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Unlocking Sacred Landscapes
Religious and Insular Identities in Context

Edited by
Giorgos Papantoniou, Athanasios K. Vionis and
Christine E. Morris

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About the Editors

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Giorgos Papantoniou is an Assistant Professor in Ancient Visual and Material Culture in the Department of Classics, Trinity College Dublin. He studied History and Archaeology at the University of Cyprus (B.A., 2003) and Classics at Trinity College Dublin (Ph.D., 2008). He has worked as an archaeologist at the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and as a researcher and visiting lecturer at the University of Cyprus, Trinity College Dublin, the University of Bonn, the University of Sassari, and the Open University of Cyprus. His research agenda is based on interdisciplinary and diachronic approaches: bringing together landscape, archaeological, textual, iconographic and anthropological evidence, he works on the interaction of social power and the archaeology of religion (considering both elite and popular cultures) from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity. He is currently developing interests in cultural heritage, reception and ethnographic analysis. He codirects the archaeological surface survey project 'Settled and Sacred Landscapes of Cyprus' (SeSaLaC) in the Xeros River Valley in Cyprus, and he coordinates the international research network 'Unlocking Sacred Landscapes' (UnSaLa) based on a formal agreement of collaboration between Trinity College Dublin and the University of Cyprus.

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Preface to "Unlocking Sacred Landscapes: Religious and Insular Identities in Context"

This volume is the last of a trilogy initiated by the Unlocking Sacred Landscapes (UnSaLa) international research network (https://www.ucy.ac.cy/unsala/, accessed 22 June 2022), based on an official agreement of collaboration between the Department of Classics of Trinity College Dublin, the Laboratory of Geophysical-Satellite Remote Sensing and Archaeo-environment of The Institute for Mediterranean Studies in Crete, and the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus. The first meeting of the Spatial Analysis of Ritual and Cult was held in Ireland in 2015 and published by Åström Editions in 2019. The second meeting on Digital Humanities and Ritual Space was held in Crete in 2018 and published by De Gruyter as a Special Issue in the Open Archaeology series. The third meeting was planned to be held in Cyprus in 2021 on the topic of Religious and Insular Identities in Context; however, due to COVID-19, the organisation of an in-person meeting was impossible. Thus, we decided to make an open call for contributions to this thematic Special Issue.

All these meetings were intended as a gathering (of both young and established scholars) for the discussion of Mediterranean sacred landscapes from a wide (and comparative) geographical spectrum, tackling, amongst other things, issues of cross-cultural importance and using a variety of approaches and methodologies. The ultimate intention was the creation of a collection of peer-reviewed studies that could be used as a reference work for the study and analysis of Mediterranean sacred landscapes. We hope that, in these three volumes, we have succeeded in offering to our authors, to landscape archaeology, and to Mediterranean archaeology in general, a useful tool for the years to come.

Giorgos Papantoniou, Athanasios K. Vionis, and Christine E. Morris
Editors

Editorial

Religious and Insular Identities in Context: An Introduction

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Abstract: The introductory article offers a general overview of the highly complicated concept of insularity as discussed variously in historical and archaeological discourse. It also provides a context of sacred landscapes and religious identities, when discussed in relation to insularity. Finally, it outlines the general themes discussed in this Special Issue and situates the *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes* (UnSaLa) research network and the current volume in the context of the current state-of-art.

Keywords: island societies; insularity; sacred landscapes; islandscapes; connectivity; ritual and cult; visual and material culture

1. Introduction

'Island archaeology' emerged as a defined field during the 1970s, with many critiques and developments continuing to the present day. Historians and archaeologists have attempted to bring together issues of identities, insularities, and connectivities both in large and self-contained islands in terms of natural resources, but also in smaller island societies with limited resources. Within a wider field of rethinking the premises, agendas, and practices of island archaeology, an examination of how insularity has influenced the shape of historical events at a regional level with a focus on the domain of religion and its interaction with insularity remains a desideratum.

Inserting religion within a landscape perspective via an integrated approach, which carefully considers temporality, spatiality and materiality, the *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes Network* invites in this Special Issue historians and archaeologists to examine the function of religion in maintaining 'social power' (with the term including and considering both elite/official and non-elite/popular ideologies and cosmologies) in both large and smaller island societies.

2. Island Archaeology and Insular Identities

Some concepts of 'insularity' should be considered in order to rethink and appreciate the dynamics of insular communities, before we attempt to connect the concept with that of sacred landscapes. Broodbank (2000) and Rainbird (2007) establish an intellectual framework for 'island archaeology', while a number of other scholars before and after them have significantly contributed to setting the scene, developing the concept, and examining island communities as active agents in island life (Evans 1973, 1977; Patton 1996; Royle 2001; Boomert and Bright 2007). As the aim of this article is not to provide a historiography of research related to the concept, we cite here some recent works that summarise the history of scholarship and the debate (Dawson 2019a; Ontiveros and Florit 2019; Gordon and Kouremenos 2020; Terrell 2020; Dierksmeier et al. 2021; Leppard et al. 2021). These are valuable attempts at rethinking the premises, agendas, and practices of island archaeology and insularity in the discussion of historical periods.

Scholars working mainly with prehistoric and Late Bronze Age periods attempted at bringing together issues of identities, insularities, and Mediterranean connectivities, while scholars working with later periods in the Mediterranean are now more often influenced

by such processes (Horden and Purcell 2000, 2019; Broodbank 2013; cf. e.g., Constanta-kopoulou 2007; Knapp 2008; Papantoniou 2013; Cherry and Leppard 2015; Hadjikyriacou 2018; Kouremenos 2018; Dawson 2019b; Kouremenos and Gordon 2020). Certain scholars, for example, have seen the small Aegean islands as territories of 'safety', away from the centre and the oppression of empires, functioning both as places of exile (Malamut 1988, p. 175) and as a 'zone of interaction' between antagonistic empires, i.e., the Byzantines and the Arabs (Vionis and Papantoniou 2019a, p. 277) during the Early Middle Ages. A similar picture emerges in the case of Cyprus in the early seventh century AD, when the island seems spiritually connected with external trends by receiving religious exiles from neighbouring Christian lands (Tannous 2018, pp. 33–34), while at the same time it appears to play a central role as a 'buffer zone' (extending from the Cyclades islands to the Eastern Mediterranean) between Byzantium and the Caliphate (Vionis 2013, pp. 116–17). The sea and the special natural and anthropogenic features of each island played a crucial role in shaping their particularity, individuality, and distinct identity, rendering them 'closed' as well as 'open' and interacting entities.

Cyprus, Crete, Sardinia, and Malta, all large and self-contained islands in terms of natural resources which are discussed in this volume, may be very different from other smaller island societies in the Aegean and Scottish archipelagos, also discussed in this volume. Nonetheless, as traditionally the island's culture has primarily been seen in terms of 'acculturation' and 'emulation', we still need to follow Broodbank's (2000, p. 1) analysis and shift our focus from current interpretative paradigms, largely characterised by adaptive models and simple, static concepts of insularity, towards more complex and culturally driven perspectives that recognise "the extent to which islanders have consciously fashioned and refashioned, their own identities and worlds". Inter-island and island: mainland relations, maritime connectivity of things and people, insular definitions of centrality and marginality, ideological values, and islanders' views of their insularity and identity, are crucial in rethinking island cultures in relation to social change, colonisation, and interaction across the water and along lines of sight or mutual visibility (Broodbank 2000, p. 1; Horden and Purcell 2000, pp. 124–32). One of the most important features of islands is their diversity and, as Broodbank (2000, p. 7) notes, this is why plurality in interpretative approaches is also needed. Islands have periodically been characterised as predominantly bounded, conservative, and closed systems (Evans 1973), open and receptive to outside ideas (Kirch 1986), or between involution and cosmopolitanism, archaism and innovation (Braudel 1972, pp. 149–50). As Broodbank's (2000, p. 19) analysis has suggested "the answer is in fact 'all and none of these', or (better still) 'it depends when, how and for whom'". "For a brightest future surely lies in the development of an island archaeology . . . that explores how island space, environment, time and culture can be most convincingly woven together into island history" (Broodbank 2000, p. 32).

3. Sacred Landscapes and Religious Identities

The placement of religiosity in a Mediterranean landscape perspective can be achieved by integrating data types and different theoretical approaches and by exploring additional dimensions such as the influence of mythology, emotional and sensory elements, and the blending and fusion of religions and political ideologies (Papantoniou et al. 2019, pp. ix–x, with references). Thus, material evidence allows us to identify sacred space in a given territory and to reconstruct sacred landscapes in which natural and/or manmade features were endowed with religious meaning. In addition, we can investigate how different cultures, in our case different island entities, saw the relationship between natural elements, human constructions, and the supernatural, how the environment was changed or manipulated to construct a sacred landscape, how the 'acculturation' process or forms of *interpretatio religiosa* resulted in changes to the sacred landscapes and how the sacred landscape can be used to express forms of cultural or religious 'resistance' against domination.

The significance of meanings and functions of Mediterranean islands' ritual and religion have usually been perceived in a twofold way: either as largely static, almost

ahistorical, or as fully and suddenly adhering to a Hellenic, Roman, or Christian religious *koine*. This could be linked with the conservative role often attributed both to islands and religion in modern western societies. Another key factor for the generation of such assumptions is the way in which Mediterranean archaeology, as a discipline, has usually been subsumed within the influence of Anatolian, Italic, Classical Greek, Roman or Byzantine archaeology, for example, both in terms of content and as archaeological practice in approach and methods. A very welcome development in recent years, however, has been the number of conference meetings, publications, and projects which have considered Mediterranean sacred space from a richer range of perspectives (sacred archaeology, the notion of the religious landscape, sanctuary as a localised space, perception, experience, connectivity, naming and mapping the gods, lived religion, etc.), both for Antiquity and for the Late Antique, Medieval and post-Medieval world (Papantoniou et al. 2019, p. x, with references).

Inserting Mediterranean insularity and religiosity within a landscape perspective via an integrated approach, which carefully considers temporality and materiality next to spatiality, we can bridge the barriers and misconceptions between those of us working with cultural-historical, positivistic and post-positivistic approaches. Emphasising the potential of landscape studies to be truly unifying, as well as the function of religion in maintaining 'social power' (with the term including and considering both elite/official and non-elite/popular ideologies and cosmologies) in a Mediterranean context is exactly the aim of the *Unlocking Sacred Landscapes* (UnSaLa) network: that is, to 'unlock' sacred landscapes and religion by locating them within their social context and their own longue durée, having no constraints in using all possible methods in order to achieve the best possible holistic approach (Papantoniou et al. 2019).

4. Unlocking Sacred Landscapes: Religious and Insular Identities in Context

This Special Issue is the third and final volume in a trilogy of collective peer-reviewed works of this phase of the UnSaLa research network (first volume: Papantoniou et al. 2019; second volume: Papantoniou et al. 2020). This final volume has encompassed various approaches both to ritual space and to artefacts relating to ritual practice and cults involving islandscapes (including landscapes and seascapes). The terms ritual and cult have been used broadly to include sanctuaries, temples, and churches as well as the domestic and funerary spheres of life. We particularly welcomed articles with a strong methodological and theoretical focus. Although the main focus of the Network is the Mediterranean region, as in the second volume on digital humanities and ritual space, we also warmly welcomed relevant contributions from colleagues working in other areas of the world, with a view to stimulating wider methodological dialogues and comparative approaches. The chronological range was also open, ranging from prehistory to the recent past and inclusive of ethnography, ethnoarchaeology, and cultural heritage studies.

Since an abstract precedes each contribution, it is unnecessary to summarise the contents and impact of each article in this Special Issue. In particular, we welcomed contributions dealing with historical and culturally driven perspectives that recognise the complexities of island religious systems as well as the active role of the islanders in constructing their own religious identities, irrespective of emulation and acculturation. The authors were asked to consider inter-island and island/mainland relations, maritime connectivity of things and people, and ideological values in relation to religious change, as well as the relation between island space and environment in the performance and maintenance of spiritual lives. We believe that the authors have, for example, successfully addressed the interrelation between official, popular and personal identities, including ritual healing and magic in island societies. However, many of the individual articles touch on more than one of these general structural themes and, of course, the topics themselves have significant points of dialogue and intersection. Holistic analyses related to ritual space and/or its associated material assemblages in island societies, as set in the two previous UnSaLa volumes, have proved to be a rich and healthy approach to

interpretative pluralism. As noted above, bringing together issues of identities, insularities, and Mediterranean connectivities has only recently begun to develop in Mediterranean archaeologies of the later periods, particularly those of the eastern Mediterranean and/or the Byzantine period and the High Middle Ages (Vionis and Papantoniou 2019b, p. 12, with references). Thus, in the printed version of this volume, we decided to reverse the chronological order, starting from the most recent past and going back to prehistory, to give voice to bring to the forefront these new approaches to these later periods and to break the long-entrenched divide between the prehistoric and historic periods of the Mediterranean's past and the scholarly approaches brought to bear on each. The day may finally have come when research on later periods may also inform prehistoric research, beyond a merely ethnographic analogy approach.

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They Are Preserved Forever: Visualising the Memorialisation of Archipelagic Religious and Community Identities

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Abstract: In this article, we respond to the Special Issue theme by addressing the complexities of religious identities in archipelagic communities where the dual role of the sea as conduit and barrier has impacted the parish system, farming estates and community life. The focus is primarily on nineteenth and twentieth century testimonies and material evidence, approached within a broader chronological context going back to the Middle Ages. Using qualitative GIS mapping of the habitations of the people memorialised in two burial grounds in Orkney, we visualise the active role of the islander in constructing identities linking people and place at parish, community and personal levels. The results show that the people with memorial stones were buried within a long-established parochial structure but did not adhere to ecclesiastical norms, with district burial grounds being favoured over a single parish churchyard. We conclude that this approach demonstrates the complexities of identities within an island community and identify its applicability in other contexts combining material culture and historical documentation to investigate religious island identities.

Keywords: historical archaeology; memorialisation; Island Archaeology; GIS; material culture

1. Introduction

For most societies, cemeteries, columbaria and similar spaces and structures are the most obvious places associated with death and memorialisation, and as such are heavily endowed with social and symbolic meaning (Kong 1999; Maddrell 2016). These gravestones and memorials are the focus of private grief, remembrance and resolution, and also public and community narratives of constructing and maintaining kinship relations and connections to place (Balkan 2015, p. 123; Howard 2003, pp. 50–51; Mytum 1994, pp. 260–61). Such graveyard memorials offer multiple opportunities for communication and are a major category of material culture from the last three centuries offering considerable potential for archaeological analysis, yet they remain relatively under-researched (Mytum 1994; Tarlow 2005).

In this article, we extend beyond the graveyards themselves into the wider landscape using qualitative GIS mapping of nineteenth and twentieth century parish burial data from memorial stones. This period is chosen based on the survival of the memorial stones in the selected burial grounds. Using a case study of a single parish to test the methodology, we visually analyse and convey religious and community identities as created and practiced in island-based maritime communities. In the process of visualising the material remains of religious memorialisation, we explore the variations between ecclesiastical structures and local and individual expressions of identity and belonging within a chronological context reaching back to the medieval period. This leads on from our previous research visualising community memories of saintly veneration in the landscape, which employed an extensive chronology spanning the Neolithic to the twentieth century (Gibbon and Moore 2019). In doing so, we find identities associated with different scales of place, from the island parochial system, smaller farming units, family units to very personal responses to place. From their burial location choices, we can see that nineteenth and early twentieth century

parishioner identities are rooted in medieval parishes and estates, yet they can also reach beyond the geographical extents of the immediate settlements to reflect identities formed in extended kinship groups.

This approach sits within the cemetery studies sub-field of historical archaeology, focussing on above-ground archaeology and related historic sources (Baugher and Veit 2020). It is widely applicable to societies where burial memorials are found and places of habitation and death are known. Whilst this is a small-scale test study, the findings show that this technique of visualisation could be extended to include multiple parishes, non-parochial burials and additional data sets to further explore and map the complexities of religious and community identities. By combining physical expressions of commemoration with historic documents and genealogical studies, we show the potential to visualise combinations of plural and micro identities and connections, thereby moving beyond place-based associations to include different co-existing self-perceptions of belonging linked to familial, cultural and religious identities through time and aligning with a reflexive process of social belonging (Casella and Fowler 2005).

2. Background

As Rainbird (1999) has discussed in detail, islands have long been viewed as distinct and different in Western thought, isolated from contact with other cultural groups and ripe for utilisation by researchers as natural experiments or cultural laboratories (Evans 1973, 1977). Such ideas have been rightly critiqued (e.g., Rainbird 1999, 2007) and reformulated (e.g., DiNapoli and Leppard 2018). Furthermore, as both authors are resident within the Orkney archipelago, and one of the authors has ancestors from Rousay and Egilsay, we reject the view of both the individual islands of Rousay and Egilsay and the larger group of Orkney islands as being culturally isolated. This is not to deny that there is the scope for a degree of insularity, but rather to recognise that the sea provides both a means of connection as well as a barrier to movement and communication (Erlandson and Fitzpatrick 2006, p. 14). These themes of fragmentation and connectivity are well recognised in maritime environments elsewhere, e.g., the Mediterranean (Horden and Purcell 2000, pp. 123–43; Horden 2016, p. 212), as well as the wider Western seaways of Europe (Rainbird 2007, pp. 142–44) in which Orkney sits. It is the sea then which determines inter-island connectedness and separation more than the edge of the land.

Rousay (Figure 1) is famed for its Neolithic tombs, and the study of these well-preserved structures provides a useful microcosm of how archaeological attitudes towards islands and the sea have changed during the twentieth century. Both Childe (1942) and Renfrew (1973, pp. 120–46) considered Rousay as a discrete geographical unit of study, investigating both the distribution of the tombs themselves and the relationships between the Neolithic tombs and the modern farmsteads, and arable land. The flaw, of course, is this consideration of Rousay as an individual island rather than as part of the larger Orcadian archipelago (Noble 2006, p. 102).

2.1. Parish Structure in Scotland

Identity in Orkney is shaped by the parochial system, which was created during the Western European ecclesiastical reforms of the Middle Ages (Bartlett 1993; Gibbon 2006, p. 61; Fletcher 1997; Imsen 2003; Sawyer and Sawyer 2000, p. 115). Similarly to its neighbouring countries of Scotland and Norway, Orkney's medieval parishes were formed and consolidated from the late eleventh to the early thirteenth century (Gibbon 2006, 2007, 2012; Cowan 1961, 1967; NLS 2021; Sawyer 1988). Often the network of parishes was created out of pre-existing smaller units (French 2017; NLS 2021), as was the case in Orkney, where the archipelago was divided into 35 parishes determined by topographic features, such as hill ridges, watercourses or high coastal cliffs, and influenced by the agricultural settlements and estates that had formed the mainstay of society since at least as early as the Iron Age, if not earlier (Gibbon 2006, pp. 163–64).

Figure 1. Looking southeast across Sourin, Rousay, the sharp relief of the topography is clearly visible and highlights the challenges of crossing the centre of the island. © James Moore.

The emphasis on incorporation of large estates in parish delineation indicates socio-political determinations by powerful landowners at the time of formation. This can most clearly be seen in the location of parish churches, of which 14 are found on estates belonging to the earl of Orkney, ten on bishopric estates, nine on privately owned estates and two where the landownership is unknown. There was, therefore, a desire for parish churches to be located on earldom and bishopric land and it is likely that together the earl and bishop were responsible for shaping the parishes, resulting in the prominence of their lands and churches at the core of parochial units (Gibbon 2012). Although this follows a recognised pattern across much of Western Europe (French 2017), the significance of the medieval estates that underpinned, in part, the parochial system in Orkney is underemphasised. To a certain extent this is because many of the estates are no longer extant or have been modified greatly and so are difficult to detect. However, there are instances where the medieval estates can be detected, such as the former Husbae Estate comprising Sourin, Sockness and Egilsay in the united parishes of Rousay and Egilsay (Figure 2).

The parish system in Orkney, as in Scotland, changed little—excepting the uniting of parishes under a single priest—between its inception and the Reformation. However, whilst in Scotland, there were major changes after the Reformation (NLS 2021), which was not the case in Orkney (Gibbon 2006), where parishes were further conjoined but not redesigned, suppressed or newly created. Parish boundaries did not change, instead parishes merged; for instance, Evie and Rendall were combined to form a single parochial charge, although in practice they remained distinct places with their own identities and communities. These amalgamations then reflect administrative changes, which in some cases caused little shift in community identities. This lack of change has resulted in longstanding associations with place at a parish level.
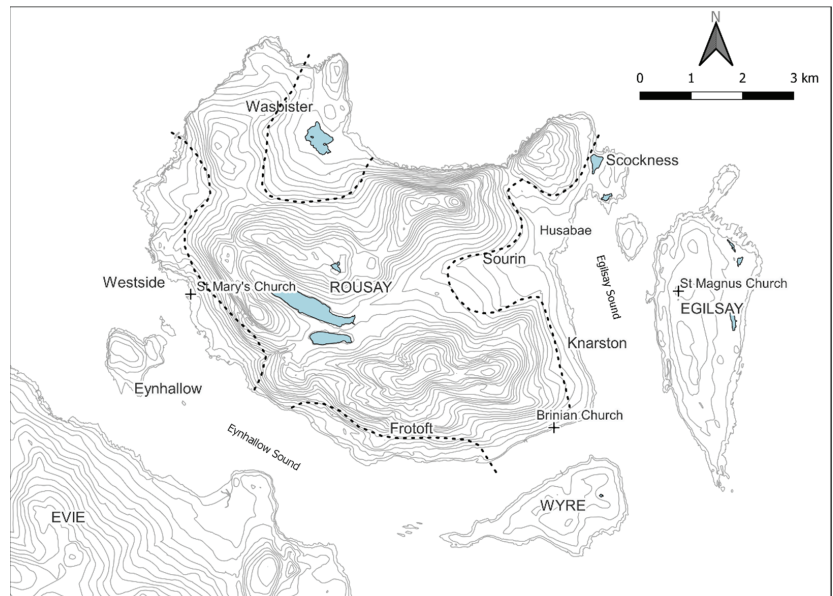
Figure 2. Map of united parishes of Rousay and Egilsay illustrating locations of the parish churches, the approximate extents of main districts and islands, as well the physical topography (Contour spacing 10 m) and part of the adjacent parish of Evie. OS Terrain 50 Contours © Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

It is important to know that Orkney's parishes were not limited to single land masses, and almost all comprised multiple islands or parts of islands because sheltered waterways between islands linked communities. Until the early twentieth century, owning a small boat suitable for inland waters was common, although in recent years this has become much rarer. Although this change has not been quantified, it has much to do with changes in transportation norms. In Rousay, the first public road connecting the whole island was built in 1874, although the sea remained the main means of transportation for some time thereafter (Farrall 1874, p. 97; Pringle 1874, pp. 39–40). Throughout Orkney, communication methods changed in the first half of the twentieth century with the introduction of motorised transportation, the telephone exchange and increasingly regular inter-island ferry services, including a fleet of floating shops (Hazell 2000, pp. 22–23, 27, 33, 43; Shearer et al. 1966, pp. 34–35). Additionally, from the later nineteenth century, population decline and a changing economy resulted in the depopulation of smaller islands. These factors meant cross-island identities became rarer too.

2.2. The Parishes of Rousay and Egilsay

Figure 2 shows the parishes of Rousay and Egilsay comprising the islands of Rousay, Egilsay, Eynhallow and Wyre, as well as the Holm of Scockness. United before 1429 (Cowan and Dunlop 1970, p. 55), the separate bounds of the two parishes are undocumented. Based on modern perceptions of identity in these islands, it might be supposed that Egilsay formed one parish and Rousay the other. However, historic and geographic evidence indicate this was not the case, and that instead Rousay Parish originally comprised the west part of Rousay and Eynhallow, while Egilsay Parish contained Egilsay and the east part of Rousay (Gibbon 2006, p. 657; Thomson 1993, p. 340). It is unclear which parish Wyre was in. These parishes were formed around two large pre-existing medieval estates. Rousay is centred on the earldom estate of Westness in Westside and Egilsay Parish is centred on an earldom estate gifted to the bishop comprising the island of Egilsay and

the districts of Sourin and Scockness and centred on Husabae (Figure 2). The 'natural unity' and symmetry of this bishopric estate depends on the 'sound' that connects the two equally valued parts (Thomson 1993, p. 340). When these parishes were designated, the settlements geographically closest to each estate were added to it to create two parish units. As such, Westness Estate was combined with Wasbister, Frotoft and Eynhallow to form Rousay Parish and Egilsay Parish combined the bishopric estate with Knarston (and perhaps Wyre).

Ecclesiastically, these parish units were administered together from the fifteenth century, with a single priest serving both parish churches from 1429 (Cowan and Dunlop 1970, p. 55; Gibbon 2006). However, some parishioners adhered to their 'parish' long after the union. A notable example from the seventeenth century illustrates this point. In 1678, James Traill raised a complaint that the parishioners of Sourin refused to contribute to the repairs of the Rousay Parish church roof as they were "annexed to Egilsha without any law" (Craven 1893, pp. 76–77). The owner of Egilsay and Sourin and a church enquiry concluded that the inhabitants of Sourin were subject to the session of Egilsay and had attended church in Egilsay "past memory of man" (Craven 1893, pp. 76–77; Smith 1907, p. 284). Here, we see parochial identity as separate from, and more dominant than, island identity. The maintenance of the separate parish church administration is evident from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (Clouston 1914, pp. 215, 277, 263, 294; Marwick 1924; Peterkin 1820). In the 1730s, elders were elected from the western part of Rousay for the Rousay church and from Egilsay and Scockness for the Egilsay church (CH2/1096/1 n.d., pp. 48–50), so even though the parishes were united, the two parish church congregations were determined by where the parishioners resided.

The identity shared between Sourin, Scockness and Egilsay was also reinforced by estate ownership. The medieval bishopric estate remained intact, administered as part of larger estates, until 1853 when Sourin was purchased by the owner of the Westness Estate, who by this time owned most of the island of Rousay (Marwick 1924; Thomson 1981, pp. 26–27, 29; 2008, p. 59). This purchase ended no less than 600 years of land ownership uniting Egilsay and Sourin. The impact of this upon community identities in Sourin and Egilsay is not documented and is one of the reasons for undertaking this study.

The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 mandated that parishioners be buried in parish churchyards (French 2017). This was adhered to in Orkney, where most burial grounds associated with non-parochial churches went out of use and burials were restricted solely to the parish churchyard. Rare exceptions to this, as in many other places, were chapels of ease with burial rights when communities were distant (often due to the tides and poor overland travel) from the parish church (Gibbon 2006). Following this pattern, one would expect to find in Rousay and Egilsay two parish churchyards and perhaps a chapel and burial ground of ease in Wyre. But Rousay and Egilsay Parish is quite unique in the number of its historic burial grounds. There is, as expected, the Rousay Parish church (used until c. 1815) and burial ground (last interment 1919) in Westside, the Egilsay Parish church (used until c. 1805 and then replaced with a new church) and burial ground (still in use) in Egilsay and a small church (ruinous by 1845) and burial ground (still in use) in Wyre. However, in addition there are burial grounds located in the largest settled areas; Wasbister (still in use), Knarston (last interment 1943) and Scockness (last interment 1958). Furthermore, there is place name evidence for a fourth burial ground on the island of Eynhallow, although when and by whom it was used is uncertain (Butler 2004, pp. 35–36; Jakobsen 1911). In Rousay in 1919, a new parish burial ground was located at The Brinian (Gibson 1996). This choice of location was practical given the Rousay Old Parish Church replacement was built there in ca. 1815, indicating a shift in parochial focus from west to east. The extensive burial provision on Rousay, from the location and number of sites, indicates a deviation from common practice and church edict, perhaps reflecting the dispersed nature of settlement and a stronger sense of identity within the units that made up the parishes. Moreover, it links these two parishes with a burial practice that is not found elsewhere in Orkney to the same extent, meaning they stand out as different in terms of their burial choices.

In this paper we look at two of the burial grounds, Egilsay Parish churchyard and Scockness burial ground (the burial place for Scockness and Sourin), specifically because they are in the medieval parish of Egilsay and the medieval bishopric estate. By doing so, we can map the homes and burial places of the parishioners and explore the extent to which parish, estate and district level identities can be discerned or were prevalent.

3. Materials and Methods

As with our previous study (Gibbon and Moore 2019), there are challenges in applying a geographical information system (GIS) to incomplete data that contain an inherent element of ambiguity. There are inconsistencies in the ways in which the places in which people lived and died are recorded, which are discussed in more detail below, as well as missing and illegible records and inscriptions. For our purposes, a qualitative GIS approach is a means of managing and visualising the data and exploring the patterns and outliers in the commemorative texts inscribed into the landscape (Hanna and Hodder 2015). QGIS 3.20 was utilised to geo-locate all the sites using the British Ordnance Survey grid coordinate system, with base-mapping, terrain data and historical maps all sourced from EDINA Digimap. Most of the houses and farmsteads under discussion are still present within the landscape. For those that have now disappeared, the 1st edition OS maps were consulted; surveyed in 1879, these maps are broadly contemporary with the inscriptions, and only one house (Newhouse, Egilsay) could not be precisely located. Thus, our qualitative data consist of the text, names and dates of the individual memorials attributed not to their locations within the graveyards themselves, but instead discrete locations reflecting the homes and places of death of each individual. Within the data there is scope to analyse patterns of inscription and memorialisation by individual families, which would represent a valuable future project.

Distribution maps are commonly seen as a means of plotting and defining the spread of a particular item of material culture. The process involves moving from collecting instances of a phenomenon, through plotting them on a map and then assessing the formation of clusters, with a view to drawing some conclusions about general patterns (Wickstead 2019, pp. 52–53). Inherent in such an approach is that there is an edge to the distribution, occasionally with isolated examples that can be labelled as outliers, and thus discussed as abnormal or atypical. Instead, we intend to utilise distribution maps here as a means of exploring the connections between places, each with an integral central place—the graveyard—that links them together.

In general, during this period most people died at or near home—whilst the Balfour Hospital opened around 1845 (Richardson 2020), this was in Kirkwall approximately 20 km away by sea, and most of the death certificates viewed record the place of death in an individual house. It was customary for older relatives when infirm to either move in with their younger, more able family, particularly after their partner had died, or for their children to move in with them; for instance, one of the memorial stones in the Scockness cemetery commemorates a Betsy Craigie who died at Falldown. After Betsy's husband died her daughter and husband moved to Falldown and Betsy remained (Sinclair 1886, 1887). As such, where a person died may not be the same as where a person lived. Whilst this example shows it is possible in some instances to trace habitation movements, even exhaustive historical research could not reveal where each individual resided at all stages of life, as this level of detailed record does not exist for everyone.

The methodology outlined here ensures consistency in the approach to material remains and historical records. The basis of this research is the work of the 'Orkney Family History Society' (OFHS), who have recorded and transcribed the inscriptions from monuments and gravestones from the majority of burial grounds across Orkney. Also invaluable was the work of Robert C. Marwick, most notably his book 'Rousay Roots: Family Histories in Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre', which has been digitised and is available online (Marwick 2005), as well as the work of Max Fletcher, whose 'Rousay Remembered' website contains a wealth of information on past people and places of Rousay, much of

which stems from the knowledge and research of Tommy Gibson, augmented by Fletcher's own work (Fletcher 2021).

For each individual recorded on the memorials in the burial grounds, we attempted to identify a location that the person would have been associated with. In some cases a location is recorded directly in the inscription, for the remaining individuals a combination of census data and death certificates were employed to identify the home, and where different the location of the person's death. It is at this point we should note that in focusing on the memorial inscriptions themselves rather than death records, we are dealing with a partial dataset. There are clearly more people who died than there are memorials—in many cases relatives could not afford or chose not to erect a memorial. We know that several of the burial grounds had earlier phases of burials (Gibson 1996) and there are a number of memorials that lack any details of the individuals buried, sometimes as a product of decades of erosion and weathering, and in some cases because very minimal detail was inscribed on the memorial (Tarlow 1998). The focus of this paper is the act of memorialisation and the expressions of identity undertaken through erecting physical memorials in discrete places. In visualising these final resting places, which on occasion do not actually contain physical remains of the individual inscribed, we are able to link the central places of the burial grounds, the people who dwelled in the landscape and the scattered houses and farmsteads in which they lived.

Egilsay and Scockness: Testing a Methodology

The data gathered and presented below represent only part of the physical memorialisation of the inhabitants of the parishes of Rousay and Egilsay. As a means of testing this methodological approach, we identified two burial grounds on either side of Egilsay Sound for this pilot study. These have multiple historical connections (see above) and the physical landforms also facilitate easier movement and communication across the water than via land routes to other parts of Rousay (Figure 2). The inscription data from both burial grounds were incorporated into a database—in both of the case study burial grounds, approximately 13% of inscriptions recorded the location of the death, burial or home of the individual (see Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the location information provided by the memorial inscriptions.

	Memorials	Total # of Individuals	Inscription Missing or Illegible	Location within Orkney Recorded	Location outwith Orkney Recorded
Egilsay BG	76	127	11 (8.66%)	14 (11.02%)	2 (1.57%)
Scockness BG	68	127	1 (0.79%)	11 (8.66%)	6 (4.72%)
Totals	144	254	13 (5.12%)	25 (9.84%)	8 (3.15%)

The inscriptions themselves provide a relatively low proportion of locational information; however, the census data collected each decade provide considerably more detail, albeit not without some additional considerations. In each instance of an inscription not recording a location, the census data immediately preceding and post-dating the recorded date of death were consulted. In the majority of instances, the place of residence for the family continued to be the same after the death of the individual, and as such it can be reasonably assumed that the deceased had occupied the house up to their death. Only three inscriptions from Egilsay and two from Scockness pre-date the first available census data from 1841, whilst a further 33 from Scockness and 55 from Egilsay post-date the most recent publicly available census data from 1911. Whilst we would certainly consider the inscriptions covered by the census data to be the most accurate, additional details were available through local and family history work conducted by Marwick (2005), Fletcher (2021) and OFHS, which was included where appropriate.

It should be noted that the census data recorded who was at each house on the day the enumerator visited. Whilst visitors were usually described as such, a man working away might not have been recorded or a servant might be recorded at their place of work rather than where they lived, for example Ann Inkster, whose family lived at Swartifield but who was recorded at Saviskaill in the 1871 census three years prior to her death. Where possible we have attempted to account for such discrepancies, but in some instances the lack of information resulted in an individual record having to be excluded from further analysis. Some inscriptions simply lacked sufficient data with which to be able to identify the individual, and many of the more recent memorials lacked the available data (census and death certificates) with which to investigate further. In total, it was possible to determine a location for a little under three-quarters of the individuals (Table 2) memorialised in the Egilsay and Scockness burial grounds, and it is these that will form the basis of the results presented in the next section.

Table 2. Summary of the individuals mapped in the case study.

	Total # of Individuals	Unable to Determine Residence	Location outwith Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre	Mapped in Case Study
Egilsay BG	127	28 (22.1%)	15 (11.8%)	84 (66.1%)
Scockness BG	127	11 (8.7%)	13 (10.2%)	103 (81.1%)
Totals	254	39 (15.4%)	28 (11.0%)	187 (73.6%)

4. Results

As noted previously, the research presented here is primarily a means of testing the value and applicability of applying a qualitative GIS approach to the practice of memorialisation. As such, the regarding we can draw concerning the ways in which religious and personal identities were expressed and remade through the erection of gravestones and other inscriptions are by necessity incomplete; however, we are able to draw out some key themes. The first of these considers the way in which inscriptions were explicitly used to link a person to a place. We then go on to explore the ways in which people, or at least the relatives responsible for memorialising them, on occasion subverted the practices that might have been expected by religious authority to instead express a degree of personal or community identity.

4.1. Place Memorialised through Inscription

As noted in the methodological discussion above, around 13% of these individuals are directly related to a particular location, either within Orkney or further afield. As a trend, the memorialisation of a place on an inscription seems to have developed in popularity from the very end of the nineteenth century (see Figures 3 and 4), although with the exception of Egilsay during the 1960s this remained a relatively uncommon practice.

We would speculate that the increase in places outwith the parishes of Rousay and Egilsay listed in inscriptions from the 1890s onwards reflects the growing movement of people both into and out of the area. Of course, the impact of the First World War is also reflected in the memorials, with four servicemen being recorded (three in Scockness and one in Egilsay). It is interesting to note that whilst the three Rousay men were related to their place of death, Private James Bews from Egilsay was instead connected to his family home of Meanness. In only one of these instances was the body returned home for burial, with the other three men being buried or commemorated at one of the Commonwealth War Graves in France.
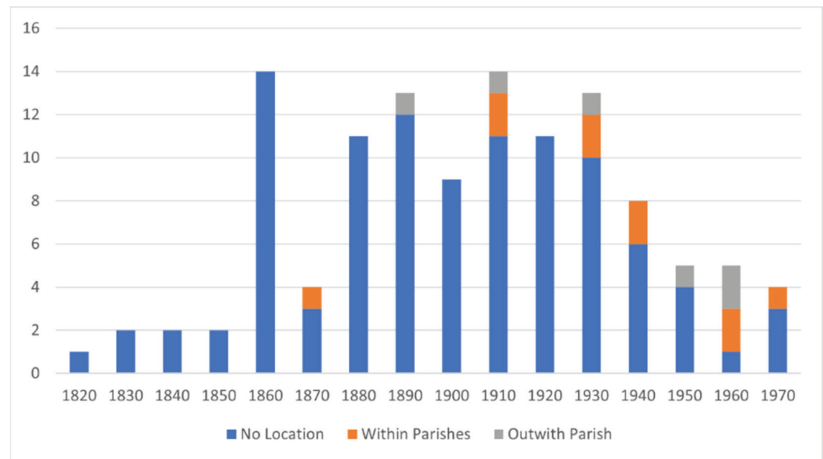
Figure 3. Distribution of inscriptions memorialising a location from Egilsay Burial Ground.
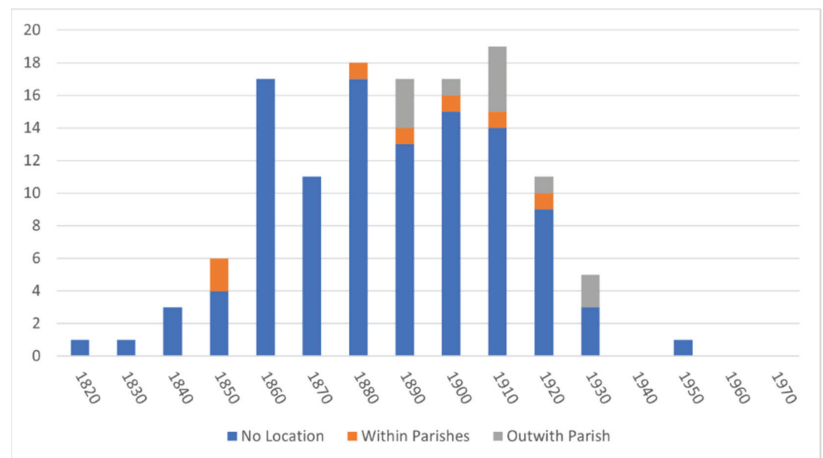
Figure 4. Distribution of inscriptions memorialising a location from Scockness Burial Ground.

This variation in the way in which people were linked to place also existed in the civilian population during the later activity in both burial grounds. Three individuals living on Egilsay are explicitly recorded as having died at Eastbank Hospital, an infectious diseases hospital and tuberculosis sanatorium opened in 1937 in Kirkwall (Hamilton 2005; Richardson 2020). In contrast, a number of individuals who died outside of the parishes are memorialised within the local burial grounds and are linked to the parish itself, for example William Mainland, whose address is recorded as being in the parish of Rendall on Mainland Orkney is related back to Egilsay with the inscription, "In sacred and loving memory of our dear brother William Mainland of Midskaill called home 1 October 1941". The language used in this inscription also provides a clear reminder that these memorials are produced by the living, surviving relatives.

4.2. Connections in the Landscape

In a typical parish, where funerary rites adhere to standard ecclesiastical practice, all parishioners should be buried in the parish churchyard. In this instance, the parish church

is on Egilsay, and as such all the individuals from Egilsay, Scockness, Sourin and Knarston should be transported to Egilsay for burial. Instead, we see a clear spatial patterning (Figure 5), in which the majority of inhabitants of Sourin and Scockness were buried in the Scockness burial ground and the majority of those who lived in the island of Egilsay were buried in the burial ground there. Undoubtedly there were practical considerations in this distribution; however, as noted above, it was entirely typical in this period for people during life to move back and forth across Egilsay Sound, and indeed all the other sheltered stretches of water within the archipelago. The mapping demonstrates that the parish churchyard of Egilsay is primarily operating not at a parish level, but for the local island community. There is a clear spatial divide suggesting that in death people are reflecting the communities in which they dwelled in life.
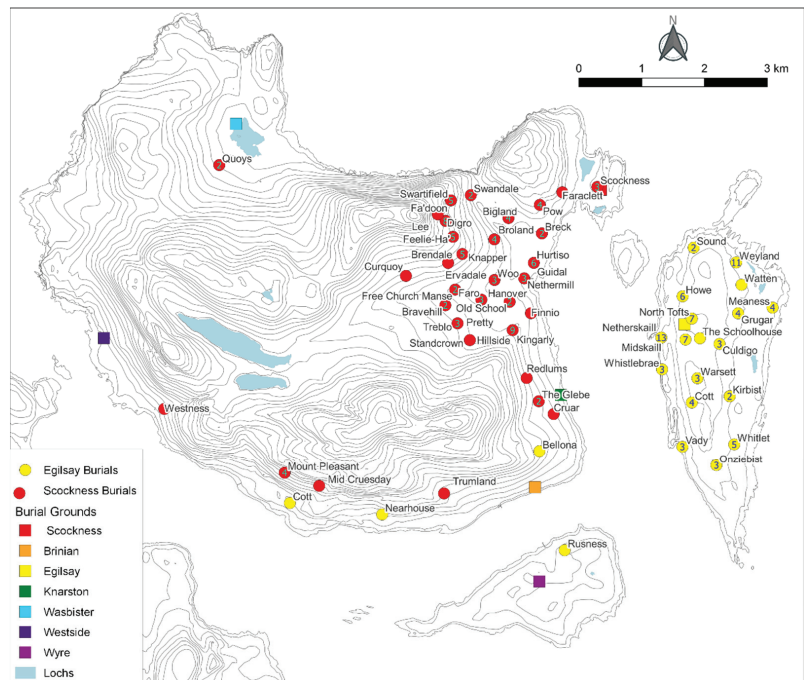
Figure 5. Distribution of the individuals memorialised in the Egilsay and Scockness burial grounds. This represents approximately 74% of the individuals recorded in the two burial grounds, with the remaining people either located outwith the parishes (11%) or unable to determine a residence (15%) (see Table 2 for more detail). OS Mastermap © Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

The second observation that can be made is that the vast majority of individuals memorialised had resided in the historical parish of Egilsay, with only a small number of people from elsewhere being buried in the Egilsay or Scockness burial grounds. This suggests that there was a persistence in community and geography that can be traced back through the establishment of the parish to the original medieval estate. This further extends to those outliers that demonstrate that the mandate for burial in the parish where they died was not always adhered to. The burial of individuals residing outwith the Egilsay Parish, in Frotoft, Westside and Wasbister, should have been served by the Rousay Parish churchyard in Westside (and after 1919 at Brinian). In all these instances, there is a clear kinship link, normally a child who moved away from the family home or an elderly relative who had moved to live with a son or daughter, presumably when they were no

longer able to maintain their own household. In their burial and memorialisation these people 'returned home' to Scockness or Egilsay. It is this process that we also see with those individuals who lived and died outside of the parish whether that was on Mainland Orkney in Kirkwall, another island or further afield in Scotland or the wider world.

4.3. Usage of Different Burial Grounds

That the choice of burial ground was related to personal identity, kinship and choice is further demonstrated in instances of houses from which individuals are interred in both burial grounds. The two examples from the island of Egilsay (Figure 6) presented below illustrate this practice, as well as highlighting the variance in the reasons where discernible for such diversion from accepted practice.
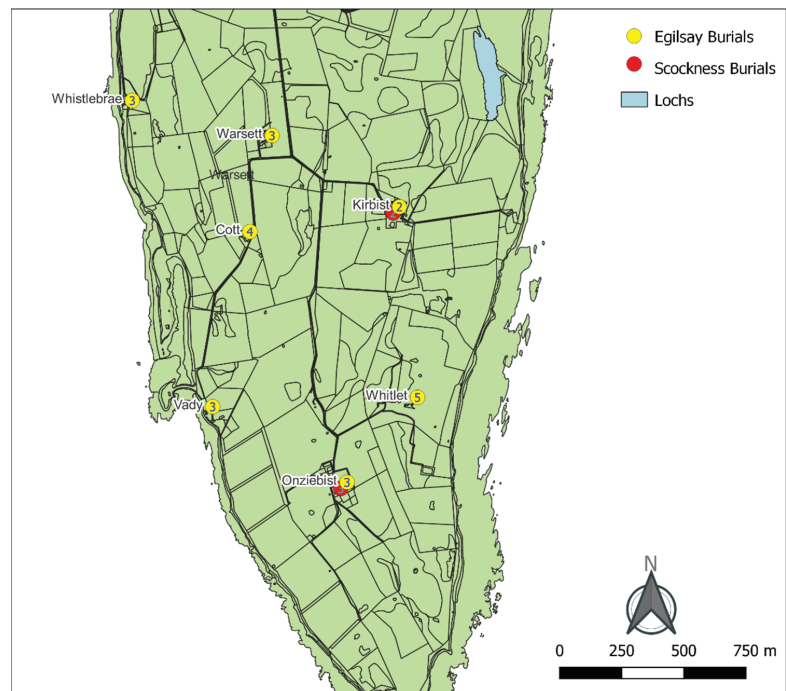
Figure 6. Locations of Onziebist and Kirbist on Egilsay, illustrating variations in burial locations for inhabitants. OS Mastermap © Crown copyright and database rights 2021 Ordnance Survey (100025252).

4.3.1. Onziebist

There are five memorial stones linked to the farm of Onziebist on Egilsay—three are in Scockness and two in Egilsay. The two in Egilsay adhere to the general pattern of people being buried in the district where they resided at the time of death. The King family, Edward and Helen, their son John and married daughter Helen with her husband George Seatter, moved from Westray to Onziebist in Egilsay between 1881 and 1885. One memorial stone was raised by Helen to commemorate her husband Edward who died in 1885, to which Helen is added on her death in 1910. The second stone commemorates George Seatter and his wife Helen King (daughter of Edward and Helen). The people commemorated here were not born in Egilsay but moved there as adults to tenant the farm of Onziebist. By the time of Helen's death, she had lived in Egilsay for at least fifty years. The family's burial in Egilsay is what one would expect to find.

The three Scockness burial ground memorial stones linked to Onziebist represent a different manifestation of identity, where the family are buried not where they died but where they and their forebears came from. The three memorial stones commemorate Isabella and Thomas Gibson and their son John. They died in 1864 within 7 weeks of each other, with John and Isabella both dying of fever (OFHS). Thomas was from Scockness and the family lived there in 1841. They moved to Onziebist some time before 1851 and were there until they died. Whoever was responsible for their burial chose to take the family 'home' to Scockness rather than bury them in the burial ground of the place they died. The significance of this is made greater as they were not buried in the parish churchyard but instead taken to the district burial ground of Thomas's family. At the same farm we can find examples of different burial practices—one where the deceased are buried in the district burial ground of where they died and the other where the deceased are taken from where they died, across water, for burial in the place where the head of the family originated.

4.3.2. Kirbist

Another example of a farm memorialised in both Scockness and Egilsay is Kirbist. One of the Egilsay memorials, for James and Annie Alexander, states where both died— James "passed away at Kirbist, Egilsay", and Annie "who died at Eastbank Hospital"—and exemplifies the importance of memorialising the place of death to those who raised the memorial (Marwick 2005). The other Egilsay memorial is for an infant who died at Kirbist, although this is not inscribed on the stone. Records show her parents living with her paternal grandparents at Kirbist at the time of her death, and it is her grandparents who are commemorated on the Kirbist-inscribed stone in Scockness burial ground. Whilst Margaret's stone, as with the Alexanders', memorialises people who died in the island or only left for hospitalisation, the Scockness stone, in contrast, provides an example of the complexities of burial place choice.

The stone commemorates Robert Stevenson, "tenant of Kirbust Egilshay 1855–1904, who died 17 April 1922" (Marwick 2005), along with his wife Margaret and daughter Rebecca. It is not clear from the inscription why the family are buried in Scockness but it is apparently important to those who raised the stone that the association with Kirbist is remembered. Records reveal that Robert and Margaret passed away in Kirkwall, whilst Rebecca died in Stromness (a town on Mainland), meaning this family, who lived for over fifty years in Egilsay, are not buried there or in the places where they died, but instead are buried in Scockness burial ground, the burial ground for Scockness farm where Robert was raised and the farm of Woo where Margaret was born and raised. The inscription records the tenancy of Robert but not the length of time he lived at Kirbist, as the census records show he was still there as a 'retired farmer' in 1911. Therefore, the inscription, although detailed, only gives selected information, and the choice of burial place reflects the childhood homes of Robert and Margaret rather than their marital home place.

5. Discussion

The data reflect a practice of remembrance during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within one small area of the Orcadian archipelago. A little less than 74% of the people commemorated lived within the bounds of the original parish of Egilsay. Had they all been buried in the parish churchyard, the distribution of parishioners would have demonstrated a recognition of the parish, with the parish church and churchyard as its spiritual centre, as an active ecclesiastical unit some five hundred years after it was united with Rousay. However, the distinct concentration of burials in the district burial grounds in which the deceased resided shows that identity of place was localised within the parish framework to the extent that there are examples of those who spent all but the end of their lives in the district being commemorated in their local 'home' burial ground.

In other parish churchyards, 'local' community identity was also important to the parishioners, as demonstrated in funerary and burial traditions (Gibbon 2006). In the parish of Harray, funeral attendance was restricted to those residing in the local district of the

deceased and men from within that district were responsible for carrying the coffin to the churchyard. Orphir Parish had burial districts within the parish, with the inhabitants from each being responsible for the upkeep of a particular section of the churchyard wall (Clouston 1918; Gibbon 2006, pp. 122, 594). Therefore, throughout Orkney parochially internal, localised identity was realised and perpetuated by funerary practice and administrative allocations in various forms, focussing on the parish churchyard. Rousay and Egilsay are particular in that their localised burial practices are decentralised and expressed in the local districts rather than the parish churchyards, perhaps being symbiotically responsive to the greater degree of geographic separation between districts instilling a stronger community reliance and identity.

The data presented also illustrates some of the complexity and 'messiness' of human life and the ways in which individual choice and identity forego broader community and parochial ties, in favour of expressing an individual relationship to a single place within the wider landscape. This is particularly well reflected by the example of Baikie of Tankerness, who is commemorated in Egilsay.

The memorial reads "In memory of Robert Baikie MD, HEICS of Tankerness who died 5 Aug 1890 and of Helen Elizabeth Davidson his wife who died 5 Jan 1886 aged 72" (Marwick 2005). The Baikie family were major landowners in Orkney, with Egilsay forming part of their estate. Robert was the ninth Baikie of Tankerness, and although born in Orkney spent most of his adult life first in India and then Edinburgh, making short visits to Orkney each summer. He and his wife died in Edinburgh and their burial in Egilsay is rather unexpected. Most of Baikie's predecessors, including his brother (d. 1869), were buried in the family tomb in St Andrew's Parish churchyard, where the Hall of Tankerness was located, whilst other gentry of his class were buried in St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall. The personal nature of his burial in Egilsay is inferred by a relative of Baikie's, who curiously states, "he may have had several special reasons for wishing to be buried there which will not be gone into" (Traill 1902, p. 34). Traill continues with a romantic explanation for Baikie's choice of burial place, and it is quoted here in full to exemplify the romance, backstories and speculation that are not found on the burial memorials or official records. This quote is also a reminder that memorialisation is selective, since Baikie's 'devoted' sister-in-law has no memorial in Egilsay.

Robert Baikie was:

> *Buried in his own Island, where he had spent many happy days with his father and mother's family, during the summer months, when a boy, among the beautiful wild flowers that grew near the old house of Howan, under the influence of a bright sun. It has been said that Egilshay got more sun than some of the other Islands, which may account for the flowers and grass growing so well there. His very worthy wife and also her sister are buried there, the sister well-deserving a resting place beside the two she had, for so many years, been a cheerful companion and devoted sister to. All three are doubtless sheltered by the old Church Tower. May their ashes rest in peace, and may they ultimately rise amid the glories of a sun, brighter than it formerly shone or does now shine on, what has been said to be one of the prettiest green Islands in Orkney.* (Traill 1902, p. 35)

During the nineteenth century, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of gravestones being erected in Orkney, a pattern also noted elsewhere in Britain and Europe (Tarlow 1998, pp. 35–37). Prior to this boom in the erection of gravestones, the implication is that the location of the physical remains was not important, and indeed in many cases earlier burials were cleared to make room for further inhumations; thus, erecting a gravestone became a way of staking a claim to land which belonged to you and your heirs and ensuring that the remains of the dead should not be disturbed (Tarlow 1998, p. 41). A letter from Hugh Sinclair in Sourin to his half-sister in Australia written in 1884 gives a glimpse into the costs and choices involved in raising a memorial stone:

> *Your mother is keeping middling and has thought rather lonely since father died, but still she is wonderful, mulling putting a headstone to the remains some time soon. The ones in the churchyard are of free stone and cost about £3, but I would have an inclination of*

having one of granite stone. They are made either in Aberdeen or Peterhead. Aberdeen's
is of a reddish colour and Peterhead's of a grayish colour. (Sinclair 1884)

One of the surviving memorials in the Scockness burial ground was raised by Hugh Sinclair in memory of his father and mother, so it seems he made use of his research to commemorate his parents. Such careful consideration and substantial monetary investment underlines the value for people in the later nineteenth century of creating a material connection between person and place. This creation of a 'material landscape of belonging' (Fontein 2011, p. 714) can be set against the social, economic and physical upheaval of the agricultural revolution, the Napier Commission, and subsequent Crofters' Act of 1886, which gave crofters security from eviction and allowed them to bequeath their tenancy to a successor (Thomson 2008, pp. 277–80).

Such linkages between houses, people and burial locations as part of a strategy for justifying and legitimising claims to land, expressing belonging and providing the ability to trace lineages find resonances in many geographical and chronological contexts, from migrant Muslim populations in Germany (Balkan 2015) to contested clan landscapes in Zimbabwe (Fontein 2011). In Orkney, these linkages of people to and with place through landscape markers have a historic legacy that is traceable across millennia (Hingley 1996; Jones 2005). Of particular note here are medieval practices and perceptions of over-water movement and commemoration. The 'returning' of Robert Baikie to Egilsay (see above) echoes the 12th century movement and stone-marked commemoration of Earl Magnus' body from his place of death in Egilsay to his mother's choice of burial place for him in Birsay and his post-elevation move to Kirkwall (Gibbon and Moore 2019). Differing practices exemplified by earls being buried where they died (Sigurd Eysteinsson and Harald the Younger) and others being transported from place of death to burial location (Erlend Haraldsson and Rognvald Kali Kolsson) are motivated by political, religious and personal familial choices (Pálsson and Edwards 1981) and reflect the findings presented here. Furthermore, the recording of their places of death and their places of burial in medieval literature provide textual comparisons indicating a diachronic 'remembering' with the stone-inscribed memorials of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The significance of remembering and connecting with ancestors brings us back to the start of this paper and the work of Renfrew (and others), who emphasises the connections between farming communities, belonging and legitimacy (e.g., Renfrew 1973; Richards 2005). Whilst this is often associated with prehistoric communities, so too do choices of burial ground in medieval Orkney imply relationships with earlier occupiers of the landscape, with many burial grounds and small churches, including Scockness, being built on or near prehistoric settlement mounds. The connection between (perceived) burial mounds, burial grounds, ancestors and notions of belonging rooted in the Norse culture of the islands persist in the place and familial identities expressed in the burial choices and memorialisations analysed above.

6. Conclusions

Through the mapping and visualisation of burial memorials, we have we have seen that communities in the inner northern isles of Orkney maintain strong ties to their home district, over and above adherence to parochial norms. We have also demonstrated that these ties to district sit within the earlier parish structure, in turn founded upon medieval estates and smaller units, meaning the district communities pre-date the parish system. Such expressions of community and personal identity pass back and forth between maritime and terrestrial environments, demonstrating the role the sea plays as occasional obstacle and more frequently as a medium for communication and movement, as well as touching upon the complexity of inter- and intra-island relations.

Graveyard surveys and the recording of genealogical data are important aspects of cemetery studies and the broader field of historical archaeology, and here we have demonstrated how the utilisation of a simple qualitative GIS might be applied to explore the patterning and wider linkages between graveyards and the wider landscape. Such an

approach has applicability in other contexts where the material culture of memorialisation and historic documentation are available, as a means of investigating the global phenomena of making and remaking of religious, cultural, familial and personal identities through time.

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Article

The Construction of Sacred Landscapes and Maritime Identities in the Post-Medieval Cyclades Islands: The Case of Paros

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Abstract: The Cyclades islands in the South Aegean initially attracted the attention of prehistorians approaching islands as 'laboratories' for the study of cultural development, examining the notions of 'isolation' and 'connectivity', or, more recently, by introducing new terminologies, such as 'seascape' and 'islandscape'. The wealth of material remains of the post-medieval era in the Cyclades islands (e.g., ecclesiastical architecture, ceramics) and the textual record available (e.g., Ottoman tax registers, travellers' accounts) provide fascinating evidence regarding the construction of sacred landscapes, self-expression, community, and maritime identities throughout the period of Ottoman domination. The main aim of this article is to examine the historical contingencies and the distribution of a vast number of rural churches, primarily as evidence for religious expression, in order to capture island dynamics and the formation of religious and community identities, as imprinted onto the sacred landscapes of the island of Paros. By shifting our focus from the imperial Ottoman to the local Cycladic, we come to appreciate islanders as decisive agents of their maritime identities, creating rituals and sacred spaces, sometimes beyond the strict borders of institutional religion.

Keywords: sacred landscapes; maritime identities; community identities; rural churches; historical contingency; historical archaeology; Ottoman era; Cyclades islands; Aegean Sea

1. Introduction

The concept and historical reality of isolation, connectivity, identities, and 'island archaeologies' in the Cyclades have been discussed in the framework of studies dealing with the prehistoric past, the Classical Greek and Byzantine eras, and the period of Ottoman domination. The Mediterranean region, whether fragmented by the sea, creating a network of 'true islands' defined as landmasses surrounded by water, or comprising 'isolated patches' of terrestrial habitat defined as 'islands that the sea does not surround' (Braudel 1972, pp. 149–51, 160–61; Whittaker 1998, p. 7), has been examined both as an area of isolation and exoticism and as a highway of travel and connectivity (Boomert and Bright 2007, pp. 4–9). Respectively, the position of the 'Greek Archipelago' (the Aegean Sea) between isolation and communication networks, without a centre of its own, as Spyros Asdrachas (1985, p. 236; 2018, p. 4) has noted, demonstrates not only cultural diversity between islands of different sizes (Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982, pp. 1–3), but also that the identity of island communities was never static (Gordon 2018, p. 10).

Inspired by evolutionary biology and island biogeography, which emphasised that islands are isolated habitats with a high degree of floral and faunal endemism, archaeologists, exploring past island communities in the Mediterranean and the Aegean, viewed islands as 'laboratories' for the study of cultural evolution and colonisation by humans (Evans 1973; Cherry 1981; Rainbird 2007; cf. Boomert and Bright 2007, pp. 5–9; DiNapoli and Leppard 2018, p. 157). The appreciation of the sea as a means of connection and communication, and the understanding of insularity as a constantly changing element, came as a reaction to previous 'insular' approaches to islands, with specialists proposing the term 'islandscape' to grasp the diverse behaviour of island communities in the prehistoric Aegean (Broodbank 2000, pp. 17–22; Cherry and Leppard 2015, p. 18). Meanwhile, the concept of 'agency' (with

local people as active agents in island life) and historical and social contingencies have also played a role in the exploration of insularity in both prehistory and historical times, on both small and larger islands, from the Caribbean to the eastern Mediterranean (Lape 2004; Knapp 2008; Papantoniou 2012, 2013; cf. Gordon 2018, p. 9). In this framework, it is important that we stress the diversity that characterises islands and the need for plurality in our interpretative approaches (Broodbank 2000, p. 7; Papantoniou 2012, p. 47).

Recognising the multiple facets of insularity in the Aegean Sea in later centuries, with a special focus on the Classical Greek and Byzantine periods in the Cyclades, it has become clear that the islands acted both as 'closed' and as 'open' and interacting entities, as attested in the literary sources and the archaeological record (Constantakopoulou 2007, pp. 2–3; Vionis 2017, pp. 167–69). In the context of the ancient Athenian Empire and its domination over the Aegean, Christy Constantakopoulou (2007, pp. 119–20) has argued that islands could also be perceived as territories of 'safety', away from the centre and the oppression of empires. One can observe a similar situation in Byzantine times, when islands functioned both as places of exile and remoteness (Malamut 1988, p. 175) and as a 'zone of interaction' between antagonistic powers, e.g., the Byzantines and the Arabs (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 133; Vionis 2017, p. 168; Vionis and Papantoniou 2019, p. 277).

Reference to the Aegean Sea in the Ottoman period as 'Adalar Denizi', or 'Sea of Islands' (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 1), implies the active role of islands, such as the Cyclades, in the maritime networks of communication. This interaction between islanders and the 'outside world' comprises a constant reminder of our need to always consider the role that the sea (Vogiatzakis et al. 2017) and the special natural and/or anthropogenic features of each island (Rackham 2012) played in shaping their particularity, individuality and distinct communal/group identity (cf. Vionis and Papantoniou 2019, pp. 258–59). Previous individual scholars and specialised collective volumes have already paid attention to the aforementioned issues. Some have underlined that insularity in the Ottoman Empire did not equal isolation (cf. Vatin and Veinstein 2004), others that internal and external impositions are equally important factors (cf. Hadjikyriacou 2018), or that local agents contributed to the formation of island identities in a period when islands did not comprise 'strategic' naval entities (cf. Imber 2002; Kolovos 2006, 2007). Meanwhile, detailed information about population, settlements and production deriving from the Ottoman tax registers (*tahrir defterleri*) of 1570 (Kiel 2007) and 1670 (Slot 1982) provide the wellspring from which we may generate economic patterns in the Cyclades, as well as aspects related to the formation of community and religious identities (cf. Vionis 2012).

Revisiting the seminal paper on 'Greek insularity' by Asdrachas (1985, pp. 238–39), we may set off on our exploration of island sacred landscapes and maritime identities in the Cyclades with the observation that the islands succeeded in maintaining maritime contact between the two halves of the Mediterranean, cultivating, at the same time, their feeling of belonging (to the Ottoman Empire). What united Aegean islanders during the eras they comprised part of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires was that they were oriented towards the 'Hellenic-spirited' capital of Constantinople/Istanbul (Spiridonakis 1977), no matter whether the ruler was Christian or Muslim. As the textual record affirms, since the early 17th century, the administrative division of the Aegean islands into 'pairs' (e.g., Paros and Naxos, Andros and Syros, etc.) inevitably strengthened the relations between islands (Asdrachas 1985, p. 239; Kolovos 2007, pp. 54–55). This fact obviously testifies to local or interregional connections, mutuality and common experiences, if nothing else. Foreign travellers in the Cyclades, from Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1718) to James Theodore Bent (1885), also stress the individuality of the islands (in accent, dress code, etc.) on the one hand and their shared expression of religiosity and superstition on the other, when it comes to citing practices outside the borders of institutional religion.

The distribution of 36 monasteries and 310 churches in villages and the countryside of the island of Paros alone, constructed between the mid-16th and the late 18th centuries, not only implies a prominent sense of piety and Christian-Orthodox identity amongst islanders, but also attests to a general stability and economic recovery due to historical contingency

(Vionis 2012, pp. 45–56). The 17th century, when church-building activity on Paros and other Cycladic islands climaxed, comprises a case to examine, not only in the context of historical contingency in the Aegean, but also in continental Europe; as David Abulafia has put it when referring to earlier historical periods, "one person's impoverishment can be another person's economic opportunity" (Abulafia 2019, p. 291). The centrality of the Ottoman State and the Sultan's 'disinterest' in the small Aegean islands (Kolovos 2018, p. 10), the special privileges in local administration and religious expression granted to Cycladic communities by successive Sultans (Slot 1982, p. 78; Davis 1991, p. 143; Vionis 2012, pp. 47–48), and the islanders' increased involvement in maritime trade within and outside the Ottoman borders in the 17th–18th centuries (Vionis 2012, pp. 52, 332) created opportunities and led to the consolidation of a new socio-economic order by Christian Orthodox families in the Cyclades (Kolovos 2007, pp. 67–68). This article examines the distribution of a large number of rural and town private and community churches on Paros in the framework of the aforementioned historical conjectures, discussing the creation of sacred landscapes, the formation of individual/family or community/parochial identities, the establishment of stopping-sites in 'pilgrimage' kinetic rituals and the consolidation of the ownership of the landscape. Shifting our attention from the imperial to the local (cf. Hadjikyriacou 2014), the post-medieval history and material culture of the Cyclades in general and Paros in particular highlight the remarkable resilience of island communities and the Church through their ability to network and adapt to political change, socio-economic crisis and religious reforms.

2. The Cyclades Islands: A Special Historical Reality

The post-medieval era for the islands of the Cyclades (Figure 1) began with their conquest in 1537/38 by Hayreddin Barbarossa, the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet, while their incorporation into the Empire was completed with the capture of the island of Tinos in 1715 (Slot 1982, pp. 73–78, 250–54). The 16th century can be considered a transitional period for the Cyclades in terms of their status and position within the Ottoman Empire. This was because, on the one hand, the Latin elite was retained in power by delivering the poll tax to the Ottoman treasury (Kolovos 2007, p. 52). On the other, in 1566, Sultan Selim II granted the islands of the former Duchy of Naxos (Naxos, Paros, Melos, Santorini, Syros, Andros) to Joseph Nassi, an Iberian Jew who never visited the Cyclades, but delegated the task of administration and revenue collection to Francesco Coronello (Cheetham 1981, p. 254; Vionis 2012, p. 46) until Nassi's death in 1579. Similarly, the Patriarchate of Constantinople took action by restoring Greek-Orthodox bishops on the islands only after their gradual incorporation into the Empire, beginning in 1537 (Notitia IX, 5i; Zerlentis 1913, pp. 40–41; Slot 1982, pp. 80–81).

Despite the location of the (smaller) Aegean islands in the middle of commercially vital maritime routes, their limited agricultural potential acted as a drawback to Ottoman 'attention' in comparison to larger islands in the Aegean (e.g., Chios) and beyond (e.g., Cyprus), the substantial surplus of which satisfied the appetite of the Empire and local/private agents (cf. Hadjikyriacou 2014, p. 450). The fact that island communities in the Cyclades experienced a phase of unsettled affairs in the Aegean region and 'disinterest' on behalf of the Ottoman State in the first eight decades of the 16th century must have generated relief in certain elite groups but also frustration for the majority of the islanders, caught between the old Latin aristocracy and the Ottomans. This situation likely promoted inter-island connectedness, as testified to by migration from one neighbouring island to another (Asdrachas 2018, p. 10), e.g., from Siphnos to Kimolos and Sikinos (Slot 2001, p. 60), due to population rise and the subsequent need to make up for the limited agricultural production on barren and infertile islands.

Figure 1. The Aegean, the Cyclades, and other locations mentioned in the text (map by the author).

What followed the establishment of the administrative district (*sancak*) of Naxos in 1580 (Slot 1982, pp. 98–99; Davis 1991, pp. 142–43; Kolovos 2007, pp. 54–55), which incorporated Naxos, Paros, Syros, Andros, Melos and Santorini, marks a new era for most of the Cyclades in terms of community formation and self-administration, economy and church-building. The issuing of imperial decrees (*ahdname*) by successive Sultans, initiated by Murad III in 1580 (and renewed in 1628 and 1646), granted islanders important privileges, such as substantial rights of self-administration, land-ownership, freedom of religious expression and the prohibition of *devşirme*, i.e., the forced recruitment of Christian male children (Kontogiorgis 1982, pp. 122–37; Slot 1982, p. 78; Davis 1991, p. 143). The Ottoman tax records of 1570 and 1670 reveal population increase, investment mostly in vines and grains, and the overall production of subsistence goods enough to cover local needs, as well as specialised goods for export (cf. Slot 1982; Kiel 2007; Vionis 2012, pp. 52–56). Moreover, ecclesiastical reports confirm the Patriarchate's concern for the reorganisation of the Church on the islands, the foundation of monasteries, in some cases for the first time since 1204 (Legrand 1889, pp. 184–99, in Kolovos 2007, p. 57), and the settlement of priests and monks in different parishes and monasteries (Kolovos 2006, pp. 102–11). We could argue that the relative economic stability, population growth and the reorganisation of the Church was the result of the aforementioned privileges granted to island communities from 1580 to the 1640s. Thus, personal initiative, historical contingency and 'imperial agency' were apparently at work, considering that the first *ahdname* was issued in 1580 by Murad III, son

of Selim II and princess Cecilia Bafo (later known as *Nur Banu*), a Hellenised Venetian from the island of Paros (cf. Miller 1908; Vionis 2012, p. 360).

The gradual abandonment of the *timar* system in the period of economic transformations in the 17th century (Kolovos 2007, pp. 58–60) led to the rise of tax-farming (İnalcık 1972, 1991), which, in certain regions (e.g., mainland Greece), involved the leasing out of abandoned plots of land to individual holders, controlling small farms or *çiftlik* estates (Vionis 2016, pp. 377–78). These farming estates were established to generate commercial agricultural produce, mainly cash crops, intended to satisfy the growing demand for raw materials by the rising industrial and capitalist states in Europe. The islands of the *sancak* of Naxos, on the other hand, had to pay their poll tax to the *Kapudan Paşa* (the Grand Admiral of the Ottoman navy) when the Ottomans started investing in naval warfare and heavily armed sailing ships (Kolovos 2007, p. 67). It was around this time that French trade boomed in the Aegean (throughout the late 17th and early 18th centuries), while the War of the League of Augsburg (1688–1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1713) made even the comparatively small, yet accessible, surpluses of the Cyclades particularly valuable (Vionis 2012, p. 52). Despite all the shortcomings and inadequate agricultural production on certain small islands (cf. Asdrachas 2018, p. 5), this was a time of opportunism for the Cycladic communities that could export grains (produced beyond subsistence on Paros, Kea and Melos) to Italy and Spain, where their price had risen considerably (Vionis 2012, p. 52). Combined with Western Europe's demand for cheap raw materials (e.g., silk from Andros, cotton and flax from Siphnos and Paros) to support its thriving textile industry (cf. İnalcık 1973), most Cycladic islands participated in a commercial network (in some cases, even through illegal trade) with the western Mediterranean and northwest Europe, with local Christian elites accumulating wealth and acquiring power. Black market trade through piracy was also practiced regularly among Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Aegean (and beyond) by turning island ports, such as Melos, Ios and Mykonos not only into sources of predation, but also into piratical bases and markets for booty (Krantonelli 1991; White 2018, pp. 41–44). The distinction between Christian and Muslim corsairs, pirates, and islanders was somehow blurred from the late 16th century onwards, when parts of the Aegean region had become no man's land, with certain islands providing supplies to corsairs and pirates.

The economic advancement of island communities accelerated throughout the 18th century, when their products, carried on large and smaller vessels that were granted safe anchorage in Cycladic harbours, found their way to the wider Euro-Mediterranean market. Numerous maps of the islands' ports drawn by travellers and geographers, as well as the positioning of foreign consuls acting for various countries (such as the Venetian Republic, England, France and the Netherlands) since the early 18th century, testify to the importance of the islands and their involvement in sea-borne trade. The French ambassador François Pouqueville (1821, pp. 70–71), for example, describes seven trading ships from Kea in 1820. A rising class of Greek Orthodox merchants, who slowly invested in the shipping of goods in their *caiques* (large fishing boats) from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, initiated and gradually developed a breakthrough in Cycladic economy. The fact that a port tax (*gümrük*) is not mentioned amongst the taxable products and sources of Kea, Kythnos and possibly Siphnos (although they had perfect harbours) implies that one of the greatest and most profitable activities in some of the Cyclades escaped taxation (Slot 2001, p. 64; Vionis 2012, pp. 54–55).

The continuous acquisition and exploitation of lands by a rising Greek Orthodox elite, investment in specific products on certain islands (e.g., grains, silk, cotton, flax) and the historical conjectures related to the unstable affairs in the western half of the Mediterranean from the last decades of the 17th century created an unparalleled impetus for the development of Cycladic societies. The gradual accumulation of wealth, the acquisition of posts with local administration and the commercial connection with both halves of the Mediterranean resulted in a 'fascinating eclecticism' of fashions among the leading Christian Orthodox families, who invested in imported furniture, table ceramics and clothing

during the 17th and 18th centuries (Bintliff 2007, p. 231; Vionis 2012, pp. 347–57). The archaeological and architectural record from the Cyclades reflect a 'pretentious' tendency for comfort and the display of wealth through the construction of multi-roomed houses and the import of ceramics from northwest Europe, Italy and Anatolia, especially during the 17th and 18th centuries. Bartmann stoneware jugs from Germany, stoneware gin bottles from the Netherlands, maiolica tableware from Faenza and Montelupo in Italy, coffee cups from Kütahya, plates and spouted jars from Çanakkale in Anatolia (Figure 2), found on land and in the harbours of Paros, confirm the need of the new elites for display and the island's centrality in the commercial maritime networks. The growing power of the Church and the Greek Orthodox population's well-being is also reflected in the construction of an outstanding number of monasteries and churches in towns and in the countryside, as noted above. Nearly 350 new cult buildings (Figure 3) were constructed between the mid-16th and late 18th centuries in different parts of the island.

Figure 2. Imported tableware (late 16th–late 18th centuries) found on the island of Paros. (**a**). Bartmann salt-glazed stoneware jug from Germany; (**b**). salt-glazed stoneware gin bottle from the Netherlands; (**c**). armorial maiolica table basin from Faenza; (**d**). maiolica table basin from Montelupo; (**e**). coffee cup from Kütahya; (**f**). painted plate from Çanakkale; (**g**). painted *ibrik* from Çanakkale (photos by the author).
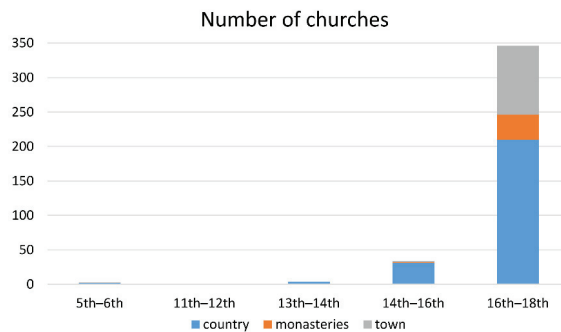
Figure 3. The number of monasteries and churches built in towns and in the countryside on the island of Paros from the 5th to the 18th century (data and graph by the author).

3. The Post-Medieval Churches of Paros

The churches constructed on Paros during the period of Ottoman domination, both in rural environments and within the main settlements of the island, although humble in appearance, present similarities with the architectural tradition of other neighbouring islands, as well as the building traditions of the Byzantine and Latin eras in the Cyclades. Architectural variations do exist, however, and seem to be related to their topographical/landscape context and role, i.e., town vs. countryside, and monastic vs. parish church. Previous scholarship has examined the main architectural types recorded on the island of Paros (Orlandos 1961, 1964; Patelis 2004), the variability of the flat-roofed rural churches (Vasileiadis 1962) and the history of monastic monuments (Aliprantis 1970). The 210 churches (out of 248) built in the countryside, representing 87% of the surviving rural chapels on the island, together with another 100 churches (out of 103) located in settlements, date to the period between the late 16th and late 18th centuries, according to their architectural style and the surviving inscriptions in 90 of them (Figure 4). The main church types that emerge, as defined by the structure of their roofs, are (a) those with a vaulted roof (barrel vault or pointed barrel vault), (b) those with a pseudo-vaulted roof, and (c) those with a dome (single-aisled, free cross, or cross-in-square type of church) (cf. Georgiadi 2014).
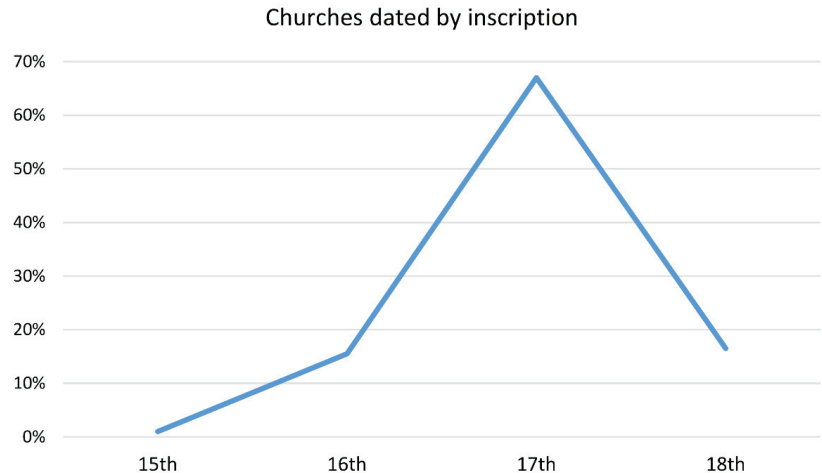
Figure 4. Ninety monastic, town and country/rural churches on the island of Paros, dated by their surviving inscriptions (data and graph by the author).

3.1. Churches with Vaulted Roof (Barrel Vault and Pointed Barrel Vault)

This is the most common type of rural and town church on Paros and other islands in the Cyclades, such as neighbouring Naxos. The two versions of a vaulted roof found are the barrel vault, an almost semi-circular roof (Figure 5b: left structure) found in churches of the Latin and Ottoman eras, and the pointed barrel vault (Figure 5a,c), which, despite the fact it is traditionally attributed a date to the Latin period, was mainly popular during post-medieval times. Most of the surviving churches on Paros actually bear a vaulted roof and they are either single-aisle and free-standing, such as Agios Demetrios in the region of Marpissa (Figure 5a), or come in pairs as twin chapels, such as Agioi Apostoloi in the region of Prodromos (Figure 5b) (Vionis 2012, pp. 189–91).
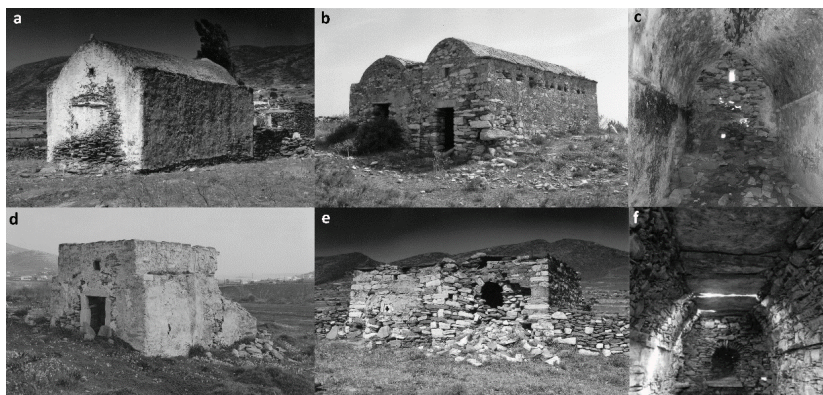
Figure 5. Representative examples of rural churches on Paros. (**a**). Pointed barrel-vaulted, free-standing church; (**b**). barrel-vaulted (north chapel) and pointed barrel-vaulted (south chapel) twin churches; (**c**). pointed barrel vault, interior; (**d**). pseudo-vaulted free-standing church; (**e**). pseudo-vaulted twin churches; (**f**). pseudo vault with stone slabs, interior (photos by the author).

3.2. Churches with Pseudo-Vaulted Roof

'Pseudo vault' (*pseudotholos*) is a term introduced by Demetrios Vasileiadis (1962) to refer to a type of church roof, the lower part of which takes the shape of a barrel vault, while its upper part is completed with horizontally placed schist stone slabs (Figure 5f) (Georgiadi 2014). The exterior of such structures appears to be flat-roofed (Figure 5d,e), as is the case with surviving examples of late medieval, post-medieval and early modern domestic architecture in the Cyclades and on many other islands in the southern Aegean. It is interesting that this church type of rather small dimensions, both 'single' (Figure 5d) and 'twin' (Figure 5e), is exclusively present in the rural countryside of the island of Paros, in isolated areas and away from villages. Although some scholars (Dimitrokallis 1993, p. 190; cf. Georgiadi 2014) have argued that pseudo-vaulted churches may date back to the Byzantine period, as only a few dated examples on Naxos may imply, their architectural individuality and surviving dated inscriptions on Paros suggest that they are of post-medieval date (Orlandos 1961, p. 133; Patelis 2004, pp. 20–22; cf. Georgiadi 2014). A noteworthy exception to this roof type appears in the town of Paroikia (the main town of Paros), where wooden beams (covered with reeds, seaweed and clay) support the roof of larger and higher structures, replacing the aforementioned flat stone slabs. According to Anastasia Georgiadi (2014), there are only 20 such churches in Paroikia, dated to the 17th and 18th centuries, with some of them preserving clear indications that the beams and the flat roof were placed at a later stage (during renovation or restoration works), replacing the original vaulted upper part of those chapels.

3.3. Churches with Dome (Single-Aisled, Free Cross and Cross-in-Square)

Domed churches comprise one of the most characteristic landmarks in the Cyclades, dominating the skyline of several islands and considered as the most typical example of island sacred architecture. Domed churches obviously date back to Byzantine times, with several examples dating to Justinian's reign (Ćurčić 1991, 2010; Ousterhout 2019); the domed basilica of Panagia Hekatontapyliane on Paros comprises a representative case. The vast majority of domed churches surviving on the island of Paros, as well as on other islands, however, date to the period of Ottoman domination. They mainly constitute monastic and settlement/parish churches, while their occurrence in the rural countryside is rare (Orlandos 1961, 1964; Aliprantis 1970; Patelis 2004). A hexagonal or circular drum with alternating openings supports the dome (Figure 6), which forms the most characteristic element of the three main church types on Paros and other islands:

the single aisle (Figure 6a), the free cross (Figure 6b) and the cross-in-square. The domed single-aisled and the cross-in-square structures have been common types since the 11th century throughout Byzantium, functioning as 'parish' and monastic churches (Vionis 2019a, pp. 71–72).
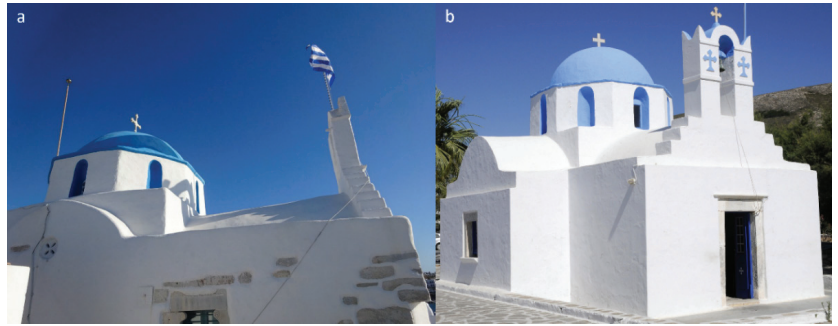
Figure 6. Representative examples of domed churches on Paros. (**a**). Single-aisled, Agios Konstantinos, Paroikia; (**b**). Free cross, Agios Nikolaos, Paroikia (photos by the author).

4. An Island Topography of Post-Medieval Churches

The number of churches built and used on the island of Paros from the late 16th century onwards is remarkable, inhabiting the residential fabric of settlements and their immediate periphery (up to 300 m away) as *parekklisia* or 'extra-mural chapels' and the extensive agricultural coastal areas and upland regions (up to 5–6 km away) as *exokklisia* or 'outlying churches' (Figure 7). Thus, an island of 193 km^2 hosts 388 identified and dated churches and monasteries (2 per km^2), in the countryside and within the core of these post-medieval settlements.

As noted in the context of sacred topography in other regions of the Byzantine world (cf. Vionis 2019a), 'parish' churches comprised the spiritual, architectural and social centre of settlement communities (Gerstel 2005, p. 166; Vionis 2014, p. 338). They also acted as a protective sacred barrier between the outside and inside worlds of the inhabitants as 'outlying chapels' (Kalas 2009, p. 90) and as markers of important resources and property ownership, or as entry points to geographical units (Nixon 2006, pp. 23–26; Crow et al. 2011, pp. 130–32). Visualising the topographical location and the distance of humble rural churches from post-medieval nucleated settlements, we can appreciate how 'extra-mural chapels' and 'outlying churches' demarcate community boundaries, sacred space, social memory, and family relations with the aid of texts documenting ecclesiastical administration, private property and daily affairs. Seifreid and Kalaycı (2019) have followed a similar approach from a long-term perspective by employing statistical analysis to explore the potential spatial relationships between churches and settlements in the southern Mani peninsula from the Byzantine to the early modern period.

The distribution and concentration of post-medieval churches on Paros (Figure 7) reveal different zones or community areas shaped by the island's topography and the available agricultural lands. The largest concentration of churches is located on the central east coastal valley of the island, the former territory of the late medieval *kastro* of Kephalos, the administrative seat of the Latin rulers from the late 14th century until its abandonment in the mid-16th (Vionis 2012, p. 150). The second largest concentration is located in the elongated inland valley between the port town of Paroikia and Naousa, extending to the southwest coastal plain within the catchment area of the main town of Paros. A third concentration is located in an upland zone between the villages of Lefkes and Kostos.
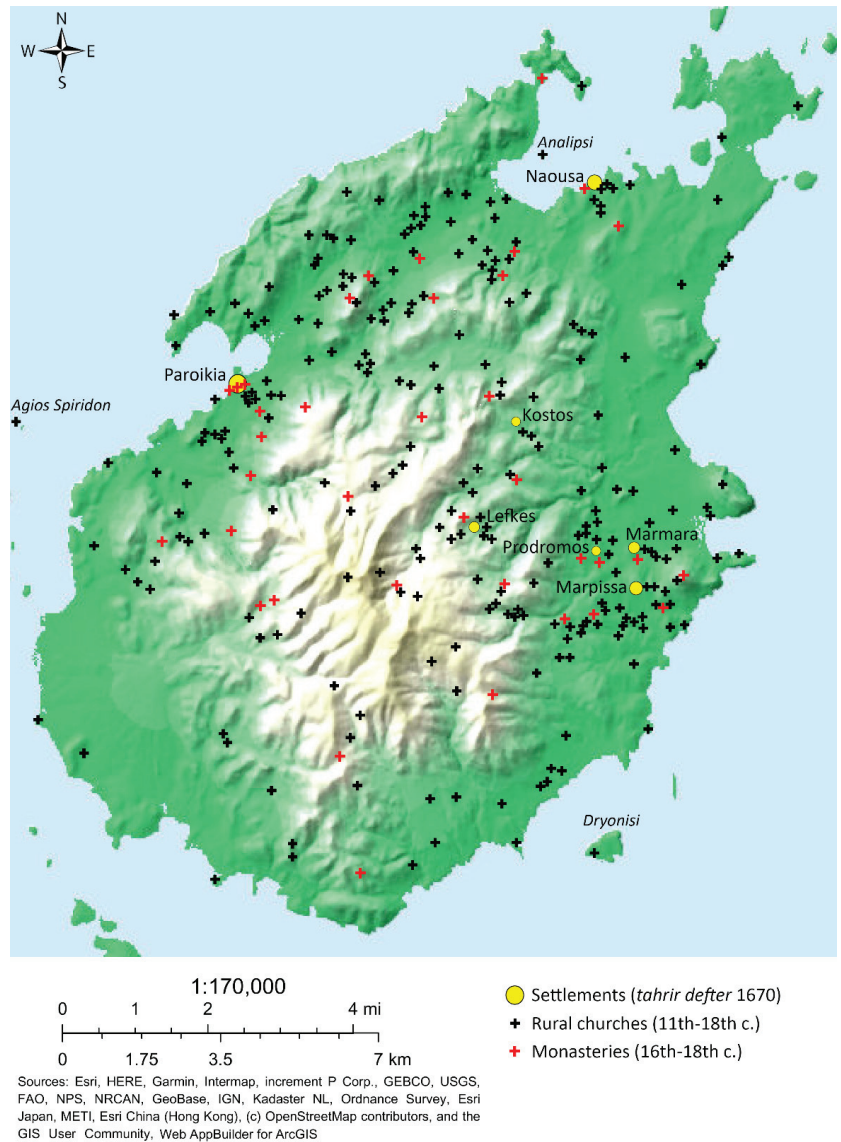
Figure 7. Monasteries (red crosses) and churches (black crosses) in the countryside of the island of Paros and its offshore islets (map by the author).

All three aforementioned areas engaged in the cultivation of vines, grains and pulses, cotton and flax, as confirmed by the 1670 Ottoman fiscal record for Paros (Slot 1982; Vionis 2012, p. 53). As is the case with other regions in mainland Greece (Kiel 1990, 1997; Vionis 2016; Seifreid and Kalaycı 2019), the increase in the number of churches and new settlements goes hand-in-hand with population growth during the early Ottoman era. The three nucleated defended towns (*kastra*) of Paroikia, Naousa and Kephalos were the only settlements on the island until the middle 16th century. According to historical sources and the 1670 *tahrir defter*, Marpissa, Marmara and Prodromos, as well as the upland settlements of Lefkes and Kostos, came into existence after the abandonment of Kephalos,

while Paroikia and Naousa became large and substantial settlements numbering 568 and 281 households, respectively, in the late 17th century (Vionis 2012, p. 347).

What is particularly interesting about extra-mural chapels and outlying churches is their specific topographic location. Their function remains, in some cases, undetermined, as they did not serve a role as parish or cemetery churches. Some of them are located in close proximity to settlements and up to 5–6 km away (Figure 8), at a lower altitude (≤100 m), or higher up, on hills overlooking the coastal and upland valleys (Figure 9). In Byzantine Naxos, a similar phenomenon points to their function as 'liminal' churches, acting both as village–territory markers and as loci of interaction between different communities (Vionis 2019a, p. 80). The great number of post-medieval churches on several islands offers multiple explanations. Charalambos Bouras (2001, pp. 238–64) notes that Tinos claims 419 churches, Santorini 300, Naxos almost 1000 and Paros approximately 700 (including ruined churches and modern private chapels). Most of the post-medieval and early modern churches in the Cyclades and other regions in the Aegean comprised private property and were the result of experiential miraculous healings, individual promises and near-death experiences (Bouras 2001, p. 264; Vidali 2009, pp. 24–26; Aliprantis 2020, pp. 65–67). In other contexts, extra-mural churches in faraway locations, in transitional zones between agricultural and pastureland (Crow et al. 2011, p. 131) and on 'neutral' ground, served as meeting places for family and friends from different villages during annual religious feasts or *paniyiria* on saints' name days (Forbes 2007, p. 372).
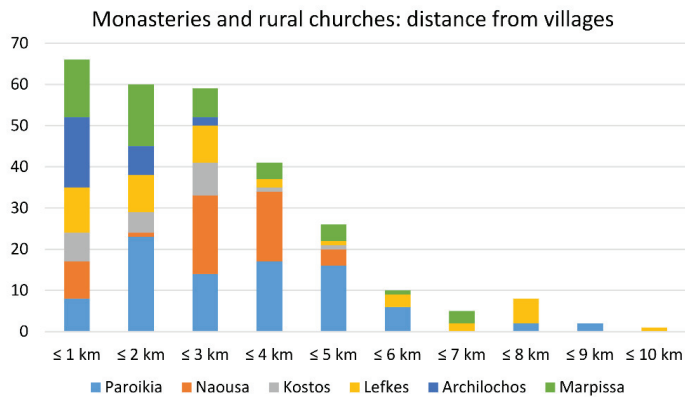
Figure 8. The distances between monastic and rural churches and their nearest settlement on the island of Paros. The community of Archilochos refers to the two neighbouring settlements of Marmara and Prodromos (data and graph by the author).
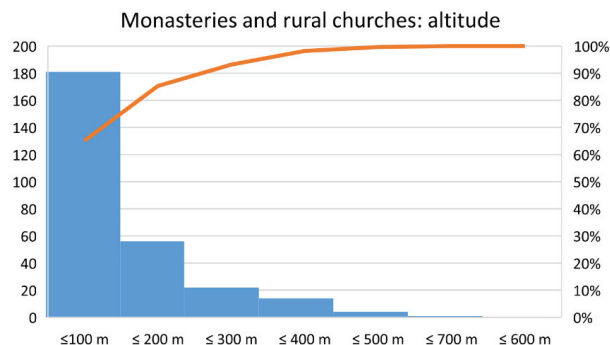
Figure 9. The altitude of monastic and rural churches on Paros (data and graph by the author).

Different groups living and moving within the landscapes of different scale and cultural identity perceive and encounter space and distance personally; thus, such notions "are always relative and qualitative" (Tilley 1994, p. 16). Although, for example, there is a distinction between 'edge' and 'outside' churches in the case of the southern Mani according to their relative distance from the nearest settlement, there is a potential overlap within the 'inside' and 'edge' categories, "indicating that a separation between the topological groups is not clear-cut" (Seifreid and Kalaycı 2019, p. 529). In another context, as Bent (1885, p. 329) noted in the late 19th century, the distance between the 'gateway' port town of Naxos and its several inland villages a few hours away resulted in the preservation of Greek communities of "undoubted pedigree." Here, the openness of the island to the external world and its economic and cultural network through its port town could have had a negative effect on the cultural or other DNA of the island's remotest inhabitants if it was not for the kilometric distance between the main town and the mountains. It is also worth noting that settlement change during the pre-modern era in different regions of the Mediterranean determined the routes of daily life, memory and travel from villages to agricultural fields and rural churches (Gibson 2007, p. 77). On the northern Troodos in Cyprus, for example, villagers in the 17th–18th centuries would commute daily from their place of residence to their fields at a distance of 4–7 km away, whereas in other regions of the island, rural populations would cover a distance of 1–3 km (Given 2000, p. 215; Sollars 2005, p. 214; Gibson 2007, p. 77). Paros is an island of a much smaller scale, where ethnographic research confirms that the notion of distance is relative and that the varying functions of site locations determined travel frequency and the concept of 'inside', 'edge' and 'outside'. More specifically, in the early 1930s, the family of S.V. would commute daily from their townhouse to their nearest farm 1 km away, whereas a second farmstead at a distance of 2.2 km and a third at 4 km away functioned as temporary residences in periods of intensive cultivation–harvest and processing, respectively, within the community area of Naousa.

The aforementioned examples cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of where 'extra-mural' space ended or at what distance from any settlement one can recognise 'outlying churches' in the post-medieval countryside of Paros. Noting, however, that the largest concentration of churches (outside the residential fabric of the seven nucleated settlements) is located primarily at a distance of 1–3 km (Figure 8), we could argue that an area of this extent around each post-medieval settlement would better integrate the various daily economic, social and religious practices of its community. The island's topography determined church location, as the vast majority of them (65%) are located at an altitude of up to 100 m and along the coastal plains of the island (Figure 9), where settlement and intensive cultivation were concentrated, at least since Roman times and the early Byzantine period (cf. Roussos 2017). On the other hand, 'outlying churches' connected with folk religiosity or agrarian religion, which have tended to be overlooked by modern scholarship, were located at greater distances (4–6 km) and at a higher altitude, and would have served different roles. One of their roles possibly included local 'pilgrimage', if we are to accept that travelling some distance between the daily living environment and the pilgrimage site comprised one of the main criteria diachronically (cf. Margry 2008). A photograph of the town of Paros in the 1950s (Figure 10) preserves some of the settlement's extra-mural landmarks in the post-medieval era: the monastery of Panagia Hekatontapyliane (320 m from the town's post-medieval market), Agios Nikolaos (330 m), Agia Eleni Varoucha (700 m) and the monastery of Taxiarchaki (1300 m), all of them extra-mural chapels and outlying churches. The photograph illustrates how settlement growth over time shaped the perception of extra-mural space and churches from the Ottoman period to the middle 20th century (when the residential fabric of Paroikia expanded as far as Hekatontapyliane), or even today (with Agia Eleni Varoucha being organically integrated into the urban fabric, no longer belonging to the 'outside' category of churches).

Figure 10. The town of Paroikia and its immediate territory in the 1950s. Red circles indicate the extent of the town in post-medieval times and the location of monasteries and churches visible on the photograph, together with their distance from the market (*Agora*) of Paroikia in the Ottoman era (© The History of Paros private collection, Paros, adapted by the author).

The question arises as to how extra-mural chapels and outlying churches, as indicated above, demarcated community boundaries and family relations in the case of the six post-medieval communities and parishes (Marmara and Prodromos comprised a single community, that of Archilochos) on the island of Paros (Figure 7). Apart from the obvious concentration of churches around each of the main settlements, pointing to their immediate association with the nearest community, notarial documents of the 16th–18th centuries from the communities of Archilochos and Marpissa (or Dragoulas and Tzipidos, respectively, in texts of the Ottoman period) are revealing in terms of community boundaries, landscape appropriation and social memory. On 7 September 1785, Maroussaki, wife of Demetrakis Roussos from Tzipidos, sells to her nephew a share of land next to the church of Agia Triada, 930 m south of Marpissa (Aliprantis 2020, p. 45). On 27 January 1757, Maria Tzioti from Tzipidos leaves as inheritance to her son Eleftherios the church of Agios Demetrios at Mersini, 1.6 km south of Marpissa, along with other landed property in the area (Aliprantis 2020, p. 59). On 30 April 1670, the priest Manuel Vitzaras from Tzipidos donates a field next to the church of Agios Georgios at Lefos (3.6 km southwest of Marpissa) to the monastery of Panagia Xechoriani (580 m southeast of Marpissa), a dependency (*metochi*) of the monastery of Agios Ioannis Theologos on Patmos (Saint John Theologian) (Aliprantis 2020, p. 55). On 9 April 1556, Philotheos Gemeliaris from Tzipidos dedicates to the monastery of Panagia Chozoviotissa on Amorgos the church of Agia Aikaterini (1.9 km southwest of Marpissa), which he built himself, along with farmhouses, an oven, a threshing floor, a wine press, olive groves and fields with fig trees for the salvation of his soul and his parents' (Aliprantis 2020, p. 34). Similarly, on 2 June 1710, Tzanis Tzanias from Marmara gives as inheritance to his son a field next to the church of Agios Vassileios, 1.2 km northwest of the village (Aliprantis 2020, p. 51). The churches of Timios Stavros and Taxiarchis (750 m and 1.2 km northeast of Marmara) feature in the context of family property and inheritance in notarial documents from Marmara on 3 November 1820 and 24 February 1831, respectively (Aliprantis 2020, pp. 101–2). The diagram below (Figure 11) visualises some of the surviving records pertaining to private churches, property, and the relationship between families and the catchment areas of their respective communities.
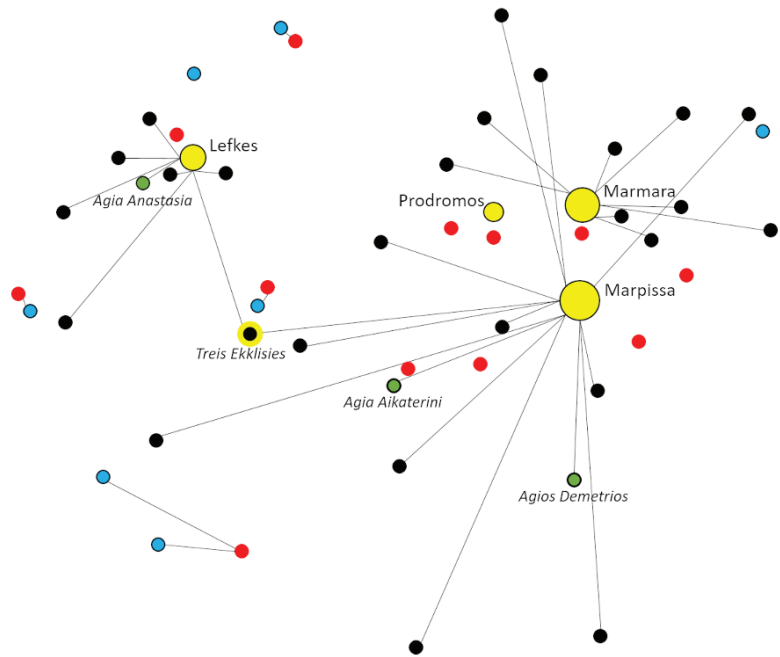
Figure 11. A diagram (in scale) showing the direct relationship between residents in the villages of Marpissa, Marmara/Prodromos and Lefkes (in yellow) and their private chapels (in green) or their landed property around rural churches (in black). It also shows the distribution of monasteries (in red) and rural churches (in blue) endowed to monasteries either in the same region (indicated with a link) or outside it (diagram by the author).

Apart from the churches within the post-medieval settlements that satisfied the communities' need for regular liturgical services and burial (mostly on the edge of settlements), it becomes clear that extra-mural chapels and outlying churches demarcated community space and affirmed family ownership. As notarial documents confirm, some rural churches were endowed to certain monasteries on the island or other major monastic foundations in the Aegean for the salvation of the owners' soul. Other outlying churches comprised family property, passed from parents to children and celebrated the memory of the saints to whom they were dedicated, gathering related families and residents from different villages at least once a year, as ethno-archaeological research also attests (cf. Forbes 2007). Even in cases when a family with landed property in the periphery of a rural church did not own the church itself, the church functioned as a point of reference for the family that occasionally catered to it by lighting its candles or by offering olive oil and incense (during their field visits). In this sense, the rural church became a material and spiritual tie not only to community but also to family identity. It is important that, as noted in the context of early modern Scotland (Given et al. 2019, p. 84), when dealing with upland historical structures in faraway locations, we identify and understand interconnections rather than marginality. The rural landscape of Paros, with its dominating yet humble outlying churches, created a sense of belonging and a stage for lived religious and social experiences that triggered social memory and promoted family identity (cf. Tilley 1994, pp. 27–28; Thomas 2001, pp. 172–73).

The example of Treis Ekklisies or "Three Churches" (Figure 11), a three-aisled pseudo-vaulted outlying church in a remote upland location between the communities of Marpissa and Lefkes, is exceptional in that it comprised a reference point for both communities. This rural church not only functioned as a landmark for families from both villages who

owned landed property in the area as attested to by relevant 18th-19th-century documents (Aliprantis 2020, pp. 102–3), but also functioned as a notional border between the two. A memorandum signed on 22 January 1940 between representatives from the communities of Marpissa and Lefkes reassigns Treis Ekklisies the role of community boundary (Aliprantis 2020, p. 103). The location of such outlying churches and the religious feasts (taking place there at least once a year), instead of separating the residents, would have promoted communication between neighbouring village communities through the churches' dual role as 'places' of periodic interaction in terms of both ritual and social life.

At first sight, the spatial distribution of monasteries may not be particularly telling in the case of Paros, considering that they are located both in the immediate periphery of villages (as private foundations) and in faraway locations in the interior of the island (Figures 7 and 11). This is not an exceptional phenomenon; recent studies (Seifreid and Kalaycı 2019, pp. 531–32) have observed that monasteries occupied not only the core of post-medieval and early modern settlements, but also the more obvious 'monastic' remote and/or upland localities and sources of wealth. Solitude and tranquillity have been important criteria for the location of monasteries since Byzantine times, together with visibility and accessibility (Smyrlis 2020), providing sacredness and spirituality, charity and hospitality. The location of monasteries on Paros obviously met all the aforementioned criteria, as is also evident in the case of the study area of Marpissa, Prodromos/Marmara and Lefkes. More interestingly, 'wilderness' and in-between localities became sacred through the construction or presence of proprietary churches (acquired by monasteries as gifts), forming a 'ring' on the edge/border of community territories (Figure 11, blue dots), some of them becoming sites of pilgrimage, especially in the early modern period. As we shall observe in further detail in the following section, monastic and outlying churches, especially those in the relatively more remote areas of Paros, were deeply embedded in the social landscape of the island, despite the oxymoron. Henri Lefebvre summarises the interrelation of sacred spaces and travel superbly by stating that monasteries "were the strong points anchoring the network of lanes and main roads to a landscape transformed by peasant communities" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 53). This is a point to explore when it comes to the construction of sacred landscapes in post-medieval Paros.

5. Discussion: *Proskynesis* and *Kinesis*

The permanent installation of churches dedicated to Mary, Christ and the saints sanctified the rural landscapes and provided a dynamic link between sacred and profane, religiosity and superstition, cyclical and linear time, pilgrims and residents, men and women. The dedication of churches to certain saints who were celebrated on special feast days within the calendar year may be revealing in terms of superstition, spirituality and human suffering. The islanders' desire for veneration (*proskynesis*), prayer and religious travel to churches through kinetic processions (*kinesis*) from their houses to their destination sanctified and physically and mentally connected places of significance within the rural landscape. These issues are essential to examine in order to fully grasp how saints, churches, people and movement created sacred landscapes and produced common memories and identities.

5.1. The Veneration of Saintly Figures

The veneration of saints and the respect the faithful paid to their memory is everywhere evident, since the Byzantine era, in the rural landscapes of the Aegean. Religious life, cathartic experience, the liturgical calendar with its fasting and feasting seasons, and the struggles of daily life resulted in church construction in different zones on the island of Paros, as shown above. Even places associated with 'dangerous spirits', 'harpies' and 'witches' were domesticated through the erection of outlying churches dedicated to certain saintly figures, as well as through processions or acts that would remedy suffering and would draw the evil away. Bent (1885) is a remarkable source of information in this domain. The people of Paros invented nicknames for various saints, rural churches and monasteries

on the island, such as 'Saint John the Rainy', 'Saint Nicholas the Seafarer' and 'Drunken Saint George' (Bent 1885, pp. 373–74). On Saint George's name day, the people of Paros would get drunk with their new wine and would dance in front of the church of Agios Georgios in the presence of the priest; on the eve of Saint Nicholas' name day, men would sing love songs to the tune of an oud, telling the story of their beloved who visited the church of Agios Nikolaos the Seafarer; in times of drought, the islanders would organise a procession to the monastery of Agios Ioannis the Rainy (Bent 1885, pp. 373–74, 389–90). The demons inhabiting a grotto close to the monastery of Agios Georgios southwest of Marpissa, and the evil spirits and witches that haunted springs and wells in the surroundings of the village of Lefkes, ready to devour unbaptised children after dark (Bent 1885, pp. 387–88), were cast out by the local Saint Arsenios through the divine power of Saint George.

The human need to invoke the saints' healing and protective powers and their attempt to sanctify their surrounding landscapes is more evident from the late 10th century onwards with the growing popularity of the cult of saints (cf. Papaconstantinou 2007; Vionis 2019a). These saintly, but at the same time human, figures were believed to have the power of intercession between God Almighty and humankind (cf. Cormack 1985). Saints were honoured because they also gave examples to the faithful, while their depiction on the lower parts of church walls or on portable wooden icons brought them down to the level of their imitators, narrowing the division between sacred and profane (Gerstel 1998, p. 102; Brown 2000, pp. 16–17; Magennis 2001, pp. 29–30). A recent and illuminating case study by Theodora Konstantellou (2020) illustrates all the aforementioned points through the example of Agios Ioannis Baptistis 'Rigodioktis' (Saint John the Baptist and 'Fever Healer') on the neighbouring island of Naxos. The depiction of the saint in the church of Panagia at Archatos, accompanied by the dated inscription *Rigodioktes* (1 September 1285), refers to John's protective and healing powers, especially against malaria, as attested in oral tradition and in the narratives of the Ottoman and early modern eras (Konstantellou 2020, pp. 188–91). Besides the saints' working of miracles, near-death experiences and other human misfortunes, combined with the display of family wealth and individual landed property, other factors, such as the onomastics of outlying churches (Figure 12), are also particularly enlightening in various respects.
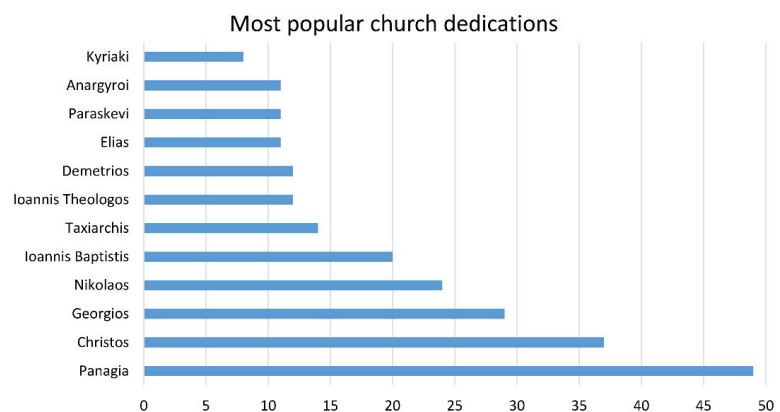
Figure 12. A graph showing the number of churches dedicated to certain saintly figures. The graph includes the names of the saints to whom the dedication occurs in more than five monastic, settlement and outlying churches (data and graph by the author).

Naming can be considered an active process of 'place-making': the dedication of outlying churches and monasteries to specific saints, consequently attributing the churches' names to surrounding landscapes, created a palimpsest of collective memory and identity, connecting local/community stories with the physical terrain, ritual practices and pilgrim-

age (cf. Gardiner 2012; Gilchrist 2020, p. 149). This dedication of churches to specific saints comprises an unparalleled source for investigating local tradition and memory, identity and patronage in the sacred landscapes of Paros and other places in the Aegean from the Byzantine period to today. The popularity of the Virgin Mary, Christ and several saints of different qualities reveals an interesting pan-Aegean pattern of dedication to 'maritime' saintly figures, such as the Virgin, Saint Nicholas, Saint George, perhaps equivalent to pre-Christian cults, such as those of Aphrodite and Isis (cf. Papadopoulou 2010; Papagiannaki 2010; Papantoniou 2012; Papantoniou and Morris 2019). Physician saints associated with the sick and dying, such as Cosmas and Damian, Paraskevi, Kyriaki, John the Baptist (Figure 12) were also popular. The cult of saints and icons since the late 6th century has been seen as "an instrument of power relations and socio-economic strategies" (Papaconstantinou 2007, p. 351) and "a capitulation of the elites" (Brown 1981, p. 18). However, as already noted above, one cannot underestimate the fact that the veneration of 'holy persons' was rooted in the story of their righteous and ascetic lives and comprised powerful examples for faithful Christians throughout the ages (cf. Meri 2015). Post-medieval sources, as well as oral testimonies and traditions, affirm that the general tendency did not change much from the Byzantine period, when individuals venerated saints and invoked them for protection from disease, death or other misfortunes. As Arietta Papaconstantinou (2007, pp. 362–63) has illustrated in the case of Egypt, there were direct and indirect ways of calling for the saints' protection, one of which was naming a child after a saint. The surviving post-medieval notarial documents from Paros testify to this, where the pairings of names between private outlying churches and members of the owning families have an obvious connection. Ethnographic research in other insular contexts has illustrated how vows to particular saints resulted in naming children after a saint or the Virgin (Kenna 1976, p. 25). However, apart from satisfying vows and appointing the saint with the responsibility for the wellbeing of a child, there existed the tradition of naming a newborn child after one of his/her grandparents. This had practical consequences, in that the child inherited some of the property belonging to the grandparent (whose name he/she was given), as well as metaphysical effects, in a way facilitating the transfer of personal qualities from one generation to the other (Kasdagli 1991, p. 81; Hartnup 2004, p. 128).

Despite the fact that some of the most popular saints to whom churches are dedicated on Paros (Figure 12) are recognised as 'military' saints, such as Georgios, Demetrios and Taxiarchis (Archangel), they seem to have acquired a dual identity by the post-medieval period, being identified as both 'military' and 'maritime'. The increased popularity of military saints in the Aegean and other provinces from the 10th century onwards likely signifies the need for Christians living on the 'frontier zones' of the Empire to protect the people against their 'infidel' persecutors and to express their military and cultural supremacy over their Muslim and other neighbours (Vionis 2017, p. 178; 2019a, p. 75). During the so-called 'Macedonian Renaissance', a period when Byzantium recovered some of the provinces lost in previous centuries to the Arabs, military saints had become virtual state symbols (Nelson 2011–2012, pp. 188–89).

It is probably not a coincidence that even churches built during the post-medieval period on the 'borders' between settlement communities and the remote areas on Paros were dedicated to military saints, the protectors of the Empire's frontiers. What is even more interesting, however, is that churches dedicated to Saint George, the most celebrated military saint, are located not only on liminal zones in the interior of the island, but also along the coasts, a place traditionally reserved for the 'maritime' Saint Nicholas. Among the 26 post-medieval churches on the coasts of Paros and its offshore islets, seven are dedicated to Saint George and only five to Saint Nicholas. The popularity of military saints (Figure 13) and the placing of churches dedicated to their memory along the coasts or in inland notional border areas probably comprises a 'maritime' phenomenon throughout the post-medieval and early modern eras. It would not be an exaggeration to note that the popularity of the maritime and military/equestrian saints and the perception of their 'apotropaic' role by the islanders may be connected to piracy and banditry in the Aegean.

Apart from the danger faced by those who sailed the sea, piracy also affected some of the islands' populations that resided in proximity to ports and the coasts. The raid on Naxos in 1574, when hundreds of women and children were seized and sold in the markets of coastal Anatolia, comprises one such example (White 2018, pp. 41, 67). These outlying churches located both inland and along the coasts played an important role in the liturgical and festive cycle of the island of Paros, when the faithful visited them and performed the same embodied acts from the post-medieval period as they do today. The dance outside the church of 'Drunken Saint George' on the evening of December 5th by the locals having become drunk with their new wine, or the blessing and drinking of milk taken by the shepherds to the church of 'Saint Nicholas Damouli' on the day of the Ascension of Christ comprise such acts of 'popular religion'. The term may not precisely represent the set of beliefs and ritual acts of the island populations in the Cyclades. Thus, it could be replaced with 'agrarian' or 'maritime religion', since such ritual practices did not involve only the 'folk', but the entire social and economic order in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire, moving away from the use of scriptures and other religious texts to cure individual and collective psychological reactions, vulnerabilities, and fears (cf. Grehan 2014, pp. 1–19).
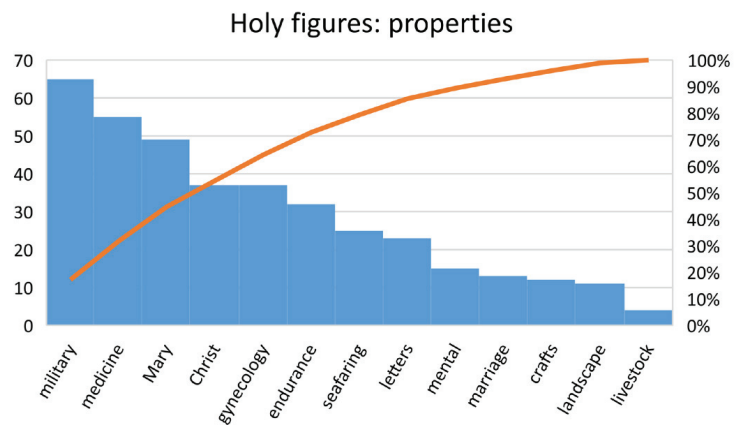
Figure 13. A graph showing the number of churches dedicated to saintly figures possessing certain qualities and powers (data and graph by the author).

The veneration and dedication of churches to the memory of saintly figures, the local pilgrimages that may have developed around their cult through the centuries, followed by legends and stories about the miracles they may have performed, comprise aspects of popular/agrarian/maritime religion. The founders of those churches, usually the local elites, promoted such repositories of memoria, perpetuating the memory of saints and their own legacy (Meri 2015, p. 514). It is evident, though, that the popularity and memory of saints continued uninterrupted from the Byzantine era to early modern times, mainly thanks to their healing and other properties. It is obvious that apart from the military saints, those associated with healing qualities and gynaecological issues were amongst the most popular (Figure 13). The cult of Virgin Mary, Saint Anna, Saint Marina and other female saints stressed the maternal role of women and issues associated with children, marriage and the domestic sphere, and they intended to appeal to and satisfy the needs of female parishioners. The growing popularity of saints under certain circumstances and in cases of urgent need was a common situation in the East and West, somehow changing the materialities and practices of religion. The imagery of Saint Christopher, for example, offering protection against sudden death, became more prevalent following the Black Death in mid-14th century southern England (Gilchrist 2012, pp. 173–74). At the same time, the bubonic plague of the 1340s–1350s led to the foundation of a great number of churches

dedicated to Saint Athanasios in Crete as a result of the meaning of the saint's name, i.e., 'immortal' in Greek (Gasparis 2016; Papantoniou and Vionis 2020, p. 96).

As noted above, the cult of the Virgin became increasingly popular during the post-medieval period on the island of Paros, as would be evident if one were to evaluate the great number of churches dedicated to Mary (Figures 12 and 13). This is certainly not a bizarre phenomenon, but is rather common throughout the Aegean, especially on the islands. Next to Christ, the value of and dedication to the Marian cult is unquestionable, through the numerous surviving miraculous icons and relics from Byzantine Constantinople to early modern Tinos (Dubisch 1995; Krausmüller 2016). Numerous post-medieval narratives and 19th–20th-century testimonies confess the miraculous appearance of Mary, either as a living person or through her icons, as has been the case since the 9th–10th centuries in Byzantium (Baun 2016, p. 206). Her universally recognised feasts celebrating the events of her life, such as the Presentation (2 February), the Annunciation (25 March), the Dormition (15 August) and her Nativity (8 September), spread rapidly throughout the Byzantine Empire (Krausmüller 2016, pp. 219–20), having become major religious feasts in the Greek Orthodox world by the post-medieval era. How can one explain her popularity on Paros and perhaps other islands? Even if her cult was not an exclusively 'maritime' phenomenon, it certainly was a 'female issue', since Mary (Panagia) was a human and quasi-divine figure, a virgin and a mother, serving as a role model for women as "gentle, humble, domestic creatures" (Hall 2010, p. 107).

Proportionally, the popularity of the cult of the Virgin Mary and other female saints (Figures 12 and 13) is also evident when compared with the number of parish and outlying churches dedicated to Christ and male saints (Figure 14). Although there is no balance in church dedication between the two genders on Paros (Mary + female saints = 27% vs. Christ + male saints = 73%), one cannot underestimate that the position of women in the domestic and public sphere in medieval and post-medieval times must have promoted the cults of the Virgin and female saints, along with women's participation in certain ritual activities. Their roles as mothers, wives, midwives, nurses, nuns and mourners in a male-dominated Christian society does not always seem to have left much space for female activity and expression beyond their love and care for their families, and their concern with fertility and infertility, health and infant mortality (Vionis 2019b, p. 255). The depiction of female saints in humble Byzantine churches, for example, illustrates their role as delimiters of female ritual, especially in burial churches, while the choice of certain female saints carrying the same names as those of certain female donors testifies to the deliberate correspondence between the two (Gerstel 1998; Vionis 2019b, p. 257).
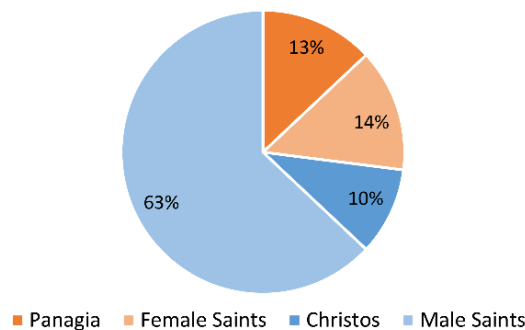
Figure 14. A pie chart showing the percentage of post-medieval churches dedicated to Mary, other female saints, Christ and male saints on the island of Paros (data and graph by the author).

Christianity perceived women in a bipolar way, both as 'evil', required to deny their sexuality or retain their virginity in order to enter Paradise, or as 'good', with Mary being the epitome of piousness and humility (Holst-Warhaft 2008, p. 16; Vionis 2019b, pp. 257–58). Both extremes become evident through two examples from Paros itself. The first is a female sculpted figure, powerfully displaying her genitalia, used to decorate the post-medieval entrance of the courtyard of Panagia Hekatontapyliane and perceived as an effective warning against the sins of the flesh (Vionis 2019b, p. 259, figure 4). The second relates to Holy Week, when following the evening service of the Crucifixion on Holy Thursday, women gather under the Cross and recite *moirologia*, folk poetic lamentations, participating in Mary's drama as mothers and wives (Papantoniou and Vionis 2020, p. 92). The close association of women with certain rituals and folk practices, including birth and burial rites, together with the cult of female saints, and especially the Virgin in the church/monastery of Panagia Hekatontapyliane, mark the explicit connection between the sacred and the female lifecycle.

5.2. Kinetic Rituals and Paths of Local Pilgrimage

The post-medieval churches of Paros and other Aegean islands have rarely received an archaeological or anthropological focus (or any attention at all) when it comes to their landscape perspective and their relation to settlement change and population movement. As shown in a number of examples above, the distribution of extra-mural chapels and outlying churches in the countryside of Paros may have multiple meanings when examined through different angles, such as serving as notional community borders, markers of family property and memory, and expressions of religiosity and individual vows. An important aspect not yet examined in the context of the post-medieval Aegean is the study of movement and the social landscapes facilitated by the maintenance and use of countryside roads and paths; a similar approach with stimulating results has been employed in the context of the Troodos region in Cyprus (Gibson 2007). A network of paths dated as late as the post-medieval period in the region of Marpissa in central east Paros comprises a fascinating case study for examining how paths and cult locations were 'connected' spatiotemporally, structuring experiences and creating kinetic rituals through annual local pilgrimages, establishing a sense of linear order (Tilley 1994, pp. 30–31).

There are two key sites in the case study area southwest of Marpissa (Figure 15). The first is the Monastery of Agios Georgios at Lagkada, built in 1664 (Aliprantis 1970) and dedicated to the military/equestrian Saint George (Figure 16a). The second is the cave church of the Metamorphosis (Transfiguration of Christ) (Figure 16b,c), constructed in the late 17th or early 18th century and connected with the sacred spring of Afklaki nearby (Figure 16d), used by Arsenios (1800–1877), monk at the Monastery of Agios Georgios, in the 19th century as a stopover during his travels to other monasteries and churches inland. The cave church was later dedicated to and renamed after Arsenios, following his canonisation as a new saint by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1967. Both cult sites are located within the catchment area of the village of Marpissa. From the outskirts of Marpissa, a cemented path leads to both sites, following the original route of an older footpath. A network of other interlocking paths (most of them currently abandoned and overgrown with vegetation) mark the only means of communication between the villages of Marpissa, Marmara and Prodromos in the plain and the numerous private outlying churches and other landed properties on the way to the two cult sites of Agios Georgios Monastery and the Metamorphosis/Agios Arsenios cave church. The aforementioned network of paths also physically connects the numerous extra-mural chapels and outlying churches with other agricultural installations (farmhouses and stables, winepresses and threshing floors, wells and field terraces) that sprang up in the post-medieval landscape of the island after settlement spread outside the nucleated settlements in the Ottoman era (Figure 17).
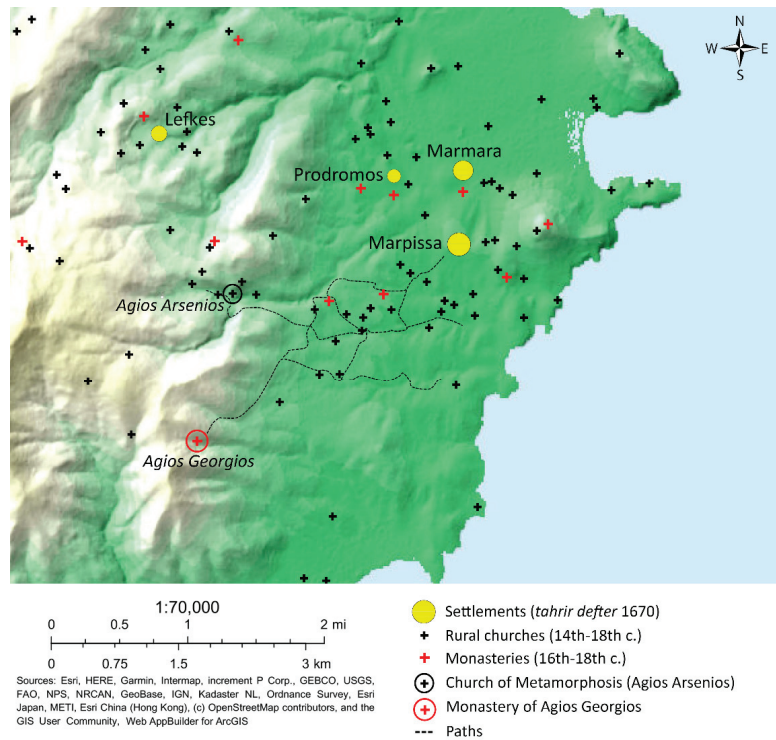
Figure 15. A map of the central east plain of Paros with settlements (yellow dots), monasteries (red crosses), outlying churches (black crosses) and paths (dotted lines) leading to the Monastery of Agios Georgios and the cave church of the Transfiguration/Agios Arsenios (map by the author).

Figure 16. (**a**). Monastery of Agios Georgios; (**b**). exterior of cave church of the Transfiguration/Agios Arsenios; (**c**). interior of cave church; (**d**). spring of Afklaki (photos by the author).

Figure 17. Various agricultural installations in the post-medieval and early modern countryside of Marpissa: (**a**). farmhouse and stables; (**b**). winepress; (**c**). threshing floor; (**d**). path and field terraces (photos by the author).

Physical movement by paths during post-medieval times, from the village house to the fields on a daily basis, or from villages to outlying churches once a year to celebrate the memory of a saint at the local *paniyiri*, created narrative stories and palimpsests of memories that connected ancestral and present-day individual and community experiences with the topography. The rural landscape between the permanent settlements and the sacred destination was not devoid of structures, life and senses; it was filled with stories, myths and superstitions, farming activities, countryside smells and the sounds of grazing animals and church bells (cf. Tilley 1994, pp. 30–31; Bintliff 2013, pp. 49–50). The view of this scenery, next to the outlying chapels along the paths and amongst the cultivated fields to which people showed their respect by making the sign of the cross, created a kind of kinetic axis for the community, connecting the domestic with the sacred and the past with the present. Thus, the physical landscape transformed into a sacred one and was woven into ritual and kinetic linear space, as worshippers, villagers and travellers traversed the distance from the coast or from the closest village to the outlying church or the monastery and back again (cf. Williamson 2021, pp. 289–91). As also argued in the context of ancient paths and embodied ritual movement (cf. Connerton 1989; Williamson 2021, p. 56), or in the case of Byzantine Constantinople (Manolopoulou 2019), movement following physical paths, as well as visual paths or 'sightlines' between the individual and the sacred site (in our case, the outlying churches along the way), created 'sacred roads' as a vehicle for everyday/domestic and ritual processions. Travelling on foot or on donkeyback to the cave church of the Metamorphosis/Agios Arsenios on August 5th–6th and 17th–18th or to the Monastery of Agios Georgios at Lagkada on 23 April was/is not an easy task, considering that the uphill journey would take someone 60 and 70 min, respectively, from the outskirts of Marpissa. Local pilgrimage is an important issue to consider (this was what kept *paniyiria* alive), with people travelling on the eve and on the festive day to attend the mass, receive the saint's blessing and participate in the festive meal. On such occasions, pilgrims from outside the island would have been extremely rare, and this was likely the case during the Byzantine period as well (Papaconstantinou 2007, p. 362).

No matter how long the journey would take for both local pilgrims and visitors/travellers, it was the physical challenge of the journey and the contact with nature and the religious monuments of the historical past that adorned the final destination (the sacred sites of veneration) and the in-between 'stations' (the multiple outlying churches) with a higher value (cf. Andriotis 2009, p. 67; Gilchrist 2020, p. 25). Admittedly, in some cases, Paros included, the process of sacred travel, as defined above, would currently seem more like 'religious tourism' than 'faith-based pilgrimage', with participants submitting their spirituality and senses to experience the sacred and embark on a private journey to their personal exploration of the place's cultural roots (Thouki 2019). The travel to join the annual religious festivals of Saint George, the Transfiguration of Christ or Saint Arsenios involves the full engagement with all material things in the domesticated landscape of the island, such as the humble churches and sacred or demonic caves, the field walls and sacred stones, the winding paths, and the springs and streams, similar to the case of major pilgrimages elsewhere (Andriotis 2009; Eade 2020). This fascination with nature and humble sacred landmarks required no official sponsorship, but rural shrines were kept alive by travellers and nearby communities through the established local religious festive days and visitation (cf. Grehan 2014, pp. 89, 117). Even if the actual liturgy at the place of destination could be simply "abstract doctrines and formulas" for some, the travel to the place of veneration and the visual contact with numerous other cult locations along the way constitute expressive worship and an unmediated communication with sacred landscapes and God (Aspray 2021).

6. Conclusions

Summing up the main points that this article has raised, I should first underline that this comprises a preliminary attempt to understand the distribution of a large number of extra-mural and outlying churches on the Cycladic island of Paros in the framework of

religious space and maritime identities. A number of historical conjectures contributed immensely to the creation of sacred landscapes on this and other Aegean islands through the construction of private town and rural churches, the demarcation of individual/family or community/parochial identities, the establishment of stopping-sites in 'pilgrimage' kinetic rituals and the consolidation of the ownership of the landscape. Within the framework of the general tendency to shift our focus from the imperial or global to the local, the post-medieval history and material culture of the Cyclades in general and Paros in particular highlight the remarkable resilience of island communities and the Church through their ability to network and adapt to political change, socio-economic crisis and religious needs.

The historical circumstances in the Aegean, with island communities being largely self-governing, distant from the imperial capital, safe from direct Ottoman presence, but at the same time, exposed to piratical and other threats in the middle of a nautical no man's land, created a diverse human geography. The local Christian islanders, some of whom engaged in long-distance trading and other activities, not only gave way to women managing their dowries and property, but also gradually brought back cash and prestigious goods, elevating their status in the community and investing in the construction of churches. Through the establishment of shrines dedicated to certain saintly figures, along with annual commemoration and visitation to these sites, both men and women were able to contribute to the sanctification of their surrounding landscapes as stages for their dramas and successes. The fear of pirates and corsairs, pandemics and infertility, gave rise to the cult of saints, attributing these saints not only with healing and protective powers, but also with the capacity for harm and vengeance against the wicked and impious. This form of 'agrarian' or 'maritime' religion was enriched with superstitions and traditions that echoed the social and sexual transformation of women through female demonic figures (e.g., harpies and witches) associated with the female nature. The cult of certain female saints was intended to overcome misfortunes associated with maternity and chthonic powers. Overall, the construction and distribution of churches on the island of Paros (and perhaps other islands in the Aegean during the same period), and the ideology associated with them, give the Church a genuine resilience, deconstructing the polarised model of institutional versus domestic religious practice.

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Saints, Sacred Trees, and Snakes: Popular Religion, Hierotopy, Byzantine Culture, and Insularity in Cyprus during the Long Middle Ages

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Abstract: The holiness of sacred spaces is expressed through the creative synthesis and performance of different symbolic or iconic elements. This article concentrates on the medieval church of Ayios Iakovos in Nicosia, Cyprus. Dedicated to Saint James the Persian, the church became, by the 1600s, a shared shrine for Christians of different denominations (Orthodox, Maronites, and Latins) and Muslims. The aim of this article is to investigate in an interdisciplinary way the formation, adaptation, and negotiation of insular religious identities in relation to Ayios Iakovos' hierotopy, official and popular religious practices, and the appropriation of Byzantine culture. The components in the creation of this sacred space reflect long-term contact between Cyprus and Greater Syria, constructing an inclusive religious environment with its own insular characteristics. It will be argued that these characteristics were shaped by global, regional, and local developments, including trade, pilgrimage, war, and environmental changes. Being in dialogue with recent scholarship on mixed sacred sites, this case study stresses the importance of interconnectivity and mobility in the creation of shared places of worship. It also shows that phenomena of religious co-existence and syncretism do not always result in homogenisation but maintain distinct group identities.

Keywords: multi-confessionalism; popular religion; sacred trees; snakes; insularity; connectivity; hierotopy

1. Introduction

In the early 1900s, people told a curious story about the great cypress growing near the small church of Ayios Iakovos at Nicosia (see Figure 1). Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter, who journeyed around Cyprus between 1894 and 1912, was informed by the area's Orthodox inhabitants that the cypress "is regarded as the most ancient [tree] of the island". She was also amazed to learn that the tree "is guarded by a big snake that hides during the day and appears only at night". Although she attempted to see the serpent with her own eyes, she was unsuccessful. Men, women, and children from the neighbourhood reassured her that the story was true, and that the snake had been guarding the tree for years. "Does this not remind", wondered Ohnefalsch-Richter, "of the Biblical snake of the Tree of Knowledge in Paradise?" (Ohnefalsch-Richter [1913] 2006, p. 231).

2. Aim and Structure

Focusing on Ayios Iakovos as a remarkable case study of official and popular religion that encompasses ritual healing, this article approaches the multi-faith society of Cyprus in the "long Middle Ages", and especially in the seventeenth century, by adopting an interdisciplinary perspective informed by the historical and cultural examination of archaeological testimonies, literary sources, and ethnographic accounts. This article aims to reconstruct the processes of insular identity formation, negotiation, and adaptation behind the long-term role of Ayios Iakovos as a sacred space. It will be argued that various local, regional, and global developments shaped the site's unique physiognomy. Although the driving forces behind Ayios Iakovos' hierotopic creation are often obscure, the religious

and cultural connectivities between Cyprus and Byzantium are instrumental in helping us unlock the complexities posed by the shrine.

The article begins with an archaeological description of Ayios Iakovos and a survey of related historical sources from Byzantine (ca. 300–1191) to Ottoman times (1570/1–1878), stressing its diachronic value as a religious centre for Cypriot Christians (Orthodox, Maronites, and Latins) and Muslims. This is followed by a discussion of official and popular religious practices (including ritual healing). The article closes by defining insularity through local, regional, and global processes associated with Ayios Iakovos, and showing the relevance of this case study for the examination of shared places of worship.
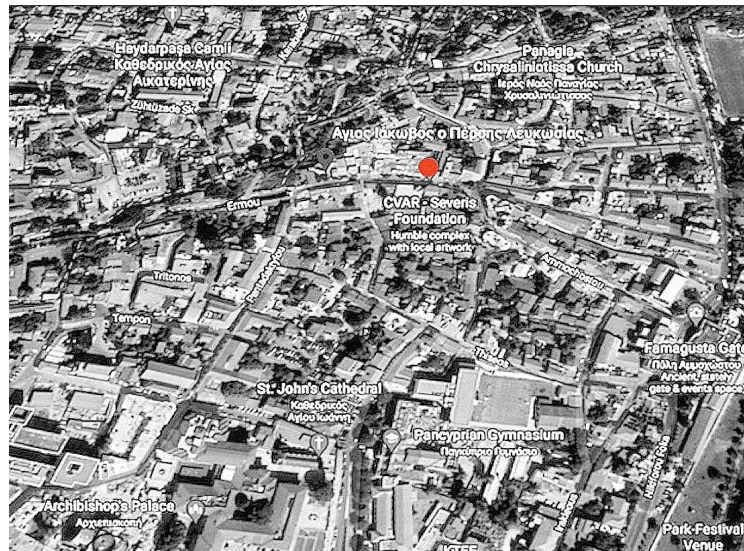
Figure 1. The location of Ayios Iakovos in modern-day Nicosia. 2021.

3. Methodological Concepts

3.1. Religious Groups

Before moving on to the description and history of Ayios Iakovos, it is first important to define some key methodological concepts. The capitalised term "Orthodox" (which, at the time, was not restricted to any group) is used to describe Byzantine-rite Christians, who were mainly Greek-speaking and generally described themselves as *Rhomaioi* ("Romans") but were called by the Latins *Greci* (*Graikoi*) (Kaldellis 2019b). The Byzantine rite "is the liturgical system that developed in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and was gradually adopted, in the Middle Ages, by the other Chalcedonian Orthodox Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem" (Taft 1992, p. 16). Although this should not be interpreted as implying complete ritual uniformity, it does suggest the existence of bonds of unity across the Byzantine world. "Byzantines" refers to subjects of the Byzantine Empire, while "Latins" refers to Latin-rite Christians in general. The choice to use "Byzantines" and "Byzantium", when referring to the medieval Roman Empire and its people, stresses the gradual dominance of Constantinople (*Byzantion*) "as the archetypal *patria communis* of the *Rhomaioi*", despite the existence of other identities, including local ones (Stouraitis 2017, p. 78; Chrysos 2016–2017; Eshel 2018, p. 202; Theodoropoulos 2021). In post-1300 Cyprus, we can trace the local identity of *Kypriotis*, shared by both *Rhomaioi* and Latin Cypriots (Grivaud 1995; Nicolaou-Konnari 2000–2001). However, the dominant identity among the island's Orthodox after the thirteenth century seems to have been the *Rhomaic* one (Perdikis 2004, p. 58; Kaplanis 2014; Kaplanis 2015), linking their self-perception to the religious and cultural legacies of Byzantium.

The Maronites were an Arabic-speaking, Syriac Chalcedonian community, with strong Lebanese ties. Like Orthodox and Latin Christians, they were following the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon (451). An extensive discussion of the council and its aftermath is beyond the scope of this paper; in a nutshell, Chalcedon proclaimed Christ having two natures, being fully God and fully human (Borg 2004; Naaman 2011). In the seventh century, it appears that the Maronites adopted the Byzantine imperial formula of the one will of Christ (Monothelitism), promoted so as to reconcile Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christians. Monothelitism and its predecessor Monenergism (one activity in Christ) were initially accepted as doctrinally correct by most Churches but were gradually rejected as heretical by the majority of Christians in East and West (Salibi 1959, pp. 16, 44–46, 99–100, 137–39, 154; Hovorun 2003, pp. 335–49).

We come now to the identity of Cypriot Muslims in Ottoman times. From the fifteenth century onwards, there was "a growing concern within the Muslim communities in the 'lands of Rum' with defining and enforcing the boundaries of correct belief and practice", a process described as "confessionalisation" and "Sunnitisation" of the Ottoman Empire (Krstić 2021, pp. 7–8). Cyprus was one of those places where elements of Sufism (Bektahism and Alevism) seem to have found fertile soil (Jennings 1993, p. 160; Hatay 2015; Harmansah 2021). In the words of Mete Hatay, Bektashism expanded Islamic influence "by maintaining most of the pre-Islamic faith motifs and continuing many of the Christian-based traditions. The Bektashi faith was predominantly popular in the newly Islamicising societies" (Hatay 2015, p. 52).

3.2. "Long Middle Ages"

The *longue durée* exploration of Ayios Iakovos as a sacred place adopts Jacque Le Goff's perception of a "long Middle Ages", stretching from Late Antiquity (ca. 200–600) to the mid-1700s (Le Goff 2015). This study concentrates on the broader period between the tenth and seventeenth centuries, namely from the consolidation of Byzantine administrative and military presence in Cyprus (965) to the first century of Ottoman domination on the island (ca. 1570–ca. 1670). Since nearly all sources on Ayios Iakovos as a multi-faith site date from the 1600s, the seventeenth century will be our main point of discussion. Thus, from a chronological perspective, particular emphasis will be laid on what is usually defined in western European history as the "early modern period". This period is distinguished from the Middle Ages proper in that it is characterised by significant developments, including the New World discoveries, the invention of printing, the Renaissance, and confessionalisation. The impact of these developments is not to be underestimated; yet, it is important to transcend the rather artificial division between the (late) Middle Ages and (early) Modernity, so as to understand more comprehensively and with greater precision the continuities and discontinuities involved in Ayios Iakovos' hierotopy. Moreover, applying the term "medieval" for Byzantine and post-Byzantine religious culture enables scholars to move beyond the illusory view of Byzantium as "not being medieval" (Kaldellis 2019a, pp. 75–92), placing its rich and multi-faceted legacy within a broader medieval world in East and West (Patlagean 2014).

3.3. Hierotopy

Alexei Lidov defines "hierotopy" as "a type of creativity deeply rooted in human nature": humans create, spontaneously and/or deliberately, "a concrete milieu of [their] connection with the transcendental world" (Lidov 2009, p. 34). The recreation of biblical *topoi* in medieval East and West is an eloquent example of this creative mechanism of reproducing the sacred (Lidov 2009, p. 38). The natural world is also part of the hierotopic process. "Like a holy icon", writes Veronica Della Dora, "the earth and its variety of *topoi*" are to be understood as being "symbolic in the ancient, strong sense of the word, since 'symbol', *sym-bolon*, denotes coming together of two halves, the visible and the invisible" (Della Dora 2016, p. 8). As suggested by Ohnefalsch-Richter's account of the legendary cypress tree and its guardian snake near Ayios Iakovos, spatial experiences

of the sacred often embrace practices and beliefs beyond those officially sanctioned by religious communities and their elites. In medieval Cyprus, as elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, aspects of pre-Christian religious culture were more or less "sanitised" and integrated into the Christian universe. The relationship between the subaltern traditions of the ancient pre-Christian world and the hegemonic tradition(s) of Christianity was largely characterised by constant negotiation, adjustment, and compromise (Kyriacou 2020b, pp. 117–56). Therefore, the distinction between official and popular religion, as well as between religion and magic, is not always clear. We will argue that it is exactly this blurring of pure categories and possibly the superimposing of different layers of hierotopic meaning that transformed Ayios Iakovos into a hospitable sacred space, allowing for the accommodation, but not homogenisation, of believers from different traditions.

3.4. Ayios Iakovos and Shared Sacred Sites

Shared sacred centres are a global phenomenon (Albera and Eade 2017). Maria Couroucli argues that "this kind of syncretic practice is more common in the Mediterranean world than elsewhere, in the home of all three major religions that have shaped the Western world", which could be partly explained by the fact that this is "one of the regions in which the humble and the illiterate have learned to accommodate themselves to more than one lord during a lifetime" (Couroucli 2014, p. 286). Dionigi Albera observes that "while mixed worship is still very much part of the religious landscape of the eastern Mediterranean, it is also by definition a relatively unstructured phenomenon". Albera suggests exploring mixed worship in its diverse contexts, which will help scholars "to arrive at a better understanding of these phenomena . . . and to pay great attention to the specific features of each of them" (Albera 2012, p. 223).

Focusing on Ayios Iakovos as a case study of mixed worship in the eastern Mediterranean addresses these considerations. This article brings forth the endemic elements of Cypriot multi-faith society and contributes, through a discussion of the site's hierotopy, to reconstructing a unique "sacred landscape of imagination". The term has been employed by Ute Luig to describe the different ways sacred landscapes are perceived and interpreted in relation to ritual performance, power, and identity (Luig 2018, p. 12). Looking at Ayios Iakovos through the prism of insularity enables us to evaluate the dynamics of human mobility and interconnectivity (both physical, as well as religious and cultural) in the creation of a mixed centre of worship, echoing recent research on shared sacred spaces of the Mediterranean (Bowman 2012; Albera and Couroucli 2012; Barkan and Barkey 2014; Couroucli 2014, pp. 379–82). Moreover, Ayios Iakovos shows that shared sacred sites existed in earlier times and should not be considered as recent phenomena (cf. Turner and Turner 1978, pp. 36, 39).

Scholars have approached shared sacred sites as "hybrid" *topoi* (Albera 2012, pp. 228–32; Eade and Albera 2017, pp. 12–14). Although "there is no single, or correct, concept of hybridity", this article avoids using "hybridity" altogether, because of the term's colonial and pseudo-biological associations (Young 1995, p. 25). As noted by Couroucli, "sharing holy places does not imply the blurring of religious or cultural boundaries; it is part of the experience of living side-by-side in multicultural societies. Cosmopolitan societies . . . are not melting pots, but places where identified social groups live in contiguity" (Couroucli 2014, p. 385). Writing about the Muslim communities of Latin Christendom, Brian A. Catlos argued that interest (self-interest and mutual interest) and convenience had been unifying factors in medieval mixed societies. Perhaps the concept of *conveniencia*, rather than *convivencia* (Catlos 2014, p. 524), should be applied in our case study as well. Interest and convenience are relevant to the centrality of Ayios Iakovos, a factor to be discussed later on that seems to have contributed to its spiritual magnetism. According to Robert M. Hayden, centrality in urban religioscapes indicates dominance (Hayden 2013, p. 327), which characterises the "competitive sharing" or "antagonistic tolerance" visible in mixed holy places (Hayden et al. 2016). This complex reality is mirrored in Ayios Iakovos, especially during the seventeenth century, when the church was shared by different groups

of Christians and Muslims. As our case study will show, the co-existence of these groups in the same sacred space did not erase the boundaries separating them, which confirms Couroucli's statement that "sharing does not imply intimacy" (Couroucli 2014, p. 385).

4. Ayios Iakovos: Archaeology and History

4.1. Architecture

Today, Ayios Iakovos lies in the United Nations Buffer Zone, a victim of abandonment caused by the political peripeties of modern Cyprus. The church was heavily damaged by rainfall in February 2019; despite efforts for its restoration, it has remained in a ruinous state ever since (Domingo 2019). This is largely due to the fact that the Turkish military forces have placed the Buffer Zone area around Ayios Iakovos under their control (Crețu 2015), as well as due to the global pandemic emergency. As a result of the present political conditions in Cyprus, the architectural examination of Ayios Iakovos has been based exclusively on publications before 1974, especially Athena Tarsouli's drawing of the building in 1952 (Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou 2012, p. 292). Jacques Lacarrière's photograph from his 2003 publication on the Buffer Zone is also particularly useful (Lacarrière 2013, pp. 34–35).

From Tarsouli's drawing and Lacarrière's image, it seems that the church, dedicated to Saint James the Persian, had an aisleless nave, a semi-circular apse, and a cylindrical dome with narrow windows. Ayios Iakovos was restored by the powerful dragoman Hadjigeorgakis Kornersios (1779/80–1809) in 1793 (Lacarrière 2013, pp. 34–35; Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou 2012, pp. 291–92). In 1873, Archduke Louis Salvator of Austria described Ayios Iakovos as "a small building with four barrel vaults; upon these stands a square wall, carrying the cupola with eight little windows. The interior shows four pointed arches; the one on the back is lengthened out. The Ikonostasis [icon screen], carved of wood, bears the Russian eagle. The apse is a niche with pointed arches" (Salvator 1881, p. 33). The existence of Gothic pointed arches may point towards the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries (Papageorghiou 2010, p. 463). If this is indeed the case, we may wonder whether an earlier Byzantine church (if there had been one) was renovated around the mid-fourteenth century, employing masons familiar with the Byzantine and Gothic building traditions, as happened, for example, in the Orthodox cathedral of the Hodegetria at Nicosia (Papacostas 2005; Kyriacou 2018, pp. 88–90, 95–96, 116n54, 172n90; Patapiou 2019; Kaffenberger 2020). An icon of Saint James the Persian (66 × 29 cm), probably transferred from Ayios Iakovos to Ayios Kassianos and now housed in the Byzantine Museum of Nicosia (see Figure 2), depicts the saint in military dress; the icon has been dated to the tenth century (Sophocleous 2014, pp. 145–47), but seems to belong to the thirteenth century (Eliades 2017, p. 95, Figure 50).

4.2. Byzantine Syrian Parallels

The existence of an Orthodox monastery dedicated to Saint James the Persian in Syria (Deir Mar Yaᶜqub near Qara), whose eleventh-century decoration echoes Byzantine models and presents similarities to contemporary murals from Ayios Nikolaos tis Stegis at Kakopetria, Cyprus, could indicate direct or indirect contacts between Cyprus and Syria. This communication took place as part of a broader process of institutional, cultural and ecclesiastical Byzantinisation in the Levant from the mid-tenth to the twelfth centuries, namely during the re-establishment of Byzantine rule in Cyprus and Syria, and could support the hypothesis of the Byzantine founding of Ayios Iakovos at Nicosia (Snelders and Immerzeel 2012–2013, pp. 80–81; Galadza 2018).

A useful parallel would be that of Ayios Kassianos (Saint Cassian), near Ayios Iakovos. We know that, under Emperor Basil II (976–1025), Byzantine Antioch witnessed the re-building of the earlier church of al-Qusiyān, dedicated to Saint Cassian, which became the city's cathedral (Eger 2013, pp. 102–3). Ayios Kassianos in Nicosia is an eighteenth-century church with later additions and Gothic elements; its dedication suggests that the initial building may be dating back to Byzantine times (Coureas et al. 2012, p. 179; Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou 2012, pp. 284, 292; cf. Papageorghiou 1976, pp. 98–99). Our hypothesis

seems to be supported by the fact that one of the island's Byzantine *doukai* based in Nicosia was Alexios Kassianos (1152–ca. 1174) (Papacostas 2012, p. 104). Future historical and archaeological research on Ayios Kassianos may reveal whether Alexios Kassianos should be considered as the founder or patron of the church. Other examples of Cypriot devotion to saints venerated in Byzantine Syria, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, are those of Saint Symeon Stylites the Younger and Saint Phokas (Christodoulou 2010, p. 100; Caseau and Messis 2021).

Being the administrative centre of one of the most important Byzantine military bases in the eastern Mediterranean (Lounghis 2010, p. 30; Kyriacou 2020b, pp. 2–9), Nicosia reproduced the sacred topographies of Constantinople (Ayia Sophia and Ayios Georgios ton Manganon) (Papacostas 2005; Pilides 2012) and Antioch (e.g., Ayios Iakovos and Ayios Kassianos). Despite the lack of concrete archaeological evidence dating to the middle Byzantine period, the dedication of two nearby churches in Nicosia to saints venerated in Byzantine Syria is indicative of the strengthening of Byzantine presence in the Levant before and during the first Crusades, and its lasting impact on Cypriot religious culture.

4.3. Historical Sources on Ayios Iakovos

The history of Ayios Iakovos is interwoven with the multi-faith society of Cyprus in the "long Middle Ages". By the mid-fifteenth century, what had probably began as a Byzantine-rite church passed under the Maronites and was known as *Santo Jacobo di Maroniti* (Richard 1981, pp. 90, 119). Parenthetically, the sources mention another church dedicated to Saint James (perhaps not the Persian) in Nicosia, which was probably situated on the site of a later Ottoman mosque, the Sarayönü Camii. This church was Latin and should not be confused with Ayios Iakovos (Lusignan 1580, ff. 89r, 90v; Richard and Papadopoullos 1983, pp. 111, 192–93; Coureas et al. 2012, p. 276). Under the Maronites, Ayios Iakovos became the seat of the local Maronite bishop (Patapiou 2010). An anonymous Venetian report on the Christian communities of Cyprus, composed in the 1560s and preserved in codex Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030, states that the Maronites of Nicosia possessed a certain monastery by the name of *San Fosi*, the income of which was used to support their bishop (Kyriacou 2019, pp. 74, 104, 150; Kyriacou 2020a, p. 72). Perhaps *San Fosi* is a scribal error made during the transcription of *San Persi*, "Saint Persian"; if so, *San Fosi* would be referring to Saint James the Persian (see Figure 2). The saint's Syriac/Arabic name, "Yaᶜqub", a remnant of the Maronite occupation of Ayios Iakovos, passed into Cypriot Greek, ultimately becoming "Akoufos" and associated, as a result of false etymology, with the miraculous healing of deafness by Saint James (Loukatos 1962).

In 1596, more than twenty years after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus (1570–71), Girolamo Dandini, an Italian Jesuit on his way to the Maronite communities of Lebanon, visited Nicosia. The Maronites of Cyprus had been recognising papal authority since Frankish times (Schabel 2001, pp. 248–49); in 1445, their bishop, Elias of Byblos, made a pro-Latin confession of faith and his representative, Isaac of Minya, travelled to Rome, receiving the right to bless marriages between Latins and Maronites (Kyriacou 2018, p. 154). In the 1560s, the anonymous Latin author of codex B-030 accused Cypriot Maronites of being non-Chalcedonians (adhering to the belief that Christ has a single nature, the divine) and Monenergists (Christ has a single activity). The island's Maronite community was also said to be divided between those following the Maronite bishop in Nicosia and the followers of the Maronite patriarch in Lebanon (Kyriacou 2019, pp. 61–62, 74, 91–92, 104, 124, 150; Kyriacou 2020a, p. 72). This division was the result of a clash between the pro-Latin Cypriot Maronites and Patriarch Mikhail al-Ruzzi (1567), whom the former accused of departing from the Chalcedonian doctrine and pursuing a pro-Jacobite (non-Chalcedonian) theological line. Papal intervention eventually led to the pro-Roman declaration of Qanubin in 1580, affirming the Chalcedonian line; moreover, a Maronite college was established in Rome for receiving Maronite students. Thus, Dandini's mission to the East in 1596 aimed at ensuring that the Maronites remained truly united with the papacy in matters of faith (Harris 2012, p. 94; Kyriacou 2019, p. 149). According to Dandini, the Maronite church of

Nicosia, most probably a reference to Ayios Iakovos, was in a poor state and in need of all kinds of liturgical equipment (Dandini [1675] 1685, p. 30).
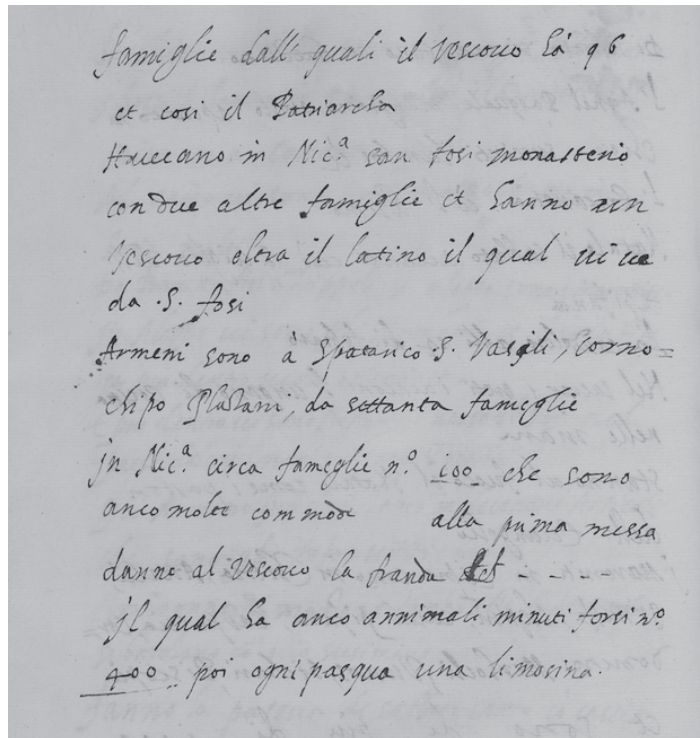
Figure 2. Codex Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030, f. 37ᵛ, mentioning (in line 3) the Maronite monastery of *San Fosi*, which may be referring to Ayios Iakovos.

Almost a century after Dandini's visit, Michel Febvre (alias Justinien de Neuvy), a Capuchin established in Aleppo in the 1670s, provided additional information on the fate of Ayios Iakovos after the Ottoman conquest (Heyberger 2012, pp. 496–97). Ayios Iakovos, we read in Febvre, had been desecrated and used by a Janissary as a stable, until Saint James appeared in his dream, demanding that he restored the church. The Janissary ignored the warning, but the dreams continued and his camels died suddenly. The Janissary immediately abandoned the building, which was eventually bought by French Capuchin friars. Ayios Iakovos was restored and even the local Muslims visited the shrine, anointing their sick with sacred oil from Saint James' lamp. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Frederick Hasluck noted that a similar story was told about the church of Saint James the Persian at Nisibis, which had been converted into a granary by the Muslims. Again, the saint appeared in the owner's dream, forcing him to abandon the church, which was eventually occupied by the Jacobites (non-Chalcedonian Syrians) (Febvre 1682, pp. 7–9; Hasluck 1929, pp. 42–43; Kitromilides 2009, pp. 105–6). At first sight, Febvre's account presents a rather different version of Ayios Iakovos' afterlife than the one suggested by Dandini, but the two versions need not be mutually exclusive: the Maronites might have continued to be using Ayios Iakovos as their church in 1596, when Dandini visited Nicosia; at some point later, the church was taken over by a Janissary and was desecrated, but was recovered by the Capuchins, as related by Febvre.

Archival sources on the activity of Roman Catholic missionaries in the Levant provide additional information on the fate of Ayios Iakovos in the seventeenth century. The journey

of three Capuchin friars—Pacifique de Provins, Pacifique de Paris, and Augustine de Pontoise—in Aleppo, Alexandretta, and Cyprus, resulted in the founding of two missionary bases on the island, in the port city of Larnaka and Nicosia (1627–1628). Upon their arrival in Cyprus, Pacifique de Provins is mentioned to have bought Ayios Iakovos, which had been turned into a stable by a Janissary (Seggiano 1962, pp. 110–11; Tsirpanlis 2006, pp. 270–71).

In 1629, Pietro Vespa, a Venetian Carmelite friar, was appointed Latin bishop of Paphos. This marked the institutional re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in Cyprus after the Ottoman conquest and the elimination of Latin ecclesiastical hierarchy (Tsirpanlis 2006, pp. 269–73). In a letter to the Propaganda Fide in 1638, Vespa claimed to have himself bought the church, wishing to make it his cathedral, but this was not accepted by everyone in the Latin community of Cyprus. Vespa stated in his letter that the Observant Franciscans wished to become the only Catholic missionaries in the Levant, for which reason they wanted their own church (*Santa Croce*), situated near the Paphos Gate, to function as a cathedral. Vespa insisted, arguing that Ayios Iakovos (*San Giacomo*) was a better option, since it was situated in the Latin quarter (*doue stano li Latini*), at the centre of Nicosia (*nel mezzo della città*) (Tsirpanlis 1973, p. 67).

Throughout the seventeenth century, Ayios Iakovos was run by the Capuchins. In 1637, the friars seem to have founded a seminary for Maronite children (Seggiano 1962, p. 111; Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 60, 211). In 1647, there was only one priest serving there (Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 116, 118); in 1661, a missionary report pointed out that the building was old and in poor condition, but the Holy Eucharist continued to be administered, the church was decorated and had a street light (*lampada publica*) (Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 166–67). In 1662, Giuseppe Maria de Bourges sent a report to the Propaganda Fide in Rome, containing a more detailed account of Ayios Iakovos' role as a religious centre. According to Bourges, the French Capuchins were celebrating Mass without any restrictions. Among their flock, there were also *Greci*, both men and women, who frequented the two Latin churches of Nicosia daily and with great devotion. In Ayios Iakovos, there was an old mural painting of Saint James the Persian, venerated by *Greci* and Turks of both sexes, who brought children suffering with hearing problems to be healed. Entering the church, related Bourges, one took a piece of cotton and soaked it into the holy oil of the lamp hanging in front of the altar. People anointed the ears of their sick, crossing themselves and saying a prayer to Saint James. As a result of the great number of miraculous healings, the Turks wished to pay the Capuchins, but the friars refused the money, saying that they lived on alms. The Turks, then, brought candles and oil to the church and, sometimes, bread for the friars. Bourges closed his account on Ayios Iakovos by remarking that the same devotion to Christian saints could be observed in other areas of Turkey, where the sick of the Muslims were miraculously healed by the grace of God (Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 178–79; cf. Foulias 2020, p. 92).

It seems that we possess no substantial information concerning the church until 1793 (cf. Archimandrite [1788] 1902, p. 587), when Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios bought and restored Ayios Iakovos. The church once again passed to the Orthodox community (Rizopoulou-Egoumenidou 2012, p. 292). Sometime around 1858, Kallistratos, a Constantinopolitan hieromonk, came to Nicosia and was established in Ayios Iakovos. Kallistratos, once a monk at Mount Athos, and his disciples were instrumental in the revival of Orthodox monasticism in Cyprus (Kokkinoftas 2018, pp. 197–200).

Sadly, the political antagonisms and national conflicts of the second half of the twentieth century put an end to the diachronic role exercised by Ayios Iakovos as a religious magnet for the Orthodox, Maronites, Latins, and even Muslims of Cyprus. Abandonment and the wrath of nature have almost totally destroyed the church; like the old cypress and its guardian snake mentioned by Ohnefalsch-Richter, Ayios Iakovos is becoming more and more a faded memory, an almost-forgotten relic lost in the mist of times irrevocably passed.

5. Zooming in: Popular Religion and Hierotopy

5.1. Iconic Elements

Having surveyed the architecture and history of Ayios Iakovos, it is now the moment to focus on the church as *hieros topos*, a sacred space consisting of different iconic elements. A spatial icon "is a category of icons which are not painted on wooden boards but are composed in one way or another out of spatial elements. It remains an icon in more or less customary sense—it is just implemented with unusual tools and materials" (Simsky 2020, p. 21). This concept is particularly useful for the study of Byzantine hierotopy: icons are merged with liturgy "in a unifying spatial space", each component functioning "as a point of contact between two worlds: Heaven and Earth". As noted by Andrew Simsky, this broader conceptual category of "icons" (including liturgical ritual, ecclesiastical architecture, art and music, and light dramaturgy) "are not merely the principal sense-making elements of the sacred space, but rather the epitome of the general principle of iconicity that endows the entirety of the sacred space" (Simsky 2020, p. 16).

In the case of Ayios Iakovos, there are three main iconic elements deserving our attention: (a) Saint James the Persian; (b) the ancient tree; and (c) the guardian snake.

5.2. Saint James the Persian

We have seen that Saint James the Persian has been venerated diachronically by Orthodox, Maronite, and Latin Christians, as well as by Muslims. The inclusive nature of this devotion is embodied by the church itself, especially the mural painting and holy oil from the saint's lamp mentioned by Febvre and Bourges. Pilgrimage to Ayios Iakovos, closely associated with the healing ritual, was a synesthetic experience "both creating and engaging a narrative linking the body—individual and social group" with sacred space (Ashmore 2004, p. 261; cf. Vionis and Papantoniou 2019, p. 11). The crucial blending of senses must have been achieved through bodily movement in space: from the street into the church, perhaps through a courtyard, before the holy altar and the mural painting of Saint James. As noted by scholars, the physical experience of moving in space "has important implications for the maintenance of power relations", since, by controlling bodily movement, "it is possible to reproduce dominant perspectives on the world", shaping memory through spatiality and ritual performance (Vionis and Papantoniou 2019, p. 11). The architectural physiognomy of Ayios Iakovos combined Byzantine and Gothic elements; its decoration might have been enriched with both Maronite and Latin influences, creating a multi-layered *holon* that invited believers from different religious traditions to venerate the saint. This amalgamation of different religious and cultural identities produced, in the long term, shared religious practices, especially among "the simple". These were non-elite believers, belonging to different Christian communities but united in their shared devotion to Saint James; they were probably "mostly illiterate, and likely had little understanding of the theological complexities that split apart" the island's Christians (Tannous 2018, p. 3; cf. Grehan 2014, pp. 190–91). Acknowledging the reality of shared devotions (Olympios 2013) does not imply the disappearance of communal boundary building; indeed, rituals became visible and concrete identity markers that intentionally cultivated emotional responses and boundary maintenance on the believers' part (Kyriacou 2020a, pp. 23–25, 31, 36–38). However, Ayios Iakovos was the shrine of a saint belonging to the ancient, idealised past of the undivided Christian Church; for this reason, he could have been conveniently claimed by all Christians, even by some Muslims, in unofficial (or, at least, less officially sanctioned) ways that did not openly challenge official religion.

Saint James lived in Sasanid Persia around the early fifth century. A Christian apostate of Syriac origin, he pursued a high-ranking career in the Zoroastrian court of Yazbegerd I (399–420), but later returned to Christianity and received the crown of martyrdom under Bahram V (420–38) in 420–21 (Petra 2014, p. 131). Given the perennial enmity between Romans and Persians, the persecutions of Christians in Persia, and the role of Constantine I (306–37) as their alleged protector, we can understand why memories of Christian Persian martyrdom left their imprint on Byzantine ecclesiastical history and hagiography

(Smith 2016). There are at least four recensions of the Byzantine Greek *Passion of Saint James*, translated from Syriac, highlighting the popularity of the saint in Byzantine times (Detoraki 2014, p. 74). What is emphasised in these recensions is the ritual mutilation of the saint by his persecutors, leading to a slow and horrible death (Devos 1953; Devos 1954). The *Passion of Saint James* was also popular in the West, reaching Latin, French, and English audiences of believers (Carruthers 2011). The saint's relics were transferred from Bet Lapat, the place of his martyrdom, to a Georgian monastery; during the persecutions following the Council of Chalcedon in 451, they were taken to Egypt by the non-Chalcedonian monk and theologian Peter the Iberian (d. 491). The saint's head was preserved in Nicomedia, until it was transferred by the monk Guillermus to the Cormery Abbey in France during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118); in ca. 1440, it was transferred once again, this time to Rome. In 1204, Bishop Nivelon de Chérisy found another head relic in Constantinople, which he believed to have belonged to the Persian saint. The bishop transferred the relic to Soissons; however, the Byzantines, under the Palaiologoi (1261–1453), continued to preserve a head relic of Saint James in the Pantokrator monastery at Constantinople. Moreover, the monastery of Saint John the Theologian at Patmos preserved a relic of Saint James the Persian in the early thirteenth century (Petra 2014, p. 136; Papacostas et al. 2007, p. 44). In Cyprus, a church dedicated to the saint, apart from the one in Nicosia, was founded some time before 1622 in the village of Choirokoitia (Hassiotis 2000, pp. 192–94). A village by the name of Ayios Iakovos, with a fifteenth-century (?) church, also exists in Trikomo, Karpasia (Smagas and Papagiannis 2017, pp. 258, 265; Chotzakoglou 2017, p. 292; Marangou 2019, pp. 128–35, 329). Although in the twentieth century the church was dedicated to Saint James, brother of the Lord, it might have been originally dedicated to Saint James the Persian; this hypothesis is strengthened by the existence of Gothic arches in both the Karpasia and Nicosia churches. During the consecration of the monastic church of Saint John Chrysostom at Koutzoubendes (1090), the monks deposited under the altar the relics of Saint Prokopios, Saint James the Persian, and Saint Marina (Papacostas et al. 2007, pp. 32, 44; Christodoulou 2009, pp. 47–48).

The latent connection between Saint James the Persian and his sacred cypress, seen by Ohnefalsch-Richter in the early twentieth century, points towards a Byzantine Orthodox liturgical and hagiographical reading (with a Syriac flavour) of Ayios Iakovos' hierotopic landscape. An eleventh-century *kontakion* (liturgical hymn) on Saint James describes his martyrdom, with the refrain metaphorically depicting the saint's mutilation as the pruning of a vineyard. The vegetal association of Saint James' death is stressed throughout the *kontakion*: the martyr's body parts fall on the ground like soft tree branches; Saint James is also praised as a beautiful and fruitful tree, whose fragrance is that of Paradise (Petra 2014, pp. 137–40). The same vegetal connection is to be found in the Syriac and Byzantine Greek versions of the *Passion*, with the Syriac text and Byzantine Greek recension α (tenth/eleventh century) even presenting the saint as a wounded, yet fragrant, cypress (Devos 1953, pp. 164–65, 177, 184–85, 187, 189, 191, 200–1, 208; Devos 1954, pp. 236–37, 244, 246, 255–56; Franco 2009, pp. 99–100, 107). Keeping in mind that Saint James' Persian community of Christians was, in fact, a branch of Syriac Christianity, "whose centre of gravity lay outside the Roman Empire and in the Persian (Sasanid) Empire to the east" (Brock 1987, p. xiii), we should interpret the tree imagery surrounding the martyr within a Syriac theological context, elements of which passed into the Byzantine tradition. For Saint Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373), "Christ himself is the fruit of [the] Tree of Life, who gives himself to be 'plucked daily' (i.e., in Communion) by the baptized: it is this fruit which confers divine life, providing humanity with the possibility, once again, of attaining that perfect state which had been intended for Adam and Eve" (Brock 1987). The Syriac tree typology sheds light on the tree imagery in the Byzantine liturgical and hagiographical texts on Saint James the Persian, explaining the existence of an ancient cypress near Ayios Iakovos.

5.3. Sacred Trees

Dendrolatry was practised in Cyprus, as elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, from prehistory (Lightbody 2011; Flourentzos 2001; Goodison 2016; Tully 2018). One of the best-known examples of tree worship in ancient Cyprus was that of "Woodland Apollo", Apollo Hylates, worshipped at Kourion and Paphos, among other areas (Scranton 1967; Soren 1987; Mlynarczyk 1980; Papantoniou 2012, pp. 89, 97, 112, 137, 139, 148, 157, 226, 227, 231–32, 240–41, 343–44; Mavrojannis 2015; Hunt 2016, p. 243n39; Papantoniou 2016, pp. 78, 97). It is unclear whether the memory of this pagan cult was still visible during the Byzantine fifth century, when the apocryphal *Acts of Saint Barnabas*, set in the first century, described pagan rituals taking place near the sanctuary of Apollo (Rigsby 1996, pp. 257–60; Young 2005). Customarily, trees near Orthodox churches played an important role in healing rituals; pre-modern Cypriots used to hang clothes or rags on the branches, expecting that God or the venerated saint would miraculously intervene in support of the believer, through the "magical" transfer of the disease from humans to trees. This has been described as a form of "sympathetic magic" (Ionas 2013, pp. 27–32, 191–92, 212–17), especially in its contagious dimension: "things which have once been conjoined must remain ever afterwards, even when relation that whatever is done to the one must silently affect the other" (Frazer 1922, p. 174).

In Bilād al-Shām, Greater Syria, trees were iconic elements of sacred landscapes for centuries. In the biblical world, Asherah, the divine consort of Yahweh suppressed by the Deuteronomistic reform (seventh-sixth centuries B.C.), had sacred trees or wooden poles as her cultic objects (Dever 2005). Holy and eminent figures of the three monotheistic religions inherited the use of sacred trees, attracting believers of different traditions. Abraham's Oak at Mamre, near Hebron, was a magnet for pagans (in Late Antiquity), Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze (Lissovsky 2012, pp. 68, 70; Heyden 2020). In 1210, Rabbi Shemuel ben Shimson saw a tree over the tomb of Yonatan ben Uziel in Ammuqa, visited by Muslims, who brought oil and lit candles to honour the sage. In 1523, Rabbi Moshe Basola saw an old tree over the tomb of Rabbi Halafta, another Jewish sage, at Kefar Hanania (Lissovsky 2012, p. 75). ᶜAbd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi (1643–1731), one of the most significant Sufi scholars of the Ottoman period, sought shade and prayed with his companions under the great oak tree at Yaᶜqub al-Mansuri's shrine on Mount Lebanon. Jean de la Roque, who visited the Levant in 1689, relates that the Maronites celebrated the liturgy under the tall Lebanese cedars. When a sacred carob tree on the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem was nearly uprooted by a storm in 1690, a *mastaba* platform was constructed by local devotees in order to keep it alive (Grehan 2014, pp. 134–36).

It becomes clear that sacred trees were diachronically considered to be the meeting place between the human world and the divine, as well as symbols of life and fertility. For Harold W. Turner, "this place where other realms are meet is also indicated by various forms representing a link or connection between the human and transhuman spheres, and usually set in a vertical dimension as a ladder, poles and pillars, trees and hills" (Turner 1979, p. 24). According to Nurit Lissovsky, "the Mediterranean landscape was for many years subjected to burning, felling and grazing, which suppressed natural growth, so that the sacred tree became a landmark in the local landscape, as well as a store of seeds that could rehabilitate the vegetation of the region" (Lissovsky 2012, p. 76). In polytheistic communities, sacred trees over or near burial sites highlight the connection between dendrolatry and ancestor worship; in contrast, in monotheistic communities, sacred trees over or near burial sites do not imply ancestor worship (Dafni 2007a, p. 11). Another difference between polytheistic and monotheistic forms of tree worship/devotion is that in monotheistic communities the object of devotion is a single tree, while in polytheistic communities the object of veneration is the forest. A third difference is that monotheistic rituals and ceremonies associated with sacred trees are not part of the official religion, whereas polytheistic rituals and ceremonies play an important role in the official religion of polytheistic communities (Dafni 2007b, pp. 11–12). Amots Dafni's examination of rituals, ceremonies, and customs related to tree worship/devotion in the modern Middle East includes "family gatherings, conducting

a Sulkha ["quarrel settling"], the leaving of food, the leaving of objects to absorb divine blessings and leaving objects for charity"; the same scholar notes that "the performing of official religious ceremonies under sacred trees was never recorded in present-day Israel and is typical of the old Semitic religions" (Dafni 2007a, p. 12). Lissovsky explores the crucial question of whether sacred sites became sacred because of the trees, or whether trees became sacred because of the site, pointing out that "cult sites were often located near great trees that were seen from afar and serve as landmarks, rather than that trees were planted because of their proximity to a tomb" (Lissovsky 2012, p. 80). In the Holy Land, most sacred trees can be found in rural locations, rather than settled ones; in the latter case, they are perceived by their devotees as easily accessible sources of divine power in everyday life, bringing health, fortune, fertility, and a good crop (Lissovsky 2012, pp. 82–83).

Having surveyed the multiple aspects of arboreal worship/devotion in Cyprus and Greater Syria, we turn once again to the cypress near Ayios Iakovos. While it is impossible to know the tree's exact age, Ohnefalsch-Richter's statement concerning its oldness should not be disregarded as the product of folk imagination. The enormous Abarkuh cypress in Yazd, Iran, for example, is considered to be around 4000 years old (Farahmand and Karimi 2018). Today, more than 200 age-old trees are protected by the Department of Forests of the Republic of Cyprus; the Ayios Nikolaos at Kathikas cypress is more than 700 years old (Department of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Republic of Cyprus 2012). Another Cypriot example would be that of the old cypress (age unknown), of 25m height (called by the locals "teparissos"), to be encountered near the medieval chapel of Panayia Tochniotissa at Mandres, not far from Ayios Iakovos in Karpasia (Marangou 2019, pp. 353–59). By the 1900s, the Ayios Iakovos (in Nicosia) cypress seems to have become a landmark for the church itself, providing an easily accessible source of divine power in the daily life of its devotees, both Christians and Muslims. Given the theological symbolism of the cypress and other trees/plants in Saint James' liturgical and hagiographical dossier, we may argue that the cypress in Ayios Iakovos was a visible, tangible, and concrete manifestation of the saint itself, a truly iconic element of his real presence in Nicosia.

5.4. Snakes

We come now to the third iconic component of Ayios Iakovos' hierotopy: the snake. The dragon's defeat by the god/hero is a basic aspect of the "chaos combat" theme (*Chaoskampf*) in Mesopotamian cosmogonic myths, probably influencing the Jewish religious tradition and the Jewish Christian and Byzantine Orthodox theological imagery (Tsumura 2005; Angel 2006; Oancea 2017; Kyriacou 2020b, pp. 139–41). The so-called "Serpent Column", once a votive of the Plataean victory at Delphi, was transferred to the Hippodrome of Constantinople, where it was invested with various symbolisms and talismanic, anti-snake powers in Byzantine and Ottoman times (Stephenson 2016). Dafni notes that, among the Muslims and Druze of the Holy Land, serpents are still considered to be the guardians of sacred trees (Dafni 2007b, pp. 6, 9). In the Greek island of Kephallonia and the Italian village of Cocullo in Abruzzi, snake festivals continue to take place within a Christian context (Håland 2011).

In Antiquity, Cyprus was known as "the snake land", *Ophiusa* or *Ophiodea* (Ohnefalsch-Richter [1913] 2006, p. 226). Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (X.229) mentions the "Ophiusian plains" of Venus (*Ophiusiaque ara*), which scholars consider as one of the island's many names (Miller 1916, pp. 80–81, 477). Hellenistic statuettes depicting snakes are probably related to the cult of the serpentine Agathos Daemon, which might have included healing practices (Papantoniou 2012, pp. 176, 228–29). The Cypriot *Ophiogeneis*, a family of "snake-born" serpent charmers, attracted, because of their healing powers, Pliny the Elder's attention in the first century A.D. (Ogden 2013, pp. 209, 211–12). The ancient *Chaoskampf* theme is reproduced in Cypriot heroic folk songs from medieval Cyprus, praising the deeds of Byzantine warrior heroes slaying dragons and other monsters, while draconic toponyms are popular throughout the island (Kyriacou 2020b, pp. 47, 40–43, 48, 59, 61, 77–78, 130–31,

135–40, 158). In 1760, the Italian scholar and traveller Giovanni Mariti (1736–1806) met a family of Orthodox healers in "Tremitiou", who could heal the bites of snakes by touch (Mariti 1792, p. 23). Similarly, Magda Ohnefalsch-Richter mentions that her husband, Max Ohnefalsch-Richter (1850–1917), met in ca. 1878 an Orthodox priest in Varosia who belonged to a family of healers. The healer-priest was said to perform a special ritual, repeating magic words in Arabic and Greek that (supposedly) transformed the serpent's poison into water: "*Serasin, Serache, Soan, Aisarahia, Aduna, Isparu, Erichidara. 'To farmaki sou osan to ydor'*" ((Ohnefalsch-Richter [1913] 2006, pp. 226–27; cf. (Ionas 2013, pp. 250–51)). In Orthodox Cypriot folk culture, snakes function as phallic symbols associated with fertility, for which reason various kinds of "snake bread" are traditionally prepared for wedding ceremonies. In earlier times, snakes were thought to be the protective spirits of houses, or even the embodiment of saints, if found near chapels. People believed that the dangerous viper, also known as "koufi" (perhaps from the Arabic "kufi") (Gonzalez 1991, p. 699), had a magic stone under her tongue (Ionas 2013, pp. 21–22, 146–48). The idea that snakes are deaf goes back to Antiquity (Kitto 1840, p. 154; Sakellarios 1868, p. 349) and is repeated by Mariti, who calls the viper "deaf snake" (Mariti 1792, p. 23). Although hard to prove, we may assume that the acoustic similarity between "kufi/koufi" (in Arabic and Cypriot Greek respectively) and "Akoufos", the Cypriot Greek name for Saint James the Persian, could have created the impression that the saint was also a protector against snakes and their venomous bite.

5.5. "Snake Land"

By the late fifteenth century, the ancient image of Cyprus as "snake land" seems to have assumed greater importance. This was no mere return to classical literary *topoi*, but the moment of creation of a new tradition, centred around the monasteries of Stavrovouni ("Mount of the Cross") on Mount Olympos and Ayios Nikolaos (dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Myra) on the Akroteri Peninsula. The founding of both monasteries was dated to the fourth century, when Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine (Constantine I) and discoverer of the True Cross in Jerusalem, visited Cyprus. Leontios Makhairas, writing sometime during the first half of the fifteenth century, follows a twelfth-century Byzantine hagiographical source (Papadopoullos 1952) in describing Saint Helen's journey to Cyprus. Helen is said to have joined together pieces of wood from the True Cross and the crosses of the two thieves, creating new cross relics suitable for distribution. When the empress visited Cyprus, the island was troubled by a severe drought. One of Helen's cross relics suddenly disappeared, only to miraculously re-appear on "Mount Olympia", where the saint eventually established Stavrovouni, a monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross and preserving a cross relic. According to Makhairas, the founding of Stavrovouni brought rain and salvation to the people of Cyprus (Pieris and Nicolaou-Konnari 2003, pp. 67–69). Systematic archaeological examination on the site may confirm the tradition of the fourth-century founding of Stavrovouni, whose Byzantine origins are, nevertheless, indisputable (Menardos [1970] 2001, p. 321; Metcalf 2009, pp. 389–90). Although neither Makhairas nor his Byzantine source mention snakes, their narratives depict Cyprus as a drought-stricken and lifeless island. As noted by a recent herpetological study on the Cypriot blunt-nose viper, "water bodies are critical for sustaining both wildlife and human civilization [and] have been facilitating contact between people and reptiles for millenia" (Jestrzemski and Kuzyakova 2018, p. 2). Thus, the limitation of water resources during periods of drought could have made snakes more visible to humans, forging a connection between the legendary drought in Saint Helen's time and the "snake land" image of Cyprus. The tragic reality of water drainage gradually became embedded to the very representation of Cyprus as an island, inevitably transforming local perceptions and practices of hierotopy.

In 1453, Peter Rot, a pilgrim from Basel, passed from the Akroteri Peninsula, mentioning that the Orthodox monks of Ayios Nikolaos kept many cats, which they employed to exterminate the snakes inhabiting the area. The number of cats appears to have increased in the following decades, reaching 600 by 1470, when the last Lusignan king of Cyprus,

James II (1463–73), supported the care of the monastery's cats with an annual income and veterinary services (Nicolaou-Konnari and Schabel 2015, pp. 318–19).

Snakes continued to command the interest of Cypriot and non-Cypriot Christians well after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus. In 1580, Estienne de Lusignan, a native of Cyprus, noted that Akroteri was full of snakes and left a description of the ferocious Cypriot "Cuffi"; he also pointed out, probably repeating what the locals had told him, that Ayios Nikolaos had been founded by Kalokairos, the Byzantine duke of Cyprus, after the return of Saint Helen in Constantinople. According to Lusignan, the monks of Ayios Nikolaos had been armed with an army of cats since early Byzantine times, so as to kill the peninsula's dangerous snakes (Lusignan 1580, ff. 18r–19v). Although archaeological evidence concerning the early founding of the monastery is scarce, the argument in support of its Byzantine origins is generally accepted by scholars (Papacostas 2015, pp. 167–68; Olympios 2015, pp. 423–24). In 1596, Girolamo Dandini reported the existence of a great number of cats nourished by the Orthodox monks of Akroteri (Dandini [1675] 1685, p. 34). A few years earlier, in 1589, Jacques de Villamont passed from the monastery and described the snakes as very long and thick. At first, he did not believe the story of the snake-catching cats, but others reassured him that this was indeed the case. The monastery, we are told, was deserted, although the peninsula continued to be known as "Cat Cape" (Villamont [1596] 1609, p. 182). In 1788, the first modern Orthodox historian of Cyprus, Archimandrite Kyprianos, spoke of the terrible Cypriot viper. Kyprianos quoted Martin Crusius' (d. 1607) description, based on the account of the Cypriot Stamatios Donatos, of a serpentine monster living on Mount Olympos. The last pages of Kyprianos' historical treatise on Cyprus are dedicated to the treatment of snakebites, interestingly including the healing practices of Native Americans from Virginia (Archimandrite [1788] 1902, pp. 7, 591–94).

5.6. Relationships of Iconic Elements

Late medieval narratives on the founding of Stavrovouni and Ayios Nikolaos in Akroteri present the basic elements creatively combined in the hierotopic landscape of Ayios Iakovos in Nicosia. The historical Helen, mother of Constantine I and later saintly empress, was transformed by Orthodox Cypriot folk imagery, probably influenced by the pre-Christian cult of the Cypriot Goddess, into a divine female figure associated with rain, fertility, and agrarian regeneration (Menardos [1970] 2001, pp. 315–40; Psychogiou 2008, pp. 89–90; Kyriacou 2020b, p. 138).

The connection between Saint Helen, whose passage from Cyprus led to the founding of Stavrovouni and Ayios Nikolaos, and regeneration is stressed by the Byzantine Orthodox theological symbolism of the cross as the "tree of life", the "life-giving tree", and the "wooden spear" terrifying Hades. There is an explicit link between sacred tree/cross and snake, since in the Old Testament the cross is prefigured by the brazen snake raised by Moses on the pole to protect the Israelites from the snakes in the desert (Karagianni 2010, pp. 28, 60, 73, 94).

The symbolic association between cross and tree was clear to the anonymous author of the Venetian report in Codex Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030, who pointed out that sixteenth-century Orthodox Cypriots during Lent gathered under the liturgical cross in order to take a rest "as if under a shadowy and leafy tree" (Kyriacou 2019, pp. 52, 84; Kyriacou 2020a, p. 52). The Russian abbot Daniel, who visited Stavrovouni in the early twelfth century, specified that Saint Helen left a cross made of cypress wood there, which drove away the devil and healed illnesses (Menardos [1970] 2001, p. 321). This implies that the cypress was regarded by medieval Orthodox Cypriots with respect, strengthening the connection between sacred trees and the cross.

It would be useful to outline the relationship of the iconic elements discussed so far, having Ayios Iakovos as our main point of reference (see Tables 1–3). Note that cats do not appear in Stavrovouni and Ayios Iakovos; snakes, on the other hand, appear in Ayios Nikolaos and Ayios Iakovos but not in Stavrovouni, while the cross/sacred tree

appears only in Stavrovouni and Ayios Iakovos. As suggested earlier, it is likely that the transformation of snake symbolism from negative to positive in Ayios Iakovos was shaped by the false Cypriot Greek etymology of the saint's Syriac/Arabic name: "the one who heals deafness/drives away vipers/*koufades*" = Akoufos > Ya‘qub.

Table 1. Relationship of Iconic Elements at Stavrovouni.

Saint Helen	Cross	Drought
Founder of the monastery	Tree of Life	Evil

Table 2. Relationship of Iconic Elements at Ayios Nikolaos in Akroteri.

Saint Helen/Nicholas	Cats	Snakes
Divine protectors/patrons of the monastery	Protectors	Evil

Table 3. Relationship of Iconic Elements at Ayios Iakovos.

Saint James the Persian	Cypress	Snake
Martyr/holy healer	Sacred Tree	Guardian of the sacred tree

Popular devotion to Saint James the Persian, not necessarily in conflict with official religion, appropriated and creatively integrated, consciously or unconsciously, the three iconic elements appearing separately in the cases of Stavrovouni (Saint Helen and the cross/tree of life versus drought) and Ayios Nikolaos (Saint Helen/Saint Nicholas and the cats versus snakes). Unfortunately, we cannot know when exactly this creative integration took place, or how the various Christian and Muslim groups attracted by Saint James' shrine interpreted its hierotopy, producing ritual responses related to the sacred cypress and the snake. What we do know is that the hierotopic landscape of Ayios Iakovos was not created in a historical vacuum but reflects long-term processes and developments in Cypriot religious mentalities. Perhaps the way to understand why saints, sacred trees, and snakes became popular by the fifteenth century and as late as the 1900s is to address questions of insularity on a global, regional, and local level.

6. Zooming out: Insularity and Its Broader Contexts

6.1. Insular Identities: Fragmentation and Connectivity

Navigating the seascape of Mediterranean insularities is to map the complex and shifting dynamics of fragmentation and connectivity. Following the "New Thalassology" paradigm crafted by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, we understand this narrative of "microecologies" as the child of Mediterranean tectonic processes and a "distinctive regime of communications made possible by the geography of the sea" (Horden and Purcell 2006, p. 733). Arthur Bernard Knapp argues that "island identities are fluid and situational, something islanders adopt or shed in tandem with what they wish to say about themselves, or the way they wish to be seen by others" (Knapp 2007, p. 51). As Christy Costantakopoulou states in her study on the Athenian Empire and the Aegean, a fuller examination of the interaction between humans and their landscape requires that we "differentiate between the world of the 'islands', a world dominated by interaction and connectivity, and the world of the 'island', an imaginary world of separation and seclusion" (Costantakopoulou 2007, p. 254). After all, there is a certain degree of conceptual flexibility in speaking about islands and insular identities: Fernand Braudel, for instance, saw the Syrian mainland, surrounded by sea and desert, as an island (Braudel [1949] 1990, p. 191).

Mobility, both human and in terms of circulating ideas and practices, is thus important in defining insularity. As nicely captured by Ottoman scholar Mustafā ᶜĀlī of Gallipoli (d. 1600), the green meadow filled with military tents can be compared to the great number

of "ships on the green sea [hoisting] white sails" (Römer 2001, p. 240). Writing on the Greek islands under the Venetians and the Ottomans, Spyros I. Asdrachas observes that, despite the diachronic predominance of agrarian economy and its implied forms of social stability, the lives of islanders have been shaped in different ways, directly or indirectly, by the everyday realities of war, trade, emigration, and travelling. This generates contact zones, internal circuits, and broader networks of communication (Asdrachas 1988, pp. 235–44).

Above all, questions of insularity need to be addressed as a way of charting and analysing the endemic features of distinct maritime regions. In his recent exploration of insularity in the Ottoman world, Antonis Hadjikyriacou reminds his readers that "islands need to be studied 'on their own terms', rather than from the external vantage point of continental realms" and that "islands are microcosms that can provide special insights into larger processes, global or otherwise" (Hadjikyriacou 2017, p. x). The same scholar carefully notes that "the study of islands is not an end in itself", since the concept of insularity should be seen merely as a methodological tool that enables us "to acquire a different perspective on the spatial, temporal or conceptual context one may choose to focus on" (Hadjikyriacou 2017, p. xi).

6.2. Trade, Pilgrimage, Mobility, and Sacred Landscapes

The rise of the Mongol Empire in Inner Eurasia enhanced the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century tendency towards commercial globalisation, since "by protecting trans-Eurasian commerce, Mongol rulers encouraged travel and trade along the Silk Roads" (Christian 2018, p. 5). In the words of Faruk Tabak, "during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the principal commercial nexus shifted from the southerly maritime circuit, which pitted Baghdad against Cairo for the privilege for serving as the hub of this commercial world, to the continental land routes, the termini of which were located on the shores of the Pontic Sea". However, around the middle of the fourteenth century, a major change took place: "the southerly maritime route regained favor after the Mongol empire began to weaken", facilitating the rise of Venice and its domination in the Levant (Tabak 2008, p. 301). The Venetian convoys (*nude*), accompanied by armed galleys, were now regularly travelling to Cyprus, Alexandria, and Beirut, transporting spices and silks, grain, and oil ((O'Connell 2017, p. 109); cf. (Arbel 2007)).

The movement of people was driven by religion, as well as profit. The Byzantine recovery of Syria in the mid-tenth century and the establishment of Crusader states in the Holy Land in the twelfth century upgraded Cyprus into a key pilgrimage station for Christian travellers. In this period, trade contacts with both the Crusader states and the Islamic world seem to have been regular. After the Muslim conquest of Acre in 1291, Famagusta became a major relay station for pilgrims and merchants sailing to/from Jaffa and Alexandria, although the port's significance began to decrease after its Genoese capture in 1373 (Wartburg and Violaris 2009; Jacoby 2016). In the sixteenth century (1530s–1570), Venetian trade contacts between the island and Bilād al-Shām/Egypt intensified; Saline (Larnaka) emerged, next to Famagusta, as another important port in the Levantine basin (Arbel 2004; Patapiou 2009; Arbel 2014; Kyriacou 2019, pp. 67, 96–97; Kyriacou 2020a, pp. 64–65). The centrality of Cyprus in regional trade, facilitated by the broader global context, left its imprint on the Levantine orientation of local places of worship. We have already argued that Syrian venerations (Saint James the Persian, Saint Cassian, Saint Phokas, and Saint Symeon Stylites the Younger) were transferred in Cyprus during the last phase of Byzantine hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean. Under the Lusignans and the Venetians, pilgrimage connections between the island and Saint Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai gave rise to the Cypriot veneration of Saint Catherine, shared by both Orthodox and Latin Christians and centred around her alleged birth in Cyprus and "Constantinian blood" (Calvelli 2014). That religious devotion, interwoven with the itineraries of seamen and travellers, is eloquently reflected in the creation of ship graffiti in churches situated in or near the harbours of Larnaka and Famagusta, a practice that seems to have become more

common after the sixteenth century (Demesticha et al. 2017; cf. Walsh 2006; Walsh 2007; Michael 2015).

Crossing the sea more often, thus, acted as a catalyst to the transformation of physical landscape into holy space (see Figure 3). As noted by Michele Bacci, "mariners tended to attribute holiness to those elements of landscape that announced difficult manoeuvres or special risks during the navigation". This led to the dedication of promontories, which required particular navigation skills to be sailed around, to holy figures and their marking by churches or monasteries (Bacci 2014, p. 11). In summer, ships approaching Cyprus from the west with the *meltem* winds filling their sails, and those coming from the east and struggling against these same winds needed both nautical skills and divine help to reach their destination safely (Casson 1950, p. 45; Arnaud 2005, pp. 208–10). Stavrovouni, Saint Helen's Mount of the Cross, was the main landmark for ships heading to or coming from Larnaka, its peak being visible even in cloudy weather (Menardos [1970] 2001, p. 328). It has been suggested that the association of Ayios Nikolaos in Akroteri with "cats", and therefore the emergence of the snake-killing legends going back to Saint Helen and the actual upkeeping of cats by the local Orthodox monks, was the result of false translation from Greek to Italian. According to this theory, medieval mariners and cartographers might have mistranslated the Greek word *agathos*, a plant name, or *Agata*, referring to Saint Agatha and perhaps implying the existence of the pre-Christian toponym *Agathe* ("Favourable"), which passed into Italian as *Gatte*, meaning "cats" (Koutelakis 2010). At any rate, the increasing significance of both Stavrovouni and Ayios Nikolaos by the fifteenth century coincides with the regional prominence of Cyprus as a key hub in the marine highways of the Levantine basin.
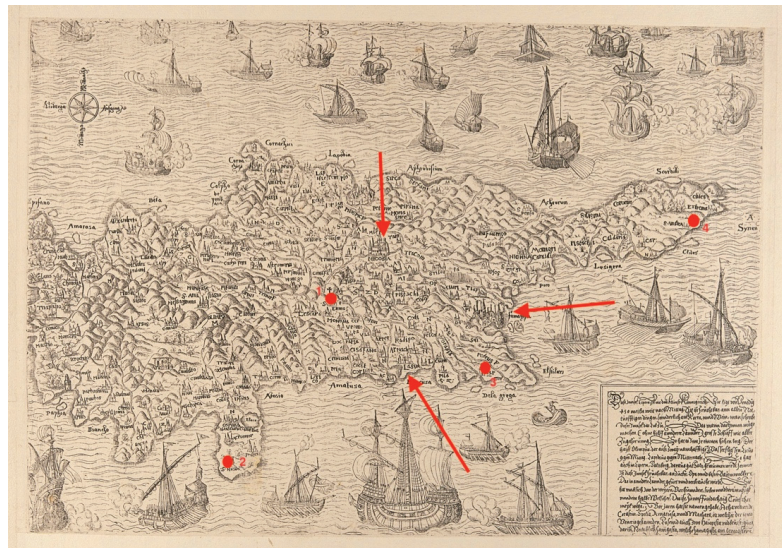
Figure 3. Map of Cyprus by Balthasar Jenichen, 1661. Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, C-036. The arrows indicate the key economic centres of the "long Middle Ages": Nicosia at the centre, Larnaka in the south, and Famagusta in the east. Sacred landmarks for sailors, traders, and pilgrims are numbered: (1) Stavrovouni; (2) Ayios Nikolaos at Akroteri; (3) Ayia Napa; and (4) Apostolos Andreas.

During the course of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans managed, slowly but steadily, to bring most of the eastern Mediterranean under their control: Syria and Egypt were conquered in 1516–17, followed by Cyprus in 1570–1571 (Jennings 1993, p. 346). The change of rule and international developments (e.g., the use of the newly discovered Atlantic areas

for the cultivation of Indian Ocean crops once largely cultivated in the Levant) affected the economic role of Cyprus, without however changing its Levantine orientation in the late sixteenth and for most of the seventeenth century (Tabak 2008, pp. 65, 302). The Ottomans renewed the Venetian *ahidnâme* (capitulation) in 1573, leading to the establishment of a Venetian consulate in Larnaka, acknowledged by scholars as one of the most important in the service of the Serenissima (Costantini 2009, pp. 151–78; Demilyürek 2010). According to Ronald C. Jennings, in the first decades after the Ottoman conquest, "merchants from Cyprus traveled regularly in Anatoli and Karaman provinces, to Aleppo (via Trabulus or Iskenderun), and to Egypt (at Iskenderiya, Dumyat, and particularly Cairo)" (Jennings 1993, p. 334). Christian and Muslim merchants also visited Cyprus and "the small size of the island enabled lots of people to utilize the bazaars and markets of Lefkoṣa" (Jennings 1993, p. 342). Antonis Hadjikyriacou recently observed that "unlike the vast majority of Ottoman islands in the Aegean, Cyprus was large enough and had the geological and climatic conditions for a polycultural cash-crop oriented economy", involving brokers, manufacturers, and exporters (Hadjikyriacou 2016, p. 91). Colin Breen argues that "in the context of economic expansion, the network of khans was especially significant. These caravanserai or inns were a central feature of Ottoman urban development, built to facilitate and stimulate commercial trade and economic development". The Büyük Han (Great Inn) of Nicosia, near the Latin cathedral of Nicosia (turned into a mosque after 1570), is a good example of the economic and social role of these foundations under the Ottomans (Breen 2019, p. 31). For the late sixteenth and greater part of the seventeenth century, when Ayios Iakovos mostly appears in written sources, Cyprus continued to serve pilgrims travelling to or returning from the Holy Land (Frazee 1983, p. 114). Despite the decline in numbers of Latin Christian pilgrims after 1570, as a result of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, pilgrimage tours from the west did take place and seventeenth-century pilgrimage literature flourished (Noonan 2007, pp. 184, 198, 201). The numbers of Orthodox Christian pilgrims (hajjis) seem to have been greater (Izmirlieva 2014); perhaps the earliest Greek account, in the form of a diary in verse, comes from the pen of Antonios Darkes, an Orthodox Cypriot priest of Latin descent, who visited the Holy Land in 1589/90 (Chrysochoides 2003, p. 108; Darkes [1645] 2017).

The ongoing human flow between the island and the Syrian mainland during the "long Middle Ages" could explain the existence of a sacred tree in Ayios Iakovos, given the diachronic popularity of sacred trees in Bilād al-Shām. The creative making of the sacred landscape in Ayios Iakovos incorporated elements (saint, tree, and snake) that were also characteristic of sacred landscapes in Greater Syria and were, thus, easily recognisable and acceptable by different religious and ethnic groups. The combination of these elements must have contributed to shaping Ayios Iakovos' hierotopic image as a religious "central place" for Christians and Muslims within the much bigger administrative and economic centre of Frankish, Venetian, and Ottoman Nicosia between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries (Vionis and Papantoniou 2019). Alternatively, to use a term employed by Homi K. Bhabha, Ayios Iakovos was a "Third Space", the meeting ground of religious and cultural alterity, of hegemonic groups and subaltern ones, of symbols that could have been "appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (Bhabha 1994, p. 37). The realities of everyday interaction miniaturised in Ayios Iakovos reflect the interconnection and reciprocity of members of Cypriot society, Muslim and Christian, engaged in economic transactions, intra-communal power struggles, patronage, and collaboration, regardless of religious and ethnic identities (Kyrris 1987; Hadjikyriacou 2016).

6.3. Cypriot Experiences of the Early Ottoman Rule

Scholars point out that the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, when Cyprus came under the Ottomans, was a period of crisis for the eastern Mediterranean. The Ottoman Empire underwent various institutional transformations (largely caused by inflation and the Safavid/Habsburg wars) affecting taxation and administration (Pamuk 2001). In the case of Cyprus, we may observe a certain degree of decentralisation (Had-

jikyriacou 2016, p. 83), in terms of local elite consolidation and communal representation (Hadjianastasis 2009; Hadjikyriacou 2019b), often leading to phenomena of corruption and oppression, which are traceable, for example, in the violent tax-collecting activities of the dragoman Markoullis (1668–1674) (Papadopoullis 1981, pp. 88–95; Hadjikyriacou 2016, pp. 85–86). Social misery was also the result of broader environmental anomalies, especially between 1580 and 1610: freezing winters and recurring drought were particularly felt in Anatolia and the southern Balkans between 1591 and 1596, when "Ottoman lands entered their longest drought in the past 600 years" (White 2011, pp. 136–37), causing "famine, social violence, population displacement, and infectious diseases" (Xoplaki et al. 2018, p. 373). Although the exact impact of these climate anomalies on Cyprus requires systematic examination, various studies (based mostly on literary evidence) suggest that the living conditions of the Cypriot peasantry in ca. 1600 were indeed exacerbated (Theocharides 1987; Jennings 1988; Jennings 1993, pp. 173–211; Grivaud 1998, pp. 258–59, 298–300, 312–13, 318–20, 323–26; White 2011, pp. 79–81, 90, 212; Lepida 2015; Hadjikyriacou 2019a; cf. Kolovos and Kotzageorgis 2019).

Given that the passage from Venetian to Ottoman rule had been sealed by conquest, with Nicosia alone providing nearly 14,000 Christian prisoners to the Ottomans (Costantini 2009, pp. 66–67), it is perhaps no coincidence that the seventeenth century witnessed a great number of anti-Ottoman revolts and plots on the part of the Christian (especially Orthodox Christian) population of Cyprus (Hassiotis 2010). Anti-Muslim sentiments might have been strengthened by the Ottoman burning of the great cross of Stavrovouni by the Ottomans in 1570 (Menardos [1970] 2001, pp. 293, 327). In 1606, the suppression of a Christian uprising was accompanied by the forced Islamisation of Cypriot children, which was lamented over by Christodoulos, the Orthodox archbishop (1606–40) (Miklosich and Müller 1865, p. 269; Hassiotis 2010, pp. 167–69). Western Christian corsair activity in the Levantine basin seems to have strengthened Cypriot Christian expectations for liberation and return to more merciful, as they hoped, conditions of rule (Hassiotis [1972] 2003, p. 55; cf. Krantonelli [1991] 2014, pp. 318–19). The extent to which the harsh experiences of the early Ottoman period were visualised through the late medieval image of Cyprus the "snake land"—tormented by drought and unusually large snakes (see, e.g., Villamont's testimony in 1589), but saved by the power of the cross, the saintly emperors of Byzantium, and the serpent-catching cats of Akroteri—remains to be ascertained (Stylianou and Stylianou 1985, pp. 198, 200–205; Fumaroli 1995; Hassiotis 2000, pp. 174–179; Walter 2006, pp. 61, 88–89; Marchesano 2010; Drakopoulou 2013; Dandelet 2014, pp. 138–98; Bireley 2014, pp. 36, 86–87, 130, 165, 284, 310, 312; Triantaphyllopoulos 2015).

The concept of martyrdom, closely related to the cross and Saint James the Persian's cypress, was known to all Christian groups worshipping within the walls of Ayios Iakovos in Nicosia. For Orthodox, Maronite, and Latin Christians familiar with the hagiographical and liturgical texts on Saint James, the cypress was a symbol of the saint's heroic confession of Christian faith and self-sacrifice in the hands of his tyrannical persecutors. The flower of life blossomed out of Saint James' martyrdom: by the 1900s, when Ohnefalsch-Richter visited the shrine, the saint's power had even transformed the venomous snake threatening Cyprus into a guardian of his sacred tree. In the seventeenth century, both Christians and Muslims venerated Saint James as a healer; for some, at least, he might have been a symbol of resistance to oppression and a source of moral strength in their daily misery. Catholic missionaries in the 1600s often mentioned in their reports the existence of former Christians/Muslim apostates who had converted to Latin Christianity (*rinegati/renegati*); in 1638, eleven of them had been baptised in secret in Ayios Iakovos, while in 1641, the Muslim qadi of Paphos and Limassol was tortured to death in Selimiye Camii for having professed the superiority of Christianity over Islam ((Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 67–68, 70; Tsirpanlis 2006, pp. 282–83); cf. (Jennings 1993, p. 137)). These reports could be considered as reliable evidence for the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity in Cyprus under the Ottomans, which is better documented in later centuries (Kokkinoftas 2019). This does not necessarily mean that all Muslims visiting Ayios Iakovos were crypto-Christians; some of them might have

been non-Sunni (Bektashi and Alevi) Muslims, as those worshipping in the Christian shrine of Ayioi Saranta at Tymvou (Foulias 2005). We may assume that the Muslims visiting Ayios Iakovos were familiar with the growing of sacred trees in the tombs of Sufi masters (Ephrat 2021, p. 125).

Therefore, the different iconic threads weaving the hierotopic tapestry of Ayios Iakovos in the seventeenth century managed to bring closer a diversity of religious groups. Orthodox and Maronite Christians rediscovered in Ayios Iakovos the ancient traditions of Syriac and Byzantine Christianity on martyrdom; Latin Christian missionaries re-established in Cyprus revived the saint's veneration as a symbol of spiritual rebirth and covert resistance to the domination of Islam; Christian converts from Islam sought comfort and moral strength; it is also likely that non-Sunni Muslims found there an easily-recognisable sacred landscape, which could be shared by their own group (cf. Kamberidis 2013; Grierson 2014).

However, sharing the same place of worship in the 1600s did not erase religious differences and did not bring homogeneity: Christians remained Christians and Muslims remained Muslims. To this division one should add sporadic outbreaks of tension and long-term antagonisms within and between the island's Christian groups. The competition between Bishop Pietro Vespa and the Franciscans was mentioned earlier. The creation of the Latin bishopric of Paphos inspired negative reactions among the Maronites, who were already under pressure by the Orthodox hierarchy (Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 29–32, 67; Skordi 2019, pp. 33–40, 59–60, 63–67). The Latin missionaries were sometimes critical of the Orthodox religious customs and practices (Tsirpanlis 1973, pp. 166, 190). Lastly, the Orthodox responded to the Latin infiltration in different ways. Some pursued a diplomatic line of pro-Catholic unionism for the sake of securing Western military help against the Ottomans; others were hostile to Catholicism, adopting a rather "pro-Calvinist" stance; a third group was openly anti-Latin, returning to Byzantine patristic sources and models of power, in order to refute the Latins theologically and stress their supremacy as Christian elite (Kyriacou 2021, pp. 24–32). This picture of confessional fragmentation resists any attempt to see Ayios Iakovos as a laboratory of a new hybrid identity shared by all Cypriot worshippers.

7. Conclusions

This article aimed to examine Ayios Iakovos as a case study of official and popular religion in the multi-faith society of Cyprus during the "long Middle Ages". Given that many of the connections drawn are separated by great spans of time, our attention concentrated mainly on Ayios Iakovos as a multi-faith centre in the 1600s. Future studies on Ayios Iakovos will certainly profit from the improvement of political conditions in Cyprus, which could provide opportunities for in situ archaeological research. Moreover, future research in Venetian, Ottoman, and pontifical archives may bring to light more information on Ayios Iakovos and its multi-faith function in the seventeenth century.

What follows is a summary of this article's conclusions:

(a) Ayios Iakovos as a multi-faith religious site. The historical exploration of the shrine has confirmed its role as a shared holy place and healing centre in the seventeenth century. The architectural survey has shown the existence of both Byzantine and Latin influences, suggesting syncretism and confessional co-existence. We have proposed that the origins of Saint James the Persian's veneration in Cyprus could be traced back in Byzantine times, especially during the Byzantine rule in Cyprus and Syria between the tenth and twelfth centuries.

(b) Details in the creative making of sacred landscape. There are three iconic elements in Ayios Iakovos' hierotopic landscape: saint, cypress, and snake. The Byzantine dossier of liturgical and hagiographical texts on Saint James the Persian indicates an arboreal symbolism (the saint as a cypress tree) with roots in Syriac theology. The analysis of the three iconic elements connects Cyprus to Greater Syria, creating a familiar *hieros topos* for worshippers from different groups and the practice of healing. Apparently, this occurred without drawing a sharp line between official and popular

religion. There are also some Cypriot parallels (Stavrovouni and Ayios Nikolaos at Akroteri), suggesting that the creative blending of iconic elements in Ayios Iakovos should be seen as part of the widespread perception of Cyprus as "snake land" after the fifteenth century.

(c)   Global, regional, and local developments. From ca. 1400 to ca. 1700, trade and pilgrimage mobility in the eastern Mediterranean were important for reasserting the significance of holy shrines in Cyprus, both in maritime areas and the mainland. The orientation of Cypriot economy and pilgrimage traffic was largely Levantine, which supports our earlier interpretation of hierotopic mobility from Greater Syria to Cyprus. At the same time, the bleak conditions of the early Ottoman rule, exacerbated by environmental anomalies, created a new dynamic for worshippers attracted to Saint James' church at Nicosia. Ayios Iakovos encapsulates these broader tendencies, witnessing the interactive relationship (but not homogenisation) of different religious groups, each of whom had its own beliefs, anxieties, and expectations. Ultimately, Ayios Iakovos, with its healing powers and sacred iconic elements, provided the common ground for Orthodox, Maronites, Latins, crypto-Christians, and Muslims to co-exist and worship within its sacred enclosure.

(d)   Byzantine connectivities. In the 1600s, when Ayios Iakovos became a Latin cathedral under the shadow of the Ottomans, the spiritual message of Saint James' story (sacrificial victory over death) seems to have become more relevant for Cypriot Christian believers, regardless of confessional identity. This was partly due to the revived interest of Muslim-ruled Cypriot Christians in the concepts of persecution and martyrdom. The theological symbolism of Saint James became possible through the translation of texts on his martyrdom from Syriac into Byzantine Greek (and later into Latin and other languages), initially in the tenth/eleventh century. Likewise, the emergence of the saint's veneration in Cyprus seems to date around the period of Byzantine rule in the Levant. Although Ayios Iakovos changed hands throughout the centuries, the saint's memory remained associated with his passion, bearing witness to the religious and cultural connectivities between Cyprus and the Byzantine world, as well as to the inclusive power of Saint James as a spiritual symbol.

(e)   Ayios Iakovos and other shared sacred sites. This case study, with its emphasis on interconnectivity and insularity, echoes the tendency of recent scholarship to examine shared sacred sites within a much broader nexus of exchanges and mobility. The hierotopic combination of the three iconic elements analysed here is crucial in understanding the distinctive physiognomy of Ayios Iakovos as an "imagined" (per Luig) *hieros topos*. Like other places of mixed worship, Ayios Iakovos should not be viewed as a "melting pot", but rather as the home of various groups, who maintained their own traditions and remained open to syncretism. What is rather atypical in the case of Ayios Iakovos, is the fact that the church is not a rural one. According to Albera, "mixed attendance . . . tends to focus on very small rural shrines that are deep in the countryside and associated with rituals based on the farming calendar" (Albera 2012, p. 228). This could be probably the result of the long history of Ayios Iakovos changing hands as time went by. As suggested by seventeenth-century sources, the communities whose history remained associated with the site continued to be attracted by it, regardless of who possessed it. To remember Hayden, centrality indicates dominance and highlights the competitive co-existence of religious groups in mixed holy places. Clearly, this view is reflected in Vespa's aforementioned statement in 1638 that Ayios Iakovos should become the Latin cathedral, because of its centrality in the Latin quarter and the city of Nicosia. The success of Ayios Iakovos as a shared sacred centre might have been also related to what Albera describes as "devotional ambivalence" (Albera 2012, p. 230). Due to his Persian/Syrian origins and popularity in East and West, Saint James belonged to everyone and was venerated by everyone, even if the cultures, beliefs, and expectations of his devotees were not always the same.

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Article

Through the Eyes of a Mapmaker: Maritime Shrines on Cyprus during the Late Middle Ages

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Abstract: Cyprus acquired special importance, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, on the Eastern Mediterranean's pilgrimage network. Described by contemporary pilgrims as "Terra christianorum ultima", the island was considered to be the last Christian land in the south-eastern Mediterranean on the pilgrims' itinerary on their journey to the Holy Land. This study is concentrated on two maps of Cyprus dated to the fourteenth century and preserved in Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A95 sup. and Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI.21. It aims to explore the physical and spiritual mobility and interconnectivity in Cyprus during the late Middle Ages and to consider how these contribute to the development of pilgrimage sites directly related with maritime routes, seamen and travellers. These unique nautical maps captured the sea voyage which had Cyprus as a stopover, bringing to light new insights into fourteenth century Cyprus. The maritime shrines discussed in this article, which are usually "mixed" sacred sites, are directly related with sailors' needs. They integrate into a wide network of communication, removing them partially from their local dimension.

Keywords: Cyprus; late Middle Ages; pilgrimage; map of Cyprus; medieval cartography; history of navigation; maritime shrine; connectivity; mixed shrines; maritime routes

1. Introduction

Cyprus, as the third largest island in the Mediterranean, represents an ideal study domain with clearly defined geographical boundaries, where blended cultures and different religious groups have been presented diachronically, from the prehistoric years to the most recent past. Thus, being defined and at the same time confined by the sea, communities on the island tended to interact with one another and with the outside world (cf. Hadjikyriakou 2017).

The intense commercial activity observed on the island and the economic prosperity to which it led, together with its strategic position close to Asia Minor, the Syropalestinian and the Egyptian coasts, rendered Cyprus the battleground between Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Venetians, and Ottomans on several occasions. Cyprus, being the easternmost Christian land of the Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages, constituted a border between West and East. Therefore, the geographical position of the island at the crossroads of three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa) and par consequence, a passage for traders, pilgrims, and conquerors, diachronically played a role in the formation of its history.

This article aims to re-examine two maps of Cyprus dating to the fourteenth century, preserved in two manuscripts that contain medical treatises, i.e., Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A95 sup.; Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI.21. By reinterpreting these maps as reflections of a navigational map rather than as personal creations, we will draw upon a range of disciplinary approaches to show how Cyprus' extensive maritime interconnectivity interacted with and contributed to the development of pilgrimages to the island during the late Middle Ages.

2. Cyprus as a Pilgrimage Centre during the Late Middle Ages

In general, the launch of Christian pilgrimage can be placed at the beginning of the fourth century (Maraval 1985). After the well-known religious journey of St. Helen (326 A.D.), mother of Constantine the Great, to Jerusalem, a myriad of Christian pilgrims from all over "New Rome" set out to walk in her footsteps. The pilgrimage to the sites of the Christ's birth, life and passion was motivated by sincere spiritual longing and led to the hope of attaining salvation in the afterlife. Although the conquest of the Holy Land by the Arabs in the seventh century made pilgrimage to the loca sancta of Palestine and Egypt a much more difficult and dangerous proposition, Christians continued to make the journey from Western Europe and the lands of the Byzantine empire.

Cyprus has a long tradition of creating sacred spaces, from the late Bronze Age (ca. 1700–1125/1100 B.C.) until today (Papantoniou 2012; Papantoniou 2016). Indeed, the island was also one of the first lands outside the Holy Land and Palestine to adopt Christianity, long before it was attested in Athens, Rome, or Alexandria. The new religion spread throughout the island during the first mission of the apostles Paul, Barnabas, and Mark—the latter of Cypriot descent—in 45 A.D. (*Acts of the Apostles* 13: 4–12). Despite the early Christianisation of the island's population, it was only in the fourth century that Cyprus acquired the institutional apparatus of Christianity, with several prominent bishops (cf. Deligiannakis 2018a, 2018b). Over the centuries, Christianity was strongly consolidated in the island. The well organised, autocephalous, local Church and its geographical position in the eastern corner of the Mediterranean and close to the Holy Land, constituted two of the main reasons for the development of a large number of pilgrimage sites on the island, which were shared by the Christian population. The fame of its saints and holy places has attracted over the centuries—and in some cases still attracts—many pilgrims via the maritime route. It is worth mentioning that one of the first pilgrims who visited the island to venerate its monasteries and shrines was St. Paul of Rome (347–404 A.D.), student of St. Jerome, who visited Cyprus in 385 A.D. and stayed there for ten days (Maraval 1996, p. 147).

Nevertheless, pilgrimage to the Holy Land seemed to flourish at the beginning of the second millennium, following heightened religious fervour (Jacoby 2016). A severe blow to overland pilgrimage occurred in 1071 with the Seljuk victory over the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert and the subsequent occupation of much of Asia Minor by the Seljuks. The Seljuk conquest of that part of Anatolia, through which ran the pilgrims' road, was certainly a catalyst for the First Crusade (1096–99) which intended to make pilgrimage safer by asserting Christian control over the loca sancta and the main routes to and within the Holy Land. Indeed, the number of pilgrims increased after 1099 and a crowd of people, from all social and economic layers, undertook the journey to the Holy Land by taking either the terrestrial or the maritime route. This journey had a direct impact in Cyprus, as pilgrims stopped in Cyprus en route to Jerusalem for supplies. During this period, Cyprus had developed and promoted its own shrines in order to benefit from the crowds of travellers–pilgrims stopping over on the island. Therefore, the island became part of the whole journey. Not surprisingly, the majority of pilgrimage sites and monuments in Cyprus belonged to the Greek community. Pilgrimage sites and other sacred places in Cyprus consisted of shrines with healing relics, sacred springs, miraculous icons, and objects, as well as places such as caves, in which holy men lived (cf. Simsky 2020). Undoubtedly, pilgrimage sites were places of high religious, political, and economic importance in the Middle Ages (cf. Vionis and Papantoniou 2019, pp. 10–13). In several cases, they still maintain their importance today.

Cyprus acquired special importance, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, due to the conquest of Syria and Palestine by the Mamluks. As mentioned earlier, the island was the last Christian land in the south-eastern Mediterranean for pilgrims' itinerary to the Holy Land. The German priest Ludolf of Sundheim, who visited Cyprus between 1336–41 during his journey to the Holy Land, had rightly described Cyprus as "Terra christianorum ultima" (Deycks 1851, p. 34; Burkiewicz 2018, p. 209). Moreover, it was an ideal base for

controlling the Muslim Middle East and the transit trade between Europe, Asia, and North Africa (Balard 1993, pp. 271–82, esp. 276).

During the late Middle Ages, the journey to Jerusalem became more intense and more organised and Venice and Cyprus had a remarkable position within it (cf. Vingopoulou 2003). Venice was deeply involved in and monopolised the pilgrim traffic; it was the port of embarkation for pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Northern Italy and from countries beyond the Alps (Jacoby 2016, pp. 89–97). This sea journey from Venice to Jaffa was expensive, difficult, and dangerous and many of the travellers died during the trip. The travellers, before the departure, signed a contract with all the terms and conditions of the journey (duration, stopovers, food supplying etc.). The duration of the journey from the West varied depending on weather conditions. It took place mainly from April to October and it took approximately forty days during the fifteenth century (Grivaud 1990, pp. 19–25); the journey lasted twenty-seven days between May and June and Cyprus–Jerusalem lasted only three days.

The travellers who stopped in Cyprus were humanly diverse with correspondingly varied economic capabilities. They usually stopped for fifteen to twenty days in Cyprus and, depending on their interests and curiosity, visited different sites, monasteries, and pilgrimage sites on the island. The travellers who arrived in Cyprus can be divided into three main categories (Grivaud 1990, pp. 11–18). The first group consisted of pious Christian pilgrims (mainly priests and abbots belonging to various western religious orders) who occasionally travelled to the Holy Land; the second one concerned traders travelling for financial profit and the third group included travellers who visited Cyprus for different reasons such as espionage and adventurism. It is interesting that no women are documented as visiting Cyprus in this period. The travellers usually recorded their travel experiences in diaries which give us valuable information about the pilgrimage sites; sometimes they provide the only surviving evidence for some shrines. However, the researcher faces several problems when examining travellers' reports, such as the reliability of these documents, the truth of recorded information, their intentions, and their personal assumptions.

3. The Two Maps of Cyprus of the Fourteenth Century

Two schematically drawn, freehand maps of Cyprus, rare and unique in the Byzantine world, are preserved: the first one in Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A95 sup., dated to the early fourteenth century, and its copy in Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI.21 (coll. 453), executed in the middle of the fourteenth century. The two maps were first published by Cronier and Gautier Dalché (2017), and then discussed by Toumpouri (2018). Both maps are preserved in two Greek medical manuscripts which contain various therapeutic recipes and treatises.

3.1. The Ambrosiana Map

The scribe and owner of the manuscript was a physician who copied it for his own use, as the annotations added day by day demonstrate (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 177; Cronier 2020, pp. 131–36). It is important to state that the person who drew the map and added the inscription above it was not necessarily the person who created the manuscript (see below; Figure 1). Based on the marginal notes, the manuscript was produced in Constantinople; then, it was transferred to the emirate of Menteşe in south-western Asia Minor, as its owner had been asked to cure the son of Selman Paşa, a Turkish ruler of the Menteşoğlu dynasty (in the 1330s). Finally, the manuscript arrived in Cyprus (mid-fourteenth century) (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, pp. 177–78).
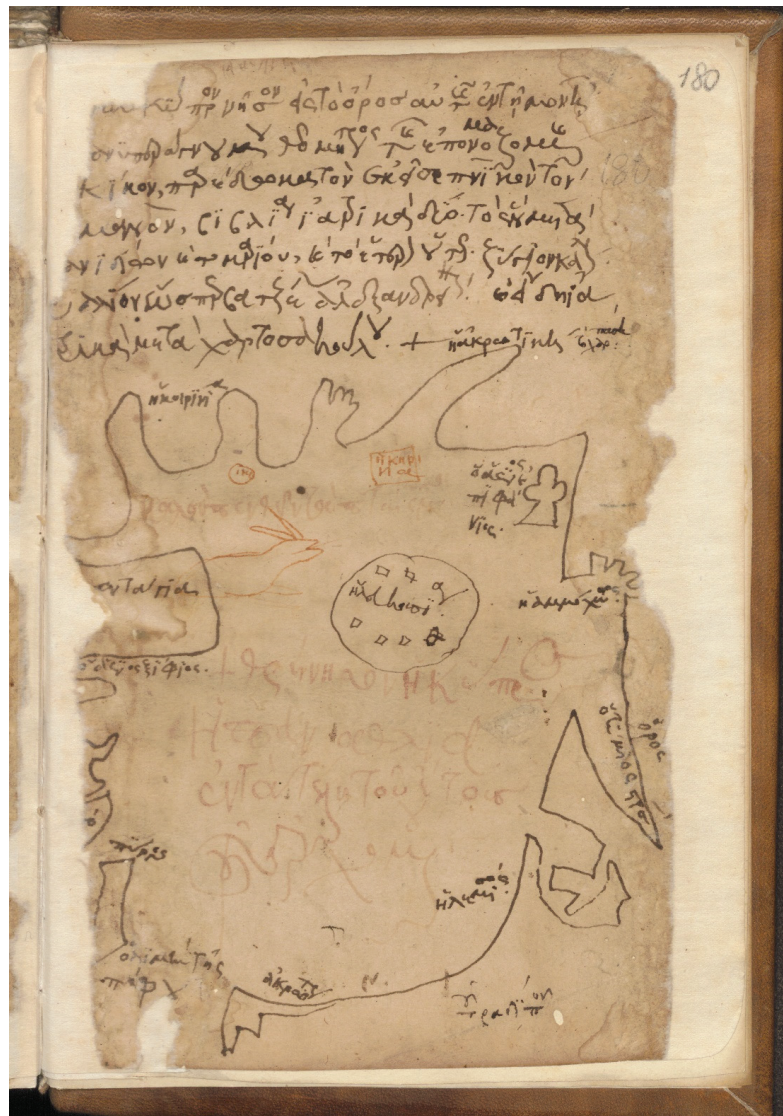
Figure 1. The Ambrosiana map of Cyprus. Milan, Ambrosiana MS A95 sup., f. 180r. First half of the fourteenth century (Reproduced with permission from the Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan).

The map of Cyprus constitutes one of the last additions to the manuscript. It was drawn on the last page (f. 180r), which was probably originally a blank leaf. According to Cronier and Gautier Dalché, the epigram and the sketch of the rabbit were added first, and the map was later drawn around it (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 178). However, we observe that the rabbit and the place-name "Kyrenia" are written in the same red ink (see below). As the placename can only be explained by the presence of the map and as the epigram was fully enclosed within the map, written in pale orange ink, we can suppose that they are all additions to the page after the map was drawn there. The epigram

was written by a different hand from that which wrote the note above the map and the map's toponyms:

Καλὸν πενθεῖν τὰ πταίσμα(τα) μου

θρήνησον ἡ κύπρος | ἡ παναθλία | ἐν τὰ τέλη [=τῷ τέλει] τοῦ ἔτους | τοῦ ἀρχομένου

It is good to bewail my sins/Wail, Cyprus, you all-wretched, at the end of the year that begins. (The transcription and translation are of Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 178)

Indeed, the first phrase "Καλὸν πενθεῖν τὰ πταίσμα(τα) μου" ("it is good to bewail my sins") indicates a man who was pious with religious zeal. In addition, the epigram refers to an uncertain misfortune that hit Cyprus. If we accept that the manuscript was in Cyprus in the mid-fourteenth century, it may be implying the Black Death of 1347–48, which hit Cyprus as hard as it had hit most other areas of Europe and the Mediterranean (cf. Papacostas 2018), reducing the population of the island by between one third and one fifth. Moreover, a Turkish attack on the fortress at Kyrenia in December 1347 is attested due to the island's vulnerable coastline (Papacostas 2018, p. 137). Furthermore, the severe outbreak of Black Death of c.1361–63 was accompanied by Turkish raids on the north coast. According to Leontios Makhairas, the Cypriot chronicler, writing between 1426–32, the Turks were facilitated by the fact that the island was empty and defenceless (Dawkins 1932, §135, §137; Papacostas 2018, p. 137).

The person who drew the map chose to mark mainly coastal sites or places directly related with sea. Therefore, sixteen name-places are recorded. Among them two important shrines and only two sites are cited inland (Nicosia and Kyrenia). Thus, we can read from east to north and from west to south coast: ἡ ἀκρωτική—Karpas peninsula; τὸ χαρπάση—Karpasi (Rizokarpaso); ἡ κοιρίνϊα—Kyrenia; [ἡ π]εντάγια—Pentayia; ὁ ἅγιος ξἴφϊος—Agios Auxibios; [ἡ π]όλ[ις]—Polis Chrysochous; πύργος—Pyrgos; ὁ λιμὴν τῆς πάφου—Paphos harbour; ἀκρωτ(ή)ρ(ιον)—Akrotiri peninsula; ἡ λεμισός—Limassol; ὄρος ὁ τίμιος στ(αυ)ρ(ὸ)ς—Stavrovouni monastery; τοῦ ραδίπου—Aradippou; ἡ ἀμμόχωστος—Famagusta; ὁ ἅ(γ)ιος ἐπιφάνιος—Agios Epiphanios. The two towns shown in the interior are ἡ κηρινια—Kyrenia and ἡ λευκουσία—Nicosia.

Concerning the toponyms, ἡ ἀκρωτική can be identified with the Karpas peninsula and can be associated with the ancient Greek temple of Aphrodite Akrea, located at the north-eastern end of the peninsula. The epithet "Akrea" refers to something that it is located on the edge; the toponym "Akrotiki" seems to arise from this epithet "Akrea-Akrotiki". The name "Akrotiki" is attested firstly in Leontios Makhairas (Dawkins 1932, §34, §191, §448, §654). Based on his writing, it is not easy to determine which part of Karpas is implied. Depending on the text context, the name Akrotiki sometimes seems to be situated near the village Agios Andronikos, sometimes at the anchorage Helones (Turtles), which is located between Rizokarpaso and Cape Apostolos Andreas, and sometimes it seems to refer to the area north of Famagusta. The toponym is also preserved in the bilingual text (Italian–Greek) of the "Regulations of Karpas Peninsula Territory", dated to the 1563 and preserved in the Venetian State Archives. The Italian text noted "Volendo il magnifico Misser Francesco Calergi honoratissimo Balio del Carpasso regger questa contrada." and its transcription in Greek: «Θέλοντας ο μεγαλοπρεπίς αφεντίς ο Φραντζέσκος Καλλέργις έντιμος εμπαλίς τις Ακρωτίκις να γουβερνιάσι ετούτιν τιν ανορίαν.» (Patapiou 2008, p. 27; Patapiou 2015). Based on the above-mentioned document, the name-place, Akrotiki, can surely be identified with the whole peninsula of Karpas.

Moreover, τὸ χαρπάση refers to the village called Rizokarpaso. The village Karpasi is also observed in medieval written sources; it is known as "casal du Carpas" in Frankish documents and as "casal del Carpasso" in Venetian ones (Patapiou 2015). The name "Risocarpaso" (Rizokarpaso) seems to appear for the first time in the map of Leonidas Attar, dated to 1542 (Cavazzana and Grivaud 2006, p. 97).

Two sites labelled as "Kyrenia" are marked on the map situated not far from each other. The first one is the coastal city and harbour (ἡ κοιρίνϊα) and the second one (ἡ κηρινια) is located inland and above the city of Nicosia. For the moment, it is difficult to suggest an interpretation concerning the second toponym. However, it is interesting to mention that the second Kyrenia was added later and although the hand is similar, it was written with a different red ink (see above). This was probably a mistake or a misunderstanding of the toponym.

Furthermore, Pyrgos is situated at the west coast of the island and probably corresponds to the tower known by the name of Pyrgos tis Rigainas at the Akamas peninsula (Jeffrey 1983, p. 412; Wallace 1984, pp. 346–47 and Figure 1; Fejfer 1995, p. 60). In Attar's map of 1542, the tower is cited as "Merovigli" (Cavazzana and Grivaud 2006, pp. 46–47, Figure 30a). The scope of this type of tower was not to protect rural populations; according to medieval tradition, it must have been part of the watch system and it was established by the Byzantines during the rule of Constantine the Great (Dawkins 1932, §6; Cavazzana and Grivaud 2006, pp. 46–47). The different watch towers of the island communicated by means of signals, as Stefano Lusignan noted in the late sixteenth century (De Lusignan 1580, f. 218r).

At a later time, and outside the map's coastline frame, Aradippou (τοῦ ραδίπου) was also added. The name cited, τοῦ ραδίπου, is preserved in medieval sources as "casali de Radipe" (Grivaud 2008, p. 363). Aradippou is associated with King Hugh IV (1324–58), who had a manor house there which he visited every spring. We know that he resided in his manor during the month of March in 1352, 1353 and 1354 (Grivaud 2008, p. 363). The insertion of Aradippou on the map is not entirely surprising; Aradippou was an important village of the area due to the royal manor. The anonymous draughtsman of the map may have added the village after hearing something about it.

It is possible that the person who drew the map arrived in Cyprus at Paphos' port, as it is the only place-name cited as a port (ὁ λιμὴν τῆς πάφου). Travellers arriving from the Aegean and Asia Minor usually anchored at Paphos' port. Although Kyrenia, Limassol and Famagusta were also ports—the latter had become the major harbour on the island during late Middle Ages—they were not labelled as such. However, the map drawer, by using iconographic signs, had stated that all these places were ports, i.e., the coastline is shown with projections on the coast.

The peninsula of Akrotiri (ἀκρωτήριον) was also an anchorage, as the delineation on the map indicates. Throughout the centuries, travellers, pilgrims, and refuges arrived from the opposite coast, especially from Alexandria. Akrotiri was famous for its salt lake, which was a major resource to the royal court during the Lusignan period; although, Larnaca's salt was of better quality and was therefore sold at higher price (Nicolaou-Konnari and Schabel 2015, p. 216).

Pentayia is located at the north coast, near the area of Soloi. The name "Pentayia" may arise from the composition of the words "πέντε ἅγιοι" (five saints), "πεντάγιοι" and "πεντάγεια" (Jeffrey 1983, p. 224). The village seems to have gained great prosperity during the Lusignan period. It was the administrative centre of the district and one of the twelve baronies of the Kingdom of Cyprus; according to Mas Latrie, it was a royal estate (Mas Latrie 1970, p. 528). The village is also observed in medieval sources; Leontios Makhairas refers to it six different times (Dawkins 1932, §137, §377, §427, §444, §447, §613). The mapmaker may indicate the large bay of Pentayia and not the village; the name is written outside the coastline-frame of the map and within the schematic line which forms the bay. The ships from Asia Minor usually stopped at this bay.

The toponym ὁ ἅγιος ξἱφϊος is located in Pentayia bay. It probably refers to the small port of Agios Efxifios at Soloi and not to the episcopal basilica of Agios Auxibios. Makhairas cites the port of Agios Efxifios (Ἅγιος Εὐξίφης) three times in relation to the Genoese invasion of Cyprus (1373) and the treaty between the Kingdom of Cyprus and the Republic of Genoa signed in 1383 or 1385 (Dawkins 1932, §377 and §613). According to this treaty, the Genoese ships would anchor only in Famagusta and not in other Cypriot

ports whose names are mentioned; among them Agios Efxifios. Moreover, the chronicler noted that Helen Palaiologina, who married the King of Cyprus, John II (1432–58), arrived in Cyprus on 2 February 1442 and disembarked at Agios Efxifios (Dawkins 1932, §709). The identification with the episcopal basilica of Agios Auxibios, who was the first bishop of Soloi, seems doubtful. The cult of Agios Auxibios seems to have existed more as a local than as a long-distance pilgrimage destination. According to an archaeological excavation, which is still unfinished, the presence of a smaller core of the saint's cult seems to exist from the twelfth to the fifteenth century (Nicolaou 2017, p. 83).

Stravrovouni Monastery, or the Mountain of the Holy Cross as it is cited as on the map, was by far the most famous pilgrimage destination for pilgrims, both local and foreign. The monastery stands on the prominent isolated peak (688 m above sea level) called Mount Olympus, near Pyrga village in the district of Larnaca. Its privileged position is also emphasised on the Ambrosiana map; it is indicated by a pointed triangle protruding towards the sea. Its strategic position between Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca, with a clear view to the south coast of the island, the Mesaoria valley and the Troodos mountains, was often described by pilgrims and travellers.

According to Cypriot tradition, the monastery was founded by St. Helen around 327–29 A.D. On her return journey from Palestine, she left a piece of the cross of the penitent thief and built a small chapel to house it. The Russian monk, Daniel (1106,) first reported Stavrovouni's association with the legend of St. Helen (Garzaniti 1991, p. 80). During the late Middle Ages, this tradition was still alive; Ludolf of Sudheim noted it in the 1330s (Cobham 1908, p. 19) and Leontios Makhairas described St. Helen's journey to Cyprus in detail in the fifteenth century (Dawkins 1932, §8). Nevertheless, there is no archaeological evidence to support the legend of St. Helen. Megaw has cited that the earliest architectural phase of the monastery is the triconch sanctuary with a groin vault over the altar (Megaw 1974, p. 61 n.14).

After its foundation, Stavrovouni was occupied by Orthodox monks. The Greek clergy was replaced by the Black Monks, Benedictines from Antioch, around 1240 or 1246. Almost all the pilgrims of the thirteenth and fourteenth century comment on the Benedictine monastery with the Black Monks and the "cross of the good thief", which became a "topos". The pilgrimage was probably reinforced by the addition of a series of relics during the fourteenth century, as pilgrims inform us (Cobham 1908, pp. 16, 27, 29, 40). It seems that Stavrovouni was a much-visited pilgrimage goal for fourteenth century travellers; one hundred thousand pilgrims had seen the cross according to Guillaume de Machaut's estimation (1365—Shirley 2001, p. 24). Needless to say, the pilgrimage trade was not affected by the different inhabitants who had the monastery under their domination.

In addition to the cross, and the various relics housed in the monastery, the miracle of the suspended cross was also a major attraction. This miracle was already noted from the early twelve century; the cross was suspended in the air without visible attachment and shook (Cobham 1908, pp. 18, 27, 28, 40; Garzaniti 1991, p. 80). Information about the pilgrimage object is unclear and uncertain. As Makhairas and an Arab chronicler mention, the monastery was destroyed and looted by the Mamluks during the 1426 invasion (Dawkins 1932, §695; Mansouri 2001, p. 129). Moreover, an Arab source informs us that the cross was taken by the Mamluks and that they discovered that it was suspended by springs, which explains its shaking. Nevertheless, some years later, the cross re-emerges in the pilgrims' notes; Felix Faber recorded in 1483 that he saw the cross and he describes it in detail (Cobham 1908, p. 40). We can assume that the Mamluks may have not taken the large cross, but probably one other cross, or they may have returned it later to the monastery.

The association of Stavrouvouni with the trade routes and sailors of this period is obvious. Ludolf of Sudheim (1330s) noted that the monastery was saluted by seamen, underlining its role as a major navigational landmark; its peak was visible even in bad weather (Cobham 1908, p. 19). Moreover, according to James of Verona (1346), who visited the monastery on his way back to Famagusta from Nicosia, it was particularly venerated by sailors (Cobham 1908, p. 18). For all those who travelled the seas, merchants, pilgrims and

ship crews, the reminder of the presence of a sacred place, such as a church or a monastery, was a vital comfort. Through these sacred establishments, travellers could pray to the saint to whom the church was dedicated and ask for the protection of the housed sacred relics. If the travellers landed nearby, they had to visit and pray to thank the saint for allowing them to survive sea dangers.

Ambrosiana's map also singles out the basilica of Agios Epiphanios, bishop of Constantia (367–403), situated in the area of ancient Salamis (eight kilometres north of Famagusta city). The basilica of Agios Epiphanios is one of the earliest monuments of Christianity in Cyprus and its construction began during the last years of the episcopacy of Epiphanios (cf. Foulias 2019, pp. 719–29). St. Epiphanios was buried in 403 and venerated at his shrines throughout the late antique to medieval period. The draughtsman of the map drew the basilica as a trefoil, evoking the three-aisled barrel-vaulted church with three domes that had been constructed in the eighth century and survived still in the mid-fourteenth century when it was associated with the cult of St. Catherine (cf. Calvelli 2009, pp. 157–245). The citation of the basilica on the map may testify that the saint's relic was still attested there, for we know his cult was alive between 1345–49 (Hoade 1970, p. 60). Their presence at the basilica in Salamis is also stated by contemporary travellers (see above and Cobham 1908, p. 20). Leontios Makhairas informs us those parts of his relics were circulated within the island during the fourteenth century. Indeed, after the miracle in Tochni (1340), Patriarch Ignatios of Antioch included one of Epiphanios' relics among the many in the great cross he made in order to be used in processions around the new church against locusts, drought, or plague (Dawkins 1932, §77). Moreover, Epiphanios' skull was venerated in the Latin cathedral of Nicosia, where a commemoration was instituted in 1357 (Coureas and Schabel 1997, p. 310; Schabel 2001, p. 366). In the sixteenth century, part of his relics was possibly transferred to Famagusta to the church dedicated to Agios Symeon or to Agios Epiphanios which adjoined the large cathedral of Agios Georgios ton Ellinon (St. George of the Greeks) (Kaffenberger 2014, pp. 171–80; Papacostas 2014, pp. 46–50).

We return to the manuscript; above the map a note in seven lines is added, plausibly by the same hand who drew the map. The hand is similar but not identical to the copyist of the main text of the manuscript (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 178). It is possible that the man who wrote the note and executed the map was the copyist himself, but at an older age.

[Εἰς τὴν] Κύπρον εἰς τὸ ὄρος αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ μονῇ ˌ [τῆς π]ανϋπεράγνου μοῦ θεομήτ(ο)ρος τῆς ἐπονομαζομένης ˌ [εἰς?] Κίκον, παρέδωκα τὸν ἐκεῖσε πν (ευματ)ικὸν τὸν ˌ [Γερ?]μανὸν, βιβλία ἰατρικὰ δύο· τὸ ἓν μετὰ ˌ [σ]ανιδίων καὶ τομαρίου, καὶ τὸ ἕτερον οὕτως· ζύγιον καλὸν· ˌ ὑαλίον ὥσπερ βατζέλ(η) ἀλεξανδρείν(η)· καὶ εἴδη ια ˌ τρικὰ μετὰ χαρτοσακούλου.

In Cyprus, upon its mountain, in the monastery of the All-Saint Mother of God called [at?] Kykkos, I gave to the spiritual father [Ger]manos, two medicine's books; the one with wooden boards covered with leather, and the other too; good scales; a glass jar, like the Alexandrian vessel; and medical utensils, with a paper bag (The transcription and translation are of Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 178).

The note informs us about a transaction with the Monastery of the Virgin of Kykkos in Cyprus (Figure 2). The anonymous man gave two medical manuscripts and other medical materials (scales for weighting ingredients, a transparent glass jar, and a bag with small medical implements) to the monk of the monastery, Germanos, who was also a "pneumatikos" (spiritual father). The monk was probably a physician. The person who gives this medical equipment was probably a doctor and could have been the original maker of the manuscript. However, we have no evidence to declare that he was the same physician who made the book.
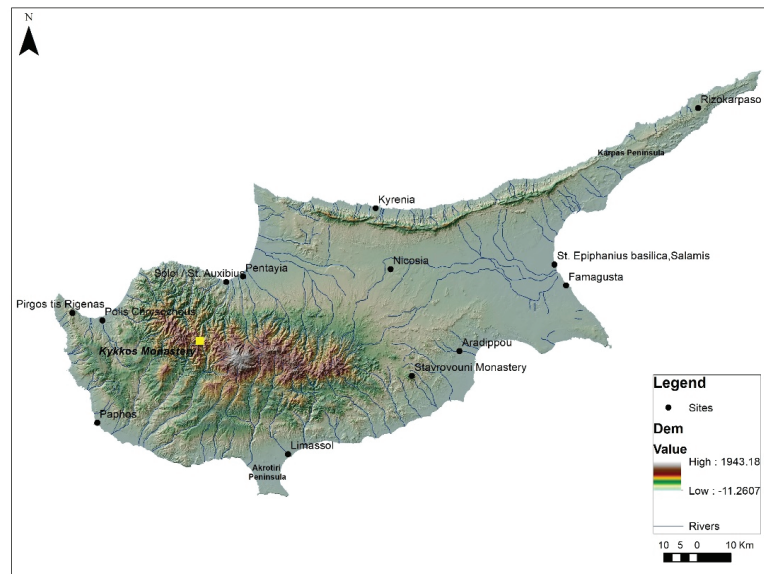
Figure 2. Map of Cyprus with toponyms and sites cited in Ambrosiana Map (Map by Niki Kyriacou).

Based on the information at our disposal, we can assume that the initial owner of the manuscript was from Constantinople (Cronier 2020, p. 132). This man was probably a well-known physician as he had been asked to give his medical services to the son of a ruler at Menteşe (Cronier 2020, pp. 133–34). After Asia Minor, the manuscript continued its journey to Cyprus. As mentioned above, we do not know if the original scribe of the book was the same person who possessed the manuscript in Cyprus. Although previous studies (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 180) have presumed that the person who owned the manuscript in Cyprus created this unique map, drawing it free-hand as his own work, we can raise the hypothesis that the Ambrosiana map was probably inspired by a sailing chart and it does not record a personal journey. The anonymous man may have found the map on the ship during his journey to Cyprus and he may have copied it. This type of map, the later so-called portolan, was taken to sea and was regarded as a practical aid for navigation, perhaps with the help of dividers. Moreover, they may have served mostly as a simple aide-mémoire, a handy guide to the features of coasts (Harvey 1991, p. 45). Our map seems to be based on a chart of Cyprus, used in navigation as it emphasised the coastal line of the island. The many coastal place-names cited on the map are mainly written on the land side of the coastline as not to obscure possible danger points. The Ambrosiana map also presents some navigational landmarks such as Stavrovouni Monastery and only one inland feature is shown; as mentioned, only the capital city of the island. Tony Campbell has stated about maritime maps: "the names, written inland and at right angles to the coast, run in a continuous sequence which presents some 'upside down', whichever way the cart is turned" (Campbell 1984, p. 48). All the above-mentioned features are observed both on sailing charts and on the Ambrosiana map (cf. Harvey 1991, pp. 39–49). However, our map drawer chose not to copy the so-called rhumb lines that usually cover the portolan maps. If our hypothesis is correct, the Ambrosiana map reflects how the nautical community in general saw the island in the late Middle Ages. Certainly, our map was drawn as a copy and never meant to be taken to sea. Moreover, it is interesting to note that each place that is marked on the map has pilgrimage significance (cf. Section 4 of this article). Nevertheless, the question arises as to why the anonymous man copied the map. Perhaps, he was a multifaceted personality with travelling interests. It is also possible that the anonymous man was planning to visit the Holy Land as a pilgrim

and made a stopover to the island. However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm this suggestion. The iconographic symbols used for Agios Epiphanios (trefoil referring to the three-domed basilica), and Nicosia (circle with six small squares implying the medieval city walls), were perhaps copied from the initial map. However, it is still unknown if he visited these places and then added the icons. Certainly, the anonymous man had various interests and curiosities (physician, draughtsman of a map, pilgrim?) and so it would seem that he was by no means an ordinary medieval man. This observation gives us more details about the travellers arriving in Cyprus during the late Middle Ages.

Concerning Kykkos Monastery, the following questions arise: When did the anonymous man become informed about Kykkos Monastery? Did he visit Kykkos as a pilgrim? Was it there that he met Germanos, or did Germanos himself invite him to the monastery? It is worth mentioning that Kykkos may have not been a well-known monastery; it was a monastic establishment in the Troodos mountains with a regional impact. Thus, it is possible that the physician learned about Kykkos on the boat or when he arrived at Paphos and that he probably went to Kykkos as a pilgrim. During his visit, he met Germanos and he gave medical books to the monastery as well as other medical materials. We suppose that all these things were sold or exchanged with something else as the verb "παρέδωκα" (παραδίδωμι) means "give", "hand over to another", "transmit". If it was a donation, we suppose that he would have specified this. If the above-mentioned hypothesis is correct, then Germanos or the monastic community of Kykkos must have had some financial capacity. There can be no doubt that the Ambrosiana manuscript was one of the two books that the anonymous man had given to Germanos and that he wrote this note above the map as a reminder of the affair. It is difficult to determine the exact time period when this action took place. It is worth remembering that in June 1365, Kykkos was destroyed by a fire that broke out near the monastery. The monastery was rebuilt by December that same year, thanks to the donation of Eleanor, the wife of King Peter I (1359–69) (cf. Roudometof and Michael 2010, p. 58). Thus, this transaction should have taken place either before the fire, as we do not know its extent, or after that. It is more likely that this event took place after the fire because in this fire, all the books of Kykkos were probably burned, which led the monk Gregorios to write a new description of Kykkos monastery.

3.2. The Marciana Map

The Marciana manuscript was probably copied in Cyprus; the type of paper used for the manuscript is oriental paper, which was very common on the island in the mid-fourteenth century (Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 180). The Marciana manuscript reproduces the Ambrosiana manuscript closely. In particular, the map is copied on the last page of the manuscript (f. 166v) and presents some changes (Figure 3). The city of Kyrenia appears only once; the copyist marked only the correct coastal city. The villages of Aradippou and Karpasi have disappeared. Moreover, all the other notes (epigram and text above the map) are not copied. The two villages were placed quite far from the coastal frame-line determining the map on the Ambrosiana manuscript and the second place named Kyrenia is written with the same red ink as the epigram inside the map; therefore, one wonders if those place-names had escaped the attention of the copyist or if there was no reason for him to copy them. Furthermore, the note above the map referred to the previous manuscript and its removal is reasonable. At the same time, the anonymous copyist added a title above the map:

Κύπρος η περιλάλητος νήσος και περίφημος

"Cyprus, the so famous and so celebrated island". (The transcription and translation are of Cronier and Gautier Dalché 2017, p. 180)
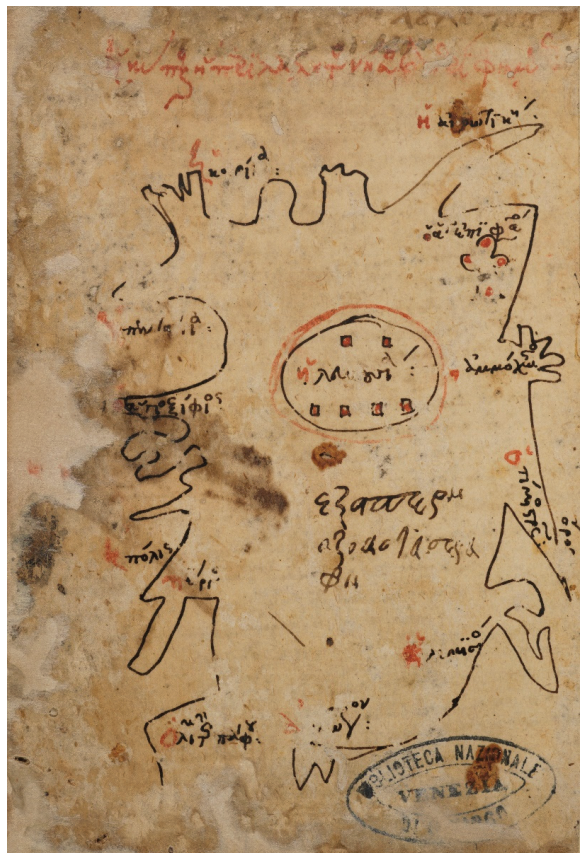
Figure 3. The Marciana map of Cyprus. Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. XI.21, f. 166v. Mid-fourteenth century (Reproduced with permission from the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice).

The insertion of the title in the above map makes clear that the copyist intended to celebrate and glorify the island, probably his island. He erased the note from the initial manuscript (Ambrosiana manuscript) that labelled Cyprus as "παναθλία" (very miserable) and replaced it with the words "περιλάλητος" (so famous) and "περίφημος" (so celebrated).

We suppose that the Marciana manuscript must have been copied at the monastery of Kykkos, as the monastery preserved a scriptorium during the Middle Ages (Yakovlevich 2010). According to the manuscript of Timios Stavros n.111 preserved at the Library of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the monk Symeon completed the copying of a Psalter at Kykkos monastery in 1472, while the expenses were covered by the priest, Basil Chamados, who was the donor of the church of Archangelos Michail at Pedoulas (Perdikis 2014, p. 73). The speed at which the Ambrosiana's book was copied is remarkable. As a book with medical content, it was perhaps a greatly desired book and was, therefore, immediately copied. On the other hand, it may have been an order.

4. Navigation and Maritime Pilgrimage Shrines

The two maps discussed, especially the Ambrosiana map, link them not only to the theme of travel, but also of pilgrimage. The Ambrosiana map is not a record of a journey but instead reflects a more broadly shared sense of Cyprus as a destination. The paths

of navigation are also paths of pilgrimage, as each of the coastal toponyms cited in the map has a maritime shrine linked to the sea, sailors, pilgrims, and the sea itineraries of the late Middle Ages. These shrines served various physical and spiritual needs. Maritime shrines were developed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, not just in the Eastern Mediterranean generally, but more specifically in Cyprus due to the increase in sea exchanges, both in trade and in pilgrimage journeys (cf. Bacci 2014). Hence, the map is a valuable witness to pilgrimage in Cyprus and, thus, the movement illustrated by navigational maps does not simply respond to already-extant pilgrimage shrines, but also stimulates the development of new ones, reflecting the diversity of travellers who came with the sea. The frequent visits of travellers (traders, sailors, pilgrims, etc.) led to the need to shape the sites in ways that could serve the needs of travellers, especially pilgrims. Famagusta's case reflects this situation.

In particular, Famagusta had special importance during the late Middle Ages. It was an important trading centre, a cosmopolitan city which conserved a significant number of shrines in its territory (cf. Borowski 2018, pp. 70–73; Walsh 2019, pp. 2–8). The historian, Stefano Lusignan, rightly described the spirit of multiculturalism and population, the so-called mélange of different languages and religions that prevailed in Famagusta in the second half of the sixteenth century (Lusignano 1573, ff. 34r–35r; De Lusignan 1580, ff. 71r–76r). The city's population increased rapidly at the end of the thirteenth century, when Christian refugees from the East sought protection in Famagusta after the Muslim conquest of these areas (Jacoby 2014, pp. 53–67). The description of the Augustinian monk James of Verona, who arrived in Cyprus on 29 May 1335 and stayed for twenty days, constitutes one of the earliest testimonies of the arrival of refugees in Famagusta (Cobham 1908, p. 17). He reports the arrival at the city's port in June 1335 of fifteen thousand refugees (old people, women, and children) from Logaze in Armenia, which had been looted by the Ottomans. Indeed, Famagusta's population included not only Latins and Greeks but also Armenians and Syrian Christians, including communities of Melkites, Maronites, Jacobites and Nestorians (cf. Schabel 2005, passim).

Famagusta's port was transformed from a regional port into the major trading harbour of the period, making the city a real crossroads for trade between the East, West and Africa (cf. Coureas 2017). Undoubtedly, ports are hubs of communication, and they are connected by a network of maritime routes (Preiser-Kapeller 2015b, p. 125; Preiser-Kapeller and Werther 2018, p. 11). The dynamic of this connectivity emerges from the interactions and connections between individuals, groups, or sites (Preiser-Kapeller 2015a, p. 13). After 1291 Famagusta surpassed Limassol and became the island's main commercial city; the harbours of Paphos, Larnaca and Kyrenia were still in use as smaller ports. Together with Alexandria and Laiazzo, Famagusta's port was one of the three great emporia of the Eastern Mediterranean. Emmanuel Piloti, a Venetian merchant based in Crete, in 1420 reported that in the port of Famagusta merchants and goods from all over the Christian West could be found (Dopp 1958, p. 312). However, it is generally accepted that before the fourteenth century, the international sea traffic passed mainly along the southern cost of Cyprus and that Limassol constituted the island's main port (Nicolaou-Konnari and Schabel 2015, pp. 210–16).

Besides the Stavrovouni Monastery which is marked on the map, another important shrine for sailors and pilgrims in the fourteenth century and onwards was the underground chapel of St. Mary of the Cave (known as Santa Maria della Cava) or "Panagia Chrysospili-otissa" in Greek (cf. Papageorghiou 2010, pp. 57–58; Bacci 2019; Foulias 2021, pp. 692–94). The chapel is located to the north of the walled city close to the Torre dell'Oca, in Kato Varoshia in the neighbour of Spiliotissa or Chrysospiliotissa. The toponym "Spiliotissa" is recorded for the first time in the account of Danish traveller Cornelis de Bruyn (1683), who stopped in Cyprus after his trip to Alexandria (Cobham 1908, pp. 236–37; Bacci 2019, p. 54).

The site was an underground tomb dating to the Hellenistic period, which was probably transformed into a church somewhere before 1300, as the church is cited in two wills of Genoese merchants (Bacci 2019, p. 52). According to a Czech pilgrim, Oldřich

Prefát (1546), the site was underground and was not visible from the outside (Prefát z Vlakanov 2014, p. 331; Bacci 2019, p. 65). The pilgrims descended a staircase of thirty-six steps which ended in a small room used probably as a narthex. The interior of the church was decorated with wall-paintings, wax offerings, candles, and small icons. James of Verona (1335) informs us that he and the ship's crew went to the underground shrine to give ex-votos offering (*tamata*) as thanksgiving for their deliverance from dangers (Cobham 1908, p. 16; Bacci 2019, pp. 50–51). It was a "shared" cult space as the architecture and the travellers' testimonies proved (Cobham 1908, p. 24; Bacci 2019, p. 52). Two large niche altars were carved on the east wall (Figure 4). The northern niche was covered by a Π-shaped iconostasis which separated the naos from bema and was used by Greeks. To either side of it, two smaller niches were carved on the wall and would be used as prothesis and diakonikon. The southern ogee arch remained uncovered and visible from the naos; it was probably used by Roman Catholics for serving the liturgy. The Latin presence at the church was also documented, at least from 1300, in two wills of merchants from Genoa mentioned above.

Figure 4. View of the east wall, St. Mary of the Cave, Famagusta (Photo: Andreas Foulias).

From 1328, St. Mary of the Cave was under the jurisdiction of the orthodox monks of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai (Coureas 2010, pp. 471–72). Cyprus had close relations with the monastery of Mt. Sinai; besides St. Mary of the Cave, Sinai Monastery had also under its jurisdiction the pilgrimage of St. Catherine in Famagusta (cf. Calvelli 2014, pp. 372–76). At the end of the fourteenth century, a considerable European interest about the sacred topography and the pilgrimages dedicated to St. Catherine had emerged (Bacci 2016, pp. 331–32). The St. Catherine pilgrimage route, which passed through at least four holy sites associated with episodes of the saint's life (place of birth within the ruins of the basilica of Agios Epiphanios; the spot where she learned to read was within the Franciscan church; the site on which an angel "betrothed" Catherine to Christ located at the rocky islet near the harbour; and, her tomb at the area of Salamis) included also a visit to St. Mary of the Cave (Calvelli 2014; Borowski 2018, pp. 76–83). Many pilgrims devoted almost an entire day to visit the sites and get to know the life of St. Catherine in Famagusta. Then, they went to Alexandria and visited the Monastery of

Sinai to venerate her relics (Bacci 2016, pp. 331–32, 335–36). However, after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt (1517), the journey to Sinai became dangerous and less and less pilgrims attempted it. Therefore, many pilgrims were content with the monuments of St. Catherine in Famagusta, which gained special fame in the sixteenth century. Certainly, the association of St. Catherine with Cyprus and the creation of the pilgrimage route had mainly economic goals.

Returning to St. Mary of the Cave, we do not know if some special holy object housed in the shrine helped to make it so popular and attract so many people. Nothing specific is mentioned in the shrine's visitors' detailed descriptions. Only in 1683, Cornelis de Bruyn noticed the existence of holy water/hagiasma in the naos of the church (Cobham 1908, p. 237; Bacci 2019, p. 54). Nevertheless, the Marian shrine may have had a miraculous icon in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century. It is worth mentioning that the central niche behind the iconostasis was decorated with the standing Virgin Mary, a location which indicates the special honour attributed to her; a rare but not unique position for the depiction of Virgin Mary (Bacci 2019, pp. 57–58). A parallel placement for Virgin Mary's portrait appeared in the church of Virgin Chryseleousa in Lysos, where a depiction of Virgin Mary Kykkotissa (fifteenth century) is placed in the niche of the sanctuary (Hadjichristodoulou and Foulias 2017, pp. 38–42). Annemarie Weyl Carr has suggested a comparison with the placement of the miracle-working icon of the Virgin Saidnaya near Damascus in Syria (Carr 1995, p. 350).

The association of St. Mary of the Cave with the sea and sailors is also indicated by its inclusion in the text of the procession of Sante Parole or Santa Parola dated to the second half of the fourteenth century (Bacci 2004, pp. 242–48; Ruzzin 2013, pp. 48–52; a catalogue with all the 130 pilgrimage sites invoked in *Sante Parole* is published by Bacci 2019, pp. 350–53). The above-mentioned procession took place on the ship shortly before sunset. The invocation could be modified and adjusted according to the location and the navigation of the ship, since it was made to allow sailors to pass safely from a specific sea area. According to James of Verona (1335) when the ship was off the Cypriot coast, the prayer included the underground chapel of Famagusta and the monastery of Stavrovouni (Cobham 1908, p. 16).

Another underground pilgrimage site associated with the sea, located not far from St. Mary of the Cave and northeast of the Martinengo Bastion, is dedicated to the protomartyr St. Thecla. According to Epiphanios of Salamis, the saint had a special place in the Christian world as she was considered second in status after the Virgin Mary (Panarior 79.5; Davis 2001, p. 74). The site was initially a Hellenistic tomb with dromos, and it was transformed into a church probably during the fourteenth century (Mogabgab 1951, p. 186; Bacci 2019, pp. 60–64; Foulias 2021, pp. 688–89). It was a "shared" worship place between Greeks and Latins. The presence of a shallow niche which ends in a tower-like crown is very close to the Eucharistic tabernacle used in Northern Europe during the late Middle Ages and it may indicate a possible association with Latin liturgy (Bacci 2019, p. 62; Figure 5). The interior walls of the shrine were decorated with coats of arms and geometric elements formed similar to a tapestry; some fragments are still visible. St. Thecla was a popular pilgrimage place due to the healing holy water, which was located in the middle of the main church, and which had the power to heal sick people trembling with fever (Bacci 2019, pp. 63–64). Possibly, many other small shrines existed in Famagusta and were correlated with the sea routes of the period. Based on Martoni's description (1394), ruined villages and cave churches existed in the area outside the west walls of the city (Cobham 1908, p. 24; cf. Foulias 2021, pp. 683–97). The transformation of ancient underground tombs into chapels that can be observed in the fourteenth century may be related with the increased number of pilgrims arriving in Famagusta during the late Middle Ages.

Figure 5. View of the interior, St. Thecla, Famagusta (Photo: Andreas Foulias).

Another case is the underground chapel of Agia Napa, located in the wider area of Famagusta, which became a popular pilgrimage destination due to its miraculous icon of the Virgin and its hagiasma, especially in the sixteenth century (Bacci 2009, pp. 443–44; Petras 2019, pp. 145–65; Ritter 2019, pp. 125–44). It was also a "shared" cult place for Greeks and Latins. Oldřich Prefát, who visited the church on 2 October 1546, noted that there were Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics, who worshipped separately (Prefát z Vlakanov 2014, §71, pp. 326–32; for English translation: Ritter 2019, pp. 143–44). The pilgrim's description provides the earliest preserved and most detailed reference for the pilgrimage site. The pilgrimage consisted of the underground cave where the icon was found miraculously. The cave was transformed into a church and a stone Γ-shape iconostasis dated to the fourteenth century separated the sanctuary from the naos (Petras 2019, pp. 150–55, 432, pl.5). The miraculous icon was situated at the right side of the iconostasis and was illuminated directly by sunlight. The holy water was located at the northern end of the cave. Over the centuries, various buildings were erected around the cave: a barrel-vaulted chapel, the so-called "Latin" (fourteenth-fifteenth century); annexes and, thus, a monastery was developed. According to recent archaeological excavations, the monastery seems to have been founded in the fourteenth century (Christofi 2020, p. 27). The pilgrims descended into the cave, where they obtained holy water/hagiasmsa and they then proceeded to the icon and, finally, if they wished, they participated in the Liturgy. The singular shape of the iconostasis gave visibility and access to the holy water and to the small opening where, according to tradition, the icon was found. The church was full of ex-votos such as ostrich eggs, wooden effigies of maritime ships and small icons (Ritter 2019, p. 144). The icon is only known by descriptions; it may have been stolen or destroyed by fire in the early nineteenth century. As Prefát noted, the icon had the height of a man and depicted the Virgin holding the Child. The figures' hands were covered with silver plating plaques, while their halos had gilded plaques decorated with precious stones. The German pilgrim, Hans Johann of Hürnheim, who visited Agia Napa on 15 August 1569, noted that the icon was painted by the apostle Luke (Ritter 2019, p. 125). Stefano Lusignan (sixteenth century) included the icon in his catalogue of the island's most venerated icons and noted that the icon was processed to Nicosia in times of high drought (De Lusignan 1580, f. 64r). Apparently, the icon was directly related to water, rain and, consequently, fertility, life, similar to another miraculous icon; that of Virgin Kykkotissa in the Troodos mountains.

The Agia Napa shrine has been also associated with sailors and maritime trade routes of the late Middle Ages due to its proximity to the sea; the existence of a spring/holy water and a miraculous icon attracted seamen (cf. Petras 2019, pp. 145–47). The toponym appeared for the first time in 1538 in Matheo Pagano's map as "Sancta Napa"; it is cited as a monastery in Attar's map (1542) (Stylianou and Stylianou 1980, pp. 16–17; Cavazzana and Grivaud 2006, p. 136). Moreover, the toponym "Agia Napa" is already cited twice by Leontios Makhairas (fifteenth century). Specifically, in 1366, one year after the "Alexandrian Crusade" (1365), the King of Cyprus, Peter I (1359–69), wrote a letter to the Pope and gave it to the admiral, who sailed from Famagusta and then to Agia Napa (Dawkins 1932, §174). Secondly, the toponym was attested during the destruction of Genoese ships, which were found at 'Agia Napa' bay in 1372 (Dawkins 1932, §549). However, Agia Napa is not mentioned as a stop for merchants and sailors approaching Famagusta's harbour. The sailors, usually, stopped at Pyla's cape, known as Cape Agios Georgios in medieval times, before arriving at Cape Greco (Delatte 1947, pp. 124–26).

The pilgrimage of Apostolos Andreas to the homonymous promontory in the Karpas peninsula, which flourished in the fifteenth-sixteenth century, can be inscribed in the same context of maritime pilgrimages (Bacci 2014, pp. 11–12). The initial core of the cult was the underground cave, which was directly connected with fresh water (cf. Foulias 2020, pp. 71–102). According to local tradition, Apostolos Andreas visited the area on his way to Palestine and miraculously created a sacred spring in the dry rock. Later, the captain of the ship, whose son was cured of blindness by the spring, is said to have built a church at the site. However, this tradition is not observed in the medieval sources. Recent archaeological excavations (2018) have shown that the cult of Apostolos Andreas goes back between the fourth and seventh century (Nicolaou, forthcoming). Based on written sources, the church seems to have existed at least since the end of the twelfth century (Foulias 2020, p. 74). During the fifteenth century, a twin-naved Gothic chapel was erected, reflecting the development of the pilgrimage. It is true that the cape of Apostolos Andreas was a passage from the dangerous cape of Antalya to the quiet and safe Levantine Sea, arriving to the port of Famagusta. In the late Middle Ages, sailors stopped at the Apostolos Andreas to take advantage of the clear spring water, offer their ex-votos and then pray. Afterwards, they continued their trip safely and protectively. It was a common practice to name promontories, which were dangerous and difficult to navigate through, after saints as well, as to construct religious edifies dedicated to the said saint (Bacci 2014, p. 11).

The pilgrimage of Apostolos Andreas seems to have been used for only a small period, as it seems to have been abandoned in the mid-sixteenth century. The Venetian nobleman Leonardo Donà who visited the monastery between 1556 and 1558, mentioned that it was abandoned (Patapiou 2006, p. 225; Foulias 2020, p. 76). Moreover, the Ottoman settlement of 1572, which recorded the Greek monasteries in the area, does not mention the monastery of Apostolos Andreas (Foulias 2020, pp. 98–99).

Another well-known pilgrimage site at the Akrotiri peninsula was the Monastery of Agios Nikolaos ton Gaton (St. Nicholas of the Cats). Its founding is also linked with St. Helen when she visited Cyprus in the fourth century. Stefano Lusignan in his *Description* (1580) wrote that Agios Nikolaos was a late antique foundation and linked it to Calocaerus, Duke of Cyprus, which attested in early sources but not in relation the monastery (De Lusignan 1580, ff. 18r-19v). The dedication of the monastery to Agios Nikolaos is first recorded in an eleventh century Cypriot manuscript (Constantinides and Browning 1993, pp. 66–67). Moreover, the monastery is also attested in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of the Benedictine chronicler Orderic Vitalis (1075–1142) (Papacostas 2015, p. 167). The actual church can be dated to the Lusignan period; thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with fifteenth century reconstructions. However, spolia from early Christian period are still visible in the church (Papacostas 2015, pp. 167–68; Olympios 2015, pp. 423–24).

The monastery was very popular among sailors and pilgrims, especially in the late medieval period. Its main attraction was the great number of cats that the monks kept in order to hunt and kill the snakes that infested the Akrotiri peninsula. According to

pilgrims' testimonies, which seem excessive, the cats' number was between two hundred and one thousand during the fourteenth century (Cobham 1908, pp. 37, 38; Grivaud 1990, pp. 117–18). The importance of cats in killing snakes in order to make the place habitable is declared by the fact that King James II (1463–73) had provided the monastery with three hundred and fifty ducats annually for the cats' care (Nicolaou-Konnari and Schabel 2015, pp. 318–19). Cats, and the great number of pilgrims visited the site, especially in order to see them, gave the monastery large revenues (Cobham 1908, p. 48). Finally, the monastery may have preserved an hagiasma; however, because of the large number of cats which was the most impressive attraction, the holy water is not mentioned in pilgrims' accounts.

An important landmark was the church of Agios Lazaros in Larnaca (Salines), housing the tomb of St. Lazaros, the first bishop of Kition. According to tradition and to archaeological evidence, the church was erected by Leon VI, called the Wise (886–912), at the end of the ninth and at the beginning of the tenth century. Even after the translation of the precious relics in Constantinople, the church was rebuilt and repaired over the centuries (cf. Papageorghiou 1998). The church was located near the port of Larnaca, another important port of the Eastern Mediterranean basin, which was an economic centre where the salt lakes of Larnaca yielded rich deposits of salt and their revenues were lucrative enough for the extraction and sale of salt (Coureas 2005, pp. 105, 108). In the late fifteenth century, the northern aisle of the church was converted into a "Latin chapel" dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Due to the increasing number of pilgrims, the installation of a Latin clergy within a Greek church was considered necessary in order to service the foreign pilgrims who came to the church (Olympios 2013, pp. 326–28). This is a common practice observed in shrines located near harbours. In this framework, Prefát's remark can be noted (1546); when he visited the monastery of Agia Napa, he met an Augustinian monk who lived there (Prefát z Vlakanov 2014, pp. 326–32, §71; Ritter 2019, pp. 143–44). We suppose that the presence of an Augustinian monk servicing the needs of Latin pilgrims who visited the shrine does not necessarily mean the installation of the Order at the monastery.

5. Concluding Remarks

This article has aimed to examine the connectivity of Cyprus as a focal point of movement, sometimes more intense, sometimes more restricted, during the late Middle Ages. Through this navigation, a number of pilgrimage sites were developed, reflecting the diversity of travellers who came to the island.

The unique freehand map of Cyprus preserved on a medical manuscript was created by an unknown "cosmopolitan" man. The history of the manuscript and its owner is quite interesting, as this man seemed to have a varied career and relationships. The map indicates the maritime centres of the island, which constituted religious and economic centres of the late Middle Ages. It seems to be copied; the owner of the manuscript at that time is not the creator of this map. It is more plausibly a nautical map which gave sailing information. Its importance lies in the fact that, for the first time, the sea voyage and maritime routes which had Cyprus as a stopover during the late Middle Ages, are captured. Moreover, it gives precious information about the coastal line of the island, the holy names, and the toponyms. Needless to say, this map comprises a unique document and offers novel insights into fourteenth century Cyprus. We hope that future research may bring to light more information about these two maps and manuscripts in general.

It is unsurprising that from the fourteenth century onwards, the increase in mobility for trade or/and pilgrimage reasons in the Eastern Mediterranean basin developed the island as a major stopover, which was accompanied by the establishment of a network of new shrines associated with the maritime itineraries. This connectivity is also expressed through a pre-modern series of ship graffiti, dated from the sixteenth century and preserved in churches mainly located in the areas between Famagusta and Larnaca; it has been suggested that they were executed by travellers who wished to disembark and visit shrines which were located on routes that connected the two major ports of the island (Walsh 2007; Michael 2015; Demesticha et al. 2017). The loca sancta discussed in the article were linked directly

or indirectly with water, which was a precious liquid for ships' supplies and also a precious and holy liquid (hagiasma) for religious practices. The majority of maritime pilgrimage sites preserved this miraculous-therapeutic holy water (hagiasma) and provided their visitors with fresh water which was important for their physical survival. Furthermore, most of the coastal shrines were venerated by more than one religious community (Greek, Latins, other denominations of Christianity). The phenomenon of "mixed" or "shared" shrines is not only observable in Cyprus; it is a well-established phenomenon in the Mediterranean area where different religious groups have lived from the medieval past to modern times (cf. Alberta 2012; Couroucli 2014). The presence of different religious groups in the same shrine did not mean that there is no religious or cultural diversity between them. Moreover, the "establishment" of Latin orders in Greek churches, located mainly near coast and ports, may be interpreted in the context of better service and economic exploitation of the Latin pilgrims/travellers. It is difficult to assess the exact role of these maritime shrines within the island. Undoubtedly, they served as a source of revenue and benefited the whole surrounding area, not only from donations but also because of the many people attracted by the shrine. This category of shrines, referred to as "maritime" pilgrimage sites, is clearly related with seamen and it is distinguished from other Cypriot sacred sites located mainly inland. Their connection to the sea routes and sailors gives them a more cosmopolitan air, removes them partly from their local dimension, and integrates them into a wide network of maritime communication.

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Article

Ecclesiastical Economies: The Integration of Sacred and Maritime Topographies of Late Antique Cyprus

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Abstract: This article focusses on the relationship of the church with productive landscapes and coastal topographies within numerous Cypriot contexts of the 4th–8th centuries. Through synthesising the archaeological research and architectural remains of these aspects and categories, the coastal settlements of the island are recontextualised in terms of their mercantile, religious, and cultural networks, on inter- and intraregional scales. The advantages of researching late antique insular societies on local, individual scales and within economic contexts are therefore highlighted. These integrative approaches can illuminate the constructions of religious identity across many coastal contexts, particularly in larger islands with micro-regions and trans-Mediterranean connectivity, like Cyprus. By considering the importance of the administrative and economic roles of the late antique church within these maritime topographies, future archaeological research can integrate both the monumentality and pragmatic aspects of sacred landscapes.

Keywords: Late Antiquity; Cyprus; economy; sacred topography; churches; landscape archaeology; Early Byzantine

1. Introduction

The transformation of agrarian landscapes to incorporate ecclesiastical aspects introduced conceptual boundaries within which settlements operated, communicated, and associated. This article aims to emphasise the advantages of integrating economic and administrative aspects of the church in studying Late Antique archaeology, with a focus on the non-ecclesiastical roles of coastal churches of Cyprus in the 4th–8th centuries. By compiling examples of the ecclesiastical relationships with local economies and productive landscapes, including aspects such as the pilgrimage industry and copper mining, this article considers the pertinence and importance of the economy in Christianised landscapes and coastal topographies. Often described as a crossroads in the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus' maritime connections, vast Christian topography, and eventful late antique history culminate in an expansive region with numerous combinations of civic and liturgical complexes (for Cypriot churches of Late Antiquity throughout the Middle Byzantine period, see Maguire 2012; Papacostas 1999; Megaw 1974; Papageorghiou 1985; Chotzakoglou 2005; Stewart 2008). The following endeavours to supplement the study of late antique Cyprus in regard to coastal archaeology and the church's maintenance of regional supplies, both in maritime networks and hinterland systems.

1.1. Research Context and Methodology

Research on Early and Middle Byzantine churches focusses on architecture, decoration, and historical sources, neglecting non-liturgical annexes and aspects, resulting in various misunderstandings of the Late Antique church (Megaw 1974; Chotzakoglou 2005; Papageorghiou 1986). Earlier scholarship includes the interpretation of the Arab invasions of the 7th century as a catastrophic watershed moment, and as a means to distinguish the Early Byzantine period (4th–7th centuries) from the period of neutrality (7th–10th centuries), but recent research argues for continuity after the Arab raids (Kyrris 1997, pp. 631, 651;

Chrysos 1993, pp. 10–11; Metcalf 2009, pp. 202, 277, 474–75; Armstrong 2009; Gabrieli et al. 2007; Rautman 2003; Winther-Jacobsen 2010; Zavagno 2017; Megaw 2007, pp. 121–31, 136). Regarding Late Antique Cyprus, few studies have placed importance on the economic roles of the church until recently (Parani 2013; Papacostas 2001; Rautman 2014; Metcalf 2009; Vionis and Papantoniou 2017; Papantoniou and Vionis 2018; Kyriakou 2019). This is partly as a result of the archaeological attention paid to monuments such as basilicas and wealthy villas, including research from Maguire, Nicolaou, and Papacostas (Maguire 2012; Nicolaou 2013; Papacostas 1999). In recent decades, excavations and Late Antique studies have investigated the social, religious, and economic contexts of Cypriot churches, shedding light on their architectural, ceramic, numismatic, and sigillographic material as well as their topographical settings (Kyriakou 2019; Papantoniou and Vionis 2018; Rautman 2003; Metcalf 2009; Gabrieli et al. 2007; Given 2018; Stewart 2008; Randall 2013). These studies have extended dates of the use of these churches and sites into the 8th century, which is therefore used as a chronological parameter for this article.

By investigating the administrative and economic motivations of the period, progress can be made within methodological approaches to insular communities and identities. This article synthesises archaeological research and landscape studies to provide an overview of late antique Cyprus and highlight the nuances of similar integrated approaches concerning its sacred coastal topographies. In compiling material corroborating the administrative and economic roles of the coastal Cypriot church, various categories and contexts have emerged: general monumentality and administration in urban centres, subcategories of regional distribution and trade (emporia and warehouses, cabotage, agro-towns, markets and shops, and pilgrimage). The following article surveys these categories and closes with a consideration of the distribution of churches throughout the copper mining landscapes.

The conceptual and theoretical frameworks for this article connect the insularity of Cyprus with maritime connectivity and island archaeology generally. In ongoing revisions of previous scholarship on the dichotomies of urban or rural, collapse or continuity, and ecclesiastical or secular, it is possible to advance knowledge of third spaces and peripheral contexts in coastal topographies and Christianised landscapes (Preiser-Kapeller and Daim 2015; Zavagno 2017; Veikou 2009; Horden and Purcell 2000).

The diverse terminology for harbours in antiquity and the Byzantine world demonstrates the importance of maritime connectivity and trade, including the varying degrees to which port installations changed the topography. One such example is the visibility of the Theodosian harbour in Constantinople (Berger 2015). These categories encompass small natural bays, built anchorages, and large commercial centres with breakwaters and facilities to store cargo (Veikou 2015, pp. 39–40). Agency and connectivity may have influenced which sites modified their urban landscape to access the coast and which refurbished port amenities from antiquity to the Byzantine period.

Scholarship regarding the Christianisation of Mediterranean settlements often denotes the prominence of churches as a form of announcement of the communal religious identity to those approaching (Häussler and Chiai 2020, p. 2; Vionis 2019, p. 78). Whether these monuments encircle a region on hilltops or feature at the liminal space of the harbour, a message can be broadcast by their placement and use of imported marble decoration. The earlier foundation of episcopal basilicas within antique cities occupied the peripheral or available quarters, i.e., near city walls (for example, Church E at Sardis (Jacobs 2012, p. 133)). The multifaceted transformation of the classical city involved modifications of temples, theatres, and civic structures into basilicas, and placement in more visible and important locations such as harbours (Jacobs 2013; Kyriakou 2019, p. 47).

As mentioned by Zavagno, the "archaeology of power" concept is relevant here for understanding the strategies deployed by elites or others at the top of social strata: material remains revealing the structures and actions of those with power can be interpreted within the framework of the church's standing and influence (Fernández Delgado et al. 2013, p. 164; Zavagno 2017, p. 34). Reinforcing and maintaining political and economic control through land ownership manifests in the foundation of settlements, complexes, and

buildings, which display power or status through control of productive facilities. When considered in connection to factors like the financial undertaking of building sanctuaries and political circumstances of the island, these monuments and landscapes become more complex (Papantoniou 2013, pp. 44–49).

Examining the local choices in institutions and processes provides a more precise model for understanding human agency or deference to established imperial or religious authorities, and reactions to political events (locally and in Constantinople). The multi-faceted nature of ecclesiastical complexes demonstrates the pragmatic and individualized situations of each settlement, ranging from monumental visibility within the landscape to small-scale agricultural production. In analysing the other roles and involvements of churches on the coast of Cyprus, more information can be supplied to ongoing discussions of longevity of occupation, connectivity, orientation toward other regions, and Christian historical contexts like autocephaly and synods (Zavagno 2017; Veikou 2015, p. 49).

1.2. Late Antique Cyprus

In Late Antiquity, Cyprus was a wealthy, independent island that was able to build its importance through diverse trade relations as a maritime crossroads. Its socioeconomic and cultural development was shaped by invasions and earthquakes, but also by trans-Mediterranean contact and the lively cult of saints and bishops from the earliest years of Christianity (Deligiannakis 2018). As Christianity developed in the eastern Mediterranean, the Church established a great influence over the island, as evidenced by numerous large 4th–6th century basilicas and the formation of many bishoprics (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of Cyprus and late Roman road network (Adapted from Ancient World Mapping Center, and Dig-TIB, ÖAW).

The church-building of Late Antique Cyprus can be briefly summarised by century following the earthquakes of the mid-4th century. In the late 4th and 5th centuries, many large urban churches were established (Megaw 1974; Papageorghiou 1985). The Roman cities and towns underwent a shift in their topography with these new basilicas encroaching on the forum, city edges, or ports. By the 6th century, Cypriot settlements saw many modifications of their basilicas and construction of even more churches, at least partly due to the new administrative power of the clergy (Kyriakou 2019, p. 50). In the later 5th and 6th centuries, rural and remote churches became more common, which may mirror the shifts in agrarian dispersed populations, the general wealth of the urban centres, and the political stability of the island (Papantoniou and Vionis 2018, pp. 19–21). Examples of these churches outside of metropolitan areas are Kalavasos-*Kopetra*, Panagia Angeloktisti

in Kiti, and Kophinou (Rautman 2003; Papantoniou and Vionis 2018). Renovated and new urban churches of this period include the acropolis basilica in Amathous, Panagia Chrysopolitissa in Nea Paphos, and Soloi (Aupert 1996; Papageorghiou 1986; des Gagniers and Tinh 1985). New churches in the 7th century include one of those at Kalavasos-*Kopetra* and the monumental double basilica at Katalymmata ton Plakoton (Procopiou 2014). The establishment of new basilicas and architectural innovations of the 7th and 8th centuries (on the Karpas Peninsula, St. Lazarus in Kition, etc.) dispute the prior understanding of the Arab invasions as devastating or paralysing (Stewart 2008).

From coastal to inland communities, the church had many obligations and roles in Late Antique Cyprus. Throughout the Mediterranean, the administrative, juristic, and civic duties were taken over by bishops and clergy (as in the *Novellae* of Justinian (128.14) Schoell and Kroll 2014; Rapp 2005, pp. 6–16; Angold and Whitby 2008, pp. 573–74; Wickham 2005, pp. 153–258). Revenue and land ownership as factors in the relationship between a church and the surrounding community both influenced and were influenced by its placement and behaviour within the settlement.

The rural wealth traced through the 6th and 7th centuries relied on the association of a community with a church, as from the Middle Byzantine period onward, many of the countryside basilicas were funded by a personal patron (Papacostas 2015a, 2015b); for rural land use strategies of the 7th century, (see Given et al. 2013a, vol. I, pp. 334–35; Rautman 2000, p. 318). The multiple roles and contexts of churches in the Byzantine Mediterranean are present in Cyprus: necropolis churches, monasteries, martyr shrines and pilgrimage churches, episcopal basilicas, churches established over or next to pagan temples, and those placed at harbours or near production sites. These coastal urban, extra-urban, and hinterland Christian sites demonstrate the complexity of the sacred topography.

Integration of churches into the economic networks of the island can be traced through the materials present, the routes on which they lay, and their placements within the landscape. Olive oil and wine properties of the south coast similarly directed their communication and produce through the nearby ports and trade routes, along which churches were built. For the copper mining of the foothills and Troodos Mountains, the settlement topographies follow the natural resources of ore, water, and timber, and the most direct communication routes for cumbersome products such as ore and metal. As demonstrated in Soloi's hinterland, discrepancies existed between mining communities' administration and whether the product was intended for long-distance export to the imperial mints or for local entrepreneurs (Winther-Jacobsen 2010, p. 84; Graham et al. 2006, p. 361; Given et al. 2013a, vol. I, pp. 329–30; 2013b, vol. II, pp. 197–98; Kassianidou 2000, p. 751). The latter, at Litharkies and Mavrovouni, is not dependent on the landscape placement: being further inland than Skouriotissa and Soloi is not a factor as the mines of Mitsero were located even more centrally within Cyprus. The presence of churches matches the communities at the points of resource extraction, the areas of workshops, routes of export, and coasts. This economic topography therefore becomes a sacred one through its management and control by the church.

2. Ports and Christianity

The association of monumental basilicas with harbours in Late Antiquity is well-known, where the church acts as a beacon, protector of sailors, and preeminent landmark in the urban topography for both locals and visitors. In Cyprus, this is clear in copper mines and workshops (Skouriotissa, Mitsero and Tamassos (Kassianidou 2000; Given and Knapp 2003, p. 74)) and olive oil presses (Hadjisavvas 1992), as creating workshops and settlements on the spot is more efficient than conveying and processing material centrally (Bintliff 2012, pp. 272, 357). While many Late Antique anchorages and ports in Cyprus have not survived or been researched, major sites such as Salamis, Nea Paphos, Amathous, and Kourion all have portside basilicas characteristic of this protective function. A 6th century basilica in Agios Georgios, Pegeia contains an ambo inscribed with "+ ΥΠΕΡ ΕΥΧΗΣ ΝΑΥΤΩΝ", or "in the fulfilment of the vows of sailors", an epigraphic practice not

unknown in Mediterranean dedications, establishing the nautical connection (Michaelides 2001; Nicolaou 2016, pp. 316–18). Another inscription is a graffito of a ship carved into a masonry block at the 6th century basilica of Pyla-*Koutsopetria* in southeast Cyprus (Christou 1994, pp. 689–90; Leonard 2005, p. 428). These coincide with the new status and stronger agricultural production role for Cyprus within the Justinianic *Questura Exercitus* of 536 CE (Lokin 1986). The visual and practical roles of these structures are considerable, including the management and redistribution of imported goods and the presence of warehouses, markets, fairs, and coastal regional trade (Leonard 2005, p. 564; Papageorghiou 1986).

Many Late Antique Cypriot basilicas were established on harbours or coastlines, or prominent on a hilltop, visible from the water. Of the former, the church at Agios Philon was to be protected by inclusion within the later reduced city walls, and one of the churches of Polis-Arsinoe was constructed against the fortification tower close to and overlooking the harbour (du Plat Taylor and Megaw 1981; Najbjerg et al. 2002). The latter category comprises many elevated examples, understandably so given the importance of the maritime routes and communication networks of the 4th–8th century. These basilicas could be observed as beacons or landmarks due to their strategic locations on both sea and land routes. They ranged from monumental centres (Soloi, Amathous, Nea Paphos, Salamis, and Kourion) to the smaller-scale (Karpas peninsula, Pegeia, Agios Kononas, Pyla-*Koutsopetria*, and Mazotos), as well as those constructed or refurbished in the late 6th to late 7th centuries (Agios Lazaros in Larnaca, Soloi, and Akrotiri). The argument that the coastal locations of the Late Antique sites made them easy targets for the mid-7th century invasions is easily supported by mapping these numerous basilicas—many of which are within a few kilometres of the sea.

The ubiquity of basilicas as monumental landmarks in harbour settlements of all sizes is evident throughout the Mediterranean, including Cyprus. In Amathous, four churches encircled the lower town, relatively densely spaced 250–500 m from each other (Aupert 1996; Empereur 2018; Procopiou 2006, 2013). The main coastal road network passed by these churches and through the lower city, indicating their repetitive visibility and centrality. Evenly spaced around the harbour, the churches also demonstrate an ecclesiastical prominence and presence along the routes of regional distribution of goods from larger harbours along the southern coast to smaller ports. The episcopal church potentially had its own anchorage east of the larger port (Empereur and Kozelj 2017; Empereur 2018; Vionis and Papantoniou 2017, p. 280; Kyriakou 2019, pp. 53–54).

Distributive hubs, such as Dreamer's Bay on Akrotiri, were in use for storage from the 4th century CE onwards, relaying produce on a micro- and macro-regional scale (Figure 2). The warehouses at Dreamer's Bay appear to have played a role in the collection and distribution of interregional goods, likely sustaining the communities of the south coast such as Kourion (James and Score 2016). The area contained numerous sites of both ecclesiastical and secular nature in the late antique period. The basilica caves of Lania and the early 7th century martyrium and double basilica of Katalymmata ton Plakoton establish the continued occupation of the southern areas of Akrotiri and the religious communities using the harbour facilities (Procopiou 2014, 2015; Christou 1997, p. 902). For pilgrims and travellers along the south coast of Cyprus, these churches give Akrotiri a sacred character in addition to its commercial functions. Roman and Late Roman sites across Akrotiri signal a widespread population, or an "integrated maritime cultural landscape", not just seasonal warehouse labour (James et al. 2021, p. 18; Kaldelli 2008, p. 200). In this sense, the peninsula and its hinterland can be studied as an entity, rather than examining Dreamer's Bay as a "discrete 'site'" (James et al. 2021, p. 5). Future research of Cypriot coastlines can be informed by this approach, incorporating the regional scale of study with the connectivity and monumentality of the immense martyrium of Katalymmata.
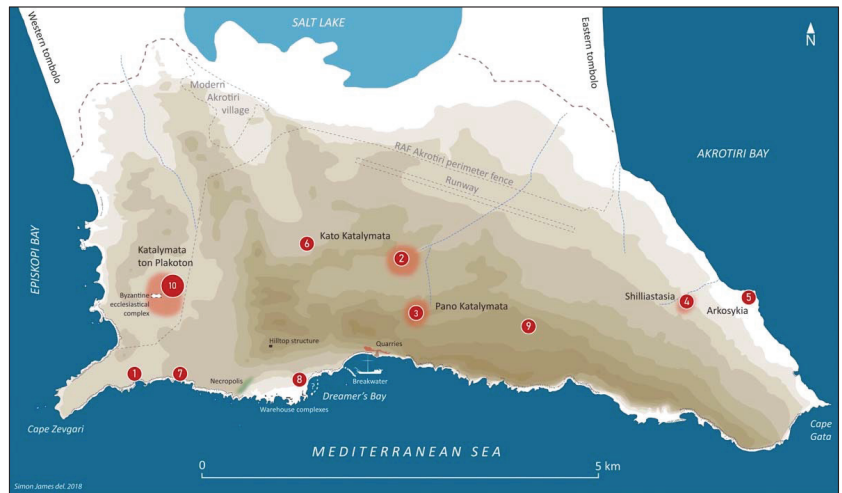
Figure 2. Late Antique sites on the Akrotiri peninsula. 1: Agia Iphigenia; 2: Kato Katalymmata; 3: Pano Katalymmata; 4: Shillastasia; 5: Arkosykia; 6: Agios Markos; 7: Agios Sylas cave; 8: Dreamer's Bay; 9: Lania cave basilicas, 10: Katalymmata ton Plakoton (Adapted from James et al. 2021, p. 19).

Nea Paphos resembles Amathous in its thoroughly Christianised urban landscape, enclosing the harbour with a basilica on either side, in addition to those elsewhere in the settlement. Another church has been identified at the harbour, between Panagia Limeniotissa and Panagia Chrysopolitissa, under the later "Saranda Kolones" castle (Hayes 2003, p. 449). It is unknown whether this church existed contemporaneously with the 7th century glass kiln under the castle, but the 7th century large marble plaque deposited in one of the castle's wells may have belonged to the basilica. The spatial arrangement of the three basilicas evenly around the harbour is also telling of a unified monumental Christian landscape, among the other churches like so-called "Garrison's camp" church and Shryvallos in the upper Ktima area (Giudice et al. 2017; Michail 2018, p. 166).

At Panagia Chrysopolitissa, the so-called bishop's residence is situated between the basilica and the Hellenistic harbour (Figure 3) (*ARDAC* 1967, p. 18; *ARDAC* 1968, pp. 17–18; Karageorghis 1960, p. 292; 1968, p. 351; 1969, pp. 564–66; *AR* 1968–1969, pp. 53–54; Papageorghiou 1969, pp. 82–88; 1985, p. 318; 1986, p. 501; Megaw 1988, p. 140, n. 12; Maier and Karageorghis 1984, p. 301). This residence has not been fully excavated due to its depth—at least 3 or 4 metres lower than the floor level of the basilica. Two of the parallel spaces have doorways at this lower level facing the harbour and might have functioned in the Hellenistic or Roman periods. This building's alignment with the narthex of the basilica indicates that it either predated or was contemporary with the basilica, but also dictated it, via the continued alignment into the construction of the narthex. The atrium and basilica then accommodated the narthex by the sharp angle in the southwest corner of the basilica and the extra northeast wall of the atrium. That both the 4th and 6th century phases of the church align with the residential building indicates that the 4th century basilica communicated with the residence either while it was still used in a secular way, or that it was already modified into a clerical residence. This interpretation is tentative pending further research and publication, but the reuse and modification of the Hellenistic or Roman spaces as an ecclesiastical residence demonstrates the pragmatic factors of basilica construction and placement in this central commercial location.

The basilica's immense size dominated the cityscape as viewed from the sea. Its construction in the available space near the harbour occurred during a period of high mercantile activity in late antique Cyprus. The lavish villa mosaics in the southwest area of Nea Paphos, and the churches, theatre, and agora demonstrate the prosperity and centrality

of the city, due to its role as a capital and the historical Palaipaphos. The basilicas and the repairs to the Roman houses attest to the growing wealth of Nea Paphos in the 5th and 6th centuries. In addition to the numerous industries of Nea Paphos (copper, ship-building, olive oil, and amphorae production), it has been suggested that in the 6th century, the city also participated in the trade of silk (Maier and Karageorghis 1984, p. 295). The basilicas were deliberately constructed as visibly and centrally as possible, and not just in urban areas that were vacant in antiquity. The monumentality of the harbour and the surrounding two or three basilicas, and the economic and cultural importance of the city, confirm Nea Paphos as a significant coastal centre and reflect known protective, administrative, and symbolic aspects of many Christian complexes (Vionis 2017, pp. 149, 158; Kyriakou 2019, p. 52). These administrative and symbolic roles may have been enacted by the churches surrounding the harbour, as focal points amidst civic and mercantile activity. Panagia Chrysopolitissa functioned as a visual monument integrated into the Late Roman city, adding to Nea Paphos' historical role as first port of call for imports into Cyprus.

Fifteen kilometres north of Nea Paphos, the unidentified site referred to as Agios Georgios in Pegeia reached a height of occupation in the 5th–7th centuries (Bakirtzis 1996, 2001, 2003). Its three 6th century basilicas were decorated with Proconnesian marble and accompanied by a baptistery, accommodation, clerical residence, and olive oil production facilities. Constantinopolitan marble furnishing as a compensation for basilicas funded by profits from local products and harbouring of *annona* ships is already known at Karpathos in the Dodecanese (Deligiannakis 2016). The excavator suggests a link between this site and the imperial grain supply, based on the marble and its location on the west coast of Cyprus, on a shipping path between Egypt and the Aegean (Bakirtzis 1995). By recontextualising the site in terms of the island Geronisos (280 m west) and nearby Nea Paphos, an alternative perspective is also possible. The presence of a small-medium potential harbour more than 1.3 km away, past numerous suitable havens, indicates that if Agios Georgios participated in the grain supply at all, it was likely one of many sites including Nea Paphos and Akrotiri. It has also been noted that the majority of the site is unexcavated and would therefore surpass the needs of a small stopover station (Michaelides 2001, p. 53). The workshops and accommodation at basilica A, the olive oil press in the annexes of basilicas C, the bathhouse between these two basilicas, and religious activity on Geronisos tie the site to its hinterland and to pilgrimage (Bakirtzis 2020, p. 28; Bakirtzis 2001).
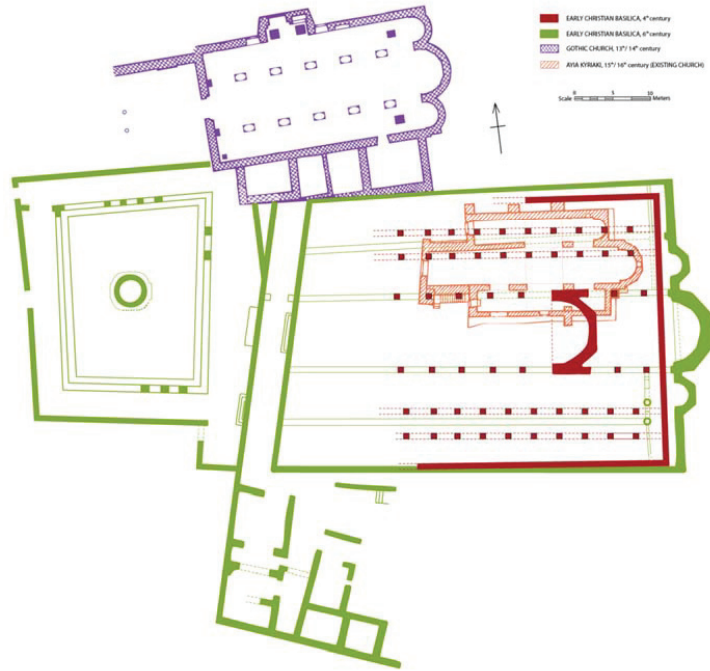
Figure 3. Plan of Panagia Chrysopolitissa and view south of the residence (Plan courtesy of the Department of Antiquities Cyprus, Photo: C. Keane).

3. Regional Distribution and Trade

The varieties of production, distribution, and consumption are primarily visible in the coasts and hinterlands of Cyprus. Political circumstances of the past fifty years have resulted in more archaeological attention on the south coast, illuminating numerous coastal settlements and their cabotage. While this has caused an unbalanced view of the island, ongoing research such as ceramic studies and underwater surveys continue to contribute data to the field. This prioritisation of the south coast is partly due to the thorough publications of the Vasilikos Valley (Rautman 2003; Todd 2004), Kourion's episcopal basilica (Megaw 2007), the Amathous harbour (Empereur and Kozelj 2017; Empereur 2018), the Maroni-*Petrera* basilica (served by the anchorage at Maroni-*Vrysouthkia*) (Manning and Manning 2002; Manning and Conwell 1992), the LR1 ceramics kiln at Zygi-*Petrini* (Manning et al. 2000), and Pyla-*Koutsopetria* (Caraher et al. 2014), and partly due to the unavailability of the north coast.

As will be discussed below, the prominence of basilicas in both smaller and larger ports is accompanied by the warehouses of Dreamer's Bay and the prevalence of pithoi at regional organisational churches. Their roles in markets, fairs, and daily labourer's communities, span from the production of goods and communal resources (threshing floors, ovens, etc.), to the revenue and land ownership of the clergy. Evidence of the church's role in controlling fairs and economic activity corresponds with religious assemblies like synods or pilgrimage, which were another source of revenue. Despite the relative invisibility of markets in the material record, textual sources and some excavations reveal church-initiated fairs, usually for celebrations of saints or martyrs, as a continuation of the previous pagan festivities, which also catered to social and mercantile needs in addition to religious. The revenue gathered by the church at these fairs matched the activity of other landowners. For Cyprus, the only source mentioning a fair is that of the *Vita of St. Spyridon*, the 4th century bishop of Trimithous (Van den Ven 1953, pp. 96–99). A comment is made concerning the cheap garments being sold at the annual winter fair held outside the village church, a fair ostensibly held in memory of the saint (Leonard 2005, p. 933; Christodoulou 1959; Parani 2013; see Vryonis 1981, p. 214 for a discussion of the pagan *panēgyris*). In addition to the hospitality for pilgrims, basilicas retained many administrative and civic duties as monumental markers in coastal and rural settlements.

The organisation of communities around churches in Late Antiquity resulted from many factors: the general establishment of Christianity in Cyprus in the forms of bishoprics, increases in prosperity, and rebuilding after the 4th century earthquakes. For hinterlands and peripheral areas, market nodes and agro-towns functioned for the micro-regions and were similarly endowed with churches (Papacostas 2013). For example, Alassa was located between the copper mines and the coast and centred the industrial and agricultural facilities at the church (Flourentzos 1996). Similarly, the basilica at Kophinou was located inland from the coast and controlled the surrounding micro-region (Papantoniou and Vionis 2018). Throughout the 5th and 6th centuries, the autocephaly of the Cypriot church cemented Christianity in fifteen bishoprics and countless villages with new and refurbished basilicas (von Falkenhausen 1999, pp. 27–29). This was accompanied by the imperial reliance on the island for agricultural produce, copper, and its maritime links.

The institutional church grew in power and authority throughout the Byzantine Empire in Late Antiquity, replacing civic bodies with bishops and clergy to the extent of local administration and jurisdiction. Authority over resources and socio-economic issues would naturally be reflected in the architectural proximity between churches with mills or presses, particularly in medium and smaller towns (for the church's legislation over economic practice, see Laiou 2013). The basilicas themselves were significant investments of labour and resources and, in areas like Kophinou, represented a social and cultural centre within a day's journey for the Xeros Valley's communities (Papantoniou and Vionis 2018, pp. 20–23; Vionis and Papantoniou 2017, pp. 279–82). Similarly, the mining community between Skouriotissa, Soloi, and Polis gathered at chapels and basilicas in each location

(Bakirtzis and Papageorghiou 2018, pp. 318–20; Given et al. 2013b, vol. II, pp. 135–36; des Gagniers and Tinh 1985; Papalexandrou 2012, p. 30; Raber 1987, pp. 307–8).

3.1. Emporia and Warehouses

The word ἐμπόριον denotes a commercial centre, as compared to the Greek terminology for a port (λιμήν), satellite harbour or town (ἐπίνειον or κατάβολος), a bay or natural harbour (ὅρμος), or anchorages (σκάλα) (and small anchorages, Ἀρσανάς) (Veikou 2015, p. 40). In Veikou's analysis of port-cities and coastal settlements, a distinction is made between those of antiquity and a form of emporion which came about in the 5th–7th centuries: coastal sites "oriented toward the sea" and located in the vicinity of large urban centres (for example, Chrysoupolis on the Strymon, near Christoupolis (modern Kavala) (Veikou 2015, p. 49)). For Cyprus, this would include Agios Georgios, Pegeia (15 km from Nea Paphos), Pyla-*Koutsopetria* (11 km from Kition), and Akrotiri-*Katalymmata ton Plakoton/Dreamer's Bay* (11–13 km from Kourion).

The spread of 5th–8th century ceramics south from Pegeia to Nea Paphos represents the density of maritime traffic along the west coast of Cyprus and highlights the multi-faceted nature of Agios Georgios as an emporion among its other characteristics (large, important site with lavishly decorated basilicas and pilgrimage roles) (Bakirtzis 2020; Harpster 2005, p. 357). The establishment of this ecclesiastical centre created a sacred and economic topography, indicated by the ceramic distribution and the installation of an olive press in the annex connected to the north aisle of Basilica C. Research into the potential harbour of Agios Georgios is focused on Maniki Bay, more than 1.5 km south of the basilicas, which bears parallel rock-cut channels for pulling small to medium boats ashore (Leonard 2005, pp. 598–99; Geronisos Island Excavation 2018). The spread of ceramics includes 6th century pithoi and Palestinian amphorae, the latter demonstrating a mercantile connection with the Levant (Connelly 2010, pp. 308–9, Figures 60 and 61). It also connects the pilgrimage/monastic site of Geronisos with Agios Georgios and this harbour, considering the presence of pilgrims en route to or returning from Palestine. In this sense, the maritime activity at Agios Georgios and Geronisos may not be restricted to purely cabotage and coastal dispersion of goods from Nea Paphos.

Pyla-*Koutsopetria* is another version of these suburban or rural emporia, although only the basilica and an adjoining structure have been partly excavated. A harbour is not preserved, but the survey team conclude that an embayment did exist into the medieval period (Caraher 2021). After the mid-7th century, interventions such as supportive buttressing walls and plastering over of windows, continued until the site was abandoned. The site was strategically placed on a sloping hillside on both coastal and inland road networks from Amathous to Kition and Salamis, and the popular sea lane along southern Cyprus. As such, the hill ridge above the church at Pyla-*Koutsopetria* may have served as a landmark and crossroads.

Of the few excavated warehouses of Late Antique Cyprus, Dreamer's Bay and Nea Paphos meet the characteristics of warehouse storage based on their size and port-side location. Both sites were used or modified into the 5th–7th centuries, contemporary with nearby churches (Kourion and churches on Akrotiri near Dreamer's Bay, and the dense distribution of churches in Nea Paphos) (Leonard 2005, p. 514; Procopiou 2015, pp. 206–9; Papageorghiou 1986). The facilitation of movement of goods from ships either into the rest of Cyprus or onward in the eastern Mediterranean is clear, especially given their locations as a first port of call from Egypt. These sites with storage facilities demonstrate the intentional first-phase plan of their contexts, as compared to Pyla and Agios Georgios at Pegeia. Pyla may have supplemented the area with a harbour if Kition's began to silt up in the Late Antique period, but it is just as likely to have functioned simultaneously along with the other harbours of the south coast. Agios Georgios relied on its hinterland for sustenance and profited from its coastal location, its pilgrimage accommodation on Geronisos, and its proximity to Nea Paphos. Sites such as Agios Georgios, Dreamer's Bay,

and Pyla illustrate the type of Late Antique emporia designated by Veikou and represent the variation of Christian maritime settlements in Cyprus.

3.2. Coastal Cabotage

The maintenance of maritime connection between these religious nodes can be addressed on a small scale of mobility, namely, the short-haul shipping between ports known as cabotage. In Cyprus, this continuous movement in short segments functions to redistribute products from the larger ports and to facilitate goods for export. In terms of religious presence in these contexts, Kowalzig notes that "religious networks are in constant motion, in an incessant process of transformation, adaptation, and realignment", just as networks continuously expand, "adding nodes and producing shortcuts" (Kowalzig 2018, p. 96). Late Antique churches were integrated into the economic and mercantile systems in Cyprus from production to export, and from import to regional distribution. This ranged from churches as civic and social centres for dispersed communities, to pilgrimage stops along coastlines (or even networks between traveling bishops and clergy).

A satellite harbour could function in a similar, but lesser, capacity to these late antique emporia, such as facilitating the movement of commerce along the coast to smaller communities. Leonard's work on the Roman coasts of Cyprus draws attention to installations at satellite harbours (e.g., Zygi-*Petrini*) and smaller anchorages (e.g., Kioni on the Akamas peninsula), many of which have associated churches (Leonard 2005, pp. 473–83; 1995). This provides a more balanced view to complement prior attention to the south coast of the island between Kourion and Pyla as densely and regularly populated with late antique settlements (including Amathous, and Kalavasos, Lemesos, Zygi-*Petrini*, Maroni-*Petrera*, Pyla-*Koutsopetria*, Mazotos-*Petounta*, and Kition). Such studies identified settlements on bays and beaches, which moored smaller boats transporting produce and materials to and from the larger commercial centres (Karyda 2016). Early Byzantine basilicas have also been noted east of Pyla, at Katalymmata and Agia Thekla, both smaller communities oriented toward the coast (Hadjisavvas 1997, pp. 27–28, 32–33; 2008, pp. 8–21).

Analysis of regional administration in rural Late Antiquity has framed these smaller coastal points as another form of a "hinterland" insofar as they meet the definitions of providing material for export and receiving imports via central ports. Consequently, the different areas of production did not need to network to and from a central hub but can gather within rural catchments using the Roman road network and the coastal sailing framework (Leidwanger 2020, p. 181). In the context of the south coast, Amathous, Kition, and the combination of Kourion and Dreamer's Bay would appear to function as the larger ports. The many south coast sites bear evidence of anchors and ceramics and their locations' protection from wind point to their use as small commercial stops for coastal cabotage in the late antique period (Karyda 2016, pp. 84–87; Rautman 2003, p. 241). This results in a relatively dense distribution of churches and ports along the coastline.

The rise in Late Antique sites has been interpreted as a result of general prosperity, more well-established networks, investment in Constantinople's wealth, and economic expansion resulting from imperial investments and administrative reforms (Caraher and Pettegrew 2016, p. 167). Production, consumption, and imported goods are evident across sites of urban and rural natures (for example, Panagia-*Ematousa* in Kition's hinterland, occupied until the mid-7th century, and perhaps later into the 8th century (Decker 2009; Sørensen and Winther-Jacobsen 2006; Winther-Jacobsen 2006; Lund 2006)). Elsewhere, local products, such as olive oil and copper, were moved through these smaller ports to the main hubs. Oil produced at the olive presses at Galinoporni-*Trachonas* and Aphendrika on the Karpas peninsula may have been shipped toward Salamis-Constantia for its local sustenance or traded in the Eastern Mediterranean (from the ports on the Karpas or from Salamis). Similarly, the even distribution of late antique ceramics between Polis and Soloi may correspond with the coastal shipping of copper or metal products from the bays by Soloi.

The presence of churches at many of these satellite ports raises the question of ecclesiastical administration and control over mercantile activity. These basilicas at harbours are of note at the remote end of the Karpas peninsula or at small anchorages like Mazotos on the south coast. An indication of this intersection is the use of pithoi as storage in the annexes and/or vicinity of such coastal basilicas. Even at sites where harbour installations did not survive, grain storage is indicated by the numerous pithoi at an otherwise unrelated location (i.e., not in a bishop's residence). Agioi Pente at Geroskipou, the coastal basilica at Kourion, Pyla-*Koutsopetria*, and Kalavasos-*Kopetra* are all examples of this large pithoi sherd yield (Michaelides 2014, p. 12; Hayes 2007, pp. 438–39; Caraher et al. 2014; Rautman 2003). Elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean, material evidence of agricultural activity at basilicas ranges from pithoi, tanks for olive oil or wine, storage rooms or houses, and production facilities (Saradi 2006). One of the more common categories, rooms with oil and wine production installations, includes sites such as Dion (Basilica "Extra Muros"), Bjagoudi Epanomis, Sikyon, Aigileia, and Panormos (Mailis 2011, p. 147). Annexes serving as storage rooms in Arkitsa and Lechaion (Basilica of Martyr Codratos) differ from those of Brauron and Eleutherna, in that the latter contain bread stamps, ovens, hearths, and mills. The baptistery at Mazotos-*Petounta* (Cyprus) has two submerged pithoi in a room adjoining the baptismal chapel (Georgiou 2013, pp. 121–23). Whether the grain was kept for distribution as alms or for milling and baking in the church complex, or for sale to the region, it is noteworthy that storage overlapped between imperial warehouses and those on church property (Laiou 2002, p. 720). For the grain supply and distribution (see Harvey 1989, p. 206; Kaplan 1991; *The Book of the Eparch*, 18:1-4 (Koder 1991)). Ecclesiastical administration of grain and bread production and consumption encompasses liturgical bread, bread stamps, and monastic diets (Galavaris 1970). This is also visible at the episcopal basilica of Amathous, where a flour mill and workbench were installed after the mid-7th century damage (Christou 1997, pp. 904–5; *ARDAC* 1996, pp. 47–48; Procopiou 1996, p. 164). The ceramics found in many of these sites show links to the Aegean, North Africa, Syria-Palestine, and Anatolia, affirming the importance and connectivity of the regions using these local ports (Rautman and McClellan 1990, pp. 232–34).

Church-controlled trade in the form of ship ownership or other maritime oversight is worth mentioning, such as the priest ship-captain of Yassıada, identified by inscriptions on a steelyard and ceramics (Bass and van Doorninck 1982). The underwater scatter of amphorae at Episkopi Bay, the coast between Pegeia and Nea Paphos, and promontories such as Cape Apostolos attests to seafaring activity in the 5th–8th centuries, potentially including ecclesiastical cargo intended for supplying Heraclian troops in Syria-Palestine (Harpster 2005, pp. 358, 401).

Within the stretch of the south coast, the surveyed area surrounding the church at Maroni-*Petrera* contained stone elements of olive oil production (settling vats, weightstone, and press base) and querns for grain milling (Manning and Manning 2002, pp. 65–76). It has been understood that the valley of Petrera exported its olive oil and/or wheat in locally produced amphorae via the nearby anchorages. Imported ceramics found at Petrera demonstrate the site's connections to the eastern Mediterranean, from Egypt to the Aegean (Manning and Manning 2002, p. 78).

The difference in decorative wealth between coastal Cypriot churches, shown by their imported marble, might correlate with their maritime connectivity, economic gain from exploited agricultural and mining resources, or sociocultural trends in various communities. For example, the basilica at Pyla (40–70 ha) yielded opus sectile fragments, while Kalavasos (4 ha) and Maroni-*Petrera* (1 ha) were paved with gypsum and limestone (with the exception of the Area V basilica which did yield opus sectile). The Theotokos relief at Kalavasos was carved in imitation of larger churches (Caraher et al. 2014, p. 268; Rautman 2014, p. 49; Manning and Manning 2002, p. 21). Further archaeological research might elucidate the complex intersections of wealth, identity, patronage, and political events.

These settlements fall between many definitions and dichotomies: emporia/anchorages, urban/rural, civic/religious, and wealthy yet without every civic amenity. Veikou analyses

the correlation between these middle ground attributes alongside the pattern of a lack of built harbours at these sites (Veikou 2015, pp. 52–53). It is possible that such harbours were used contemporaneously and independently of the large urban ports in the vicinity, and that networks of production and trade overlapped due to social and cultural factors. In later centuries, as ships with smaller designs were prevalent, the Middle Byzantine tendency to allow Antique and Late Antique harbours to fall into disrepair without maintenance could be explained by the ubiquity of these small anchorages. The terminology of a late 9th century text mirrors this, using the word ὅρμος (a bay or natural harbour) for lightweight transport at Ephesus (Gerolymatou 2008).

This pattern during Late Antiquity reflects Leidwanger's description that pragmatism was favoured over monumentality, as compared to port structures of antiquity (Leidwanger 2013, p. 239). Harbour locations and facilities were "opportunistic;" that is to say, they functioned as economically as possible. From the view of Horden and Purcell, frameworks like these consisted of many "nodes of density in a matrix of connectivity" (Horden and Purcell 2000, p. 393). Models such as these can help to highlight the variety of socioeconomic arrangements in island maritime environments. The presence of churches throughout the satellite ports and communities reflects the opportunistic participation of ecclesiastical authorities in local economies, but also in establishing connectivity.

3.3. Agro-Towns

The agricultural landscape of the south coast plains discussed above has focussed on those directly on the sea, or within 10 km of the coast with established exporting routes (e.g., Kalavasos, Alaminos, and Maroni). The prominence of basilicas in topographies like agrarian valleys allowed for a centralised hub of administration from the 6th century, in particular: the communication and organisation of produce and artisanal products could be created, redistributed, and exported from the agro-town. In Cyprus, the term "agro-town" is often used in reference to the Xeros Valley and its central node, Kophinou (Papantoniou and Vionis 2018). From the 6th century, settlements like Kophinou were organised around the foci of churches, extending to hamlets and farms within a certain radius. Churches such as Panagia Kophinou could be prominent in the agricultural production, redistribution, and organisation of goods. Included in this category are Kalavasos and the Vasilikos Valley, and Linou-*Vrysi tou Haji Christophi*. Similarly, Politiko-*Phorades* (a small settlement with agricultural ceramics), and Malounda-*Panagia Khrysopandanassa* (a church with spolia, also surrounded by Late Roman ceramics) likely supported a mining community near Tamassos and Mitsero (Given et al. 1999, p. 27). This presents another thematic category to nuance the traditional discourse of landscape dichotomies (urban vs. rural, coastal vs. inland, local- vs. long-distance trade connections, etc.).

Aside from the large urban centres of Cyprus, most settlements feature a mix of characteristics in size, fortifications, religious topographies (monastic and episcopal, but also commercial and mercantile), harbours, distances from exploited sources, and remoteness from the coast. The overlapping characteristics of Late Antique Cypriot communities allow for many sites to be discussed in multiple categories and underlines the redundancy of categorisation into dichotomies. For example, Pyla has been described as a market town, minor port, and a potential monastery (Caraher et al. 2014, p. 294). The ongoing scholarship for ceramics provides more accurate dates for these sites, but theories conflict over whether larger ports were out of use in Late Antiquity, which would necessitate more activity from the smaller settlements like Pyla. By contrast, it would appear that the establishment of Salamis as the new provincial capital provided extra incentive for the region to flourish, giving smaller communities a market hub to send local products to and in which to live and work. According to the field survey, Pyla experienced a sudden expansion of four times its pre-4th century size (Caraher et al. 2014). Although Pyla lacks historical and epigraphical data which would contribute to the understanding of Cypriot donors and elites, the extent of information on settlement growth would appear to correlate with the building of churches in the 4th and 5th centuries. The conceptual boundaries of

a settlement, religious community, valley, coastline, or industrial landscape were likely transformed with the association of churches and monasteries.

3.4. Markets and Shops

Similar to the harbour remains, the market areas (agora, macella, shops, etc.) of Late Antique Cyprus are also relatively unexcavated apart from Nea Paphos, Kourion, Amathous, and Salamis (Miszk and Papuci-Władyka 2016; Papuci-Władyka et al. 2018; Christou 2013; Aupert 1996; Prête 2007; Flourentzos 2002; Argoud et al. 1975). Those attached to basilica complexes had a better chance of being uncovered due to the archaeological priority given to monuments over domestic and industrial life, e.g., the annexes of Pegeia's Basilica C, the civic intersection by Polis' E.F2 basilica, and the Huilerie in Salamis between the Campanopetra and Agios Epifanios (Bakirtzis 2003; 2019, p. 15; Papalexandrou and Caraher 2012, pp. 273–74; Najbjerg et al. 2002; Argoud et al. 1980). Many of the workshops and shops have been found via their presence in churches and annexes following damages of the 7th century, for example the episcopal and acropolis churches of Amathous, Agia Triada Gialousa, and the episcopal church in Kourion.

It is also possible to infer the presence of markets in these larger hubs by the growth and activity of smaller surrounding settlements. In the case of Salamis, the prosperity of the Karpas Peninsula and the south-eastern coast (Pyla) likely interacted via the circulation of goods to and from Salamis and increased in employment. Nucleated settlements with outlying farms founded in fertile areas were connected largely through the Roman road network in addition to the maritime links. The wealth fostered by gathering at markets and assembling economic surpluses (whether agricultural or in terms of manufactured goods like ceramics, glass, etc.) would have stimulated the growth of market towns. As a landowner and local authority, the church played a role in many stages of economic life and as a result could sponsor the construction or renovation of churches. A similar dynamic occurs in late antique Kos and in parts of the Dodecanese (Deligiannakis 2016, p. 66). The church as a communal focal point and meeting place included philanthropic and legal duties, but also functioning as a market location, as indicated by adjacent market stall post holes and workshops (Leone 2007, p. 236). In Late Antique Cyprus, this intersection of the church with mercantile activity is demonstrated through workshops and shops in Pegeia, the Huilerie in Salamis, and Agia Varvara in Amathous.

3.5. Pilgrimage Industry

As noted in the corpus of funerary inscriptions from Korykos in southern Anatolia, many ecclesiastical figures did not participate in the working of productive labour but rather provided services to the working class. This included providing alms to the poor and taking care of the fiscal aspects of land ownership, church repair, etc., many of which appear to have been under the jurisdiction of the deacons. These inscriptions provide insight into these socio-economic relationships and occupations of the northeast Mediterranean, via numerous mentions of the clergy's secondary roles, for example "a lector-wine-importer, a presbyter-potter, a presbyter-money-lender, a subdeacon-net-maker, and a subdeacon-cider-maker" (Trombley 1987, p. 17, nos. 682, 650, 676, 463, 760). Trombley points out that these roles contributed to the employment and sustenance of the labourers, in contrast to an argument regarding the church's exploitation of labour (Trombley 1987, p. 18). The diverse administrative roles within the Late Antique church ranged from psalmists and deacons to lectors, and among their land ownership and revenue were the facets of pilgrimage activity.

Given its proximity to the Levant, Anatolia, and Egypt, Cyprus has an early Christian relevance (through association with SS. Paul, Barnabas, and Mark (Acts 9:27; 11:19–26)), as well as a later popularity with pilgrims (both locally, transitionally, and between Cyprus and Abu Mena near Alexandria). Although Cyprus is often mentioned as a stopover point on pilgrim's itineraries, domestic buildings at basilicas are not securely tied to the hospitality industry. However, the journeys of St. Willibald, among others, confirm the

island's popularity on pilgrimage itineraries, as is well-known from the south coast of Anatolia (Wilkinson 1977). The impact of pilgrimage accommodation on local Cypriot settlements is not as well documented as elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean; however, it could be suggested through hospice structures, ceramic imports, and resulting economic profits. The following three Cypriot sites illustrate this participation in the pilgrimage itineraries and construction of sacred topographies, but further investigation is required to draw conclusions of the benefits of the pilgrimage economy on these micro-regions.

3.5.1. Geronisos

The excavations of Geronisos, the island west of Agios Georgios at Pegeia (Figure 4), have established the presence of a community in the 6th and 7th centuries (Connelly 2002; 2010; Connelly and Wilson 2002). In addition to cisterns, olive presses, and domestic rooms, a structure on the eastern side of the island has been identified as a vaulted subterranean room beneath the narthex of a basilica long since eroded into the sea (Connelly 2010, pp. 306–11). The cisterns could support a handful of people and the olive press and sheep or goat skeletal remains indicate a domestic/semi-permanent residence. Whether this pertains to pilgrims, monks, and/or a small garrison, there is no doubt that the island could host overnight visitors, a role it had fulfilled in the Hellenistic period as well (Karageorghis 1983, p. 945; Connelly 2002). Pilgrimage ampullae from Abu Mina in Egypt were found at Agios Georgios, and part of a pilgrim's flask was recovered from a cistern on Geronisos, placing these sites as potential accommodation stopovers for pilgrims traveling in the Eastern Mediterranean (Connelly and Wilson 2002, p. 283; Bakirtzis 2020, pp. 31–32).
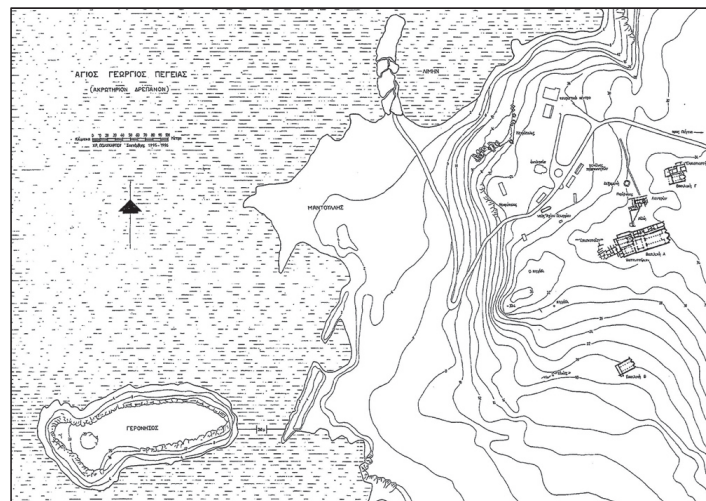
Figure 4. Plan of Agios Georgios, Pegeia (Raptis and Vassiliadou 2005, p. 200, courtesy of the Greek Archaeological Mission at Agios Georgios Pegeias).

Pegeia's wealth, Constantinopolitan influence, and relative safety from attacks all hint at a role of a pilgrimage stopover, in addition to an industrial one. If a basilica and monastery existed on Geronisos, they would function congruently with the extravagant churches on the mainland, which may have grown as a result of the increased pilgrim traffic towards Jerusalem. The pilgrim ampulla found in the complex west of Basilica A and an Alexandrian amphora found at Geronisos indicate the contact Pegeia's residents and visitors had with Egypt, and the sea winds would have made traveling east from the Aegean a favourable route towards western Cyprus (Connelly and Wilson 2002, pp. 274–75). Additionally, the industrial exploitation of the countryside of Nea Paphos and Pegeia, and the Christian draw of St. Paul's reputation in Nea Paphos, could have benefited a site

like Pegeia in quick expansion into an ecclesiastical landscape of its own (Davis 2012). The olive presses and hospices attached to both larger churches only support this idea, as self-sufficient accommodation, especially considering the high quality domestic and transport ceramics (Bakirtzis 2001, p. 165; 1996, pp. 154, 156).

The connection between 6th century Geronisos and 6th/7th century Pegeia could fit within monasticism, pilgrimage, or as one cohesive site which was modified and expanded on the mainland. The difficulty of accessing Geronisos depends more on its 21 m steep ascent from the sea, rather than its 280 m distance from the mainland. Fulfilling the remoteness of late antique monastic habitats, Geronisos was suitable as a seasonal or short-term retreat for monks or clergy from the Agios Georgios ecclesiastical centre. Increased pilgrimage activity may have resulted from the new level of maritime traffic along the southwestern coast of Cyprus, both for the *annona* routes and interregional contact across Cyprus with its new increase in building and wealth.

3.5.2. Salamis-Constantia

The basilicas of Agios Epifanios and Campanopetra were both venerated by pilgrims in Late Antiquity. Sources from the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries mention Salamis as a stopping point along pilgrimage routes in the eastern Mediterranean on the way to Phoenicia and Jerusalem (Antoninus Placentius (Milani 1977, p. 35); Anastasius of Sinai (Flusin 1992); Willibald (Wilkinson 1977, pp. 22, 79)). There is also a mention of an early 7th century visit by John the Almsgiver to the relics of Barnabas and Epifanios, after returning from Egypt (Festugière 1974, vol. XIII, p. 328). Evidence of pilgrimage or monastic accommodation around the atrium of the church of Agios Barnabas is visible in the current topography (Stewart 2008, p. 137).

The 5th century episcopal church, Agios Epifanios, contained the eponymous bishop's burial in the south aisle. Directly on the coast, the Campanopetra church was built in the later 5th century, also as a pilgrimage site, perhaps as a martyrion for Barnabas (Megaw 2006, pp. 399–403). The excavators suggest that it was rather designated as a basilica to hold a relic of the True Cross, taking architectural inspiration from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Roux 1998; Megaw 2006). The basilica's direct access to the sea and architecture allowed for a processional route around the east atrium and basilica, north apse, and treasury (Roux 1998; Metcalf 2009, p. 368). Corridors on either side of the basilica facilitate direct access from the western atria to the eastern atrium, bypassing the basilica. The presence of a large stone vessel with holes (modified from an animal trough) in the north aisle may have functioned as a sarcophagus through which one could pour oil to be sanctified. The continued pilgrimage to Salamis for into the 7th and 8th centuries denotes the importance of the city and its churches.

3.5.3. Katalymmata ton Plakoton

A similar processional route is visible in the early 7th century basilica at Akrotiri-*Katalymmata ton Plakoton*, the architecture of which imitates that of Abu Mena in Egypt (Figure 5) (Procopiou 2014, p. 83). Pilgrims would access the burials via the ambulatory colonnades. The interior colonnades separate the central aisle and bema from the transept, which was supplemented with martyr burials on five of the six walls. In a liturgical celebration, the gifts could be processed from the diakonikon, past the reliquaries and burials, before being brought to the bema. The site was built after 617 CE (according to a coin found under the martyrium walls) and abandoned around 641 CE or later (Procopiou 2014, p. 76). The basilica has been attributed to the activity of John the Almsgiver, whose return from Egypt in the early 7th century was connected to the introduction of refugees fleeing the Persian invasions in the Levant and Egypt. Burials in the western church may have included the remains of the apostle James and the protomartyr Stephen, which John is said to have saved from the oncoming sieges (Stewart 2018, p. 143). A cave inscription west of the Kourion cliffs names two Beirut men, Sergios and Nektavos, who have been interpreted as refugees as well (Procopiou 2018, pp. 91–93). The arrival of refugees may

have contributed to the increase in demographic and economic activity, which in turn is visible through the patterns of church-building.
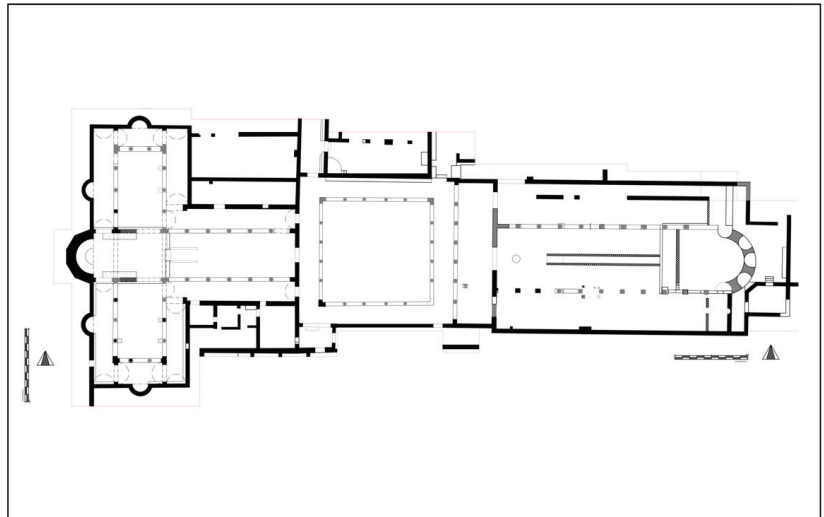

Figure 5. Katalymmata ton Plakoton basilicas (Procopiou 2018, p. 86).

Connections between Cyprus and Egypt were already established through ceramic studies of Late Roman amphorae and maritime routes, but additional information stems from hagiographic texts. The popularity of Egypt among Cypriot pilgrims, particularly in the 7th century, centred around the shrines of Kyros, John, and Menas (Papacostas 2001, p. 113 (citing Festugière 1974, pp. 345, 362, 409)). Cypriots also frequented the shrine of Thekla near Seleucia in Cilicia (Papacostas 2001, p. 114; Vryonis 1981, p. 200). The pilgrimage routes between Egypt, Palestine, and southern Anatolia certainly interacted with those from every side of Cyprus, including Geronisos, Agios Tychonas, and Salamis. Textual sources (Papacostas 2001) and ceramic studies (Armstrong 2009) testify to the connectivity of Cyprus and pilgrimage routes. The presence and movement of pilgrims throughout the area contributed to creating and maintaining sacred topographies amidst the mercantile activity of the Cypriot coasts.

3.5.4. Construction and Church Architecture

It is worth noting the administrative role of the church and clergy over construction activity, a phenomenon which has so far been traced in workshops of liturgical furnishings and mosaics (Nicolaou 2013, p. 170; Michaelides 2020). In Bowden's study of late antique Epirus, he proposes that the construction of churches resulted from a combination of donations from bishops or the community and free labour, but that the churches themselves still provided "testimony to the rise of a new elite in late antique society" (Bowden 2001, pp. 57–68). The influence of an individual over the architecture of early basilicas in Cyprus has been suggested for Agios Spyridon in Trimithous, Agios Epifanios in Salamis, and Akrotiri-*Katalymmata ton Plakoton*. The mosaic inscription at Trimithous names a Karterios as the mosaicist decorating the church under the direction of Spyridon, although this is a tenuous connection (Deligiannakis 2018, p. 345; Nicolaou 2001, p. 14; Efthymiadis 2018, p. 109).

In Maguire's analysis, he traces Epifanios' historical movements leading to the construction of the seven-aisled basilica in Salamis (Maguire 2012, pp. 63–96). He notes stylistic outliers, such as the transverse misalignment of the columns and supports, by comparison to other eastern Mediterranean churches where Epifanios had travelled or

lived. The Salamis basilica's similar proportions and scale to that of Mt. Sion in Jerusalem leads Maguire to suggest that the bishop strongly influenced the architectural design of his basilica.

Just as Epifanios directed the architecture of his eponymous basilica two centuries prior, John the Almsgiver relocated from Alexandria to Amathous and likely influenced Katalymmata ton Plakoton's imitation of Abu Mena. The basilica of Abu Mena is Justinianic and existed for decades before John's departure for Cyprus. Another potential indication of the Alexandrian martyrion is an inscription at Katalymmata: a marble table with the names of Paul and Menas (Procopiou 2015, p. 197). John's connection to Niketas, the cousin of Heraclius, explains the presence of the Heraclius stele, which was designed in a style reminiscent of Alexander the Great. The art historical analysis of the stele provided by Stewart (2018) delves into the iconographic and literary contexts into which it may have fit, but also questions its placement in the second story of the martyrium's gatehouse. This choice of iconography is noteworthy as a decision of the patriarch who was already commanding the architectural style of the entire complex.

The roles of clergy and bishops as influential over new basilica's architecture can be traced at least through John the Almsgiver and Epifanios of Salamis, by creating sacred landscapes through the emulation of other churches. Numerous basilicas which were established in the late 6th century or early 7th century demonstrate a new level of activity in Cyprus, and the construction of many basilicas at that time indicate a highly organised and wealthy administration of the Christian community (for example, Kophinou, Panagia tou Kampou in Chirokitia, Pyla-*Koutsopetria*, Kalavasos-*Kopetra*, and Alassa-*Agia Mavri* (Procopiou 2015, p. 212)).

4. Sacred Landscapes of Copper Mining

The copper mining landscapes of Cyprus in this period can contextualise the coastal topographies within the hinterland and peripheral regions. Within the mining landscape, visibility and monumentality played a large role for ecclesiastical buildings of both Christian slaves or farming communities providing sustenance for miners, but in particular for the administrative centres such as Polis/Arsinoe, Soloi, and Nea Paphos. The mining environments with supervisory or overseer control of natural outlooks over the mines and routes include Kalavasos-*Kopetra*, Agia Marina-*Agios Kyriakos*, and Mitsero-*Panagia Lambadiotissa*, all of which bear strong evidence for church foundations (Rautman 2003; Given et al. 2013b, vol. II, p. 187; *MKE* 10, p. 364; Given and Knapp 2003, pp. 187–90; Kyriakou 2019, p. 57).

This conflation of jurisdiction and religious belief is paralleled with the churches of harbours, ports, or warehouses, but in that case, there is also the theme of visibility to the public and divine protection over the harbour. While divine protection can be part of the churches at mines, especially in light of the Christian slaves condemned to them, the quality of the churches varies considerably and brings a new question forward (Figure 6). In the southwestern Troodos and Soloi's hinterland, roof tiles and orientation of buildings lead to conclusions of their ecclesiastical nature. By contrast, churches such as Skouriotissa, Mitsero-*Panagia Lambadiotissa*, and Agia Moni/Hieron show evidence of marble decorations or multiple phases of high-quality masonry and paintwork (Bakirtzis and Papageorghiou 2018). Kalavasos-*Kopetra*, though made with local gypsum, imitates the Christian architecture and decoration of churches in larger urban centres, and thereby brings a similar monumentality to the rural industrial landscape.

The identities created and confirmed in these deliberate architectural choices reflect not only wealth but tie the essential role of the churches to the suburban and rural environments. As ecclesiastical monuments are the most visible manifestation of Christianity in a topography, their very construction embeds the spirituality of the community into the landscape. From the Iron Age kingdoms and their competition over mining resources and settings of boundaries, through to the Hellenistic and Roman legalities concerning the administration of copper working, a diachronic view shows the centrality of the industry to

sacred landscapes. Whether the cult sites are Archaic-Classical polytheistic temples, or Late Roman monotheistic churches, viewers were reminded of sanctity and identity. Studies of the Iron Age have noted the importance of rivers and ore deposit areas as relevant factors around which the political spaces and territories were conceived (Papantoniou and Kyriakou 2018). Through earthquake damage and subsequent renovation in the main cities, the establishment of new Christian monuments replaced pagan temples as focal points of the population.
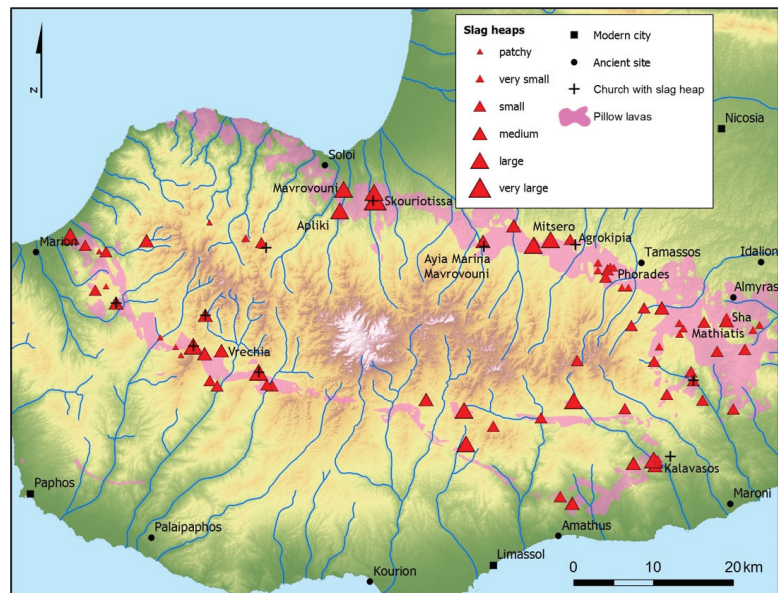

Figure 6. Map of the Troodos range with slag heaps and churches marked (Given 2018, p. 167).

In the pillow lava regions, at the mines themselves, the basilicas were small, one-aisled, and sometimes decorated with marble, for example, Panagia Skouriotissa or Mitsero-*Panagia Lambadiotissa.* In the administrative centres like Kalavasos, Soloi, or Polis, they were three-aisled, larger and at the centre of everyday life, performing liturgical and civic roles in their local immediate environs as well as the participation in mining control. In addition to communal faith, political power, settlement control, and function were all tied to this Christian landscape. As Caraher notes, churches are "seen as the projection of episcopal authority rather than the producers of it . . . [and] . . . represent both a medium for Christianisation and modes of its expression" (Caraher 2003, p. 58).

Within a micro-region, churches can act as the central socio-economic meeting place and religious authority. The sight of these monuments imposes a social memory on the community and newcomers, more so with multiple churches. At those with supervision roles, the viewers of such a presence are the miners, farmers, and families. In Naxos, multiple churches encircle a valley at the heights of the ridges and in the settlement at the valley floor, thereby creating a network of basilicas (Vionis 2019, p. 78). This interconnectedness not only distinguishes the micro-region as Christian but also creates a conceptual boundary between the community and the outside world. Combining the natural topographical features of mountains, rivers, coastlines, caves, etc. with Christianity results in agrarian, social, religious, and personal aspects uniting under a new distinct identity. In this sense, territory markers can redefine the nature of the territory and its borders.

At numerous copper export routes, a sense of Christian control and visibility was established by the presence of the churches, and these patterns were clearly emerging in Late Antiquity. Compared to the divine protection over ports and harbours, the church's visibility at the mines and metal workshops is notably lesser in terms of monumentality and quality (perhaps due to less elite involvement in the mines), yet still maintains a strong conceptual identity throughout the landscape.

5. Conclusions

For Cyprus, an island with a high percentage of coastal sites, the situating of monuments at harbours and coastlines is an obvious and deliberate strategy. Centrality and access to an urban congregation provided the clergy the resources needed for its administrative participation, and vice versa for the community's various needs. Alongside aspects like communal threshing floors or ovens, Cypriot churches also behaved as a hub for markets, a rural monument around which agrarian groups could define a community, and visible markers of Christianity in seaside towns. The ubiquity of multiple churches in sites like Amathous and Nea Paphos is imitated on smaller scales in places like Pegeia and Kalavasos.

The appearance of these churches at mines, farms, transportation routes, miner's settlements, urban centres, and ports must have instilled a sense of supervision and protection over the extraction, processing, storage, and trade of these goods, in addition to protection of the individuals themselves. A narrative begins to emerge at the churches individually about their roles in the micro-region and the dynamic interactions of late antique sites in Cyprus with the maritime networks to the broader Mediterranean. Themes of regional distribution, pilgrimage accommodation, post-destruction occupation, and copper mining are major components at these basilicas. The centrality of economic activity at the churches and as a factor in deciding the construction of a church within a landscape deserves more focus within the "archaeology of power" conceptual framework.

This article has outlined various forms of distribution and administration by the placement of churches within coastal and rural communities in order to underline the advantages of integrating economic aspects into archaeological investigations of insular communities. The complex roles of the church are demonstrated by illuminating their active participation in sanctity and industry from many angles and on different scales. These examples highlight the economic participation of the church, whether in the planned inclusion of workshops in a church complex's original design, or later additions of facilities to an atrium. The variety of combinations of pragmatism and monumentality contribute to discussions of third spaces and peripheral contexts, not only in complicating the binary perspectives of urban or rural, ecclesiastical, or administrative, etc., but in ongoing scholarship of sacred landscapes and insular archaeology. Socioeconomic aspects of Late Antique maritime settlements are significant in contextualising the construction of religious identity.

In the coastal and copper mining landscapes, the foundation of churches in existing industrial contexts is meaningful, projecting a Christian identity and serving as a sacred centre for the community. The visibility and connectivity of these churches range from large episcopal complexes at the port to small one-aisle chapels within the Troodos foothills, and provide ample material through which to study archaeologies of power and reflections of communal belief. The impact of the changing environment on the Late Antique individual or community, but also their influence through transitional and innovative urban developments, builds a new understanding of dynamic insular settings.

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Abbreviations

AR	Archaeological Reports in JHS
ARDAC	Annual Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus
MKE	Megali Kypriaki Enkyklopaidia

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Article

Insularity and Religious Life: The Case of Hellenistic Ikaros/Failaka Island

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Abstract: This paper explores the notion of insularity and religious life in the sacred landscape of Ikaros/Failaka with a particular focus on the Hellenistic period. The little island of Ikaros/Failaka in the Persian Gulf had a long pre-Hellenistic religious history and was occupied by Alexander, explored by his officials and became part of the Seleucid kingdom. From the mid-20th century, archaeological missions working on the nesiotic space of the Persian Gulf have revealed material evidence that has altered our view of this remote part of the Hellenistic world. Research revealed a flourishing network of cultural communication and contacts between the indigenous population of the East and Greco-Macedonians. These interactions mirror the landscape of the Hellenistic East. Thus Ikaros/Failaka, an island on the periphery of the Seleucid kingdom, situated at a strategic point (near the mouth of the River Euphrates and close to the shores of the Persian Gulf) appears to be part of a chain of locations that possessed political/military, economic, and religious importance for the Seleucids. It became a fruitful landscape, where the Seleucids pursued their political and religious agenda.

Keywords: Ikaros/Failaka; Hellenistic East; insularity; sacred space; Seleucids

1. Introduction

In recent times, the matter of insularity and insular landscapes has become an important issue in the study of Mediterranean islands. Many theoretical approaches have attempted to define the notion of insularity, which has led to a range of interpretations. When investigating the concept of insularity, one must bear in mind that insularity is not static. It changes over time in relation to long-term spatial features (such as geography and topography) and temporal factors (such as tradition, culture, human activities, intentional or unintentional, and relationships) (Braudel 1972; Broodbank 2000, pp. 10, 19, 22–23). Insularity is influenced by many parameters and is thus open to multiple interpretations. Knapp (2008, pp. 31–35), when stressing the complex nature of insularity, notes that it covers a wide range of states, from complete isolation to complete connectivity. In mentioning the parameters involved in the notion of insularity, he notes that 'insularity is contingent on both space and time, and thus may be adopted or adapted as individuals or wider social concerns dictate' (p. 18). Decisions by individuals or policies of central administrations, conscious or unconscious actions, behaviors and ideologies, local identities and beliefs create a fruitful environment where insularity is defined or redefined according to circumstances. Thus, insularity is a relative concept, ' . . . culturally constructed, open to multiple meanings in a given context, historically contingent, and therefore liable to change' and 'contingent in both space and time' (Broodbank 2000, pp. 17–18, 22–23).

Using the theoretical approaches involved in insularity, in combination with literary sources, historical narratives and archaeological discoveries, scholars have reinterpreted the insular landscapes of the Mediterranean as spaces where human activity is characterised by the interplay of many internal and external factors. The islands' geographical location and environment, their natural resources, their local identities, traditions, beliefs and practices in combination with political and economic circumstances created within the

Mediterranean a network of vibrant geo-historical and geo-political entities that interacted over time and space (Broodbank 2000, pp. 22–23). Moreover, as Horden and Purcell (2000) argue in *The Corrupting Sea*, the Mediterranean is characterised by a geographical and regional fragmentation that led to the increase in maritime connectivity, which therefore made the Mediterranean an interconnected world.

But does this also occur outside the Mediterranean, in the nesiotic space of the Persian Gulf? How might the notion of insularity apply to the islands of the Persian Gulf and in particular to Ikaros/Failaka island? In Kosmin's (2013, p. 68) view 'the Arab/Persian Gulf, much like the Mediterranean, should be regarded as an environmental and (consequently) geopolitical entity'. The islands of the Persian Gulf can be considered as geo-historical entities, as part of a long-term history in which their populations increase, mingle, move or decline as a consequence of broader historical developments (Brughmans 2013). Our knowledge of the unique character of the islands of the Persian Gulf has grown thanks to the archaeological discoveries of the mid-20th century. From the 1950s onwards, a series of Danish archaeological missions worked on three islands of the Persian Gulf, Ikaros/Failaka (north), Tylos/Bahrain (center) and Umm an-Nar (south) (Figure 1). Their work has generated new perspectives in the study of this area (Potts 2016, p. 109). Moreover, the continuous systematic excavations in the Persian Gulf by American, Italian, French, Greek, Kuwaiti and Slovak archaeological missions, among others, have revealed a vibrant maritime and land network that, from the Bronze Age onwards, spread from Mesopotamia, southern Iran, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indus Valley (Potts 2016, pp. 29–31, 109–10; Hannestad 2019, pp. 314–15; Kosmin 2013).

Figure 1. Map of the Persian Gulf showing the position of Ikaros/Failaka. The map was created by the author using Google Earth Pro maps.

Although the islands of the Persian Gulf formed distinct geographical entities, they lacked political autonomy. They were influenced by major civilisations, such as those of Magan and Dilmun, and of empires, such as those of the Assyrians, the Neo-Babylonians, the Achaemenids, the Seleucids and the Iranian kingdom of Characene (Potts 2009, pp. 27–43). Thus, anybody inhabiting the islands or concerned to draw profit from them would have rejected any lengthy or permanent self-imposed isolation, because the natural resources

available to the islands were limited. Communication and interaction with other nesiotic and mainland spaces was therefore imperative. This situation created a complex form of insularity, in which the indigenous cultural background, created by continuous communication on the part of the inhabitants with other areas, was associated with the political transformations, cultural forms and practices imposed by the empires and kings that dominated the area. However, in this mingled cultural environment, the archaeological finds show, on the one hand, the level of connectivity within the island or with other places, and, on the other hand, how far the islands were integrated into the continental empires or kingdoms to which they belonged.

The present paper focuses on the island of Ikaros/Failaka, located near the coast of Kuwait and the mouth of the River Euphrates. Significantly, there was never any stable population on the island, 'as it witnessed influxes and exoduses depending on trade activities in the Arabian Gulf, as well as periodic epidemics, each of which adversely affected habitation on the island' (Hassan et al. 2020, p. 11). Because of these fluctuations in human settlement, we focus on the Seleucid occupation of the island, during which there is a continuous Greco-Macedonian settlement from the 3rd century BC to 127 BC (apart from a short period of Arab occupation) (Hannestad 2019, p. 313). The Seleucid occupation of the island permits us to explore the policy and cultural agenda of the Seleucids towards this nesiotic space. It also allows us to consider how local cultural identity was preserved and redefined under Seleucid rule.

Most of the archaeological finds from the island are connected with its religious history. The long religious and cultic tradition of the island, that pre-dated the Hellenistic world, in combination with the new religious practices that were introduced by the Seleucids, created an environment that allows us to observe the diverse cultural elements that shaped its sacred landscape.

We therefore employ here archaeological discoveries, literary evidence and new theoretical approaches in order to locate Ikaros/Failaka in a grid of cultural exchange and connections. Thus, we hope to interpret the cultural interchanges and transformations and to study how and to what extent the sacred landscape of the island changed under Seleucid occupation.

In the next, in order to examine the insularity and connectivity of Ikaros /Failaka in terms of the insights and theory yielded by the study of insularity in a Mediterranean context, we consider how the historical sources deal with the nesiotic area of the Persian Gulf and, more generally, how this area was perceived during the Hellenistic period. In the third part of the paper, we examine how far Braudelian analysis of long-term spatial and temporal features can be applied to the island of Ikaros/Failaka. In the fourth part, we present the evolution of the sacred landscapes of Ikaros/Failaka and the impact of this on the indigenous population and on Greco-Macedonian settlers. Through this analytical structure we will, hopefully, develop a better understanding of how a miniscule island on the borders of the Hellenistic world became part of a cultural chain that interconnected numerous places in the Hellenistic world and to what extent its sacred landscape was shaped according to the cultural and religious agenda of the Seleucids.

2. The Ancient Greek Knowledge and Perception of Islands in the Persian Gulf

The Persian Gulf and its nesiotic space were described for the first time by the officials of Alexander. Arrian draws on the accounts of the historian and geographer Aristoboulos, who accompanied Alexander on his expeditions. Alexander was attracted by the flourishing spice trade (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.20.2) in the area and declared that he intended to make this part of his vast kingdom as prosperous as Phoenicia and to place settlers here (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.19.5). Arrian's detailed description of this part of Alexander's kingdom and of its resources derives from the accounts of sailors who took part in the three naval expeditions dispatched by Alexander (in 325 BC) to explore the western coast of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. Arrian mentions that the expeditions dispatched by Alexander were intended to explore and to record geographical features, such as rivers and harbours,

of the area, to learn about the inhabitants and their customs and to find places suitable for colonisation (*Anabasis* 7.20. 2–10; 7.21.7). The first expedition was commanded by Archias of Pella, who sailed as far as Tylos (today's Bahrain), the second by Androsthenes, who sailed from Tylos to Arados and a part of the Arabian Peninsula, and the third by Hieron. Hieron, despite orders to sail to Heroöpolis in Egypt, sailed round the Arabian Peninsula, but did not go as far as ordered and returned to Babylon (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.20.7–8).

According to Arrian (*Anabasis* 7.20.3), Alexander learned of the two islands located near the mouth of the Euphrates from his commanders. The first island, close to the shore and to the mouth of the Euphrates, was small, inhabited by animals and thickly forested, and also possessed a shrine of Artemis, around which the inhabitants lived. Alexander ordered this island to be named Ikaros, after the island Ikaros in the Aegean Sea. The other island lay further away from the mouth of the Euphrates and was called Tylos (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.20.2–6). Strabo (*Geogr* 16.3.2) states that Androsthenes, who had navigated the Persian Gulf, mentioned that there was a temple to Apollo and an oracle of Artemis Tauropolos on the island of Ikaros.

Further information about this area derives from Polybius, who describes the return of Antiochos III from his *anabasis* in 205 BC (Polybius 13.9.2–5). Polybius describes Gerrha, a prosperous city and trading center (*emporium*) of the Arabian Peninsula situated on the west coast of the Arabian Gulf (Strabo, *Geog*. 16.3.3), which maintained commercial relations with other cities of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Petra, with Syria and, further afield, with Delos (Potts 2009, p. 40). The Gerrhans offered local products, namely frankincense and oil of cinnamon, as a gift to Antiochos on the ratification of the peace between them. Antiochos III stopped at the island of Tylos before returning to Seleukeia–on-the-Tigris (Polybius 13.9.4–5).

As we have observed, the literary sources on the islands of the Persian Gulf are scanty, perhaps because the majority of ancient writers were not concerned to offer a description of the area or because they knew very little about it and its local conditions. Our sources, unfortunately, reflect only the Greek perception of the area and say nothing of the views held by the indigenous population, who must have been familiar with the islands of the Persian Gulf and navigation among them. Accounts by the Greco-Macedonian sailors of the expeditions commissioned by Alexander show that the ships sailed close to the coasts and avoided going further out to sea, because of the dangers involved. The sailors probably had to contend with the seasonal peculiarities of the sea caused by the monsoon winds that blew in the area throughout the year (south-west winds from June to September/October and north-east from November to April/May) (Seland 2013, pp. 373–74).[1] Thus, hugging the coastline was a safer option for the Greco-Macedonian sailors of the 3rd and 2nd century BC, who could neither predict the weather with certainty nor had any knowledge or experience of local maritime conditions and of the peculiarities of the area. For the same reason Antiochos III, during his *anabasis*, preferred to follow the coastline and to make stops at Gerrha and Tylos. Perhaps the ports and coastal islands in the area were affected less than other maritime regions by the dangers of the sea and so became popular anchorages for the Greek merchants and soldiers navigating the Gulf.

3. Insularity and the Nature of the Connectivity of Ikaros/Failaka Island under Seleucid Occupation

As written sources provide us with only limited information about the islands of Persian Gulf, we now turn to theoretical approaches in order to understand how and to what extent the concept of insularity—as it has developed on the basis of a study of the Mediterranean—can be applied to the island of Ikaros/Failaka. In our analysis of the insularity of Ikaros/Failaka, we focus on the long-term spatial and temporal parameters involved in the notion of insularity that derive from Braudel. First of all, the permanent features of the island, such as its geographical place, its size, and its topography, determined how its inhabitants perceived their island, its natural resources and its relations with other insular and mainland places. The island is situated in the northern part of the Persian Gulf

off the coast of Kuwait and the mouth of the River Euphrates. It was therefore located at a very strategic point, in that it controlled access to the mouths of the Tigris and the Euphrates, a feature that must have made it attractive to regional powers in the area. Its geographical position (20 km from the coast of Kuwait), its small size (43 km²), its geomorphology, its climate and its environment created a unique geographical entity.

One should not forget, of course, that this geomorphological picture of the island may be very different from that of the era of the Seleucids. The island today is a flat triangular shaped island, which, apart from a small hill on the west side of the island, consists of harsh desert, with only a few places suitable for agriculture (Hassan et al. 2020, pp. 7–8). By contrast, Arrian describes an island covered by thick forest and inhabited by wild animals. At the time of Arrian's sources, Ikaros/Failaka may have been closer to the coastline, erosion and a rise in sea level having perhaps increased the distance of the island from the main coast since then.

The west side was the closest part of the island to the mainland and contained wells of fresh water. This was therefore the area that received settlement (Figure 2). The proximity of the island to the mainland determined its contacts with the continental empires and civilisations of the region (Hassan et al. 2020, p. 11). As Ikaros/Failaka is a coastal island with few natural resources, it was not isolated since it depended on its connections with continental areas for its survival. On the other hand, although this island lies close to the coast, it depends on the particularities of the sea in the region and on the monsoons that affected navigation and dictated where one could anchor safely (Seland 2013, pp. 373–74).

Figure 2. Map of Ikaros/Failaka. The map was created by the author using Google Earth Pro maps.

The permanent geographical features of the island interact with temporal features, such as local tradition. Firstly, the maritime tradition of the island is evident from the excavation of a port in the Al Khidr area, in the northwest part of the island and dated to the Bronze Age (particularly in the Dilmun civilisation), which clearly shows that the island communicated with the coast. The remains of material objects, such as fishing hooks and pearls, found in the area reveal the maritime occupations of the inhabitants, such as fishing and pearling (Hassan et al. 2020, p. 12).

A second parameter of insularity, of vital importance in terms of local cultural traditions, is religion. Two sites dated to the Bronze Age have been excavated in the southwest of the island. One is area F3, a residential zone possessing a temple probably dedicated to

Inzak, the chief god of the Dilmunites (Salles 1985, pp. 590–92), whom the Neo-Babylonians later identified with the god Nabu. Area F6 contained the 'palace', which was probably an administrative centre of some sort, and another temple. These sites are dated to ca. 2200 BC and so belong to the Sumerian Ur dynasty and Dilmun civilisation (Salles 1985, p. 592; Hassan et al. 2020, pp. 11–13). These two settlements are linked to the harbour on the northwest coast and reveal the way of life of the first communities that settled on the island.

A third parameter revealed through archaeology consists of the cultural connections of the island with other nesiotic and mainland spaces. The archaeological evidence, as it now stands, clearly reveals that this small island was indeed not self-sufficient. Numerous fragments of ceramics, sculptures, coins and architectural buildings connect the island with many different areas of the Middle East and of the Greek world, indicating that the island was closely tied to the surrounding areas. The island was occupied during the Magan and Dilmun civilisations (ca. 3rd millennium BC onwards), by the Assyrians (ca. 900–612 BC), the Neo-Babylonians (612–539 BC), the Achaemenids (550–330 BC), Alexander and the Seleucids (330–127 BC) and the Iranian kingdom of Characene (127 BC–2nd century AD) and the finds made on Ikaros/Failaka mirror the political, economic and cultural development of these empires. They also reflect the cross-cultural communication that existed between the island and the civilisations of the mainland. Population movement and the contacts of the inhabitants with the continent introduced new cultural forms and practices that were adopted and mixed with indigenous cultural elements and practices of the islanders (Salles 1985; Connelly 1990). The multiple archaeological finds on the west and south-west side of the island reveal that this area formed the centre of economic, cultural and religious life of the island (Salles 1985, p. 592) and belonged to a strong trading and cultural network with links to other continental and insular places (Potts 2009, pp. 39–42; Kosmin 2013, pp. 62–70).

A fourth feature consists of the administration of the island, in our case, by the Seleucids. We will observe briefly (in this part of the paper) the handling of local tradition by the Seleucids in combination with Greek cultural tradition of the Aegean world. The Seleucids, following the example of the inhabitants, established their buildings and temples in the southwest of the island. In three areas there are remains of Seleucid settlements. In area F5, there is the Hellenistic fortress, lying some 100 m away from the ruins of a building of the Bronze Age (Calvet et al. 2008, pp. 21–22), and consisting of a residential area, two temples and storage areas. In area F4, there is a block of houses and workshops. Area B6 contains the Hellenistic sanctuary. There was also the old sanctuary at Tell Khazneh that pre-dates the Seleucid occupation and displays remains of the cultic life of the Neo-Babylonians, of the Achaemenids and of the Seleucids (Salles 1985, pp. 586–90; Cohen 2013, pp. 140–44).

Recent archaeological excavations have revealed that, together with other islands of the Persian Gulf, Ikaros/Failaka constituted part of the main nesiotic space of Seleucids, the maritime district of 'Tylos and the islands' (Kosmin 2013, p. 70).[2] The maritime district of the Persian Gulf strengthened the hold of the Seleucids over the area and reinforced connections between the islands.[3] The Seleucids, in order to consolidate their presence on the island, erected a fortress (found at area F5), near the ruins of a building, probably a temple-tower of an older civilisation and situated on the southwest corner of the island. This area formed a secure spot for the defence and the protection of the island.[4] This enclosure was probably constructed for the mercenaries of the Seleucid garrison, for the defence of the area and for the protection of the two temples erected therein and of the wells of fresh water[5] that lay within the fortification. Small islands in the Aegean also display Hellenistic fortifications. In the view of Constantakopoulou (2007, p. 198) 'the Hellenistic towers found on a number of islands may add to our understanding of the importance of islands for maintaining connectivity in the Aegean'. The same is true for the fortress of Ikaros/Failaka, if we regard it as a part of a chain of fortifications or fortified temples erected within the Seleucid kingdom.

The island, although situated on the very edge of the Seleucid empire, was both connected with Seleucid military policies and formed part of the Seleucid religious programme. As Canepa (2018, p. 172) notes, 'the Seleucids, in effect, strategically created a ritual stage and spatial context that tied the settlement to the Empire'. The erection of new temples, the use or the reuse of old local temples and the manipulation of local eastern traditions was one of main objectives of Seleucids' religious policy (Canepa 2018, p. 179). Thus, the island, which already had a long religious tradition, became subject to Seleucid religious policy and thus part of a network of fortresses, temples and cities, such as Jebel Khalid, Dura-Europus, Ai Khanum, Takht-e Sangin, and (probably) Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, where the Seleucids combined cultural elements and practices of Babylonian, Persian and Greek traditions, to create 'a unifying focal point for both their Greco-Macedonian elites and pre-existing populations' (Canepa 2018, p. 172) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Map of the Middle East showing the position of Ikaros/Failaka. The map was created by the author using Google Earth Pro maps.

The temples, shrines and fortifications in these areas may have had a symbolic function. The locations and the way in which they were erected throughout the Seleucid kingdom communicated to indigenous populations and local dynasties a message of Seleucid dominion over a vast area (Freyberger 2016). These buildings also promoted a notion of connectivity and unity in a varied ethnic environment, with Babylonian and Achaemenid architectural practices and religious traditions blending with Greco-Macedonian features, to create a complex mixture of cultural elements throughout the Middle East.

At this point, we must add a fifth feature implicit in the notion of insularity, the fluctuation in human settlement on the island in combination with the subordinate political status of the island. These two elements affected the organisation of society and the identity of the inhabitants. We cannot argue that the inhabitants of Ikaros/Failaka had any uniform model of local identity of the type to be observed, for example, in the islands of the Aegean. The identity of the inhabitants of Ikaros/Failaka mirrored the cultural traits of the major civilisations that conquered the island and thus, insularity there is characterised by a continuously changing cultural identity. Despite this dynamic imposed from above, the material evidence, as we will see in the next part of this paper, shows that the inhabitants of

the island had their own way of maintaining their cultural and social behaviour. They had their own religious administrators who were responsible for cult activity, they had their own rules for contact with the Greco-Macedonians (as revealed by the Greek inscription found on Ikaros/Failaka that refers to the disputes between the indigenous inhabitants with the settlers) and their own perception of their island and of their life on it.

To sum up our observations, the long-term spatial and temporal aspects of Braudelian analysis may apply to the island of Ikaros/Failaka, albeit with some restrictions caused by the fluctuation in human settlement, and so reveal some important aspects that may define insularity. Insularity is not static. It is continually constructed and changed over time, adapting to the circumstances. On Ikaros/Failaka, insularity is a complex phenomenon connected mainly with cultural change and the interplay between internal (local) and external (central administration) factors. The fact that this island lay at the crossroads of many civilisations affected the identity of its inhabitants and thus their version of insularity. As we have already noted, since there are very few local written sources, we must turn to the archaeological discoveries, in order to understand the cultural changes involved and to reveal how local cultural identity and tradition were preserved and reinterpreted under Seleucid rule.

4. Religious Life and Insularity in Ikaros/Failaka Island

The island had a long cultic tradition that pre-dated the Hellenistic period. Ancient literary sources, such as Arrian, that refer to the island briefly mention its religious life. The majority of Greek inscriptions found on Ikaros/Failaka reveal which gods were worshipped on the island and various aspects of religious life. In this part of the paper, we will examine what happened when the Seleucids conquered the island and annexed it to their kingdom and how and to what extent the sacred landscape changed. We will employ archaeological evidence to deal with the sacred space of the island as an environment created by such architectural features as temples and sanctuaries in combination with human religious activities and practices. We have already mentioned that the population of the island varied over time and that, during the Seleucid occupation, there was a military garrison. We will not, however, discuss in detail the archaeological finds and the wider problems raised by some of them, as our aim is to put together the material evidence in such a way as to explain how diverse cultural elements influenced the sacred landscape of the island.

Three sacred places on Ikaros/Failaka give us information about religious life, the interaction of Greeks with the indigenous population and the connection of the island with other insular and mainland places. These are: the old sanctuary of Tell Khazneh pre-dating the Seleucid occupation of the island, the fortress and its temples erected by the first Seleucids[6] and the new Hellenistic sanctuary in area B6 that was built later, in ca. 200 BC (Hannestad 2019, pp. 312–30). These sacred landscapes and material culture reveal the existence of a cultural dialogue between, on the one side, the indigenous peoples and their traditions and, on the other, Greco-Macedonian settlers, mercenaries, travellers or sailors visiting the island.

4.1. The Pre-Hellenistic Sanctuary at Tell-Khazneh and Its Continuity

The oldest cultic centre predating the Seleucid occupation of Ikaros/Failaka is situated in the southwest of the island in the Tell Khazneh area. A few remains indicate that cultic use was made of this area from the pre-Hellenistic period to the mid-2nd century BC, when the area was abandoned (Hannestad 2019, pp. 315–16). Here artefacts were found, probably offerings that tied this spot to its Achaemenid religious past. Approximately 280 figurines were found in this sanctuary, among them many Persian figurines of horsemen, who are probably wearing the Persian *Kyrbasia* (Lesperance 2002, pp. 97–98). Male and female Mesopotamian figurines found at the sanctuary display similarities with terracotta offerings found in the cities of southern Mesopotamia, such as Uruk and Nippur. A Mesopotamian seal dating to the neo-Babylonian Empire depicts a priest of Nabu, the patron god of literacy and wisdom (Salles 1985, p. 588; 1986b, pp. 144–52).

As we have already noted, Arrian (*Anabasis* 7.20.3–4), when referring to the island, notes the existence of a shrine of Artemis and that the inhabitants spent their lives around it. There is no other literary information on the cultic rituals performed in this shrine or the identity of the inhabitants. Hannestad (2019, p. 316), on the basis of a coin hoard found at the area, suggests that 'the sanctuary was visited in first quarter of the 3rd century by mercenaries and/or soldiers probably coming from Mesopotamia via Euphrates'. Perhaps the first visitors to the island, influenced by the thick forest and the wild animals found on the island, guessed that this shrine belonged to Artemis, the goddess of hunting, or perhaps they thought that it was a shrine to the goddess Anahita, an ancient Iranian goddess who in the Near East is frequently identified with Artemis (Hjerrild 2009, pp. 42–43) or of the Mesopotamian goddess Nananya, spouse of Nabu, who is frequently assimilated with Artemis (Lesperance 2002, pp. 111–12).

In this area a very mutilated inscription was found that refers to the sacrifice performed by a Greco-Macedonian "*hegemon*", whose name ends with *-telos* (*IK Estremo oriente* 417: 4th/3rd century BC). There is no reference to the god to whom he sacrificed, but it may have been a female deity. Archaeological evidence derived from stratigraphical information reveals that at the third excavation level, dating to the Hellenistic period, Hellenistic-style female figurines were found, five of them being nude female figurines with their arms at their sides. Several incense altars were also found (Lesperance 2002, p. 98). On the basis of archaeological discoveries, Salles suggests that this sanctuary may have been that of Artemis referred to by Arrian (*Anabasis* 7.20.3–4) (Hannestad 2019, p. 326), although, the pre-Hellenistic terracotta offerings found here connect this sanctuary with a male divinity (Salles 1985, p. 590), probably with Nabu, the son of the Babylonian god Marduk (Gachet and Salles 1990, p. 210).

Two inscriptions dated to the 3rd century BC give us some idea why the Greco-Macedonians used this sanctuary. The inscriptions mention dedications that were made by Soteles (the Athenian or the son of Athenaios) (Roueché and Sherwin-White 1985, pp. 4–5). The first dedication was made by Soteles and the soldiers to Zeus Soter, Poseidon and Artemis Soteira and the second dedication was made by Soteles to Poseidon Asphaleios. Roueché and Sherwin-White (1985, p. 10) suggest that the dedications were made by the garrison of the early Seleucids established on the island. The fact that, during the early years after the Seleucids established their power on the island, there was no Greek temple, although there are inscriptional references to sacrifices taking place on the island, leads one to believe that the Greco-Macedonians probably sacrificed in local temples and sanctuaries, such as that of Tell Khazneh. Canepa (2018, p. 179) notes that 'the archaeological material . . . suggests [that] the Greco-Macedonian settlers engaged pre-existing cult sites once the military installation was founded'.

The dedications of Soteles were made to Zeus, the supreme god of the Greek pantheon, to Poseidon, who granted safety to sailors and protected the ports, and to Artemis. Artemis was chosen, probably because of the connection between of Ikaros/Failaka with Ikaros in the Aegean.[7] Artemis was patroness of Ikarian sailors of the Aegean and also protector of hunters and of wild animals. On the north-west coast of the Aegean island of Ikaros, there was a port that offered a safe anchorage in the midst of the dangerous seas around the island. On Ikaros, too, there also stood a temple dedicated to Artemis Tauropolos at Oenoe and a temple of Artemis at Nas. On the island of Ikaros/Failaka in the Persian Gulf, there was, as we have discussed earlier, a *temenos* that the Greco-Macedonian sailors identified as a shrine of the Greek goddess Artemis (Arrian *Anabasis* 7.20.7–8) or an oracle of Artemis *Tauropolos* (Strabo *Geogr* 16.3.2). In the first dedication made by Soteles, the goddess is referred to as Artemis *Soteira* (Saviour), who protected sailors and brought them safely to the island. The second dedication by Soteles was made in honour of Poseidon *Asphaleios*. According to Xenophon (*Hell*. 4.7.4.), *paeans* in honour of Poseidon *Asphaleios* were sung whenever an earthquake occurred, in order to appease the force behind it and to lessen its effect (Katsonopoulou 2021, p. 132). Although the worship of Poseidon *Asphaleios* was connected mainly with earthquakes and had spread to many places in the Mediterranean

world, Katsonopoulou (2021, p. 132) notes that in the Hellenistic city of Dionysopolis on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast there was a cult of Poseidon *Asphaleios* connected with 'the safety of their cities and ports'. In our case, the dedication of Soteles to Poseidon *Asphaleios* was probably made after the dedicator had arrived safely on Ikaros/Failaka. Soteles, who had probably faced the monsoons in the area, may then have made this dedication to thank Poseidon for his safe return.

Although no buildings survive from the Tell Khazneh sanctuary (Salles 1986a, pp. 107–9), the archaeological record in the area reveals the co-existence of pre-Hellenistic local artifacts, particularly figurines, with Greek artifacts, such as incense altars and pottery (Lesperance 2002, pp. 97–98). Although this temple was a sacred place for the old inhabitants of the island, this did not stop Greco-Macedonians from sacrificing here and using the temple to perform their rituals. Their actions are perhaps a manifestation of Seleucid religious policy that made use of pre-existing local religious infrastructures (Canepa 2018), so as to create a unified religious environment that allowed the monarchs to control remote strategic areas of their kingdom. Yet it may also be connected with the multi-ethnic composition of the Seleucid garrisons. Naveh (1995, pp. 2–3), in his study of the two Greek inscriptions regarding Soteles and of a contemporary Aramaic inscription found on the island, argues that the Seleucid military garrison included Iranian soldiers and officers. Non-Greek Seleucid soldiers, probably familiar both with local eastern religious practices and with Greek practices, must have facilitated the cultural dialogue between local and Greek cultic habits.

4.2. The Fortress

The cultural dialogue between Greek and local traditions is also evident in the fortress, whose architectural structure and temples combine local architectural forms and practices with Greek traditional architectural styles, thereby creating a hybrid cultural identity. The Hellenistic fortress stood on the south-west corner of the island. In the same area, on a site approximately 100 metres distant from the Hellenistic fortress, a temple-tower was built around 2000 BC, during the Dilmun period. The benefits of the site were already evident to the Bronze Age inhabitants of the island, who built a temple-tower there (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 22). Temple-towers in the East were erected at strategic spots and, being visible from a distance, were used by sailors for orientation and navigation (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 25). These temple-towers also served to observe the arrival of ships. In the temples included in these temple-towers, sailors offered thanks to the gods who had protected them and brought them safely home. Calvet (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 25) connects the existence of temple-towers with the presence of important sea and land routes in the East. He compares the temple-tower of Ugarit, an ancient port in northern Syria, with that of Ikaros/Failaka and concludes that, during the Bronze Age, these 'temple towers are situated at points of intense trade, in places of transit between the sea routes and the land routes'. Calvet (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 23) argues that the thriving trade that existed in these areas facilitated the creation of religious, cultural and intellectual ties between local populations and their neighbours.

The Seleucids, playing their part in the long history of Ikaros/Failaka and realising its importance of the area, decided to erect their fortress at this point on the island (Gelin 2014, pp. 88–89). The strategic location of the hill and the existence of wells of fresh water, indispensable for the survival of any inhabitants, made this a highly desirable site for a fortress. The use of the old eastern model of the temple-tower in this Seleucid rebuilding reveals a continuation of an older tradition. Irrespective of the architectural form, the geographical position of the fortress, its religious role and its importance in navigation show that the building had multiple functions and strongly resembled the temple-towers of the Bronze Age. Archaeological finds and, in particular, the presence of fragments of Attic black glaze bowls indicate that the first phase of the enclosure was built around 300 BC, perhaps the work of Antiochos I (Gelin 2014, p. 88). It served primarily as accommodation for the Seleucid garrison and to protect Temples A and B that stood within its precincts.

Temple A was a typical Greek style temple with *naos*, *pronaos*, altar, *stylobates*, *krepis* and Greek-style ornamentation, such as *acroteria* (Jeppesen 1989, pp. 25–28; Gelin 2014, p. 89; Lesperance 2002, pp. 64, 67–68). The builders of the temple, however, combined these traditional Greek elements with Achaemenid-influenced column bases of local limestone (Jeppesen 1989, p. 34). Temple B stood a small distance from Temple A. It displays the same plan as Temple A and the same characteristics of a Greek temple in the form *naos* and *pronaos*, although Gelin (2014, p. 89) believes that its plan is oriental. Temple B displays less decoration than Temple A and has a circular altar (Lesperance 2002, pp. 68–73).

How did the indigenous population deal with these changes? Written sources concerning the local population are scanty. As we have said, Arrian notes that they lived around a sanctuary (*Anabasis* 7.20.3–4). A letter, inscribed on a *stele*, which mentions a now unknown Seleucid king (probably Seleukos II) and mentions arrangements concerning religious matters and other practical issues that arose on the island (*IK Estremo oriente* 422; l.15), divides the locals into *neokoroi*, who were local servants of the gods (or eminent members of the local society with cultic responsibilities), and into other inhabitants. Roueché and Sherwin-White (1985, p. 32) discuss the role of *neokoroi* 'who, on the analogy of the famous sanctuaries of Artemis at Sardis and Ephesus, as well as that at Amyzon, were important administrators responsible for temple administration as well as for the organisation of the cults in their care'. The fact that the *neokoroi* hold their religious office after the island has been annexed by the Seleucids demonstrates that the Seleucids, far from wanting to break the link with the past, actively desired that old and new religious practices should co-exist. Moreover, the fact that local religious officials used a Greek term (*neokoroi*) to label them is an example of how Seleucid rule dealt with religious matters. Unfortunately, the lack of indigenous written sources means that we cannot construct a complete picture of the relations between local religious aristocracy and the Greco-Macedonian administration.

In the letter that we have just looked at, Ikadion, a Seleucid official, conveys the will of the Seleucid king to his subordinate, Anaxarchos, that limits be put on the treatment of locals by Greco-Macedonian colonists and that certain religious, economic and property matters be settled. He orders this letter to be inscribed on a *stele* in front of Temple A in the sacred fortress. These measures may have been triggered by disturbances and clashes between the indigenous population and colonists, since the king was clearly anxious that his ruling should be displayed in a prominent public space. The king mentions, among others matters, the relocation of a temple left unfinished by his ancestors, such an operation never having been carried out before (*Estremo oriente* 422; ll. 4–8). Perhaps this projected relocation was one reason for any clashes that may lie behind the ruling published on the *stele*. The king apparently requested that the *hieron* of *Soteira,* probably the shrine of Artemis *Soteira*, be relocated to the interior of the fortress (*Estremo oriente* 422; ll. 5–6). It is not clear from the letter where this altar of *Soteira* was situated. Roueché and Sherwin-White (1985, p. 32) argue that this old temple was either the temple of Artemis that the explorers of Alexander discovered on the island or the Achaemenid shrine of Tell Khazneh or perhaps some other shrine elsewhere. The main reason for the royal decision was to protect the new sanctuary and to provide 'room for the community to dwell around it' (Roueché and Sherwin-White 1985, p. 32). Hannestad and Potts (1990, p. 123) argue that the evidence of Ikaros/Failaka reveals how 'a local pre-Seleucid cult was transformed on royal command into something at least reminiscent of Greek cultic practice'.

Temple A of the fortress existed before the *hieron* was moved inside the fortress, which perhaps indicates that more than one god was worshipped in the temple. That this was so is suggested by the second inscription found in Temple A, which mentions the gods to which the inhabitants of Ikaros/Failaka dedicated the altar. Notably, the inscriptions do not distinguish between the local population and Greco-Macedonians (*IK Estremo oriente* 420). All this written evidence leads one to suspect that the local inhabitants had no separate administrative organisation. Their officials were mainly concerned with the local cult and the administration of the temples. By contrast, the Greco-Macedonians lived in a semi-urbanised community (Petropoulou 2006, p. 147), which was not a *polis* and was subject to

the orders of the representatives of the Seleucids. The establishment of athletic and music competitions (*IK Estremo oriente* 422: ll. 11–12) as part of the religious festival that took place on the occasion of the relocation of the altar reveals that, even in areas on the very edge of their kingdom, the Seleucids promoted and supported Greek cultural practices.

Let us consider another factor connected with the relocation of the altar and the co-existence of Greco-Macedonians and the indigenous population alongside each other that is revealed through archaeological finds from the island. The relocation of the cult of Artemis *Soteira*, the divine protector of sailors, to the Hellenistic fortress, the protection of her sanctuary, and the offerings made by her pilgrims are clearly connected with the protection and use of the temple-towers for religious purposes during the Bronze Age. In the Hellenistic period, towers were erected on islets in the Aegean to protect sea routes from pirates or other hostile individuals, to ensure the maintenance of the 'complex matrix of intercommunication in the seascape of the Aegean' (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 198) and to indicate that more powerful neighbours dominated and exploited the natural resources of these islets (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 198). The towers of the Hellenistic period probably also served as a means of protection and as markers of dominion and territory. Perhaps, then, when the Hellenistic-style tower spread through the east, it was combined with the eastern temple-tower tradition and so acquired yet another function, that of a shrine. Such temple-towers are found from the Mediterranean coast, 'as at Alalakh, ancient Atchana, and Ras Shamra, ancient Ugarit, to the shores of the Gulf, as at Failaka, and in Mesopotamia, as at Mari and other Mesopotamian sites' (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 24). This type of temple-tower had evolved from the ziggurats (Calvet et al. 2008, p. 24) built by indigenous populations, such as Sumerians, Babylonians, Akkadians, and Elamites, to worship local gods (Walton 1995, p. 158). This concept of the temple–tower, rooted in local tradition, probably influenced Seleucid architects when they came to construct their fortress.

As the archaeological discoveries now stand, there is evidence of Hellenistic fortifications with sanctuaries in Seleucid territory (Canepa 2018), but the size, structure and style of the Ikaros/Failaka enclosure seems to be unique. Thus, it would seem that, although this enclosure and its temples were modelled after local eastern and Greek prototypes, it kept its unique character and reflects Seleucid policy in the area. In the case of Ikaros/Failaka, in addition to the Greco-Macedonians, indigenous religious officials (*Estremo oriente* 422, l.15) also took part in the rituals practiced in the fortress. Even archaeological finds from the period, when Seleucid power had declined in the area and the Seleucid garrison abandoned the fortress, show that the local inhabitants used the temples uninterruptedly (Gelin 2014, p. 89), which indicates that they had embraced the mixture of local and Greco-Macedonian religious traditions and continued to perform their own rituals. Such behaviour clearly demonstrates that the Seleucids, instead of aiming to impose any one religious tradition upon another, created new, heterogeneous religious forms accepted and promoted by the local population and Greco-Macedonians. Such religious co-existence probably also mirrored the relations between the local population and the Macedonian garrison.

After the period of Arab occupation of the island (246–223 BC), Antiochos III restored Seleucid power over the area. He reinforced and extended the fortress and awarded it the status of a colony (Gelin 2014, p. 89). This event is reflected in the increasing number of houses erected within and outside the fortress. The presence of an indigenous population or at least of non-Greek settlers in the fortress, is revealed by finds there consisting of terracotta figurines and ceramics, most of which display traditional Mesopotamian stylistic traits. These finds included nude female figures inspired by Babylonian and Parthian figures, terracotta horsemen whose figures display similarities with those found at Uruk and Babylon and in southern Iran and, ceramic vessels Mesopotamian and Arab in style (Lesperance 2002, pp. 78–83). The archaeological finds from the fortress also included model boats, which reveal the maritime occupations of the owners or dedicators. Although most of them display similarities to model boats from Babylon and Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (Chavane 1990, p. 286), in the view of Mathiesen (1982) some fragments display parallels

with objects found elsewhere in the Mediterranean, such as at Salamis on Cyprus (Chavane 1990, p. 286). These boats are either to be connected with the occupations of the inhabitants or were used domestically as ornaments or toys. They may also have had some religious purpose, a feature attested elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East (Chavane 1990, pp. 286–89). These model boats may have been offerings made to the gods before a voyage or after a safe return to the island, or they may have been dedications made by fishermen after a plentiful catch. Prayers offered at sanctuaries and temples, sacrifices, and offerings to the god-protectors of sailors were common public and private cultic practices, designed to secure the benevolence of the gods towards navigators (Van Straten 1981, p. 65).

The offerings made at temples demonstrate both the piety of the donor and his hopes for protection during future maritime endeavours (Van Straten 1981, pp. 72–73). The material from which these offerings were made and the stylistic influences they display clearly express a desire on the part of the donor to display his wealth before the public, his stylistic preferences and his connections with either the Achaemenid and Babylonian past or with Greco-Macedonian tradition. Monloup (1984, p. 148) connects these boats with burial traditions and suggests that they symbolised the voyage of the dead on Charon's skiff. This ancient Greek tradition and, in particular, the appearance of such vessels in tombs, is attested on Crete and Cyprus (Chavane 1990, p. 286). In addition to the model boats, dedications of naval equipment were found at the sanctuaries in the fortress. These include two small stone anchors offered at the sanctuaries (Chavane 1990, p. 289) that resemble anchors found in Salamis on Cyprus (Chavane 1975, p. 115, no. 356–57) which imitate Near Eastern prototypes from the Bronze Age. It is easy to see why an anchor, vital for maritime travel, especially among the windy islands of the Persian Gulf, should have been offered. Indeed, an anchor was something sacred in that it kept a ship stable in bad weather and the safety of the ship and the crew directly depended on it (Kapitän 1985, p. 152). Many items connected with fishing, such as fishing weights, flat and lenticular spindles and spindle-shaped spherical caps, were found in the fortress and in the Hellenistic sanctuary in area B6. Fishing was an important economic activity for the inhabitants of the island and was indispensable for their subsistence. Multiple offerings demonstrate people's piety towards the divine protectors of sailors and fishermen.

The way in which the artifacts found in the fortress were manufactured (Gachet 1990) or the way in which they represented humans, animals or deities expresses the cultural identity of the owner, their stylistic preferences and their social status. Because the island was connected with so many other places, these artifacts are naturally the creation of various artistic trends that combined eastern and Greco-Macedonian stylistic forms (Connelly 1990). A stone statuette of a bottlenose dolphin created in a local workshop and dating to the mid-2nd century BC was found in the fortress and throws light on the local sculptural aesthetic and the view of the inhabitants of dolphins. The bottlenose dolphin lives in shoal-waters, near shores and bays (Lilly 1962) and statuettes and other images of dolphins were widespread round the Mediterranean. The Phoenician dolphin cult led to the incorporation of the dolphin into Greek religious life. Dolphins were considered to be protectors of fisherman and sailors and were connected chiefly with the worship of Poseidon and Apollo (Csapo 2003, p. 94). Among the archaeological finds from Ikaros/Failaka connected with the religious or cultural life of the inhabitants, there is a statuette of Papposilenos, the style of which displays similarities with figurines from Pergamon and Kharayeb in the Lebanon (Connelly 1990, p. 214). The Ikaros/Failaka Silenus was connected with the Dionysiac cult of the Greco-Macedonians (Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.8.1) or 'possibly [reflects] the influence of theater in the daily lives of soldiers posted on the Eastern frontier' (Connelly 1990, p. 214). In the fortress, a fragmentary Greek-style statuette of a young Herakles was also found (Connelly 1990, p. 210). Terracotta figurines of Herakles were also found in the fortress, but their style displays Near Eastern influences, especially from Mesopotamia and Susiana (Connelly 1990, p. 210). The worship of Herakles was widespread in the East. Statuettes of Herakles have been discovered at Nippur, Uruk, Hatra, Dura-Europus, Assur and Begram (Connelly 1990, p. 211). These figurines may depict Herakles in his role of protector of

those who, like him, make long-distance expeditions (Diodorus 4.18.4–5). Herakles reached the furthest limits of seafaring in the West and confronted the sea in all its moods and other dangers, too (Pindar *Nemean* 3), but nevertheless accomplished his goal and returned home. The Greco-Macedonians probably saw similarities with Herakles' journey in their own experiences and no doubt hoped that, if they worshipped him, he would grant them the safe return home that he himself enjoyed.

Architectural forms or domestic and cultic objects show that Seleucid policy was to establish their cultural influence on the foundation offered by local Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid cultural tradition. Local cultural elements combined with Greco-Macedonian practices, influencing each other to create a unified new cultural form within the Seleucid kingdom. By reshaping the older local sacred landscapes, the Seleucids created a heterogeneous cultural environment. This allowed the indigenous population to continue their local practices and traditions, even when Seleucid presence on the island had faded (Gelin 2014), and to live in an environment that displayed cultural elements from their past, but at the same time to adopt some Greco-Macedonian cultural elements without losing their local identity.

4.3. The New Hellenistic Sanctuary in Area B6

The remains of the Hellenistic sanctuary, built in ca. 200 BC and lying along the beach of the southwest coast of the island, reveal the existence of a Greek-style temple, complete with *naos*, *pronaos*, a colonnaded porch and altar. Lesperance (2002, pp. 90–93) believes the sanctuary was built in two phases. The colonnade of the sanctuary of the first phase displays similarities to the *heroon* of Kinneas at Aï Khanoum dated to the early 3rd century BC. The modifications that took place during the second phase (early 2nd to mid-2nd century BC) are comparable to features of the temple of Herakles at Masjed Soleiman in Susiana (Salles 1985, p. 584). The shrine also shows many similarities with the shrines of Hatra (Parthian city), which display Assyrian and Mesopotamian forms (Downey 1987, p. 43; Lesperance 2002, pp. 92–93). All this clearly demonstrates how heterogeneous Seleucid religious architectural forms were, and such heterogeneity illustrates the diversity of cultural influences that existed in the Near East in the 2nd century BC. The Seleucid Hellenistic sanctuary of Ikaros/Failaka, which was the last building on the island that the Seleucids erected, probably during the reign of Antiochos III (Salles 1985, p. 586), was built in a period of prosperity during Seleucid rule over the island. The Arab occupation (246–223 BC) of the island was now over. Ceramic vessels found in the sanctuary reveal trade connections of the island with Mesopotamia, Susiana and the Eastern Arabian Peninsula (Lesperance 2002, pp. 94–96). The architectural form of the sanctuary displays an attachment to local forms. Many cult objects were found at the sanctuary, such as terracotta figurines, small stone altars, heads probably of Herakles and Artemis (or the oriental Atargatis), model boats, nude female figurines and offerings consisting of metal objects (Salles 1985, pp. 584–86). Although Greek and Near Eastern cultural influences are revealed in the archaeological finds from the sanctuary, it is difficult to reconstruct the social status of the dedicators. The cultural diversity evident in the architectural form of the sanctuary is also reflected in archaeological finds. Thus, it seems that the sanctuary was used by Greco-Macedonian soldiers, Hellenised non-Greek colonists, members of the indigenous population and foreigners who had come the island.

5. Conclusions

To conclude this paper, I would like to underline certain key points that have arisen in this study.

Archaeological finds make it very clear that Ikaros/Failaka was far from being an isolated spot. Indeed, the connection and connectivity of the island to many mainland places made it part of a chain of areas of military/political, economic and religious interest to the Seleucids. Archaeological finds also make it clear that the notion of insularity can be applied to the island, albeit with some restrictions caused by the fluctuation in human

settlement. The inhabitants constructed their cultural identity in distinct ways, based partly on their cultural past and on their own rules and customs dictating their contacts with other cultures and partly under the influence of Seleucid rule. We have observed that the sacred landscapes of Ikaros/Failaka were shaped in accord with Seleucid cultural and political agendas. The kings intervened to settle religious disputes and other matters and to promote a mixing of heterogeneous cultural elements, in an effort to create new religious forms acceptable to both the Greco-Macedonians and the indigenous population.

We have also observed that the respect towards the local inhabitants promoted and imposed on Greco-Macedonian colonists by the Seleucid kings facilitated the co-habitation of the Greco-Macedonians alongside the local population and promoted the creation of a cultural identity that connected aspects of Greek culture with Near Eastern cultural forms. This cultural dialogue is reflected in archaeological finds, which include religious architectural forms of the temples, votive offerings consisting of statuettes and terracotta figurines, items for domestic and everyday life and figurines for household or public worship. Stratigraphic data (Hassan et al. 2020) shows that the indigenous population continued to use the sacred locations within the fortress, even in periods when the Seleucid military garrison had abandoned the island (Gelin 2014, p. 89). After the re-occupation of the island by the Seleucids and especially during the peaceful period from 223 to 163 BC, the kings promoted the connections of the island with the outside world. This is clear from religious architecture, the offerings made in the sanctuaries and coins (Amandry and Callot 1988).

Although Ikaros/Failaka is a small island, during the Hellenistic period, the intra-insular connections were created after the arrival of the Seleucids, while extra-insular ties came into being and changed over time. This made for the absorption of this island, on the edge of the Seleucid kingdom, into the political and cultural/religious whole promoted by the Seleucids and for the shaping of the religious landscape of the island in accordance with Seleucid policy and local eastern tradition.

Notes

[1] Arab and Indian sailors, long aware of the monsoons, exploited them to cross the Indian Ocean. Hippalos (1st century BC) was the first Greek sailor and merchant, according to *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (ch. 57) and Pliny (*Natural History* vi 100, 104, 106), to discover the direct trade route from the Red Sea to India via the Indian Ocean and to handle the monsoon winds safely (Hatcher 2013, pp. 19–29). Yet the Greeks did not find the journey easy, as Strabo reveals (*Geog.* 2.5.12).

[2] Drawing on an important Greek inscription found on Bahrain (*IK Estremo oriente* 147/427: 140–124 BC), Kosmin (2013, p. 76) notes that 'the religious geography of the Hellenistic Gulf seems mapped onto a network of communication and control. The *naos* of Dioskouroi on Bahrain, the various temples on Failaka, the double-trophy at Ras Musandam and the sacred mountain on Kharg sacralize the nesiotic space'. Perhaps we have here a network of shrines and temples created by and for the needs of sailors in the Gulf. Kosmin (2013, p. 76, n. 146) compares this religious network with 'the marine sanctuaries and sailors' dedications of the islands of Kasos, Saros, Kalche and Telos' in the Aegean.

[3] Constantakopoulou provides an analogous example from the Aegean (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 87). She notes that the Aegean islands 'provided a wealth of inlets and bays, where a ship, and more particularly an oared warship, could shelter during storms or be beached during an overnight stay . . . any power wishing to maintain control over Aegean Sea had to control its islands as well'.

[4] If a small island was fortified, it was probably intended to be a secure military base 'because of the security and isolation' that it provides for military operations (Constantakopoulou 2007, p. 120).

5   The presence of fresh-water wells, so vital for the inhabitants, in this part of the island naturally necessitated the building of the fort here to protect this resource.

6   According to Salles (1985, p. 580) the ceramic evidence found in the area places the erection of the fortress in the first half of the 3rd century BC. Jeppesen (1989, pp. 73–76) believes that the two temples may have been built later, Temple A dating roughly to 260 BC and Temple B to about 240 BC.

7   The island of Ikaros/Failaka in the Persian Gulf was named after the Aegean island Ikaros in the Aegean.

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Article

Cyprus and Sardinia at the Transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age: A Sacred Landscape Approach

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Abstract: In the framework of this contribution, and taking a macro-historic sacred landscapes approach, we established a comparative project analysing in parallel the development of sacred landscapes of two mega-islands, Cyprus and Sardinia, at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age. In both Cyprus and Sardinia, the period between the 12th and 8th centuries BC seems to have been a time when re-negotiations of individual, societal, and political identities took place, and this is clearly reflected on the construction of the sacred landscapes of the two islands. We first present our 'landscape/macro-historic approach'; we then define the chronological horizon and the socio-historical contexts under discussion for each island, exploring at the same time how the hierarchical arrangement of ritual sites appearing at this transitional phase seems to be related with articulated social order or linked with shifting relations of power and cultural influence. Finally, we proceed to a discussion addressing the following three questions: (1) what is the relation between individual insularities and the construction of sacred landscapes on these two mega-islands?; (2) how can a 'landscape/macro-historic approach' assist us in better formulating microscopic approaches on both islands at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age?; and (3) is a comparative approach viable?

Keywords: Cyprus; Sardinia; sacred landscapes; insularity

1. Introduction

Traditionally, historians and archaeologists concerned with the insular communities of ancient Cyprus and Sardinia have often treated ritual and religion as a sub-system of society, describing its material manifestations (sanctuary architecture or votive assemblages) and focusing on one particular chronological period (Papantoniou 2012a, p. 65; Ialongo 2013, p. 187; Depalmas et al. 2016). Thus, the active role of ritual and religion in the construction and transformation of social identities in the long term and their relationship with internal and external influences and power have been undervalued. Changes in ritual systems did not take place overnight. In order to understand ritual and religion as transcultural phenomena, particularly through major phases of socio-political transitions, it is essential to grasp both continuity and change.

The connections via trade between the Bronze Age cultures of Cyprus and Sardinia have been discussed on various occasions (e.g., see more recently Depalmas et al. 2017; Russell and Knapp 2017; Lo Schiavo 2018; Charalampous 2020; Gradoli et al. 2020; Sabatini and Lo Schiavo 2020; Knapp et al. 2021), and this is not the objective of the present comparative approach. The reason for choosing these two mega-islands at the edges of Mediterranean for a comparative approach is not to observe connections in ritual and cult; by taking a landscape approach, rather than focusing on specific sites, it is our intention to contrast Cyprus and Sardinia with regard to the place of the sanctuaries and their material culture in the landscape and their archaeological and social contexts. Landscape archaeology is an area of study that crosses conventional boundaries between disciplines, opening a window to the study of the past across time and space. The study of sacred

landscapes is concerned with the study of the temporality, spatiality, and materiality of sacred space through time, using a range of interdisciplinary approaches (Papantoniou et al. 2019, with references). Our previous research has placed great emphasis on the interaction between political and religious structures, noting the importance of sacred landscapes in establishing social power and identity (e.g., Papantoniou 2012b, 2016; Depalmas 2014, 2018a; Depalmas et al. 2016; Papantoniou and Kyriakou 2018). In the framework of this article, and taking a macro-historic sacred landscapes approach, we established a comparative project analysing in parallel the development of sacred landscapes of two mega-islands, Cyprus and Sardinia, at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age.

It is generally accepted that the transition from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age is a period that comes after general disorder and movements of people and ideas in the broader Mediterranean, as well as in Cyprus and Sardinia, resulting in a kind of new cosmopolitan settlement (Knapp 2008; Georgiou 2012; Iacovou 2013; Ialongo 2017; van Dommelen 2018, p. 219; Georgiou and Iacovou 2019; for a comparative chronological table with correspondences between Cyprus and Sardinia, see Russell and Knapp 2017, p. 4). We have chosen this specific phase as the focus on this contribution as, as we will demonstrate below, this is the time that the sacred landscapes of the two mega-islands totally transform. Towards the end of the 12th century BC, Cyprus began to witness major transformations, which should, at least in part, be related to newcomers from the Aegean post-palatial world, possibly also from the Levant, who arrived as immigrants (rather than colonists) in the island's Late Cypriot urban centres. During the last phase of the Late Cypriot and during the Cypro-Geometric (ca. 1050–750 BC) periods, negotiations of individual, societal, and political identities took place, instigating the establishment of a new political geography on the island.

In Sardinia, during the Final Bronze Age (ca. 1150–950 BC), the construction of typical Bronze Age architectural structures named Nuraghe (housing towers) and collective monumental tombs known as Giants' Tombs slowly stopped. The population moved into villages representing the only form of settlement in the Early Iron Age. The Nuraghe were used as food stores or for cult rituals, although in rare cases, they continued to be inhabited. There are no traces of deliberate destruction but only of abandonment. The most important phenomenon of the period is related to the construction of places of worship. In fact, the earliest 'Nuragic' sanctuaries were built during the Final Bronze Age and at the beginning of the Early Iron Age (ca. 950 BC): these are centred on monuments built over springs or deliberately dug wells. Settlements of different sizes often grew up around these temples (Blake 2001). Many of these were probably only used when the local community came together to participate in the festivals and religious ceremonies that took place at the sites. In the Final Bronze Age, we can notice substantial societal changes. Social stratification appears and consolidates in the Iron Age. In Sardinia, although the term Nuraghe has also long been widely used to define the Final Bronze and Early Iron Age phases, it should be remembered that the Nuragic period proper would include only the Middle and Recent Bronze Age, which coincides with the period of construction and primary use of Nuraghi. In this sense, the phase relating to sanctuaries and worship, i.e., the Final Bronze and Early Iron Ages, should not be defined as Nuragic.

2. Cypriot Sacred Landscapes through Time

Ritual practice on Cyprus prior to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700 BC) has been identified primarily in the mortuary domain, which seems to have functioned as a key setting for the origins of cosmological systems (Webb and Frankel 2010). As Webb (2019a, 2019b; cf. Bürge 2021) has convincingly argued, the institutionalisation of ritual and the development of related ideologies and iconographies in the Late Bronze Age seem to derive from earlier, more socially integrative practices and should be seen as a response to emerging urbanisation and economic intensification. The study of pre-Late Bronze Age ritual, therefore, serves to capture the indigenous elements of Cypriot culture (Papantoniou 2016; Papantoniou and Webb 2021).

During the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1700–1100 BC), ritual landscapes became increasingly linked to industrial activities. The appropriation, distribution, and consumption of various resources (especially copper), labour, and land were achieved by the elite through exploitation of supernatural knowledge (Knapp 1986, 1996, 1999; Webb 1999, 2001, 2014). Divine figures standing on the ingots (Figure 1), as well as the direct spatial relation between copper workshops and sanctuaries in the case of Kition, for example, have been widely discussed in the scholarship on the construction of an argument around the relationships between economy and religious institutions (for a literature review, see Kassianidou 2005).
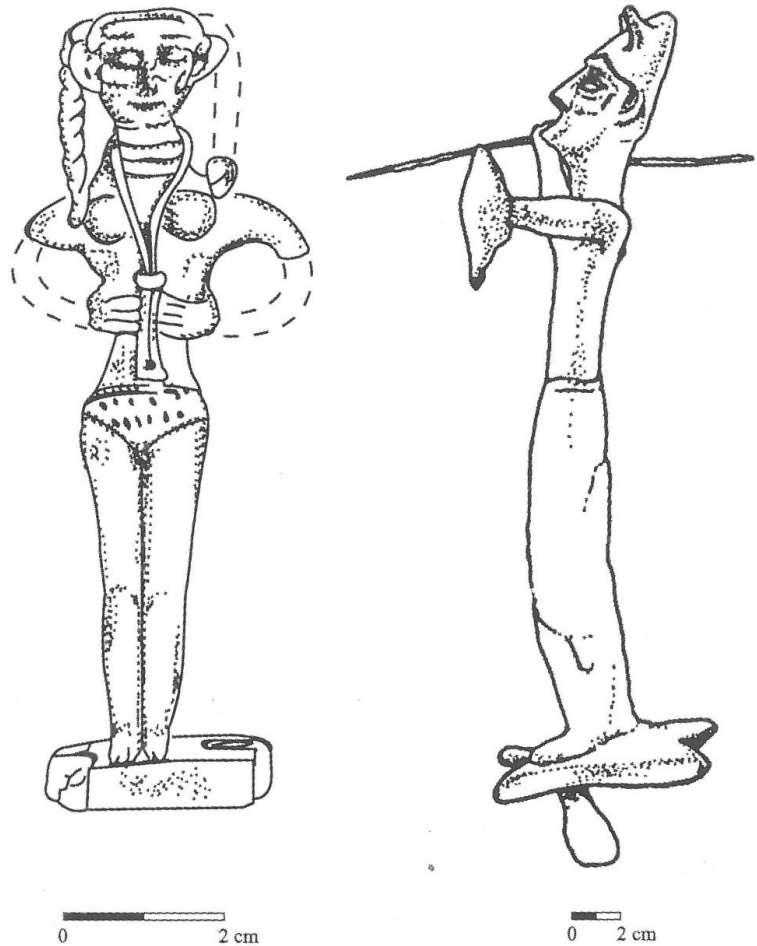
Figure 1. The so-called 'Bomford Goddess' (**left**) and the 'Ingot God' of Enkomi (**right**) (after Webb 2001, p. 75, Figure 6).

Considering that the foundation horizon of the Cypriot Iron Age polities lies well within multi-layered socio-political transformations, the statements above should be kept in mind as one moves towards Iron Age ritual and sacred space. In this context, it is particularly important to introduce issues of memory into the discussion by noting that a number of Iron Age sanctuaries were built within the ruins of Late Bronze Age monuments. At Agia Irini, for example (Figure 2: no. 9), an Iron Age temenos was built on top of the

ruins of a Late Bronze Age settlement (for the Early Iron Age evidence for sacred landscapes and a literature review, see Papantoniou 2012b).
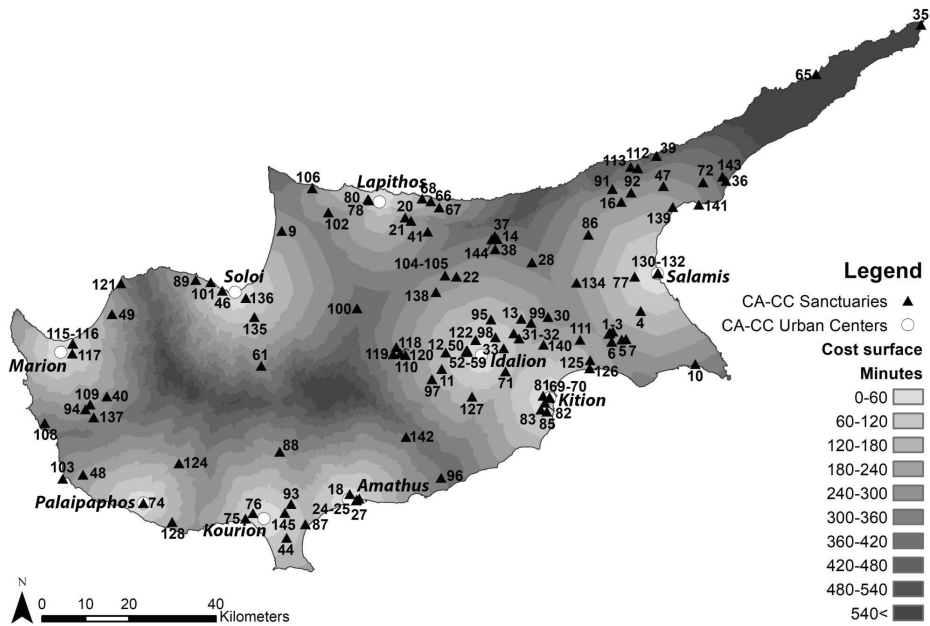
Figure 2. Hypothetical map showing the synchronicity of Cypriot kingdoms (as independent polities) and sanctuary sites at the transition from the Archaic to the Classical period, illustrating the problems involved in an attempt to capture political and sacred landscapes at a single point in time during the Iron Age (cost surface GIS analyses conducted by converting slope inclinations derived from the DLS DEM to time cost per unit surface area travelled based on exponential anisotropic Tobler's hiking function). Sanctuary numbers on the map correspond with site names published in the online appendix of (Papantoniou 2013b): www.ajaonline.org/article/1493; accessed on 17 December 2021. Digital data courtesy of the Department of Geological Survey and the Department of Lands and Surveys (map and analysis by Charalampos Paraskeva).

The Early Iron Age political and sacred landscapes (between the 11th and 8th centuries BC) are very difficult to comprehend (Papantoniou 2012b, pp. 306–7; 2016, p. 77; Iacovou 2013). Nonetheless, one should highlight two significant changes in the perception of ritual space that took place within this period: (a) the consolidation of the Cypriot urban and extra-urban Iron Age *temenos* type with specific religious and public roles/purposes; (b) a clearer separation of 'secular' and 'religious' urban space, but still always in direct ideological relation and association. Based on the current stage of research, this suggestion cannot be applied as a model for each and every Iron Age polity; each site had its unique development and individual history, based primarily on its surrounding geography. A fact remains, however: we can identify *temenos* sanctuary sites (that is an open court, enclosed by a peribolos wall, with an altar and sometimes a rectangular room) in urban and rural environments only towards the end of the Geometric period, that is at the same time as when we can notice palatial structures on the island. This phenomenon might well relate to the consolidation of the Cypriot city-kingdoms and their territories.

It is important to note that the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age is the first time in the history of the island when a terracotta female figurine, that is the so-called 'goddess with upraised arms' type (Figure 3), is found in a clearly religious (not just ritual) context. For example, in its last phase, the sanctuary of the 'Ingot God' at

Enkomi (near the later city of Salamis) was equipped with offering benches and the west 'adyton' housed a baetyl (an aniconic stone image of the deity) surrounded by many votive objects, including several figurines of the 'goddess with upraised arms'. The origin of this type is often attributed to the 'post-Mycenaean' or 'sub-Minoan' (non-palatial) worlds. D'Agata, however, is right to suggest that comparative stylistic studies can take us no further than mere observation of the 'migration' of the type (D'Agata 2005, p. 9). Moving beyond stylistic analysis, however, the analysis of the archaeological stratified evidence for Enkomi and other sites such as Kition or Palaipaphos shows that this type of figurine, along with other representations, does not seem to corroborate the argument that, during the 12th and 11th centuries BC, the two major islands of Crete and Cyprus were involved in a particularly noteworthy exchange at the level of actual cultic or ritual practices. Rather, these stylistic relations may reflect the trade circuit at work between Cyprus and Crete within the context of wider ranging contacts with the Mediterranean world (D'Agata 2005, p. 14; cf. Kourou 2002, pp. 32–33; Zeman-Wisniewska 2013) (for detailed discussion and further references, see Papantoniou 2016, pp. 84–92; cf. Papantoniou 2013a; Budin 2014, pp. 204–5).
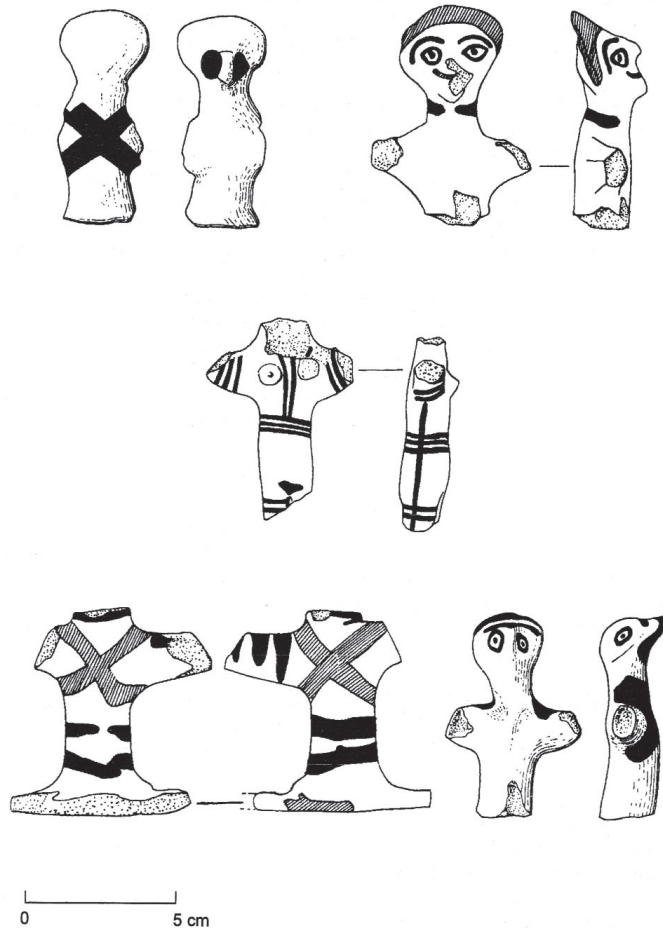

Figure 3. Terracotta figurines of the 'goddess with upraised arms' type from the sanctuary of the 'Ingot God' at Enkomi (after Webb 1999, p. 214, Figure 75).

The multiplication of the extra-urban sanctuaries in early Archaic times represents the climax of a process that started within the Geometric period. While urban sanctuaries became communal religious centres where social, cultural, and political identities were affirmed, the extra-urban sanctuaries played an important role in the establishment of the political and territorial boundaries of the many co-existing Iron Age polities of the Archaic and Classical periods of the 8th to the 4th centuries BC (Papantoniou 2013b). It is probably not accidental or results only from access/non-access to limestone quarries that the best corpus of monumental limestone sculpture of Cypriot dignitaries or even of probable 'royal types' comes from extra-urban sanctuaries (Satraki 2012), especially those located in the plain of the Mesaoria, where many polities would have vied for territorial control.

Sanctuaries were diachronically instrumental within the power systems and the construction of the political geography of Cyprus. An examination and analysis of sacred landscapes in the *longue durée* provides information on how various agendas and ideas were communicated and transmitted and allows multiplicity and diversity in their interpretation. Whether particular extra-urban sanctuaries intentionally marked 'boundaries' remains hypothetical and problematic; a macro-historic approach, which examines the Cypro-Archaic city-kingdom sacred landscapes vis à vis those of the earlier and later periods, can provide a different framework for understanding the function of extra-urban sanctuaries in the territoriality of the Iron Age polities (Papantoniou 2019, with references). Nonetheless, lying within extra-urban settlements, along long-distance communication routes or in 'frontier' zones, they were linked to evolving sociopolitical and socioeconomic dynamics, creating 'liminal' zones among the city-kingdoms. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyses of the distribution of city-kingdom sanctuaries (Figure 2) have revealed their diachronic relationship with roads, sociopolitical 'boundaries', and networks, and with communication and trade routes between city-kingdoms or cities, second-rank towns, and rural settlements (Papantoniou and Kyriakou 2018; Papantoniou 2019; cf. Papantoniou and Bourogiannis 2018; Papantoniou and Vionis 2018; Vionis and Papantoniou 2019).

3. Sardinian Sacred Landscapes through Time

As early as in the full Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1700–1350 BC), refined techniques for cutting and polishing squared building blocks indicate a new, fine taste and specialised craftsmanship, expressed (as in the case of the Cypriot Bronze Age) first in funerary monuments and later, during the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age (ca. 1150–750 BC), in specific buildings dedicated to worship (in a similar way as the Cypriot Iron Age temenos). During the Middle and Recent Bronze Age (ca. 1350–1200 BC), monumental collective tombs named Giants' Tombs, were erected. Giants' Tombs are the buildings where communal rituals, feasts, and ceremonies for the dead take place. In particular, the open space shaped in a semi-circular area (exedra) located in the front of tombs coincided with the ceremonial zone. Like the Nuraghi, the Giants' Tombs also seem to have stopped being built by the Final Bronze Age. At the same time, it is possible to observe the rise and development of sanctuaries and places of worship focused on springs or wells or, in any case, buildings connected with water, as well as the spread of structures for community ceremonies such as rotundas or meeting huts. The emergence of monumental complexes and structures expressly designed for rituals and ceremonies is directly linked to the diminishing role of the Giants' Tombs as the location of religious ceremonies.

In contrast to the dense settlement patterns of the Middle and Late Bronze Age, in the Final Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age, the 'Nuragic' sanctuaries gathered different communities creating new types of networks (Depalmas 2014, 2018a; Usai 2015; Matta 2020). These cult complexes are diverse and often associated with the use of water, maybe due to climatic reasons: we can categorise Sardinian religious buildings as: a. sacred wells and springs; b. rectangular buildings (*megaron* temples); c. straight-and curvilinear structures; and d. circular buildings, in some instances featuring so-called 'rounds with basins' or without any vats (Depalmas 2005).

As already mentioned, the Sardinian Iron Age communities were organised in independent villages apparently with no substantial differences in size or rank, and not organised politically under bigger units (Depalmas and Melis 2010; Depalmas 2017). The exact function or functions of these sanctuaries in the context of these villages and their territorialisation remains to be identified. As with the building of the Iron Age Cypriot *temenos* with its role as a public sanctuary, the building of cult structures in the Final Bronze Age (ca. 1150–925 BC) is also a completely new phenomenon in the Sardinian landscape. Around the temples, groups of huts of varying sizes were established and probably often used by pilgrims at the feasts and religious ceremonies that attracted many communities from the whole territory, in a similar fashion to modern Christian sanctuaries nowadays in the Sardinian countryside.

We do not know the precise ceremonies that were practiced around the water cult sanctuaries; however, thanks to archaeological contexts, we can reconstruct a ritual involving the roasting of animal offerings, probably as part of religious feasts. The few archaeological contexts in Sardinia that have yielded useful finds show the presence of bones of wild and domestic animals, some of them burnt, leading to the hypothesis of a liturgy probably during ritual meals. In particular, the analysis of the faunal remains found in association with the pottery and the iconography of the bronze statuettes, representing worshippers offering gifts such as animals, food, and pottery (e.g., those from the sanctuary of Abini mentioned below) allow us to support the hypothesis of such offerings and ritual performances in Sardinian protohistoric sanctuaries (Depalmas et al. 2021). Another important source of information for understanding the rituals carried out in these sanctuaries is the class of small bronze figurines, the so-called 'bronzetti' (Figures 4 and 5), mainly found within cult areas and interpreted as offerings given to the temple during ceremonies (Ialongo 2013). In addition, one of the most commonly depicted subjects is the worshipper offering animals (rams), objects, and food.

Figure 4. 'Bronzetti' from Abini 'Nuragic' sanctuary in Teti (from Canino 2014, p. 351).
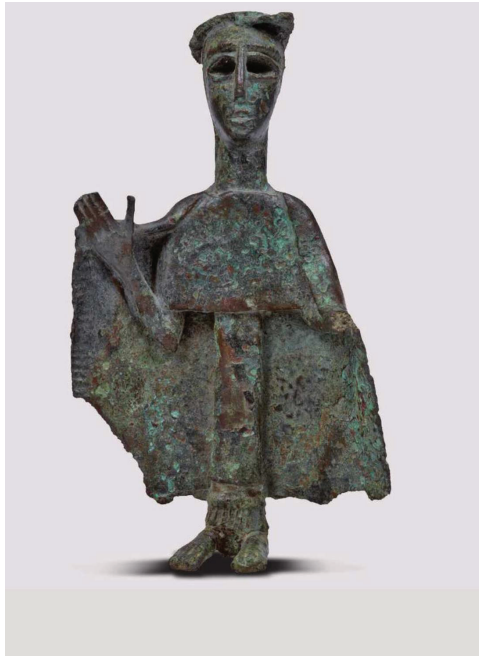
Figure 5. Woman offerer from the hoard of S'Arrideli in Terralba (from Alba 2014, p. 384).

The sanctuaries, or the village close to them, would have had an important and primary role in metallurgical activities for the production of metal weapons, tools, and objects (Depalmas et al. 2016, pp. 345–48). As well as figurines, a large number of weapons have been found in so-called 'Nuragic sanctuaries' (mainly daggers and 'votive' swords), tools, and objects, often in miniature (Lo Schiavo 1992), and these allow us to classify the well, the spring, the rectangular or circular building, and other connected rooms as places of metal artefact collection or even (in some instances) production (Depalmas 2018a, p. 8). The deposition of weapons in votive sanctuary contexts corresponds to precise offering sets, in which pins and daggers are recurrent; their presence has been interpreted as a personal offering, which corresponds to the funerary equipment in other geographical areas, and so is related to the social status of the donor. As discussed above, one can notice similar votive practices related to status in the case of the Cypriot Iron Age *temenos*. As Ialongo (2013) clearly asserts, Sardinian elites presented a complex 'ritual strategy', so that they could seize political legitimacy and territorial economic organisation. The water sanctuaries show the power and wealth of 'Nuragic' communities through the monumentality of their structures, their elaborate stone decoration, and the presence of exclusive built-in stone furniture and votive offerings. The management of the sanctuary by the elites took place through the involvement of the local communities in the ceremonies and feasts associated with them, which constitute a powerful attraction for goods and people.

In any case, water sanctuaries were centres of not only religious value, but also of political, economic, and social significance, since the Sardinians met at them to govern society and to manage wealth and resources (Depalmas 2018a, pp. 9–10). In addition to locally produced objects, mainly weapons, tools, ornaments, and figurines, the presence of fibulae of peninsular origin is well documented (Figure 6). These were evidently dedicated to the temple as a result of contacts with the Villanovan area, although Sardinian sanctuaries also received fibulae dating from the Final Bronze Age as votive offerings (e.g., in Santa Vittoria di Serri, Serra Niedda di Sorso) (Salis and Minoja 2015). It is certainly significant that the deposition of fibulae in graves is almost unknown, given that the only finds in

funerary contexts come from the necropolis of Monte Prama, and moreover from outside a shaft burial (Lo Schiavo 1992). This reinforces the idea that dedication of these objects to the temple follows the perspective of the offering as an exotic object whose functional value is not maintained, although it is also possible that the fibulae were deposited as part of an offering of a textile or item of clothing.

Figure 6. Fibula from cult complex of Sa Sedda ' Sos Carros in Oliena (from Gianfranca Salis 2014, p. 285, n. 27).

Spatial analyses, such as Network Analysis and GIS, support the interpretation that these Sardinian landscapes, similarly to the Cypriot case, acted as symbolic, economic, and territorial nodes within and in-between settlements and various natural resources (Matta 2020) (Figure 7). Even if they still lack an agreed scholarly interpretation, beyond their function as centres of religious and political aggregation of dispersed communities, 'Nuragic' sanctuaries seem to have been placed at strategic locations of several variables related to the environment, centrality, territoriality, and economy (Depalmas 2014; Matta 2020, p. 92). The interaction with groups coming from outside, such as the Phoenicians, who began to frequent the coasts of the island at least from the beginning of the Iron Age, seems also to be reflected in the internal dynamics of the sanctuaries, which appear to be centres able to attract exotic goods, probably always in the context of offerings dedicated at the temple. It is also possible, according to new models, that these arrived from outside, via *emporia* (van Dommelen 2018, pp. 219–21), in some cases perhaps coinciding with sanctuary sites, such as Sant'Imbenia in Alghero (for the hypothesis of the presence of an indigenous sanctuary in the site, see Depalmas 2018b, p. 119). Significant here is the presence of bronzes featuring iconographies of oriental divinities in cult complexes such as those of Santa Cristina in Paulilatino and the Camposanto in Olmedo (Tore 1983) or Nurdole in Orani (Madau 1997), testifying to the role and the force of attraction played by the sanctuaries of the inland areas with regard to the coastal areas as well.
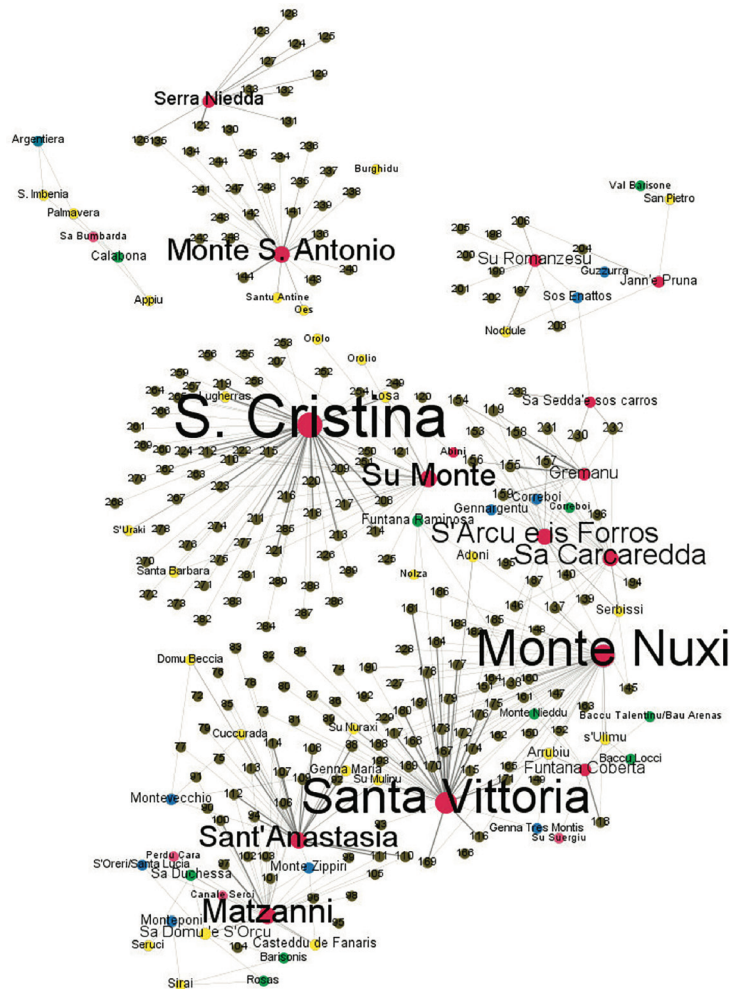
Figure 7. Network graph showing the connections between sanctuaries (in red), major settlements (yellow), other Nuragic settlements (brown), and ores (green, blue, pink) (from Matta 2020, p. 121, Figure 5).

4. Discussion

Having presented the evidence first from Cyprus and then from Sardinia from the Bronze to the Iron Age, we conclude by addressing the following three questions:

4.1. What Might Be the Relation between Individual Insularities and the Construction of Sacred Landscapes on These Two Mega-Islands?

What we have been able to show is that within their Late Bronze Age and Iron Age insular systems, both Cypriot and Sardinian sanctuaries, as is the case in other areas of the Mediterranean and world religion (e.g., see case studies in Papantoniou et al. 2019 with references), were centres not only of religious importance, but also of political, economic, and social significance, acting as central places where communities from the broader territory would have met, and where social and political identities were manifested and maintained.

Archaeologically, when it comes to sacred landscapes and religious material culture, Cyprus and Sardinia have revealed distinct identities shaped both by isolation and connectivity with the external world. For example, if we take the so-called 'goddess with upraised arms' figurines from Cyprus, we can note that it is influenced by the Aegean, but at the same time, they acquired a specific identity and meaning within their own insular systems (Papantoniou 2016). In Sardinia, the constant presence among the offerings of the sanctuaries of materials imported from outside, especially from the Italian peninsula, such as Villanovan fibulae, indicates not only the intense relations between the two opposite sides of the Tyrrhenian Sea, but also the tendency to take over and give new meanings to this material (Salis and Minoja 2015). Island size and proximity to the mainland and other islands can influence the nature of insularity and connectivity (Gordon 2018; Knodell et al. 2020), in this case the levels of transmission and transformation of culture (Clarke 2005). The ways in which materials, ideas, and behaviours are transmitted and transformed in time and space have usually been explored by historians and archaeologists who tended to focus on trade and exchange, immigration, colonisation, cultural diffusion, acculturation, and enculturation. Modern scholarship has been particularly keen on identifying and understanding the complex web of other interactions, transmissions, and transformations that happen when processes such as trade, exchange, military conflict, and social disorder take place, as well as the multiplicity of social changes that result from such phenomena (Schortman and Urban 1992; Clarke 2005; Knapp and van Dommelen 2010): movement of people and social disorder, trade and exchange, all of which are related to the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age in the Mediterranean, are deeply linked to the way in which culture is transmitted and transformed. Agency and objectification processes also need to be considered in order to comprehend ancient cultural systems, artefacts and their meanings, as well as ancient cognitive systems and sacred landscapes. It should, thus, be remembered that any artefact can give rise in different viewers to a multitude of varying and even contradictory perceptions, responses, and meanings, depending on their personal experience and identity (Elsner 1995, p. 3).

Movement of objects and ideas through space via migration, trade, exchange, etc. appear to enhance or promote change. Cultural traits, therefore, travel with people, but not all aspects of culture travel in the same way. A 'receiving group', for instance, can easily copy materials, decorative styles, and iconography, and these kinds of cultural transmissions are more clearly identifiable in the material record. Technologies and ideologies, including religion, require greater human participation in the transmission process, and they are harder to identify. When transmitted, such cultural forms can also be transformed. An important problem, however, in cultural transmission and transformation studies is identifying the level of human participation in the process. While style, for instance, can be transferred without the presence of people who have actual knowledge of it, the adoption of new technologies or ideologies apparently requires the presence of people who can demonstrate ways of doing things and ways of thinking about them. It is indeed very difficult to grasp the complexities of human interaction without first understanding the types of cultural transmissions and transformations that have occurred in a local context. Culture is created by experience shaped by various interactions with the world around, and it should be emphasised that the concept of 'local context' is very important in this process. The role of memory in the transmission and transformation of culture becomes an important interlocutor (Rowlands 1993). Mega-islands, such as Cyprus and Sardinia, therefore, produced different sacred landscapes and religious material culture, which were largely self-sufficient.

4.2. How Can a 'Landscape/Macro-Historic Approach' Assist Us in Better Formulating Microscopic Approaches on Both Islands at the Transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age?

Such an approach shows that, in the cases of Cyprus and of Sardinia, a Bronze Age cult practice was transformed and transplanted into the Iron Age due to its association with a successful indigenous political and economic model based on the elite manipulation

of power, including the production and circulation of metals and other resources. In using the terms 'transplantation' and 'transformation', we refer to the transfer of earlier ideas (and ideals)—as read in ritual practices, cult, and iconography—into an Iron Age sacred landscape, functioning within the context of a newly emerged political/administrative topography. Material evidence and iconography, as described above, allows us to identify sacred space in a given territory and to reconstruct sacred landscapes in which natural and/or manmade features were endowed with religious meaning. In addition, we can investigate how the two different cultures under discussion saw the relationship between natural resources, human constructions, and the supernatural, how the environment was changed or manipulated to construct a sacred landscape, and how the 'acculturation' process or forms of *interpretatio religiosa* resulted in changes to the sacred landscapes. In order to value 'religion' on these terms, we must question where the 'secular' and the 'sacred' begin or end and consider how it might be possible to isolate the 'sacred' from its socio-cultural matrix. The emergence and establishment of spatial analysis as a new field of study has put space at the centre of historical analysis. Sacred spaces, previously usually overlooked or studied as single sites irrespective of their built and natural environment, are now seen as sites of historical processes within a broader socio-political landscape and environmental framework (Papantoniou et al. 2019).

However, the relationship between ritual and community should be singled out. Materials used in ritual and votive practice, such the 'goddesses with upraised arms' figurines in the case of Cyprus or the Villanovan fibulae in the case of Sardinia, express the reception of this relationship by the public. Power and knowledge are closely linked, and the interaction between the population and political structures needs to remain our primary concern when we attempt to interpret ancient power structures. These concerns are closely bound to issues of the interaction between popular and politico-religious identities. The audience of both the Cypriot and the Sardinian sanctuaries must have taken ownership of the reception of any interaction, otherwise the message would be lost. Trends and iconography, therefore, were always translated into and reworked within Cypriot and Sardinian island traditions in order to express both elite ideology and popular cosmology.

4.3. Is a Comparative Approach Viable?

A comparative approach is viable not because there is any concrete evidence for direct interaction between the two mega-islands, but mainly because we are focusing on two mega-islands, behaving differently and more independently in relation to other smaller islands in the Aegean Archipelagos or the Croatian coast, for example. In addition, studying macro-historically the sacred landscapes of the two mega-islands, we can observe similar behaviours or functions of the sanctuaries, although, in each case, in a very different socio-political setting. Mega-islands may offer their own continental feeling, exactly because they are mega rather than being studied from the external vantage point of continental realms; thus, each mega-island can provide special insights into larger processes of socio-political responses, global or local (Hadjikyriacou 2017, p. x). Reminiscent of mainland areas with plateaus and mountain ranges, areas that Braudel (1972, pp. 160–61) called 'islands that the sea does not surround', 'sea-girt islands are landmasses marked by fluctuating levels of social connectivity and isolation' (Gordon 2018, p. 5); i.e., they can be places where social processes are either difficult to observe on continental space, or qualitatively variant on such mega-islands. Following Knapp (2008, pp. 373–86), local resources, seascape, and geopolitical location can create unique—and archaeologically legible—identities. Such an approach can contribute to a discourse on insularity, especially through its examination of long-term biogeographic and short-term socio-cultural configurations (Gordon 2018, p. 5).

The concept of 'islandscapes' (involving the sea and the coasts) becomes even more vital when studying such mega-islands, where the landscapes and coastlines are experienced differently by people living on the same island and may include a diverse range of 'temporal' and 'spatial' features (Gordon 2018, pp. 21–22). Thus, each Cypriot polity should be seen as an individual micro-entity (to use the term metaphorically, as if a small

islandscape) within the unitary space of the Cypriot mega-island, and each Sardinian post-Nuraghi society should be seen as an individual micro-entity island within the unitary space of the Sardinian mega-island. The cultural unity of the Cypriot polities and the Sardinian settlements seems to rely on a multi-layered composition of regional variability created by inter-regional influences, while the stylistic and architectural comparisons between the various centres should be viewed vis à vis other material culture indicators and topographical features. In other words, in each centre, we find architectural and material similarities between sanctuaries, but also regional variation (Papantoniou 2012a, pp. 21, 106; Depalmas 2018a). The clusters of Cypriot and Sardinian sacred landscapes (Figures 3 and 4) further showcase the idea of multiple islandscapes making a connected mega-island. In understanding such mega-islands, one has to consider first the differing levels of connectivity and isolation influenced by external contact (or non-contact if we consider the landward buffers beyond seascape and established views on the relative distance of Sardinian parts from the continental shores) (cf. Vogiatzakis et al. 2017), and secondly, long-term local practices in the case of each island. It appears that there could have been a range of islandscape-based notions of insularity that would have affected Cypriot and Sardinian sacred landscapes and their material expression, allowing for a great degree of local insular developments at the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (cf. van Dommelen 1998, pp. 11–13; Kearns 2018; Dawson 2019; Russell 2020). The development of major coastal sanctuaries in the seascape of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age, at Kition and Palaipaphos, continuing into the Iron Age, the Hellenistic and the Roman periods, in parallel with other major coastal sanctuaries at Amathous, Salamis, Soloi, and Kourion, for example, further supports this statement, relating to topographical features, seascape connectivity, and landward isolation. Most Sardinian sanctuaries originated in the Final Bronze Age, if not the Recent Bronze Age, and developed during the Early Iron Age, elaborating complex forms of organisation through the establishment of complex rituals, the control of metallurgical workshops, and the management of considerable wealth including objects of external provenance such as amber, bronze, and fibulae. Sanctuaries were also places of attraction and sites of meetings with Phoenician components that came from the coast to inland areas, as is well exemplified by the sanctuary of Santa Cristina, where, in addition to Villanovan fibulae, there are Levantine elements represented not only by Phoenician ceramics but also by figures of seated deities.

5. Conclusions

This article represents a first attempt to develop a comparative approach between Cypriot and Sardinian sacred landscapes, and to explore what lessons we can learn from such an approach. Our contribution contrasts Cyprus and Sardinia with regard to the place of sanctuaries and their material culture in the landscape and the archaeological and social contexts. There is clearly much more space for future research and developments using and developing this approach. Broadening our scope to the cosmopolitan settlements that emerged after the Early Iron Age Mediterranean movements (van Dommelen 2018, p. 227), through the study of material culture deriving from these sacred landscapes, we may be able to explore the broader array of cultural interaction at both local scale and inter-regionally in the Mediterranean, asking questions about the nature of the evolving worlds in a local context, full of material or ideological connectivities, as seen in the material culture from Cypriot and Sardinian sanctuaries presented above. Some of the insular variables that shaped Cypriot notions of insularity (size, ports, and seafaring history) may have parallels on Crete or Sicily, while the range of its natural resources is closer to Sardinia (Gordon 2018, p. 15). It is, however, the unique combination of each island's size, resources, and location in relation to contacts with continental cultures that likely played a key role in influencing spatially contingent notions of Cypriot and Sardinian insularities as expressed in sacred landscapes and their material culture, and as reflected in the periods afterwards (cf. Roppa 2018; Gordon 2020, p. 17; Kardulias 2020). Both in Cyprus and Sardinia, sacred landscapes seem to have played a significant role in the control of resources and the mobility

of raw materials, as well as the territoriality of space. An island archaeology approach offers a framework for exploring the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, contextualising Cypriot and Sardinian sacred landscapes within a geohistorical situation that is unique to these sea-girt mega-islands (cf. Kopaka and Cadogan 2012, p. 23). In recent years, Cyprus, on the eastern margins of the Mediterranean, and in a number of publications, has emerged more and more often as an incompatible peripheral entity, whose archaeological record confirms its uniqueness, encouraging 'Cyprocentric' approaches that emphasise its long-term endogenous rather than exogenous cultures and historicity (Iacovou 2007; followed or commented by, e.g., Papantoniou 2012a, 2013a, 2016; Satraki 2012; Counts and Iacovou 2013, p. 17; Averett 2015; Gordon 2018, p. 8; Kearns 2018, p. 67). Perhaps the time is ripe, when it also comes to Sardinia, on the western margins of the Mediterranean, to move more clearly to similar 'Sardinocentric' approaches, free of neighbouring continental or contemporary nationally (i.e., Greek for the case of Cyprus, and Italian for the case of Sardinia) driven archaeologies, for insular interpretations of both 'Nuragic' and later historical sacred landscapes.

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Mortuary Landscapes Revisited: Dynamics of Insularity and Connectivity in Mortuary Ritual, Feasting, and Commemoration in Late Bronze Age Cyprus

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to discuss mortuary contexts and possible related ritual features as parts of sacred landscapes in Late Bronze Age Cyprus. Since the island was an important node in the Eastern Mediterranean economic network, it will be explored whether and how connectivity and insularity may be reflected in ritual and mortuary practices. The article concentrates on the extra-urban cemetery of Area A at the harbour city of Hala Sultan Tekke, where numerous pits and other shafts with peculiar deposits of complete and broken objects as well as faunal remains have been found. These will be evaluated and set in relation to the contexts of the nearby tombs to reconstruct ritual activities in connection with funerals and possible rituals of commemoration or ancestral rites. The evidence from Hala Sultan Tekke and other selected Late Cypriot sites demonstrates that these practices were highly dynamic in integrating and adopting external objects, symbols, and concepts, while, nevertheless, definite island-specific characteristics remain visible.

Keywords: Cyprus; Late Bronze Age; insularity; connectivity; ritual; commemoration; burials; mortuary practice; sacred space

1. Introduction

While the surrounding cultures of Mycenaean Greece, Crete, Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt have yielded a wide variety of cultic remains, as well as iconographical and textual information on ritual and religion, the evidence from Late Bronze Age Cyprus (ca. 1650–1050 BCE) is sketchier. This is partly due to the lack of decipherable written sources from the island and partly dependent on the diversity reflected in the archaeological record. In fact, compared to the numerous well-known urban centres, the architectural evidence for built sanctuaries is somewhat elusive: it includes the cultic complexes at Athienou and Myrtou *Pigadhes*, as well as the monumental structures at Kition, Palaepaphos, and Enkomi (see a summary in Webb 1999, pp. 21–113), which are dated to the later part of the Bronze Age, i.e., the 13th and 12th centuries BCE. In addition, there are numerous important urban centres where clear cultic structures have not come to light—first and foremost at Hala Sultan Tekke. Hence, it is necessary to look at additional evidence of possible ritual and/or religious activities, some of which may have been overlooked in past research.

In contrast, the evidence of mortuary contexts is rich, albeit restrained by missing or limited research agendas, hasty and careless excavation, insufficient documentation, and the fact that many incomplete artefacts, as well as biofacts and human remains, were only rarely kept in the course of the extensive excavations on the island at the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century CE (Keswani 2004, pp. 24–26). Only in recent years, and especially owing to Priscilla S. Keswani's (2004) seminal study of mortuary ritual in Bronze Age Cyprus, it has become clear that this practice is highly complex, multi-faceted, and different from that of other Eastern Mediterranean regions, although foreign objects and other elements were frequently incorporated into burial contexts in the Late Bronze

Age. Due to the lack of additional data, mainly burial contexts per se were discussed, while evidence of activities related to burials, but taking place outside tombs, such as feasting, commemoration, votive practices, and deposition were often neglected (cf. Webb 1992; Steel 2004; Keswani 2004, 2012a; Webb and Frankel 2008; Webb 2019 for the Early and Middle Cypriot periods).

Therefore, the aim of the paper is to discuss mortuary contexts and possible related ritual features as parts of sacred landscapes in Late Bronze Age Cyprus. A specific focus will be given to the question of whether and how specific objects and practices may have been integrated into local customs in the light of the island's highly multi-cultural and inter-connected character in this period. The movement of people, knowledge, ideas, and perceptions was one of the main driving forces of increased social and economic complexity (e.g., Knapp 1986)—but in what way is this reflected in the ritual sphere? What significance did insularity and connectivity have in relation to the mortuary landscape? The starting point of the study is the peculiar combination of tombs, wells, and ritual pits at Hala Sultan Tekke Area A (Bürge 2017). It will be extended to other areas of the same site as well as to other regions in selected case studies from Palaepaphos in the south-west, *Toumba tou Skourou* and Ayia Irini *Paleokastro* in the north, and Enkomi in the south-east (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of Cyprus indicating Late Bronze Age sites mentioned in the text (drawing by the author).

2. Insularity and Connectivity in Late Cypriot Religious and Ritual Spheres

Late Bronze Age Cyprus, which has been often described as a melting pot and cross-roads of civilisations of the eastern Mediterranean (and beyond), certainly was influenced by surrounding cultures as regards almost all aspects of society, including rituals, beliefs, and religion in general. The sea, as the most efficient form of mobility (Gordon and Koure-menos 2020) was more a bridge than a barrier and greatly facilitated the exchange of goods and ideas, as well as human mobility, which are the main criteria for connectivity as defined by Horden and Purcell (2000, pp. 123–72). The sailing routes in the Eastern Mediterranean inevitably passed Cyprus (e.g., Bar-Yosef Mayer et al. 2015; Safadi 2016; Safadi and Sturt

2019) and the sought-after Cypriot copper stimulated trade and contacts from Cyprus to the surrounding regions.

Compared to other Mediterranean islands, Cyprus is very close to the nearest mainland, i.e., Anatolia and the Northern Levant, the mountains of which are, on clear days, visible from the Cypriot coast and vice versa (see also Horden and Purcell 2000, pp. 124–32; Bar-Yosef Mayer et al. 2015, p. 420). Depending on wind direction and weather conditions, waves and currents, season, and time of day, the surrounding coasts could be reached within only a few days (Broodbank 2000, pp. 345–47; Bar-Yosef Mayer et al. 2015; Safadi 2016; Safadi and Sturt 2019; Knapp 2020). Although mostly concerned with the Neolithic period, Bar-Yosef Mayer et al. (2015) calculate voyages of less than a day from Anatolia (Cape Anamur) to Cyprus (Cape Kormakitis/Morphou Bay)—while the way back may lead along the Northern Levantine coast and will therefore take longer—around a day from the Northern Levant (Latakia) to Cyprus, and one to two days from Cyprus to the Levantine coast (Beirut) under the most favourable conditions.

In fact, much has been written about the interconnected Late Bronze Age societies in the Eastern Mediterranean, the correspondence and diplomatic relations between different political powers, and the circulation of goods and élite items (see, e.g., contributions in Duistermaat and Regulski 2011; Aruz et al. 2013; Eder and Pruzsinszky 2015). Meanwhile, it seems more difficult to tackle if and in what way aspects of daily life or ritual and cult were affected by this 'globalisation' (see though, e.g., Eriksson 2008). We may imagine that Cyprus at this time was a cosmopolitan and polyglot society, which is, inter alia, epitomised in a silver bowl from Hala Sultan Tekke with an Ugaritic inscription most likely mentioning the owner with a Hurrian name and West-Semitic patronym (Åström and Masson 1982; Stieglitz 1984), although we do not know whether the bowl was produced and inscribed on Cyprus or at another place, such as Ugarit.

Taking a closer look at the material culture, Mycenaean imported fineware, mostly produced in the Argolid (Sterba), occurs in most conspicuous quantities not only in ritual, burial, and élite contexts but also in domestic areas (see summary in van Wijngaarden 2002, pp. 183–91). In addition, Levantine, Egyptian, and, to a lesser degree, also Anatolian imports and influences are ubiquitous (Fischer and Bürge 2017; Bürge and Fischer 2018). Despite the inter-connected character of the island and the incorporation of diverse material culture elements, it would be fallacious to assume that Late Cypriot ritual practice can be reconstructed analogous to that of the Aegean or the Levant, from where we have more substantial evidence. As we will see below, the issue of religion and ritual in relation to insularity and connectivity is highly complex: it is often associated with notions of tradition and conservatism, and seen in static terms (Knapp and Dommelen 2014, pp. 605–6). In particular preparation and consumption of food and drink, not only in rituals, is regarded as 'deeply embedded in cultural traditions' (Steel 2010, p. 109) and changes in these practices, which may be reflected in the material culture, are significant as being indicative of social transformations. On the other hand, rituals may also be a powerful source for transformation (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, pp. 139–40).

The selection of material remains that might express identity and insularity in the archaeological record needs to be carefully considered (see also Knapp 2007, p. 41) and, in general, notions of identity are dynamic, diverse, and therefore difficult to interpret (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Hence, as a starting point, the Cypriot evidence will be regarded as representing a distinct 'cultural sphere'. However, possible influences, adoptions, and adaptations from surrounding cultures will be considered and discussed.

3. Late Cypriot Cemeteries and Mortuary Practice

While in the Early and Middle Cypriot periods burials and habitation areas were separated (see summary in Keswani 2004, pp. 39–41; see though the reservations expressed by Webb 2018), the Late Bronze Age mortuary evidence is very diverse: cemeteries from the Middle Cypriot periods were still in use, other extramural cemeteries were established at the end of the Middle Cypriot or the beginning of the Late Cypriot period (Keswani

2004, p. 86), but associated larger settlements have not been found. In most urban centres, e.g., Enkomi, *Toumba tou Skourou*, Alassa, Kalavasos or Kition, the tombs are located inside the settlement, often immediately next to residential, administrative or workshop areas, in courtyards or open spaces (see summary in Keswani 2004, pp. 86–88). At first sight, Hala Sultan Tekke seems to represent an exception, as both extra- and intramural burials were found (see below). However, as will be demonstrated below, the dichotomy of intramural versus extramural needs to be questioned (see already Webb 2018). A long-term use of the tombs is still characteristic of Late Cypriot burial practices, as well as collective burials and complex multi-stage treatments of the deceased (Keswani 2004, 2012a). Hand in hand with the social, political, and economic transformations during the Late Bronze Age, i.e., the intensification of copper production and export, long distance trade, the development of urban centres and the increased interactions with surrounding cultures, it seems likely that specific practices underwent transformations, and some may have been adopted from other cultural spheres.

Emerging élites are inter alia expressed in richly furnished tombs containing items of social prestige (e.g., Keswani 1989, 2004, pp. 241–45, Table 5.11). Only in the 12th century BCE, i.e., the Late Cypriot (henceforth LC) IIIA, a decline of valuable items within the tomb inventory and the appearance of single (shaft) graves can be observed (Keswani 2004, pp. 118–19; see also the LC IIIA Tomb 23 from Hala Sultan Tekke in Niklasson 1983, which, however, contained numerous precious bronze objects). In the subsequent LC IIIB (end of 12th century–1050 BCE), which will not be discussed in the present article, funerals were carried out as 'public spectacles' (Keswani 2012a, p. 321) with excessive numbers of tomb objects and valuable prestige items (e.g., Karageorghis 2016; Karageorghis and Raptou 2016, 2019).

Besides burials and funerals, mortuary practice may also include a range of activities taking place in connection with the burial, as well as ancestral rites (Morris 1991; Charles and Buikstra 2002; Silverman 2002). The evidence from Hala Sultan Tekke offers the possibility to study a cemetery in a wider context and as an area where a multitude of different and recurrent rituals and activities were carried out.

4. The Case of Hala Sultan Tekke

The discovery and exposure of tombs was one of the main aims of the British Museum excavations by Henry B. Walters and John W. Crowfoot in 1897 and 1898, respectively (Bailey 1976). Unfortunately, there are only vague notes about the location of the more than 60 tombs exposed (Bailey 1976, Plate Ia, b). According to these, Walters' area is north-west and (one of) Crowfoot's to the south-east of Area 23 (see location in Figure 2; also Samaes and Nys 2010, p. 223, Figure 2). If these rough indications are correct, both areas are just outside the densely built city centre, which could be pinpointed and characterised thanks to a large-scale magnetometer survey carried out in 2017 (Fischer 2020, p. 192, Figure 2b). Five intramural tombs dating mainly to the LC II (Tombs 20–22, 24) and LC IIIA (Tomb 23) were found in Areas 8 and 23 (see Figure 2) in the 1970–1990s (Åström 1983; Niklasson 1983; Åström and Nys 2007). An LC IIA–B tomb was unearthed in CQ2 in the course of the renewed excavations (Fischer and Bürge 2018a, pp. 124, 129–34). Additional Late Cypriot tombs, some of which cannot be exactly located today, were found during rescue excavations along the channel and the road next to the mosque and under the parking lot of the mosque (Karageorghis 1976, 1983, p. 915; Samaes and Nys 2010).
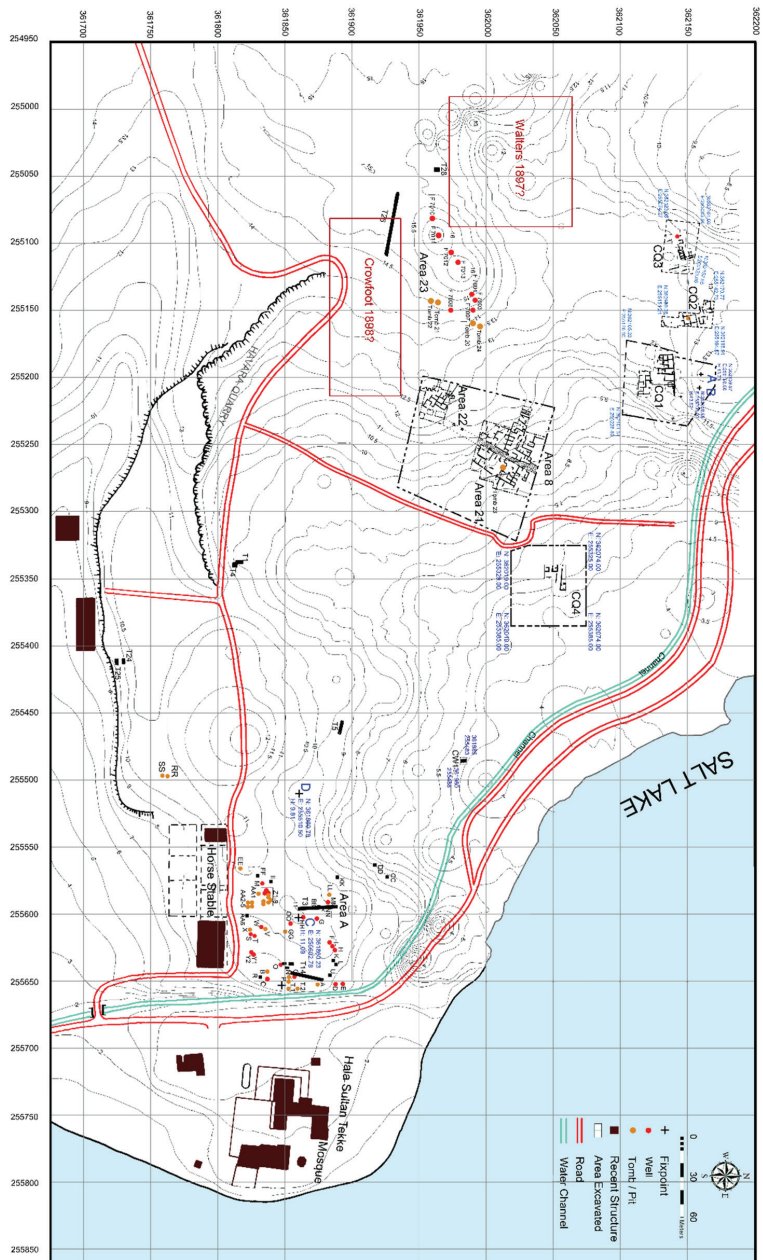
Figure 2. Overview over Hala Sultan Tekke and excavated areas (drawing by M. Al-Bataineh with additions by the author).

The existence of a large extramural cemetery, Area A, along with intramural burials at Hala Sultan Tekke, could be confirmed by the results of the 2017 magnetometer survey (Fischer 2020, p. 192, Figure 2b). Additional excavations substantiated the period of use from the earliest occupation of the city at the beginning of the Late Cypriot period until the

end of the LC IIIA, i.e., in the mid to second half of the 12th century BCE, when the city was destroyed and abandoned, never to be occupied again. Area A is located just southeast of a structure, possibly a city wall or at least a small rampart (Fischer and Bürge 2020, pp. 90–91), and seems to continue beyond the channel and the road towards the mosque. Today, the area of Hala Sultan Tekke is relatively flat with differences of not more than 12–15 m between the highest points located mainly in the western and north-western parts of the city (Area 23 and CQ1) and the north-eastern part (e.g., CQ4), which gently slopes down towards the shore of today's Salt Lake. Although the Bronze Age coastline has not been determined yet (cf. Devillers et al. 2015), it is reasonable to assume that the ancient coast and the harbour were located in the area of the Salt Lake, which was connected to the sea in the Late Bronze Age (Morhange et al. 2000) and silted up some time after the end of the Late Bronze Age. Consequently, Area A, located in a presumably flat area close to the shore, must have been visible from the sea and vice versa.

Area A is not only interesting because it represents the only hitherto known Late Cypriot 'extramural' cemetery, which can be associated with one of the urban centres, but also because numerous wells with striking fillings and possible ritual pits were excavated mainly in the most recent seasons of excavation. A detailed publication of all features is forthcoming and some of them have been presented in preliminary reports (see summary in Bürge 2017). Therefore, only selected contexts will be presented and discussed, which may help to understand ritual activities in connection to burials and commemoration: these are subdivided into three main types based on contents and way of deposition, although there might be types that are mixed or reflect yet more activities performed in this area.

4.1. Pits Containing Depositions of Complete Objects

Four of this type of pit have been excavated at the site (Pits B, P, Z6 and Z7; Bürge 2017, pp. 136–41; Fischer and Bürge 2018b, pp. 49–50). Three (Pits B, Z6 and Z7) can be dated to the LC IIC, i.e., the 13th century BCE, while the material of Pit B is best placed in the LC IB, i.e., the 15th century BCE. The pits have circular shapes with diameters of 1–1.5 m. With the exception of one reused well (Z6) the others have depths of roughly 2–3 m, which is not sufficient to reach groundwater. The reused well, Z6, is deeper but has not been excavated to groundwater level. In contrast to the other pits, it has circular recesses cut in at regular intervals, which are characteristic of the wells at the site and facilitated the access to the shaft for cleaning and maintenance (Fischer and Bürge 2018b, p. 45).

The stratigraphy reveals that up to three different acts of deposition took place within the same pit (Figure 3), most likely quite close in time. The uppermost deposits are in two cases (Pits B and Z6) sealed by an ochre-coloured layer (Figure 4a). The deposited artefacts are complete or almost complete and consist of locally made (Figure 4b: 1–2; Figure 5: 1–2, 8, 11) and imported fineware vessels (Figure 4b: 3–5; Figure 5: 3, 9–10), cooking vessels, lamps and wall brackets, loom weights, a spindle, or distaff (Figure 5: 13; see also Fischer and Bürge 2018b, p. 48, Figure 16.9) and a figurine of a female (Figure 5: 6) and a bovine rhyton (Figure 5: 7). Some faunal remains are worked or modified, such as incised scapulae of *Bos* (Figure 5: 5) and *Ovis/Capra*, ground down astragali of *Ovis/Capra* (Figure 5: 12) and fragments of elephant ivory. Other remains include mainly bird, fish, and shells, while botanical material is scarcely preserved.
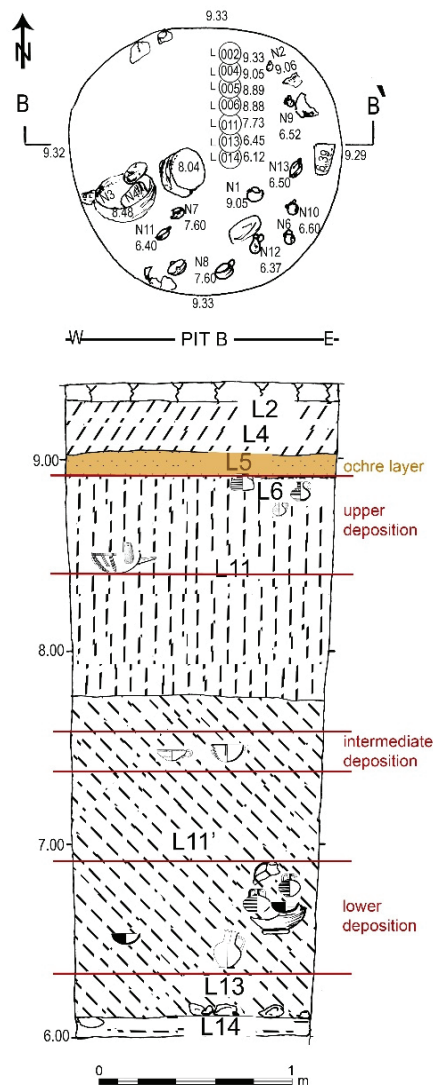
Figure 3. Plan and section of Pit B (drawing by M. Al-Bataineh with additions by the author).

All in all, the contents of these pits are not very different from Late Cypriot tomb inventories (see synopsis in Keswani 2004, pp. 226–48, Tables 5.8–5.13). However, frequent burial gifts, such as personal adornment or weapons are absent and, most importantly, there are no human remains. So far, no comparable contexts have been found in Late Bronze Age Cyprus and the combination of utilitarian items, textile production tools, tableware, and objects with cultic connotation, i.e., notched scapulae, ground down astragali, figurines, and rhyta, is unique. Jennifer M. Webb (1999, p. 249 with further references) has suggested that incised scapulae were used for scapulomancy, i.e., divination based on specific features of the bone. It has also been suggested that these were used as musical instruments (Karageorghis 1990), perhaps similar to rasps known from Central Europe already in the Palaeolithic period (Morley 2005, pp. 214–15), but the notches are not very deep, quite irregular, and too distant from each other to produce an acceptable sound—beside the

fact that the scapulae do not show any use-related wear (see also Webb 1985, p. 324; for further discussion and interpretation see also Zukerman et al. 2007). In any case, they occur mostly in ritual contexts (Webb 1999, p. 249; Reese 2002). Possible functions of the astragali include again fortune telling (astragalomancy) indicated by the way the bones fall but they may also have functioned as gaming pieces (Gilmour 1997; Webb 1999, p. 250). Nude Base-ring female figurines, of which two general types exist (Webb 1999, pp. 209–11), are fairly standardised, most likely depict a divinity (Budin 2009) and, at least one of the types, clearly alludes to fertility (Webb 1999, pp. 209–11; for more recent interpretive approaches see Alexandrou 2019; Steel 2021). These, as well as bovine rhyta, were mostly found in cultic structures and less commonly in tombs (Webb 1999, pp. 209–11, 216–19; see though recently Alexandrou 2019, p. 202; see below their occurrence in Tombs RR and SS at Hala Sultan Tekke; also Fischer and Bürge, Fischer and Bürge).

Figure 4. Pit B: (**a**) Ochre layer covering the uppermost deposition; (**b**) selected finds (photographs by P.M. Fischer and the author).

Figure 5. Selected finds from Hala Sultan Tekke, Pit Z6 (upper part) and Pit Z7 (lower part) (photographs by P.M. Fischer and the author, drawing by the author).

The tableware from the pits consists of locally produced finewares (Figure 4b: 1–2; Figure 5: 1–2, 8) and, in the case of the more recent pits (B, Z6, Z7), Mycenaean (Figure 4b: 3–4; Figure 5: 9), Minoan (Figure 5: 3) and Sardinian imports (Figure 4b: 5; Figure 5: 4, 10). Both open and closed vessels are represented, but it is interesting to note that bowls (together with other open vessels such as cups and kylikes) prevail in all pits (Figures 6–8). The second largest group is that of serving vessels (jugs) and small containers (juglets, small stirrup jars, alabastra). Vessels for food preparation, i.e., cooking pots, baking trays, and basins occur as well but never in large quantities. Storage and transport vessels, i.e., pithoi and Canaanite jars, are only preserved in fragments. While Sardinian imports, five bowls

and a large fragment of an open vessel which resembles a cooking pot, are present in all three contexts, the quantity of Mycenaean (and Minoan) imports varies slightly, while the vessel types comprise open eating/drinking vessels (bowls, cups, kylikes) and containers for small precious substances (alabastra, stirrup jars, juglets): Pit B contained six vessels (a shallow cup and an alabastron, two stirrup jars and juglets), Pit Z6 only a shallow bowl and a Minoan small squat stirrup jar, and Pit Z7 an almost complete and three larger diagnostic fragments of bowl(s), a kylix, a shallow cup, and a complete and a lower part of a juglet.
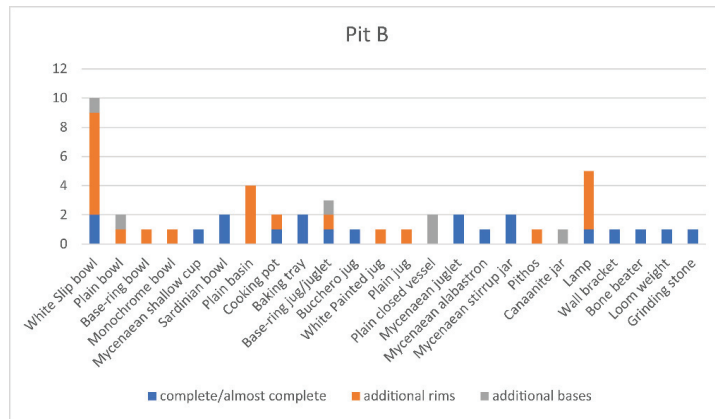

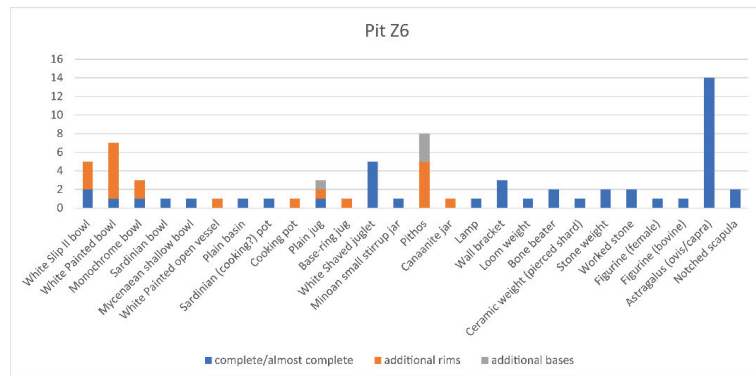**Figure 6.** Distribution of finds from Hala Sultan Tekke, Pit B.

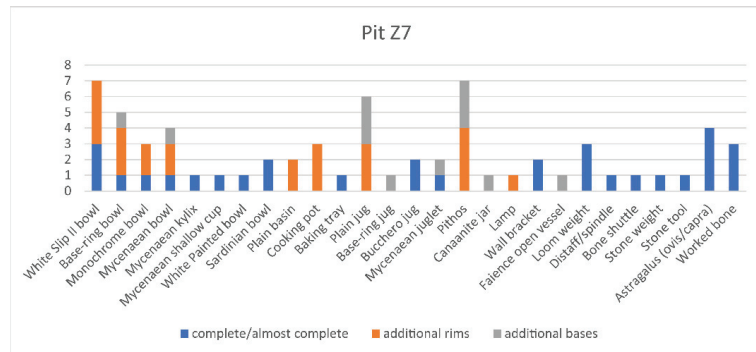**Figure 7.** Distribution of finds from Hala Sultan Tekke, Pit Z6.

Figure 8. Distribution of finds from Hala Sultan Tekke, Pit Z7.

4.2. Pits Containing Broken Fineware

Four pits or wells containing exceptionally large amounts of broken fineware have been discovered in Area A. The well in Trench 1/4 was excavated in 1971–1972 (Öbrink 1983) and epitomises the misconception of this specific type of context: the well filling excavated down to a depth of 3.45 m consisted of over 10,000 fragments, of which around 75% are finewares of local production and Mycenaean and Anatolian imports, and 24% are Plain wares that may also comprise fine tableware (Figure 9). Since the material needs some revision concerning the identification of wares and the statistics, only preliminary observations can be made; while the large group of Base-ring vessels mainly comprise closed shapes (jugs, tankards), the Plain wares mainly include kraters, bowls, and jugs and White Slip is almost exclusively represented by bowls. The evaluation of the Mycenaean imports is somewhat more detailed (Öbrink 1983, p. 35, Table 2), yet based on sherd count (for a critique of this method and an alternative approach to pottery statistics see Bader 2010); closed shapes, mainly piriform jars and jugs prevail, whereas eating/drinking vessels such as bowls and kylikes as well as kraters are relatively rare. The material suggests a date in LC IIA–B/Late Helladic (LH) IIIA1–2, i.e., in the early 14th century BCE. Only ten fragments of cooking ware come from this well and very few pithos and Canaanite jar fragments, while other types of objects are absent. Among the very few faunal remains are six bones of *Equus asinus* and ten marine shells (Reese 1998, p. 136). This peculiar context was interpreted as tomb material by Öbrink (1983, p. 31) but neither the absence of human bones and artefacts commonly occurring in burial contexts, nor the fact that all vessels were fragmented were further discussed.
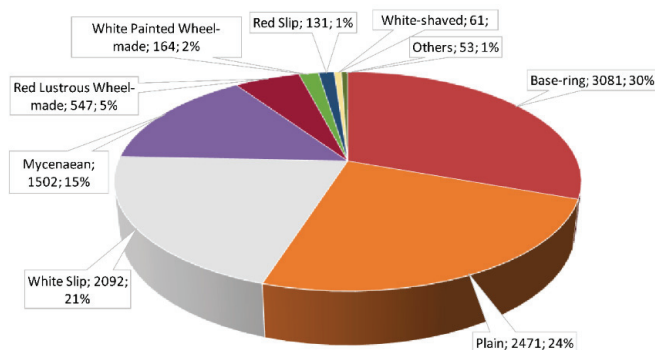

Figure 9. Hala Sultan Tekke, well in Trench 1/4: distribution of pottery classes according to Öbrink 1983 (based on sherd count).

In the course of the renewed excavations at least three similar contexts, Well Q, Pit V and Pit GG, were found. Well Q is very similar regarding context and material (Bürge 2017, pp. 143–45), while Pits V and GG are relatively shallow and figure-8-shaped. Nevertheless, the large amounts of fragmented pottery, mainly finewares, the general lack of non-ceramic objects and the relative scarcity of faunal remains resemble the well in Trench 1/4. The material from the other three pits/wells has not yet been studied completely but preliminary analyses suggest a relatively long timespan represented in the pottery ranging from LC IIB–C/LH IIIA2–B, i.e., ca. 1350–1200 BCE (Bürge 2017, pp. 143–45; Fischer and Bürge 2018b, p. 53). However, all four pits have in common that matching pieces are distributed throughout almost all levels and areas within each feature, which hints at one single act of deposition. In addition, some vessel parts show evidence of deliberate breakage and none of the vessels could be completely reassembled, as despite careful excavation and extensive sieving some fragments were still missing (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Mycenaean (LH IIIA) jug from Hala Sultan Tekke, Pit V, showing missing fragments (photograph by the author).

In summary, these features do not contain typical tomb inventories and human remains are absent. The contents rather seem to represent ritual consumption and, as the small number of animal bones and botanical remains indicate, that of liquid substances. A preliminary evaluation of vessel types revealed that open shapes are well represented in White Slip, Base-ring, and Plain wares, whereas Mycenaean imports mainly contribute to the repertoire of closed shapes (jugs, piriform jars). The same applies to Anatolian Red Lustrous Wheel-made vessels, which are predominantly spindle bottles (regarding the most likely Anatolian origin of this ware see, e.g., Kibaroğlu et al. 2019; Kozal). The long timespan reflected in Pit V may either point to an extended use life of specific vessels or to the possibility that the pottery was collected elsewhere after each consumption event and finally deposited in one single event, which may also explain the missing fragments.

4.3. Pits Containing Broken Pottery and Larger Amounts of Faunal Remains

The third group of pits is more diverse and will be discussed only exemplarily using Well F as a 'model'. Here it seems that mainly wells have been used to discard pottery, other objects, and animal bones. The numerous wells at Hala Sultan Tekke, all characterised by the presence of climbing holes, have depths of more than 10m but only very few could be excavated down to the bottom (Åström 1998). Nevertheless, an evaluation of the material is meaningful even in partly excavated wells, since the material is mostly concentrated in the uppermost levels of the shaft. Well F yielded over 30 complete or almost complete objects, among them a possible bronze vessel, a scarab, loom weights, and a bone beater and numerous ceramic vessels (see a summary in Fischer and Bürge 2016, pp. 47–49) in addition to 1285 pottery fragments (Figure 11). Looking at the rim and base statistics (MNI) of pottery types and shapes, we see a high overrepresentation of bowls ($n = 116$; Figure 12). Most of them ($n = 76$) are of White Slip II ware, followed by Plain ware ($n = 20$)

and Base-ring (*n* = 8) and single examples of other wares (White Painted, Red Slip, Red Lustrous Wheel-made). The second largest group are jugs (*n* = 42), mainly of Plain ware, Bucchero, and Base-ring, followed by Plain ware basins (*n* = 11) and lamps (*n* = 6). Cooking pots, pithoi, Canaanite jars, juglets, and wall brackets occur only occasionally (*n* ≤ 4).
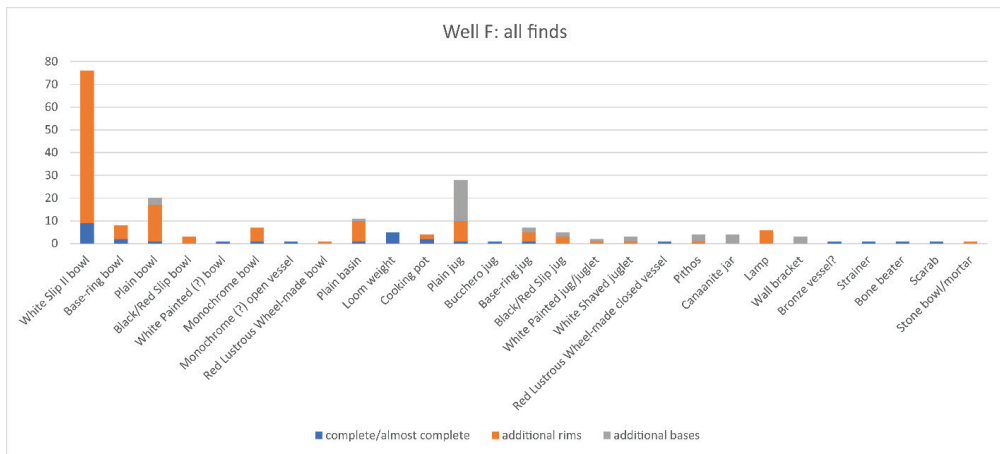

Figure 11. Hala Sultan Tekke, Well F: distribution of finds.
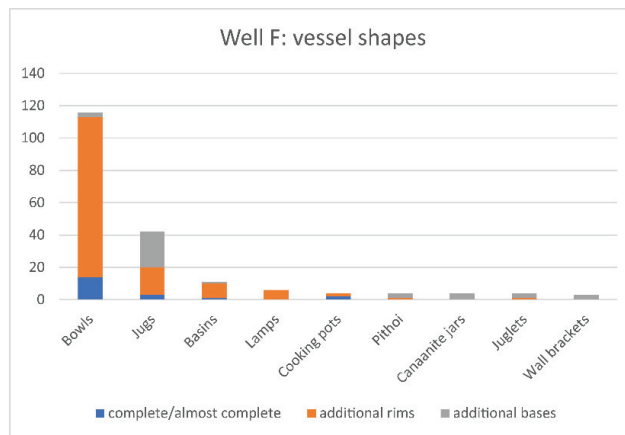
Figure 12. Hala Sultan Tekke, Well F: distribution of vessel shapes.

Besides the considerably smaller number of pottery fragments and objects, the main difference to the pits described above are the faunal remains: Well F contained numerous remains of mainly *Ovis/Capra*, *Bos*, *Canis*, small mammals, birds, fish, and molluscs, among them several hundreds MNI of *Hexaplex* which were crushed. Although a final evaluation of the faunal remains is forthcoming, the preliminary results show that among the *Ovis/Capra* and *Bos* remains numerous cut marks of meat-bearing and other parts are present. Meat consumption and the (symbolic) use of specific animal parts certainly took place in Area A, since large amounts of animal bones as well as distinct skeletal parts, such as skulls, horns or even almost complete animals—mainly cattle, sheep/goat, equid and dog have been discarded in other wells and pits in the area (e.g., Fischer and Bürge 2015, p. 47, Figure 26).

5. Mortuary Rituals and Activities at Hala Sultan Tekke, Area A

How do these contexts relate to each other and how are they connected to the tombs in the same area? It seems obvious that the pits reflect different types of activities: while the pits with complete objects are the results of careful depositions, those with fragmented finewares and other objects were filled up by throwing complete or already broken vessels after ritual consumption. None of these contexts is consistent with tomb inventories and the frequent assumption that similar deposits often found in wells or pits represent the remains of looted tombs (e.g., Hala Sultan Tekke: Öbrink 1979, p. 1; 1983, p. 31; Kouklia Mantissa: Karageorghis 1965, p. 158; Enkomi: Lagarce 1986, pp. 57–58) is not tenable.

The deposits in Area A cover the period from LC IB to LC IIC, which is consistent with the main use of the cemetery. The two reused wells of the LC IIIA, where several individuals were buried with only very few associated objects or personal belongings (Stolle 2016; Fischer and Bürge 2018b, p. 50), are not discussed in the present paper but may perhaps express changes in customs and society in the transformative period of the 12th century BCE (Fischer and Bürge). Analogous to the common Late Cypriot burial practice, the LC I–II tombs in Area A contain numerous burials and show clear evidence of different stages and degrees of post-mortem treatment and long periods of use, often spanning a few centuries (Bürge and Fischer 2017; Bürge 2017, Fischer and Bürge). The activities taking place in a cemetery therefore do not only consist of funeral rituals. There may have been extended periods of celebration or periodic events between the first placement of the corpse (in or outside the tomb) and secondary treatments or depositions. Tombs were recurrently opened and closed again to deposit additional corpses, and specific rituals took place during each of these stages. In addition, rituals of commemoration or activities connected to ancestral cults, which are certainly more restricted and circumscribed than funerals (see also Webb 2018, p. 216; 2019, p. 171), may have occurred both simultaneously and/or independently from the funerals per se, and these may explain the function of the pits with complete objects: while they do not seem to contain animal sacrifices or food offerings, the deposited objects are of symbolic value and the few relatively small drinking and serving vessels indicate small-scale drinking of restricted groups or libations.

Since the meaning of the incised scapulae, the modified astragali, the female figurines, and animal rhyta is not entirely clear, it is difficult to assess what exactly these symbolise when deposited in the pits. However, it is interesting to note that these objects do occur in Late Cypriot tombs, albeit not very frequently. Two examples are at Hala Sultan Tekke; one is Tomb RR (Fischer and Bürge 2020, pp. 91–96; Fischer and Bürge), where four Cypriot Base-ring figurines of females and one Minoan female were deposited, besides a fragment of an incised scapula and ground-down astragali. The other is Tomb SS, where inter alia a Base-ring bovine rhyton was associated with one of the burials (Fischer and Bürge). It cannot be excluded that the pits with complete objects are related to ritual pits known from Hittite sources which connect the living with chthonic deities (Collins 2002). Although it is often problematic to introduce interpretive terms, as these may hamper an unbiased approach, for the time being this type of pit will be termed 'offering pit', which may comprise the notion of votive offering, commemoration, or ancestral cults, as well as other possible aspects like necromancy or 'symbolic sacrifices'.

The deposits of broken fineware clearly display collective consumption, most likely of mainly liquid substances. However, the apparently single event of final deposition contradicted by the long timespan represented in the pottery may only be explained when looking at the nearby tombs and specifically the recently (2020–2021) excavated Tomb SS (Fischer and Bürge, Fischer and Bürge): the roughly pentagonal pit of 4.5 m in diameter contained (at least) two deposits of broken pottery covering the burials. While the heap-like upper deposit (L121; Figure 13) is the result of a single event of throwing vessels into the open tomb pit, the lower one (L133; Figures 14 and 15) has been created by depositing vessels on top of the most recent burials. The main difference in the deposits is the degree of fragmentation, which is considerably higher in the upper deposit, while the pottery in the lower is in most cases intact or broken on the spot in large fragments. However,

in contrast to the evidence from the fineware pits discussed above, even the relatively fragmented vessels of the upper deposit could be completely reassembled.

Figure 13. Hala Sultan Tekke, Tomb SS; photo of upper pottery deposit L121 (photograph by P.M. Fischer).
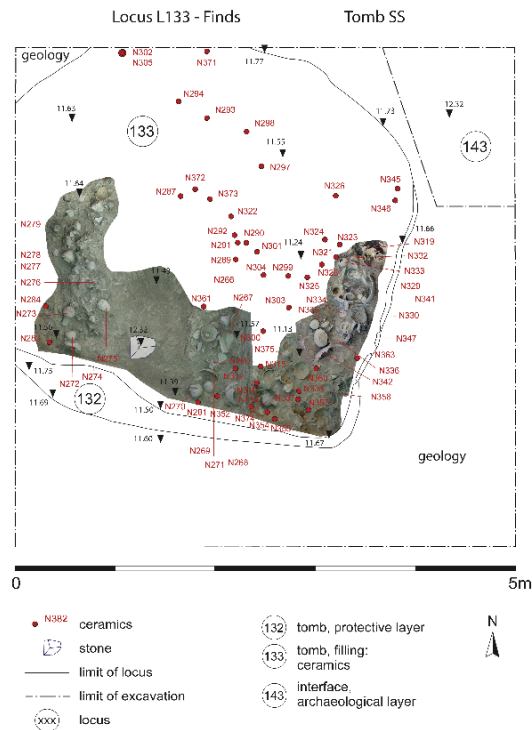

Figure 14. Hala Sultan Tekke, Tomb SS; preliminary plan of lower deposit (by A. Buhlke).

Figure 15. Hala Sultan Tekke, Tomb SS; photo of part of lower pottery deposit L133 (photograph by P.M. Fischer).

Regarding the type of material, these two deposits are almost identical and comprise (at the current state of processing) around 250 complete vessels of almost exclusively fineware. There is one Canaanite jar in each deposit, whereas only a few fragments of cooking vessels were found. The main pottery classes represented include local tableware, mainly bowls, jugs, and juglets of Base-ring, White Slip, White Shaved, and Plain ware and spindle bottles and bowls of Anatolian Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware. More than a third of the Mycenaean and Minoan imported vessels are miniature piriform jars. Other shapes include mainly kraters—some of them with pictorial decoration—stirrup jars, juglets, and alabastra, whereas open vessels—bowls and kylikes—are represented in quite low numbers, and only one rhyton was deposited.

The only faunal remains consist of various molluscs, most of them complete *Bolinus brandaris* and *Hexaplex trunculus*, i.e., purple snails, as well as a Base-ring jug that contained fish bones. The pottery is best placed in LH IIIA2 and LC IIA2–B, i.e., the second half of the 14th century BCE, and the homogeneous composition of the pottery corpus suggests that both deposits were placed rather close in time. While these deposits certainly deserve further discussion under various aspects and the processing of the material is still ongoing, it seems to reflect one or perhaps more rituals of tomb closure. Here, too, the material suggests communal drinking rather than meat consumption—unless the meat refuse was discarded elsewhere.

Hence, the most probable explanation for the deposits of broken fineware are periodic tomb openings and closures and the necessity of clearing the tomb and removing the deposited items before a new interment could take place, which may have ended in one or more feasts, i.e., a 'a form of public ritual activity centered around the communal consumption of food and drink' (Dietler 2001, p. 67), perhaps primarily for commemoration of the deceased but also for defining social relations (e.g., Steel 2004; Hayden 2009). However, consumption of food and drink as meaningful epitomisation of mnemonic device as well as to create remembering and forgetting is only one activity that took place. Others may have included singing, dancing, consumption of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, and the symbolic killing and sacrifice of pottery and other objects (see also Hamilakis 1998; Steel 2004). It is important to point out that objects used in ritual performances most likely were not simply 'discarded' but there might be highly ritualised, specialised, and complex procedures of handling ritual waste (e.g., Ekroth 2017).

The presence of large skeletal parts of animals and non-meat bearing parts in some of the wells and shafts of Area A indicates that slaughtering and butchering took place close by. In addition, a pit containing one or more pithoi and numerous White Slip II bowls (Pit EE; Fischer and Bürge 2018b, p. 53) may have been used to store food and/or liquid items.

There has been much speculation about the density of wells in this area (e.g., Fischer and Bürge 2017, p. 209) and despite the supposedly short life cycle of each well due to the soil conditions and the risk of saltwater intrusion, the preparations for and the ritual activities themselves certainly required continuous access to fresh water.

6. Mortuary Landscapes, Feasting and Consumption in Late Bronze Age Cyprus

The combination of tombs and wells characteristic of Area A is repeated in the intramural Area 23 of Hala Sultan Tekke (see location in Figure 2), which today constitutes the highest elevation of the site. Due to intensive ploughing during the past decades, no architectural remains are visible—neither at the surface nor on the magnetometer map. We can therefore not exclude the possibility that this area was covered with buildings, but it is likely that it was an open space inside the city, where similar rituals and performances were carried out as in Area A. Webb (2018) has recently challenged the concept of intra- versus extramural location of a cemetery by taking a closer look at the development of mortuary space in relation to residential buildings and other architectural units. She came to the conclusion that in many Late Bronze Age urban centres, such as Enkomi, *Toumba tou Skourou*, or Maroni, most 'intramural' tombs were primarily located in open spaces. If they were found immediately next to or below buildings, these mostly postdate the tombs. Hence, the 'boundary between intra- end extramural burial was blurred and residential burial (i.e., burial in interior domestic space) was reserved for a small group of elites' (Webb 2018, p. 223). These observations entirely match the evidence from Hala Sultan Tekke. In addition, peculiar fills of pits, e.g., a fragmented fineware deposit in Area 22 (Öbrink 1979; see location in Figure 2), a residential area, may also be the result of feasting or clearing tomb deposits, although, admittedly, no tomb has been found in the vicinity and the sherds may also reflect any other (ritual) consumption.

In recent years, mortuary feasting and drinking in Bronze Age Cyprus has been suggested and discussed in connection with contexts of different periods and regions of the island and it is most likely that this took place mainly outside of the tombs, not only in the Early and Middle Cypriot (see Webb and Frankel 2008, p. 288) but also in the Late Cypriot period (possibly with some exceptions, e.g., Tomb 66 at Enkomi, see below). In fact, the tombs at Hala Sultan Tekke also contained various meat bearing animal remains (besides parts of skulls or horns which may have had symbolic properties; see above), partly inside vessels (e.g., bones inside a White Slip II bowl and a jug with numerous fish bones in Tomb RR; see Fischer and Bürge 2020) and partly deposited next to the burials and may represent either food offerings to the deceased, to supernatural forces, chthonic deities, or perhaps 'symbolic participations' in feasting by the deceased together with the surviving members of the family or society. However, the tombs do not seem sufficiently spacious to enable celebrations with the participation of larger groups of persons.

In this sense, other Late Bronze Age contexts deserve a closer look. A possible forerunner of these could be at the site of Korovia *Palaeoskoutella* (see location in Figure 1), where numerous grave tumuli with buttressed chambers, which are unusual in the prehistoric Cypriot record, were found (Gjerstad et al. 1934, pp. 416–38; Webb 1992, pp. 92–94). The most recent material can be dated to the Middle Cypriot (MC) III to LC I period (Webb 1992, pp. 92–93). Associated pits and basins filled with faunal remains, pottery sherds, ash, and dark sticky soil have been interpreted as installations for libations, food and drink offerings, funerary meals, or sacrifices carried out in connection with the surrounding burials (Webb 1992, pp. 93–94).

The character and settlement topography of the Late Bronze Age occupation at Palaepaphos (Figure 1) is not easy to understand due to erosion and later building, settlement, and agricultural activities (Iacovou 2008, p. 266). However, there are unambiguous material remains from the MC III to LC I transition (Georgiou 2019, p. 195) and mainly tomb and settlement material prove that the site was settled during the entire Late Bronze Age and that it originated from various small clusters at different localities (Iacovou 2008, pp. 265–66). Today, mainly tombs and some wells are known from this period; at the local-

ity of *Mantissa* a number of shafts, most likely not wells, were found during construction work. One of these was excavated and revealed a deposit of more than 70 complete or almost complete vessels of tableware, almost exclusively bowls piled upon each other, which can be dated from the LC IIC–IIIA period, i.e., around 1200 BCE (Karageorghis 1965, pp. 157–84). Due to the close proximity of the shafts to tombs from the same period, the content of the shaft has been interpreted as material from looted tombs (Karageorghis 1965, p. 158)—although human remains are not reported. It is not clear if the shafts were located inside or outside the settlement but these shafts may attest to (mortuary) rituals similar to those from Hala Sultan Tekke. A peculiar LC IIIA well fill from the locality of *Evreti*, some hundred metres south of *Mantissa*, has recently been interpreted by Constance von Rüden (2016) as remains of feasting debris—possibly from a sanctuary, in which also crafts played an integral role (regarding the connection between workshops and sanctuaries see Webb 1999).

At *Toumba tou Skourou* (Figure 1), features with burnt material, faunal remains, and fragmented pottery were found above Tombs I and II, mainly dated to the LC I (Vermeule and Wolsky 1990, pp. 169, 245–46), i.e., around 1650–1525 BCE. These were interpreted as remains of funerary rituals, although the fact that these are located not within but on top of the burial layers may also point to ceremonies carried out later (see also Keswani 2012a, p. 317, n. 138), such as commemoration or ancestor cults. Besides many other tombs on the island, the discussion of which goes beyond the topic of the paper, it is interesting to note that a similar closing deposit as that of Hala Sultan Tekke, Tomb SS, has been found covering a LC I tomb at Ayia Irini *Paleokastro* (Quilici 1991). The fact that the enormous quantity of pottery on top of and partly intermingled with the remains of the most recent burials has simply been labelled as tomb gifts (Italian 'corredo'; Quilici 1991, pp. 135–49) and that the moved human remains have been interpreted as result of carelessness (Quilici 1991, p. 135) highlights the problem of previous research: tomb inventories have mainly been discussed under typological and chronological criteria, but possible groups of deposits within a tomb, the way and place in which artefacts and biofacts have been deposited is often not documented, yet it may provide plentiful information on all activities in connection with funerals, secondary burials, and rituals of commemoration. Possible ritual pits similar to those at Hala Sultan Tekke may have often been neglected or only briefly mentioned in excavation reports (see, e.g., Lagarce 1986, pp. 57–58 for a peculiar deposit in a reused well in Enkomi).

While the discussion of other feasting deposits in non-mortuary contexts (e.g., that at LC IIC Kalavasos Ayios Dhimitrios, Building X, for which see South 2008; also Steel 2004, pp. 290–92; or at LC II Hala Sultan Tekke, CQ1, for which see Fischer and Bürge 2020, pp. 80–82) goes beyond the scope of this paper, another interesting deposit, albeit not from a mortuary context, deserves further attention. In the Sanctuary of the Horned God in Enkomi, on Floor III of Room 10 (Dikaios 1969, pp. 171–220), which is dated to LC IIIA late to IIIB early (i.e., the late 12th century BCE), a total of 276 bowls were placed upside down in three piles—a deposit that can be linked to the final closure of the sanctuary. Room 10 is also the space where the famous bronze statuette of the Horned God was found (Dikaios 1969, pp. 177, 191–211, 524), although the circumstances of deposition of the statuette are not well understood (Webb 1999, p. 99). The deposited bowls are of Plain White Wheel-made ware, imitating traditional LC IIC bowls of hand-made Base-ring ware, in a period when the Cypriot drinking set had already been replaced by locally produced Mycenaean-type vessels (Jung 2011). Papasavvas (2014, p. 257) has interpreted this context as the creation of a mnemonic record within a conservative ritual tradition. In addition, he connects the inverted bowls to mortuary deposits, which are known, e.g., from Minoan Crete (with reference to Hamilakis 2008; Caloi 2011). This systematic ritual inversion, however, is not found in the deposits of Area A at Hala Sultan Tekke, not even in the contexts with complete vessels. The formal closure of the Sanctuary of the Horned God in Enkomi is symptomatic for the processes of the final abandonment of the entire settlement

in LC IIIC and the ceremonies and rituals performed in this occasion may perhaps be compared to the final closures of tombs.

In summary, this very brief and limited review of mortuary feasting remains in Late Bronze Age Cyprus may provide an idea about the importance of mortuary rituals in society. The spatial arrangement and the question of whether tombs are located inside or outside habitation areas is perhaps not crucial for the manner and the location in which funerals were performed. Hence, both extra- and intramural tombs may be regarded as sacred spaces, and in both cases the possibility should not be excluded that these spaces also had a multitude of other purposes and connotations in the eyes of the local population. In the case of Hala Sultan Tekke, at least two burial areas could be determined, Area 23 inside the city and Area A outside. Both areas are located at prominent places, well visible within the city and/or from the sea. Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess the appearance of these cemetery areas in the Late Bronze Age. Tombs must have been marked in some way, since they were periodically reused throughout many generations. Other pits may have remained open for some time and may have been closed and concealed after the last deposition, which is also indicated by the ochre-coloured 'sealing' in some of these pits (see above).

7. Discussion: Tradition and Insularity, Innovation and Connectivity Reflected in the Mortuary Programme

As shown above, specific aspects of the mortuary programme of Late Bronze Age Cyprus seem to be consistent with Middle Cypriot (and even earlier) traditions. These traditions seem to be characteristic of the island of Cyprus (Keswani 2004, pp. 157–60) and contrast with those from surrounding areas (e.g., Pfälzner et al. 2012; Dakouri-Hild and Boyd 2016). However, Late Bronze Age Cyprus cannot be understood out of its Eastern Mediterranean context, and not only commodities and objects, but also people, and with them, ideas, perceptions, and traditions travelled and may have spread over vast areas. The complexity of cultural transformations caused by highly interconnected regions and human mobility (e.g., Clarke 2005) is not easy to elucidate. At the same time, not all external influences are integrated equally in all aspects of life. While ritual, religion, and cult have often a priori been considered as conservative aspects of culture and behaviour (cf. the discussion in Whitley 2009), they may dynamically adopt and adapt foreign objects, symbols, practices, and beliefs (see, e.g., most recently Papadopoulos 2020). Along these lines, Louise Steel (2010) has highlighted the varying popularity of Cypriot finewares throughout the Late Bronze Age and pointed out that funerary and ritual contexts may be particularly open to changes.

As regards the material culture, the integration of the Mycenaean drinking set—albeit with modifications—is the most obvious component in many ritual assemblages (van Wijngaarden 2002, pp. 125–202). In Area A of Hala Sultan Tekke piriform jars, especially those of small and medium size are particularly common in comparison to similar contexts in Greece (e.g., Walberg 2007), whereas open shapes such as kylikes and bowls which are a common part of the Mycenaean eating/drinking set are relatively rare. In fact, small piriform jars were the first Mycenaean (LH IIIA1 and IIIA2) shape to be imitated by local potters already in the early 14th century BCE (Graziadio 2017). Consequently, this vessel type was not only imported as a container for precious substances but must have played an important role in Late Cypriot practices of consumption, especially in ritual and mortuary contexts. In contrast to bowls, kraters, jugs, and juglets, the piriform jar does not exist in the local repertoire of shapes (with the exception of the local production of the Mycenaean type pointed out above).

The scarcity of imported open shapes may also be explained by conservatism in specific aspects of cult, analogous to the evidence from the Sanctuary of the Ingot God in Enkomi, where the local eating and drinking vessels were preferred. The krater, as important or even the 'centerpiece of the LC drinking set' (Steel 2004, p. 293) is unevenly distributed in the contexts of Hala Sultan Tekke, Area A. While it is well represented in the deposits of Tomb SS but also in Pits V and GG, it does not occur in Well F or in the 'offering

pits' Pit B, Z6 and Z7. Numerous previous studies have pointed out the production of Mycenaean (amphoroid) kraters, often with pictorial decoration, specifically for the Cypriot market (e.g., Morris 1989, pp. 207–14; van Wijngaarden 2002, p. 276; Jung 2015), which again proves a high selectivity by Cypriot consumers in adopting and integrating items from overseas into local practices. These kraters are almost exclusively found in ritual and especially in mortuary contexts and seem to correlate with high prestige goods such as bronze vessels, weapons, and gold jewelry (Keswani 2004, pp. 129–39, 241–45, Table 5.11) and consequently served as funerary display of the highest social groups.

Anatolian Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware occurs comparatively rarely, and the predominant shape is the spindle bottle which due to its limited capacity most likely was imported as container of precious liquid items. In contrast, large shallow bowls, lentoid flasks and kraters are rare and these vessels do not seem to have played a crucial role in ritual consumption as the Mycenaean imports did. Cypriot White Shaved juglets as well as Anatolian produced copies were, vice versa, integrated in local cultic practice in Anatolia and at Alalakh (Akar 2017). This type of vessel has its origin in the Levantine dipper juglets already known in the Middle Bronze Age, hence showing a pattern of connectivity between Cyprus, the Levant, Cilicia and central Anatolia from the 16th century on, and particularly in the 15th and 14th centuries BCE (Akar 2017, pp. 11–12). Interestingly, this spread corresponds well with that of the Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware (Akar 2017, p. 12; see also Kozal).

A limited role in ritual consumption may, however, apply to imported pottery from the Levant, which mainly comprises transport jars, since these are, with the exception of Tomb SS, not commonly found in mortuary and ritual contexts; even less common are Levantine lentoid flasks (see though one from Hala Sultan Tekke Tomb X in Bürge 2017, p. 192, Figure 27). Other Levantine influences are, e.g., expressed in the ashlar-built tombs of Enkomi and in specific Tomb 66, where, as reconstructed by Lindy Crewe (2009), lamps and a silver bowl were suspended from bronze pins in the wall by the door of the tomb. Crewe suggested that a Near Eastern and Levantine style kispum ritual of feasting or drinking with the deceased may have taken place in the tomb, i.e., as an emulation of these practices by the local élites (Crewe 2009). Similarly, in comparing mortuary practices at Enkomi and Ugarit, Keswani (2012b) has argued that a similar set of prestige symbolism was shared by the élites of the two policies during their heyday, i.e., in the 14th and 13th centuries BCE. Not only may the Cypriots have emulated prestigious Levantine mortuary practices, also human mobility in the form of intermarriage or long-distance trade may have influenced ritual practices in both directions. Towards the end of the 13th century BCE, however, the mortuary expenditure in Enkomi declined hand in hand with other societal changes (see above), perhaps indicating the diminished importance of kin group identity, whereas in Ugarit we see an increased elaboration of ashlar tombs, which points to continued power and competition of élites (Keswani 2012b, p. 199).

The role of the Sardinian bowls and the large fragment of a (cooking?) pot (Bürge and Fischer 2020; Gradoli et al. 2020) in the 'offering pits' Pit B, Z6 and Z7 is particularly interesting, since besides these only a few Sardinian vessels, all of them jars, have been found or were identified on Cyprus, i.e., at Pyla *Kokkinokremos* (Bretschneider et al. 2017), roughly 17km east of Hala Sultan Tekke. The pits of Hala Sultan Tekke are the only context where these small, shallow bowls have been found so far. Their small capacity of ca. 0.05–0.15l makes them unsuitable for the consumption of large amounts of food or liquid. They may have rather been used for libation or 'symbolic consumption'. The meaning of the Sardinian (cooking?) pot in this specific context is even more difficult to assess, in particular since not the entire vessel but only a large fragment was deposited. However, the fact that these objects were integrated in the local Cypriot cultic practice—perhaps with a specific meaning or with the awareness of them being exotic items—is striking and once again testifies to the high level of connectivity and receptivity of the Late Cypriot society to external influences.

8. Conclusions and Outlook

Evi Gorogianni's (2020) notion that 'the Aegean of the MBA and the LBA bears almost all the hallmarks of an ancient globalization' (with references to Jennings 2011, pp. 20–32; 2017; Hodos 2017) may also apply to Late Bronze Age Cyprus. The highly intertwined cultic landscape of Late Cypriot cemeteries nevertheless shows some very specific Cypriot characteristics. While it cannot be excluded that some peculiarities might be limited to Hala Sultan Tekke, the cursory review of other sites has shown that at least some island-wide commonalities existed. As Broodbank (2000, p. 363) stated, 'insularity is [. . .] a dynamic condition', it is not only dynamic across time but also regarding specific aspects of daily life, ritual and religious practice, specific areas and realms, as well as social groups, individuals, and expressions of identity. It is always difficult to assess whether, or to what degree, the society, social groups, and individuals felt aware of connectivity (or insularity).

Nevertheless, the Late Cypriot evidence clearly points to a high awareness of this connectivity based on the important role of economic connections with the surrounding cultures. The use of exotic materials and imported objects of high value in rituals and the emulation of Levantine (and perhaps other foreign) practices certainly also served to establish and negotiate authority and to display wealth and power by the emerging élites at the beginning of and during the Late Cypriot period (Webb 2014). In a nutshell, the Late Cypriot culture and society can to a high extent be characterised by extra-insular contacts and interactions and insularity should not simply be regarded as geographical condition, it rather symbolises the way island societies deal with the presence of the sea (Robb 2001, pp. 195–96; see also Knapp 2008, p. 25). Besides the integration, appropriation, and adaptation of foreign items into local cultic practices, the contexts from Hala Sultan Tekke, which represent the largest known Late Cypriot assemblage of fish and other marine animals, attest to the important role that coastal and maritime resources may have played in various aspects of mundane and ritual life. In summary, due to the complex ritual and mortuary evidence of Late Bronze Age Cyprus only a brief overview of the main aspects related to the function and use of cemeteries as space for various mortuary rituals, feasting, and commemoration could be provided. Forthcoming studies will focus particularly on detailed analyses of structured depositions throughout the entire island, possible diachronic changes, exact functions, uses, and mechanisms of adoption and adaptation of imported objects as well as on other dynamics of cultural transformation reflected in ritual and cult of the island.

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The Obstetric Connection: Midwives and Weasels within and beyond Minoan Crete

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Abstract: The Minoan peak sanctuaries call for systematic comparative research as an island-bound phenomenon whose significance to the (pre)history of medicine far transcends the Cretan context: they yield clay anatomical offerings attesting to the earliest known healing cult in the Aegean. The peak sanctuary of Petsophas produced figurines of weasels, which are usually interpreted as pests, ignoring their association with votives that express concerns about childbirth, traditionally the first single cause of death for women. The paper draws from primary sources to examine the weasel's puzzling bond with birth and midwives, concluding that it stems from the animal's pharmacological role in ancient obstetrics. This novel interpretation then steers the analysis of archaeological evidence for rituals involving mustelids beyond and within Bronze Age Crete, revealing the existence of a midwifery *koine* across the Near East and the Mediterranean; a net of interconnections relevant to female therapeutics which brings to light a package of animals and plants bespeaking of a Minoan healing tradition likely linked to the cult of the midwife goddess Eileithyia. Challenging mainstream accounts of the beginnings of Western medicine as a male accomplishment, this overlooked midwifery tradition characterises Minoan Crete as a unique crucible of healing knowledge, ideas, and practices.

Keywords: midwives; Eileithyia; Minoan peak sanctuaries; Bronze Age medicine; gender studies

1. Introduction

According to evolutionary anthropologists, the conflicting conjunction of a narrow pelvis—derived from bipedal adaptation—and increased brain size resulted in difficult parturition, which is at the origins of assisted birth; namely, obligate midwifery, a therapeutic response to lessen the impact of maternal and perinatal mortality that may have been in place long before the advent of anatomically modern humans (Trevathan 1987; Rosenberg and Trevathan 2001; DeSilva 2010). The first practitioner recorded in writing is the 'wise woman' (Liturgy to Nintud, Mesopotamia, c. 2600 BCE), the expert in the core medical fields of gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatrics. Yet no attention has been paid to the therapeutic systems emerging early on to address the issues associated with gestating and birthing large helpless infants. Anthropological and comparative approaches to midwifery indicate that these medico-religious systems revolve around the cult of deities/spirits of (re)birth made in the image of the midwife. This is pertinent to Petsophas (c. 2000–1600 BCE), the Minoan peak sanctuary yielding the largest number of terracotta anatomical votives. Distinctive of Petsophas are also models of weasels, commonly interpreted as pests (Myres 1902–1903, p. 381; Evans 1921, p. 153; Mackenzie 1917, p. 275; Hutchinson 1962, p. 219; Willetts 1962, p. 72; Dietrich 1974, pp. 292, 299; Marinatos 1993, p. 117; Jones 1999, p. 33), and a largely overlooked concentration of gynaecological offerings; an association evoking the weasel's intriguing symbolic bond with childbirth and the ancestral figure of the midwife. The paper argues that their pervasive connection rests on the weasel's pharmacological use in obstetrics, which explains the animal's role as an attribute of the Cretan Eileithyia and other divine midwives. Applying this interpretation to the diachronic analysis of rituals involving mustelids beyond Bronze Age Crete leads to the identification of an animal package with a long history in midwifery cult and practice.

This package is associated in the Minoan votive record with depictions of plants later recorded as main gynaecological drugs in the Hippocratic texts, bespeaking of women's neglected contribution to the foundations of Western medicine. A Minoan midwifery system is thus revealed by pinpointing a distinctive insular tradition on Crete, nested in wider traditions and connectivities that are discernible across the Mediterranean and the Near East. As the paper illustrates the potential of integrative approaches to the study of peak sanctuary materials, it showcases Minoan Crete as an epistemic laboratory of the greatest significance to the (pre)history of medicine.

2. Practices Relating to Midwifery at the Minoan Peak Sanctuary of Petsophas

2.1. An Extraordinary Corpus of Gynaecological Votives

Dedicating models of body parts to supernatural healers is a very old ritual practice in the Mediterranean. In modern Greece, metal and wax anatomical *tamata* are offered to saint therapists (e.g., Panagia, Agios Panteleimonas) in request or thanks for cures and protection. For similar purposes, in Classical times worshippers offered clay and marble anatomical votives to medical deities (e.g., Asklepios, Hygeia). The prototypes of these dedications typically associated with healing cults are the clay body parts from the peak sanctuaries of Bronze Age Crete (Peatfield 2000, p. 11; Morris and Peatfield 2014, p. 61; McGeorge 1987, p. 414; 2008, p. 122), occurring alongside full-bodied figurines of worshippers, animal models and other votives.

Petsophas, serving the area of Palaikastro in northeastern Crete, is the Minoan peak sanctuary yielding by far the largest number of anatomical votives. These include legs, arms, hands, torsos, hips and lower bodies, often pierced for suspension, insightfully related to healing practices by John Myres (1902–1903, p. 381), who first excavated Petsophas at the turn of the 20th century. In the 1970s, Costis Davaras completed the excavations of the site, unearthing the largest part of the sanctuary's assemblage, still mostly unpublished.[1] Among these finds and the fewer published is a striking concentration of offerings suggesting childbirth-related concerns, the kind of dedications made in antiquity to deities protecting reproductive health. The corpus of gynaecological votives from Petsophas, unprecedented in the Aegean, encompasses the following material:

- Figurines of clearly pregnant/periparturient females (Rutkowski 1991, p. 91; Morris and Peatfield 2014, pp. 51, 60): One displays upraised arms (Myres 1902–1903, p. 370, Pl. 11, n° 22), an auspicious gesture of birth in later Greek iconography.[2] Other figurines are in traditional birth positions, squatting or sitting with splayed legs and/or incised vulvas. A birthing figurine with a bottom peg to be wedged in a stool (see Figure 1a) recalls the parturient figurines on birth stools (see Figure 1b) occurring with shells in the Chalcolithic deposit from Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Cyprus, c. 3000 BCE), which may well be the ritual kit of the community's midwife, as suggested by Goring (1991, p. 95).
- Figurines with splayed legs seated on stools (Myres 1902–1903, pp. 373–74), probably alluding to parturition despite showing no bulging belly; in the Iron Age childbirth models from Eileithyia's cave at Tsoutsouros (southern Crete), not all the labouring women assisted by the midwife are visibly pregnant (see Kanta 2011a, pp. 117, n° 114).
- Seated figurines with spread legs not visibly pregnant.
- Models of four-legged stools detached from figurines (see Figure 1a) (Myres 1902–1903, p. 374).
- Anatomical models of female hips and lower bodies with splayed legs and/or incised pubic triangles/vulvas (see Figure 2a) (Rutkowski 1991, Pls. 43–44).
- Anatomical models of breasted female torsos.
- Figurines of swaddled babies (see Figure 2b), to date unique in the context of Minoan peak sanctuaries, and among the earliest testimonies of the ancestral practice of wrapping newborns in cloth, still performed by the last Cretan folk midwives (*praktikes mames*) in the 1970s.
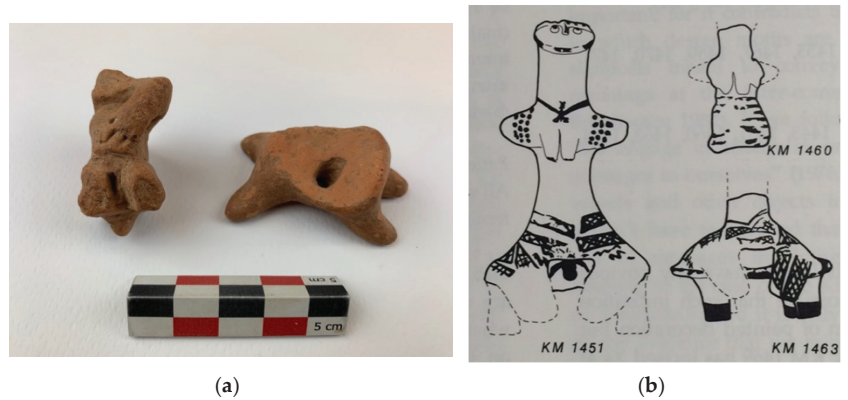
Figure 1. (**a**) Fragmentary clay figurine of a birthing female with a dilated vulva and a hand on the belly, originally seated on a stool like the one adjacent. Petsophas. Crete, 2000–1600 BCE. Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos, Crete. (**b**) Drawing of clay parturient figurines—one with an emerging infant—seated on stools. Kissonerga-Mosphilia. Cyprus, c. 3000 BCE. Courtesy of Diane Bolger.

Figure 2. (**a**) Clay lower body models with incised female genitals, one displaying spread legs, and (**b**) clay figurines of swaddled newborns. Petsophas. Crete, c. 2000–1600 BCE. Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos, Crete.

According to osteological studies, life expectancy in Bronze Age Crete was not even half that of modern Cretans, females having an average life span shorter than males, as due to the endangering hazards of pregnancy and childbirth, many women died during the stage of peak fertility between the ages of 20–25 years (McGeorge 1987, p. 408; 1988, p. 48; 2008, p. 118; Hallager and McGeorge 1992, p. 38). Such hazards gave rise to the cult of Eileithyia (McGeorge 2012, p. 293), the prehistoric Cretan goddess patterned on the midwife (Willetts 1958, p. 221), who was to be adopted into Greek religion as the primary deity of childbirth (Farnell 1896; Baur 1902; Pingiatoglou 1981). Eileithyia's cult is attested in the 2nd millennium BCE; her name (*e-re-u-ti-ja*) appears on Linear B tablets from Knossos, one mentioning the neighbouring site of Amnisos, where she had a cave sanctuary renowned in Homeric times (*Od*. 19. 188) (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, pp. 127, 310; Flouda 2011). She is the earliest known midwife goddess in Crete and, according to Warren (1970, p. 375), the only medical deity in the Linear B archives.

In Hellenistic-Roman times, on the island of Paros, Eileithyia was offered models of female breasts and hips with incised genitals (Forsén and Sironen 1991, pp. 176–77; Forsén 1996, pp. 97–100, 135), the kind of dedications made for safe birth, lactation (Wise 2007, pp. 103–16), or other gynaecological issues. Nilsson (1925, p. 30; 1950, pp. 518, 523) and Willetts (1958, pp. 221, 223, n. 16) respectively acknowledge Eileithyia as "the divine midwife" and her "obvious origin in the human midwife"; but they then argue that she was a deity of childbirth except on Paros, where she was a healing goddess because only there did she receive anatomical votives. This view is supported by other scholars (Pingiatoglou 1981, p. 88–89; Forsén and Sironen 1991; Forsén 1996, p. 135; Leitao 2007, p. 257), including Dietrich (1974, p. 87, n. 88), who—except on Paros—sees Eileithyia as a "goddess of nature". Ancient sources show, however, that this paradoxical division of her skills and roles and her association with nature rather than culture are modern perceptions obscuring data relevant to the history of medicine. On an Archaic relief amphora from the island of Tinos depicting Athena's birth, Eileithyia holds her *harpē*, the obstetric knife to cut the umbilical cord (Olmos 1986, pp. 686–87, 697; Étienne et al. 2013, pp. 63–65, 109–10); as we shall see, the divine midwife displays other attributes of her medical expertise. Writing on her human prototype, Plato (*Theaet.* 149c-d) says that by means of drugs and incantations, she induced labour, eased the birth pangs, promoted conception, and abortion, if needed. Soranus (*Gyn.* 1. 4) states that, when skilled, the *maia/obstetrix* was a general practitioner.[3] In the Orphic Hymn to Protothyraia, Eileithyia is invoked as she who frees from pain those in terrible distress. Human or divine, the midwife is always a healer. The anatomical votives dedicated to Eileithyia on Paros in historical times find close parallels among the gynaecological offerings from the Minoan peak sanctuary of Petsophas, themselves pointing to her cult. Supporting this suggestion is an animal with surprising names that takes us on a journey across the Mediterranean and beyond.

2.2. Kalogennousa: The Intriguing Weasel Models from Petsophas

Along with human figurines including body parts, when excavating Petsophas, Myres unearthed clay models of cattle, goats, sheep, swine, birds, beetles, tortoises, dogs, and a creature with a pointed nose, prick-ears, long neck and tail, and a kink in the back (see Figure 3). He recorded this animal as the most common "non-domestic" species represented at the sanctuary and identified it as a mustelid, probably the *kalogennousa* (Myres 1902–1903, pp. 377, n. 2, 381), a Cretan name for the weasel meaning 'she who births well/easily'. Myres (1902–1903, p. 381) listed the *kalogennousa* models among the few finds from Petsophas difficult to interpret. Arguing that the mustelid had an evil repute among pastoral people, he deemed it "vermin", "definitely noxious", and suggested that worshippers dedicated the figurines of weasels "by way of imprecation or out of gratitude for deliverance from their ravages".

Except for a few voices recalling the animal's ancient domestic use to repel mice and/or its symbolic connotation with fertility (Rutkowski 1991, p. 36, n. 64; Watrous 1996, p. 87), archaeologists have mainly followed Myres' lead and variously portrayed the weasels[4] from Petsophas as "unclean animals", "mere vermin", "bestial enemies of mankind", "lowly creatures", and "pests" (Evans 1921, p. 153; Mackenzie 1917, p. 275; Hutchinson 1962, p. 219; Willetts 1962, p. 72; Dietrich 1974, pp. 292, 299; Marinatos 1993, p. 117; Jones 1999, p. 33). No new insights have been offered on the weasel figurines from the sanctuary, nor have questions been raised as to their occurrence together with anatomical votives attesting to healing practices. Yet the role played by mustelids in Minoan ritual should not be neglected. As discussed below, Palaikastro, the settlement served by Petsophas, yielded weasel iconography and wells with remains of dedicated mustelids. And the Temple Repositories of the Palace of Knossos, the cult assemblage containing the iconic faience 'snake goddesses', included a weasel skull along with depictions of plants suggesting that the animal was neither noxious nor lowly.

Figure 3. (**a**,**b**) Clay models of weasels. Petsophas. Crete. c. 2000–1600 BCE. Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos, Crete.

### 2.3. Telling Names: The Lexicon of the Weasel

While inquiring about the weasel in Crete, some people told me that "it is bad because it attacks chickens in their coop"—yet the chicken is virtually absent from the island's Bronze Age record (Reese 1990, pp. 200–2; Moody 2012, p. 240), so this could hardly have been a problem for the Minoans. Other people reported instead that the weasel is *gouri*, a bringer of good luck. Cretans have funny local names for the animal. Along with *kalogennousa*, 'she who births easily/well', they call it, or rather, her, *kalosynteknari*, 'she who is good with the infant'; *kalogynekari*, 'good little woman'; or *nyfitsa*, 'little bride', the common Greek term for the mustelid. This peculiar nomenclature would have no further significance if it were restricted only to the Aegean. But that is not the case. In an array of languages and dialectal variants over a broad geographic area stretching from the Atlantic to the Black Sea and from the Baltic to the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the weasel is regarded as female and commonly designated by names meaning 'little lady', 'little beautiful lady', 'little bride/newlywed' (Hutchinson 1966; Bambeck 1972–1974; Coseriu et al. 1979, pp. 36–37; Mesnil and Popova 1992; Witczak 2004; Kaczynska and Witczak 2007), and also 'little midwife': *comadreja* (Spanish), *kumairelo* (Tolosan), *cummatrella* (Campanian), *cumarella* (Abruzzian), *cumătriţă*, *cumetritl* (Romanian) (Coseriu et al. 1979, pp. 36–7; Bambeck 1972–1974), all deriving from Late Latin *commater*, 'with (the) mother'; namely, the *obstetrix*, she who stands before the mother in childbirth. Belonging to this same semantic field are the Cretan terms for the weasel *kalogennousa* and *kalosynteknari*. Why is the animal's identification with women's transition to motherhood (brides), birth and midwives imprinted in the linguistic record across Europe and beyond? Looking into this question sheds light on the joint occurrence of gynaecological and weasel votives at the Minoan peak sanctuary of Petsophas.

2.4. Mustelids, Brides and Midwives: Ethnographic and Historical Sources

Ancestral practices and beliefs often lie embedded in words. The weasel's striking lexicon brings to mind the popular Athenian ritual of the *Nyfitsa* ('little bride') still performed in the 19th century, by which the animal was ceremonially invited to partake in wedding celebrations (Rodd 1892, p. 163). The *Nyfitsa* ceremony evokes, in turn, the Hungarian custom of offering weasel furs as wedding gifts (Dömötör 1982, p. 126); the belief held in Montenegro that such furs eased delivery (Mesnil and Popova 1992, p. 96); the use of the skin of another mustelid, the otter, as a childbirth charm in the Scottish Highlands (Beith 1995, p. 180); amulets with hair of yet another mustelid, the badger, given to newly delivered mothers and their babies in the Abruzzi (Italy) (Canziani 1928); and a Renaissance custom linking the weasel to the girdle, an association we shall come across in the Minoan record. In her study on weasels and pregnancy in Renaissance Italy, Musacchio (2001) discusses weasel iconography on birth trays, inventories recording jewelled mustelid heads

as expensive bridal gifts (see Figure 4a), and portraits of wealthy ladies holding weasel pelts, at times outfitted with golden mustelid heads, which are attached to their girdles by a chain (see Figure 4b).

(**a**)   (**b**)
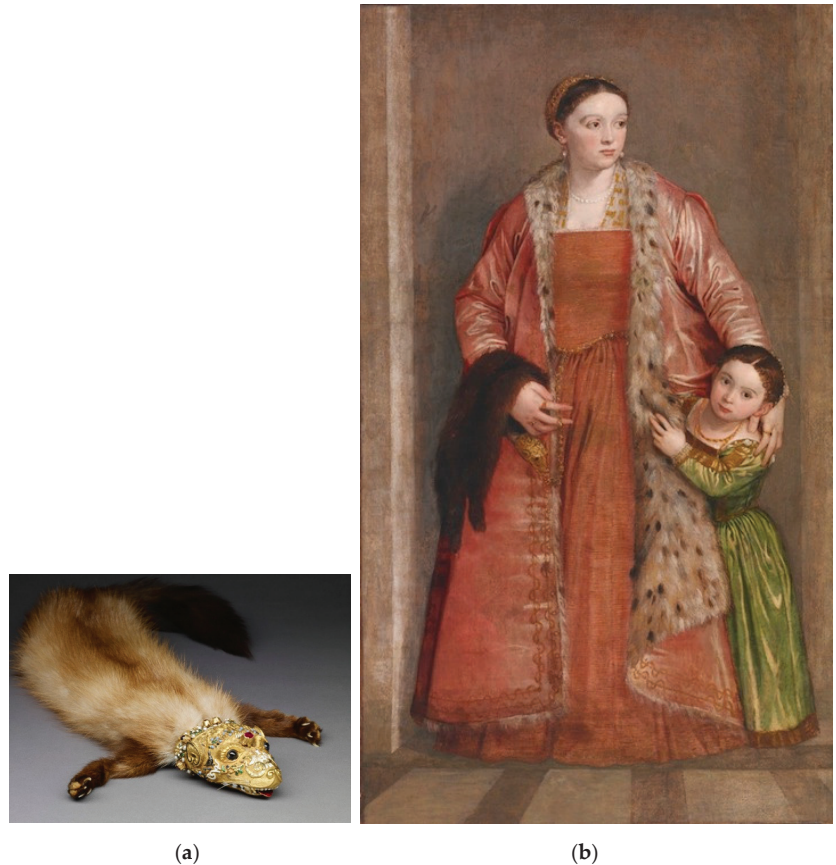
Figure 4. (**a**) Jewelled gold head of a marten. Venice, c. 1550. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; (**b**) A similar head set with mustelid fur is worn attached to the girdle by Countess Livia da Porto Thiene on the portrait with her daughter Deidamia, painted by Veronese in 1552 when the noblewoman was pregnant. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Some art historians have interpreted these 'weasel girdles' as flea-catchers worn to draw vermin away from the body, but there are no references to such a function in contemporary texts; relying on primary sources, Musacchio (2001) argues instead that in the Renaissance mustelids served as amulets in pregnancy and childbirth. Could their apotropaic use to propitiate this risky passage explain the weasel's identification with the midwife in the linguistic record? Or is there more to it? Trota of Salerno's *De mulierum passionibus* (12th c.), a major reference on women's medicine disseminated throughout Europe by the Late Middle Ages, offers a first insight into this question. Trota, whose treatments stem from female oral lore (Green 2008, p. 58), prescribes a vaginal pessary containing weasel oil and musk to promote conception (Boggi 1979, p. 22). Beyond, or rather, beneath its apotropaic function, the weasel was then a pharmacological animal in midwifery.

When turning to Classical texts, we learn that the weasel was an attribute of Eileithyia, Hekate and Leto (Ael. *NA* 10. 47, Ant. Lib. 29. 4. 1), all goddesses of birth, the latter identified with the Egyptian Wadjet (Hdt. 2. 59). The ancient Greek name for the weasel was *galē*, a term also designating other mustelids and the Egyptian mongoose, the ichneumon. At Herakleopolis, the Egyptians worshipped the weasel-like ichneumon, sacred to the goddesses of birth (Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2. 39. 5, Ael. *NA* 10. 47); mummified mongooses were placed in statuettes of Wadjet (James 1982), and when children recovered from serious illnesses, ichneumons received thank-offerings of bread and milk (Diod. 1. 83). In the Greek polis of Thebes, the weasel was worshipped in honour of Galinthias (Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2. 39. 6, Ael. *NA* 12. 5), the female metamorphosed into a weasel who unblocked Alkmene's delivery of Herakles, saving mother and child from likely death. Out of gratitude, Herakles set an image of Galinthias by his house and offered her sacrifices, a cult perpetuated by the Thebans, who, before the festival of the Herakleia, sacrificed to Galinthias first (Ant. Lib. 29).

2.5. Galinthias, the Oxytocic Weasel

The myth of Galinthias (<*galē*, 'weasel'), recorded by various sources, is a story about obstructed labour, a main cause of maternal and foetal death. Wishing to hinder Alkmene's delivery of Herakles, Hera/Juno dispatches Eileithyia and the Moirai (Ant. Lib. 29), the Pharmakides (Paus. 9. 11. 3), or Lucina (Ov. *Met*. 9. 281–323), who, by crossing their limbs, 'lock' the parturient's womb.[5] But Alkmene's clever attendant, Galinthias/Galanthis, fools them. With a joyous cry in their hearing, she announces that the baby has been born, which so startles Hera/Juno's envoys that they 'unlock' their limbs, thus allowing Alkmene to bring forth Herakles. Then, in punishment for her deed, Galinthias/Galanthis is metamorphosed into a weasel. According to Ovid, the mustelid is doomed to give birth through the mouth for having assisted Alkmene by uttering a lie. In another version (Ant. Lib. 29), out of pity for the metamorphosed Galinthias, Hekate appoints the weasel as her sacred attendant.

Modern scholarship, perpetuating many a gender stereotype, tends to follow ancient authors ascribing Galinthias to the presumed female domain of magic, superstition, trickery, sorcery and deviant sexuality. The weasel is associated with witchcraft, endowed with magical potency, linked to superstitious practices owing to the blocking gestures performed by Hera/Juno's envoys, or related to miraculous birth because of the belief that the animal delivered through the mouth (Papathomopoulos 1968, pp. 134–38; Celoria 1992, p. 189; Canto Nieto 2003, pp. 205–8; Bettini 2013, p. 168). It has also been proposed that the similarity between Galinthias' name and the weasel's (*galē*) is accidental or assignable to false etymology (Maas 1888, p. 614; Hiller von Gärtringen 1910, p. 607; Forbes Irving 1992, p. 206). But the data examined so far suggest otherwise.

At the core of Galinthias' story lies a primary concern to women: surviving childbirth. Relevant in the myth then is not so much what obstructs Alkmene's labour, but rather who is credited for its unlikely positive outcome: a female turned into a weasel, identified with the animal. In Pausanias' account (9. 11. 3), Galinthias is called Historis, meaning 'she who knows', 'she who is skillful' (cf. Papathomopoulos 1968, p. 136), the oldest and most common name for the midwife (Stol 2000, p. 171). It may thus be inferred that Galinthias = the weasel is the practitioner able to deliver Alkmene when she is in the dire straits of stalled labour (cf. Bettini 2013, p. 247). Through metaphors embedded in Galinthias' myth, we are told that the weasel facilitates birth. In fact, the mustelid acts precisely as expressed in the linguistic record: like a 'little midwife' (Spanish *comadreja*, Tolosan *kumairelo*, Campanian *cummatrella*, Abruzzian *cumarella*, Romanian *cumătriţă*, *cumetritl*), a 'good birther' (Cretan *kalogennousa*), a female 'who is good with the infant' (Cretan *kalosynteknari*).

Ancient sources record the weasel as an attribute of midwife goddesses, who mirror the functions and emblems of their human counterparts. Is it possible then that the animal provided an oxytocic (<ὀξύς, 'quick' + τόκος, 'birth'), one of those drugs stimulating uterine contractions essential in obstetrics because they hasten labour, foster placental

expulsion and reduce the incidence of postpartum haemorrhage? This was indeed the case. Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 30. 43. 14), who draws from the vast repository of ancient Mediterranean folk medicine, reports that delivery is facilitated when the parturient has taken the liquid that flows from the uterus of a weasel by its genitals. As tame weasels were often kept within the household in antiquity (Lazenby 1949, p. 302; Kitchell 2014, p. 95), the drug would have been readily available. Scholars assume that the remedy recorded by Pliny was ineffective (French 2004, p. 54) or related to homeopathic magic (Bettini 2013, p. 98), but underestimating the efficacy of traditional animal-derived drugs without inquiring into their chemical composition may be unwise. The oral administration of the pounded tail of the opossum (*Didelphis marsupialis*) to ease birth, an ancient Mayan treatment still used in Mexican midwifery (Enríquez Vázquez et al. 2006, p. 495), has been relegated to folk beliefs (Bettini 2013, pp. 128–29); but it actually rests on sound empirical knowledge as, according to laboratory analyses, opossum tail extracts contain prostaglandins, hormone-like compounds that function as oxytocics, and are effective in very small doses when taken orally (Ortiz de Montellano 1990, p. 187).

What is significant here is that a weasel-based drug deemed an effective oxytocic was employed in ancient Mediterranean obstetrics, in all likelihood explaining why the animal was sacred to Eileithyia and cognate goddesses, its apotropaic use in pregnancy-delivery, and its remarkable lexicon. Under this new light, the joint occurrence of childbirth and weasel offerings at the Minoan peak sanctuary of Petsophas seems no coincidence. This votive association undermines the view that weasels were pests, reinforces Eileithyia's connection with the sanctuary, and raises the question as to whether the animal's tenacious bond with females, birth and midwifery has left archaeological traces across the Mediterranean basin. Let us cast a diachronic eye on mustelid figurines and bones in votive/cult and funerary assemblages beyond Crete before we zoom back to the insular Minoan record.

3. Mustelids Associated with Ritual Practices beyond Minoan Crete

Finds from the Italic peninsula provide revealing data. A temple deposit (2nd c. BCE) unearthed at the Roman site of Praeneste contained anatomical votives, including clay models of uteri; a bronze statuette likely portraying Juno; probable iron keys, typically dedicated to ease birth (i.e., 'unlock' the womb); bones of a marten or a cat; and unique clay figurines of a female with a weasel-shaped body (Tedeschi 2007). Tedeschi, who soundly interprets these figurines as depictions of Galinthias, notes the occurrence of the weasel motif on Praenestine bridal bronze caskets (*cistae*), and briefly mentions the weasels from Petsophas as an earlier example of mustelid iconography. The reported finds, notably the association of weasel figurines and gynaecological votives paralleled at Petsophas, point to the cult of a healing goddess linked to animals of the weasel family who presided over female lifecycle transitions and related concerns, possibly Juno Lucina, Eileithyia's Roman counterpart.

Of relevance here is a pattern observable in the Roman and Etruscan votive record and beyond. Mustelids are recurrently sacrificed to midwife goddesses along with tortoises, dogs, including puppies, and/or deer. All four animals, including puppies, are documented in the faunal assemblage of the Archaic temple of Mater Matuta and Fortuna at Sant'Omobono in Rome (Rask 2014, p. 293; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2000, p. 393; Trentacoste 2013, p. 98, n. 44). Likewise, at the sanctuary of Pyrgi (Donati 2004, pp. 142, 146–148, 156; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, p. 63; Trentacoste 2013, p. 98, n. 42), where a votive pit yielded remains of tortoises and anatomical votives (Belelli Marchesini and Michetti 2017, p. 480); the main deity at Pyrgi was the Etruscan Uni, identified by the Greeks with Eileithyia and Leukothea (De Grummond 2016, p. 153), the latter assimilated to Mater Matuta by the Romans (Carroll 2019, p. 3). Remains of canids, tortoises and deer, also found in the *area sacra* of Tarquinia, appear to be associated with Uni's cult (De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2000, p. 392; Bonghi Jovino 2005, pp. 73, 80–81; Rask 2014, p. 293); bringing to the fore Archaic relief slabs of crouching females with splayed legs and upraised arms from Tarquinian tombs, interpreted as goddesses of birth and

rebirth (Jannot 1980; Perkins 2012, pp. 159–60). Mustelid (otter) and dog bones occur at the sanctuary of Poggio Colla (Trentacoste 2013, pp. 83, 85), which yielded a stele mentioning Uni (Warden 2016, p. 213) and the stamp of a birthing female with upraised arms (Perkins 2012). Martens, badgers, canids, tortoises and deer are attested at the Etruscan sanctuary of Ortaglia (Volterra), consecrated to an unidentified goddess overseeing female concerns (Bruni 2005). Turning to the Aegean, the Acropolis sanctuary of Stymphalos (Arcadia, 4th c. BCE) produced inscriptions naming Eileithyia, snake-shaped bracelets probably offered to her for safe delivery (Young 2014, p. 143), beech marten, otter, tortoise and deer remains, many sacrificed dogs (Ruscillo 2014, pp. 250–51, 257, 266), and a puppy burial (Stone 2014, p. 329, n. 58).

The tortoise was primarily sacred to Eileithyia and cognate goddesses (Baur 1902, p. 73). Artemis Orthia (Sparta)—bearing the epithet *Chelitis* (<*chelis*, 'tortoise') (Clem. Al. *Protr*. 2. 33), Artemis Elaphebolos (Kalapodi), Artemis Laphria (Kalydon), Aphaia (Aegina) and Athena Lindia (Rhodes) received shells and/or figurines of tortoises, an animal also linked to Aphrodite Ourania (Paus. 6. 25. 1) and the Phoenician Astarte (Bevan 1988). As for dogs, according to literary evidence, the Argives sacrificed bitches to Eileithyia/Eilioneia for safe birth (Baur 1902, pp. 17, 22, 89; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, p. 62; Bettini 2013, p. 99, n. 35). A Hellenistic well in the Athenian Agora (2nd c. BCE) contained the remains of c. 500 infants and over 150 dogs, including puppies, possibly dedicated to Hekate, Artemis or Eileithyia (Liston and Rotroff 2013). At Eretria (Euboia), where Eileithyia was worshipped (Ackermann and Reber 2018), a well associated with the Sebasteion (3rd c. BCE) yielded the bones of at least 19 infants and 26 dogs (Chenal-Velarde 2006, pp. 27–28). At Messene, the Agora well hosted the remains of several hounds and c. 264 infants (3rd-2nd c. BCE), the large number of baby bones suggesting that the well was used by "mothers and local midwives as a place of disposal of infants who died at birth" (Bourbou and Themelis 2010, pp. 115–16). Eileithyia was worshipped at Messene (Paus. 4. 31.9).

Artemis, Hekate/Enodia, Aphrodite Kolias and the Genetyllides, all goddesses protecting the birth process, received dogs-puppies in sacrifice and so did the old Roman birth deities Genita Mana and Mater Matuta (Baur 1902, pp. 17, 22, 89; Dillon 2002, pp. 246–47; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, pp. 62–64; Trantalidou 2006; Bettini 1978, pp. 128, 130; 2013, p. 99, n. 35). Sirona, Nehalennia, Aveta, Epona and Sequana, Gallic healing goddesses who presided over human, animal and/or plant reproduction, appear represented with dogs-puppies; Sequana received anatomical votives, and Sirona is depicted with the medical serpent coiled about her arm (Gourevitch 1968, pp. 256, 275–80; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, pp. 63–64). Two millennia earlier, in Mesopotamia, the divine physician Gula, herself a midwife (Stol 2000, p. 79), displays the dog as a sacred attribute, which is offered to her in the form of figurines and actual dogs-puppies (Ornan 2004; Böck 2014). Gula's opponent, Lamashtu, the demoness causing maternal and infant mortality and whose favourite trick was to pose as midwife (Stol 2000, p. 230), is frequently portrayed suckling puppies and piglets, possibly reflecting the ethnographically attested practice of suckling neonatal mammals to relieve breast engorgement after the death of an offspring (Wiggermann 2010). Mesopotamian, Hurrian, Hittite and Greek sources record the ritual use of puppies to heal and purify people and places (Hartswick 1990, p. 242; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, pp. 63–64; Edrey 2008, p. 271). Puppies occur in foundation deposits (Black and Green 1992, p. 70; Ornan 2004, p. 18; De Grossi Mazzorin and Minniti 2006, p. 65), and in funerary contexts (Trantalidou 2006), notably with infants, as aforementioned; altogether testifying to the animal's propitiatory role in liminal transitions, often conceived as symbolic rebirths. According to Hurro-Hittite texts, to avert evil, purify and promote new beginnings, wise women employed piglets, animals customarily offered to birth goddesses (e.g., Hannahanna/Nintu, Gulses), which occur along with puppies in votive pits and on tablets describing rituals (Collins 2006, pp.161–62, 174–75, 177).

In the Near East, the ritual association of mustelids, dogs and/or tortoises with females can be traced far back in time. At the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük (southern Anatolia, 8th-6th millennium BCE), weasel skulls were embedded in plaster representations of breasts, the animals' teeth protruding from the open nipples (Mellaart 1967, pp. 101, 106, 183). The site, yielding the clay statuette of an enthroned birthing female and plaster relief figures with upraised arms, widely splayed legs and swollen bellies (Mellaart 1967, pp. 76, 139), produced the burial of a woman interred with a complete weasel, a small dog, and many owl pellets (Farid and Cessford 1999; Hamilton 1999). This remarkable grave, calling for further study, brings to mind two preceding ones in the Mesolithic Levant: an Early Natufian burial at 'Ain Mallaha (Israel, c. 12.000–10. 800 BCE) hosting the skeleton of a woman with a hand on a puppy placed above her head (Maher et al. 2011, p. 8), and an unprecedented tomb at the Natufian site of Hilazon Tachtit (Israel, c. 10.000 BCE) containing the remains of a mature woman buried with 86 tortoise shells; the skulls of two mustelids (beech marten) without skinning marks, suggesting they were interred with their skins attached; selected parts of other animals (wild boar, golden eagle, leopard, cow); a pointed bone tool and a basalt bowl fragment (Grosman et al. 2008; Grosman and Munro 2016). Since cross-cultural evidence shows that shamans are often buried with objects reflecting their medico-religious role, such as the remains of particular animals and the contents of healing kits, the woman from Hilazon Tachtit has been interpreted as a healer, a medicine-woman closely bonded to the animals that accompanied her to the afterlife (Grosman et al. 2008). In cultures the world over, midwives were shamanic practitioners with broad healing competence (Tedlock 2005; Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, pp. 56–67). The mature Natufian female could thus be a wise woman and perhaps also the female buried with a weasel and a small dog at Çatalhöyük.

Looking beyond the island boundaries of Bronze Age Crete, we have identified a transcultural set of animal associations embedded across the Mediterranean that are relevant to the cult of goddesses concerned with reproductive health. These ritual associations include mustelids, tortoises, dogs-puppies and/or deer, occasionally occurring with anatomical votives or snake iconography. In the prehistoric Levant and Anatolia, mustelids, dogs-puppies and/or tortoises are connected with females, one of them consistently interpreted as a shamanic healer. Keeping in mind the weasel's oxytocic dimension in ancient obstetrics, let us zoom back to mustelids and associated finds in the Minoan votive record.

4. Unravelling Evidence for a Minoan Midwifery Tradition

4.1. Petsophas-Palaikastro and Juktas

Coming back to Petsophas, we may now safely argue that the association of gynaecological votives with weasel figurines at the sanctuary is far from coincidental: the assemblage also includes models of tortoises and dogs (Myres 1902–1903, p. 377; Rutkowski 1991, pp. 108–9, 112; Jones 1999, p. 45), which, like weasels, are sacred to Eileithyia in the historical record. Juktas, the peak sanctuary of Knossos and Archanes in north-central Crete, produced a pregnant figurine, over 60 models interpreted as embryos or women crouching in childbirth (Karetsou 1981, p. 146; Watrous 1996, p. 70); figurines with splayed legs, paralleled at Petsophas;[6] models of puppies (Karetsou and Koehl 2014),[7] snakes (Karetsou 1974, 2018) and tortoises.[8] These Minoan materials are contemporary with the dedication of dogs to the midwife goddess Gula, the foremost medical deity in Mesopotamia, and with midwifery devices from Middle Kingdom Egypt displaying tortoise and/or snake iconography; such as a baby's feeding cup, apotropaic wands to propitiate birth and the rebirth of the dead, bricks upon which women crouched during delivery, and segmented rods thought to be conceptually and functionally linked to the bricks (Wegner 2009, pp. 466, 473–74, Fig. 13; Teeter 2011, p. 169; Fisher 1968, pp. 30–32).

This brings to the fore the therapeutic dimension of the animals represented in peak sanctuary assemblages, which should not be disregarded in the context of a healing cult; all the more so considering that zootherapy was common practice in antiquity, as shown by the wealth of Egyptian animal-based drugs (Nunn 1996, pp. 137–62), or the over a hundred

animal species employed in Hippocratic medicine (Von Staden 2008, p. 175). The question pending here is why tortoises and dogs-puppies are emblematic of deities patterned on the midwife. It has been suggested that the tortoise is associated with fertility because it lays many eggs (Rappenglück 2006, p. 227), but this symbolism could have stemmed from actual medical practice. In the Hippocratic Corpus, tortoise-based treatments are predominantly gynaecological—to stimulate postpartum lochia discharge and promote conception (Von Staden 2008, pp. 187, 202). The Babylonian medical compendium from Assur prescribes eating turtle meat to ease delivery (Stol 2000, p. 71) and the Ebers Papyrus a tortoise-based remedy "to release a child from the belly of a woman" (Nunn 1996, p. 195). The animal was, like the weasel, deemed an oxytocic agent. As for dogs, it is often argued that the beneficial effect of their saliva in curing wounds through licking explains the animal's bond with Gula and other healing deities (Fuhr 1977, p. 143, n. 5, 144; Böck 2014, p. 38; Ornan 2004, p. 18; Ogden 2013, p. 369, n. 113). But this might not account for the dedication of dogs-puppies to divine midwives stretching all the way from Mesopotamia to the Gaul. When turning to medical sources, we learn that in Hippocratic medicine bitch milk was used to expel the foetus (Andò 2001, p. 125, n. 283). According to Pliny (*Nat.* 30. 43. 14), bitch milk and placenta facilitate childbirth. It may be noted that bitches, not male dogs, were offered to Eileithyia/Eiloneia, Hekate, Genita Mana (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 52), Artemis and Enodia (Baur 1902, p. 17, n. 22; Lacam 2008, p. 43).

According to endocrinological research, breast milk contains high concentrations of oxytocin (Takeda et al. 1986). The placenta, a major endocrine organ in mammals, contains both oxytocin and high levels of prostaglandin (Fields et al. 1983; Onuaguluchi and Ghasi 1996; Burd and Huang 2011), the two chief endogenous compounds activating uterine contractions and lactation (Neville and Walsh 1996, pp. 25–26; Kota et al. 2013). The intake of placenta extract increases the opium-like substances released during childbirth, thus enhancing the tolerance to labour pains; it fosters milk secretion, may help to arrest postpartum bleeding and promote lochia discharge (Burd and Huang 2011), and effectively alleviates menopausal symptoms (Lee et al. 2009). In European, Moroccan, Nigerian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Javanese and Mexican midwifery traditions, the placenta, usually dried and pounded, was used to hasten birth, expel the dead foetus, prevent afterpains, promote lactation and treat infertility (De Nobleville and Salerne 1757, pp. 478–80; Mérat and de Lens 1837, p. 174; Croft Long 1963, p. 238; Onuaguluchi and Ghasi 1996; Burd and Huang 2011; González Casarrubios and Timón Tiemblo 2018, p. 291).

As for puppies, what about their connection with female healing practices? We may develop here Wiggermann's (2010) suggestion that the iconography of Gula's opponent (Lamashtu) suckling puppies and piglets might mirror their use as breast pumps after the loss of a nursling. The breastfeeding of puppies—and other neonatal mammals— by women, encouraged by midwives and doctors until the 19th century in Europe, is performed in many cultures to develop good nipples, stimulate lactation, relieve breast engorgement after the death of an offspring, disperse mammary nodules and prevent conception (Rabdill 1976, pp. 26–27; Simoons and Baldwin 1982, pp. 429–32, 435; Gourevitch 1990, p. 94). This therapy was prescribed as well to expel the afterbirth; for example, when the writer Mary Wollstonecraft was dying of puerperal fever in 1797, the attending doctor applied puppies to her breasts in an attempt to remove the infected placenta from her womb (Tomalin 2004, pp. 280–81). As oxytocin is released in response to sucking (Neville and Walsh 1996, p. 25), breastfeeding puppies could also have been effective to induce/ease labour. Such treatments may account for the persistent connection of neonatal dogs with midwife goddesses.

Coming back to Petsophas, the dog figurines offered by worshippers at the sanctuary could refer to the animal's role in the hunt or as guardian of flocks (Myres 1902–1903, p. 381; Platon 1951, p. 111; Zeimbekis 1998, p. 253); but its therapeutic agency in cleansing/renewal/rebirth rites should also be considered in light of finds from the settlement where the worshippers lived. At Palaikastro, also yielding weasel iconography (Evely 2012, pp. 227, 252–3 Fig. 8.18; Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, p. 283, Fig. 25), two Late Minoan

wells produced bones of at least 28 dogs, including puppies, and remains of mustelids (beech martens), in some instances articulated skeletons (Wall-Crowther 2007, pp. 184, 194), indicating that the animals were carefully deposited (MacGillivray and Sackett 2007, p. 226). As argued by Cunningham and Sackett (2009, p. 91), the offering of puppies and piglets—also documented in the wells—should be regarded as part of the cultic life of the inhabitants of Palaikastro since cross-cultural parallels attest to their use in purification rites. Such rites, the Classical evidence for dog sacrifice in wells, paralleled at Palaikastro, and the animal's bond with the medical goddess Gula are recalled by Karetsou and Koehl (2014) in their discussion of the puppy models from Juktas, which underscores the dog's sacral connotations in the Aegean Bronze Age.

Arnott (2014, p. 51), who sees a pregnant figurine from Petsophas and the squatting models from Juktas as "evidence for childbirth and the work of midwives", has repeatedly postulated the existence of these practitioners in Aegean prehistory (Arnott 1996, p. 267; 1997, pp. 277–78, n. 109). He speaks of "wise women", remarking that "midwives with a much wider healing competence are well known from other early societies", such as the Hittite 'Old Woman' (Arnott 2004, pp. 162–63, n. 28); we may recall the cleansing/renewal rites involving piglets and puppies linked to the expertise of Hurro-Hittite wise women. The joint dedication of childbirth, weasel, tortoise and dog offerings at Petsophas, of dogs-puppies and mustelids in the Palaikastro wells, and of childbirth, puppy and tortoise votives at the Knossian peak sanctuary of Juktas suggests the existence of a Minoan midwifery system seemingly connected with the cult of Eileithyia, who, like Gula, is patterned on the wise woman. An iconic cult assemblage from Knossos provides further evidence for female therapeutics, including an oxytocic flower that takes us to the nearby island of Thera on a last comparative journey.

4.2. From the Temple Repositories of Knossos to the Xeste 3 Frescoes at Akrotiri (Thera)

At the heart of the Central Palace Sanctuary at Knossos, Arthur Evans (1921, pp. 463–85) brought to light the Temple Repositories (c. 17th c. BCE), two carefully sealed stone cists containing, among others, the famous faience 'snake goddesses'; a complete weasel skull, whose function remains obscure to scholarship (see Figure 5); and deer antlers (Panagiotaki 1993, pp. 54–55, Fig. c; 1999, pp. 118–19). The bare breasts of the figurines, often regarded as symbolizing maternal and nurturing aspects of the 'snake goddesses' (Evans 1902–1903, p. 85; 1921, p. 500; Nilsson 1950, p. 85; Christou 1968, p. 145; Panagiotaki 1993, p. 54; 1999, pp. 104, 273; Jones 2001, p. 264), have traditionally been invoked to support the existence of a mother goddess central to Minoan religion (Evans 1902–1903, p. 85; 1921, p. 500; Nilsson 1950, p. 85; Christou 1968, p. 145). But the notorious absence of kourotrophic (female holding/nursing infant) images in Aegean Bronze Age iconography strongly argues against any notions of such a deity in the Minoan pantheon (Olsen 1998, p. 391; Goodison and Morris 1998, pp. 114–16; Budin 2010). Indeed, the Knossian 'snake goddesses', found with *both* weasel and deer remains, point not to the cult of a mother goddess but to the worship of a deity embodying female healing knowledge. This contention is supported by the snake-handling figurines themselves, in association with other objects in the Repositories, when addressed within the context of ancient midwifery cults and practices. Let us briefly discuss the most relevant material.

Figure 5. Finds from the Temple Repositories of the Palace of Knossos (c. 17th c. BCE), including the weasel skull indicated by the arrow, as arranged by Arthur Evans shortly after discovery. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum Archive Collections, Oxford.

4.2.1. Figurines of Female Snake-Handlers

Scholarly approaches to naked breasts in ancient art, heavily influenced by the Western dichotomization of women's breasts as either sexual or maternal attributes (Morris 2009, p. 243), overshadow what the Knossian figurines *are doing*. Calling for elaboration is the suggestion that they are "snake-charmers" of a religious character (Evans 1921, pp. 506–7) or participants in a snake-handling cult (Foster 1979, p. 72). In line with mainstream interpretations of the serpent when associated with prehistoric female iconography, scholarship underscores its chthonic and fertility aspects in Minoan cult (Evans 1902–1903, pp. 85, 87; Picard 1948, p. 113; Willetts 1962, p. 120; Christou 1968, p. 145; Panagiotaki 1999, pp. 104, 149; Gesell 2004, p. 132) but tends to overlook its potential medical symbolism. The snake was already a rich repository of remedies in Sumerian times (Krumholz McDonald 1994), and its healing symbolism is so tenacious that, despite the reptile's negative Judeo-Christian connotations, it still signals our pharmacies. There is, therefore, no reason to assume that the serpent lacked medicinal value in the Aegean Bronze Age.

Associated with birth, rebirth and the prophetic gift, the snake was an attribute of ancient medical deities (e.g., Hygeia, Asklepios, Angitia, Bona Dea) (Ogden 2013). It has been suggested that the healing serpent of Asklepios originated in the cult of house snakes and related deities, first attested in the Aegean in Minoan Crete (Schouten 1967, pp. 35–36; Ogden 2013, p. 343); a type of cult perpetuated until the 20th century in rural Greece and the broader Balkans, where the house snake (*oikouros ophis, domachitsa*) was kept in high regard as the guardian spirit of the home (Lawson 1910, pp. 259–61; Evans 1935, p. 153). According to Greek folklore, Asklepios was a *fidopiastis*, a snake-catcher (Oikonomopoulos and Oikonomopoulou 2012, p. 696). Serpents were emblematic of snake-handling therapists across the Mediterranean, such as the *Ophiogenes* in Cyprus, the *Psylli* in Lybia, or the Italic *Marsi* linked to Angitia's cult; practitioners reputedly skilled in snake-based drugs (e.g., antidotes, *theriaca*), charming serpents and curing snake bites (Leaf 1923, p. 85; Ogden 2013, pp. 210–13; Dench 1995, pp. 24, 99, 156–74; Montinaro 1996). Similar therapists, called *serpari*, *cirauli* or *sanpaolari*, were practising until fairly

recent times in Italy (Montinaro 1996; Park 2001). There are no poisonous serpents in Crete (Weingarten 2015, p. 192) that could possibly account for a healing cult associated with the cure of snake bites in Minoan times. But the 'snake goddesses' from the Temple Repositories of Knossos strikingly resemble the Beset-type birth deities commonly featured on midwifery paraphernalia from Middle Kingdom Egypt, such as birth wands and bricks (see Figure 6).
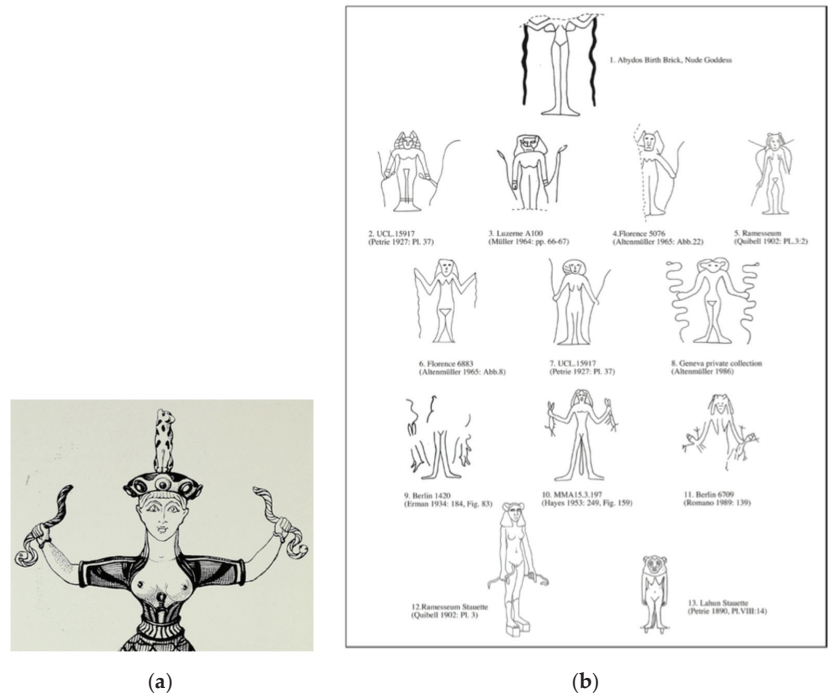
Figure 6. (**a**) Drawn detail of the reconstructed faience figurine from the Temple Repositories of Knossos (Evans 1921, p. 504, Fig. 362a); (**b**) Beset-type figures portrayed on the Abydos birth brick and apotropaic birth wands from Middle Kingdom Egypt, and Beset statuette from the Ramesseum (Wegner 2009, p. 466, Fig. 10). Courtesy of Josef Wegner.

An extraordinary deposit from the Ramesseum (Luxor, 18th c. BCE), including a wooden figurine of Beset holding bronze serpents (see Figure 6b, n° 12) (Quibell 1898, p. 40, Pl. 3), has been interpreted as a magician's kit (Bosse-Griffiths 1977, p. 103; Dasen 1993, p. 69; Wegner 2009, p. 482; Teeter 2011, pp. 166–67; Weingarten 2015, p. 185), the professional kit of a medical practitioner (Gardiner 1955, p. 1), a female healer (Weingarten 2015, p. 184), or the town physician or midwife, who might have assumed the role of Bes[et] to perform rituals (Dasen 1993, p. 69). The kit could indeed have belonged to a wise woman as it included apotropaic wands (Quibell 1898, p. 40, Pl. 3, Figs. 1–3) employed in (re)birth rites, ritual-medical texts recording a birth incantation, procedures to protect the newborn, the first known account of an obstetric fistula (Nunn 1996, p. 194) and a reference to mastitis (Aufrère 2010, p. 12), along with other objects relevant to midwifery.[9] The Beset figurine in the Ramesseum kit has articulated arms, emphasising the capacity of the midwife goddess as a serpent-handler. It may be noted that Hittite wise women used snakes in rituals (Beckman 2016, pp. 51, 53); and that the snake motif recurs on Graeco-Egyptian and Byzantine uterine amulets used to treat female conditions (Bonner 1951; Ritner 1984; Vikan 1984; Spier 1993).

The ritual handling of snakes is a distinctively female feature of Minoan cult. In later antiquity, the handling and tending of (harmless) sacred serpents was primarily a female activity (Lawler 1946, p. 121, n. 26; Ogden 2013, pp. 201–6, 319–21, 370–71). Snake worship is attested in connection with Eileithyia's cult at Olympia; the priestess of the goddess cared for the snake Sosipolis dwelling in her sanctuary (Paus. 6. 20. 5). The many serpent bracelets found at Olympia, regarded as symbols of birth and fertility, probably relate to her cult (Bevan 1986, p. 270). They recall those likely given for safe delivery to Eileithyia at Stymphalos, occurring with mustelid, tortoise, dog and deer remains, including antlers (Ruscillo 2014, p. 251). Along with the weasel skull and deer antlers, the Knossian Repositories yielded parts of missing faience figurines, including a hand and two arms—one with a coiled snake—wearing serpentine bracelets (Panagiotaki 1999, Pl. 16e).

According to ancient medical texts, the snake was commonly employed in the treatment of female concerns. Its cast-off skin, prescribed in Hippocratic medicine to promote lochia discharge (*Morb. Mul.* 1. 78), was deemed a powerful emmenagogue and oxytocic remedy (Plin. *Nat.* 30. 43. 14, 30. 44). Pliny (*Nat.* 30. 44) reports the oral administration of snakeskins to ease parturition—strikingly paralleled in Chinese (Read 1982, pp. 33–34), Mexican (Enríquez Vázquez et al. 2006) and Filipino midwifery (Oracion 1965, p. 273)—and also the use of snakeskin girdles as birth amulets. This practice evokes the snake girdle worn by the largest figurine from the Temple Repositories (see Evans 1921, Frontispiece) and by the Egyptian birth protector Bes,[10] the male counterpart of the snake-handling Beset, superseding her in the 1st millennium BCE. According to Greek folklore, in his capacity as a *fidopiastis* ('snake-catcher'), Asklepios assisted women in hard labour by attaching snakeskin girdles to their loins or by placing on their belly a live serpent. The animal would henceforth remain in the home as the house snake (*spitofido*), a domestic protector not kept by childless couples (Oikonomopoulos and Oikonomopoulou 2012, p. 696), leaving one to wonder whether that was because the barren did not require a regular provision of sloughs. The pharmacological and related apotropaic use of snakeskins to ease birth is deeply embedded in the Mediterranean. Both have survived throughout the basin until the 20th century (Kristić 1955; Gélis 1976, p. 326; 1986, pp. 44–45; Gicheva-Meimari 2002, p. 929; Musset 2004, p. 430); in modern Greece, the *fidopiastes* supplied snakeskin girdles in case of dystocia (Oikonomopoulos and Oikonomopoulou 2012, pp. 696–97). Though not in connection with the Knossian 'snake goddesses', Evans (1935, pp. 168, 183, n. 2) reported that in Crete, snakeskins "are still preserved as possessing certain curative or apotropaic virtues", and in the spring, young men of courting age hung them up on trees as charms "for the girls to look at". Such charms were not just looked at. The snakeskin, called *poukamiso* ('shirt') or *fidotomaro*, was used in Crete to treat persistent fever (Rigatos 2005, p. 361) and reproductive issues; elderly villagers still remember the customary feeding of snakeskins to female animals (e.g., ewes, does) as an effective emmenagogue promoting mating and conception. Considering their widespread gyneacological uses, serpent sloughs might contain some uterotonic agent—prostaglandins, oxytocin?—yet to be (re)discovered by modern clinical research.

4.2.2. Deer Antlers

The Knossian Repositories yielded three roe deer antlers (Panagiotaki 1999, p. 118, 172). It has been proposed that they reflect "an aspect of the natural world" or are "talismans to ensure success in the hunt" (Panagiotaki 1999, p. 118). However, hunting is a practice holding a rather residual place in Minoan ideology (Krzyszkowska 2014) and the deer, not native to Crete, has left little trace in the island's Bronze Age faunal record, suggesting that the animal was imported for reasons other than economic, possibly including its symbolism (Jarman 1996, p. 219; Harris 2014, p. 50; Harris and Hamilakis 2014, pp. 99–102). Deer antlers were offered to the Etruscan Uni, the Roman Mater Matuta and Fortuna (Bonghi Jovino 2005; Bruni 2005, p. 21), together with mustelids, tortoises and dogs. Such dedications are paralleled at the Stymphalos sanctuary where Eileithyia was worshipped, shifting again the attention to medical practice. Deer-based remedies

are exclusively gynaecological in the Hippocratic Corpus (Andò 2001, pp. 267, 294). Deer suet and marrow recur in pessaries for uterine inflammations to promote menstruation, conception and lochia discharge (Von Staden 2008, pp. 185–86, 200–1; Temkin 1991, p. 222). Roasted/burned and administered orally or in fumigations, deer antlers were used to regulate menstruation (Hipp. *Morb. mul.* 2. 192, 195, 199, Dsc. *Mat. med.* 2. 63, Plin. *Nat.* 28. 77. 19). In traditional Chinese medicine, they are prescribed in the treatment of gynaecological disorders and male impotence (Rehman et al. 2013), a clinical study suggesting that antler velvet products may "produce anti-inflammatory compounds that assist in the regulation of prostaglandins" (Rehman et al. 2013, p. 90; Nezhat et al. 2012). It has been proposed that the deer's close bond with Artemis—often identified with Eileithyia—explains its relevance in the Hippocratic treatment of uterine disorders (Von Staden 2008, p. 186). But it may conversely be argued that the animal was emblematic of midwife goddesses because it belonged to the pharmacopoeia of wise women.

4.2.3. Seashells

Seashells, found in abundance in the Temple Repositories (see Figure 5) (Evans 1921, pp. 498, 517–19; Panagiotaki 1999, pp. 78–81), occur with periparturient figurines in Neolithic Crete at Phaistos (Mosso 1908; Pernier 1935, pp. 105–6; Todaro 2012) and in the birth deposit from Kissonerga-Mosphila in Chalcolithic Cyprus (Sharpe 1991). In the East, they are offered primarily to female deities (Panagiotaki 1999, p. 130); at Mari, conch shells and objects made from seashells were given to Ninhursag (Sanavia and Weingarten 2016, pp. 337–38), also known as Nintu, the first recorded (divine) healer.[11] The Sumerian ideogram for 'pregnancy' and 'shell' is identical: it represents a body with water in it (Stol 2000, pp. 51–52). Shells were involved in Mesopotamian birth rituals (Stol 2000, p. 52), and girdles with attached cowries, associated with notions of birth and rebirth, were worn for protection during pregnancy-childbirth in Egypt (Golani 2014; Quirke 2015, p. 60). In Classical antiquity, the cowrie (Latin *matriculus*) was among the shells symbolizing the vagina/womb (Stol 2000, p. 52; Golani 2014). Pounded shells recur in Mesopotamian, Classical and later gynaecological recipes (Steinert 2012; Lev 2003, p. 110). To treat pregnancy bleeding, Hippocratic and later medical authors (Cyranides, Alexander) prescribe pessaries with pounded cuttlefish bone (Voultsiadou 2010, p. 245), still administered orally in the 1960s by Cretan midwives as an "excellent remedy" for postpartum haemorrhage (Karatarakis 1962, p. 24). Like seashells, the cuttlebone contains mainly calcium carbonate (Ivankovic et al. 2009, p. 1040), which improves gestational and birth outcomes when taken as a supplement during pregnancy (De-Regil 2013).

4.2.4. Depictions of Robes and Girdles

Together with the weasel skull, deer antlers and shells, the Knossian Repositories contained faience models of dresses and girdles, some decorated with crocuses (see Figure 5) (Evans 1921, pp. 505–6; Panagiotaki 1993, 1999, pp. 101–3). We may recall the Renaissance girdles attached to weasels, serving as amulets in pregnancy and childbirth (Musacchio 2001). An ancient marker of reproductive maturity (Lee 2015, p. 135), the girdle is a garment closely bonded with women's rites of passage, whose apotropaic dimension has survived into present times. In Greece, Agia Zoni ('Saint Girdle') is said to bestow strength on children (Handaka 2006, p. 104) and aid in conception and delivery. The belts of Christian saint deliverers of women in travail were placed on the parturients' belly to ease birth (Gélis 1986, p. 44); Cretan midwives borrowed the priest's belt to incense it over women in hard labour (Karatarakis 1962, p. 36). Medieval prayer rolls served as birth girdles (Musacchio 2001, p. 185; Jones and Olsan 2015, pp. 424–27). In ancient Egypt, the amulet depicting the girdle of the healing goddess Isis (*tyet*) was deemed to staunch obstetrical haemorrhage (Nunn 1996, p. 110); plausibly depicting a looped, loosely tied cloth (Quirke 2015, p. 58), the *tyet* "may evoke general use of cloth at menstruation, or specific bandaging in extremes, above all at birth" (Quirke 2015, p. 60; citing Westendorf 1965). In Classical antiquity, the girdle signalled the transition to puberty and marriage-motherhood. Callimachus

(Fr. 620 A) refers to a prepubescent girl as *azostos* ('without a *zone* = belt'). Tying on the *zone* was an act signifying a girl's sexual maturity (Lee 2015, p. 135), and loosening it symbolic of consummation (Hersch 2010, pp. 109–12) and easy delivery (Baur 1902, p. 67). The Minoan peak sanctuary of Vrysinas in western Crete yielded figurines of female worshippers with tied and loose girdles, which may reflect initiation rituals, as suggested by I. Tzachili (pers. commun. 2017). In historical times, out of gratitude for surviving parturition, women who 'loosened the girdle for the first time' (primiparae) dedicated their girdles (Sch. A. R. 33. 13–14), robes and jewels to goddesses protecting birth (Rouse 1902, p. 252; Baur 1902, p. 67). Eileithyia, who bore the epithet *Lysizonos*, 'Girdle-Looser' (Theoc. *Id.* 17. 60–63), was offered clothes pins at Sparta, suggesting the dedication of related garments, like those given to Artemis at Brauron (Kilian 1978, pp. 220–21). As argued by Warren (1988, p. 22), such practices may be continuities from the Bronze Age; Eileithyia's Cretan cave sanctuary at Tsoutsouros yielded Late Minoan-type gold rosettes that used to be sown/pinned to clothes (see Kanta 2011b, pp. 160–61). The models of robes adorned with saffron flowers from the Knossian Repositories may, like the girdles, have a bearing on women's maturation rites. Similar garments are worn by females thought to participate in initiation rites to menarche and motherhood on the Bronze Age frescoes from Xeste 3 at Akrotiri on Thera, addressed below. In later Greece, girls undergoing their puberty initiation at Brauron wore a saffron-dyed robe (*krokotos*), the crocus having a special significance in such rites because it relieves menstrual pains (Lee 2015, p. 200).

4.2.5. Medicinal Plants

Along with the crocus-decorated garments, the Temple Repositories yielded models of crocuses, lilies, pomegranates, and a vessel with a spray of rose leaves (Evans 1921, pp. 499–500; Panagiotaki 1993, 1999, pp. 75–77, 91, nº195). The rose is referenced over ninety times in the Hippocratic Corpus, exclusively in gynaecological treatments (Andò 2001, p. 242). Dioscorides (*Mat. med.* 1. 53) prescribes *rosaceum* oil to soothe irritations of the vulva, and Soranus in contraceptive pessaries, remedies for uterine haemorrhage, womb inflammations, drying up breastmilk, skin ulcers in infants, and gonorrhoea (Temkin 1991, pp. 227–28). According to modern research, rose tea alleviates primary dysmenorrhoea (Tseng et al. 2005), recurrent menstrual pain. Roses feature on the Fresco of the Garlands from the North Building at Knossos together with lilies, crocuses, papyri and greenish leaves that might stand for dittany, myrtle or olive (Warren 1985, pp. 193–204; 1988, p. 24). Warren (1988, pp. 24–27), who includes the collection and dedication of flowers (e.g., in bunches, wreaths) among the characteristic rituals of Minoan religion, argues that the symbolic value of the plants involved in such ceremonies derived from their perceived usefulness and efficacy. Noting that lily, dittany, withy/osier, pomegranate and myrtle were associated with childbirth and menstruation in antiquity, he suggests that the wreaths on the Fresco of the Garlands relate to the cult of one or several Minoan goddesses as, in historical times, Eileithyia, Diktynna, Ariadne and Europa-Hellotis were garlanded with plants symbolic of fertility, such as dittany, pine, mastic and/or myrtle (Warren 1985, pp. 202, n. 59, 205; 1988, p. 26).

The pomegranate, occurring in the Temple Repositories in the form of bud models (Evans 1921, p. 496), is an attribute of Eileithyia (Buffa 1933; Pfiffig 1975, p. 307; Jannot 1980, p. 616) and other goddesses overseeing human, plant and/or animal (re)birth (e.g., Hera, Demeter, Persephone, Aphrodite, Artemis) (Sourvinou-Inwood 1978; Preka-Alexandri 2010; Senkova 2016; Greco 2016). In antiquity, it was used to expel the foetus and the placenta, treat uterine conditions, and as a contraceptive (Riddle 1991, p. 11; 1992, pp. 25–26, 93–94; Nixon 1995, p. 86); according to modern research, pomegranate extract stimulates uterine contractions (Promprom et al. 2010; Kupittayanant et al. 2014, pp. 531, 534), its female sex hormones accounting also for its effectiveness as a contraceptive (Riddle 1991, p. 12; Nixon 1995, p. 86). While the pomegranate is regarded as a symbol of fertility because of its many seeds and blood-red juice (Greco 2016, p. 188; Ward 2003, p. 532), this symbolism could also have to do with its long-recognised oxytocic properties. Like other life-giving midwifery

drugs—and instruments—the pomegranate played a role in lifecycle transitions conceived as symbolic rebirths. Depictions of the fruit occurring in ancient funerary contexts, in Greece and elsewhere in the Mediterranean (Immerwahr 1989; Ward 2003), might have symbolically fostered rebirth into the afterlife. In modern Greece, the pomegranate is shared by newlyweds, laid on the bier of the deceased, and is an ingredient in the *kollyba*, the customary funerary meal (Lawson 1910, pp. 13, 535, 559). The fruit is still hung or smashed on the threshold of the home to propitiate the New Year's (re)birth.

The lily models from the Repositories (Evans 1921, pp. 499–500; Panagiotaki 1999, pp. 75–76) find parallels at Petsophas. Together with the crocus, it is one of the most common plants in Aegean Bronze Age iconography, a sacred flower appearing as tribute to the deity, associated with cult objects (Marinatos 1984, p. 89; Warren 1985, pp. 203–4; Phitos 2010), and the floral motif par excellence on Late Minoan larnakes, likely symbolizing regeneration/rebirth (Watrous 1991, p. 295). The lily has pervasive historical connotations with childbirth. According to Greek mythology, the Milky Way (*Galaxias* < *gala*, 'milk') was formed by a squirt of Hera's breastmilk, lilies sprouting from the drops fallen on earth (Chirassi 1968, p. 105; Phitos 2010, p. 105). Busts crowned with lilies, periparturient figurines and keys were offered to Hera-Eileithyia for safe delivery at the Heraion at Foce del Sele (Poseidonia/Paestum) (Zancani Montuoro and Zanotti-Bianco 1951, pp. 14–15; Stoop 1960, pp. 24–41). In the Christian tradition, the Madonna Lily embodies the mystery of the Incarnation and is the flower of the Annunciation (Phitos 2010, pp. 114–15); thence the Cretan expression *myrise ton krino*, 'she smelled the lily', meaning, ironically, that a woman got pregnant. The lily is mainly a gynaecological drug in the Hippocratic Corpus (Andò 2001, p. 291). Its oil, the *sousinon*, deemed most effective to treat female ailments (Dsc. *Mat. med.* 1. 62), is recorded as an emmenagogue and an oxytocic by Pliny (*Nat.* 21. 74) and Soranus (Temkin 1991, p. 228).

As for the crocus, proven to be a powerful oxytocic by modern research (Javadi et al. 2013), it is the most represented plant in the Knossian Repositories. Prescribed as an oxytocic in Babylonian medicine (Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, p. 207), it was used throughout antiquity to induce parturition and abortion, arrest uterine haemorrhage, as an emmenagogue and a painkiller in menstruation and childbirth. Archaeologists have recognised these gynaecological applications in the context of the Xeste 3 frescoes from Akrotiri (Thera) interpreted as initiation rituals to menarche and motherhood, which depict prepubescent to mature females—some wearing crocus-decorated garments—who are engaged in the harvest and dedication of saffron to a goddess (Cameron 1978, p. 582; Marinatos 1984, pp. 64–65; Amigues 1988, p. 237; Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, pp. 207–17; Forsyth 2000, pp. 152–53, 162, 164; Rehak 2002, pp. 48–50; 2004, p. 92; Kopaka 2009, p. 192).

It has surprisingly gone unnoticed that four other plants featured on the Xeste 3 frescoes, either as offerings to the goddess or decorating the depicted altar, wall backgrounds, garments or jewellery, were themselves main midwifery drugs: the lily and the rose;[12] the iris,[13] an exclusively gynaecological plant in the Hippocratic Corpus (Andò 2001, p. 301), recorded as an emmenagogue and an oxytocic by Dioscorides (*Mat. med.* 1. 1, 1. 66) and Soranus (Temkin 1991, pp. 227–78); and, last but not least, vitex,[14] used in Babylonian midwifery (Steinert 2012; Böck 2013, p. 44 n. 64) and predominantly gynaecological in the Hippocratic texts, which was prescribed as an emmenagogue, oxytocic, galactagogue and fertility enhancer (Von Staden 1993, pp. 26–27; Nixon 1995, p. 87). Called *lygos* (modern *lygaria*), vitex was involved in Spartan maturation rites presided by Artemis Orthia, to whom the plant was sacred (Calame 1997, pp. 135, 163–64), and whose sanctuary also hosted the cult of Eileithyia (Kilian 1978). The *lygos* was sacred to the Samian Hera (Paus. 7. 4. 4, 8. 23. 5), who was offered pomegranates, poppies (Kyrieleis 1993, pp. 138–39) and anatomical models, including female genitalia (Senkova 2016, pp. 33–34). Lastly, vitex was associated with the most widespread Greek festival, the all-female Thesmophoria, in honour of Demeter. During this celebration propitiating human and agricultural reproduction, women congregated in the wildness, slept on *lygos*-strewn couches, uttered ritual obscenities, sacrificed piglets and imitations of snakes, ate pomegranate seeds and cakes

shaped as female genitalia (Burkert 1985, pp. 242–46; Von Staden 1993, pp. 37–40; Dillon 2002, pp. 110–20).[15]

5. The *Materia Medica* of Minoan Midwives and Crete's Identity as a Foremost Drug-Bearer

On the above-discussed frescoes from Xeste 3, contemporary with the Knossian Repositories, there is not one but five plants composing a pharmaceutical kit to ease women's hazardous transition to menarche, pregnancy, parturition, postpartum and lactation: crocus, lily, rose, iris and vitex. The Xeste 3 goddess has been interpreted as a mistress of nature (Marinatos 1984, p. 70), a mistress of animals or *Potnia theron* (Marinatos 1976, p. 33; Cameron 1978, p. 582; Rehak 1999, p. 12; Chapin 2010, p. 227), and as a medical deity owing to the manifold applications of saffron in ancient therapeutics (Ferrence and Bendersky 2004). On account of the specifically female herbal kit linked to her cult, the Xeste 3 goddess is most probably a divine wise woman, the type of deity overseeing female rites of passage. Several scholars highlight the economic importance of saffron as both a dye and a medicinal agent in the Aegean Bronze Age (Goodison and Morris 1998; Day 2011). The Xeste 3 goddess may have presided over the (re)productive cycle of this precious commodity on Thera. According to Marinatos (1976, p. 36) and Doumas (1992, pp. 130–31, 162, Fig. 125), she is crowned by a rearing snake. The figurine from the Temple Repositories wearing the serpent-plaited girdle (see Evans 1921, Frontispiece) displays a snake on her headdress.

The Knossian 'snake goddesses', traditionally ascribed to the cult of a conjectured mother goddess, are represented with the crocus, lily and rose, included in the Xeste 3 healing kit; the pomegranate, weasel, deer and snake, all midwifery pharmacological agents linked to the historical Eileithyia; garments used in female initiations; and shells, fulfilling pharmacological and apotropaic functions in birth-midwifery across the ancient world. The Knossian figurines, schematically paralleled on midwifery instruments from Middle Kingdom Egypt, recall the snake-handling Beset statuette from the Ramesseum kit including midwifery paraphernalia. They also bring to mind the ritual use of snakes by Hittite wise women—employing as well piglets and puppies—and the priestess of Eileithyia tending her sacred serpent at Olympia. It is likely then that the 'snake goddesses' mirror Minoan healers attached to Eileithyia's worship. They may be practitioners like the Mesopotamian midwives officiating in the cult of Nintu (Stol 2000, p. 76; Westenholz 2013, p. 248), the Sumerian Creator goddess who fashions humans from clay through her midwifery skills; or like the nu.gig/*qadishtu*, the 'sacred women' performing as midwife-priestesses in the cult of Ninisina/Gula, "the midwife of the mothers of the land, the great physician of humankind" (Stol 2000, pp. 79, 112, 116), who is associated with dogs-puppies and the 'dog's tongue', a plant prescribed for women in hard labour (Stol 2000, pp. 54, 131, 133; Böck 2014, pp. 141, 153–54). Leading us to the Knossian Repositories were the weasel figurines from the peak sanctuary of Petsophas, occurring with childbirth, tortoise, dog and lily offerings, themselves likely indicators of Eileithyia's worship. This same cult is suggested at the related site of Palaikastro by the joint dedication of dogs-puppies and martens in wells. And Eileithyia may also have been worshipped at Juktas, the Knossian peak sanctuary yielding childbirth votives, models of puppies, tortoises and snakes.

We seem to have here a ritual package of animals and plants belonging to the *materia medica* of Aegean Bronze Age midwives. Related to their expertise are at least two other drugs: dittany and the opium poppy.[16] Endemic of Crete and the island's most celebrated herb in antiquity, dittany, offered in wreaths to Eileithyia, was sacred to the goddess because it was deemed to soothe the pangs of childbirth (Warren 1985, p. 202, n. 59). In the Hippocratic texts, this Cretan herb is prescribed exclusively in gynaecological treatments (Andò 2001, p. 277). The slit poppy capsules crowning the tiara of the Late Minoan 'Poppy goddess' from Gazi attest to the use of the plant's analgesic sap (Marinatos 1937). Poppies and another gynaecological plant, lilies, are offered by two women and a girl to a likely birth goddess on a signet ring from Mycenae featuring metonymical depictions of Taweret (Younger 2009), the Egyptian birth goddess transformed into the Minoan Genius

(Weingarten 1991). The opium poppy, employed primarily for female complaints in the Hippocratic Corpus (Guerra Doce 2006, p. 141), is the source of the strongest modern pain relievers—morphine and other opiates.

In Classical antiquity, Crete was praised as the richest place in medicinal herbs (Theophr. *HP* 9. 16. 3, Plin. *Nat.* 25. 53), first among them the oxytocic dittany (Theophr. *HP* 9. 16. 1). Plants become drugs when their healing properties are tested, recognised and consistently applied in therapeutics. Therefore, Crete's identity as a unique repository of herbal medicine implies the existence of a venerable indigenous healing tradition long renowned beyond the island. Floral offerings and settings are the exclusive domain of females in Minoan iconography (Goodison and Morris 1998, p. 128), probably reflecting a gendered epistemic phenomenon: herbal knowledge, customarily transmitted along the female line (Blum and Blum 1965, pp. 170, 183; Faure 1973, p. 326), was largely the province of women because they regularly used plants to treat reproductive-related conditions (Willetts 1962, pp. 79, 160). The evidence for a Minoan midwifery tradition unravelled in this paper strongly suggests that the lore of indigenous wise women, passed down through the ages, played a major role in building Crete's historical reputation as a foremost drug-bearer.

6. Conclusions

The view that the clay weasels from Petsophas represent pests shows that regarding Minoan peak sanctuaries as conceptually isolated 'islands' obscures the understanding of the ritual language expressed by their extraordinary offerings. Healing practices underlying votive associations come to light when focusing on connectivities, namely when peak sanctuary materials are addressed comparatively both within and beyond Crete, and by taking a deep and wide time frame. Applying this integrative approach for analysing the joint occurrence of weasel and gynaecological votives at Petsophas has proved fruitful. It has led to the identification of evidence for a ritual healing package in the Aegean Bronze Age that includes the weasel, tortoise, dog-puppy, deer, snake, crocus, lily, rose, iris, vitex, pomegranate, dittany and opium poppy, animals and plants which are the source of important or exclusively gynaecological drugs in the Hippocratic Corpus (5th–4th c. BCE) and/or other medical texts.

The identification of this overlooked Minoan midwifery package lends material support to a claim so far unaddressed but most significant to the interpretation of women's neglected role in the history of medicine: that Hippocratic gynaecological pharmacopoeia originated in earlier female lore passed down orally (Rousselle 1980; Demand 1994, p. 63). The Hippocratic gynaecological texts compose the largest body of homogeneous subject matter within the Corpus (Hanson 1975, p. 568). They include the two oldest Hippocratic treatises, *Nature of Women* and *Diseases of Women* (Grensemann 1975; Andò 2001, pp. 10–11, 29–30), namely, the foundational core of Western (written) medicine. These texts record ancestral *materia medica* of midwives, the first attested healers. Midwifery lore is extremely persistent and may traverse the millennia virtually unchanged unless new technological paradigms set in (e.g., biomedicine). This tenacity is illustrated, for instance, by the evidence for infant swaddling at Petsophas, the pharmacological and apotropaic applications of snakeskins to ease birth/induce menstruation, or the use of mustelid pelts as birth amulets, all practices perpetuated in the Mediterranean until the 20th century. Enduring symbols do not stem from sheer imagination or unwarranted beliefs. The origin of pervasive emblems of birth-midwifery, like the weasel, dog, snake, lily or pomegranate, often ascribed vague 'fertility' connotations, is to be sought in the material responses they provided to women's pressing health concerns; responses available within the household, resting on sound empirical knowledge in the case of the placenta, crocus, vitex, poppy, pomegranate and rose, confirmed as effective gynaecological drugs by modern research.

The Minoan therapeutic package brought to light in this paper reveals the existence of a midwifery *koine* stretching in antiquity from Mesopotamia to the Western Mediterranean, as shown by the association of dogs-puppies with divine midwives all the way from

Babylonia to Gaul; the cross-cultural use of puppies for cleansing/healing purposes; shared gynaecological applications of animals (e.g., tortoises in Egyptian, Babylonian and Classical treatments) and plants (e.g., crocus, vitex and pomegranate in Mesopotamian and Classical remedies); or the widespread use of shells in birth-related practices. According to the examined data, the oldest recognisable elements of this midwifery *koine* are tortoises, mustelids and dogs-puppies. Bones of these animals are associated with females in the Mesolithic Levant, in one instance (tortoises and mustelids) linked to a woman interpreted as a shamanic healer. They are also linked to females in Neolithic Anatolia (mustelids and dogs-puppies), prefiguring the historical connection of puppies with wise women in the region. Then, at the turn of the 2nd millennium BCE, the three animals emerge together on the northeastern coast of Crete, indicating close indigenous contacts with Eastern therapeutics. This loan, however, is incorporated within a genuinely Minoan healing cosmology. Weasel, dog and tortoise figurines appear at Petsophas alongside an unprecedented type of artefact distinctive of the peak sanctuaries, bespeaking of a full-blown, highly elaborated therapeutic system: anatomical offerings. To judge by their enduring use, these embodiments of wishes or thanks for well-being are a brilliant invention consistently satisfying spiritual needs; in Crete and broader Greece, dedicating anatomical ex-votos is still a favoured mean to negotiate help and protection with supernatural healers. A new ritual language, still 'spoken' today in modern ways, was thus inaugurated by Minoan worshippers at the peak sanctuaries, the first known shrines to yield anatomical offerings. Lying at the crossroad of Asia, Africa and Europe, the island of Crete was strategically gifted to become a major cultural hub, interacting with and interconnected with cultures across the Eastern Mediterranean. But it was the creative vitality of Minoan culture that made the island a unique testing ground of therapeutic knowledge, ideas and behaviours.

Notes

[1] The publication of Davaras' 1970s excavation has been entrusted to Alan Peatfield and Christine Morris and forms part of the East Cretan Peak Sanctuaries Project (ECPSP), on which the present author is a collaborator. The Petsophas material in this paper will be more fully catalogued and discussed as part of the ECPSP publications.

[2] This gesture, characteristic of Eileithyia, was deemed to convey divine forces easing delivery (Farnell 1896, pp. 613–14; Baur 1902; Bettini 2013, p. 84).

[3] Up to the 1950s, folk midwives were by far the predominant healers in Crete (Clark 2011, p. 21, n. 50; Allbaugh 1953, p. 158). According to elderly villagers who remember the last *praktikes mames*, they were general practitioners and often also veterinarians.

[4] The figurines may depict martens. The term weasel is occasionally employed in this paper to generically denote animals of the weasel family, namely mustelids.

[5] Bindings/knots were believed to obstruct delivery (Bettini 2013, pp. 69–82).

6. The figurines from Juktas, on exhibit at the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, display both the same bodily position and hairdo as the specimens from Petsophas.

7. The Late Bronze Age sanctuary of Phylakopi (c. 13th c. BCE) on the island of Milos yielded a dog figurine resembling the puppies from Juktas (Karetsou and Koehl 2014, p. 334), beech marten bones, tortoise shells, and the probable image of a goddess with upraised arms (Psi type figurine), the so-called Lady of Phylakopi (Renfrew 1985, pp. 325–26, 372–73, 479).

8. I thank Alexandra Karetsou for mentioning the tortoise votives from Juktas in the discussion following the Online Annual Open Lecture of the Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies at Athens on 29th April 2021, "The Petsophas Peak Sanctuary: A Prelude" by Alan Peatfield.

9. For a full discussion of the finds from the Ramesseum deposit having a bearing on female therapeutics, see (Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, pp. 296–98).

10. For instance, see the statue of Bes from the temple of Nectanebo (Serapeum of Memphis, 4th c. BCE) exhibited at the Louvre Museum (N437, Room 317).

11. The Liturgy to Nintud, or Kesh Temple Hymn, one of the two oldest known pieces of literature, is an ode to the temple erected at Kesh to Nintu(d), the midwife of the gods who, according to the Atrahasis Epic, creates humans from clay. In the myth "Enki and the World Order" she is portrayed with her medical emblems including the obstetric knife. Nevertheless, Nintu is generally regarded as the Sumerian 'mother' goddess, leading to paradoxical interpretations of the sources (Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, p. 97–99), which recall the conflicting modern division of Eileithyia's skills and roles discussed above.

12. On the walls of the corridor leading to staircase 8 one of the mature women depicted in procession carries a bunch of roses, another one a bunch of lilies, a flower also represented on the bodice of yet another mature woman and elsewhere at Xeste 3 (Vlachopoulos 2008, pp. 451, 453–4).

13. The so-called Wounded Woman in Room 3a wears an iris-shaped hairpin (Doumas 1992, p. 142 Fig. 106).

14. Vitex is depicted in Room 9 at Xeste 3. English publications render the plant as osier (Doumas 1992, Fig. 151; Vlachopoulos 2008, p. 454, Figs. 41.41, 41.42).

15. On other gynaecological plants associated with the cult of Demeter, see (Nixon 1995) and (Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, pp. 397–98).

16. Other pharmacological agents likely associated with this midwifery tradition are squills, pine, myrtle, and mastic, the resin from the terebinth and lentisk (Zimmermann Kuoni 2019, pp. 390–96).

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Neolithic Ritual on the Island Archipelago of Malta

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Abstract: This paper addresses the ritual of Neolithic Malta in its island context drawing on recent research by the FRAGSUS project. Ritualised club houses placed in horticultural enclosures formed the focal point of the prehistoric Maltese landscape in the fourth and third millennia BC, providing a stable exploitation of the islands by the small populations of the period. This was a period when connectivity was more challenging than in the Bronze Age which followed, when Malta became part of the wider ritual patterns of the central Mediterranean and beyond. The paper provides discussion of the leading issues and arguments applied to this rich case study of island ritual.

Keywords: club house; connectivity; Malta; Mediterranean; ritual

1. Introduction

It has often been remarked that something rather special, perhaps even unusual, happens in the ritual sphere on islands in prehistory. It is an empirical observation that islands have disproportionately large numbers of prehistoric ritual monuments. This observation has been noted from as far afield as Polynesia with examples such as Hawaii (Kirch 1990) and Easter Island (Boersema 2015). The same observation has been made of islands of the Mediterranean with examples that range from the Balearics (Lewthwaite 1985) to Sardinia (Tinè and Traverso 1992) and to our case study of Malta (Figure 1). This raises questions of why this should be so. Do islands as different in size and isolation as Easter Island and Sardinia have something physically or biogeographically in common that transcends time or is the comparison more in the mind, a social construction of reality, heavily dependent on the socio-political context in which they are situated? We collect together the data and interpretations here for Malta so that readers can address this debate with the most up-to-date information and interpretations, and so that they can come to their own conclusions for an archipelago at the smaller end of the spectrum.
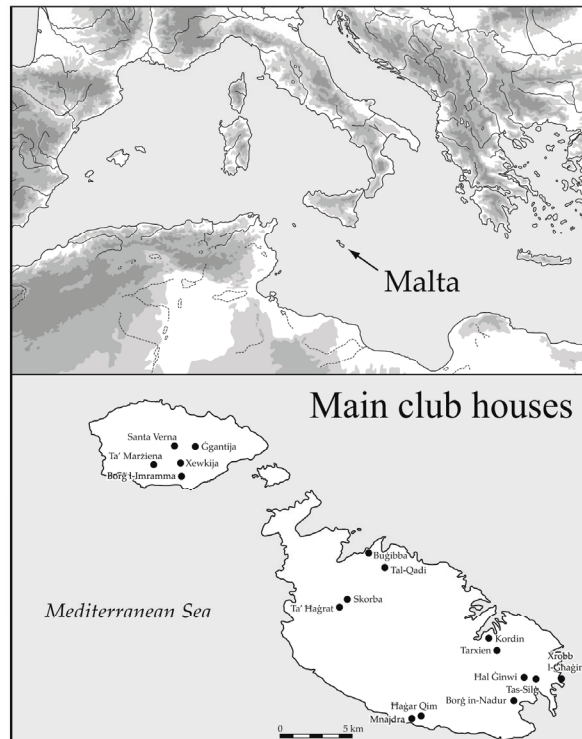
Figure 1. The Maltese islands. The location of club houses, traditionally known as temples.

2. The Relationship between Past and Present

Ethnography (a study of the present or near present) has often been studied as a guide to island society. The work of the late Marshall Sahlins is one important example of the way in which the socio-political history of islands, from an anthropological perspective, has been very influential. His early work looked at the relationship between size and socio-complexity, taking an ecological perspective (Sahlins 1963). His later work looked at the complex interaction between different types of society in an island world, clarifying their sense of difference, of identity, particularly when connectivity led to the meeting of different worlds (Sahlins 1981; Sahlins et al. 1995). Other work has also shown the entanglement of radically different worlds (Thomas 1991). In our study of prehistoric Malta, we have to clarify that sense of difference. For this purpose, Malta is fortunate to have its own distinguished ethnographer in the late Jeremy Boissevain (e.g., Boissevain 1980), who identified patterns of ritual distributed across the landscape that have an uncanny topological similarity to the patterns of the prehistoric past. Yet, as we will explore, whereas some of the structural scales may have been similar, the ritual content and periodicity of prehistoric Malta was radically different from the village religions of the twentieth century (Barratt et al. 2018). Boissevain (1996) first expected the rituals that he studied in the 1960s to fade away in a more globalised world. In fact, ritual identity became more accentuated, as Malta became more globalised. Did that same pattern apply to the prehistoric past? As another Maltese ethnographer has explained, ritual mediates between the global and the local (Mitchell 2002) in the modern world. Do the same criteria apply to the prehistoric world?

Indeed, an important pertinent issue is that the conditions of connectivity on islands in prehistory were somewhat altered from those of the present day. We have to transport ourselves into a different world. Islands today have lost a major component of their

maritime character, namely the adventure of access, because of the power of air travel, where the maritime features are only regained when the aerial travellers end up on the beach. The difference between past and present is one of the controversial features in explaining the ancient character of islands and the case of prehistoric Malta powerfully illustrates that issue (Evans 1973; Bernabò Brea 1960; Malone and Stoddart 1998; Robb 2001; Malone and Stoddart 2004; Malone et al. 2020a; Dawson 2021). The issue of the level of connectivity is an element that divides a number of these authors in their interpretation of the ritual creativity of island life. It dwells on how much the cultural achievements and characteristics of humans outweigh or interact with the impact of biogeography. In the case of Malta, what is clear is that the technology of both island resilience and travel changed radically between the early Neolithic settlers of the c. 6000 BC and the early state societies of c. 1000 BC. The navigational and other boating skills of the sixth millennium BC made visits to the island of Malta a substantial venture and a degree of fragile existence once agriculture was established, so that most regular resources had to be locally procured. The navigational and other boating skills of the first millennium BC made crossings from the nearest larger land masses much less of a risk and began a process of regular procurement of external resources that allowed much higher and potentially more stable population levels. The transition from one level of connectivity to another over the course of the fourth to second millennium BC was complex, but we can now draw on data that are both cultural and biological. From a modern perspective, where it is easy (at least outside COVID-19 times) to arrive in Malta from most places in Europe, it is more difficult to imagine how the embedded cultural physicality of the Maltese islands contributed to the creative response.

Here we outline this extraordinary explosion of ritual activity on the Maltese islands in the fourth and third millennium BC. We summarise and develop some of the debates on why and how this took place in the light of the most recent evidence at our disposal. We start by examining the character of Malta from three temporal perspectives.

3. Scales of Time and Ritual

The Maltese islands can be studied in Braudelian terms (Braudel 1949): the longue durée physicality of the islands; the medium scale of the social and technological context; and the action of individuals at the scale of time witnessed by the actors involved. These scales interact and have a degree of fuzziness at their boundaries, but an investigation of these scales illustrates many of the issues in the identification and exegesis of prehistoric Maltese religion.

4. The Longue Durée

The Maltese islands are small, totalling 317 square kilometres and one of the best studied larger islands, Gozo, is even smaller, reaching only 67 square kilometres. This size has decreased over time because of rising sea level; indeed, the islands were once a headland of Sicily (until c. 14,000 BP; Furlani et al. 2013, Figure 9). However, the size of the islands was relatively stable in the relevant period of the fourth to the third millennium BC (although memories may have remained in the prehistoric mythologies of a fading land mass (Stoddart 2015)). In the same way, the distance of about 80 km from the nearest landmass, Sicily, also remained relatively constant during the same period, although historical navigators' accounts of the crossing vary from absolute calm to substantial storms, so the distance was still potentially a challenge.

The geology of the island provided another element of stability in the character of the island, entirely composed, as it is, of sedimentary rocks and different forms of limestone interbedded with more impermeable clays. These layers, transformed by fault lines, created a fractal quality of landscape in the islands where the small islands were themselves compartmentalised into smaller component parts, so that the small was itself divided into smaller, more intimate and personal places (Alberti et al. 2020, p. 267). Grima (2016b) has shown that this fractal quality was even introduced into the subterranean monuments themselves, where structure was provided by the very bedding planes of the substrata. The

geology (permeable/impermeable layers and fault lines) also created springs and aquifers, vital for an island system that has no perennial rivers. Water was, and is, a crucial and enduring limiting factor of life in the Maltese islands, one consequently linked to ritual and perhaps to cosmology, as we will discover, and this fact has been extensively explored by Reuben Grima (2016a). Moreover, the globigerina and coralline limestone rock offered malleable material for the construction of the framework for the built environment and the clays and globigerina limestone created immense opportunities for portable material culture within these structures.

The southern European latitude of the islands, nested between continental Europe and continental Africa, has consistently offered long growing seasons, as well as evocative light on land and water alike, characteristics that impressed individuals in the more modern world such as Samuel Coleridge and Edward Lear. These evocative sources of light and dark also undoubtedly impressed the prehistoric people (Stoddart et al. 2020a), particularly when accompanied by violent storms and substantial runoff into the small, intimate, and periodically violent, catchments of the islands.

The absences from the island were and are as important as the presences. There is no current evidence of pre-Neolithic occupation of Malta when, prior to 12,000 BC (Furlani et al. 2013, Figure 9), she was a headland of Sicily, so humans have always had to bring in a number of resources. Some resources, such as animals and plants, had to be brought in on a small scale to initiate agriculture on a larger scale, and then grown and expanded to provide the necessary basis of a stable occupation of islands of this size. Current pollen evidence suggests that this was achieved by c. 5900 BC (Farrell et al. 2020). After the initial import of cultigens, the islands had to become broadly self-sufficient once a population was established, since the large-scale import of food stuffs was not a practical proposition until the first millennium BC. Other raw materials such as some cherts (Chatzimpaloglou 2020a, 2020b), hard stones (Dixon et al. 2009) and obsidian (Malone et al. 2009, pp. 250–53) were similarly imported on a small scale and were probably accompanied by a continuing exchange of humans, both to provide the transport and what we currently assess to have been a limited exchange of genetic material (Ariano et al. 2022). The exotic provenance of materials can be proved, but these materials are difficult to quantify or date. The degree of movement of humans (measured by oxygen and strontium isotopes) is even more difficult to assess, because of the similarities of neighbouring geologies for strontium and the complex pathways for oxygen (Stoddart et al. in press). What is, however, clear is that it was no small venture, compared with today, to cross the waters to Sicily or Africa and what evidence there is of the biology of the inhabitants suggests transmission *was* affected by biogeographical factors (Ariano et al. 2022).

5. The Structurelle

This stability of the islands was nevertheless fragile, even though both humans and ritual were surprisingly resilient. Humans rapidly stripped the islands of climax vegetation (Farrell et al. 2020) and humans have subsequently prevented the recovery of that land cover, cutting down the trees within a very short period and, in much more modern times, covering a substantial portion of the landscape with concrete. The result has been a long-standing human-induced period of very substantial run-off of water, removing the sediments derived from the parent rock and preventing the development of stable soils. At times, manuring and terracing have been introduced to mitigate these effects, but at this intermediate scale of time, the islands illustrate a lesson to modern humanity on the over-exploitation of the landscape. As will be discussed below, prehistoric ritual very probably had a role in introducing a regulated approach to the landscape, which itself mitigated the disastrous effect of stripping the landscape of its vegetation. The monuments were, though, more than the mere ritual; they were strongly embedded in the socio-economic fabric of prehistoric Maltese society.

The human response to these difficulties was one of considerable resilience. Human capital has always been a vital component of the Malta story. In this respect, we can

define two important prehistoric stages which engage with a link between connectivity and demography (McLaughlin et al. 2020). For the first c. 3500 years of human occupation of the Maltese islands, demographic levels were very low, probably in the very low thousands for Gozo and not substantially more for the larger island of Malta. The first phase of Neolithic occupation may even have reached a crisis after a few hundred years, a result calculated from the application of a substantial suite of new radiocarbon dates to the available stratigraphies. The second phase of occupation was centred around monuments in the landscapes, introducing a more stable system on which we focus in this paper. From this period, we have evidence, on the one hand, of very high infant mortality, but, on the other hand, of the considerable longevity of some of those who survived adolescence (Stoddart et al. in press). The end of this period of the Neolithic (c. 2450 BC) was marked by a transition towards a much greater degree of connectivity with the rest of the Mediterranean, broadly at the beginning of the Bronze Age. New research by Italian and Anglo-Maltese scholars have detected a new pottery style at the end of the Neolithic period which seems to suggest new contacts (Recchia and Fiorentino 2015; Malone et al. 2020b), most probably the product of more advanced navigational skills. These links also brought risks and settlement rapidly transitioned towards defended sites during the full Bronze Age. By the first millennium BC (Stoddart et al. 2020b), the Phoenicians had made the islands an important node in their maritime network and, from this time onwards (with some fluctuations), the demographic progress was substantially upwards. The major demographic increases did, however, have to await the major modern networks of the Knights of Malta, the British Empire and the European Union. Today, the islands house a population approaching half a million people, sustained by the economic and political power of the European Union. By contrast, for the study of prehistoric ritual, we have to envisage much more intimate population levels of low thousands of individuals and even smaller breeding networks of several hundred (Ariano et al. 2022). These are the scales of interaction recorded in the rituals of the villages of modern Malta, albeit with many differences.

6. The Eventuelle

The micro scales of individual action are much more difficult to characterise in pre-history and would have provided the greatest contrasts with the modern world. The structural agency of society at the time of the major prehistoric monuments is subject to some debate. Renfrew (Renfrew 1973; Renfrew and Level 1979) sustained a hierarchical idea of society, where the temples were the central foci of a society, implicitly headed by ritual specialists. A rival approach was that of Gimbutas (1991), who stressed the power of women in prehistoric Maltese society, drawing on the perceived feminine form both in the floor plan of ritual sites and in the representation of the human body. More broadly, Gimbutas saw Malta as an example of pacific, female-centred Neolithic religion, particu-larly prominent in the Balkans, that was replaced by a more male-centred martial society in the Bronze Age, ultimately incoming from the steppes of Asia. More recently, the idea of a more factional prehistoric society has been proposed (Bonanno et al. 1990; Stoddart et al. 1993), where different interest groups jockeyed for position in an intense, but relatively small-scale, society. This model drew substantially on the work of Boissevain (1964, 1965, 1980), who had variously proposed competing networks for the modern rituals and band clubs of modern village Malta. It allowed for ritual specialists to seek advantage within the complex ritual spaces of prehistoric Malta, but was essentially a much flatter perception of relationships within society. The same perception of a flatter, more egalitarian society has continued in more recent writings (e.g., Thompson 2020).

The funerary evidence shows that there was equal participation of all age grades (including the very young) and both sexes in funerary ritual. However, one or two men were placed in structurally significant positions within the funerary stratigraphy, most notably under the very threshold of entry into the best-known funerary complex of the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle. Some individuals appear to have intentionally shaped their teeth as a sign of difference (Power et al. in press a) and one female in the burial complex was adorned

with a cap of cowrie shells (Stoddart et al. 2009b, p. 145, Figure 8.47). On the other hand, the rich representation of the human form does not give strong prominence to a particular gender or age, but rather to broad cultural attributes, strongly tied to a collective ritualised identity. As a general trend, all the participants in the funerary ritual went through the same patterns of burial: inhumation placed on the right side, sometimes covered by an animal pelt, perhaps sometimes symbolised by a figurine and accompanied by an offering bowl. This integrity of the human form was followed by collective disarticulation, leaving only a small proportion of the original body intact. Furthermore, the isotopic evidence of diet suggests that there was not a substantial variation in the diet of the members of society, which, according to the latest modelling, was 60–80% animal (heavily sheep and very probably dairy in part), 10–20% plant-based and only 10% fish-based, with a relatively low variation (McLaughlin et al. in press). Given the importance of diet in registering differential wealth and identity, this apparently low level of variance suggests a relatively flat society in terms of access to resources, a point supported by the shared physical resilience. This was also a strongly pacific society (echoing the view of Gimbutas) with very little evidence of trauma or indeed of the means (in the form of weapons) to inflict that trauma on other members of the population, accompanied by clear evidence of curative care of individuals within the community (Power et al. in press b). At the risk of exaggeration, the succeeding Bronze Age appears (again echoing Gimbutas) to have been more prone to conflict, if some of the visual material culture and defensive settlement response is taken at face value.

7. The Neolithic Ritual of Malta

What is the evidence for Maltese prehistoric ritual? The main evidence for formalised prehistoric ritual on Malta dates to the fourth and third millennia BC. These are the structures colloquially designated the *temples of Malta*, still laying claim to be some of the earliest free-standing stone structures in the world, impressive structures that have been recognised as long (since the sixteenth century) as the less impressive classical structures on the islands. By contrast, in the first phase of the Neolithic, we only have settlements and some tentative evidence for religion embedded in domestic life from a site such as Skorba. From c. 3800 BC, best illustrated by the excavations of Skorba (on Malta) and Santa Verna (on Gozo), large monumental buildings were constructed, structures that have been designated temples, although we increasingly designate them *club houses*, inspired by the ethnographic work on band clubs on Malta and on comparable socially embedded ritual from further afield, analysed in many non-Western ethnographies (Barratt et al. 2020).

The *club houses* of prehistoric Malta were composed of highly structured, demarcated and cleansed spaces (Figure 2). It is clear that ritual was broadly prescriptive, but also creative. The scale was also monumental, in the best-preserved cases combining shaped globigerina blocks for decorative finesse with unshaped coralline for the main body of the structures. The largest of the structures, that of South Ġgantija, is in excess of 20×20 m in area and an original height in excess of 10 m. The opinion is consolidating that these structures were roofed, creating substantial internal dark spaces. The most frequent type of club house was symmetrical, organised about a principal axis rising towards a central apse. The classic example, once again, is the paired structures of Ġgantija. Studies have suggested that the interior was very closely organised so that the left hand was for water and right hand for fire (Malone 2007), developing the theme of dualism noted elsewhere (Tilley 2004). Substantial deposits of animal offerings, principally of heads and feet, were discovered in the best-preserved example of Tarxien, along with numerous offering bowls (Malone 2018). Other material culture was found at visual hotspots within the structures. The interplay of architectural space and liturgical artefacts was exploited through an elaborate theatrical strategy of dark and light, posture and perspective (Tilley 2004), where lines of sight were permanently or temporarily obscured, an interpretation that has been explored through GIS analysis (Anderson and Stoddart 2007), drawing on the best-preserved site of Tarxien, excavated by the father of Maltese archaeology, Themistocles Zammit. The permanent occlusion was, by means of apses, hidden offstage by narrow monumental doorways.

These same monumental doorways could be completely closed, as demonstrated by holes in the door jambs. Successive opening of doors and movement of actors hidden within would have created elaborate impressions of sound and light worthy of eastern orthodox liturgy. All these effects would have been greatly enhanced if the structures were roofed. A less frequent type of club house seems to have taken the form of a zone of transition, an architectural rite of passage, where participants would have entered at one end and left by the other open end, replacing the closed apse in the most common format epitomised by Ġgantija (Figure 2, right). This alternative architectural framework suggested a rite of passage from one status to another, perhaps from the sea to the land, or from life into death. The classic example is that of Hslashaġar Qim (Figure 2, left), with at least one other example at Tas Silġ. Grima (2001) has applied this idea of ritual transition to all temples (see below), but the case seems even stronger where the architectural framework suggests an entrance and an exit rather than a cul de sac, unless the Maltese archipelago itself was seen as the end point of a journey from the northern Mediterranean shore.
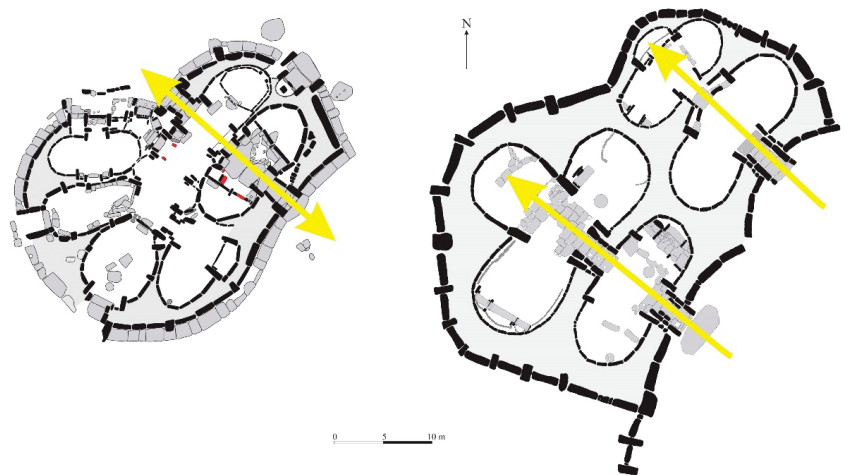
Figure 2. Two types of club house: Hslashaġar Qim (**left**) Ġgantija (**right**).

There is tentative evidence that different club houses may have had different attributes (as interpreted by artistic representations found within them), granting an identity to individual communities associated with them. These attributes appear to have been focused on different living creatures and thus may have formed part of the cosmological structures discussed further below. On the Xagħra plateau on Gozo, the longer-lived club house of Ġgantija appears to have been associated with the serpent, whereas the shorter-lived club house of Santa Verna may have been associated with the snail. On the mainland of Malta, the small club house of Buġibba seems to have been linked to fish, one of the Kordin club houses to the grinding of grain and the large club house of Tarxien to the world of domestic animals. This attribution to parts of the animal world may fit the idea that these club houses were also memory monuments, storing the collective memories of small local communities, which may have consisted of no more than a few hundred people. A cluster of these club houses (Figure 3) may characteristically have shared a common burial ground, as appears to be the case on the Xagħra plateau where the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle was the focal point between Santa Verna and Ġgantija. This pattern seems to have been repeated on the heights above the modern Grand Harbour where Hslashal Saflieni and the associated site of Santa Lucija were the focal points for the Kordin cluster of club houses on one side and Tarxien on the other. This suggestion provides a future research strategy for investigation of those club houses which lack a burial focus, notably the Hslashaġar Qim and Mnajdra clusters on the southern cliffs of the island of Malta.
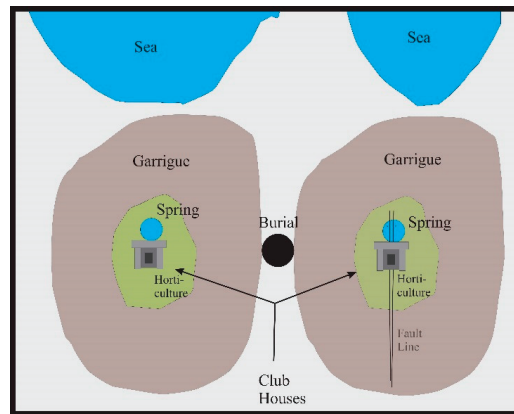
Figure 3. Club house models of landscape, showing the relationship to different parts of the land and seascape: sea, garrigue, burial places, horticulture and springs.

The evidence for death ritual is also very strongly represented. The main data are derived from two complementary sites. The first, the site of Hslashal Saflieni, discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century, is a complex, deep architectural space which provided a club house for the dead complementary to the one for the living above ground. Sadly, very few of the human remains were preserved. For an understanding of the funerary ritual, we have to turn to the more recent excavations of the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle, where some 220,000 fragments of human bone were recovered, amounting to an estimated minimum of 1001 individuals (Stoddart et al. 2009a, p. 321) if all ages and sexes are included. The ritual procedure, as partly described above, amounted to a highly regulated process of inhumation followed by disarticulation, most probably presided over by ritual specialists, whose liturgical artefacts were found close by. The symbolism appears to have been centred on the recurrent theme of the cycle of life embedded in the longevity of the eternal descent group. Two sets of liturgical artefacts found in a central demarcated zone of the complex appear to echo the cycle of life in material form. One was the stone (globigerina) carving of a pair of corpulent individuals seated on a wooden bed. The first held a small diminutive human form. The second (with the head missing) held an offering bowl. These can be interpreted as child progressing through life stages into the status of an individual buried with their bowl, temporarily personal to them. The second was a set of carved schematic stick figures in different stages of craft completion. Both share elements of the Tarxien dress style, which appears to have been the overarching collective memory of all prehistoric Maltese society. Our interpretation is that these liturgical objects encapsulate, visually and metaphorically, the transitions of life within a framework of eternal memory: childhood and death and craft process.

8. Landscape and Cosmology

There is strong evidence that the cosmology of prehistoric Maltese religion can be reconstructed from the placement of the club houses in the landscape. This can be analysed at different scales, starting with their preferential location and investigating their horizontal and vertical relationships with landscape by incorporating increasing scale.

The club houses were preferentially located close to springs (Grima 2004; Ruffell et al. 2018), a preference which allowed the club houses to be the centres not only of consumption but of horticultural production (Figure 3). Study of the soils has shown the improved conservation and enhancement of the soil quality in the immediate environs of these impressive structures (French et al. 2020). In the case of Ġgantija, the club house was deliberately located above a spring which still remains active today, facilitated by a fault line that runs below the structure (Ruffell et al. 2018) and similar bedding planes or fault lines underground at Hslashal Saflieni

may have merged the percolation of water with the very structure of the monument (Grima 2016b). The soils around the above-ground club houses have become depleted today, moving towards the arid terra rossas covered with garrigues that are frequent on the overworked limestones of the Mediterranean as a whole. The club houses, in the past, were maintained as ritually defined precincts of intensive horticulture, a tamed Eden, within a wild uncultivated space grazed by sheep and goats that extended across the wider, wilder landscape. The practice of rituals within these precincts was complementary to the socio-economic success of the communities, drawing on the stability that the gardens created. The location of the club houses close to reliable water sources, as convincingly shown by Grima (2016a) on an island-wide basis using a combination of geological prediction and toponyms, must have facilitated the relative success of these monuments. The importance of water is also given emphasis by the presence of very large ceramic containers for liquid, most probably water, in many of the large temple and burial complexes such as Tarxien, Santa Verna and the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle. Grima has suggested that the size, longevity and success of temple clusters was strongly correlated with their agricultural catchment (Grima 2007, 2008), an interpretation given further precision by the recent FRAGSUS project (Grima et al. 2020).

The club houses were arranged in clusters within the horizontal landscape. Generally, these were arranged across a façade (e.g., Ġgantija) or around a court (Mnajdra) or, more informally, stacked horizontally (Hslashaġar Qim and Tarxien). These clusters can be envisaged (as first proposed by Renfrew) at the centre of territories attached to living communities, in some cases attached to a focal burial ground. The formation of the land and the visual qualities of its geology may have inspired the prehistoric inhabitants (Tilley 2004). Equally, access to the sea (as shown by Caruana (1896), Zammit (1929, p. 5), Pace (1996, p. 5) and more recently by Grima (2004) in his GIS work) seems to have been an important criterion, as well as proximity to fresh water, as already described.

This relationship to the sea has also been interpreted cosmologically. Grima (2001, 2003) has suggested that the internal organisation of the temple may itself be related to the interplay of land and sea, as has Tilley (2004). The internal "marine" courts, often surrounded by raised curbs decorated with spirals recalling reflections of water, might have been deliberately flooded with pooled rainwater to enhance this effect, making a contrast with the "terrestrial" apse islands decorated with vegetation carved in relief at Tarxien. Grima has taken this further by suggesting that graffiti of boats at Tarxien and a canoe-shaped grindstone at Kordin II reinforce this pattern. This internal spatial configuration of the club houses could thus have mirrored the Mediterranean island seascape of which Malta was part. This idea may be reinforced by the fact that points of reference, the places in the non-human world of sea and land, are mainly represented in relief, whereas the humans are represented in the round (Grima 2003), setting up a specific cultural categorisation that is special to the Maltese islands.

Scholars have hypothesised that a vertical landscape was also critical, potentially composed of three layers, drawing on comparative ethnographies: the sky, the land and the subterranean (Stoddart 2002; Tilley 2004; Malone 2008; Malone and Stoddart 2009, pp. 374–46; Grima 2016a, 2016b). The structural and cosmological stability of these club houses was guided by their orientation with the celestial world. The entrance appears to have been orientated on the winter solstice, complementary with the life rituals which were undertaken within (Barratt et al. 2018). The principal apses were broadly orientated towards Sicily, the principal point of origin of these very same communities (Stoddart et al. 1993). By contrast, the opening of the one funerary structure, the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle, where an orientation can be calculated, appears to have been set on the summer solstice, complementary to death rituals practised within. These deep funerary structures gave access to a lower landscape inhabited by the dead and other beings.

These three levels were populated by different beings that the prehistoric Maltese took care to represent in their art (Malone 2008). The world of the visible earth was the most familiar and the most represented. The form of representation was generally corpulent, but a corpulence attached to gender ambiguity. The figuration of the human form generally

adopted a sacred style of gathered hair (Stoddart and Malone 2018), limited individuality and flounced skirts when clothed. This was a timeless style, redolent of ritual time and of stability in a fragile world. Animals were also represented from this world, most notably at Tarxien, which (as already mentioned) may have taken the domestic animal (pig and sheep) as its attribute. More rarely, the occupants of the upper world, the sky, namely birds, were represented, communicants perhaps with the celestial markers observed from the club house entrances. With equal rarity, the occupants of the lower worlds, monsters and fish were also part of the repertoire, most probably associated with the unknown yet originally familiar world of the dead.

9. The Power of Inter-Related Scales

One interesting recurrent feature of the creativity of the prehistoric world of Malta was the morphing between scales in a wide range of material forms of the same shape and style (Malone et al. 1995; Tilley 2004; Stoddart and Malone 2008; Vella Gregory 2016), leading to a comprehensive conceptualisation of the cosmos under one roof in the case of the architecture of the club house or burial enclosure. The exquisite aesthetic and skill of the small and the overpowering extra-human dimensions of the colossal (Mack 2007, pp. 5, 11, 55), as well as scales in between, were important features of the Maltese-built and peopled ritual environment. At the same time, human bodies were disarticulated and their parts reassembled in a larger collective form. The miniaturised had a capacity to be more elemental and more redolent of ritual (Mack 2007, p. 72) and yet recombined as part of a unified architectural complex.

In the ritualised ceramic repertoire, we have minuscule vessels of less than a centimetre across that were scaled up to very substantial containers of more than a metre in diameter (Figure 4). These two scales show the considerable investment in liturgical apparatus that contrasts with the simpler fare of the few settlements which have been excavated (Malone et al. 2020a). A good example of the small scale is a container for ochre found in the inner sacristy of the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle. A good example of the larger scale is the stone vessel found in an inner apse of Tarxien, substantial enough to wash a human body. In the representation of the human form, there is a comparable range in scale from much less than a centimetre to an original size of at least two metres in scale. The posture and character of the human form, however, tended to vary more across this range (Malone and Stoddart 2016). The corpus of human figurines may now reach some 250 examples of which nearly 40% come from the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle. Some of the smallest representations are human heads on animal phalanges from the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle. Individual heads were also carved at life size and sometimes larger, notably from the club houses of Ġgantija and (probably) Tarxien. Full representations of the human form range from small, corpulent, seated figurines at the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle, through larger seated stone versions found at Hslashaġar Qim, to the massive standing figure in the right apse of Tarxien (Figure 5). This brief analysis of the permutations of scale shows that one underlying trend was the liturgical role of the object. Funerary sites seem to have had the more intimate, meaningful liturgical items, whereas the club houses appear to have contained the more rhetorical, visual displays of larger scale which looked over and gazed on their audiences (Malone et al. 1995). A further scaled creation was the model of the club house. One example took an exterior perspective of a one-apse structure. Other examples appear to be simple representations of the floor plan. These scaled models appear to have been more explanatory, perhaps guides to the ritual process. What is interesting is that there was a guiding cultural and stylistic logic which bound together these different scales into one working system of ritual performance. It is a detail of understanding of the workings of ritual that is extremely rare in prehistory. This article has presented some of the key characteristics and some of the debates regarding their character and meaning.
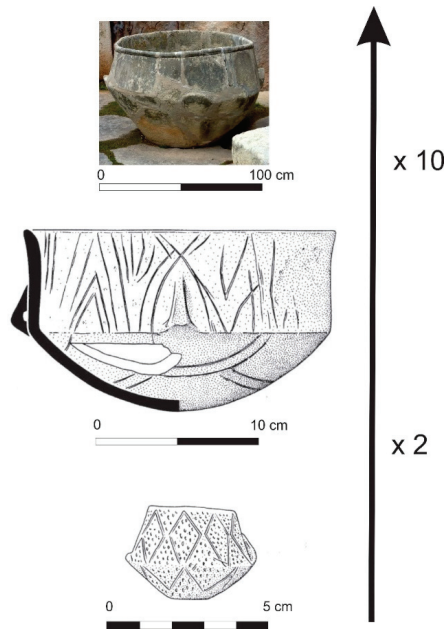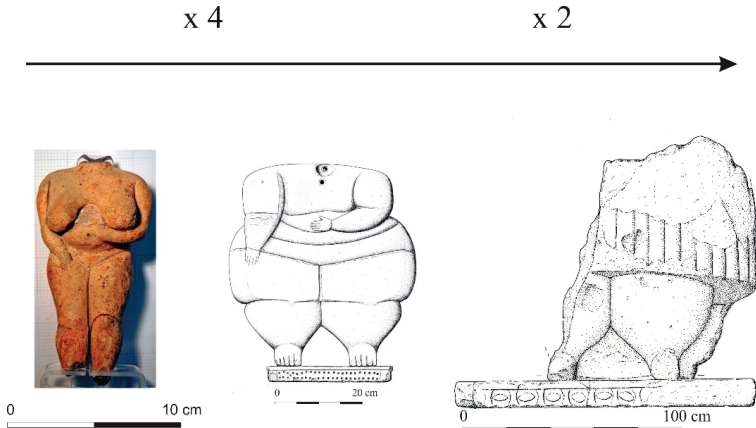
Figure 4. Scales of vessel.

Figure 5. Scales of figurative sculpture.

10. The Ending

One facet of prehistoric island religion which has been more recently uncovered is its demise. Where sites have been more effectively excavated, there appear to have been deliberate acts of closure, or even of iconoclasm. In the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle, the liturgical artefacts seem to have been deliberately back-filled into a demarcated enclosure, colloquially described as the sacristy. A standing human figure of something less than life size was also deliberately broken up and its parts distributed across the burial area. At the club house of Tas Silġ, another standing figure appears to have been deliberately toppled and slighted. At Tarxien, the central part of the site may have been deliberately covered

with an agricultural deposit. The upper levels of other club houses were unfortunately excavated in a period when the subtleties of stratigraphy were not recorded.

The circumstance of this closure can now be explained in cultural and ecological terms. It is very probable that the club house horticulture was no longer serving the needs of the community. The promises of the divine authorities were not being fulfilled. There is evidence of increasing aridity in the landscape (French et al. 2020) and some evidence of stress within the human remains discovered in the later phases of the Brochtorff Xagħra Circle (Stoddart et al. in press). A combination of factors, including fundamentally the social, appears to have contributed to the end to what had been a very stable system of club house ritual, which lasted, on present estimates (McLaughlin et al. 2020), for at least a thousand years from 3400 to 2400 BC and was preceded by a formative period of a further 400 years from 3800 BC. A subsequent transitional period of two hundred years (2400–2200 BC) was followed by a probable hiatus of two hundred years, before replacement by another system of ritual in c. 2000 BC, during the arrival of the Bronze Age. A very different stylisation of the human form then accompanied cremation. The islands of Malta were now part of a connected Mediterranean world which lacked the distinct identity of the preceding Neolithic. This was a world which adopted defended locations in the landscape and prioritised the burial of single individuals. The new ritual of the Maltese islands was now shared with the rest of the Mediterranean through the medium of enhanced connectivity. In contrast to the maintenance of ritual identity uncovered in the modern, globalised by Boissevain, the ritualisation of Malta in protohistoric times came to be shared or at least *glocalised* (Eriksen 2001, p. 302) within the wider Mediterranean, where local variants could be easily placed and recognised as part of a much wider framework.

11. Island Ritual?

We posed the question at the beginning whether there were special circumstances that made ritual on islands qualitatively different from those in other geographical circumstances. It is true that islandness can be a state of mind which can affect some substantially large land masses, such as not only Sardinia (24,090 km^2) and Cyprus (9251 km^2) discussed elsewhere in this journal (Papantoniou and Depalmas 2022), but the "island nations" of Sri Lanka (65,610 km^2; Bacon 2016), the British Isles (in its imperial form 315,159 km^2; Lavery 2005), Japan (377,975 km^2; Isozaki 1996) and even Australia (7,617,930 square km^2; Broeze 1998). The issue is often one of comparative, that is relational, scale since the inhabitants of such islands consider themselves in contradistinction to the inhabitants of their neighbouring continents. The inhabitants of smaller islands in the appropriate sociopolitical circumstances and conditions of connectivity (Stoddart 1999) can sense even more profoundly that challenge of scale. We contend that the richness of the Maltese evidence does show that inhabitants of the small islands did have a highly developed creativity that in some considerable degree relates to their relative physical circumstances. These circumstances include their sense of security and connectivity, which may interpret the physical distance between them and their neighbours in different ways in different periods. We are dealing with gradations of connectivity, cultural as well as biological, that must have left their impression on the construction of identity of the communities concerned. We leave the readers to decide for themselves the temporality of the sense of distinctive difference that we have presented for the fourth and third millennium BC, which contrasts itself with previous and subsequent periods.

Data Availability Statement: Many of the supporting data of the FRAGSUS project can be found in the Cambridge Apollo repository (e.g., https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/312497, (accessed on 2 March 2022); https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/315523, (accessed on 2 March 2022)).

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