

The Urban Plan of Mantinea in the Peloponnese: An Integrated Geophysical and Satellite Remote Sensing Fieldwork Campaign

Jamieson C. Donati, Apostolos Sarris, Carmen Cuenca-García, Tuna Kalaycı, Nikos Papadopoulos, and François-Xavier Simon, Institute for Mediterranean Studies (FORTH)

This paper presents the results from the first campaign of remote-sensing fieldwork at Mantinea in the Peloponnese. Geophysical prospection, using new generations of multicomponent equipment, has been used in tandem with satellite-image processing to reveal an extensive network of buried orthogonal streets, sections of city blocks, and residential and public buildings. This new and valuable information reveals much about the wider urban dynamics of Mantinea and shows that the city was a planned settlement. Rather than conform to a strict Hippodamian system, Mantinea appears to have experienced different phases of city planning, possibly as a reaction to sociopolitical upheavals during the fourth and third centuries B.C.E., when the city was twice destroyed and rebuilt. The discovery of city blocks of different dimensions and irregularities in the positioning of roads are indicative of a multilayered urban environment. On a broader scale, the new city plan of Mantinea has important implications for the history of Greek town planning in the Peloponnese during the second half of the first millennium B.C.E. While the rational organization of cities is a defining feature of Greek urban culture, especially in colonial foundations, few examples are known from the Peloponnese. Mantinea illustrates that the organization of space and conceptual approaches in cohabitation are characteristics of Greek urban culture in the Peloponnese as much as they are elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean.