “of” the village), largely because of the project’s permit boundary. The surveyed area did, however, encompass a significant percentage of Maryelaika, and also a large portion of the cultivable territory of Papaflessas (that is, Kondogonaika).<sup>12</sup> In addition to the region’s thick vegetation and the permit boundary, two other problems surfaced in the course of this study. First, there is no land register available for Maryeli, which prevented a thorough study of land ownership. Second, despite the shifting of provincial boundaries over the last 300 years, Maryeli has always lain at the extremity of the various provinces (see Fig. 4). Regional archival data, therefore, may not reflect Maryeli itself very well. Finally, while this article claims to be a microstudy of one village, there is only so much archival data available for that one village. So at times this study is about two or three villages (Maryeli, Papaflessas, and Ayii Apostoloi), at times it is about their immediate vicinity (called the deme of Voufrasou or Voufrados from 1840 to 1912), at times it is about the region now known as Pylia, at times Messenia, and occasionally it is about the whole Peloponnese. While a shift in this way from the local to the regional is unavoidable, it is also my belief that doing so contributes to breaking down the stereotype of the isolated village.

8. The interviews were conducted by William Alexander during the summer of 1995 in Maryeli, Papaflessas, and Ayii Apostoloi. It is worth pointing out that several of our primary informants were from seventy to ninety years old.

9. We have also created a catalogue of the material elements in the landscape over the last 200 years, in full awareness of the fact that much of that record is now rapidly disappearing. We will publish the detailed data

on the PRAP Web site (<http://classics.lsa.umich.edu/PRAP.html>) in the near future. It will include a gazetteer of all the items discussed below, and a more detailed discussion of how chronological determinations were made.

10. Friedl (1962, p. 23) and Sutton (1988, p. 204) also discuss this distinction between means and goals.

11. Davis et al. 1997, pp. 400–402, describes PRAP’s overall goals and

field-walking techniques.

12. The words “Maryelaika” and “Kondogonaika” specifically refer to all the land owned by the villages (see Fig. 3 for the boundaries). Maryelaika comprises approximately 4.41 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 2.52 was covered in the detailed survey. Although Kondogonaika is much larger (7.35 km<sup>2</sup>), much of it is extremely steep, and some of the best fields are contained in the 1.08 km<sup>2</sup> included in the survey area.

## TOPOGRAPHIC, HISTORICAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Maryeli lies in the rough hill country that rises as one progresses west from the valley of the Pamisos River up into the Aigaleo, the westernmost mountain range of the Peloponnese (Fig. 1). Lying fifteen kilometers east of Gargaliani and twenty-eight kilometers west of Kalamata, it is virtually at the geographic center of the Messenian peninsula. Maryeli, at 420 meters above sea level, is virtually hidden on the slopes of a narrow valley between Profitis Ilias (610 masl) to the east and higher successive ridges of the Aigalean range rising immediately to the west. An outcrop of that range, the nearly circular hill Koutsouveri (530 masl), cuts off Maryeli from the north, and only to the northeast does Maryeli face a somewhat gentler rolling vista, leading away into the heart of Messenia. It is in this direction that most of Maryeli's more accessible fields lie, and here also that the Velika runs, an unusually swift-flowing, perennial river that provides the villagers with water, waterpower, and good bottomland (Fig. 3). The relative ease of movement for eastbound traffic has led Maryeli's residents traditionally to look first east toward modern Aristomenis (formerly Mustapha Pasha), and then south to more regional markets or ports at Petalidi and Messini (formerly Nisi).<sup>13</sup>

On the ridge 200 meters above Maryeli, to the west, are the joint villages of Ano and Kato Papaflessas, formerly and still occasionally known jointly as Kondogoni (Fig. 3).<sup>14</sup> They, and particularly their modern offshoot Ayii Apostoloi, founded in the 1970s, provide a point of comparison to the village of Maryeli.

Details of the early history of Maryeli must remain obscure. As a village that was small and well removed from the main communication route between Kalamata and Pylos, it never figured in the accounts of the early modern travelers. Local tradition asserts a founding date "sometime during the Tourkokratia" when two shepherd brothers (named Maryeli) fled their home in northern Greece and arrived in Messenia. They purportedly received permission from the local Turkish aga in Kefalovryso (formerly Halvatso) to settle where they pleased between Halvatso and Pylos.<sup>15</sup> Venice conquered the Peloponnese in the mid-1680s, but Maryeli does not appear in the Venetian census of 1689 (although Kondogoni does); Maryeli is listed, however, in the census of 1700 (with twelve residents) as part of the *territorio* of Modon.<sup>16</sup>

13. Many Greek villages with Turkish or other "non-Hellenic" names were renamed, particularly during the first decades of this century. Where relevant I have noted both names.

14. In this paper I will refer to the villages (Kato and Ano) jointly as Papaflessas.

15. Founding legend as told by villagers. The etymology of Maryeli is unclear, but I was intrigued to discover the village of Margelliç in south-central Albania during fieldwork near Apollo-

nia (Fier) in the summer of 1999.

16. Panagiotopoulos 1985, pp. 226, 266; Topping 1972. See also Dokos 1971-1972, p. 135, for the Venetian ecclesiastical survey that recorded two churches within Maryeli's territory. One is the hilltop shrine to Profitis Ilias, which probably predated the village, and the other is dedicated to Panayia and may be the church in the middle of the village, now called a family "chapel" of the Maryeli family and still dedicated to Panayia.

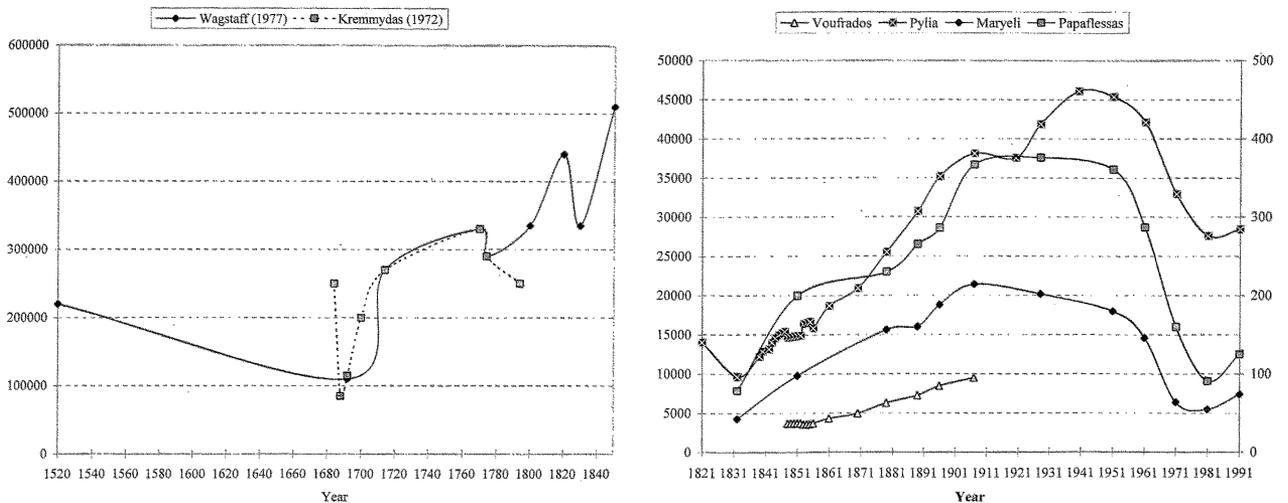


Figure 5 (left). Peloponnesian population, 1520–1850. Based on Kremmydas 1972 and Wagstaff 1977

Figure 6 (right). Regional population, 1821–1991. Maryeli and Papaflissas read from the right vertical axis; the others read from the left vertical axis. Based on Rangavis 1853–1854, II, p. 578; Chouliarakes 1973–1976, I, pp. xxiv–xxv, 27; *Μεγαλι Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαιδεία*, s.v. *Maryeli* and *Kondogoni*; NSSG 1971–1991

The Ottoman Empire recaptured the Morea from the Venetians in 1715, reestablishing a dominion that lasted until Greek independence in 1829. Archival research in Istanbul by Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, another PRAP team member, is ongoing; at the moment, little can be said about Maryeli during this period. Leake's description of the region seemingly would place Maryeli within the Turkish *kazasi* (an administrative unit) of Andrussa (Fig. 4: Venetian provinces).<sup>17</sup>

Local information becomes more available with the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. We know, for example, that although the Peloponnese saw significant fighting, Maryeli avoided the main dangers of the war until the campaigns of Ibrahim Pasha, beginning in 1825. Ibrahim Pasha's Egyptian army quickly overran most of the Morea but was unable to establish order in the countryside. During the summer of 1826, recognizing this failure, Ibrahim Pasha instead set out to devastate the country. For six months his troops systematically ravaged the Peloponnese, and Messenia, his base of operations, suffered a disproportionate share of the damage. Local tradition affirms that Ibrahim Pasha destroyed Maryeli during this period, and burned the nearby monastery at Karamitsa (see Fig. 15).<sup>18</sup> One writer reported in 1842 that Messenia lost some 60,000 fig and olive trees during the rampage.<sup>19</sup>

Following independence, Greece experienced significant demographic expansion under the new monarchy. The population doubled under Otho (1833–1862), then tripled under George (1863–1913). This growth occurred without territorial expansion until 1864, when the Ionian islands were added to the Greek kingdom; Thessaly and Arta were added in 1881. In general this national population growth was less dramatic in the Peloponnese and in Messenia (see Figs. 5, 6). Maryeli appears in the written record of this period only as an entry in the various redrawings of provin-

17. Specifically he said: "The kazasi [of Andrussa] extends in that direction to within a few miles of Navarin" (Leake 1830, I, pp. 365–366). The expedition scientifique de Morée's catalogue of villages, using the Turkish administrative divisions, includes

Maryeli in Andrussa (modern Androusa); Chouliarakes 1973–1976, I, p. 32.

18. Early in this period of conquest there was a battle fought between Ibrahim's army and a force of some 3,000 Greeks under the command of Dikaïos, a priest popularly known as

Pappa Flesas. Finlay 1898, VI, pp. 366–367; Phillips 1897, pp. 177–179; Petrounakou 1901. Kondogoni later was renamed Papaflissas in the priest's honor.

19. Strong 1842, pp. 179–180; Finlay 1898, VI, p. 399.

cial boundaries carried out by the new Greek state between 1836 and 1882. Initially Maryeli was in the Demos of Skarmingos within the Eparchy of Pylia, then in 1840 it was reorganized into the Demos of Voufrasou (later renamed Voufrados) within the Eparchy of Pylia (hereafter abbreviated as Ep. Pylia). The deme system was abolished in 1912, replaced by the smaller *koinotites*—typically encompassing one or two villages, with the *koinotita* taking the name of the largest. In 1912 the *koinotita* of Kondogoni included Maryeli, Kondogoni, and Maniaki (cf. Fig. 3); the last of these villages split off at an uncertain date, though not later than 1961.<sup>20</sup>

The Peloponnese suffered through the “currant crisis” of 1893 (discussed more fully below), but avoided most of the disruptions of World War I and the catastrophic defeat by Turkish nationalist forces in 1921–1922 along with its subsequent exchange of populations.<sup>21</sup> World War II, reverberations of which continue to be felt in the Greek countryside, was a different experience entirely.<sup>22</sup> The occupation and the civil war, the latter lasting until 1949, severely depressed the agricultural economy, not only through the normal disruptions of violence and conscription, but also through the loss of normal markets. Additionally, among wartime population losses, famine, and the onset of emigration, the demographic expansion of the Peloponnese had ended. The cost of reconstruction, added to the cost of fighting a civil war, was simply beyond the means of the restored Greek government. In fact, reconstruction proved to be beyond the means of a war-weary Great Britain, which historically had assumed responsibility for Greece’s stability. The early onset of Cold War tensions led the United States in March 1947 to affirm its commitment to Greece and to begin a program of civil and military aid that was in large measure responsible for ending the civil war and restarting the Greek economy.<sup>23</sup> By the early 1950s the economy had recovered to its prewar level, and through the painful devaluation of the currency in 1952, the Greek government managed to claim a budget surplus in 1953. American civil aid ended in 1962, and it is in the late 1950s and early 1960s that “postwar Greece” can truly be said to have begun.<sup>24</sup>

The demographic history of the region is critical to understanding its development. All available data indicate that the populations of Maryeli and Papaflessas have grown and declined together (see Fig. 6). Maryeli and Papaflessas were both tiny villages when they are first detected in the Venetian census of 1700 (12 and 20 people, respectively), and neither village appears ever to have exceeded 400 individuals throughout its history.<sup>25</sup> In general the Peloponnese had gone through a long period of demographic stagnation, culminating and initially worsening under the Venetian conquest. Venetian initiatives, succeeded by improved Ottoman administration, encouraged a rebound in the population (see Fig. 6).<sup>26</sup> Part of the explanation for that rebound should be credited to the improved access of Greek merchants to international trade over the course of the 18th century, and their use of resulting profits to stimulate native productive industries.<sup>27</sup>

Statistics for the region are increasingly reliable beginning in 1822, although, with the exception of 1851, village figures are unavailable for the

20. Chouliarakes 1973–1976, I, pp. 120, 125–126, 139, 216, 238–239; II, pp. 32–33. The designation “Voufrasou” was changed to “Voufrados” sometime between 1896 and 1907. In the present study, “Voufrados” is used for statistical series.

21. Greece absorbed 1,069,957 refugees after the 1921–1922 catastrophe, but only some 3,720 were sent to Messenia, and 3,587 of those were settled, at least initially, in Kalamata. NSSG 1931, p. 39.

22. Aschenbrenner 1987; Laiou 1987; Mazower 1993.

23. Sweet-Escott 1954, p. 104. Between 1947 and 1949 Greece received \$300 million in U.S. economic aid. In 1948 fully a third of the population was still on relief, and in 1949 agricultural output was up to only 70% of prewar levels. Kourvetaris and Dobratz 1987, p. 51.

24. Woodhouse 1968, pp. 258–259, 261, 265–267, 282; Kourvetaris and Dobratz 1987, p. 53.

25. Population in 1700 from Panagiotopoulos 1985, pp. 226, 265–266.

26. Population estimates for the 18th century, even at a regional level, are generally merely educated guesses based largely on travelers’ reports (see Fig. 5). Kremmydas 1972; Frangakis and Wagstaff 1987; Topping 1976; Wagstaff 1977.

27. Mouzelis 1978, pp. 8–11.

period 1832–1879.<sup>28</sup> Comparing the sparse data for the village itself with regional information confirms a general picture of slow expansion in the 19th century. A noticeable “hesitation” in regional growth is evident around the period of the revolution, a trend partly explained by the loss of virtually all of the Peloponnesian Muslim population.<sup>29</sup>

Beginning in 1879, population figures for Maryeli and Papaflessas exist in a fairly continuous sequence, with both climbing to historic highs in the census of 1928. This population expansion matches the growth in Ep. Pylia over the same period, and reflects the success of the region’s agricultural economy. Since World War II, international emigration and migration to Athens have created a steady decline in population until the most recent census (1991), which showed a slight upturn.<sup>30</sup>

## MATERIAL REMAINS IN THE LANDSCAPE

With this background, we can turn to the results of the ethnoarchaeological study of the Maryeli area and to an examination of the human effects on this local landscape. Agricultural activity dominates that impact, but is in turn contingent upon individual choices conditioned by factors both natural (topography, climate) and structural (subsistence needs, the market, industrialization, land tenure systems, population levels). The challenge is to identify, where possible, the combination of factors that created particular configurations in the landscape. To answer this challenge in the case of Maryeli, two broad categories of evidence will be examined: material remains in the village of Maryeli and its surrounding hinterland, and the record of crop selection and agricultural production in the area. From these two categories of evidence, the degree to which Maryeli has long been affected by, and involved in, wider economic systems of exchange will be measured and explored.

The following brief review of material remains is divided into five sections: constructions in the countryside, agricultural processing facilities, water supply and management, roads, and houses.

### CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

#### TERRACES

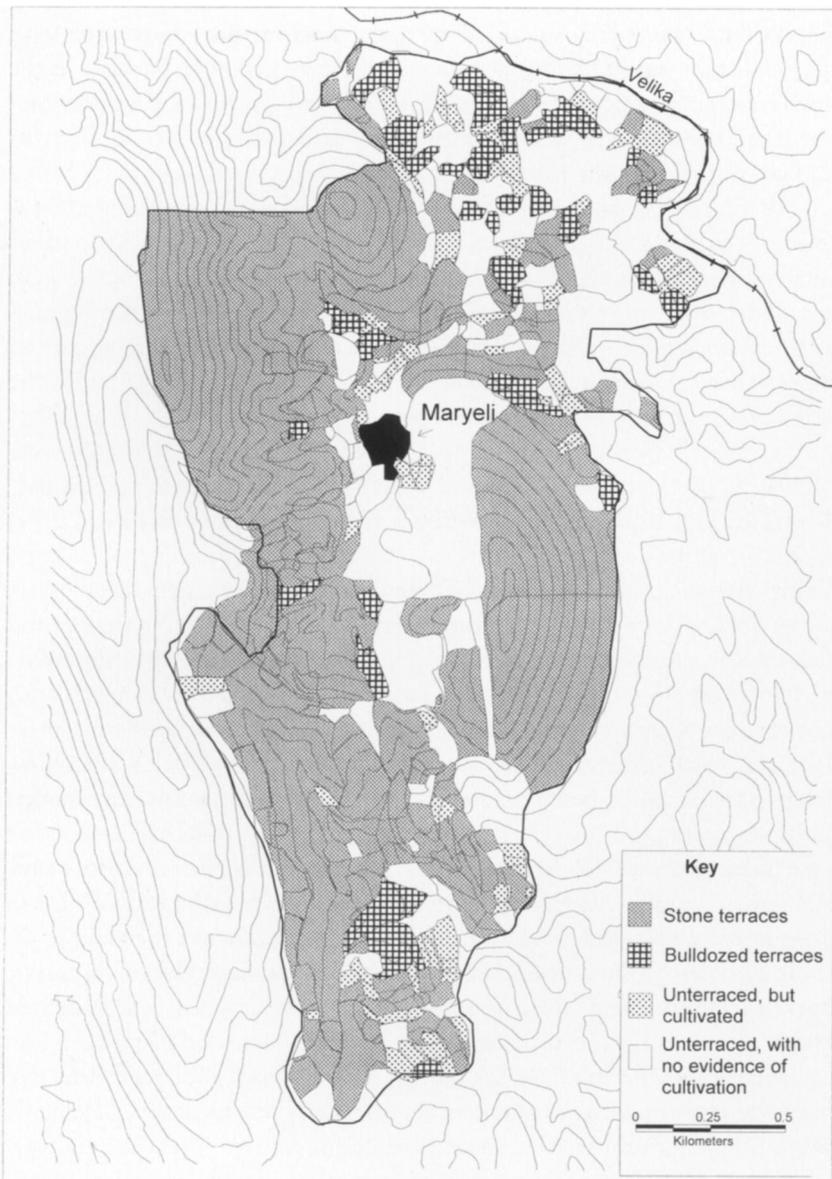
Description of the landscape must begin with the fields themselves, and around Maryeli there has been significant creation of fields through terracing (see Fig. 7). Terracing to increase the area of cultivable land is a common feature of Peloponnesian agriculture. In recent years the standard stone terraces have been supplemented or “repaired” by bulldozing. There is little evidence, however, that bulldozing has enlarged the total area available for cultivation; rather, it simply has replaced the far more laborious process of building or repairing stone terrace walls. Terracing has been critical to the spread of cultivation in the survey area. Terraced fields make up 2.9 km<sup>2</sup> out of a 4.1 km<sup>2</sup> surveyed area (not all of which is cultivable).<sup>31</sup> With the exception of one small side valley, which contains

28. Chouliarakes 1973–1976, I, passim; Belia 1978, pp. 284–285; Rangavis 1853–1854, II, pp. 573–578; NSSG; unpublished census account of Maryeli and Papaflessas for 1991 from manuscript census housed at the Nomarchy of Messenia’s statistics office in Kalamata.

29. For example, the population of Ep. Pylia in 1821 was 14,031, of whom fully 7,343 were Muslims. Chouliarakes 1973–1976, I, p. 27. Most of those individuals left Greece after the War of Independence. Pre-independence Androusa, for example, had a largely Turkish population: Leake (1830, I, pp. 365–366) indicated that it had 250–300 Turkish families and only 3 or 4 Greek. Similarly, the source used by Belia (1978, pp. 284–285) reported a 1786 population of 800, but according to the French expedition, Androusa in the 1830s was left with only 146 people; Bory de Saint-Vincent 1834, p. 64.

30. For post-World War II population movements in general, see Baxevanis 1972; NSSG (Atlas), p. 214; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1966.

31. For the extent of Maryelaika and Kondogonaika, and the area of each included in the survey, see note 12.



**Figure 7. Terracing, survey area. See note 33. W. Lee**

several cross-channel or “check-dam”-style terraces, all of the region’s terraces are the common “contour” style, built parallel to the contours of the hillsides and to each other.<sup>32</sup> Figure 7 highlights two concentrations of unterraced areas with no remaining evidence of cultivation: one in the immediate vicinity of the village on the slopes of Profitis Ilias, and the other in the flatlands and low hills near the Velika River. The unterraced and uncultivated areas near the village are generally extremely steep, even compared to the slopes to the west, and would have been exceptionally difficult to terrace. The situation near the Velika is less clear. Some of the knobby hills have nearly clifflike slopes, but in general the majority of the “blank spaces” are relatively flat areas that were probably under cultivation at one time, but have been abandoned long enough to erase the evidence. In sum, the overall picture is one in which virtually every available area has at one time been under cultivation at the cost of extensive terracing.

32. Wagstaff (1992, p. 155) defines these types. Exact slope and corresponding terrace dimension data were not collected, but can be characterized as extremely variable throughout the region.

Unfortunately, there is little hope of establishing a chronology for the spread of that terracing.<sup>33</sup> First, the quality of terrace construction varies widely from field to field, leading to different rates of deterioration. In fact, some of the apparently oldest terraces (a tentative assumption based on the weathering and encrustation of the stones, and their position in remote, long overgrown fields) are—counterintuitively—in the best condition, not least because they were constructed more sturdily from heavier stones.<sup>34</sup> Rapid vegetative regrowth in this well-watered region has protected the abandoned stone terraces from suffering much erosion. While time and roots have torn down many of the actual terrace walls, the maquis has held the soil in place. That has not been the case where the villagers have opted to rework the terraces with bulldozers. Those areas are eroding quite rapidly.<sup>35</sup> This brings us to the second chronological difficulty: the bulldozing of terraces has obscured or destroyed the original stonework, making it difficult to draw conclusions about the ages of terraces in the region. In general, those areas that retain evidence of traditional stone terracing tend to be more distant from the village, on the steeper slopes, and many of them are now out of cultivation. The most heavily cultivated areas show the greatest reliance on now bulldozed terraces that were probably once made of stone. The exception are the fields belonging to Papaflessas just north of Ayii Apostoloi. There the traditional stone terraces have continued in areas under cultivation, but the recent cutting of a road through the middle of those fields may change the situation by allowing easier bulldozer access.

There are a few safe chronological conclusions. Given what we know of the demographic history of Maryeli—that its highest population level came in the 1920s and 1930s—it is likely that many of the most difficult or remote terraces belong to this period, chronologically coinciding with the area's agricultural expansion (that expansion is discussed below).<sup>36</sup> The motivation for successful cash cropping combined with demographic expansion led to the use of fields, usually after terracing, that had been on slopes too difficult of access to encourage previous cultivation. A bulldozer was first used in the village in the 1950s and was initially employed for roadwork only.<sup>37</sup> Stone terrace construction theoretically could have continued well into that decade; certainly some walls show signs of relatively recent repair work and one villager specifically remembers a few stone terraces still being built by the villagers as late as about 1940.

33. For one attempt to define an abandonment sequence of early modern terraces, see Whitelaw 1991, pp. 406–410. During the survey, we originally classified terraces according to their condition, as derived from Whitelaw. Given the difficulties in using that information toward establishing a chronology of terracing, only bulldozed and stone terraces are distinguished in Fig. 7. See also Wagstaff 1992, pp. 159–160, but the lack of any truly old olive trees

(discussed below) around Maryeli prevents the use of his dating technique.

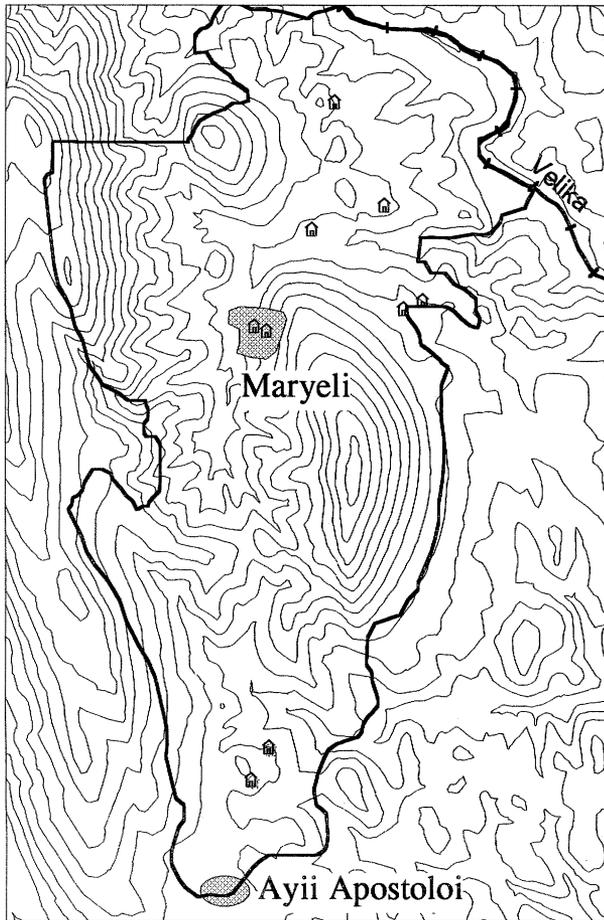
34. The description “long overgrown” refers to those areas where low-lying maquis (particularly the prickly oak and velandia oak) has progressed to forest.

35. Forbes (1997, p. 196) reached a similar conclusion about the difficulty of dating terraces, and of the consequences of bulldozing.

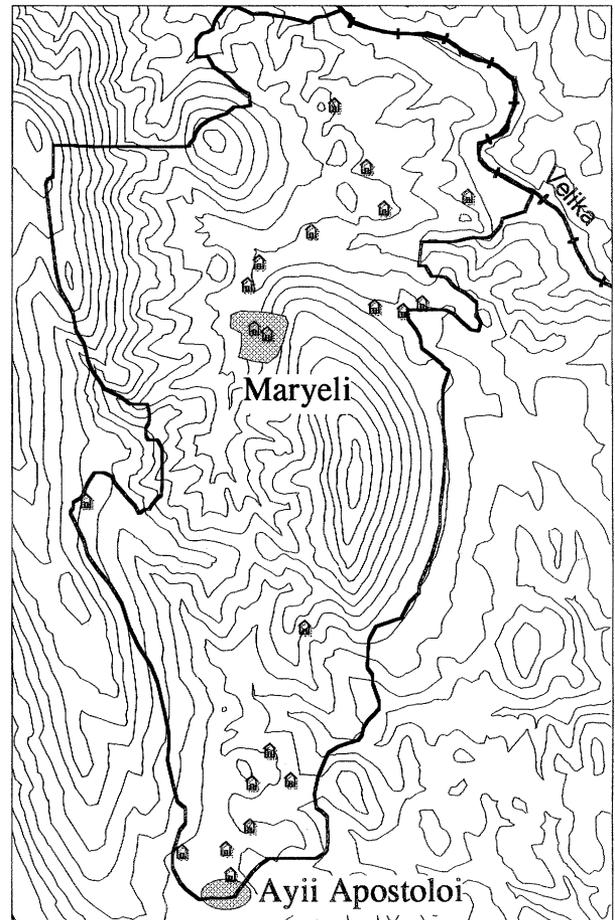
36. Similarly, Allen (1997, p. 263),

Forbes (1997, p. 196), and Foxhall (1996) all argue that the relatively recent expansion of terracing is partly a result of modern demographic pressure and changing economic goals.

37. The first tractor arrived not much later. Given the difficult terrain, and the relative lack of permanent residents, no one in Maryeli has ever owned either a bulldozer or a tractor, although both have been hired to work suitable areas.



Pre-World War II



All (old and new)

### FIELD BUILDINGS (*Spitakia*)

A wide variety of storage buildings, stables, and shelters lie scattered throughout the fields of Maryelaika and Kondogonaika (see Figs. 8, 9).<sup>38</sup> These buildings, which tend to be extremely simple and small, are here subdivided into the “older” *spitakia* composed of rubble masonry, and the “newer,” postwar versions, which use obviously modern materials. Seasonal residences (*kalyves*) are treated separately.<sup>39</sup> The stone buildings occasionally have cut corner-blocks, but most often are made of purely rubble masonry. They also usually have a peaked, tiled roof. The newer buildings tend to be constructed of cinderblock, with a wide variety of roofing materials, the most common being corrugated steel or vinyl. Interior partitions separating storage from stable areas are normally found only in the newer, larger buildings. Both old and new *spitakia* are frequently found in association with crop processing facilities (*alonia*, threshing floors, etc.; see below).

38. In the present context, the word “shelter” refers to a hut, often with a bed, used for the Mediterranean siesta. In many cases such use is combined with another purpose (stable, storage, etc). Classifying a building as a shelter

rather than as a seasonal residence is difficult. Where lacking direct information, I generally used the lack of a second room as a defining characteristic.

39. See “Houses,” below.

Figure 8. Distribution of *spitakia*, survey area. *Kalyves* are excluded.  
W. Lee



Figure 9. *Spitaki*, pre-World War II.  
W. Lee

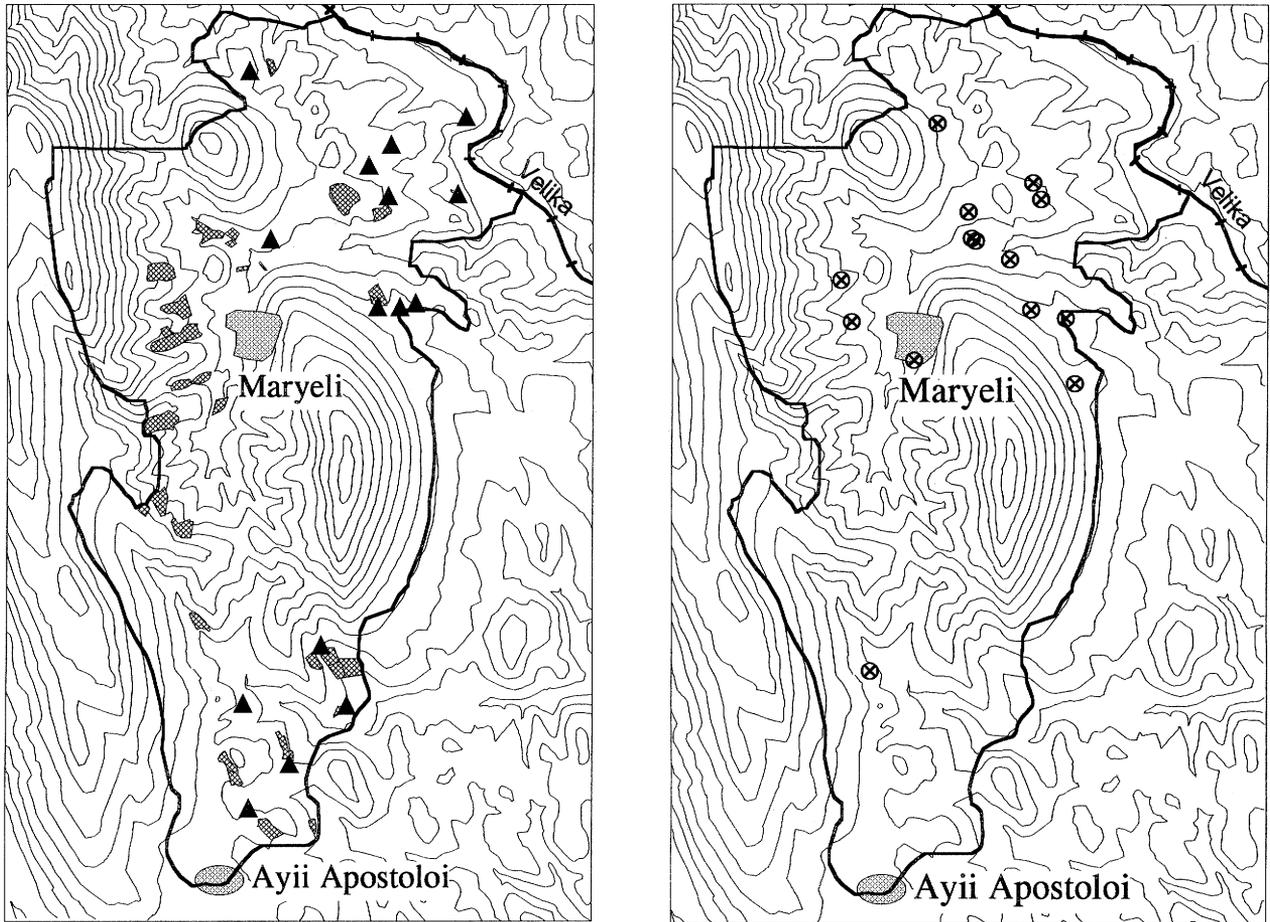


Figure 10. (left) Distribution of *alonia* (15 total); (right) distribution of threshing floors (14 total). Marked fields are those of current or confirmed former vineyards. W. Lee

## AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING FACILITIES

### *Alonia*

The Greek word *aloni* (pl. *alonia*) refers to almost any kind of flat area used for processing the harvest. In this region, three types appear: drying racks for figs, drying racks for currants, and threshing floors. As the first two are physically indistinguishable, they are considered here as a single entity, and are referred to as *alonia*. The expression “threshing floor” is preferred for those structures specifically built to process grain (although they could be used for other purposes as well).

Figs and currants around Maryeli are often found in adjoining fields, and *alonia* adjacent to such areas can be used for either crop, although, since both crops are harvested and dried over the same period, it is necessary to provide sufficient space for processing the two crops at once (see Figs. 10, 11). The drying process is similar for both. Typical *alonia* are simple flat spots with an arrangement of racks to support a cloth cover. More elaborate *alonia* with concrete platforms are found elsewhere in Messenia, although not in Maryelaika.

After the harvest, which stretches over August and September, the figs and currants are carried to the drying racks. There the fruit is spread

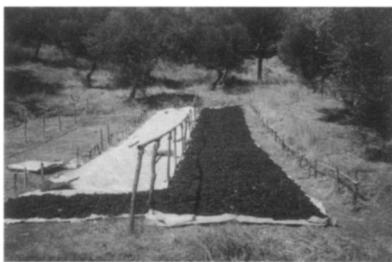


Figure 11. *Aloni*, with currants spread out to dry. W. Lee

out on sheets. Another cloth can be stretched over the fruit to protect the crop from rain. A batch is normally left to dry for ten to twelve days, before another is harvested and brought to the *aloni*.<sup>40</sup>

It is extremely easy for an abandoned *aloni* to disappear in the undergrowth, and it is likely that many former *alonia* have been missed. Therefore, the number and extent of *alonia* shown in Figure 10 (left) is probably much smaller than it would have been even as late as 1973. Aerial photographs from that year (taken during the late summer drying season) in a few instances show white drying-sheets in locations now apparently lacking *alonia*. Additionally, a number of the field buildings have a stone patio which could have served as an *aloni*; the 1973 photos support this supposition.<sup>41</sup> Threshing floors, the next category of agricultural processing facility to be explored, although unquestionably designed for threshing grain, can also be employed as drying platforms. In general, the *alonia* that survive or are still in use are those readily accessible by road (see Fig. 10). More remote *alonia* have faded from use.

Despite the ease with which *alonia* have disappeared, their widespread presence attests to Maryeli's historic participation in the production of currants and figs. The exact chronology of the rise and fall of the production of currants will be explored below through production statistics. This local evidence on the ground, however—specifically the decline in the numbers of *alonia* in Maryelaika even since 1973—shows Maryeli to be in line with the later-20th-century regional downward trend in currant production.

## THRESHING FLOORS

Threshing floors are among the more impressive of the agricultural processing structures found in the countryside. The typical threshing floor is a stone-paved circle approximately ten to thirteen meters in diameter; some have large flagstones set upright at the edge of a portion of the circle to help contain the chaff during winnowing. These stone circles are quite common around Maryeli (see Fig. 10), and it is possible that even more, made of stamped dung and earth, have disappeared, preserved only in village memory.

The design of the floor reflects the use of a threshing technique that has remained relatively stable in Greece for centuries. The 17th-century description by traveler Bernard Randolph discusses Greek threshing techniques in terms that easily could have applied to pre-World War II Maryeli:

They reap their Corn much in the manner as we do, but have no Barns, only Threshing-floors, (which the Turks call Chirman). They are on high Ground, and open to the Winds. Here they tread it out with Horses, which are made fast to a Post, round which the Corn is put; the Horses trampling upon it make great dispatch; with the Wind they cleanse it, and send it home to their Houses.<sup>42</sup>

Although other descriptions of threshing in Greece have included a threshing “sledge” dragged behind the animal, or long sticks or knotted cords, living memory in Maryeli does not record such enhancements, and threshing remained dependent on an animal's hooves.<sup>43</sup>

40. For fig drying, some farmers formerly preferred using shallow, stackable wooden crates (*kalamota*) laid out on the floor of an *aloni*, but these have been almost superseded by the greater ease offered by nylon tarpaulins. Interviews; Burlumi 1911, pp. 12–13; Kanasi 1930, pp. 27–28.

41. The photographs show distinct white spots on patios near *spitakia*, cloths laid out to dry the fruit.

42. Randolph 1689, p. 17. Scrofani (1801, III, p. 64) provides a nearly identical description for the 18th century.

43. See Halstead and Jones 1997 for detailed descriptions of the threshing process in two island communities. Such sledges were not unknown in Messenia. PRAP fieldwork, in fact, found at least one threshing sledge “tooth” of worked stone near the village of Metamorfosis.

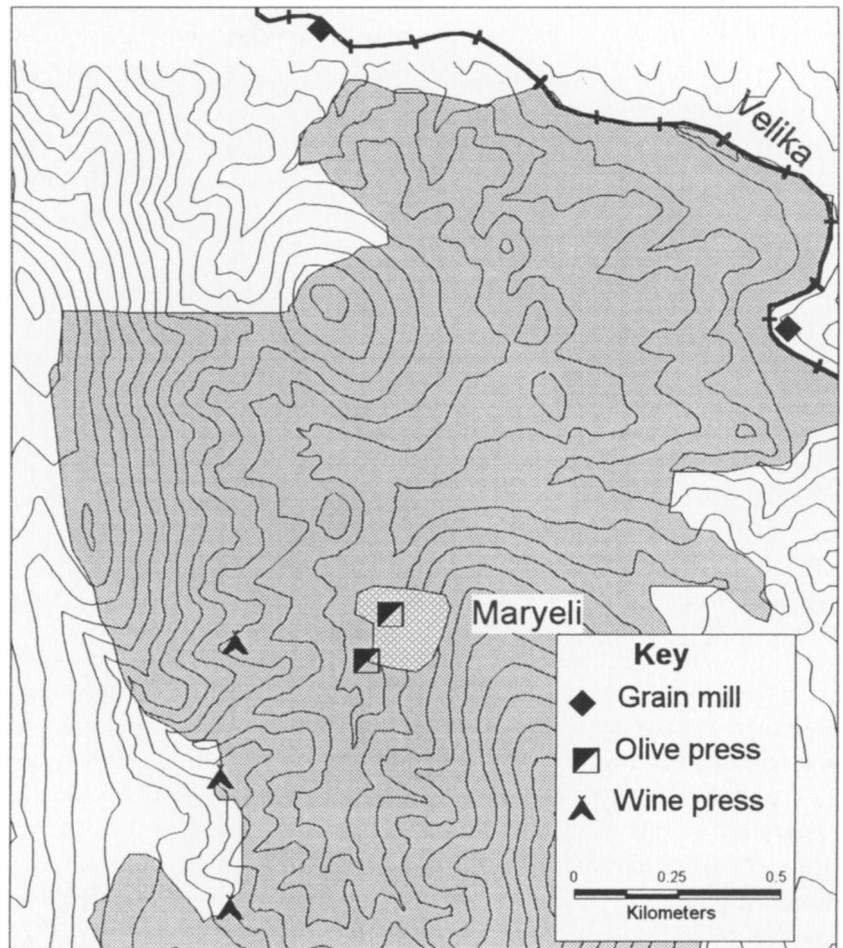


Figure 12. Distribution of mills and presses, survey area. W. Lee

44. Pers. comm. with Siriol Davies, based on her research in the Venetian archives.

45. One example given of such a favor was that the borrower would lay leftover straw in the stable of the threshing floor's owner.

46. This supposition is supported by village testimony. Prior to World War II, communities in the region made wine themselves and sold some small amounts to other villages to the east, as far as Kalamata (areas toward Hora had their own vineyards). After the war, the villagers began selling their grapes to the Yialova winery. Also compare the small number and simplicity of the wine presses discussed here to the elaborate and numerous examples described by Whitelaw (1991, pp. 421–424) for the much more active wine-producing economy on Kea. See also Sutton 1991, p. 390.

The physical distribution of the floors in the landscape, specifically their often very close proximity to each other, led us to suppose that they were privately owned, with each farmer constructing one sufficient to his own needs. This contrasted, however, with the understanding that threshing floors were communally owned during the Venetian period.<sup>44</sup> The villagers confirmed the private ownership theory, but pointed out that even in a small village like Maryeli there were not enough threshing floors to accommodate every farmer. Families that did not possess one could use a neighbor's in exchange for minor chores or favors.<sup>45</sup> At any rate, the sheer number of threshing floors around Maryeli provides ample evidence of the former importance of cereal production (discussed below).

### WINE PRESSES

Wine presses in this area are extremely simple and small, clearly inadequate and too few in number for any serious production of wine for market—unlike the relatively vast number of drying floors for currants (see Fig. 12).<sup>46</sup> There are essentially two types found in the area: an open cisternlike press and the basket-style press (whose poor durability has left only one example extant, though informants attest to their common use). Aside from those wine presses shown on the distribution map, it should be noted that some growers had presses within their house compounds. Those presses, largely through reuse for other purposes, have disappeared.

## OLIVE PRESSES

Only two olive presses were found within the survey area (see Fig. 12), and both are presently nonfunctional. The larger of the two was owned by the Maryeli village church, and sits on the edge of the village nucleus. The building is now mostly a ruin, although its circular stone press is still in situ with as many as six millstones scattered around the interior. This mill was reportedly in use until approximately thirty years ago.<sup>47</sup> It is constructed of simple stone masonry without any of the embellishments one associates with Langadian house masonry (for a discussion of the Langadian masons, see the section on houses, below).<sup>48</sup> The smaller press building, in the village center, belonged to the Maryeli family, and is still a well-preserved building containing a variety of pressing equipment (see Fig. 13). The building itself is a simple rectangular structure of rubble stone masonry offering few clues to its construction date. Both presses operated by keeping 10% of the oil produced (5% to the owner, 5% to the press workers). The leftover olive pulp was used as fuel or pig feed.<sup>49</sup>

## GRAIN MILLS

The swiftness and reliability of the Velika River, especially before modern waterlines began pumping out the water and lowering the river's flow, made it an ideal power source for grain mills. Between Palio Loutro (the headwaters of the Velika; see Fig. 14) and the southeast extremity of Maryelaika there were at least eight mills, two in Maryelaika itself (Fig. 12).<sup>50</sup> Once again the Maryeli family owned one of those mills, and the church, this time the monastery at Karamitsa, the other. The mills were badly damaged by a flood in 1936, after which the villagers took their grain to Vlasi or Platanovrysi. The Maryeli family mill was rebuilt and operated until the 1965 flood, which wiped out all the mills on the upper Velika; with the decline in regional grain production at that time (discussed below) there remained no motivation to rebuild, and today both mills are in an advanced state of ruin.

## WATER SUPPLY AND MANAGEMENT

Most farming societies dedicate significant effort to making water conveniently available, and such efforts are usually visible in the landscape. A passing glance at the cities of antiquity attests to the ancient Greeks' investment in water management, and in the 18th century Scrofani commented on the great ability of both the Greeks and the Turks to manage water.<sup>51</sup> Such ability finds expression even in a small village like Maryeli.<sup>52</sup> Within the survey area there are four types of "water artifact": wells, cisterns, springhouses, and water channels/pipelines (see Fig. 14).

Surprisingly, only three wells were detected during the survey. They are all circular, rubble stone shafts, and are still in use for watering animals. Various shaped plaster-lined cisterns are somewhat more common. The cisterns in this area were not normally used to provide drinking water for people or animals; instead they functioned to hold and redistribute runoff into productive fields (especially market gardens). The farmers cut channels upstream from a cistern, diverting water from the seasonal torrents

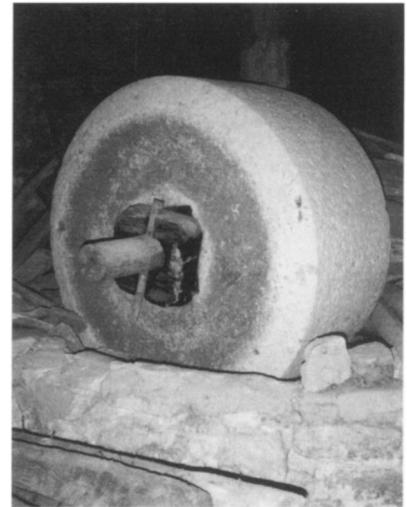


Figure 13. An upright stone olive press in the Maryeli family press house. W. Lee

47. Information on the decline of the press was obtained from interviews.

48. "Langadian" is the common anglicization of *Langadini*.

49. This press payment system was described in interviews.

50. Aschenbrenner's (1986, p. 13) study village, Karpofora, had access to a similar set of mills, the siting of which he dates to the 18th century. Cf. Bialor 1976, pp. 229–230.

51. Scrofani 1801, III, p. 88. For the ancient Greeks' sophisticated manipulation of the water supply, see Crouch 1993.

52. Settlement sites were often determined by the availability of water (although not always, as Papaflessas illustrates); see Wagstaff 1982, pp. 78, 81. The founding legend of Maryeli includes the decisiveness of water in determining location.

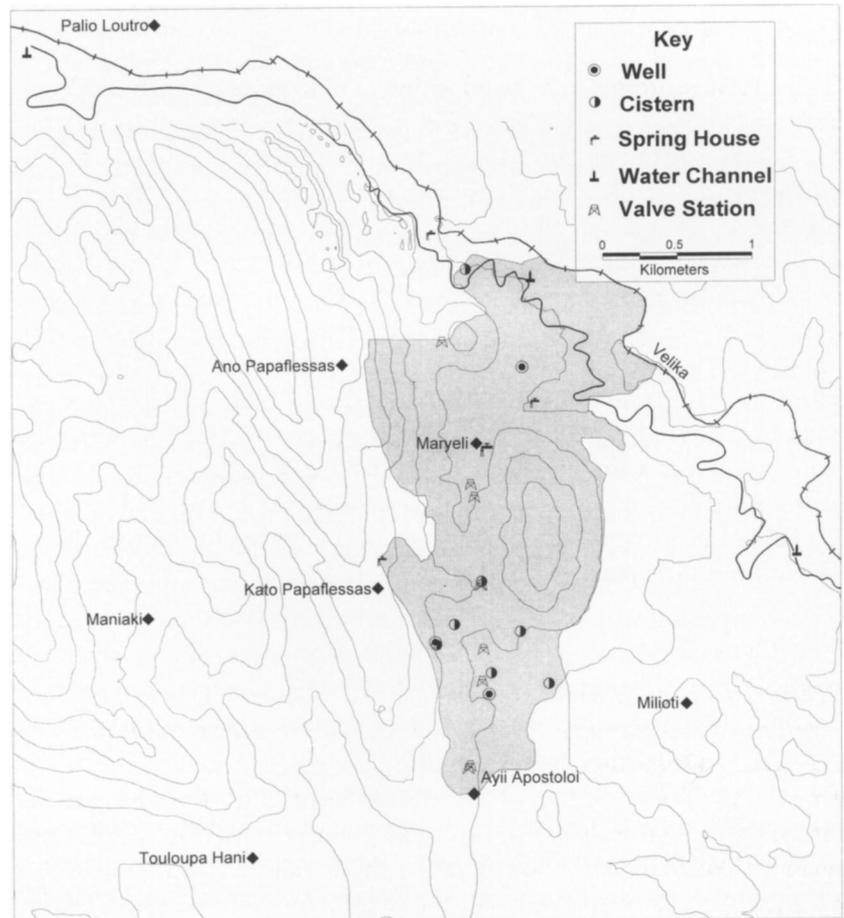


Figure 14. Water facilities. The thick black line indicates the probable path of the “Turkish water channel”; see note 56. W. Lee

out of the steep-banked creek bottoms and into the cistern, whose outlets were channeled into the fields. Those cisterns and water channels associated with springhouses performed a similar function of collecting surplus water for agricultural purposes.

Springs have always been fundamental to the Greek view of the land, and they are often protected carefully and enhanced by the construction of springhouses. Maryeli currently has three springhouses. The one in the center of the village continues to provide a good flow of water, although apparently somewhat less abundantly than formerly.<sup>53</sup> The present building is a plain, rectangular, concrete structure (essentially a roof supported by two pillars and a wall, with pipes protruding from the latter). A successful emigrant to the United States sent home the money for its construction in 1948. Representing the first use of concrete in the village, it replaced an older double-arched stone structure. The water, after leaving a shallow pooling area under the shelter (useful for doing washing and watering animals), passes under the concrete roadway and gathers in a cistern from which it can be redirected to nearby gardens and for watering animals. Although the village homes are now supplied with water via a modern pipeline (originating from the Velika headwaters near Palio Loutro), the central spring continues to be used for watering animals and for some other domestic chores.<sup>54</sup>

53. Attested by report and by the relocation of the outlet pipes.

54. Cf. Bialor 1976, p. 228; Clark 1994–1995, p. 521.

Although not exactly from a spring “house,” traces remain of a constructed water channel (now dry) emptying into the dry streambed approximately 250 m northeast of the village. About 50 m uphill from the stream, the channel originates at a 2.5-m-high, mossy terrace wall. Within memory, this channel carried a heavy flow of “warm” water that the villagers used for a variety of activities, although not for drinking. This spring has since dried up, although informants report that four to five years ago a heavy rain caused it to run again briefly.

The third springhouse, built in August 1994, lies immediately beside a tributary of the Velika at a place called Kefalovyryo (“springhead,” not the village of the same name), very close to the boundary of Maryelaika and approximately 1.5 km from any habitations. Several of the local villages (Platanovyrsi, Horeftra, and Aristomenis) had designs on this water supply, planning to set up a pumphouse to use this spring’s water for irrigating fields to the south. The Mayor of Maryeli, Vasilis Dimitrakopoulos, hoped to improve his village’s claim by building a springhouse there, in the eventual hope of having the government provide a grant for pumping water to Maryeli’s olive groves. Three Northern Epirote masons were brought in at a cost of 350,000 drachmas to build the stone fountain, which required 26 tractorloads of stone from Aristomenis. This stands as a classic example of staking claim by improvement; it remains to be seen, however, who will ultimately win that dispute.

The style of construction also serves notice of how changing aesthetics have affected the landscape. The springhouse in the village center was reconstructed in concrete in 1948 as a symbol of modernity and progress, whereas the new one at Kefalovyryo was built along traditional lines despite the heavy cost. In this respect the new springhouse reflects a growing trend in rural Messenia to celebrate and preserve traditional architecture, even though it is usually beyond the means of most private individuals to recreate such now-expensive techniques in new buildings.

Neither Papaflessas nor Ayii Apostoloi has springs within the village. These villages are now supplied by the modern pipeline installed in the early 1960s, partially indicated in Figure 14 by the line of valve stations.<sup>55</sup> Papaflessas formerly relied on the springhouse at the turnoff of the modern road to Maryeli (the springhouse indicated just north of Kato Papaflessas in Fig. 14). The foot- and donkey path leading directly up the hillside from the springhouse to Kato Papaflessas is still quite visible.

Finally, and possibly most revealing of the Turkish influence on this relatively remote area, the villagers of Maryeli pointed out the very faint remains of what they call the “Turkish water channel” (see Fig. 14). Its visible remnant is a narrow (about 30 cm wide) shallow ditch whose remains frequently fade into the ground, and thus proved impossible to trace over its entire length. Tradition holds that the channel begins at the springs in Palio Loutro (“old bath”), snakes around the Papaflessas mountain, cuts across Maryelaika, and then passes beyond the knowledge of the villagers near the point where the Maryeli–Aristomenis road crosses the Velika River.<sup>56</sup>

Villagers pointed out several locations where they definitely remembered seeing the channel. A search around Palio Loutro revealed not one

55. The stations shown on Fig. 14 mark the line that supplies Maryeli and Ayii Apostoloi. A branch of that line supplies Papaflessas. The point of origin is the Velika headwaters at Palio Loutro.

56. In Fig. 14, water channel markers along the length of the “Turkish water channel” indicate attested or verified points of its course. The remainder is supposition based on elevation. The channel may well actually end near the crossing of the Velika, because at that point it is approaching the same elevation as the river. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Professor Joost Knauss from the Technical University of Munich in analyzing the probable course and fate of the water channel.

but several similarly sized channels, some with simple stone linings still preserved (such stone is neither apparent nor remembered elsewhere along the water channel's length). With this information a probable course for the channel was plotted, which covered a straight-line distance of 10.1 km over a total elevation drop of ca. 200 m. The resulting 2% gradient is well within the norm for an uncovered irrigation or drainage ditch. The assumed course does not, however, maintain that gradient consistently. Such variations in gradient have created places where the ditch alternately dug itself deeper or silted up. Presumably these defects eventually rendered the channel inoperable.

Dating a feature such as this channel with any certainty is, of course, impossible, but the traditional association with the Turks is neither unlikely nor without precedent. The 18th-century traveler Scrofani ascribed to the Moreots the ability to distribute water over distances of "eight, ten and even twenty miles."<sup>57</sup> According to Peter Topping, a comparably long (8.5-km) example of such a work exists on the plain of Pila, though he is not exact about its location.<sup>58</sup> Within the PRAP survey area there is a similar, though much shorter, water channel associated with Turkish remains near the village of Metamorfosis.<sup>59</sup>

57. Scrofani 1801, III, p. 88.

58. Topping may be referring to the channel associated with the well-known aqueduct outside the modern town of Pylos that carried water to the fort at Neokastro. Topping 1972, p. 77.

59. For a brief discussion of the evidence for the Turkish "bath" and water channel at this location see Davis et al. 1997, p. 480.

60. Belia 1978; Leake 1830, I, pp. 354, 395–398, and foldout map. To clarify: the road cutting across the southwest Messenian peninsula from Kalamata to Navarino (by way of Karpofora) existed in the late 18th century, but it was not apparently the main route of travel. Both Leake and the 1786 French military survey discussed by Belia emphasize Androusa as the waypoint between Kalamata and points west and north. See also Depping 1830, II, p. 125, and Bory de Saint-Vincent 1835, unnumbered map of the Peloponnese.

61. Kremmydas 1972, pp. 159, 260.

62. See Kremmydas 1972, p. 191 for their importance in the 18th century, and Kremmydas 1980, pp. 84–85 for their decline and Kalamata's rise. The roads were never very good. The Venetians in 1699 complained about the bad roads around Navarino. Siriol Davies (pers. comm.). See also McGrew 1985, p. 5.

## ROADS

There are two stories to tell regarding what are collectively called "roads." The first involves the long-range routes of communication between major markets that in turn connect into the wider Messenian network. The second is the development of local pathways and field access routes. Together, these two stories of road development speak not only to the role of the village in a broader world and how that broader world has reshaped the village, but also about changes in the practice of agriculture over time.

## REGIONAL NETWORKS

Travelers' accounts allow a reconstruction of the major routes of travel and communication in southwest Messenia at the start of the 19th century. The major nodes of communication were Methoni, Koroni, Navarino (Pylos), Arkadia (Kyparissia), Kalamata, Androusa, Leondari, and on to Tripolis in the central Peloponnese. A French military report from 1786 and Leake's experience in 1805 both affirm that Androusa was the nexus of travel through southwest Messenia.<sup>60</sup> This is essentially the road network as mapped by Vasilis Kremmydas in his work on the 18th-century Greek economy, and not surprisingly the important road termini correspond to the ports he identified as being the most active centers of commerce.<sup>61</sup> By the end of the first third of the 19th century, however, the declining importance of Androusa (which had lost most of its primarily Turkish population) and the rising importance of Kalamata led to the dominance of the direct Kalamata–Navarino route following a path similar to the modern road.

As a not surprising corollary, the condition of the roads leading to Navarino, Methoni, and Koroni declined as those ports yielded their pre-eminence to Kalamata during the 19th century.<sup>62</sup> During his travels in

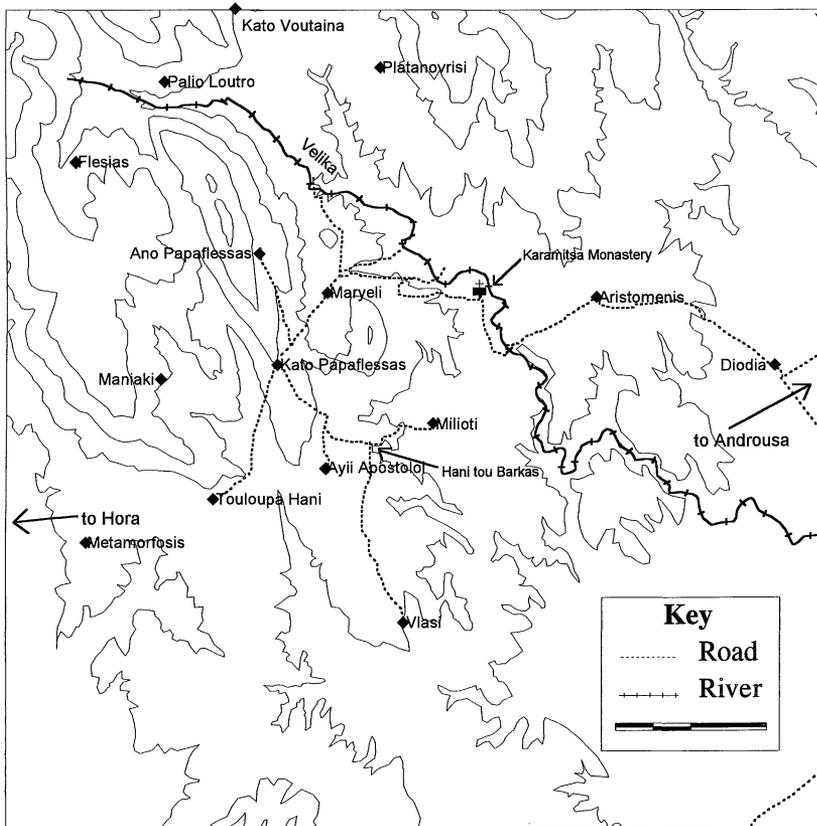


Figure 15. Local intervillage road networks, early 20th century. Routes marked have been verified on the ground or by testimony. W. Lee

1804, William Gell was able to report that some of the bridges on the Navarino–Gargaliani road were still intact, and that the Navarino–Methoni road was old but “very perfect, consisting of small stones very well united, not more than six feet broad—perhaps Venetian.”<sup>63</sup> Edward Dodwell, however, in the same decade found all the bridges on the coastal road north of Arkadia (Kyparissia) to be broken down.<sup>64</sup> Shortly after the war for independence, Perdicaris described the last westerly stretch of the Kalamata–Navarino/Pylos road as “one of the worst and most perilous roads that is to be met in the Kingdom of Greece.” By 1858, moreover, Wyse described Messenia’s western roads as “quite as wretched as in the worst parts of Greece,” while Clark for the same period simply said that there were no practicable roads at all around Navarino and “so Kalamata engrosses all the export trade of Messenia.”<sup>65</sup>

The early years of the Greek kingdom saw little improvement in the road system. As of 1913 only some 4,000 km of road had been built throughout Greece.<sup>66</sup> Beginning in 1923 the government began spending \$2–3 million annually for roadwork and by 1929 there were 198,000 kilometers of “highway.”<sup>67</sup> It was during this period, in 1925, that the Kalamata–Pylos route was made into an all-season, wagon-width roadway.<sup>68</sup> And it was only in the early 1950s, with the funding of the U.S. Aid Mission, that many of the current wheel-capable access roads were built to reach villages.<sup>69</sup>

63. Gell 1817, pp. 51, 53.

64. Dodwell 1819, II, p. 349. He reckoned it a twenty-hour journey on the coast road from Arkadia to Modon (Methoni).

65. Perdicaris 1845, II, p. 193; Wyse 1865, II, p. 236; Clark 1858, p. 227.

66. NID 1944, II, pp. 204, 212; Mears (1929, p. 153) claimed there were only some 500 miles of improved road in 1912. Mouzelis (1978, p. 18, note 90) claims that there were 620 km of road in 1880 and 2,128 km in 1909.

67. Mears 1929, pp. 153–154.

68. Aschenbrenner 1987, p. 109; 1986, pp. 78–88.

69. McNeill 1978, pp. 91–92; Hart 1992, p. 57; Clark 1994–1995, p. 521; Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 15–16.



Figure 16. The author on a Veneto-Turkish bridge near Strefi.  
W. Alexander

## LOCAL NETWORKS

How and when this regional road network connected with Maryeli and the surrounding villages is not entirely clear. Some conclusions, however, are possible (see Fig. 15). Local intervillage roads were originally small foot- or donkey paths, laboriously constructed with a single or a double wall, creating a path wide enough for a heavily laden donkey, and known as *dromakia* or *kalderimia*. In some places they were cobbled, and in others their constant use and their tendency to become washes has worn them down to bedrock. *Kalderimia* frequently follow the most direct route to a location, with slight regard for the steepness of the path, easily traversable by donkey. Where a modern road will follow a circuitous path through valleys or along the shoulders of a mountain, a *kalderimi* will shoot almost straight up the mountainside.<sup>70</sup>

Surviving sections of *kalderimia* provide the outline of the older intervillage local network. Combining those surviving sections with the villagers' memory of the routes they followed to different markets early in this century allows a reconstruction of those routes, as found in Figure 15. For example, travel south and west toward the market at Hora followed the *kalderimi* (still partially intact) that led up the mountain from Maryeli to Papaflessas. From there, surviving sections—combined with the aerial photographs of 1945—attest to a connection to Touloupa Hani and from there to Metamorfosis and on to Hora. Alternatively, a southbound traveler could opt for Ayii Apostoloi (remains of the *kalderimi* between there and Kato Papaflessas still survive), where there was another *hani*, now in ruins, called the *Hani tou Barkas*. From there, connections existed to Milioti or Vlasi.

There are a variety of old intervillage routes running north and east out of Maryeli toward the lower hill country and leading eventually to Androusa. According to the villagers, and in some places confirmed by visible remains, there were once within Maryelaika at least three and possibly four bridges across the Velika. All of these bridges seemingly date to the Turkish period.<sup>71</sup> The villagers remember them as being in ruins by the early part of this century, their former sites then remaining in use as fords, keeping the old roads in their former place. Numerous villagers recalled traveling to nearby villages via these routes and also recalled the passing of other villagers through Maryeli to connect to the route leading to the market

70. This is not to say that the *kalderimia* are constructed without a careful regard for topography, merely that they take more radical paths than modern roads.

71. The dimensions of the surviving bridge abutments pointed out by the villagers are consistent with the kind of bridges found elsewhere in the Peloponnese and described by Clark (1858, p. 214) on the road from

Kalamata to Nisi (now Messini) as "steep-pitched, narrow bridges without parapets," that is, not designed for wagons. An example of a large Veneto-Turkish bridge survives outside the nearby village of Strefi (see Fig. 16), and may form an important link in the route to Nisi described in the text. See Petronotis 1986, pp. 66, 67 for further illustrations.

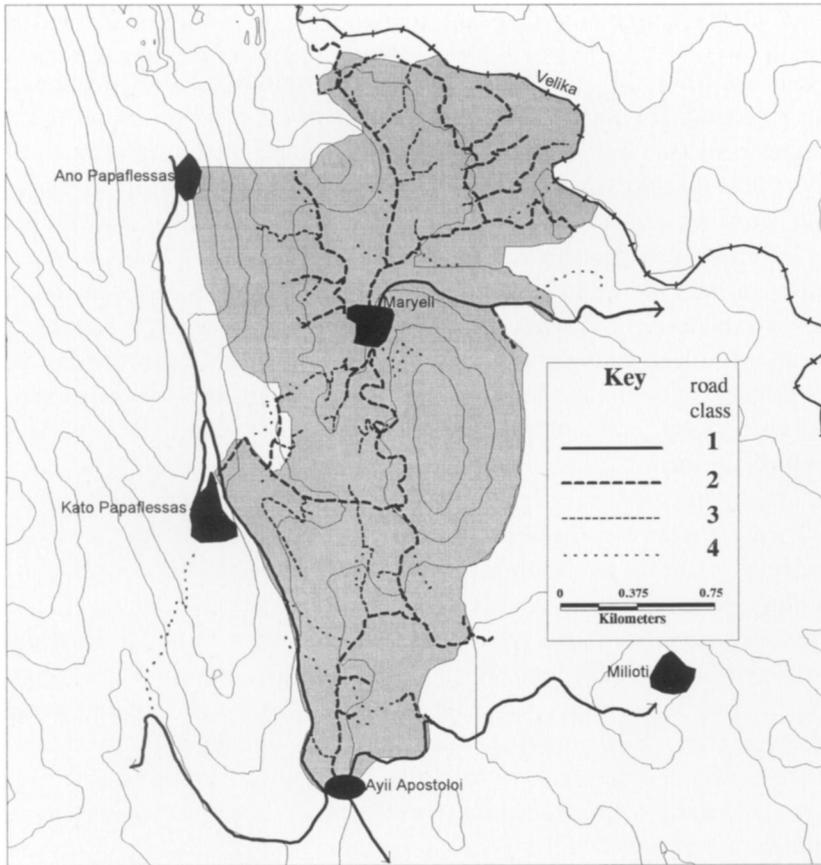


Figure 17. Existing road network, survey area. W. Lee

- Class 1:** fully asphalted (or concrete) modern roads  
**Class 2:** well-graded dirt or gravel roads  
**Class 3:** roughly bulldozed field roads  
**Class 4:** *dromakia* or *kalderimia*

at Hora.<sup>72</sup> The “main” road, used for travel to the currant markets at Nisi (now Messini) and Petalidi, described by the villagers as having been a “pebble road” or a “narrow path,” is the one shown in Figure 15 passing by the Karamitsa Monastery, then briefly following the Velika River until turning toward Aristomenis.<sup>73</sup> This route proceeded from Aristomenis through Diodia, Sterna, Manesi, Spitalion, Pilalistra, Mavrommation, and then Nisi/Messini (approximately 23 km on the ground, and remembered as a six-hour trip with a loaded donkey).

The modernization of these local roads occurred slowly (see Fig. 17). The existing well-graded dirt road that connects Papaflessas to Maryeli was built before 1940 by government-sponsored wage-work for the villagers. This road appears on the 1945 aerial photographs, and has changed little since. The development of a new market in Aristomenis around 1970 probably indicates how far paved roads had reached by that date. The old

72. Interesting support for this formerly extensive movement between Maryeli and points north and east is found in the village register, which, besides Maryeli and Athens, for the period from 1898 (the earliest) through 1938 lists birthplaces in Sterna, Voutaina, Aristomenis, Palio Loutro, Platanovrysi, and Kefalovryso—all nearby villages to the

north or east. Γενικόν μητρώον δημότων (Κοινότητις Μαργέλιου), kept in the village office.

73. Just east of Profitis Ilias, where the modern road winds between two hills, one can see where the old road follows a different route around the hills before the routes converge again.

road north and east out of Maryeli toward Aristomenis was bulldozed to wagon width in the 1950s. As late as 1982, Papaflessas apparently managed without an asphalt access road. The current east–west road through Ayii Apostoloi was built by “personal initiative” in the 1930s, widened for wheeled traffic later (after the war?), and then paved in the 1970s.<sup>74</sup>

Even this relatively slow encroachment of modern roadways has had profound effects on the geography of the region. For Maryeli and the surrounding villages to the north and east, the existence of asphalt roads (Class 1 in Fig. 17) and the availability of cars has rerouted communication onto fewer paths. Traffic out of and into Maryeli now mainly flows along the single paved road to Aristomenis, more occasionally along the dirt road from Papaflessas. The village network of *kalderimia* (Class 4), which formerly reached over bridges across the Velika to neighboring villages, has been largely replaced by roughly truncated bulldozed field roads (Class 3), both of which are distinctly discernible as a separate entity cut off from the broader network. The current road system revolves around a series of larger trunk roads (Class 2—well-graded dirt or gravel) that branch out from the village to access the major cultivable areas, tending to peter out either one field away from the Velika or at the edge of the village territory. Similarly, the less developed pathways (Classes 3 and 4), which branch out yet further from the trunk lines, tend to die out at the edge of a given field, at the river, or at the Maryelaika boundary.

The multiple crossings of the Velika are no longer tended, and where once the villagers of Platanovrysi and Voutaina regularly traveled through Maryeli en route to the market at Hora, now they are confined to the asphalt corridors around it. While this shift presents no economic hardship, because the speed of motorized travel on asphalt roads greatly exceeds that possible on the older direct footpaths, it has changed the way villagers interact. Where, before, whole families driving flocks or carrying goods to and from the market could mingle and socialize in the villages they passed through, those opportunities have now shrunk to chance meetings on the streets of the larger towns, and the use of trucks has reduced the number of people required for those market tasks.<sup>75</sup> Stanley Aschenbrenner noted a similar phenomenon at Karpofora. He found that until about 1970, Karpoforans maintained social and kinship ties almost exclusively with villages within 6 or 7 km (not counting those who emigrated from the village). The availability of roads greatly broadened that network of relationships, with Kalamata, Messini, and Athens figuring increasingly prominently.<sup>76</sup>

#### LOCAL NETWORKS: THE RISE OF AYII APOSTOLOI

The founding of Ayii Apostoloi is particularly revealing of the consequences of roads and wheels. The land around Ayii Apostoloi belongs to the twin villages of Papaflessas (Ano and Kato), and in fact some of the present-day houses began as seasonal structures used by the villagers when they came down to work their lower fields. In the 1960s, in response to the improving road network and the availability of buses, a movement developed in Papaflessas to relocate the village to this lower site, already called Ayii

74. The uncertainty in these dates arises from the fact that they are based on villagers' memories.

75. See above for Maryeli's residents' nativity in nearby villages.

76. Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 8–9.

Apostoloi after the chapel there. Neither the upland villages nor the proposed lower location had good access to water at that time, but the villagers believed that water could be brought down to Ayii Apostoloi from the springs at Palio Loutro, as indeed proved the case.

The founding of this new settlement was not without incident, meeting some hostility from some members of the original villages who attempted to block the move. Only after several years and much political maneuvering were the residents of Ayii Apostoloi recognized as a *de facto synoikismos*, or settlement, although the new village remains an administrative part of the *koinotita* of Papaflessas.<sup>77</sup>

This small community has developed its particular morphology both because of the controversy over the move and because of the impact of the road network. For years the road running through Ayii Apostoloi was the only wagon-sized, all-season road in the area. Asphalt paving brought with it the all-important public bus route with its connection to Athens, the center of the nation's post-World War II economic recovery, and to growing regional urban centers like Kalamata. Participation in the rapidly changing Greek economy required access to the cities and to those areas that began to encourage tourism. More and more rural inhabitants now have cars, but for a long time and to many people, "access" meant the bus. Although it goes without saying that hundreds of pounds of dried fruit cannot be transported to market by bus, government checks or the profits derived from local markets can—allowing people to take home the enticements of a consumer economy.<sup>78</sup>

The irresistible lure of the road junction constantly visible from their old village drew people to Ayii Apostoloi. The efforts of the anti-move faction within Papaflessas prevented an official acquisition of land for a *nucleated* village, which was the pro-move faction's original intent.<sup>79</sup> Instead, individuals built on land that they already owned in the vicinity, or improved on already extant seasonal residences. Of necessity, then, the village of Ayii Apostoloi developed in a scattered fashion, and given people's preference for being near the road, it became almost linear in form (see Fig. 18).<sup>80</sup> A new dirt road was bulldozed into the heart of the fields, occasionally following the line of the old *kalderimia*, to serve those whose plots did not front on the paved road.

Aschenbrenner has expressed some concern that ethnographers, and even the Greeks themselves, have overemphasized the role of new roads in leading to village movement or creation. In his own study village, he argues, the road was but one factor in the creation of Rizomilo, on the modern Kalamata-Pylos road, as an outgrowth of the older home village of

77. There was extensive controversy and factionalism within the village over the question of the proposed move. The dictates of space here do not allow for a fuller discussion of the internal complexities of this controversy.

78. Cf. Aschenbrenner 1986, p. 9; Allen 1976, p. 177.

79. A design for the new village, contracted in 1981, planned a relatively

traditional (i.e., nucleated) layout with modern improvements. It would have had its own small road network, a *plateia* (village square), and 73 building plots.

80. In his categorization of Balkan settlement types, Beuermann identifies the "street-and-line settlement" as the arrangement of 25–30 houses along a road: Beuermann 1956, cited in Wag-

staff 1969, p. 310. Beuermann explained these types of settlements as consequences of wartime refugee displacement crystallizing around wayside chapels and *hania*. Although Ayii Apostoloi has both of those, it instead represents a case where the road itself, coupled with village factionalism, dictated this style of settlement.

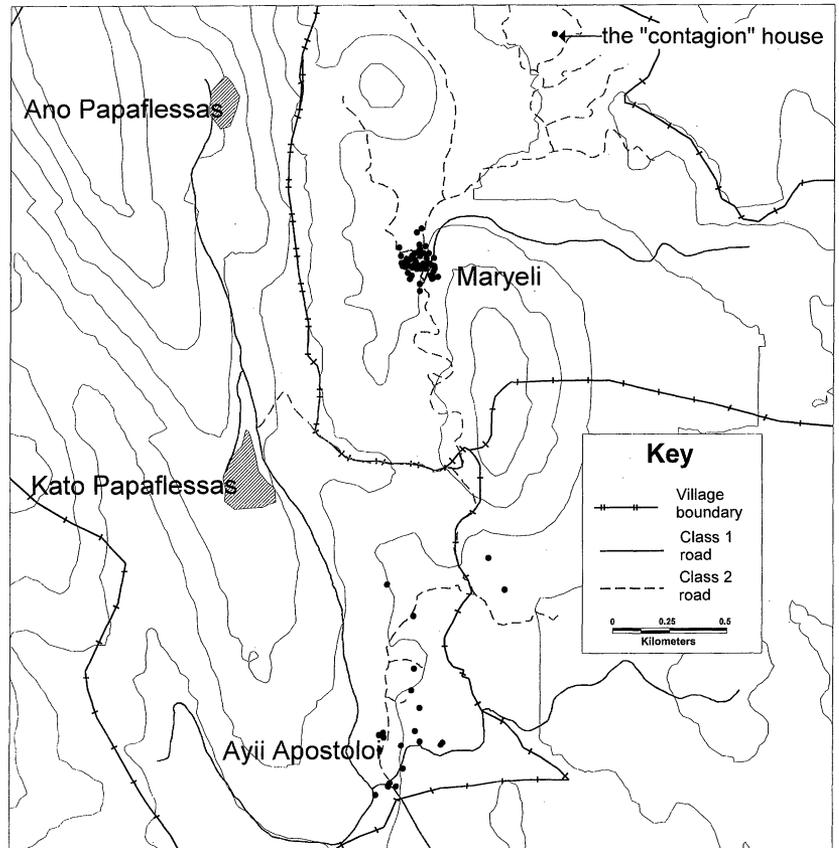


Figure 18. Distribution of houses, including former and current seasonal residences, Maryeli and Ayii Apostoloi. W. Lee

81. Wagstaff 1965b; Petronotis 1986; Stedman 1996; Clark 1994–1995; Hart 1992; Mikeli 1981; Moutsopoulos 1993. Also helpful is Konstantinopoulos 1983. Fred Cooper of the University of Minnesota is currently conducting a survey of medieval through modern vernacular architecture in the Peloponnese, although no details have as yet been published. See <http://clvl.cla.umn.edu/marwp.index.html>. There are numerous local studies of vernacular architecture for other regions of Greece (particularly the north and the islands) but they are not applicable to this study.

82. The chronology of house details given in Fig. 20 is derived from lintel dates, interviews, Petronotis 1986, and Konstantinopoulos 1983. A more detailed description of the houses and the chronological reconstruction briefly described here will be available in the Web site catalogue (<http://classics.lsa.umich.edu/PRAP.html>).

Karpofora. Aschenbrenner cites other factors such as the desire for a new home or a larger lot, but nevertheless the location of the road determined both the physical location and the layout of the new village.

## HOUSES

Traditional architecture is a relatively well-studied field in Greece; this description of the houses in and around Maryeli adds regional details to an existing broader picture.<sup>81</sup> This particular analysis also shows how the architecture of one small village has developed in response to outside forces. Homes in Maryeli, like the crops the villagers chose and the fields in which they grew them, changed in response to national and international pressures. Within the survey area, there are essentially two groups of residential structures: the dense grouping of “traditional” houses comprising the nucleated village of Maryeli, and the scattering of seasonal residences belonging to Papaflessas, around which coalesced the new village of Ayii Apostoloi (see Figs. 18 and 19).

## MARYELI’S HOUSES

There is a relatively clear pattern of chronological development and elaboration in the construction techniques of Maryeli’s houses (see Fig. 20).<sup>82</sup> That pattern, as we shall see, particularly when viewed in conjunction with the periods of active building, reflects Maryeli’s participation in the larger economic and demographic trends of Greece. Working from travelers’



Figure 19. Built structures in Maryeli, including the two churches and the central spring, 1995. W. Lee

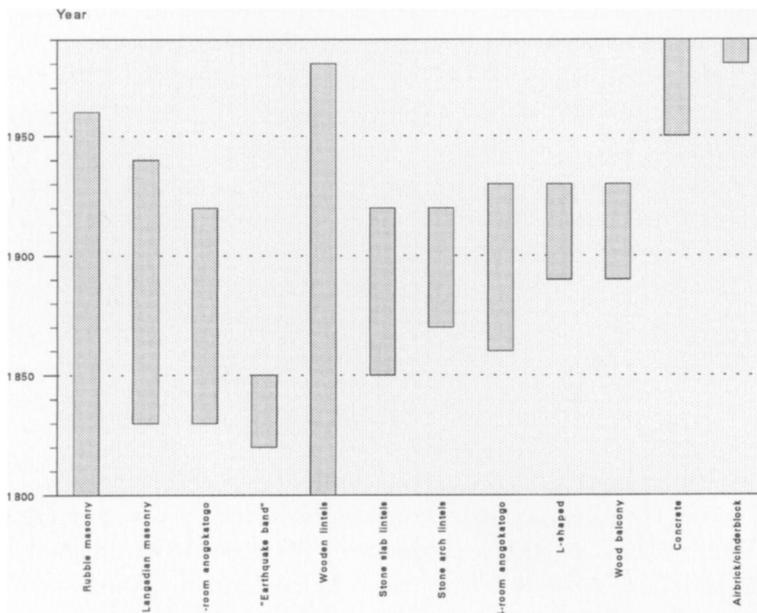


Figure 20. Chronology of house details, Maryeli. See note 82.

descriptions of Peloponnesian homes, from other architectural studies in Arkadia, the Argolid, and central Greece, and from the testimony of the villagers, we can tentatively date the oldest extant buildings in the village to the early part of the 19th century.<sup>83</sup> Those houses follow a classic Peloponnesian design, designated by Petronotis as an *anogokatogo makrynari*: a narrow rectangular plan divided into two rooms, with a half-basement where the slope of the hill allowed (see Figs. 21 and 22).<sup>84</sup>

Virtually all of Maryeli's houses, including these earliest ones, have some exterior details in common. The walls are rubble stone masonry anchored on the corners, and at the door and window frames, by larger cut stone blocks. All of the roofs are tiled, in recent years with different forms of tile. Although there is wide variety in some particular details, this general style of masonry is distinctive of Peloponnesian traditional architecture and characteristic of the work practiced by groups of traveling masons.

In Maryeli the villagers claim that their houses were built by the Langadian masons—probably the most prolific group of traveling builders in the Peloponnese.<sup>85</sup> The Langadians reached the peak of their dominance of the building trade in the late 19th century. After the first decade of the 20th century, their numbers dwindled rapidly due to changing economic conditions and their own out-migration (primarily to America).<sup>86</sup> Maryeli is geographically somewhat remote from the Langadian home village of Langadia in Arkadia (some 80 km as the crow flies), and was less of an economic draw than the busier centers of Messenia. As a result, we would predict a relatively late arrival of Langadian-built homes to Maryeli, or at most only a few dating before the late 19th century. Similarly, there should be few from after about 1920, when the Langadians' numbers had dropped off significantly.<sup>87</sup> The lintel dates and other clues we have sup-

83. Randolph 1689, p. 19; Jameson, Runnels, and van Andel 1994, p. 133; Williams 1820, II, p. 228; Clark 1858, pp. 263–265; Barrington 1850, pp. 170–171; Perdicaris 1845, II, p. 79. These travelers' descriptions are in accord with the conclusions of Argyris Petronotis (1986, p. 18 and *passim*) in his study of Arkadian traditional architecture. They also dovetail well with Stedman's study (1996) of several villages in central Greece, Clark's study in Methana (1994–1995), and Hart's in Zarakas (1992). Note that the "oldest" houses in Maryeli uniformly lack lintel stone dates, the earliest of which is 1869.

84. Hart (1992, pp. 58–62) outlines a similar house layout for her village in Zarakas, and while she establishes a sequence of development, she does not pin it to actual dates. Wagstaff defines

this whole class of house styles as a "mountain house," but his definition is not as specific as Petronotis'. Wagstaff 1965b, p. 60.

85. See Konstantinopoulos 1983 for an outline of the activities and reach of the Langadian masons. The Langadians are also credited with building the homes of nearby Karpofora (save three). Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 12, 86.

86. Konstantinopoulos 1983, pp. 94–96.

87. Very few new homes were built in Maryeli after about 1920, until after 1973, when the availability of concrete led to the complete replacement of one home in concrete, discussed below. That one home, like similarly constructed new homes in Ayii Apostoloi (also discussed below), is significantly larger than the older homes.

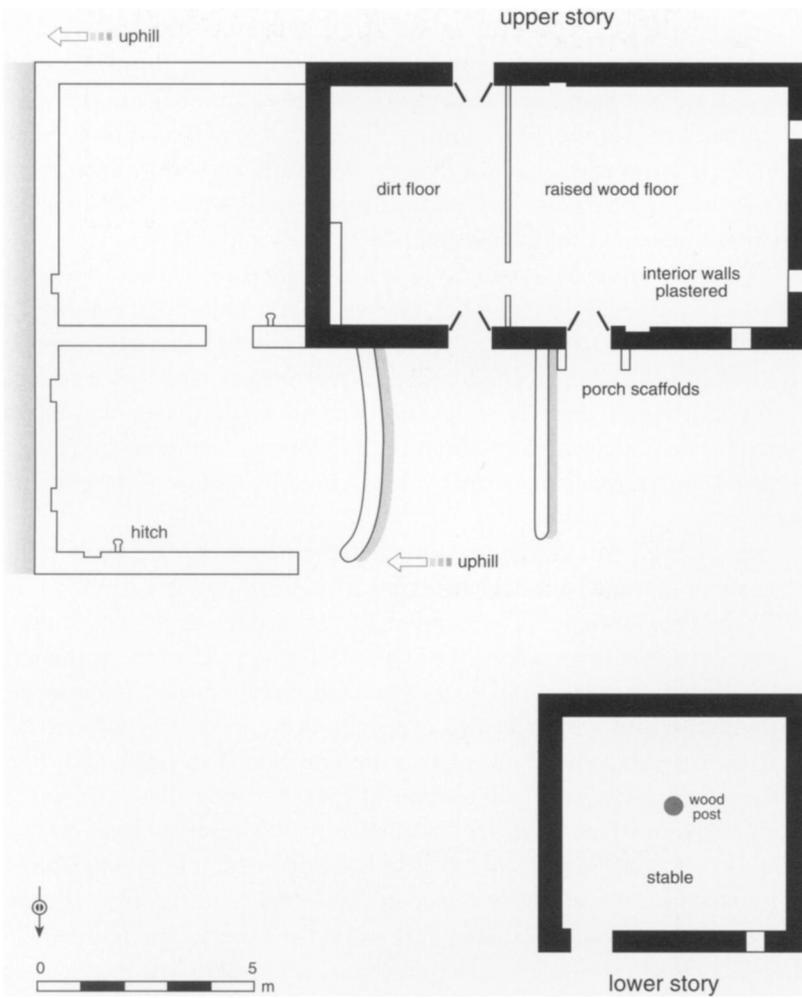


Figure 21. Plan of a two-room *anogokatogo makrynari*-style house, structure 1023. R. J. Robertson



Figure 22. A two-room *anogokatogo makrynari*-style house, north face. W. Lee

Figure 23. Elevation of a four-room *anogokatogo*-style house, structure 1035. R. J. Robertson

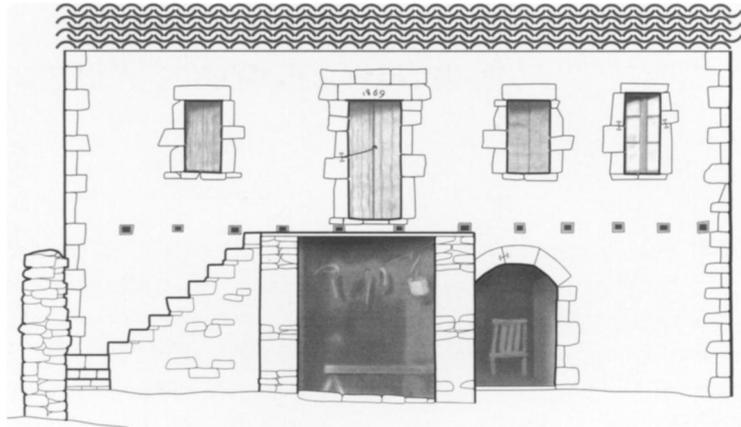
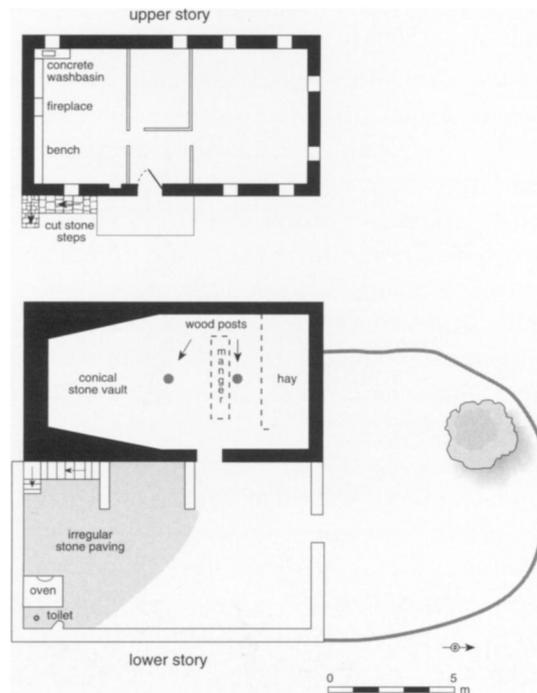


Figure 24. Plan of a four-room *anogokatogo*-style house, structure 1035. R. J. Robertson



88. There is no way to prove that *all* of the houses showing this general style were Langadian-built, but many probably were. At least two of the village houses (structures 1010 and 1042) have tile rosettes, which, according to Petronotis, were a particular signature of the Langadians; Petronotis 1986, p. 68. Lintel dates may indicate date of marriage and not the date of construction. In at least one case in Maryeli, a lintel date indicated the addition of an upper floor to an older structure. Generally, however, when lintel dates existed, the villagers were able to connect them to actual construction.

port that chronology.<sup>88</sup> For convenience, however, throughout this article all houses built with the distinctive cut stone corners are described as “Langadian.”

By the middle of the 19th century, Maryeli’s homes began to undergo some elaboration both in the plan and in the details of construction. The narrow rectangular design expanded to allow for four rooms (see Figs. 23 and 24). Along with the enlarging of the floor plan came enhancements in the masonry—including the innovation of arched basement entrances and door frames built two cut-stones wide (referred to as “double stone door frames”). Additionally, a much more sophisticated basement construction appeared. In the new design, half of the under-house space consisted of a conical stone barrel vault, built into the upper slope and under the room with the fireplace (see Fig. 24).

TABLE 1. HOUSES BUILT IN MARYELI, BY PERIOD

	<i>A</i>	<i>A-B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B-C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C-D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>
	1800–1850		1850–1900		1900–1920		1920–1940	1940–1973	
No. houses built	4	2	4	10	9	3	3	1	1

In the first two decades of the 20th century, further improvements appeared.<sup>89</sup> Some of the houses were now built in an L-shape, with the crook of the “L” enclosed as a courtyard. Some of the larger buildings now began to have finished ground-floor rooms, as opposed to merely unfinished storage or stable space. This period also saw the appearance and proliferation of elevated balconies. Many of these homes bear witness to the full scope of the Langadians’ creative skills in the use of various kinds of arches over doors and windows, and in the insertion of tile vents through the stonework along the roofline.<sup>90</sup>

After about 1920 there was a significant dropoff in the number of houses built in Maryeli (see Table 1: categories C–D), a dropoff that (as we will see) coincided both with a significant fall in currant production and with the decreasing availability of Langadian masons.<sup>91</sup> The relatively few homes that have been built since then mostly reflect the availability of modern materials (airbrick, concrete, cinderblock, corrugated vinyl roofing), securely dating them to a period after World War II. Maryeli has one completely new building constructed in reinforced concrete, built on the site of a preexisting building. Ready availability of modern materials has also led several villagers to add to or renovate their houses, making them “conglomerate” in their building materials. Traditional elements are visible, but modern additions have obscured many features that might have allowed a more precise dating.<sup>92</sup>

Within or quite close to the village, there are few completely nonresidential buildings (discounting small sheds built immediately adjacent to the houses). There are two olive-press buildings (discussed above), one family “chapel,” a village office (formerly the school), and a church associated with the village cemetery. Even the two village *kafenia* (coffeehouses) operate out of houses rather than from separate structures.

In general terms, the state of the homes in the village may be described as follows: There are 43 buildings that are now or were once residences. At present, 25 are still actively used as dwellings or are maintained for that purpose—often remaining empty, with their owners residing in Athens or elsewhere. The declining population has left 10 houses completely unused or in ruins. One is being restored, one is under construction, and eight have been converted into sheds or stables. The decision of whether to abandon a building or to reuse it seems to depend entirely upon the family’s continued presence in the village rather than the structure’s age; some of the oldest buildings are still lived in or used in some fashion.

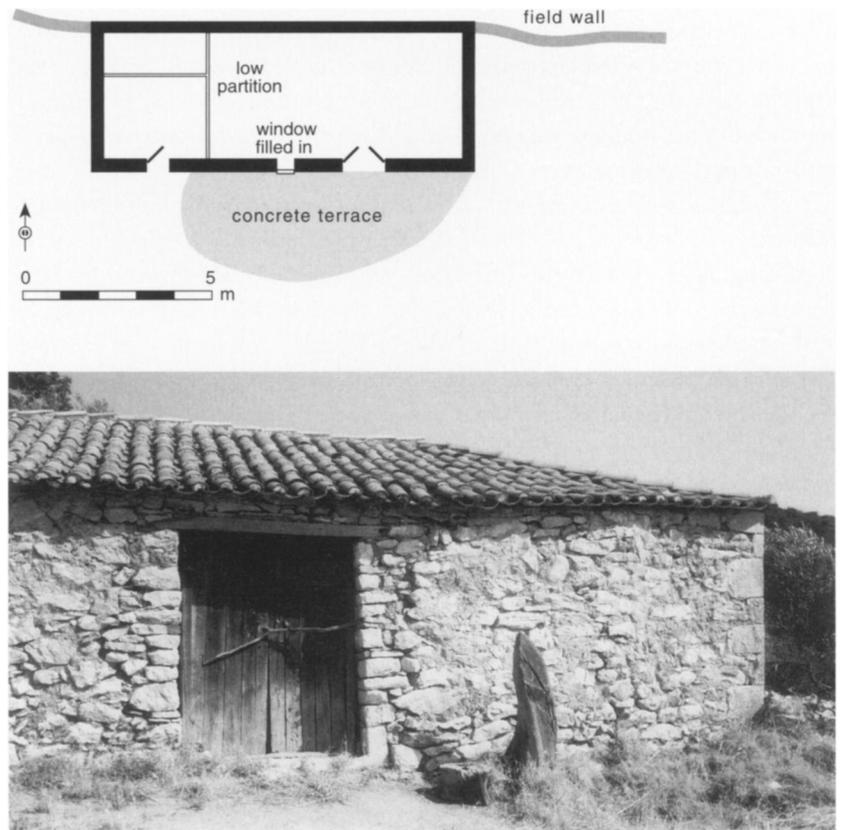
Before I proceed to describe the other major cluster of houses in this study, those around Ayii Apostoloi, two other dwellings are worth mentioning. In general, the villagers of Maryeli did not use seasonal residences (*kalyves*). Their fields were neither so far away nor so difficult to reach as to require actual in-field residences, as opposed to mere shelters. Infor-

89. Clark (1994–1995, pp. 516–519) found similar developments in Methana over the mid-19th century to the early 20th, although without as much change in floor plan.

90. “Tile vents” are holes in the masonry, lined with tile and placed just below the roofline of the house, which allow rising hot air to escape.

91. Clark (1994–1995, p. 524) found a parallel dropoff in house construction in Methana after 1911 and up until 1948.

92. For similar postwar architectural developments in other villages, see Allen 1976, pp. 186–187; Aschenbrenner 1986, p. 86; Hart 1992, pp. 58–62; Clark 1994–1995, pp. 519–522.



**Figure 25. Seasonal residence (*kalyva*), structure 41.** Plan, R. J. Robertson; photograph, W. Lee

mants report that there were, however, a couple of such residences at the extreme edge of Maryelaika near the monastery. One of these, destroyed in the flood of 1964/1965, was constructed to house the seasonal labor hired by the Maryeli family. The other dwelling outside the nucleated village is the so-called contagion house, apparently built by the villagers to house a victim of tuberculosis. Isolated on a knoll amidst Maryeli's fields (see Fig. 18), it was built "sometime before World War II" of simple rubble stone-and-mortar construction, and is today in ruins.

### AYII APOSTOLOI

South of Maryeli lies a group of fields where villagers from Papaflessas have built a number of scattered seasonal residences for use during heavy periods of labor.<sup>93</sup> Although some now lie in ruins, over the last thirty years some of these *kalyves* have been transformed into permanent residences while other new houses have been added with the development of the *synoikismos* of Ayii Apostoloi (see above). Specifically, there are ten buildings in this area that were probably once used as seasonal residences. Two are in ruins, four are still used for occasional siestas, for storage, or for stables, while four others have been enlarged or incorporated into full- or nearly full-time residences. Few features allow us to date Papaflessas' *kalyves*, but from a villager's remarks, one building could be approximately 80 years old (see Fig. 25).

93. Clark (1994–1995, p. 513) found that *kalyves* in Methana were built in high-elevation fields in the period before villagers could afford even to purchase donkeys and thus commute to their fields.

Most of these *kalyves* are simple rubble-and-mortar masonry. A few have Langadian “touches” such as cut stone corners, although these are done more crudely than those of the homes of Maryeli. These structures are often found in association with *alonia* or with threshing floors, as are other nonresidential field buildings in this area. These buildings are concentrated in the many small valleys that dissect the region, and often sit on well-drained knolls above a watercourse.

All ten seasonal residences discussed above were built before the introduction of concrete (ca. 1948); all are constructed of stone rubble, with occasional later modern modifications. In other words, the need for new seasonal residences ceased at least before the introduction of concrete, or at the earliest, around the time of World War II. The decline of seasonal residences presumably resulted from the failing population followed by the increased availability of motorized transport.

As for the modern homes of Ayii Apostoloi, they exemplify a trend today common to many areas of southwest Messenia. When a new house goes up outside traditional village boundaries, it tends to follow a particular design, here called the compound. The houses are usually widely spaced from each other and are inside large fenced compounds, rather than the small walled courtyards characteristic of older village homes. Usually the inside of the compound is heavily cultivated. In Ayii Apostoloi the relative scarcity of water has favored “dry” cultivation (olives, vines) although some people have chosen to create vegetable gardens. The houses are framed with reinforced concrete, filled in with airbrick, plastered over, and alternatively flat-roofed or tiled, according to the resources of the owner. Generally these homes are much larger than traditional stone homes: in part owing to the amenability of concrete and brick to larger-scale construction, in part owing to the greater availability of space outside the nucleated village, and overall reflecting the growing affluence of Greece itself. Unusually, in Ayii Apostoloi the homes are mostly single-story, whereas elsewhere in southwest Messenia, even if in an unfinished state, they are clearly meant to be two-story. The compounds provide ample space for the proliferation of small, cheaply made outbuildings; cinderblock construction with corrugated steel roofs is especially common.

## CROP SELECTION AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Although a wide range of agricultural and pastoral practices have been known in Messenia—including the cultivation of grapes, fodder crops, market vegetables, silk, and more—the region’s most consistent and best-documented products have been currants, wheat, olives, and figs; they will constitute the core of this study.<sup>94</sup> The sources for a regional history of

94. Focusing on these four products allows us to take the longest possible view of Messenian agriculture, because they have persisted the longest within our two-century frame of reference. While other crops (e.g., silk) may have enjoyed periods of prominence, these four are our best indicators of long-

term regional agricultural trends. The nature of the evidence is admittedly weighted toward them because of their use as exports at various times; travelers (and consular representatives) emphasized those items that brought wealth through trade.

agricultural production before the end of the 18th century are slim.<sup>95</sup> What is clear, however, is that well before 1800, the Peloponnese, and perhaps Messenia in particular, had begun to participate seriously in a domestic and international agricultural market, owing largely to the suitability of Messenian produce for export.<sup>96</sup> Admittedly, to speak of Messenia as an export region in the 18th century does not mean that every locale within Messenia fully participated. Production for export varied from locale to locale. Fig cultivation, for example, remained confined during this period to a fairly narrow geographic area in and around the Pamisos River valley (e.g., Kalamata and Androusa). Oil and grain, while more broadly based, still varied according to a locale's ability to produce sufficient surplus for market.

Commercial agriculture continued in the early 19th century, when Leake observed how, despite the inadequacy of the road network, Kalamata served not only as the external port for much of the surrounding area, but also as the

chief place for the interchange of commodities between the interior of the Morea and the Southern coast. A fair is held every Sunday, at which maize, wheat, barley, cheese . . . are brought for sale from the districts of Karitena, Londari, Arkhadia, Andrussa, Tripolitza, and Mistra.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, even before the War of Independence, Maryeli was situated within what was potentially a relatively commercialized area of Greece.

After independence the trend of Messenian commercialized agriculture continued, combined with subsistence production, although there was a decline in the ability of the area to produce sufficient wheat for export.<sup>98</sup> Perdicaris, writing in 1845, confirmed the relative prosperity of Messenia in his comparison of the abundant markets of Kalamata with the depressed areas of Arkadia and the Mani.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of the 18th century, the commercial strength of the Messenian ports had already de-

95. Although Messenian commercial agriculture predates the 18th century, that subject lies beyond the scope of this paper. Methoni and Koroni were critical ports on Venetian routes to and from the Levant in the 14th and 15th centuries, and in the late 17th century Messenia was exporting significant quantities of produce to Venice, particularly olive oil. Siriol Davies (pers. comm.).

96. This statement is based on an analysis of crop production figures for southwest Messenia found in a variety of sources. See Belia 1978, pp. 284–285, and also the detailed accounts of Saverio Scrofani and F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, discussed in combination with other evidence by Kremmydas (1980). Additionally, Leake's early-

19th-century accounts provide regional details. Maryeli's location at the nexus of the Venetian and Ottoman provinces of Methoni, Navarino, and Andrussa dictates an examination of all three regions. In general, however, 20th-century Maryeli's agricultural pattern is more akin to that of the Kalamata upland region (i.e., Androusa) than to Pylia (i.e., Navarino). See also McGrew 1985, pp. 5–6. Further evidence for the commercialization of Messenian agriculture comes from Kremmydas' study of commerce in 18th-century Peloponnesian ports. He found that the five key ports were Patras, Nafplia, Navarino, Methoni, and Koroni (Kalamata and Petalidi were still minor ports at this time). Of those, the three Messenian entrepôts combined to outweigh any

other port, making southwest Messenia a major center of the export trade. The significance of these figures arises from the close proximity of the three Messenian ports, all servicing a relatively small area, unlike Patras and Nafplia, each of which serviced a much larger hinterland. Kremmydas 1972, p. 29. Petalidi is not much of a port now, but in the late 19th and early 20th century it held tremendous importance in the Messenian currant market.

97. Leake 1830, I, p. 346.

98. Production figures are available for 1835 in Strong 1842, p. 127. For 1860, figures are from Mansolas 1867, pp. 75, 78.

99. Perdicaris 1845, II, p. 172.

clined relative to Patras and Corinth, despite Kalamata's growth and eventual dominance in Messenia.<sup>100</sup>

To sum up: the products of southwest Messenia (particularly wheat, olives, and figs) were in international demand *and* were available in some surplus, prior to independence. The Messenian market share of exports from the Morea declined as the 18th century ended, however, and as the 19th century advanced, the currant trade originally centered in the northern Peloponnese came to dominate the wider Peloponnesian and Messenian economy.

The most significant local development underlying all these changes in crop choice and commercial marketing was the radical change in land tenure and distribution that followed the Greek War of Independence. When Leake described the state of the Messenian countryside around Androusa (which included Maryeli), he attributed the "usual aspect of Turkish desolation" to the *tsiftlik* system which predominated in that area.<sup>101</sup> Although a complex, variable, and evolving institution, *tsiftliks* (or *ciftliks*) in this period in the Peloponnese were commercially run estates on land granted by the Ottoman state, but long since free of the state's interference. The growth of the landlords' independence led them to make harsher and harsher demands on the peasant sharecroppers who worked the land. These demands are often blamed for a general movement of population from the lowlands to the mountains in the 18th century.<sup>102</sup> By the end of the 19th century, things were very different. Although there is some disagreement in modern scholarship, landholding is agreed to have become much more broadly based, thanks to Greek land-redistribution projects in 1835 and 1871. According to Frederick Strong's statistical study of Greece, published in 1842, the Department of Pyli's working population was 57% "agriculturalists" (farm labor), while 11% were small landed proprietors and 0.3% were large landholders.<sup>103</sup> The British consul in Patras, writing in 1891, described the peasants of mid-century as having been primarily pastoral, whereas in his time they had become landed proprietors. He attributed this change to the land distribution and to the success of farmers in converting that land to currant production.<sup>104</sup>

Unfortunately, it will probably never be possible to determine whether the lands in and around Maryeli were included in the redistribution schemes of 1835 and 1871 (although it is worth remarking that the majority of the Peloponnese was). The 1835 law was extremely unsuccessful, resulting in

100. Kremmydas 1980, pp. 84–85; see also Leake 1830, I, p. 346.

101. Leake 1830, I, p. 353.

102. Sutton 1988, p. 190. This supposed movement of population is disputed by Frangakis and Wagstaff (1987). For a good general discussion of the *tsiftlik* system, see Stoianovich 1953.

103. Strong 1842, p. 186. It is worth pointing out that the neighboring Department of Messenia (not the modern inclusive Nomarch of Mes-

senia) was much more balanced, with 38% agriculturalists, 44% small landed proprietors, and 1.3% large landholders. The Peloponnese as a whole was, respectively, 47%, 20%, and 1.4%.

104. BCR for 1891, pp. 8–9. The history of the redistribution of land after independence is described in McGrew 1985. The question of whether the Peloponnese became dominated by small landholders or remained in the grip of larger landlords and merchants is debated. Frangiadis, for example,

makes a strong case that wealthier farmers worked around the distribution laws to gather more land into fewer hands, converting many smallholders into sharecroppers. It remains true, however, that the Peloponnese experienced a significant, if incomplete, shift in favor of the peasant smallholders. See Frangiadis 1990, pp. 80–83; Sutton in Wright et al. 1990, p. 597; Mouzelis 1978, pp. 11–16; Seferiades 1999, pp. 281–285; Sutton 1988, p. 193.

only 1% of available national lands being redistributed, and only 6,970 stremmata in Ep. Pylia.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, in a study of the occupations of 998 men sworn into state service in Messenia between 1851 and 1860, the Demos of Voufrasou (which included Maryeli and Papaflessas) appears to have been behind other areas of Messenia in the private ownership of land. In Messenia as a whole, 775 office-holders were characterized as “landowners” (*ktimatiai*), while only 70 were listed as “farmers” (*yeoryi*)—apparently individuals who worked on rented land. In Voufrasou, however, only 2 of 26 were landowners, and the rest farmers (with one “other”).<sup>106</sup> The redistribution law of 1871 was much more successful, and it is very possible that Maryeli’s farmers benefited from that round of land distribution.

### CURRENTS

How much effect this land redistribution had upon Maryeli can be determined only by returning to the history of currant farming in the Peloponnese. The northern coast of the Peloponnese had long been known for its currants, but the crop remained largely restricted to that region until after independence.<sup>107</sup> Independence, its success as a cash crop, and land redistribution all combined to foster the spread of currant production in the Peloponnese.<sup>108</sup> The major change in the international currant market, however, occurred in 1877. In that year French vineyards were first seriously damaged by phylloxera, raising demand for Greek currants from 881 tons (English) in 1877 to 70,401 tons in 1889.<sup>109</sup> Ironically, this disaster in France occurred just in time to save the Greek currant farmers from a disastrous overproduction. The land redistribution in 1871 had dramatically increased new plantings of currants, all of which began to bear fruit in 1876–1877 (newly planted currants require 5–7 years before bearing).<sup>110</sup> The new French demand created an inflated price, and Greek farmers hurried to borrow money to buy yet more land, to plant yet more currants.

It was during this period that farmers in Messenia and the rest of the southern Peloponnese began to move wholeheartedly to the currant; the lesser-quality, lower-priced fruit produced in the south was perfect for wine blending.<sup>111</sup> To give just one example, Karpofora, the Messenian village studied by Aschenbrenner, planted its first currants in 1880.<sup>112</sup> Alexis Franghiadis attributes the steep rise in the Messenian population in 1861–1891 to the migration of peasants from the interior highlands down onto

105. Of the 17,400,000 stremmata of national land in the Peloponnese in 1833 (3,300,000 more were private, with their sum being the total area of the Peloponnese), by 1857 only 189,351 stremmata had been redistributed or sold to private persons. Of those, 6,970 were in Ep. Pylia, 3,7500 in Triphyllia, and a mere 1,351 in Ep. Messenia. McGrew 1985, pp. 87, 173–174. See also Strong 1842, p. 220. (The stremma [pl. stremmata] is the traditional Greek measure of farmland, and its modern version [since 1829] is equivalent to 0.1

hectares.)

106. Giannakopoulos 1991–1992, pp. 328, 346–348.

107. There is some confusion as to exactly when large-scale currant farming was introduced in Messenia. Strong’s 1840 survey of currant-producing regions definitely excluded Messenia, although Mansolas’ publication of agricultural statistics for 1860 indicates that Messenia had shifted 36,159 stremmata to currant fields. Strong 1842, p. 174; Mansolas 1867, pp. 72–73.

108. Much of the following (except

where otherwise noted) derives from the description of the currant crisis in BCR for 1891–1894, *passim*.

109. Until the French crisis, the crop had been exported primarily to England, and to secondary markets in the U.S. and elsewhere in Europe. Demand had increased, but at a relatively slow pace.

110. Burlumi 1899.

111. Franghiadis 1990, pp. 26–27.

112. Aschenbrenner 1972, p. 49; 1986, p. 12.

the coastal, and relatively unoccupied, lands of Messenia in order to participate in the currant boom.<sup>113</sup> The explosion of currant production even led to the cutting down of olive groves to make way for the new cash crop.<sup>114</sup>

The decision to switch cultivable land to currants was not one made lightly, despite the apparently rising value of currants as a cash crop. The labor requirements for currants (as for all viticulture) were significantly higher than for competing crops. It has been calculated that currants required 14.5 nine-hour work days per stremma, whereas wheat required only 2.6 and olives only 3.5.<sup>115</sup> This calculation does not include the additional preparatory work necessary to ready some fields for viticulture, such as terracing. Currants required a much greater investment in shaping the land than did cereals or pastoralism. In areas like Maryeli, the expansion of cultivable area beyond subsistence needs pushed currants up the steep hillsides and mandated the building and maintaining of ever more terraces.<sup>116</sup> Abandoned vineyards, and other areas around Maryeli pointed out by the villagers as former currant fields, occupy sometimes startlingly steep hillsides. Finally, all that investment in labor and capital had to wait five to seven years from planting to the first full harvest. None of these difficulties deterred Peloponnesian farmers from moving to currant production, particularly during the boom caused by the disaster in France. The significant labor investment in currants may in fact help explain why the farmers tenaciously held onto this crop even in the much less certain times to follow.

Unfortunately, French demand did not remain at a steady rate. Recovering from the phylloxera outbreak, the French in 1892 began restricting the importation of currants. Prices throughout Greece fell so far that production costs in 1893 exceeded the selling price.<sup>117</sup> Messenian currant growers were particularly hard-hit since the traditional market in England for the currant as a dried fruit in mincemeat pies and currant loaves preferred the more succulent fruit produced in the northern Peloponnese. The “currant crisis” quickly became severe enough to warrant government intervention.<sup>118</sup>

Notwithstanding the crisis and government attempts to limit production, the currant retained a dominant role in the local agricultural economy. Peloponnesian production of the fruit began to level out in the early years of the 20th century, but Messenia saw a rapid increase in the years after 1913 (see Fig. 26). While World War I dramatically restricted Greece’s ability to market its currants, it also saw an initial steep rise in their price.<sup>119</sup> Despite market uncertainty, high prices encouraged Messenian farmers who had not already gone over to currants to do so. In the postwar years those prices were maintained artificially through export limitations. Although the nominal price of currants remained high, farmers were increasingly unable to sell their entire crop at the listed price. Eventually even those prices could not be sustained, particularly in the face of falling British demand and rising Californian and Australian competition. The price and production boom lasted through the 1920s, but the huge fall in prices associated with the Great Depression in the early 1930s led to a series of violent outbursts, even rebellions, by Peloponnesian and Messenian currant growers in 1934/1935.<sup>120</sup>

113. Franghiadis 1990, p. 31. Rennell Rodd, writing in 1892, described the Messenian plain as the most prosperous agricultural area in the Peloponnese. Rodd 1892, pp. 66–67.

114. BCR for 1892.

115. Pepelasis and Yotopoulos 1962, p. 164. See also Wagstaff 1965c. I have used the calculations for 1955, and have added together the workdays of man and “supplementary” (women, elders, children). The coefficients represent the number of nine-hour workdays per stremma to produce the volume of agricultural output for that year. These coefficients are variable depending upon the yield (the larger the harvest, the more time necessary to process it), but they serve as a good comparative baseline.

116. Franghiadis 1990, pp. 76–77.

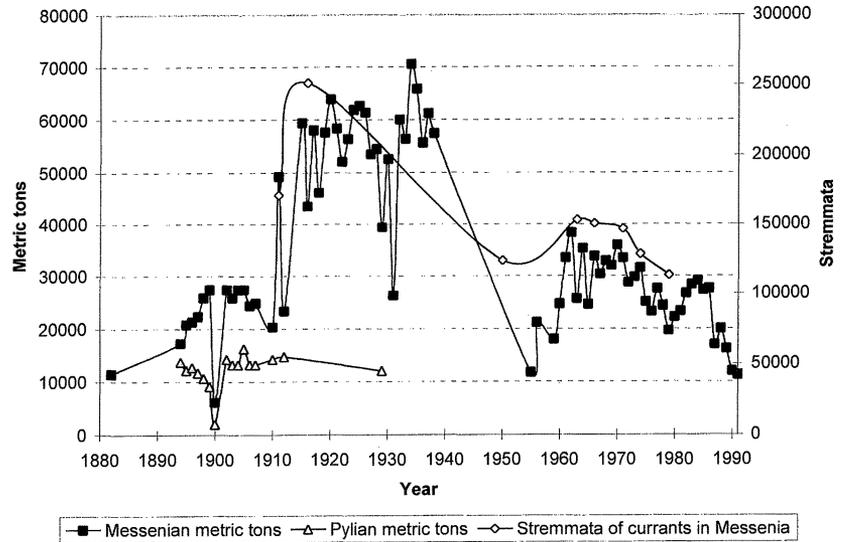
117. BCR for 1893, pp. 6–9.

118. In 1896 the Greek government tried to restrict the supply of currants, and thereby increase the price, by itself buying up the surplus. This retention law, and the 1899 establishment of a currant bank, met with limited success. In 1905 the government established a privileged twenty-year monopoly to guarantee a minimum price; at the same time, the government also restricted the expansion of currant plantations. BCR for 1905.

119. See Mazower 1991, pp. 51–53, 79–83 for the currant market during World War I. Aschenbrenner (1986, p. 12) noted a wave of new currant plantings in Messenia beginning in 1910.

120. Mazower 1991, p. 85; Mears 1929, pp. 64–66; Seferiades 1999, pp. 297–298, 317–320.

Figure 26. Currant production, Messenia and Pylia. Data in Figs. 26–29 are compiled from GSE 1911–1994; BCR for 1874–1914; Kilimi 1939; Strong 1842; Mansolas 1867



Despite this boom-and-bust market, currant producers were slow to change crops. The labor investment in vineyards, together with the vivid memory of boom times, helped currants to persist in the countryside, and Greek and Messenian currant production continued unabated right up to the eve of World War II.<sup>121</sup>

Maryeli and its neighboring communities entered the currant market around the beginning of the 20th century. Presumably the relative remoteness of Maryeli and the surrounding communities initially insulated them from the regional move to currants. Exactly when they began to grow currants is unclear, but the 1911 statistics for the *Koinotita Kondogoni* (which included Maryeli; Kondogoni, soon to be renamed Papaflessas; and Maniaki; hereafter K. Kondogoni) showed 634 stremmata already under mature currants.<sup>122</sup> Those 634 stremmata should be compared to the 749 stremmata of wheat under cultivation at the same time. The surrounding Demos of Voufrados had already had a somewhat longer experience of currant production, for it was represented in the bylaws of the society of Messenian currant growers in 1898.<sup>123</sup> Village memory unequivocally points to currants as the primary cash crop of the pre-World War II era, and it is significant that Maryeli and the surrounding region peaked demographically during this period (see Fig. 6). Paralleling Maryeli's turn to currants and the simultaneous demographic expansion was the rapid appearance of many of the well-crafted stone-masonry homes in Maryeli during the period from 1900 to 1920 (see Table 1).

121. A similar adherence to a cash crop with a history of boom times is documented for early colonial Virginia and the production of tobacco. The initially high prices saved the colony and saw virtually every propertied colonist invest in tobacco farming. The later fall in prices had only a minimal impact on total production and the colony strug-

gled to find ways to recreate the boom times. Morgan 1975, pp. 108–130.

122. Although the deme system was not abolished until 1912, the 1911 agricultural statistics were reported according to the new *koinotita* system, presumably because publication did not occur until 1914. Chouliarakes 1973–1976, II, pp. 32–33; GSE 1911.

The word *koinotita* or *kinotis* is often considered to indicate one village, but actually, especially during this period, it could encompass several villages under one administrative unit.

123. *Καταστατικόν του Σταφίδικου Σύνδεσμου Μεσσηνίας*, p. 3.

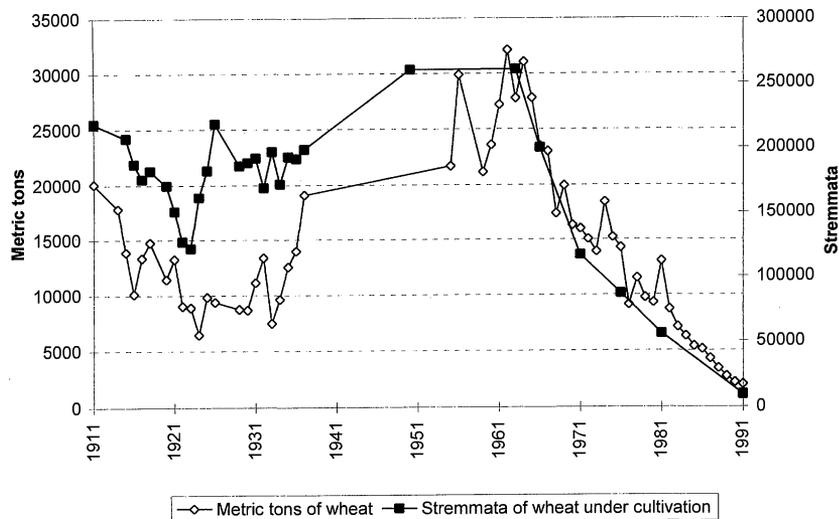


Figure 27. Wheat production, Messenia

## WHEAT

The history of the other three principal crops in the period up to World War II is somewhat less clear, in part because of the dominance of currants. Wheat's very ubiquity has reduced its visibility in the historical record.<sup>124</sup> Its universal presence in the landscape in the past led observers to comment on it only when it was produced in sufficient abundance for export. Wheat clearly outweighed, however, any other cereals in this century in the region around Maryeli. In the 18th century wheat was also an important Peloponnesian export, declining in the early 19th century. The expansion of the currant market, and the success of the peasantry's participation in it, led to another decline in grain production toward the end of the 19th century, although wheat of course remained a subsistence crop.<sup>125</sup> Motivation to plant cereals continued to be undercut by the government's tithe on grain, which lasted until 1880.<sup>126</sup> The availability of cash from the selling of currants also allowed the peasants to consume their own grain rather than sell it to the cities (and further switch land from grain to other crops), and the urban areas consequently began to have to import grain from outside Messenia.<sup>127</sup>

With the end of the tithe, and with the 1893 currant bust, wheat began to regain importance. It was, however, planted on fallow land rather than as an actual replacement for currants.<sup>128</sup> In K. Kondogoni in 1911, of the 2,044 cultivated stremmata reported, 749 were in wheat (36%), the largest single item (see Table 2). Wine grapes and currants filled most of the remaining fields. In the rest of the Peloponnese, wheat also continued to be the dominant crop (as measured by stremmata in production).<sup>129</sup>

The beginning of the 20th century, however, represented the pre-World War II peak for Messenian wheat production. Wheat production soon began to slide due to ongoing investment in currants (currant production rose in almost direct proportion to wheat's decline; cf. Figs. 26 and 27), combined with the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 and World War I. Other scholars, noting the disruption that occurred in all aspects of national agricultural output during this period, have attributed the decline to the mobilization of soldiers, the fighting in northern Greece, requisitioning, and the malnutrition of remaining farmers due to wartime shortages.<sup>130</sup>

124. K. Kondogoni had 749 stremmata of wheat in 1911, only 2 stremmata of barley, and no other cereals or pulses. This dominance of wheat applies to the region at large, if less obviously, and continued through 1961; GSE 1911; NSSG (Atlas), pp. 303–306.

125. BCR for 1880; Franghiadis 1990, p. 50.

126. Other crops were not so taxed, and the bureaucratic inefficiency of the system led to waste, as grain rotted waiting for the collector; BCR for 1880.

127. Franghiadis 1990, pp. 36–37.

128. BCR for 1903, pp. 3–4.

129. GSE 1911.

130. Mazower 1991, p. 52.

TABLE 2. STREMMATA IN CULTIVATION FOR TWO REGIONS IN 1911

Stremmata of	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Other Cereals</i>	<i>Currants</i>	<i>Wine Grapes</i>	<i>Young Vines</i>	<i>Olives</i>	<i>Figs</i>
K. Kondogoni	749	2	634	539	99	—	—
Voufrados	11,598	7,191	4,952	3,592	600	927	305
Workday coefficient per stremmata	2.6	—	14.5	7.5	—	3.5	12.1

Messenian farmers at this time, however, radically increased currant output, indicating not a lack of ability to farm so much as a conscious decision to keep up their cash crops. The need for subsistence production was beginning to pale compared to the attractions of the market.

In the 1920s and 1930s a growing Peloponnesian population brought more and more land under cultivation, and technological improvements increased the wheat yield.<sup>131</sup> More importantly, and just in time to make a difference during the coming worldwide depression, the Greek state stepped up incentives for wheat production, inspired by a fear of a repeat of the instability demonstrated during World War I and the famines and food shortages it engendered.<sup>132</sup> The government's efforts bore the desired fruit, with the area devoted to wheat cultivation rising by 46.7% from the late 1920s to the early 1930s.<sup>133</sup> This is the era remembered by the villagers as that when grain and currants were "everywhere." Given the population peak reached in this period (Fig. 6), and the cash motivations to increase cultivated area (initially for currants, and then for grain after 1928), it is almost certain that the early 1930s were the years when the expansion of Maryeli's cultivable land through terracing reached its greatest extent.

### OLIVES AND FIGS

Olives do not appear at all in the 1911 agricultural statistics for K. Kondogoni, and are quite minor in the rest of the Demos of Voufrados (see Table 2). Nor does the region around Maryeli have examples of the very old, gnarled olive trees common to other areas of Messenia.<sup>134</sup> These indicators would seem to contradict the traditional notion of nearly universal olive oil production in Messenia, but the two olive presses associated with the village may help clarify this seeming contradiction. The smaller, family-owned press building, dateable to the late 19th or early 20th century, and too small to contain animal-driven presses, may represent an era of small-scale household production of olive oil, production

131. Jameson, Runnels, and van Andel 1994, p. 145.

132. In 1927 Greece imported 411,000 tons of wheat (and 67,000 tons of flour) while producing 352,000 tons; Turner 1928, p. 9. In 1928 the Greek government founded the Organization for the Concentration of Wheat, an agency that pursued the policy of purchasing local wheat at double the price paid for imported. See also Cumberbatch 1934, p. 36.

133. Mazower 1991, pp. 238–240. Almost all the crops saw a rise in cultivated area; wheat's rise was more dramatic than some, less so than others. This rise took place without national territorial expansion.

134. Only 10 fields out of 306 surveyed contained any "old" olives as defined by their trunk diameter. All of those old olive fields were in Kondogonaika, and totaled only 0.08 km<sup>2</sup>.

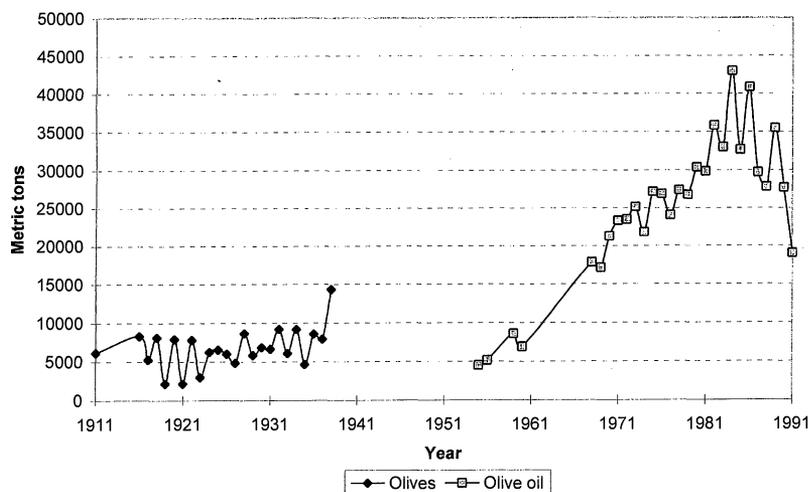


Figure 28. Olive/olive oil production, Messenia. See note 136.

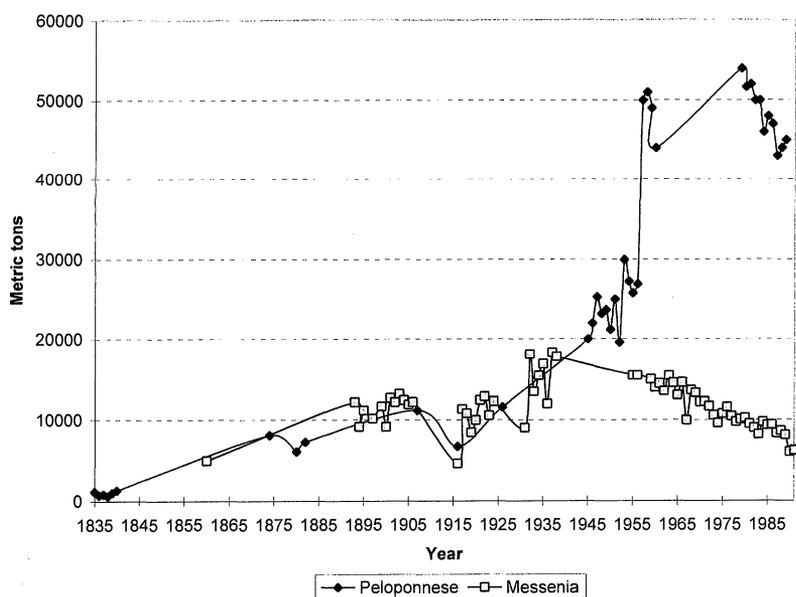


Figure 29. Fig production, Peloponnese and Messenia. After 1947, figures include only dried figs.

that the village did not report to the agricultural authorities.<sup>135</sup> The larger, church-owned press building, which seems to date ca. 1920–1940, may reflect the upturn in regional commercial olive growing that took place at that time (see Fig. 28).<sup>136</sup> Figs too were an important crop in Messenian history (see Fig. 29), beginning at least as early as the 17th century, but they apparently have a shorter history in the uplands around Maryeli.<sup>137</sup> In general the villagers recall figs and olives as relatively insignificant crops until well after the peak of currants and wheat. In the post–World War II era, however, both crops have achieved prominence in the local landscape (see discussion below).

135. The nearby village of Karpofora seems to confirm this pattern, with oil production from 1850–1912 increasing, but primarily for subsistence. It was only at the end of this period that larger olive mills became available. Aschenbrenner 1986, p. 13.

136. Given the lack of better local

records of the use of the two mills and of actual local production figures, this correlation between the building of the press and the increase in olive production must remain supposition. Production figures for olives have not been kept in uniform terms: early-20th-century statistics tend to count olive

production; there are few to no surviving statistics from the war era; and more recent statistics have differentiated between table olives and olive oil. Fig. 28 reflects the variance among these statistics.

137. For the history of Messenian fig production see Kanasi 1930.

## REVIEWING THE VILLAGE ECONOMY

## BEFORE WORLD WAR II

On the eve of World War II, Maryeli and Papaflessas enjoyed a flexible and successful village economy (measuring success by demographic expansion and an accelerated rate of building construction) that nevertheless rode a fragile international market (in the case of currants) or was dependent on state protectionism (in the case of currants and wheat).<sup>138</sup> The villagers remained keenly aware of their dependence on that international market, and adjusted, if slowly, as outside influences impinged on the viability of their products. This awareness and use of the world market might extend back to prerevolutionary times, given the relative affluence and commercial orientation of Messenia as a whole. Demographic patterns, however, reveal the significant impact of late-19th-century economic changes. Regional population figures (see Fig. 6) reflect slow but steady growth in the post-independence era, and then take off in the wake of the second land distribution, that of 1871, and the succeeding currant boom. The delay in the beginning of Maryeli's and Papaflessas' growth spurt until around the turn of the century reflected their relatively late entry into the currant market compared to the rest of Pylia. This is exactly the period (1880–1920) that Sutton refers to as the “period of maximum village creation in recent Greek history.”<sup>139</sup> While Maryeli was by no means a new creation, its growth reflected the broader national trend.

The archaeological evidence supports this view of a take-off in the local economy at the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th century. A spate of new Langadian homes appeared in Maryeli between 1900 and 1920. Others were renovated. The Maryeli family itself moved into a new, much larger home.<sup>140</sup> The living-space of homes, increasing over the course of the 19th century, reached its greatest point during the early 20th century, not to rise again until the more affluent period of the 1980s and the availability of cheap concrete.<sup>141</sup> The fact that most, if not all, of this construction was conducted by professional migrant builders (the Langadians), who were presumably paid at least in part in cash, further cements the perception of Maryeli's access to wider markets. The road network, its growth somewhat behind that in agriculture and living-space, gained wagon-width, wheel-capable stretches in addition to the extant criss-crossing village *kalderimia*, although this change would not take firm hold until after the war.

138. Mouzelis (1978, p. 91) and Seferiades (1999, p. 284) have argued that the condition of the peasantry in general was not so rosy. They posit that the late-19th- and early-20th-century shift from subsistence to cash cropping resulted from the increasing pressure of taxation and not from the attractions of the market. Seferiades also points to the heavy out-migration during this period as evidence for the difficult conditions of the peasantry. As will be seen in the following analysis, however, the demographic and material evidence points to prosperity through the 1920s,

with a decline in the 1930s. That 1930s decline does accord well with Seferiades' portrait of the even greater economic pressure on the peasantry in that decade. Also probably contributing to village prosperity were the remittances of successful emigrants abroad. While incontrovertibly important to Greece as a whole, in Maryeli such a factor proved impossible to measure, nor did it figure in the villagers' memories of the era.

139. Sutton 1988, p. 199.

140. The original Maryeli home (structure 1030), supposedly one of the oldest in the village, was incorporated

into the courtyard of the newer larger house (structure 1036), and used partly as a bakehouse and partly as a guest house.

141. Bialor (1976, p. 229) reached a similar conclusion about the effect of high currant prices on the expansion of construction and renovation of homes in his study region in the northern Peloponnese during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Aschenbrenner (1986, pp. 12, 15) also records an expansion of construction in Karpofora/Rizomilo from 1923–1928 (unrelated to the refugees of 1922).

The propped-up currant market did not long survive the onset of the worldwide depression of the 1930s, and despite the violent reaction of currant growers to falling prices, the depression marked the end of currant-based prosperity. The material evidence reflects that downturn. No new construction in Maryeli can be firmly attributed to the 1930s, and the workmanship of what might possibly have been built at that time was clearly inferior to that of the Langadians. Similarly, the regional population peaked at the end of the decade, beginning a slow decline that would speed up in the postwar years.

Thus Maryeli, despite its small size and isolated location, was very much integrated into the international market during the latter part of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. As Table 2 demonstrates, in terms of sheer labor, an overwhelming amount of farming effort in 1911 was devoted to cash crops for marketing outside the region, and outside Greece itself. In the case of K. Kondogoni, the 1,272 stremmata of grapes and currants would have required 13,236 nine-hour work days, while the 749 stremmata of wheat would have required a mere 1,947.<sup>142</sup>

Whether the general policies of state protectionism and land redistribution were “right” or “wrong” for the country as a whole, clearly the result was an agricultural population that could survive in the world market by employing traditional farming techniques and by dedicating the majority of their labor to cash crops. During the period from the War of Independence to the outbreak of World War II, the villagers of Maryeli and Papaflessas filled their landscape with ever more elaborate stone houses, terraces, field buildings, threshing floors, and other agricultural facilities. The villagers expanded the cultivated area to its largest extent and the village population reached its highest level. This crowded landscape resulted from Maryeli’s success in exploiting the potentials of an international market, despite that market’s fluctuations. Such reliance on cash cropping could not, however, have occurred without state intervention in the form of guaranteed markets and land redistribution. In fact, the artificial protection of traditional small-scale production by farmers mixing subsistence and cash cropping, and still reliant on four-legged transportation up through the 1930s and beyond, provides one explanation for what then happened to the rural Peloponnese in the post-World War II era. After the war, a crisis-strapped state, the decline of traditional currant markets, and the related demographic downturn combined to again rewrite the human landscape.<sup>143</sup>

## AFTER WORLD WAR II

The severe constriction of Greek agriculture during the Axis occupation was only partially relieved in the postwar decade.<sup>144</sup> Maryeli itself had been occupied by Italians and, later, Germans, and although the region was spared the worst of the guerrilla war against the Nazis, the end of the occupation in 1945 quickly turned into a civil war. The internecine strife lasting through 1949 hampered recovery, and then, beginning in the 1950s, demographic change became the dominant variable in Peloponnesian (and Messenian) history. Migration out of the countryside into Athens or abroad set the tone for everything else. A quick look at Messenian production figures reveals a period of steady output from 1955 through 1967, followed by a

142. Comparing local production to population and per capita consumption reveals that the area probably produced just enough wheat for its own subsistence needs. This calculation was done for Voufrados: population in 1907 = 9,497; probable wheat yield in 1911 = 1,043,820 kg; i.e., producing 110 kgs of wheat per person compared to a per capita wheat consumption in Greece in 1954 of 147 kg/year. The per capita consumption figure is the earliest one available; it declined slowly to 103 by 1988. The multiple conversions needed to get from stremmata of olives or wine grapes to liquid measures makes them unlikely to be helpful. For per capita consumption see OECD 1968–1988. Wheat yield is calculated from stremmata in cultivation in 1911 (see Table 2) times the average yield for that year in Messenia (source: GSE 1911).

143. Unfortunately, although not surprisingly, there are virtually no agricultural or demographic statistics available for the region from the war years or, in some cases, for several years thereafter. This study therefore skips to the postwar era.

144. National Bank of Greece 1950, pp. 2–3, contains agricultural statistics for the whole of Greece, comparing 1939 to 1949. In terms of stremmata under cultivation, wheat had declined by 67%, and currants by 24%. The latter’s decline is in part attributable to the voluntary uprooting of 120,000 stremmata of currants during the war (p. 7). Aschenbrenner (1986, pp. 15–16) describes Karpofora as having reverted to subsistence farming.

steep drop in everything except olives (Figs. 26–29). The rural population already had begun to fall by 1951. By 1961 the trickle of emigration had become a torrent.<sup>145</sup>

Emigration had immediate consequences for agriculture. For example, the market for currants had virtually disappeared by the end of the German occupation. The late 1950s saw a small revival, but prices stayed low due to Australian competition and that country's preferential status within the British Commonwealth.<sup>146</sup> By 1961 the number of *stremmata* under currants had dropped 34% since 1938, and although some regions successfully substituted *sultanas* (a kind of raisin), this did not occur in Maryeli.<sup>147</sup> Population again was a key factor here: a typical family could work only approximately 10 *stremmata* of currants without hiring wage labor—and the pool of such labor was declining.<sup>148</sup> Before the war 60% of the Greek population worked in agriculture; by 1951 this proportion had dropped to 55.6%, and in 1984 it reached 30%.<sup>149</sup>

The residents of Maryeli and Papaflessas specified this exact problem in their memories of the end of currant production. Villagers departed in droves for Australia or Athens in the late 1950s and 1960s, rendering unavailable the labor necessary for widespread viticulture. Currant prices remained low, and the government initiated a program of subsidies for farmers to uproot currants. All these factors led to the abandonment of many vineyards and grainfields, and the substitution of other, less labor-intensive, crops—particularly olives.<sup>150</sup>

To the villagers, the advantages of olives were obvious, and as a result, olive trees have come to dominate the landscape around Maryeli (see Fig. 30).<sup>151</sup> Landowners could reside in Athens, retain their village lands, keep olives on them, and hire someone to do the occasional necessary work. Olives require one of the lowest number of workdays per *stremma* (3.5) of any of the familiar Mediterranean crops.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, data collected by the FAO comparing income from various crops in 1962 (adjusted for yield and labor) revealed the cash potential of olives as far ex-

145. There are two kinds of rural emigration: rural to domestic urban, and international. To give an example only of permanent international emigration: Messenia recorded 433 emigrants in 1959, 2,414 in 1963, growing to 3,410 in 1964. Baxevanis 1972, p. 41. See also NSSG (Atlas), p. 214; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1966, p. 13. In more recent years emigration has shifted somewhat from single men departing overseas to whole families moving within Greece to Athens or to other large cities. Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 100–111.

146. McNeill 1978, pp. 147, 161, 169.

147. NSSG (Atlas), p. 314.

148. McNeill 1978, pp. 146–147. Aschenbrenner (1986, pp. 21–22)

found during his study that one-third of the households were still producing currants, but that to do so required much greater resort to hired labor than before the war.

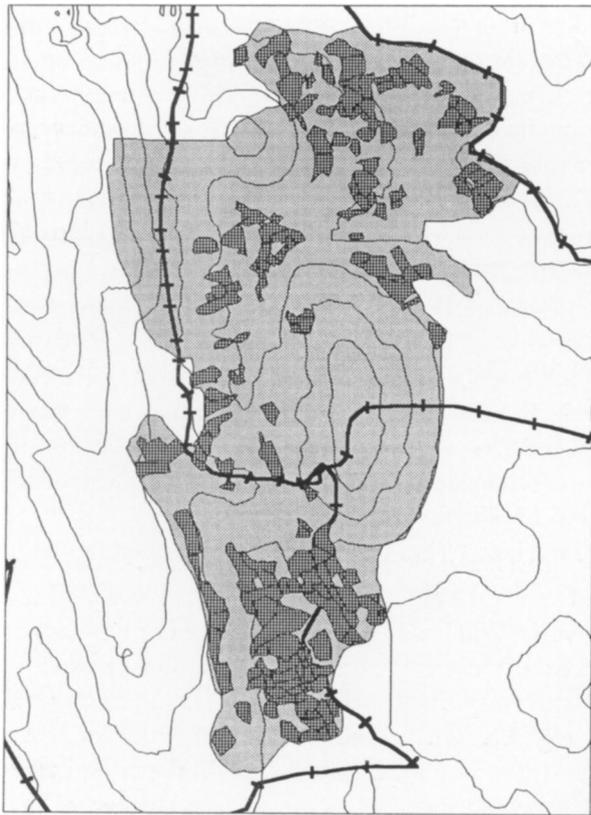
149. Kourvetaris and Dobratz 1987, p. 122; Sweet-Escott 1954, pp. 131, 177.

150. The villagers also reported that in Maryeli, wheat production (including subsistence, not just that for market) ceased not later than about 1973. See Costa 1988, p. 175 for a similar shift to olive production after World War II in Kefallonia. For similar patterns in Crete, Nemea, the Mani, and elsewhere in Messenia, see, respectively, Herzfeld 1991, pp. 29–33; Sutton in Wright et al. 1990, p. 601; Allen 1997, p. 262; Aschenbrenner 1986, p. 113.

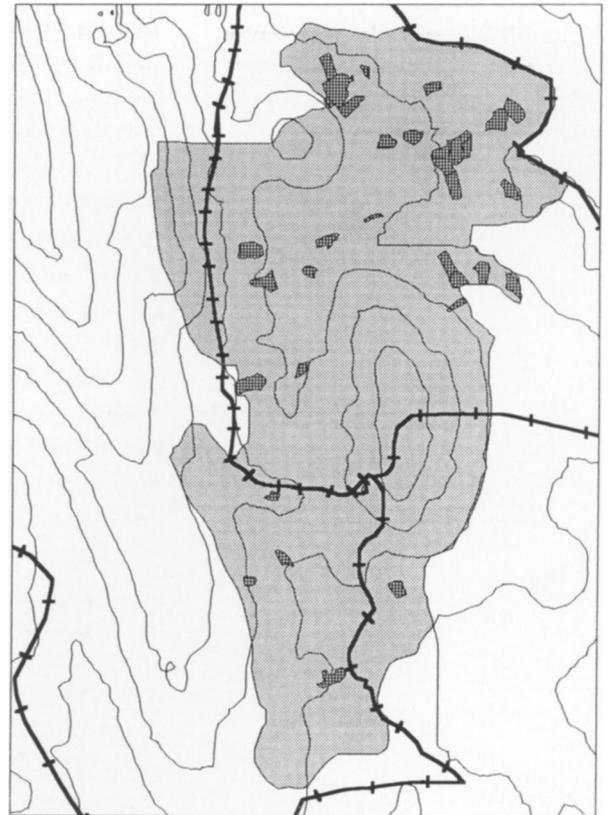
151. A vast number of the olive

fields shown in Fig. 30 are comprised of young to very young olive trees; many in fact are newly planted saplings. Olive trees were classified into old, mature, young, and baby, each defined according to trunk diameter. There were 10 fields with “old,” 93 fields with “mature,” 76 fields with “young,” and 14 fields with “baby” olives. Fields with olives in several stages of development were counted once for each stage they contained.

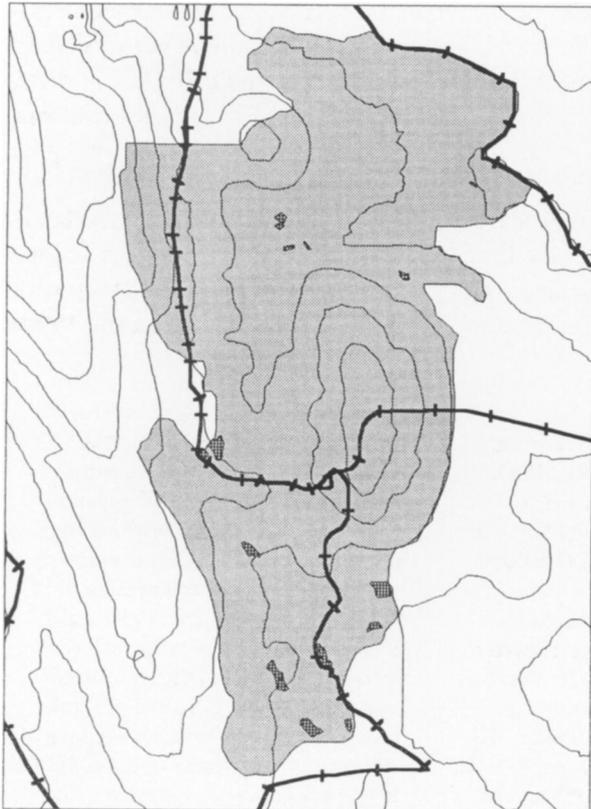
152. This statement is confirmed by the statements of the farmers still working in Maryeli, several of whom hire out their time to tend the olives of villagers now living elsewhere. See Table 2 for work effort per *stremma*. Cf. Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 18–19.



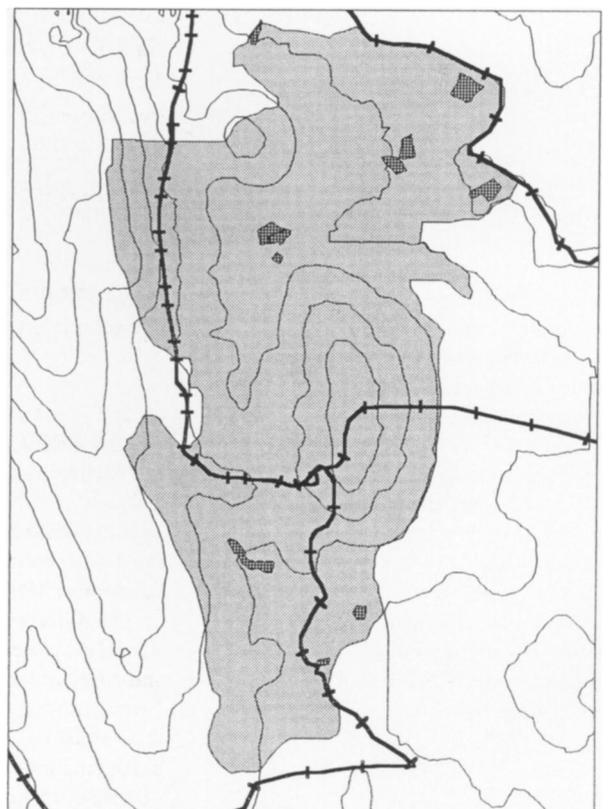
**Olives**



**Figs**



**Vineyards**



**Gardens and Miscellaneous Fruit Trees**

Figure 30 (*opposite*). Crops currently cultivated, survey area. Mixed-crop fields are shown for each crop they contain. W. Lee

ceeding that of wheat or currants.<sup>153</sup> The profitability of olives has been further stimulated by a rise in the demand for cooking oil and by EEC programs encouraging olive oil consumption and subsidizing its production through direct payments to farmers.<sup>154</sup> The ongoing improvement in roads has also made it easier to buy cheap bread brought in from Greece's northern breadbasket.<sup>155</sup> Subsistence farming is no longer necessary in a now largely cash-crop economy complemented by the cash provisions of government pensions or emigrant remittances.

Figs also have become more important to Maryeli in recent years, despite the relative decline of the Messenian share in overall Greek fig production (see Figs. 29, 30). The rationale for their appearance in Maryeli is similar to that of the olive; figs require more care than olives, but much less than vineyards, and as a cash crop they outperform wheat.<sup>156</sup>

### THE POSTWAR LANDSCAPE

How are these postwar agricultural changes visible in the landscape? The answer is complicated. Despite the enormous drop in agricultural production over the last thirty years, field buildings have continued to appear (see above and Fig. 8). There are two ways to explain this seeming contradiction. The packageable and transportable nature of modern materials such as brick and concrete, together with a road network on which to move them, makes construction relatively cheap and quick. On the other hand, many of these buildings may not actually be as "new" as they appear. The availability of materials may have led the villagers to create permanent buildings in place of older field structures whose simple brushwood materials have left no mark on the landscape and would not have been visible in the 1973 aerial photo. A number of "modern" field buildings have foundations that hint at a much older origin. At any rate, this is one case in which the material evidence appears to belie predictions based solely on demographic trends.<sup>157</sup>

If this proliferation of buildings is surprising in this particular landscape, an examination of the fields provides a clearer picture of the decline of Peloponnesian agriculture, especially when considered together with the empty or crumbling houses in Maryeli. Active farming in the 1990s

153. FAO 1965, III, p. 10.

154. EEC Commission Regulation No. 2941/80 of 13 November 1980; EEC Commission Regulation No. 1348/81 of 20 May 1981; EEC Commission Regulation No. 3137/81 of 30 October 1981.

155. Greece's breadbasket had moved decisively north into Thessaly and Macedonia. There, mechanized farming on larger fields enabled the drop in price of grain. FAO 1965, III, p. 10; Aschenbrenner 1986, p. 23.

156. Aschenbrenner (1986, p. 20) found virtually every household

producing some figs in the 1980s.

157. Other village studies have noted an increase in home construction not necessarily related to demographic expansion, but to increasing prosperity generally, a rise in consumerism, and the relative cheapness and availability of modern materials. It is important to note that such construction is often paid for by prosperity achieved outside the village, either by migration or by taking advantage of a nearby tourist economy. See Hart 1992, p. 4; Clark 1994–1995, pp. 521–522; Aschenbrenner 1986, pp. 27–28.

has retreated to relatively few areas, while other fields run riot with wild vegetation. In Maryeli itself the villagers could name only three currently working farmers, although some residents who owned land but were now too old to farm continued to hire outside labor to work their fields.<sup>158</sup> The remaining active farmers in Maryelaika and Kondogonaika either work fields immediately adjacent to the road network or hire a bulldozer to cut a better access path to the more remote fields. Actively cultivated fields tend to run in strips along either side of wheel-capable roads. Only rarely now are the old *kaldirimia* used for field access. Other landscape changes mirror the development of agricultural techniques. Despite the late arrival and limited use of bulldozers, the old terrace systems are being “repaired” with borrowed bulldozers, rather than by shoring up the stone terrace-walls. The soil that villagers have labored to preserve over at least the last century will soon begin to disappear.

## CONCLUSION

The landscape of Maryeli, now and always, is a product of individual, usually agriculturally-oriented, decisions. Those decisions, for at least the last hundred and fifty years (and probably for much longer), have been informed by local experience of national and international forces. The region’s long history of agricultural production for international markets has significantly affected crop selection and the consequent shaping of the land to suit a given crop. In the early 20th century, the modern state’s capacity—however awkward—to provide incentives and trade protection allowed the villagers to produce profitably despite their continued use of older techniques and small-scale production. The growing availability of cash from the very beginning of the 20th century has also played a role in the developing landscape. Cash crops, government allowances, and emigrant remittances have long enabled contract construction and equipment hire. The late 20th century, however, has seen greater reliance on the extravillage sources of cash, and these have contributed much to the rising local standard of living. The latter half of the 20th century has also seen another rewriting of the landscape as roads have changed local priorities, allowing easier access to building materials and extraregional produce, even leading to a redistribution of local population. Those roads have also, however, redirected human relationships, leaving neighboring and once linked villages now more cut off from each other, each village focusing instead on regional urban centers like Kalamata, and above all on the all-important Athens conurbation.

Yet another force in the landscape has appeared in more recent years: a renewed interest in traditionalism. Hart’s recent work in the southern Peloponnese found a new nostalgia for village life, especially since the mid-to late 1980s, derived from disillusionment with the cities. That nostalgia had physical consequences in a new minor boom in house construction and renovation in her study village.<sup>159</sup> That nostalgia is also archaeologically visible in Maryeli in the revival of traditional architecture. The villagers of

158. We did not survey the livelihoods of all the nonfarming residents, but the majority were clearly retired, and presumably receiving a pension.

159. Hart 1992, pp. 4, 70. See also Clark’s evidence of an upsurge in new construction in the 1980s (although not necessarily traditional); Clark 1994–1995, pp. 521–522. Particularly important in this regard is Herzfeld’s detailed analysis of the relationship between modern forces of tourism and archaeological conservation and the desire for modernization of homes in Rethymnos, Crete; Herzfeld 1991, esp. p. 36.

Maryeli are investing in restoring their traditional homes, and in building a new springhouse with old techniques. Several of them now report regretting their previous decisions to cover their old stone homes with stucco. Traditional-style renovation and construction are expensive, and it remains to be seen how far such a desire will go, but the landscape has already been transformed because of this developing attitude.

For archaeologists, Maryeli's is a cautionary tale. Reasons for particular configurations of the human landscape here are not always easy to ascertain—even when archival evidence is available. The proliferation of field *spitakia*, for example, does *not* reflect demographic expansion. Old, even ancient, agricultural techniques do *not* imply a subsistence economy. More roads do *not* necessarily mean greater local interconnectivity. Buildings that look old may *not* be. Maryeli is remote; it looks old; it is now surrounded by olives—that most ancient of Greek crops. Timeless, however, it is not.

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