4 Cypriot Iron Age Communities in Time and Place: Considering Amathus in a Regional Context

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Introduction

In recent years, archaeologists have reworked macroscalar approaches that substitute a granular focus on particulars for the wide-angle lens of big data, global comparative histories and grand narratives (see e.g., Robb and Pauketat 2013; Kohler and Smith 2019; cf. Emberling 2016). Large temporal and spatial scales of comparative analysis have offered bigger canvases on which to take up historiographical questions that echo some of our contemporary anxieties: rising inequality and political upheaval, global warming and the Anthropocene, the sixth extinction. We are not exactly at a *fin de siècle* moment in 2022, but the framing of these analytical choices as 'grand challenges' puts a self-reflexive spotlight on future trends – the next 25 or 100 years in archaeological research (e.g., Kintigh *et al.* 2014). One compelling narrative, that uses macrohistorical frameworks and has become more prominent over the last decade, concerns the transition to the Iron Age on Cyprus, following the end of the Late Bronze Age, covering a span of approximately five centuries. This vexed interface of Bronze and Iron epochs invites inquiry, especially in how we try to reconstruct historical progression (see e.g., Iacovou 2008; Voskos and Knapp 2008). This paper proposes that we attend more closely to analyses of Iron Age social life in time and place.

A promising way to rethink temporal and spatial schemes is through the analysis of ancient communities and their landscapes, themes that A. Bernard Knapp has explored in several important contexts (2003; 2008). To examine Iron Age communities more critically, we can rethink chronological frameworks for the first millennium BC, and begin to invest in high-resolution dating methods that can complement existing relative chronologies. We can also outline a stronger focus on the social orders, politics, environments and landscapes driving the period's transformations, particularly those outside of main urban sites. Survey data for the Iron Age provide a rich and understudied evidentiary base from which to question the

formation of diverse Iron Age communities (cf. Papantoniou and Vionis 2018; Satraki 2019). In what follows, I lay out how our current narratives can lead to assumptions about time and place, and then briefly present the case of the polity of Amathus, on the south-central coast of Cyprus, as an entryway for multiscalar analyses of social change. I am grateful to Bernard for persistently inspiring and questioning the contributions of this research.

Narratives of the End of Protohistory

The division between the Bronze and Iron Age periods, or what Maria Iacovou (2008: 635) has called an arbitrary 'pseudobreak', marks a well-known and problematic fault line between prehistory and history, or Classical history, familiar to other Mediterranean contexts (Iacovou 2008: 625; see Knapp 2008: 280; Khatchadourian 2011; Schmidt and Mrozowski 2013; Papadopoulos 2014; 2018; Kotsonas 2016; Lemos and Kotsonas 2020). Such a cleavage has generated vague (if always political) terminology for the 'Early Iron Age' or 'Geometric-Archaic' or just 'Iron Age' periods that sit in the transitional centuries in between (Georgiadou 2017: 99; see Kotsonas 2016). Undoubtedly, major social, economic and cultural transformations occurred across these centuries, whose temporal complexity warrants analyses that take seriously the 'before and after' (*sensu* Papantoniou 2012) of the Late Bronze Age collapse. In recent years, scholarship on the Bronze-to-Iron transition has adopted more explicit macrohistorical frameworks (e.g., Lemos and Kotsonas 2020; see Iacovou 2013b: 587). For Cyprus, approaches that aim to integrate the social histories of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC with those that follow have recalibrated the study of the subsequent periods, revealing compelling cycles of some persistent sociocultural and economic practices, like religious foundations, and interruptions in others, like urban geography (e.g., Iacovou 2008; 2013a; Papantoniou 2012; Satraki 2019; Georgiou and Iacovou 2020; cf. Knapp and Meyer 2020).

These reconstructions of the transition between so-called prehistoric and historical formations often seek to analyze patterns of large-scale complexity, like centralized economic control, urbanization, stratified societies or long-distance trade. For Cyprus, scholars also privilege the testimonies of later textual sources that hint at the outlines of regional kingships by the late eighth and seventh centuries BC, and, in so doing, tend to uphold a linear progression from regionally-segmented Bronze Age political economies to Iron Age ones (Iacovou 2002a; Fourrier 2013; cf. Rupp 1987; Knapp 2013: 447–54; T. Petit 2019). The timeline usually ends with the arrival of the Ptolemies and their colonial institutions in the fourth century BC. We can think of these macrohistorical arguments, often including five or more centuries of social change, through the metaphor of a grand literary narrative: while analyses have recovered features of the setting, like urban sites and extra-urban sanctuaries, we are much less clear about the characters involved or the local and regional structures of the plot. By the Iron Age, we can see the creation of several long-lived

settlements with control over arable land and other resource zones and harbors (e.g., Kassianidou 2013; Iacovou 2013a; 2014), but we are much less aware of how smaller settlements participated in these changes between the twelfth and eighth centuries BC – for example in the acceleration of copper or agropastoral economies, in the production and consumption of surprisingly similar material culture practices, or in the use and dissemination of multiple languages (Iacovou 2013c). Macrohistorical perspectives are thus critical for bringing attention to long-term continuities and interruptions in forms of economic or social practice, but they often make tacit assumptions about the social orders experiencing and driving these transformations.

In many arguments for the Bronze-to-Iron Age transition on Cyprus – constrained by biases towards urban and funerary records, and lacking much excavated settlement evidence – singular objects can often seem to supersede the communities who used them. To take a well-known case: the famous bronze spit (*obelos*) of someone named Opheltas, found in a tomb of eleventh-tenth century date at Palaepaphos *Skales*, with a syllabic inscription in Greek, has been called a 'perfect example of a transitional phase' between Bronze and Iron Age writing practices and linguistic communities (Masson and Masson 1983: 411; see Sherratt 2003: 225; Knapp 2013: 466). This telescoping between 'Greek' grave good and the centuries-long processes of Greek-speaking migrations makes for exciting archaeology, but, as others have noted, it is a precarious foundation for explanations of social, political or cultural continuity or change (Voskos and Knapp 2008: 674–75; T. Petit 2019: 69–70). By interpreting the *obelos* as a marker of transitional time, scholars can reify the links between mobile populations and incipient Iron Age societies, but can equally mute the time and experiences of Opheltas himself, and his social feasting (see e.g., Vonhoff 2011; Hamilakis and Sherratt 2012). Another example is the royal stele of Sargon II of ca. 708/707 BC, found near Kition, which served to embody Neo-Assyrian sovereign power and territoriality in the image of Sargon and his cosmos (Radner 2010). While the inscription (and others of the Neo-Assyrian empire, see e.g., Cannavò 2019) programmatically mentions the kings of the island and their capitals, and has been used as an anchor for the consolidation of royal territory between the eleventh and seventh centuries BC (e.g., Iacovou 2002a), the stele is a more ambiguous piece of evidence for changes in settlements and living practices of the subject populations of the various kingdoms over such a long timeframe. In addition, while scholars can employ Fernand Braudel's (1972: 100) slow-moving *longue durée* to situate objects like these against much longer-lived social and economic phenomena (e.g., Papantoniou 2012; 2013; 2016; Fourrier 2013; see also Iacovou 2008: 627), the concept is arguably apolitical. Its utility for framing continuities, especially of political form, is suspect when it acts only as a synonym for long-term processes, as is its acknowledged difficulties with explaining change over time, when used as a synonym for diachronic (see e.g., Morley 2004: 58–59; see also Knapp 1992).

These problems of duration and longevity are especially salient in the case of the emergence and landscape history of Amathus on the south-central coast, a site that

has been called a polity 'without prehistory' or 'with no previous history' (Iacovou 1994: 155–56; 2008: 626; Papantoniou 2012: 304). Here, the 'previous' refers to a time prior to the foundation of activities on the acropolis, argued to have occurred during the eleventh century (Iacovou 2002b; Hermary 2015: 4–5) or, more visibly in the material record, during the ninth century BC (T. Petit 2019: 48). Such a language of time raises provocative questions about the semantic ambiguity of terms like 'prehistory', 'protohistory' and 'history', and the analytical weight we designate to our understandings of historical narrative when thinking about identity and culture (see Trouillot 1995; Schmidt and Mrozowski 2013; Papadopoulos 2018; Osborne 2019). What does it mean that a site and its landscape do not possess prehistory? Who has the power to claim prehistory, or for whom does the narrative of a non-prehistoric Amathus serve?

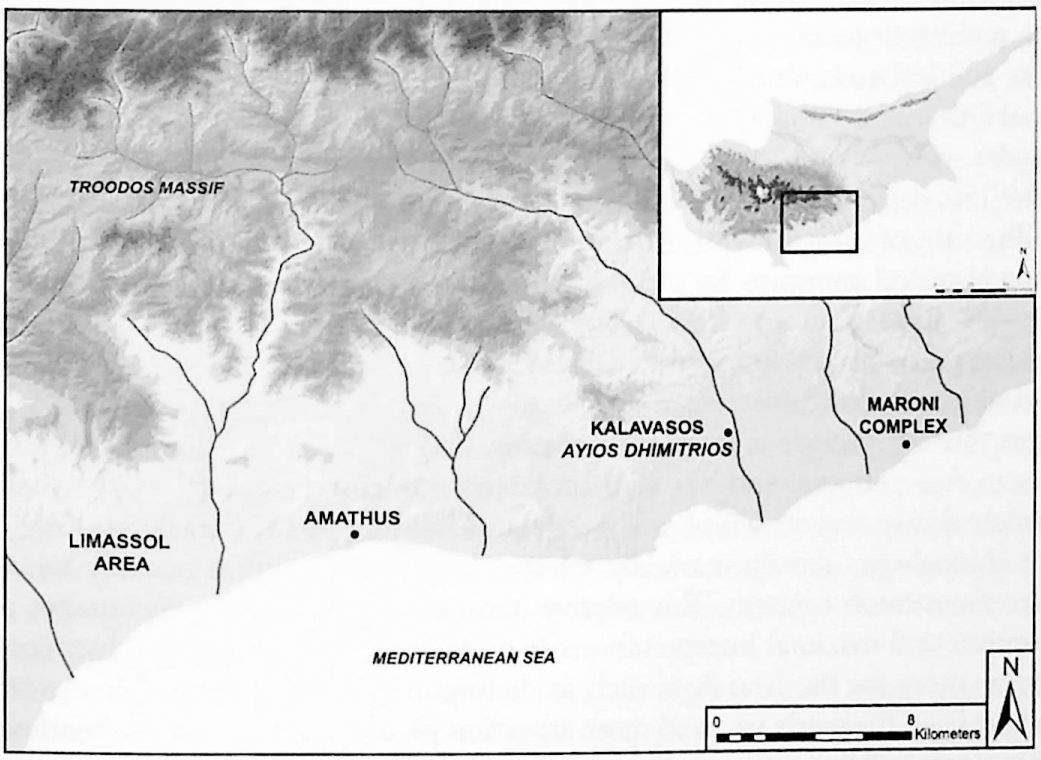

Figure 4.1 Map of Amathus and the Vasilikos and Maroni region to the east, with the Bronze Age urban sites of Kalavasos *Ayios Dhimitrios* and the Maroni complex (created by author, data from Geological Survey Department).

Interpreters of Amathusian history who seek out the continuities across the Bronze-to-Iron Age transition hold that populations relocated from some late second-millennium BC antecedents and founded the city in a place without Bronze Age evidence, what Giorgos Papantoniou has called an 'ex-novo' settlement process (Papantoniou 2012: 304; see T. Petit 2001; Iacovou 2002b; Todd 2013: 120). To the west was the Late Bronze Age complex at Episkopi *Bamboula* and the subsequent Iron Age center at Kourion, but equally rich evidence for Bronze Age tombs comes from the district of Limassol (Karageorghis *et al.* 2012; see also Kiely 2005). The

neighboring valleys to the east of Amathus also had major Late Bronze Age sites, Kalavasos *Ayios Dhimitrios* and the Maroni complex, which were abandoned around 1200 BC (or a little later in the twelfth century BC: see Manning, this volume). In many reconstructions, the post-abandonment Vasilikos and Maroni landscapes were emptied through migration to towns like Kition, before populations settled at Amathus and stepped into a regional 'power vacuum' (Iacovou 1994: 156; 2008: 626–27; 2018: 19–20; South 2002; see Figure 4.1). But the *topos* of a peculiar genealogy for the city also includes ancient foundation narratives that cite the inhabitants as descendants of Kinyras, a local heroic figure (T. Petit 2004; 2019: 45). Unlike the legends of cities established by Greek *nostoi* or Levantine merchants, Amathus's unique epigraphic traditions and apparent autochthony, preserved in Greco-Roman texts, amplified its primordial otherness (T. Petit 2004; Iacovou 2008: 635). Thus, one ancient narrative of Amathus recounts a pre-Greek local population with prehistoric roots, that later shaped historical and archaeological interpretations of its political and cultural identity (Given 1998: 18–24). How do we analyze the possibilities of a community claiming its own heroic pasts for certain political agendas with the archaeological appearance of a town 'with *no prehistory*' (Iacovou 1994: 156; Papantoniou 2012: 304)?

The case of Amathus foregrounds how we approach empirical data and construct historical narratives for social groups with fuzzy boundaries of time and place (Trouillot 1995; Kotsonas 2016: 119; Papadopoulos 2018; Osborne 2019). Between prehistory and history reside well-defined if often implicit methodological and theoretical trends that differentiate each side by its evidentiary categories and ways of reconstructing periods and spatial patterns. A key example is chronology: while Bronze Age periodization has seen increased refinement through high-resolution absolute dating and statistical analyses (e.g., Manning 2013; Paraskeva 2019), Iron Age chronologies remain markedly relative, based primarily on ceramic sequences taken from tomb contexts. This relative dating is perhaps what encourages grand narratives and maximal interpretations (e.g., Iacovou 2013b). To conduct comparative analyses for the Iron Age, such as distinguishing the practices of the twelfth century from the tenth, we need more attention paid to high-resolution methods for chronology-building.

Despite a lot of recent work in radiometric dating for the Iron Age in the southern Levant and surrounding regions, we have surprisingly few absolute dates for the first millennium BC on Cyprus. Beyond the helpful radiocarbon data coming out of slag heaps, through the work of Lina Kassianidou (e.g., 2013), there seems to be a reluctance to rethink our Iron Age temporalities through high-resolution methods (see Papadopoulos 2014: 184 for similar issues in the Aegean; Toffolo *et al.* 2013; Fantalkin *et al.* 2015). There are well-known problems with the so-called Hallstatt plateau of the radiocarbon calibration curve, which unfortunately creates wide margins of error for dated samples between the ninth and fifth centuries BC (~800–400 cal BC). Recent work from Europe and central Asia, for example on the British Iron Age or Armenian Iron Age, however, makes it less tenable to continue to argue that

calibrating radiocarbon dates for the period is useless (see e.g., Hamilton *et al.* 2015; Jacobsson *et al.* 2018; Manning *et al.* 2018). Additionally, ongoing studies on the Greek Iron Age that utilize statistical analysis of radiocarbon dates, especially with advances in methods like wiggle matching and Bayesian analysis, are complicating the periodization of ceramic sequences, with significant implications for synchronizations of Greek pottery across the tenth to seventh centuries BC (Toffolo *et al.* 2013; cf. Gimatzidis and Weninger 2020). It is pertinent, therefore, that we start to construct robust absolute chronologies for Cyprus for the first millennium, not just to refine our periodizations, but equally to analyze the connections to absolutely-dated regional histories of plant and animal economies, climatic change, and settlement activity.

Radiometric dates should help contextualize relative ones, but can also support comparative analysis through multi-temporal investigations that re-center the analysis of social life (Khatchadourian 2011: 465). As Knapp (2013: 27–28) has argued, we need to separate the timescale from the material culture taxonomies that anchor culture historical approaches, and consider other frames: scale, place, climate, communities (see also Knapp and Meyer 2020). Pinpointing the Iron Age on a chronological schema should not be an end in itself, but a means to analyzing the patterns and processes of change that transformed different populations through periods of crisis or reformation. Or, to put it another way, I think there are more compelling questions that could be asked of the Iron Age if we try to discern what community structures were like, and how they developed and transformed new landscapes and political economies throughout the centuries linking the Bronze and Iron Ages, which were clearly marked by transformative changes in social life. The end of Late Cypriot urbanism and the emergence of Archaic towns arguably constitute a pivotal locus to explore new senses of household and community, and their relationships with rising social complexity in the eastern Mediterranean Iron Age (Knapp 2008: 285; see e.g., Blackwell 2010; Janes 2010; Papantoniou 2012; 2016; Fourrier 2013; Foxhall 2014; Steele 2019).

Thinking more about communities can, as Knapp (2003) has summarized, help examine relationships between social life, place and space. In recent years, archaeologists have rethought definitions of community that capture how they are socially-constructed arrangements formed through shared practices and interactions beyond the household, as an interface composed of individuals who do not necessarily always interact but who share senses of affiliation (Wernke 2013: 23; see e.g., Mac Sweeney 2011; Porter 2013; Birch 2013; Harris 2014). In particular, while collective practices are often strongly linked to place, scholars have argued that communities are not necessarily confined to particular sizes of settlement, and are just as likely to cut across spatial boundaries, or to overlap them, as to adhere to them. These recent moves to reconsider the complexity of community help dissociate it from its typical conceptual position as the small-scale, 'simple' contrast to complicated urban social dynamics (Porter 2013: 1–3). Such approaches have proven compelling when they entail multiscalar perspectives. We can analyze shifting relationships of social

affiliation between a range of places, like between Amathus and surrounding smaller settlements, or between the town and numerous farms, quarries or mines, as well as between generations or centuries of social development. In doing so, we can begin to interrogate which scalar arrangements were socially constructed by particular political formations (see e.g., Brenner 2001; Brown and Purcell 2005). These might include, for example, household scales that incorporated the ceramic signatures of a ruling polity, or the negotiation for access to resources like healthy soil, copper, trees or limestone, between local laborers, markets and various authorities. Scholars have posited the possibility of 'secondary centers' at the eastern edges of the Amathusian polity (e.g., Georgiadou 2018), but what were these like, and how did their authorities interact with communities around them and with Amathus?

In what follows, I am particularly interested in tracing patterns of rural settlements, beginning in the ninth and eighth centuries BC, which seem to have re-utilized earlier, existing Bronze Age landscape features, like terrace walls. Such features provided engineered plots for agropastoral production that could lead to wealth accumulation through the production of semi-luxuries like olive oil and wine. These forms of landesque capital – persistent modifications to land that anticipate yields beyond a present crop cycle and require different demands of use and maintenance, as, for instance, the case of olive groves that need long periods of initial growth (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987: 9; Morrison 2014) – mediated local knowledge and catalyzed new possibilities for communities and forms of status differentiation. While the archaeology of settlement structures, households and place-making for the early first millennium BC is partly challenged by available archaeological evidence and methods (Rupp 1997; Counts and Iacovou 2013), the numerous datasets of surface survey available for the island offer a compelling source for such research questions, as John Cherry (2004: 30) noted 15 years ago. I sketch below how we might interrogate different trajectories of community practice between the Bronze and Iron Ages, related to the rise of Amathus, through legacy and recent survey data (Kearns 2019; on the difficulties of comparative survey analysis, see Alcock and Cherry 2004). As space is limited, I focus on the archaeological records to the east of Amathus, in the Vasilikos and Maroni valleys, although recent work is showing an equally interesting western hinterland in the Limassol area (Alpe 2015; Georgiadou 2018).

Multi-Temporal South-Central Landscapes

Amathus and its landscapes, including what might be called its rural edges, beyond the immediate *chora* that lay within walking distance to farms (ca. less than 20 km from the town), offer compelling records for investigating the construction of novel communities at different scales. We can look first at sites recovered through multiple surveys both in the surroundings of the acropolis and in the watersheds to the east, where different temporal relationships between sites indicate a complex series of settlement formations with various tetherings to prehistoric places. The

following discussions draw from legacy survey data by the Vasilikos Valley Project (Todd 2004; 2013), the Maroni Valley Archaeological Survey Project (Manning and Conwell 1992; Manning *et al.* 1994), and the French Expedition to Amathus (C. Petit *et al.* 1989; C. Petit 1996), as well as from recent re-survey of targeted Archaic sites (Kearns 2019; Kearns and Georgiadou 2021). Instead of plotting recorded survey findings from the Iron Age by their predominant period of occupation, like 'Geometric' (ca. 1050–750 BC) or 'Archaic' (ca. 750–480 BC), Figure 4.2 categorizes them through an index of phasing, albeit one compromised by the coarse signatures of surface material. Each Geometric or Archaic site is shown within its longer-term sequence of occupation. This relational picture reveals different patterns between Iron Age settlements and previous occupation phases and landscape features. Assemblages classified with only Cypro-Archaic materials, for example, have occupations beginning in the eighth and seventh centuries, suggesting new foundations of settlement or activity. This period saw the greatest density of occupations across the two valleys, with fewer sites continuing into the sixth and fifth centuries BC, according to ceramic analysis (Georgiadou 2016; 2018). Artifact scatters that reveal multi-period places, and that contain evidence of continuous or sporadic activity through different earlier periods, are labeled with several other temporal relationships. Some sites, for example, show evidence of intermittent but relatively persistent occupation from the Neolithic, while others indicate long gaps between Middle Bronze Age and Archaic activity.

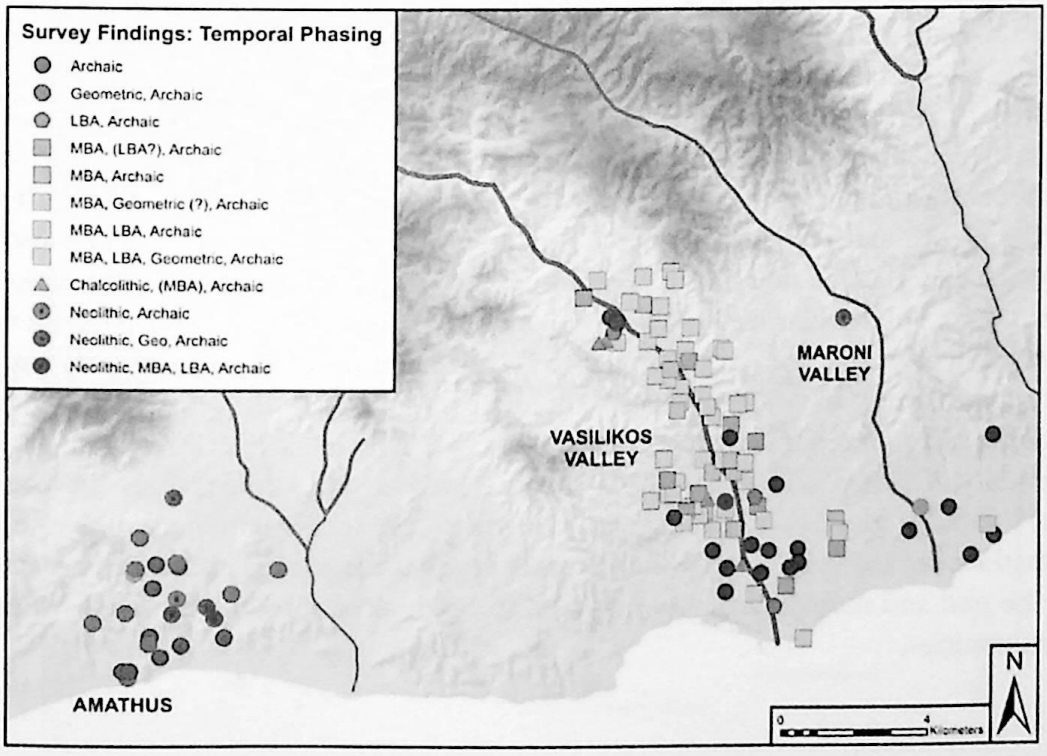

Figure 4.2 Survey findings of the Geometric and Archaic periods from the region of Amathus and the Vasilikos and Maroni valleys, categorized according to temporal phasing and continuity from earlier occupations (created by author, data from Geological Survey Department).

Envisioning survey material along contours of temporal associations with the past affords heuristic insights into Iron Age political economies and the different social patterning of Amathus and these regions to the east. In the Vasilikos valley, divergent clusters of material suggest localities with important landesque capital surviving from earlier prehistoric occupations, like cross-channel walls or terracing, which afforded more accessible agropastoral land use strategies, for example around the site of Kalavasos *Vounaritashi* in a western side drainage of the Vasilikos River (Kearns 2019: 284–85; Kearns and Georgiadou 2021; see also Keswani 2018; Figure 4.3). The aggregation of materials like fragments of storage jars, grinding vessels, building stones and basins in these parts of the landscape point to the presence of developing households, and possibly to communities linked through shared tasks and the management of terrace systems, as hypothesized for Bronze Age field walls in this area (Wagstaff 1992). The apparent re-use of these drainage systems during an initial horizon of permanent settlement during the ninth and early eighth centuries BC (Cypro-Geometric III) indicates conditions that supported economic investments in agriculture. By the later eighth and seventh centuries (Cypro-Archaic I), some prominent households or groups with control over labor and productive land were able to move into and begin exploiting what had been more marginal areas on higher elevations, on alluvial terraces with calcareous soils, and on the flatter coastal plain (see Manning 2019). These patterns of increasingly permanent installations suggest the novel organizations of landscape management that further allowed some to re-invest in managing and extracting valuable resources like copper, trees and stone, which were appearing more widely on interregional markets. The available radiocarbon dates from the slag heaps in the Vasilikos valley indeed point to the utilization of mines and smelting workshops only by the Archaic period, indicating that initial Iron Age settlement in the area during the ninth century BC focused more on securing claims to arable and grazing land, before turning to other industries in the eighth and seventh centuries (Kassianidou 2013: Appendix 1; see also Van Brempt and Kassianidou 2016). The interesting Archaic sanctuary, which re-used the monumental ashlar walls of the Maroni *Vournes* site in the lower Maroni valley, with votive evidence for deities linked to fertility and pastoralism, similarly suggests that some earlier landscape features took on new meanings and senses of the past for groups seeking out performative ritual spaces (see Ulbrich 2012; 2015; D'Agata and Hermary 2012: 285; Figure 4.4). At present, we can only conjecture this community's social leaders, participants, and ties with local settlement networks and with Amathus, but the evidence highlights practices that forged different understandings of the past and rooted local communities, through rituals, to the old walls of earlier communities.

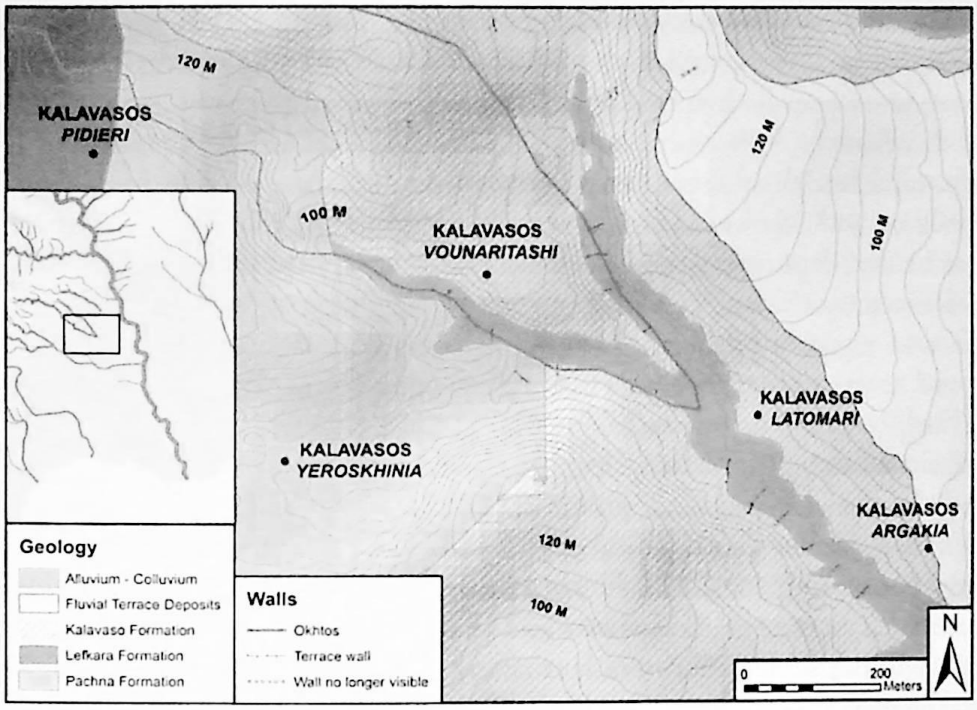

Figure 4.3 An example of several sites in a side drainage of the Vasilikos valley, of ninth-fifth centuries (Cypro-Geometric III-Cypro-Archaic II) date, and associated cross-channel walls and landscape features. 5 m contours (created by author, data from Geological Survey Department).

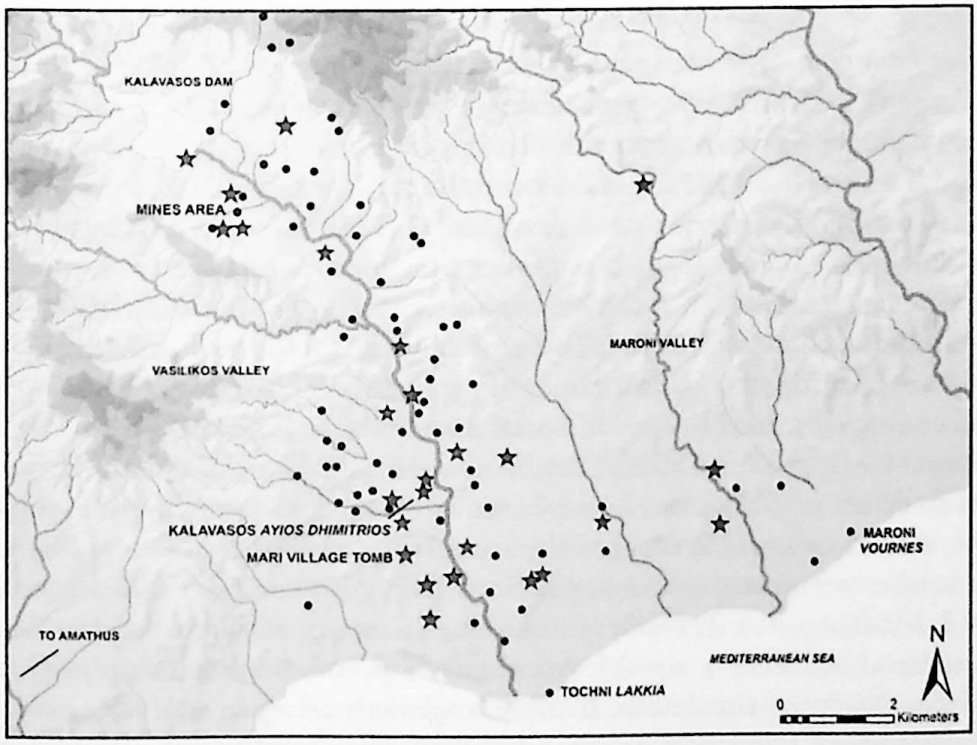

Figure 4.4 Ceramic scatters (black dots) and tombs/cemeteries (red stars), of ninth-fifth century date, in the Vasilikos and Maroni region, with sites mentioned in text (created by author, data from Geological Survey Department).

By contrast, evidence for first-millennium BC tombs and larger necropoleis in this region, some investigated through rescue excavation, suggest the creation of new mortuary landscapes on intervisible marine terraces along the coastal plain, with less clear indications of earlier occupation (Kearns 2019: 281, fig. 9.5). While the shift to extramural burials is a common island-wide signature of the Iron Age period, the Vasilikos and Maroni evidence reveals coordinated efforts to distance certain rural cemetery depositions and possible community affiliations from prehistoric places. Rescue excavations at Mari in the lower Vasilikos valley, for instance, revealed a tomb that arguably exalted a local or regional male figure with some distinctive status and access to foreign goods like iron swords, along with a female partner and child (Hadjicosti 1997; Kearns 2019: 281). The individual's links to community were partly built at the scale of these local household politics, perhaps through a claim to familial or kinship mortuary grounds, while simultaneously being constructed to participate in the more hierarchical practices of funerary assemblages of ruling elites at nearby Amathus (Janes 2013; Hermary 2015). These social leaders were providing the norms for how to anchor status and generational wealth to meaningful place through familial or ancestral lineages. Intriguingly, new excavations at Amathus *Loures*, roughly 1 km east of the acropolis, have revealed two constructed tombs for important members of the community, beginning during the tenth century BC and intentionally distanced from other contemporary burial grounds (Stefani and Violaris 2018). While still preliminary, these findings highlight how intra-elite distinctions were beginning to manifest through senses of place-attachment outside the town.

These emerging dynamics guiding the need for new social spaces in mortuary grounds, as well as the manipulation of Bronze Age remains, can help us reframe the landscapes of Amathus from the Bronze to Iron Ages. There is the possibility, sketched below, of a pre-urban history for the area during the Bronze Age, when examined comparatively in its broader regional context. Georgia M. Andreou (2016) has recently argued for a shift in settlement practices and rural economies in the Vasilikos watershed from the late third to the second millennium, when the coastal lowlands and anchorage sites like Tochni *Lakkia* became focal points for regional development. During the Middle Bronze Age, several large occupations in the central valley suggest a likely nexus of social and economic power, albeit still household-based (Knapp 2013: 350–52; Andreou 2016: fig. 5). By the Late Bronze Age, the urban center of Kalavasos *Ayios Dhimitrios*, as well as the Maroni complex and possible centers around Limassol to the west, had developed and were likely drawing in smaller communities and populations (Kiely 2005: 193–94; Karageorghis *et al.* 2012; Manning *et al.* 2014). It is becoming more apparent that *Ayios Dhimitrios* possessed and attracted a sizeable 'rural-urban' population of farmers (Manning and Fisher 2018; see also South 2014). The growth of *Ayios Dhimitrios* may have incorporated rural actors and communities from the Amathusian catchment on its western edge, whose smaller, more ephemeral working and residential sites remain especially difficult to identify through surface survey (Andreou 2016: 147; 2019).

The survey undertaken by the French mission revealed a series of Neolithic occupations in the surroundings of Amathus, including what the surveyors called large settlements, some of which were re-utilized during the Geometric and Archaic periods (C. Petit *et al.* 1989: 895). It is reasonable, although still speculative, that Bronze Age sites taking advantage of cultivable coastal terrain existed in the area around Amathus, but that they have been variously destroyed or obscured by twentieth and twenty-first century land use activity and urbanization (Hermary 2015: 25). Is an alternative, pre-urban history possible for the area, in which small agropastoral communities became linked through payments or other dependencies to larger establishments to the east and west?

Rather than see the Amathusian catchment as a 'virtual topographical gap' in these early periods (Iacovou 1994: 156), we could envision different modalities of occupation and land use that were driven by smaller communities operating on the edges of the economic spheres of other Bronze Age stratified settlements. We do lose track of settlement evidence for the eleventh to early ninth centuries in these areas, but we can reason that social life had pivoted to concentrate on the more intimate scales of the household and community, rather than on regional or centralized authorities. Prominent families that had claimed productive arable land in this period, accumulating agropastoral wealth and maintaining access to external markets, sought out the Amathus region, and particularly the prominent ridge of the acropolis, as a space for new political action. Some groups had clearly established and maintained strong connections with trade routes to the east and the Aegean, and cultural interests partly pivoted towards the sea. By the later ninth century, as the south-central lowlands oscillated again towards agropastoral and mining economies that came to depend upon settled economies and routes to harbors and markets, communities used these striking hilltops as salient places for performing authority through monumental buildings and elite burials (T. Petit 2001; Janes 2013; Hermary 2015). As Sarah Janes (2013: 161) has argued, the conspicuous presentation of elite tombs and necropoleis for possible hinterland viewing generated 'a more fluid and possibly fractious relationship between the center and the rest of the city-kingdom' than traditional models of political topography acknowledge.

This wider south-central region, from Limassol Bay towards Kition, became more populated during the mid-eighth century, and dozens of settlements seem to have been established in these river valleys (T. Petit 2019: 47; see also the recent survey evidence in Papantoniou and Vionis 2018; Menozzi *et al.* 2018). In the Vasilikos and Maroni area, groups moved onto higher terraces to take advantage of newly productive soils and extractive technologies of mining, quarrying and timber production. At a coarse resolution, the ceramics analyzed for the Vasilikos and Maroni region indicate production oriented to Amathusian workshops, which implies either direct consumption of the town's wares, or local production strategies that variously appropriated the fabric techniques and stylistic signatures of Amathus (Georgiadou 2016; 2018). These production, distribution and consumption practices position the region within the ambit of emerging Amathusian cultural and political powers, reflecting

social ties between local managers or laborers and authorities at the urban center overseeing the flow, and likely the taxation of goods like copper, arable and pastoral products, and building materials like wood, limestone and gypsum (see Hermary 2015: 18). Arguably, it is during this later Geometric and early Archaic horizon that those in control of Amathus were becoming urban, while communities in the Vasilikos and Maroni area were becoming rural (Kearns 2022). This latter region undoubtedly contributed some taxable commodities that supplemented the immediate *chora* of Amathus, populated with small farms by the eighth century BC (T. Petit 2019: 47).

These interpretations both complicate the narrative of Amathus as a site with no previous history, isolated from its surroundings, and deconstruct the often ahistorical status of the Vasilikos and Maroni region during the Iron Age, long considered a 'backwater' on the edges of other kingdoms (Todd 2013: 120). They also return us to questioning how constructions of 'without history' may have been articulated in the past. By approaching the settlement and landscape evidence in ways that suggest active claims to territory and assertions of authority in places with differentiated social and cultural entanglements with the past, we refocus inquiry onto the actors and groups enacting these changes, and resist the urge to reduce these processes to passive transitions of economy and power.

Conclusions

The dynamics happening across these south-central valleys during the early and middle centuries of the first millennium BC do not easily provoke, or overturn, grand narratives. Prosaically, comparative survey analysis in this region indicates landscape practices oscillating in permanence – associated with environmental shifts and social responses to new climates, economic investments and variable access to emerging trade networks – from the urbanism of the second millennium BC to the agropastoral and craft-production economies coinciding with the cultural rise of Amathus during the ninth and eighth centuries (Kearns 2019). The survey data reveal that Amathusian landscapes contained a patchwork of prehistoric and older remains that communities sought out for more lasting settlements during the later Geometric and Archaic periods. I have conjectured that Amathus's local setting may have supported pre-urban Bronze Age communities, but that, more likely, groups during the tenth and ninth centuries were investing in the Amathus and Vasilikos and Maroni regions for different political purposes. Some took advantage of landesque capital from Bronze Age land use systems to begin farming and herding in the Vasilikos and Maroni valleys. Other leading households, or emergent authorities, chose the imposing acropolis at Amathus and its surrounding hills for the construction of visible statements of social power and belonging. After the localized urbanism of the Vasilikos and Maroni valleys to the east waned, the survey evidence points to a transition, when households and landesque capital played a significant role in establishing who or which groups held claims to wealth and status. By the ninth

century, landscapes of small settlements were appearing within the Vasilikos and Maroni area. These communities were crafting new senses of local affiliation in burials and mortuary grounds, as well as gearing some consumption practices towards the figures taking on more established and legitimate power at Amathus. These arguments foreground the social orders and populations driving the transformations of the period, which maximalist histories tend to attenuate. Yet, with our current lack of evidence for households, domestic economies and land use practices, these analyses can only go so far in discerning how Amathus and its eastern edges were politically and socially intertwined (see Rupp 1997). Pilot excavations and future investigations at sites in these valleys have started to explore these questions, as well as to build up hypotheses for examining group and household interrelationships and interactions at multiple scales (see Kearns 2019; Kearns and Georgiadou 2021).

I have also prescriptively suggested that the field needs more scrutiny of time and place to investigate the complexities and contingencies of community-building 'before and after' the early first millennium BC (Papantoniou 2012; see also Papadopoulos 2018). Through paying more attention to developing high-resolution proxies for absolute chronology, as well as conducting more analysis of survey data for smaller settlements, we can begin to examine the multifaceted contexts of highly transformative periods like the Early Iron Age or Archaic horizon. In doing so, we reveal the ambiguities of our top-down frameworks for state formation or historical change, and help establish grounded and more bottom-up explorations of social life.

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Part II

Cyprus and Metallurgy

MONOGRAPHS IN MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO CYPRIOT AND WIDER MEDITERRANEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Edited by

Sturt W. Manning