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# From phantom town to maritime cultural landscape and beyond: Dreamer's Bay Roman-Byzantine 'port', the Akrotiri Peninsula, Cyprus, and eastern Mediterranean maritime communications

Simon James<sup>1</sup>, Lucy Blue<sup>2</sup>, Adam Rogers<sup>1</sup> and Vicki Score<sup>3</sup>

At Dreamer's Bay on the Akrotiri Peninsula of Cyprus lie remains of what has been interpreted as a, perhaps the main, port for Roman and early Byzantine Kourion. New research reveals a significantly different picture. This was not a nucleated port town as sometimes assumed, but a concentration of maritime facilities with a variety of functions, including an artificially enhanced (but still mediocre) harbour, and shoreline installations partly facilitating Kourion's commerce in commodities like wine and oil. It was also partly an industrial landscape focused on stone quarries above the bay and, perhaps equally important, a proposed watering and victualling stop for long-haul shipping between the Aegean, Egypt and the Levant. Dreamer's Bay was hardly a distinct 'site' or 'place', but rather a commercial/industrial zone forming part of an integrated landscape of settlement and activity spanning the entire peninsula, which itself constituted a major maritime crossroads in the eastern Mediterranean.

**Keywords** Cyprus, Roman, Byzantine, harbour, port, maritime, landscape

## Introduction

Dreamer's Bay, on Cyprus's Akrotiri Peninsula, boasts exceptionally well-preserved remains of what has been seen as an example of a small port of the ancient eastern Mediterranean (Figs 1, 2 and 3). This apparently served Akrotiri, and also the nearby Classical and Late Antique city of Kourion. Since 2015, the Ancient Akrotiri Project, Cyprus (AAP) has been examining this complex in detail. Belonging to the Roman and early Byzantine periods, although possibly active from Hellenistic times, it lay at the southern-most point of Cyprus, on a major maritime crossroads between the

Aegean, Egypt and the Levant (Fig. 4). What was initially thought to be a discrete, nucleated, local node in the maritime communications network binding the Greco-Roman world together, turns out, instead, to be a cluster of components, part of a wider integrated maritime cultural landscape, reflecting complex interactions between land and sea, something only comprehensible at the multiple scales of the Akrotiri peninsula, wider southern Cyprus, and of the eastern Mediterranean. As such, Dreamer's Bay and Akrotiri offer a fruitful case study in how we approach archaeology at the interface between land and sea in the ancient Levantine region, and beyond.

In Antiquity Akrotiri (roughly, 'headland' or 'prominence') was known as Cape Kourias (Ptolemy *Geography* V.13.2; Strabo *Geography* XIV.6.3; see also Arnaud 2005: 212–26; Ault and Leonard forthcoming; Leonard 1995; 2005). Our most detailed

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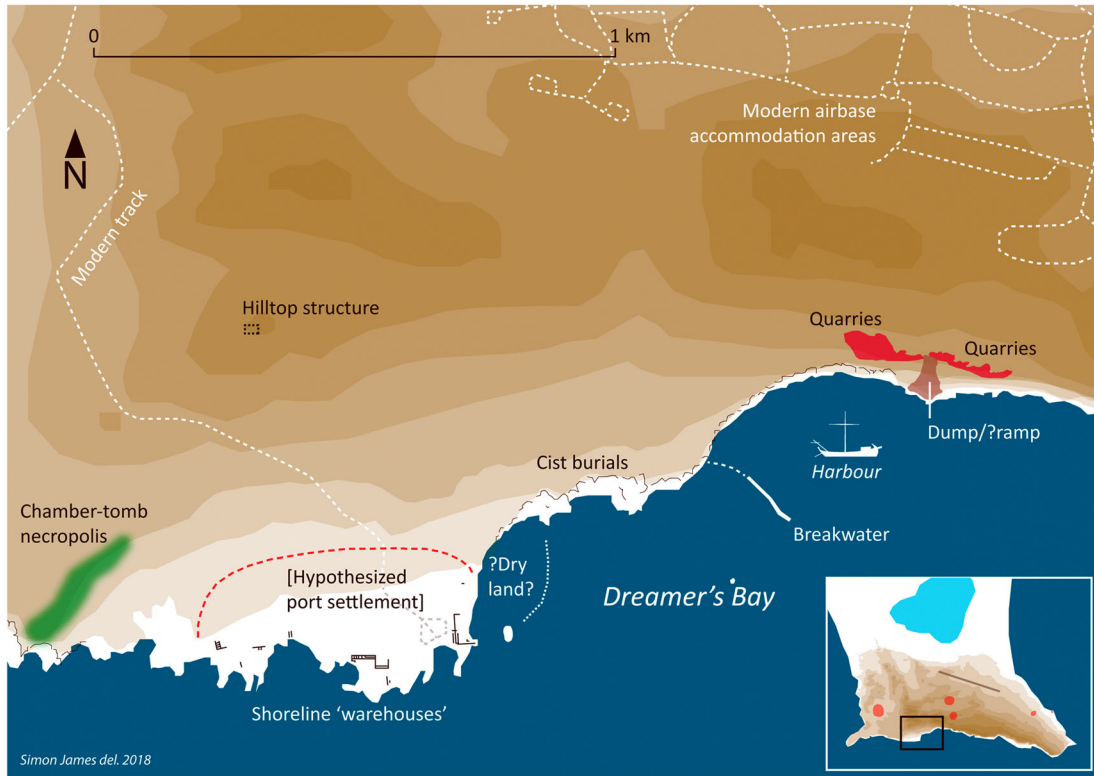
**Figure 1** Cyprus in the Greco-Roman era, showing the major cities and key topographical features including Cape Kourias (the Akrotiri peninsula) and the location of Dreamer's Bay. In brown, land over 400 m (Drawing by S. James).

source, the anonymous Greek *Stadiasmus of the Great Sea*, c. 3rd century AD, distinguishes *Kouriakon*, apparently Kourion, from *Karaia*, 'a promontory with a *limèn* [here best interpreted as sheltered

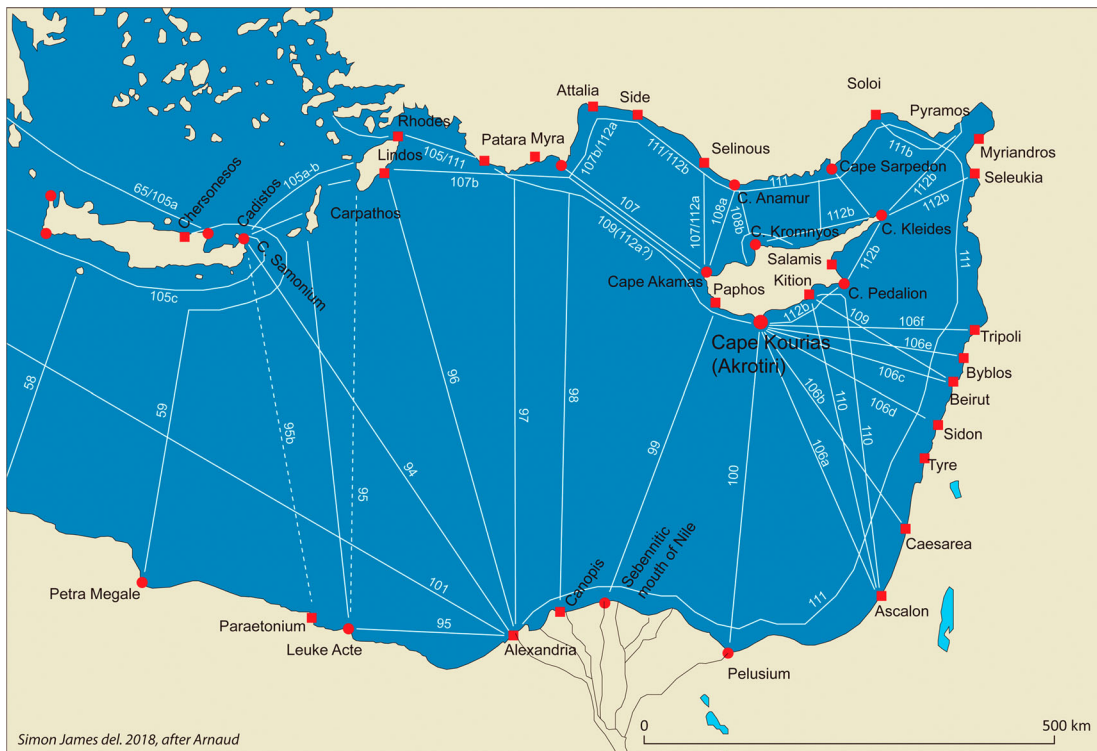
anchorage], a small *hormos* [connoting berthing place] and water' (*Stadiasmus* 303: with thanks to Pascal Arnaud for interpretation of this passage). There has also been uncertainty about whether



**Figure 2** Satellite imagery of Dreamer's Bay and the Akrotiri peninsula in relation to the Kouris River, ancient Kourion, and modern Limassol (Image © DigitalGlobe).



**Figure 3** Principal archaeological remains in and around Dreamer's Bay, Akrotiri. The Ancient Akrotiri Project has shown that the presumed 'port town', on the low ground behind the shoreline structures on left, did not in fact exist. Contours at 25-ft intervals (Drawing by S. James).



**Figure 4** The location of Cyprus in the Greco-Roman eastern Mediterranean, with attested ancient sea routes (Drawing by S. James, after Arnaud 2005: 212).



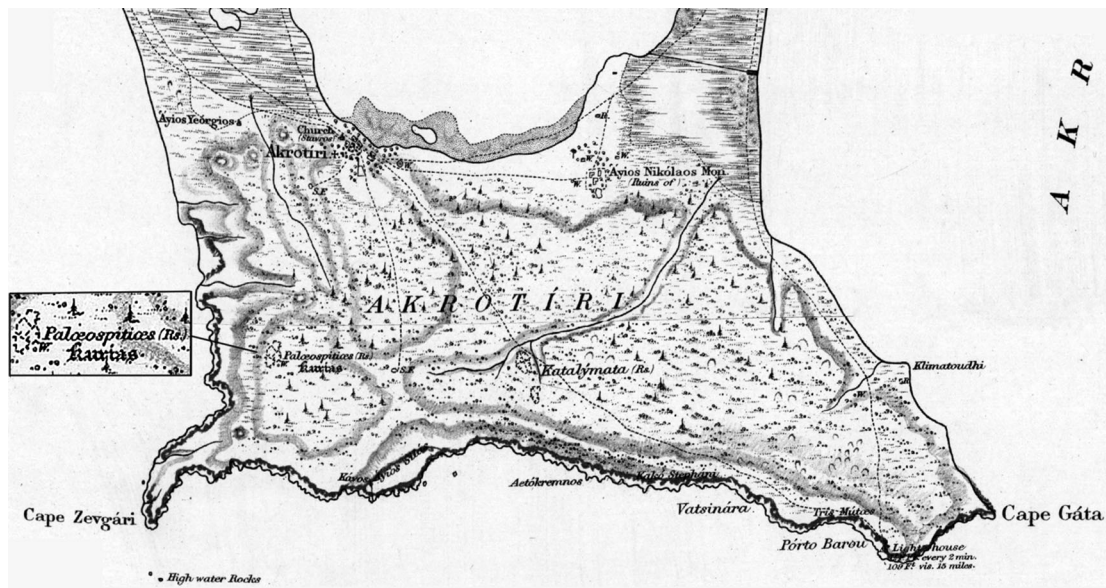


Figure 5 Detail of H. H. Kitchener’s 1885 mapping of Cyprus, labelling the ruined settlement now known as Katalymata ton Plakoton as ‘Kurias’.

Kourias was simply a geographical feature, or if it also denoted a specific town; Kitchener confidently labelled one of its ancient settlements as ‘Kourias’ in his map of Cyprus 1885, although this site is well inland (Fig. 5). How did the Dreamer’s Bay ‘port’ fit into this?

The terms ‘harbour’ and ‘port’ are often used as synonyms, but here we will follow Leidwanger (2013: 221, fn.1), a maritime archaeologist who has worked at Akrotiri, in using the convention that ‘harbour’ connotes ‘a place of shelter for ships; *spec.* where they may lie close to and sheltered by the shore or by works extended from it’ (the common understanding of the English term as expressed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*), while ‘port’ describes a place for the movement of people and exchange of goods between sea and land, the latter commonly taken to be commercial trade. ‘Ports’ are often imagined, from Classical to modern contexts, as equating to ‘port towns’; nucleated complexes combining harbour, warehousing, trading and customs facilities, maintenance installations with residential districts also offering a broad range of ‘service industries’ including hostelry and prostitution. However, port functions do not necessitate such a settlement: the *OED* defines a port as ‘A town or place possessing a harbour which boats use for loading or unloading’, (definition I.1.a, our emphasis).

Indeed, in the Classical Mediterranean when many sea-going vessels were relatively small, some argue that such places need not even possess a harbour; open beaches could suffice for port activities

(Horden and Purcell 2000: 391–93; Schörle 2011; Wilson *et al.* 2012: 380–83). Conversely, harbours need not be ports (e.g. naval bases), or have an adjacent residential settlement — although of course they need people living nearby to operate them. These distinctions and studies are important for the Dreamer’s Bay project. Increasingly interest in Roman period port and harbour studies has been moving away from the focus on monumental sites and emphasizing the need to look at how a range of non-urban locations along coastlines functioned and interacted together (e.g. Leidwanger 2018). This approach also emphasizes the integrated relationship between land and sea.

The English word ‘port’ derives from Latin *portus*, although Romans also used the Greek-derived figurative synonym *limen*, ‘threshold’ or (perhaps better as *limen* included the lintel of a doorway) ‘portal’; hence English ‘liminal’, ‘characterized by being on a boundary or threshold, esp. by being transitional or intermediate between two states, situations...’ (*OED*). To fully understand ports, then, we must pay equal attention to both terrestrial and maritime aspects. However, from the outset (Last 1954), surveys of Akrotiri have generally considered the archaeology as a collection of land sites, with the exception of Sollars (2005: 96–98) who recognized the importance of the maritime dimension, although he did not investigate it. Conversely, maritime archaeologists investigating Dreamer’s Bay and nearby remains were primarily interested in these as parts of wider studies of ancient Cypriot coastal sites and

maritime exchange systems (e.g. Leidwanger 2013; Leonard 2005). In short, **terrestrial and maritime archaeologists dealing with Akrotiri have tended to stop on their respective sides of the shoreline**, which remained the effective boundary set for maritime archaeology 40 years ago (Muckelroy 1978: 4–6). For this project, the approach has been that liminal locations like Dreamer’s Bay can only be understood by looking at both sides of the sea–land interface. This led to landscape-focused Leicester’s collaboration with the University of Southampton which specializes in maritime archaeology.

It was clear from the beginning just how profoundly the history of human presence on Akrotiri is intertwined with environmental processes. In the recent geological past, climatic change, sea-level rise and geological processes turned Akrotiri, first into a separate island, and then into a peninsula. These dramatic shifts, which have continued since the arrival of humans in Cyprus at least 12,000 years ago (first attested at *Aetokremmos*, c. 2 km east of Dreamer’s Bay: Simmons 2013; Swiny 2001), underline that we cannot understand the cultural past as something separate from the natural environment. Specifically, we cannot interpret the archaeology of Dreamer’s Bay without looking at evidence for past sea-level and patterns of erosion on this rocky coast, and not least establishing when the island became a peninsula. Closure of the sea channel between Akrotiri and Cyprus, opening of land access to the new peninsula, and formation of the Salt Lake, were all critical events in both the ecological and cultural histories of this poorly-watered block of land (Blue 1997). Geomorphology is, therefore, also fundamental to the project.

Due to the circumstances of its beginnings, the AAP started with something unavailable to previous investigators of Dreamer’s Bay because of military security restrictions (below): a general reconnaissance of Akrotiri’s archaeological landscape. This convinced the authors that Dreamer’s Bay could not be understood as a discrete ‘site’, but only in terms of human activity across the whole peninsula and its waters; hence the project name, and the desire to draw on, and build on, the concept of the ‘maritime cultural landscape’ originally developed by Westerdahl in the context of northern Scandinavia (Westerdahl 1992; 2011), but, as yet, not yet widely adapted for Mediterranean cases (although see e.g. Semaan *in press*). The AAP also draws on developments in ‘social archaeology’ as applied to ancient ports (e.g. Rogers 2011; 2013): who worked at Dreamer’s Bay, what did they do, where did they live? Examining all these facets in a holistic way

brings the physical aspects of land and sea together with the cultural and social.

September 2019 saw the effective completion of AAP fieldwork around Dreamer’s Bay; the AAP now aims to move on to a second phase of research on the wider peninsula. This, therefore, marks an appropriate moment to consider the implications of the work so far, for understanding ancient Akrotiri, Cyprus and beyond, and for shaping the objectives of the projected AAP Phase Two.

### Topographic and environmental setting, and modern political context of Dreamer’s Bay

The rocky tip of the Akrotiri peninsula comprises upthrust seabed strata, trending gently upwards from low northern beaches to an elevation of c. 60 m near the southern coast. The latter comprises very steep slopes and sheer drops up to c. 40 m, except for the area of low ground, c. 0.5 km long, west of cliff-bound Dreamer’s Bay. Here flat, or gently sloping land has a rocky shoreline only c. 4–5 m above current sea-level, with tiny inlets offering practicable access to and from the sea. The modern colloquial English place-name Dreamer’s Bay (origin unknown) is applied, not just to the small bay, but also to the low shoreline area (Fig. 6). To local Greek Cypriots the location is *Nissarouin*, ‘the little island’, after the islet beside the modern road-head (Figs 3, 7).

Today, except for the cultivated strip in the north, the rocky part of the peninsula remains covered with *batha* (thorny scrub: Sollars 2005: 12), or low woodland. Water supplies are sparse, depending largely on variable winter rainfall.

At times during the Ice Ages, rising sea-levels made Akrotiri an island off the southern coast of Cyprus. Over millions of years, floodwaters from Mount Troodos to the north carried vast quantities of rock down the Kouris Valley, which longshore drift shaped into an immense tombolo beach of large pebbles, growing southwards from the river mouth. This gradually closed the sea channel between Cyprus and the north-west corner of Akrotiri Island. A second, sandy tombolo (Ladies Mile) developed to the east, the two beaches now framing a salt lake; Akrotiri’s most famous feature due to the flamingos which frequent it (Polidorou 2019a; 2019b).

The evolution of the tombolos created a prominent headland on the southern Cypriot coast, between Episkopi Bay (dominated in Classical antiquity by the city of Kourion) and Akrotiri Bay (largely the territory of the next major coastal city, Amathous: Fig. 1). On the chronology of peninsula formation, see below.





**Figure 6** Dreamer's Bay, looking east across Structure 2 under excavation in 2018, towards the ancient harbour in the distance (Photo: AAP).



**Figure 7** Structure 2 under excavation in 2018, looking south-east to the adjacent islet which give the site its Greek name of *Nissarouin* (Photo: AAP).



Today westerly winds prevail for much of the year, a pattern unlikely to have changed significantly since antiquity (Arnaud 2005: 7–60; Berensford 2012; Blue 1997), and a fundamental factor in the local marine environment; they made the coast from Kourion to Akrotiri's Cape Zevgari (see below Fig. 20), a risky, though not impracticable, potential lee shore for sailing vessels.

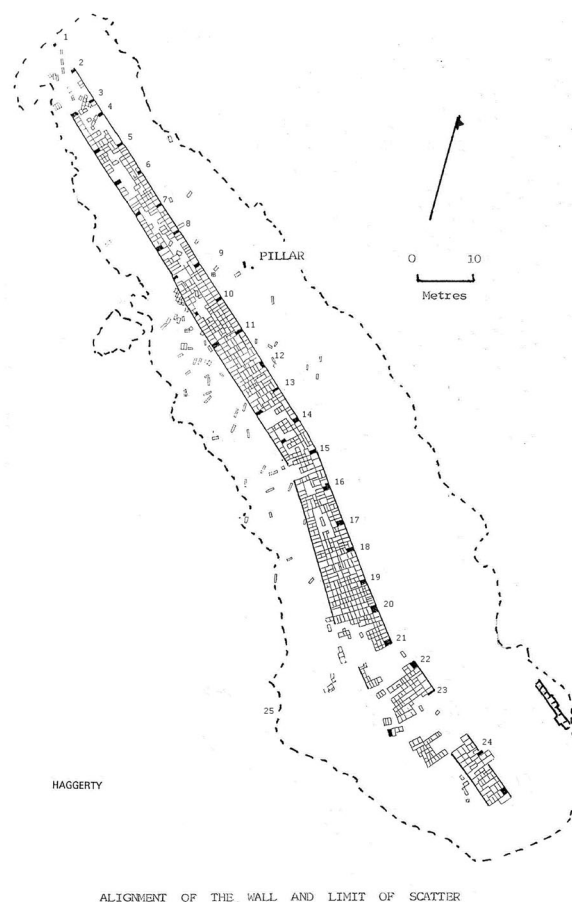
Paradoxically, the archaeological remains at Dreamer's Bay — and indeed its rich natural environment — survive well due to their fortuitous inclusion within the high-security military airbase of Royal Air Force Akrotiri, part of the UK's Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs), retained when Cyprus achieved independence from British rule in 1960 (Leonard 2005). The UK civil agency administering the SBAs is the Sovereign Base Areas Authority, which leases land to the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) for military purposes. Only military development is permitted within the SBAs, so the peninsula has escaped the rampant commercial development affecting so much of the nearby Cypriot coast. The SBAA has stewardship responsibilities for archaeological remains, which legally belong to the Republic of Cyprus. Heritage responsibilities were taken very seriously even before independence. Remarkably for the time, an archaeological survey of the peninsula was conducted before the airbase was built (Last 1954). This led to the avoidance of recorded monuments (subsequently scheduled, see Procopiou 2015: 185) when siting military facilities. However, the remains of the ancient maritime infrastructure on the southern coast were not noticed for another quarter century.

### Previous research and interpretation of Dreamer's Bay

Various terrestrial and marine surveys examined Dreamer's Bay between 1968 and 1990, mostly small scale, or as parts of larger exercises, professional or avocational (notably by Francis Haggerty as a serving RAF officer, and by the Western Sovereign Base Area Archaeological Society chaired by Major Frank Garrod (ret.) and others). These were followed by academic projects by Justin Leidwanger, and especially by the Akrotiri-Dreamer's Bay Ancient Port Project (A-DBAPP). This survey project began in 2006, but the tragic death of project leader Danielle Parks in 2007, plus funding difficulties, prevented further progress (Ault 2010; Leonard 2008: 135–37; Leonard *et al.* 2006). We are, however, grateful for permission from John Leonard and Brad Ault to cite a draft paper, from the proceedings of a 2009 conference still unpublished, setting out the state of

knowledge and interpretation at Dreamer's Bay when the AAP was beginning (Ault and Leonard *forthcoming*). This and other publications and unpublished documentation interpreted the Dreamer's Bay remains as comprising:

- an artificial breakwater defining a small harbour containing ancient anchors, amphorae, etc., in a bay surrounded/backed by cliffs (Brian Richards pers. comm.; Department of Antiquities, CADiP record 3190; Nic Flemming pers. comm.; Haggerty 1990; and see Figs 3 and 8)
- stone quarries overlooking the harbour (Leonard *et al.* 2006; and see Figs 3 and 9)
- west of the harbour, on the only area of low shoreline of Akrotiri's otherwise cliff-bound southern coast, stone structures identified as warehouses, associated with concentrations consisting overwhelmingly of Late Antique pottery (Heywood 1982: 167)
- a substantial port town, up to 10 ha in size, postulated on the slightly sloping ground behind the shoreline warehouses (Leonard and Demesticha 2004: 190–92, 202; Parks 1999: 54–57)



**Figure 8** Plan of the Dreamer's Bay masonry breakwater, surveyed by Francis Haggerty (Haggerty 1990; reproduced with his kind permission).





**Figure 9** Top L: central part of the Dreamer's Bay quarry zone from the south, showing the 'dog-tooth' quarry face and, at centre, the huge dump of reddish sand, excavated to expose the conglomerate deposits, and possibly used as a ramp to slide quarried blocks down to the harbour. R: a conglomerate quarry above Dreamer's Bay, which produced squared blocks (leaving the 'dog-tooth' face in the background) and circular millstones (foreground: scale 150 mm). Lower L: a view east along the water channel, reportedly containing a ceramic pipe, running through the quarried zone on top of the cliffs. The arrow marks its traced course (Photos: AAP).

- coastal cemeteries east of the bay and west of the warehouse/town site, assumed to attest the settlement's population (Parks 1999: 54–57)
- substantial masonry constructions on the hilltop overlooking the warehouses and putative urban area (Leonard *et al.* 2007), for which 'an administrative, residential, or ecclesiastical function seem likely' (Ault and Leonard *forthcoming*)

Dreamer's Bay has been seen, then, as a fully-fledged ancient 'port town', even as the second-most important urban centre in the territory of the city of Kourion, on the coast 13 km to the north (Parks 1999: 54–57). This may have become Kourion's 'primary port' following a great earthquake in the 360s which, possibly, destroyed the port below the city itself (Leonard and Demesticha 2004: 202, fn.66). Dreamer's Bay 'appears to have served in the main as a port and maritime trans-shipment point, a cabotage, likely associated with nearby [Kourion]' (Ault and Leonard *forthcoming*). Leidwanger agreed Dreamer's Bay was 'a commercial harbour for

Kourion', but questioned whether it entirely replaced Kourion's facilities after the earthquake (Leidwanger 2005: 38–41). All this would make Dreamer's Bay one of many port towns across a highly urbanized Graeco-Roman eastern Mediterranean networked by busy sea-lanes.

Leidwanger also examined its peninsular context, noting other apparently contemporaneous inland nucleated settlements (Leidwanger 2005: 42, 133, 187), which Leonard also considered (2005: 541). These 'village' sites (see below Fig. 20) remain largely unexplored, except for Eleni Procopiou's excavations of the massive, but apparently short-lived, Byzantine ecclesiastical complex at Katalymata ton Plakoton (Procopiou 2014; 2015). This was embellished with rich materials including glass and marbles imported from overseas. Leidwanger further highlighted the possibility of ancient maritime activity on other parts of Akrotiri's coast. He postulated maritime exchange, serving the settlement at Katalymata ton Plakoton, via the inlets on the rocky western

shore (Leidwanger 2005: 133, 187) a notion later developed as ‘opportunistic ports’ (Leidwanger 2013) and mooted, but did not locate, another potential ‘port’ on Akrotiri’s eastern coast (Leidwanger 2005: 42). Further consideration of the wider context of Dreamer’s Bay was, however, hindered by limited security access within the airbase.

Hitherto, Dreamer’s Bay has been generally treated as a self-contained archaeological ‘site’, distinct from others, though potentially related to them in unclear ways. Our own work challenges almost every aspect of this — the archaeological features of Dreamer’s Bay were rather subordinate components of wider networks at local, regional and ‘global’ scales.

### Thinking about Ancient Mediterranean ports and connectivity

There has been a great deal of literature on the concept of connectivity and relationships between coastal sites. Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s book *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Horden and Purcell 2000) was influential in developing the idea of the ‘maritime façade’ which drew on the phrase ‘*ora maritima*’ used by Livy (9.41.3), referring to the concept of the coastline of the Mediterranean as a unified whole. Looking at Rome, they argued that it was simplistic to identify a singular port of Rome, namely Ostia or Portus, not only because of the complex geography of the coast and the history of the development of ports and harbours in the area, but also because of the nature of supply to Rome and the movement of goods around the Mediterranean. Horden and Purcell’s approach is very much from the Roman elite perspective on how they saw the Mediterranean; however, concepts of the maritime façade and connectivity have encouraged the need to look at the relationship between sites and how and if they worked together. This has seen the development of the study of port hierarchies, and the ways in which activities adapted to the difficult terrain of the coastline (eastern Mediterranean: Blue 1997; Tyrrhenian Coast of Italy: Schörle 2011). Larger ships were not able to dock everywhere along the coast and so had to rely on major port sites. This created a hierarchy of sites between which smaller boats could travel to redistribute goods. The relationship between large port and harbour sites, and smaller locations along coastlines, has been central to many studies of patterns of trade, including Andrew Wilson’s model of ‘short-distance trade’ (Wilson 2011).

The need to place sites within their wider landscape and temporal context is also indicated by the model of

‘opportunistic’ ports, developed by Justin Leidwanger for the study of ports along the coast of Cyprus (Leidwanger 2013). His survey work along the west coast of the island built on a long tradition of coastal archaeological survey work around the island, with a recognition of the need to document the range of different sites including anchorages, natural harbours, coves, and constructed features (see e.g. Leonard 1995). Recently Leidwanger has further developed his thinking on such secondary or opportunistic places away from major coastal cities, which were probably about a range of functions separate from (or even instead of) the economic exchange which is commonly focused on, such as overnight halts for shipping in transit, or for local exploitation of fisheries; he therefore neutrally terms them ‘coastal landing sites’ (Leidwanger 2018: 221).

The AAP seeks to examine how separate sites on and around Akrotiri can be interpreted together in an integrated way that emphasizes local experiences as well as connections with the eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

### Dreamer’s Bay and the Ancient Akrotiri Project

Renewed research on Dreamer’s Bay and its environs by the AAP has been conducted as a five-year programme led by the University of Leicester. It is a collaborative partnership with specialists from the Universities of Southampton (maritime archaeology and geomorphology), Cyprus (especially ceramics) and Athens (geology), and with key local stakeholders, notably UK Ministry of Defence (not least, RAF Akrotiri), the Republic of Cyprus Department of Antiquities, the joint UK/RoC Akrotiri Environmental Education Centre (AEEC) and the Western Sovereign Base Areas Archaeological Society (WSBAAS).

The project arose from a fortunate convergence of circumstances around 2014. MOD official David West, concerned at the erosion of the apparently Roman/Byzantine shoreline remains at Dreamer’s Bay highlighted by A-DBAPP, initiated discussions leading to a scheme to explore and document the archaeology to inform heritage management. Overseen by MOD archaeologist Philip Abramson, this was to involve existing partners working on another UK Defence Estate Roman-era archaeological project involving SJ (Chapman 2018). As a Roman specialist with experience of working in the Levant, SJ was to lead the fieldwork team.

Exploratory survey and excavation were undertaken by SJ and a team of volunteer field archaeologists from University of Leicester Archaeological





Figure 10 Courtyard wall south of Structure 5 under excavation in 2016. Part has been lost to the sea (Photo: AAP).



Figure 11 The structural complex on the hill behind the shoreline structures, under excavation in 2017, with Cape Zevgari in the distance. It enjoyed a spectacular view, and was of some pretension, with wall plaster and gypsum floor slabs. Bottom left and inset, the enigmatic half-round masonry structure: base of a beacon? (Photos: AAP).



Services (ULAS) in September 2015 (James and Score 2015). This initial ‘rescue archaeology’ foray provided the almost literal beachhead for a broader research initiative seeking to understand, not just ancient Dreamer’s Bay, but also its wider peninsular context: hence the name ‘Ancient Akrotiri Project, Cyprus’ (specified to distinguish it from the Bronze Age town of Akrotiri on Santorini, Greece: Fig. 10). This academic objective would also further inform UK MOD cultural heritage management on the peninsula, and would, therefore, be of mutual benefit.

SJ invited VS of ULAS to be onshore field director of the project. Landlocked Leicester having no maritime archaeology programme, SJ approached the UK’s leading centre for underwater expertise, the University of Southampton, resulting in research partnership with LB, who had prior knowledge of Cypriot waters. The new project would differ from previous efforts in being broader in objectives, and in being able to excavate. The other vital new dimension was contextual geomorphological research, initially undertaken by Ferréol Salomon, also then of Southampton (Salomon *et al.* 2015), and subsequently, Athens PhD candidate, Miltiadis Polidorou. Crucially, Professor Stella Demesticha, of the University of Cyprus, also kindly joined the project to analyse the pottery. The AAP additionally includes a substantial integrated outreach programme engaging with both UK and Cypriot communities.

Larger expeditions of onshore archaeological survey and excavation, staffed by ULAS volunteers, students and military personnel, followed annually from 2016 to 2019 (James and Score 2016; 2017; 2018; James *et al.* 2018; 2019). In parallel, coastal geomorphological survey and coring in the Salt Lake were conducted to examine sea-level change (Salomon and Blue 2016). Underwater archaeological surveys and targeted artefact collection were conducted in and around Dreamer’s Bay harbour in 2018 and 2019 (Blue 2019; 2021). The project was generously supported by the CBRL (2016) and then primarily by the Honor Frost Foundation and UK Ministry of Defence (2017–19).

### The phantom town of Dreamer’s Bay

The new research fundamentally challenges previous understandings of the extent, nature, sequence, chronology, connections and probable purposes of the archaeological remains at Dreamer’s Bay. The key findings relate to the shoreline buildings, the hilltop complex and the putative port town between them.

The ancient structures on the hilltop, overlooking the presumed town and shoreline warehouses

(Fig. 11), have produced some stratified LR1 amphora fragments and a Byzantine buckle-plate (Fig. 12), suggesting use into the 5th and 6th centuries, or later. The remains represent a multi-phase complex, which may have had a long history, occupying the crest, with rubble piles indicating it extended for 30 m down the seaward hillslope (Fig. 13). It was, apparently, not ecclesiastical; its function remains uncertain, although probabilities are discussed below.

Surface inspection, excavation and geophysical survey reveal that the structures initially identified as warehouses along the low shoreline west of the harbour were larger, more complex and more extensive than hitherto realized (Figs 6, 7, 14, 15). They sprawled along the entire half kilometre of low ground west of Dreamer’s Bay itself, and shared strong mutual similarities in construction and layout, with stone-foundations probably supporting mudbrick superstructures. At least some had ceramic tile roofing. The ‘double’ or ‘lengthwise-subdivided warehouses’ previously claimed (e.g. Ault and Leonard *forthcoming*; Leonard *et al.* 2006) were,



Figure 12 A copper alloy military buckle-plate of 6th–7th-century Byzantine type from the hilltop, indicating military use of the observation/landmark complex towards the end of its life (Photo: AAP).

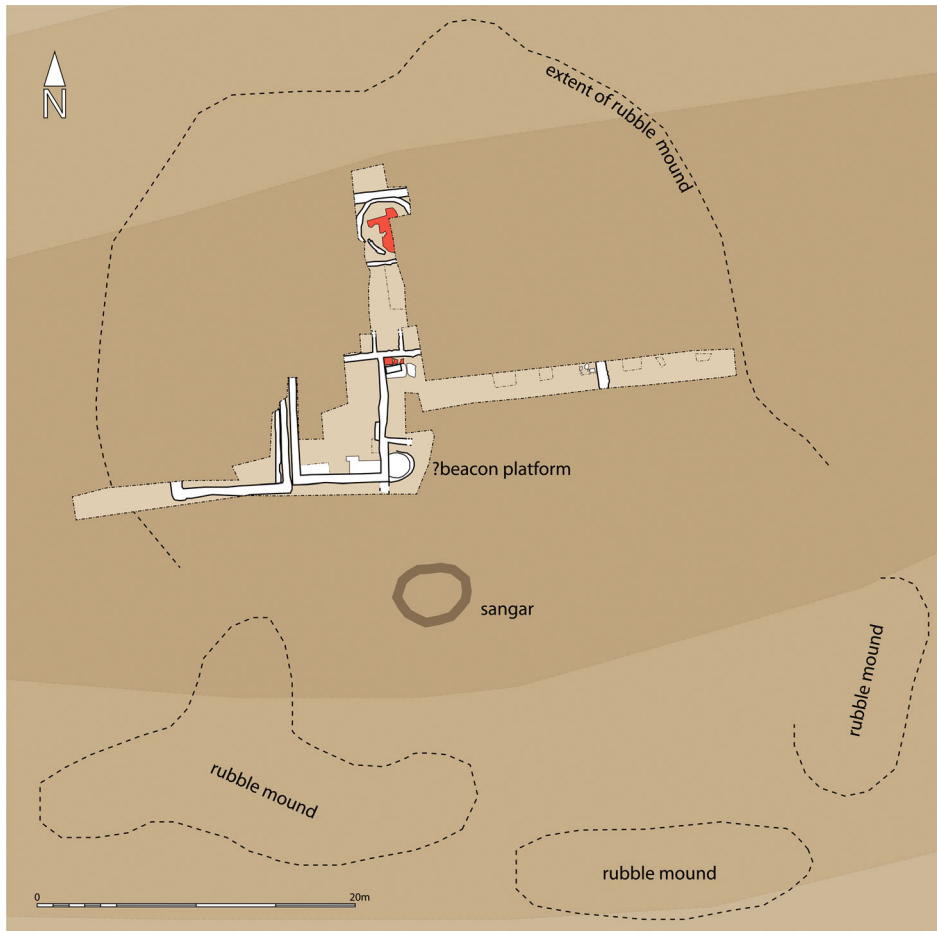


Figure 13 The hilltop complex (Area 7) with one of the modern sangars (entrenched firing positions from military training). Digging of another in the 1980s revealed the large room adjoining the Fig. 11 possible beacon platform (Drawing by S. James).

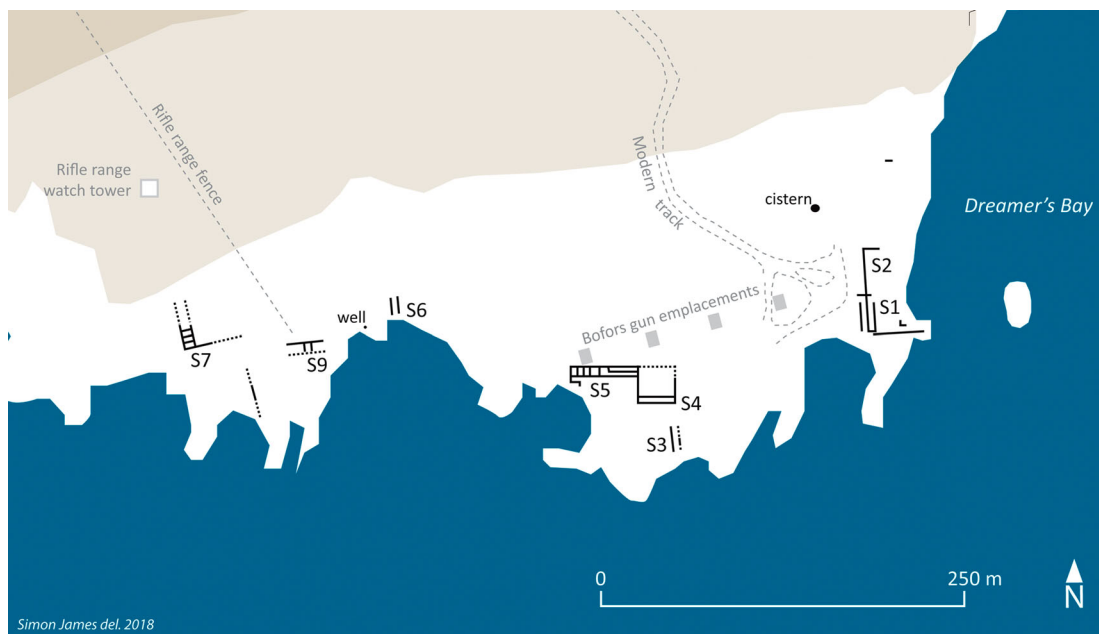


Figure 14 The arrangement of shoreline building and courtyard complexes stretching for half a kilometre along the low ground to the west of Dreamer's Bay. Contours at 25-ft intervals (Drawing by S. James).

rather, single, long, narrow, rectangular structures, *c.* 4.4–6.5 m wide and up to *c.* 50 m in length. Walled courtyards surrounded or abutted them, with areas of burning probably attesting industrial activities. At least some buildings were internally divided into multiple cells (Fig. 15). The buildings and courtyards were not only strictly orthogonal, but shared a fairly consistent alignment, which is striking given the irregularity of the shoreline along which they lay. We will return to the implications of these commonalities.

Especially significant discoveries regarding the shoreline zone relate to the sequence and chronology of the shoreline buildings and associated pottery concentrations. Hitherto, on the basis of the ceramics over and around them, the structures have been seen as 5th–6th century (Leidwanger 2013; Leonard and Demesticha 2004). However, strikingly, not a single sherd of Late Roman 1 amphora has yet been identified among the stratified material from any of the buildings, even though LR1 fragments are plentiful on the surface (Stella Demesticha, pers. comm.). The building deposits were, therefore, sealed before LR1 appeared, perhaps around the end of the 4th century. Indeed, the stratified ceramics suggest that the buildings were in use in the 3rd century, and were probably laid out and constructed as early as the 2nd century

AD, at a place which occasional Hellenistic sherds suggest was already a long-established landing place.

At least some of the shoreside structures appear to have been destroyed by an earthquake, most clearly evident from Structure 5, where the internal dividing walls had all fallen westwards onto the contents of rooms clearly then in use. It was not rebuilt, leaving intact its contents which comprised amphorae and used cooking pots. To the east, Structure 2 appears to have suffered similar destruction. The event which flattened the buildings was very likely the same mid-4th century event which devastated Kourion; there are striking similarities between the pottery from Structure 5 and the Kourion ‘earthquake house’ ceramic deposit (Costello 2014). Most of the Dreamer’s Bay buildings were apparently abandoned after this episode. Only Structure 2, perhaps significantly that nearest to the bay, was replaced by a new building used for a further period before it, too, was abandoned or destroyed (Fig. 6). However, that also appears to have been demolished and sealed before LR1 amphorae became current. The extensive surface spreads of later ceramics indicate that the shoreline continued to be used for exchange and trading purposes during the 5th and 6th centuries, although without evidence of permanent structures.



Figure 15 Western end of Structure 5 under excavation in 2017 (North to the right). In the right foreground, modern defence archaeology: one of the concrete gun platforms. Inset, photogrammetry (Photo: AAP).





Figure 16 Amphorae, cooking pots and other vessels under excavation in structure 5 (Photos: AAP).

Rather than simply being a Late Antique phenomenon, it is clear that the Dreamer’s Bay shoreline was intensively used for communication between land and sea for centuries prior to this, being active for about half a millennium. What of the activities undertaken here?

Stratified finds from the buildings are indeed consistent with their use as warehouses for, for example, storage of transport amphorae (Fig. 16). Trading and exchange activities are corroborated by a small weight (Fig. 17). The ceramic concentrations overlying them, apparently primarily comprising amphorae, are consistent with these processes continuing after the buildings were destroyed. However, copper alloy nails and a probable sail-maker’s needle recovered from the buildings, perhaps together with the burned areas mentioned above, also suggest maintenance of shipping. The buildings may, therefore, always have been multi-functional, serving not just for transshipment of goods, but also as workshops and stores for carpenters, smiths and sailmakers, locally resident or members of ships’ companies. They could also have stored the supplies and victuals needed by visiting mariners.

The apparent earthquake deposit in Structure 5 produced used cooking pots, which, if not brought onshore from ships, indicate that people were, at

least, eating meals here. These highlight however, what is otherwise a dearth of the routine domestic material within and around the shoreline buildings — personal items, accumulated food debris, etc — to be expected if anyone was living long-term in these structures. The buildings and courtyards may, then, have provided spaces for overnighting ship’s companies to cook, eat and sleep ashore, and as caravanserais for drivers and pack animals bringing goods to the sea, or collecting them for inland distribution.

Especially important is clarification of the landward extent of the Dreamer’s Bay buildings. The shoreline structures had previously been presumed to form the seaward façade of a more substantial ‘port town’ to their north. However, beyond a few ephemeral features, trenching and geophysical survey have found no evidence of significant additional occupation landward of the known structures (Fig. 18). Behind the shoreline zone there are no further wall foundations, surface scatters of building debris, or, of ceramics, or other cultural material beyond the thin background pottery scatter seen across most of the peninsula, possibly the result of manuring. This is in marked contrast both to the shoreline remains, and also to the





Figure 17 Metal artefacts from the shoreline structures, including copper alloy nails probably from ships or boats, a probable sailmaker's needle (bottom), and a small weight bearing a *chi-rho* monogram, fused to an iron nail. Scale 50 mm (Photos: AAP).

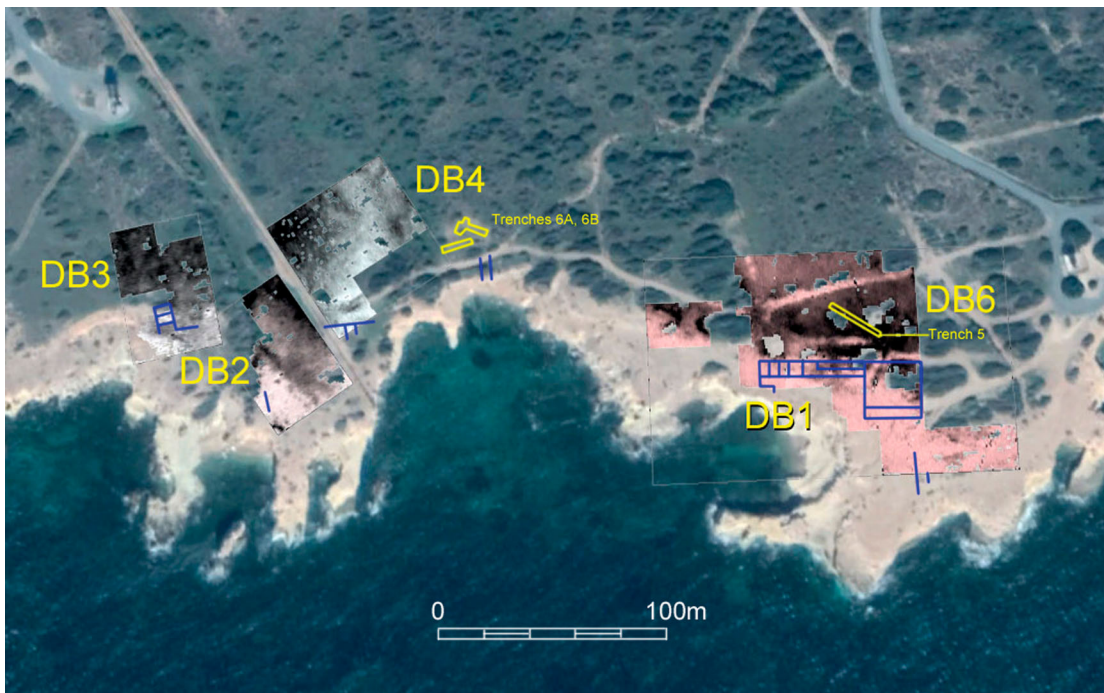
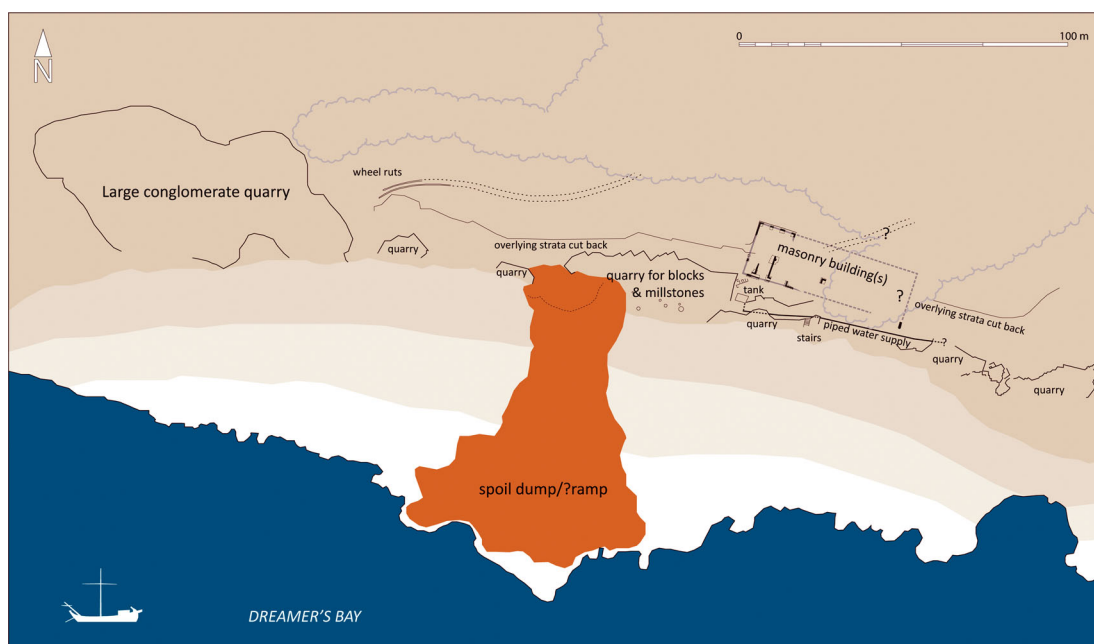


Figure 18 Neither trenching nor geophysical survey (in this case resistivity, especially survey areas DB4 and DB6) identified any trace of the postulated residential town behind the shoreline warehouse complexes at Dreamer's Bay (Base imagery © Google Earth).



**Figure 19** The quarry complex overlooking Dreamer's Bay, with the massive dump/ramp of sand and conglomerate tailings down the scarp to the water's edge by the protected harbour. The eastern part of the quarry zone was subsequently used for a Roman-era building complex with a pressurized water supply (Drawing by S. James).

characteristics of the other known ancient settlements on Akrotiri, which comprise unmistakable low 'tells', c.1–8 m high, their surfaces scattered with stone rubble, pottery, tile, and occasional intact wall lines and architectural fragments. The 'disappearance' of the presumed urban settlement at Dreamer's Bay changes the archaeological picture completely.

### Quarries and harbour

The complex of quarries above the bay (Figs 3 and 9) exploited deposits of conglomerate of varied composition, from very hard to friable, the latter probably valued as aggregate for plaster and concrete, as widely seen at Kourion. Curved grooves in the quarries indicate harder material was used to make millstones. A heavily-rutted track led inland from the quarries, the stone of which is likely to have been a major resource for the peninsula's settlements. The quarries also overlook the harbour. The breakwater could have protected vessels coming close inshore to load stone products. At the time of writing, however, the chronologies of both breakwater and quarrying remain uncertain, although much of the latter is probably Roman to Late Antique, when the breakwater is thought to have existed.

The quarried area also included hydraulic installations first recorded by Haggerty (Fig. 9), probably associated with newly identified stone structures

(Fig. 19) representing a Roman-era building complex, administrative and/or residential, which postdates some of the quarrying activity, and itself appears to be post-dated by more.

2018 and 2019 saw September campaigns of underwater fieldwork, involving new surveys of the breakwater, coring around it, and a general survey of the seafloor in and around the harbour area. This produced a detailed record of previously reported and newly discovered stone anchors, ceramics and imported stone columns, now interpreted as attesting a shipwreck of 6th–7th century date to the east of the breakwater (Blue 2019; 2021).

### Geomorphology: peninsula formation

One of the most important conclusions arising from the project collaborations comes from research, conducted by Salomon (Salomon and Blue 2016; 2018; Salomon *et al.* 2015) and Polidorou (2019a; 2019b), on the geomorphological context of Dreamer's Bay harbour and the wider peninsula. As Dreamer's Bay is an eroding shoreline, assessing things like contemporary sea level in the ancient harbour had to be approached indirectly; in part through coring deposits in the Salt Lake on the north side of the former island. Such work could also, potentially, answer the far more fundamental question of when Akrotiri ceased to be an offshore island separated by a sea channel, potentially allowing coastal shipping to pass easily



between the Kourion and Amathous areas, and when it became a peninsula, thereby closing any such route. The details remain to be formally published, but new dating has firmly established that the western tombolo is far older than hitherto realized, existing before the start of the Holocene (Polidorou 2019a; 2019b). By the time Kourion developed there was no sea channel between Cyprus and Akrotiri — coastwise shipping always had to weather the peninsula, past Dreamer's Bay. Indeed, it seems that the eastern tombolo had also formed before the Bronze Age, and the Salt Lake environment was evolving. This is a key result, with wide relevance for the human and environmental history of the Akrotiri peninsula, and of southern Cyprus.

### A new emergent picture of ancient Dreamer's Bay and Akrotiri

Work continues on the new body of data from Dreamer's Bay. We can, however, already offer a new hypothesis regarding the history of the area.

Firstly, Dreamer's Bay was never the integrated, nucleated port town envisaged by some earlier investigators. The inferred residential district behind the 'warehouses' did not exist: rather the shoreline structures were multi-functional industrial and economic facilities. Where, then, did littoral workers, local boat crews, pack-animal drivers and others live? The obvious candidates are the contemporaneous settlements roughly 20 minutes' walk inland — underlining that Dreamer's Bay cannot be understood in isolation (below).

Then there are the fundamental questions, what were the maritime facilities for, and how did they work? We have several pieces of evidence: the artificially-constructed breakwater in the bay itself; the quarries on the cliffs above the harbour attesting exploitation of conglomerate deposits, much production presumably being exported by sea; imported amphorae and a bronze weight from the low shoreline west of the bay, indicating trade; apparent boat nails, a sailmaker's needle, and the burnt areas around the shoreline buildings suggesting repair and maintenance of vessels. But how did all this fit together? Details of local topography, and prevailing weather and sea conditions, probably little changed since Antiquity, pose some interesting questions.

Most notably, the low south-facing shore lined with building compounds and ceramic concentrations is separated from the harbour by c. 600 m of shallow water; some of the structures are more than a kilometre from the anchorage. While part of the intervening area may still have been land when the harbour

was in use (Fig. 3), the eastern half is bounded by sheer, actively eroding cliffs, suggesting that there cannot have been a water's-edge road linking the buildings and ceramic concentrations on the low ground with the breakwater, thereby allowing the latter to be a jetty or quay. Any communication between harbour and western shoreline facilities must, it seems, have been by boat.

But boats unloading goods from ships in the harbour would have had a long row to reach the shoreline landing area, potentially against prevailing seas and winds; if equipped with sails, they would have had to tack well out to sea and back. This is clearly physically possible, but underlines the fact that the conformation of the area is less than ideal for a port. It also raises the question of why the compounds were stretched out in a linear arrangement, and not grouped closer to the harbour. The observed plan suggests that each had its own landing/embarking place, perhaps artificially enhanced through quarrying the soft strata, facilities since eroded by the sea.

There are other considerations: the harbour is really quite poor, and still relatively exposed to south-westerly winds and seas, even with the artificial breakwater, a fact which has puzzled experienced maritime commentators (Leidwanger 2005: 47, 120, 122; Stella Demesticha and Nic Flemming pers. comms.).

It is hypothesized that the artificial breakwater in the bay was built, not primarily to serve vessels engaging in trade enacted on the low ground to the west, but mainly to facilitate exploitation of the mineral resources on the cliffs above. This was a major industrial undertaking, which involved shifting thousands of tons of overlying deposits, and, apparently, some engineering, in order to move products down the scarp and onto ships — i.e. technical expertise, organization and investment commensurate with that needed to create the breakwater: a structure that may be best explained as a measure to help vessels more safely operate close inshore, when loading stone from the bottom of the great dump of quarry tailings or 'ramp'. On this interpretation, Dreamer's Bay breakwater was created to form an industrial harbour serving the quarries.

The low shoreline to the west apparently served quite different purposes. A scatter of Hellenistic sherds indicates that it had been used as a landing place for centuries. In Roman Imperial times it was lined with building compounds, while the ceramics overlying them attest to continued Late Roman/Early Byzantine activity after the compounds were destroyed; suggesting sustained use over several

centuries. Imported amphorae indicate maritime trade was enacted in this zone, although the scale remains unclear. However, although a search of the sea floor has not yet located evidence such as anchors, perhaps at least some of the sea-going ships calling here to trade — or for other purposes which may actually have been more important (below) — did not use the limited shelter of the breakwater at all, but simply anchored off the low shoreline, where the waters were of a suitable depth (the 20 m isobath runs about half a kilometre offshore). This would reduce transshipment distances between vessels and shoreline to a few hundred metres. While ships anchored in this area were exposed to the weather, if westerly or south-westerly winds and swell developed, they had sea-room to weigh anchor and run to the south-east clear of the rocky coast. In the middle months of the year at Dreamer's Bay today, there are light breezes or calms with little swell for much of the diurnal cycle. To be sure, with a standing risk of storms even the cliff-bound harbour of Dreamer's Bay was no place to sojourn for any length of time, yet there are good reasons why large numbers of ships might have chosen — or been obliged — to make brief calls here.

As we have seen (Fig. 4), established long-distance sailing routes meant many ships converged on Akrotiri, even if they had no trading interests in the area. Cape Kourias was a major crossroads in the seaways of the eastern Mediterranean, a great promontory which Cypriot coastal shipping had to weather, while those on longer-distance voyages used it as landfall or point of departure for high-seas sailing. Dreamer's Bay may, then, have been ideally located as a routine port-of-call, typically for a few hours or at most overnight, to allow ships on 'blue-water' voyages between Cyprus and the Levant or Egypt to replenish food and water stocks. It could also allow their crews to have a run ashore, to cook, with many sleeping near their vessels, for example, in the courtyard complexes. It further provided an opportunity to undertake some of the minor repairs which wooden ships regularly required.

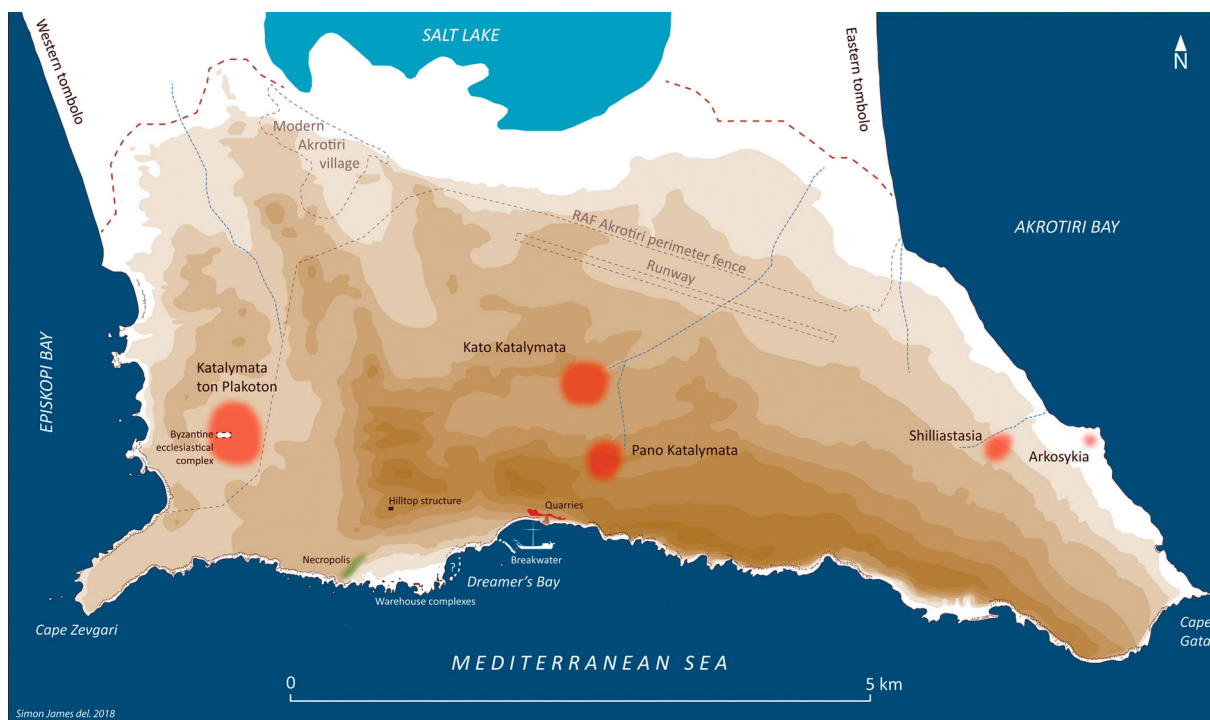
But why were there multiple separate shoreline compounds in Roman times? Was this extensive capacity created to handle the needs of vessels arriving in rapid succession, or perhaps even sailing in company? Each might have handled the needs of a separate ship, providing a controlled and monitored environment for handling goods and customs requirements, and accounting for mariners, passengers and marine supplies. We will return to matters of organization and operation.

We can also refine potential explanations for the hilltop structure north of the western shoreline. This point has a spectacular view, north to Kourion, north-west towards Paphos, west to Cape Zevgari and round to the south-east — i.e. the arc of approach to Akrotiri and Episkopi Bay for shipping sailing on or beating into the prevailing westerlies. The hilltop was certainly occupied for a prolonged period in Late Antiquity, and perhaps earlier, and was ideally sited for lookouts to alert port workers, traders and customs officials of approaching ships. A prominent building on this ridge top would also offer a valuable landmark for mariners seeking Dreamer's Bay. It may even have operated a beacon at night: this might explain a curious semi-cylindrical feature within the complex, perhaps a small tower supporting a beacon platform (Fig. 11: cf. Morton 2001: 211–14; Wilson 2011: 45–46).

### Dreamer's Bay and Akrotiri as an integrated maritime cultural landscape

The archaeological remains at Dreamer's Bay did not, then, constitute a 'port town', but rather comprised a harbour probably primarily servicing adjacent stone quarries with, to the west, an area serving partly as a trading port, but perhaps for a long period primarily constituting a watering and victualling station, and light repair stop, for high-seas shipping. Provision of these and other maritime 'service industries' potentially formed a major part of the peninsula's economy for centuries; perhaps locally much more important than trade in maritime goods such as oil and wine.

Dreamer's Bay was, therefore, an industrial/commercial complex, a place of work for scores of people, at least when ships called. But, except for night watchmen and visiting mariners, apparently nobody actually overnights at Dreamer's Bay. While not directly visible from Dreamer's Bay, the settlements at Pano Katalymata, Kato Katalymata and Katalymata ton Plakoton, from surface indications of Roman-Early Byzantine date, lay within a couple of kilometres of the coastal infrastructure (Fig. 20). These are the presumptive places of residence for the Dreamer's Bay workforce: warehousemen, stevedores, lightermen, ship's chandlers, carpenters and sailmakers, smiths, muleteers, probably locally based mariners, plus fishermen exploiting the inshore waters, as well as the workers from the cliff-top quarries. For visiting seamen, the settlements were also likely to have been the location of other expected amenities of any port, from sanctuaries for religious observances, polytheistic or



**Figure 20** Topography of the rocky former island forming the end of the Akrotiri peninsula, with known ancient settlement sites in red, and water courses taken from Kitchener's map (Kitchener 1885). The extent of the RAF airbase and of the modern village of Akrotiri are outlined. Dreamer's Bay maritime complex was within easy walking distance of three apparently contemporaneous settlement sites. Contours at 25-ft intervals (Drawing by S. James).

Christian, of those facing the dangers of the seas, to accommodation, hostleries and other inevitable 'service industries' such as prostitution. Not only did many people from the villages work by the sea; they were also laid to rest in coastal cemeteries, comprising chamber tombs of Hellenistic/Roman type and later individual cist graves, running from the high ground west of the Dreamer's Bay's shoreline compounds to the southern cliffs far to the east of the harbour (Heywood 1982: 169; surveyed but not published by Haggerty).

Yet including the nearby settlements and cemeteries is still only part of the picture. As we saw there is evidence indicating ancient activity on other stretches of Akrotiri's littoral. Finds on the western coast led Leidwanger to suggest that, even on this rocky lee shore, favourable weather could have seen 'opportunistic port' activities, though whether this was commercial trade or smuggling may have been a matter of perspective. Potentially more substantial and regular maritime activities may have taken place on the eastern shoreline north of Cape Gata, another area of low rocky shore and shallow waters, and generally sheltered from the winds and swell except during the relatively rare easterlies of winter months. On a small headland of Arkosykia there is ceramic evidence of

Roman-era activity of otherwise unknown nature and extent. North of this, early in 2019, ancient stone wall footings were identified, consistent with the possibility of another shoreline complex similar to Dreamer's Bay, suggesting a second 'port' site, on a low shoreline where ships could, perhaps, have been beached for hull repairs, or laid up for the winter. It may well be no accident that Akrotiri's fourth substantial settlement, Shilliasia, lay close to this area (Fig. 20). Maritime activities, then, likely took place on three sides of the rocky peninsula, while to the north the Salt Lake probably already offered the rich plant and bird resources exploited into modern times.

The Akrotiri Peninsula thus possessed most, or all, of the components that elsewhere were often concentrated in port towns — warehousing and trading facilities, residential areas with presumed service industries, anchorages and roadsteads, somewhere to beach vessels for repair, etc. However, it lacked a really good natural harbour and (equally crucial) the abundant water supplies needed to permit a substantial population to be concentrated in one place. Instead, these were distributed across the entire former island and multiple parts of its shoreline and inshore waters. Akrotiri thus constituted, in broadly Westerdahlian terms, an integrated maritime



cultural landscape (Westerdahl 1992; 2011), in which the resident population lived in multiple inland settlements dispersed to exploit the meagre rainfall catchments, and from which people commuted to the multiple coastal areas where they worked with — or aboard — ships and boats. The settlements, boats and activities integrated land and sea, creating a maritime landscape embracing both culture and the physical environment.

### Akrotiri and Kourion

Formation of the tombolos raises another fundamental question for understanding Dreamer’s Bay and Akrotiri/Cape Kourias: how did all this relate to southern Cyprus, and especially to the nearest *polis*, Kourion? Its name and the region’s topography suggest Kourias formed part of the *chora* (extra-urban territory) of this city rather than its eastern neighbour, Amathous. The maritime affordances of the peninsula could indeed have formed a major part of Kourion’s economic communications with other Cypriot cities and the wider world.

There are of course other examples of *poleis* with principal ports kilometres away, most famously Athens and Piraeus, and Rome with Ostia/Portus.

Did Akrotiri in general, and Dreamer’s Bay in particular, correspondingly serve Kourion as a major satellite port facility? As we saw above, this has been suggested for the Late Antique era, but it is now clear that the Dreamer’s Bay shoreline complexes existed much earlier, probably from the 2nd century. Kourion certainly had limited local maritime installations. While like all Cypriot rivers (Skoulikidis *et al.* 2017: 3) the nearby Kouris was dry for most of the year and so useless for shipping, Kourion acropolis overlooked a long beach, where, currently presumed to have been built in Classical Antiquity, a simple artificial breakwater existed (Figs 2 and 21, at a). Smaller vessels could have directly beached here, with larger ones anchoring offshore and using lighters for transshipment, despite the prevailing westerlies making this a lee shore; departing ships could sail on early-morning offshore breezes to gain enough sea-room to weather Cape Zevgari, or to start beating into the prevailing westerlies which frequently strengthen later in the day. There was also a further anchorage to the west, in the cliff-bound bay below the sanctuary of Apollo Hylades; bay and cliff-top being linked by a rock-cut tunnel or presumed Classical date to facilitate access for goods and pilgrims (Figs 2 and 21, at b).



**Figure 21** Aerial view of the acropolis of Kourion looking west across Episkopi Bay. Arrowed: the masonry breakwater, indicating use of the beach (a) for port activities. The nearby bay below the Sanctuary of Apollo (b) was also used as an anchorage (Photo: AAP).

Larger ships with cargoes or passengers for Kourion, but also bound for further destinations may, however, have preferred to avoid Episkopi Bay and call at Dreamer's Bay instead, transshipping goods via the warehousing, or directly to local boats which could coast to Kourion when conditions were suitable. It is probably best, then, to envisage Kourion's beach, western anchorage and the facilities on Akrotiri as forming a polyfocal maritime communications and exchange system for the city and its *chora* — making Akrotiri one major element of an even larger-scale maritime cultural landscape.

Framing Kourion as the regional centre of power assumed to have authority over Akrotiri from Classical times to Late Antiquity, returns us to questions of organization and operation at Dreamer's Bay. As we saw, the scale and sophistication of the quarrying operation, construction of the masonry breakwater and the planning implicit in the layout of shoreline compounds, indicate deployment of technical expertise, exercise of authority, and mobilization of resources on levels probably beyond the capacity of the 'village' society of the peninsula. The obvious source of these initiatives is the presumptive local centre of power, Kourion.

While we do not yet know details of its construction, the artificial breakwater below Kourion acropolis suggests that the *polis* did invest in maritime infrastructure works. It now also appears that creation of the Dreamer's Bay shoreline compounds roughly corresponded with the mid-imperial zenith of ambition and expenditure on urban development in the Roman-ruled eastern Mediterranean (Raja 2012). Most of this was organized and financed by the ruling civic elites, although encouraged, sometimes sponsored and, when overambition led to financial problems, regulated by the emperor. The driving force was fierce competition within and between urban aristocracies for prestige and imperial favour (Lendon 1997: 73–89). This competition was enacted through financing public games and performances, or more durably through bankrolling public building projects, from temples and theatres to baths and aqueducts; this was euergetism, competitive philanthropy which combined beautifying of one's own city through monuments and public amenities with self-interest (van der Vliet 2011). At Kourion, the grand scale of early imperial investment is seen in, for example, the huge Trajanic urban baths (Costello 2014: 13–14), and the magnificent suburban sanctuary of Apollo Hylades (Soren 1987). Strategic investment in infrastructure at key points of the city's broader hinterland would fit with this, potentially

bringing additional income to bankroll the ambitions of local oligarchs. The maritime developments at Akrotiri would have enhanced, and better controlled, existing port functions, and allowed fuller exploitation of another lucrative potential market: supplying the needs of passing high-seas shipping.

Ancient ships made frequent coastal stops, not necessarily to load or unload cargo, but to replenish their water, food stocks, and perhaps let their crews sleep ashore. The fundamental importance of such logistical calls is reflected in the third-century AD *Stadiasmus*, which lists the Mediterranean's anchorages, harbours and ports, and distances between them. Strikingly, if the *Stadiasmus* gives any additional information about particular ports of call, it is, by far, most likely to specify water sources; 'Watering facilities are a *Leitmotiv* in half of the *Stadiasmus*, with a dozen of qualities of water ...' (Pascal Arnaud pers. comm.). Some places were no more than watering stops; for example, 'Zygris' on the coast of Egypt was just 'an islet ... there is water in the sand' (*Stadiasmus* 16). A number of cases are known of cisterns outside ports, often close to their entrances, indicating brief stops solely for watering (e.g. Elaioussa-Sebastè in Cilicia, Leukè Aktè, *Paraetonium* (Mersa Matruh) in Egypt, and Boreion in Tripolitana: Pascal Arnaud pers. comm.) Besides supplying port workers and transport animals, cisterns and wells at Dreamer's Bay, examples of which have been identified (Fig. 14), doubtless served for replenishing ships calling at *Kourias*, especially those arriving or embarking on high-seas sailings (Fig. 4).

Indeed, the emperors themselves had reason to approve of the initiatives on Akrotiri. Trade in wine, olive oil and other consumables is famously attested by amphorae, at Dreamer's Bay as across the entire Mediterranean, but this was just part of much wider commerce involving everything from slaves to grain, and minerals ranging from Cyprus's eponymous copper to architectural stone. The cities of the Roman East saw an extraordinary programme of monumental embellishment using imported stone, which climaxed in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD. These great urban schemes involved the shipping of thousands of tons of marble and other prized building stone from largely imperially-owned quarries to the cities of the Levant. For example, Antioch's new 2nd-century 9 m-wide colonnaded thoroughfare was framed by 1400 grey or pink Egyptian granite columns, and paved with Thebaid granite (Burns 2017: 213). The hundreds of voyages from Egypt to transport these thousands of tons of stone may well have made landfall at Akrotiri *en*

route; Antioch was simply the greatest of the many Levantine cities embellished in Roman times with stone imported from Egypt or the Aegean, much of which likely passed via Cyprus. Ships on such voyages may well have made brief victualling calls at Dreamer's Bay. Columns of Aswan granite in Dreamer's Bay harbour, probably from the Late Antique shipwreck, attest the long continuation of such movements.

By the time the Dreamer's Bay compounds were destroyed in the 4th century, Mediterranean maritime trade was less intensive, and urban elites were no longer investing their wealth in prestigious civic projects, but in private residences and, increasingly thereafter, the Church. It is no surprise, then, that most of the compounds were not rebuilt, although as we have seen, trading, and probably watering, victualling and other service functions long continued at Dreamer's Bay, albeit using ephemeral shoreline facilities. As elsewhere in coastal districts of Cyprus, visible archaeological activity effectively ceases on Akrotiri after the mid-7th century, due, at least in part, to the dangers of Muslim coastal raiding, and only visibly picks up again in later medieval times with, for example, the establishment of the monastery of St Nicholas of the Cats (Heywood 1982: 171–72).

### Conclusion and prospect

What, then, was Dreamer's Bay? It now seems that the archaeological remains, along this roughly 2 km stretch of Akrotiri's southern coast, represent multiple dynamic phenomena during the early centuries AD, comprising in part an industrial harbour for exporting quarried stone, in part a watering and victualling station for high-seas shipping, and, in part, a local and regional trading place. It does not make sense to try to ascribe a single descriptor, as it was in no sense a single defined, self-contained entity like 'a port town'. Rather, it represented an aggregation of functions exploiting geological and topographical features in close proximity along the coast: prized mineral outcrops overlooking a bay which could be artificially enhanced into a practicable, if vulnerable, harbour, fairly near to a stretch of low shoreline across which sea-land exchanges could be enacted, with space for organizing people, ships' supplies and cargoes. These activities were undertaken by people who lived not at Dreamer's Bay, but in nucleated settlements across the middle of the peninsula. They doubtless also exploited, as best they could, the poorly-watered land and the Salt Lake environment, but probably took most of their living from the opportunities afforded by the surrounding sea

(Sollars 2005: 97–98); if many of their maritime activities were concentrated at Dreamer's Bay, others were distributed around Akrotiri's other coasts. This was an integrated maritime cultural landscape *par excellence*.

Dreamer's Bay itself, then, represented parts of a local cultural network which can only be understood at the level of the whole peninsula — and at scales larger still. The nature of the Dreamer's Bay remains point to the agency of powers capable of organization, mobilization of resources and technical expertise at levels greater than seems plausible for the multifocal village society of the peninsula. The regional authority controlling Akrotiri was presumptively the group of dominant landowning families of Kourion, and the urban administration they ran. This city society projected its power here because the peninsula came to constitute a node in the vital maritime communications of a Hellenistic world transforming under Rome into part of a globalizing empire — a node which Kourion could access especially through Dreamer's Bay, at the landfall and point of departure for many direct sailings across the eastern Mediterranean.

A new, multi-scalar picture is, then, taking shape. However, much remains to be done, on Akrotiri's relationships with Kourion, Cyprus as a whole, and, through its imports, with the wider Mediterranean. In particular, we cannot yet fully perceive the details of the local peninsular network, and the human scale of the lives of the people who, from Hellenistic to Byzantine times, loaded and unloaded the ships, toiled in the quarries at Dreamer's Bay, and otherwise worked Akrotiri's land and coastal waters — while also burying their dead overlooking the sea. Addressing this is the planned next phase of the AAP, the first step of which is to develop the fullest possible overview of the archaeology of the peninsula. By a happy convergence, UK MOD also needs this information for heritage management purposes, so a collaborative project has been undertaken to create a comprehensive archaeological database and GIS, based on desktop study combined with a 'ground-truthing'/monument condition survey, to provide an overview of all known ancient human occupation of the peninsula. Projected follow-up fieldwork will focus on exploring the settlements, and eventually the coastal necropoli. Were the settlements all occupied from Hellenistic to Byzantine times, or were things more complex? And not least, how was the human story at Akrotiri enmeshed in the wider geological and ecological history of the peninsula? As we further develop integrated consideration of the



cultural and environmental heritage of this block of maritime landscape, we will be much better placed to understand the character of those remains with which we started, the wave-battered buildings and breakwater at Dreamer's Bay.

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