

SYKHARI–LAKKIN: PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON A NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE FROM KYRENIA MOUNTAINS – CYPRUS¹

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Abstract: Although it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, Cyprus can be regarded as a small geography on the basis of its surface area. Yet, the island still offers great importance for both Mediterranean and world archaeology in terms of archaeological wealth and diversity it hosts. For the last quarter-century, surveys conducted in the western, southern and northwestern parts of Cyprus have added lots of new information to the island's archaeological inventory. On the other hand, there is a continuing stability in the north and east of the island for many years.

Just in this context and situation, a series of coincidental discoveries related to an archaeological landscape within a small valley on the Kyrenia Mountain Range has occurred. Within these coincidental discoveries, a group of various archaeological finds was found not contemporarily at a location known as Sykhari-*Lakkin*. Among these finds, there were tombs as well as a wide selection of ceramics, figurines, architectural elements, industrial usage tools and even some architectural remains. This article will be the first publication that will evaluate Sykhari-*Lakkin* in an archaeological perspective in light of the aforementioned finds and reveal its archeological significance for the island of Cyprus.

SYKHARI – LAKKIN KUZEY KIBRIS'TAN YENİ BİR ARKEOLOJİK ALANA DAİR İLK GÖZLEMLER

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kıbrıs • Arkeolojik coğrafya • Yüzeysel araştırması • Şarap işliği • Figürinler*

Özet: Her ne kadar Kıbrıs Akdeniz'in üçüncü büyük adası konumunda olsa da yüzölçümü bakımından oldukça küçük bir coğrafyadır. Yine de Ada, bünyesinde barındırdığı arkeolojik zenginlik ve çeşitlilik bakımından, hem Akdeniz hem de Dünya arkeolojisi için büyük önem arz etmektedir. Son çeyrek yüzyılda, Kıbrıs'ın batı, güney ve kuzeybatı kısımlarında gerçekleştirilmiş olan yüzeysel araştırmaları adanın arkeolojik envanterine pek çok yeni bilgiler katmıştır. Diğer yandan, adanın kuzey ve doğusunda devamlılık arz eden bir durağanlık yaşanmaktadır.

Tam da bu bağlamda, Girne Dağları'nın küçük vadilerinden birinde Sykhari-*Lakkin* olarak anılan bir bölgede bazı tesadüfi arkeolojik keşifler yaşanmıştır. Bu keşifler esnasında bazı mezarlar, seramik buluntular, mimari elemanlar, endüstriyel kullanım araçları hatta mimari kalıntılar da tespit edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, tüm bu arkeolojik eserlere ev sahipliği yapan Sykhari-*Lakkin*'in ilk defa ele alınıp bilimsel bir çerçevede içinde inceleneceği ve Kıbrıs arkeolojisi için sunduğu önemin vurgulanacağı ilk çalışma olacaktır.

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Introduction²

Cyprus is the third-largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia. Although large in terms of islands, it is actually a relatively small area of land compared with Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece, Italy and Egypt. Still, it hosts a rich and varied archaeological landscape. The entire coastline of Cyprus and its vast plains, together with many valleys and the foothills of mountains host a range of archaeological sites.

Since the 1970s in particular, newly identified archaeological landscapes have been added to the archaeological inventory of the island nearly every year. Evaluation of these new sites, together with assessment of those that have been long known (many of which were identified long before the emergence of archaeology as a scientific endeavor), is revealing an increasingly rich archaeological landscape. However, this situation largely pertains only to the southern two-thirds of the island which is under the responsibility of the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus³.

Over the course of the last 40 years, the archaeology of this portion of the island has been substantially redefined,

thanks to studies conducted by the Survey Department of the Department of Antiquities⁴, other small-scale scientific studies⁵ and long-term projects such as the Maroni Valley Survey Project⁶, the Kouris Valley Survey Project⁷, the Polis Pyrgos Archaeological Project⁸, the Vasilikos Valley Project⁹, the Sydney Cyprus Survey Project¹⁰ and the Canadian Palaipaphos Survey Project¹¹. Consequently, many new archaeological sites have been recorded, regional chronologies have been created, regional settlements and cult sites have been determined and it has also become possible to interpret intra-island cultural bonds better than ever.

On the other hand, since the mid-1970s, most of the surveys undertaken in the northern portion of Cyprus have been conducted within the boundaries of previously known sites¹². Only a very few surveys have been conducted with the aim of identifying new archaeological sites, and, of these, only a very small portion has been published to date¹³. Of

² I express my thanks to Figen CANER and Özlem L. MERTKAN from Nicosia branch of the Department of Antiquities and Museums of Northern Cyprus for granting me the necessary permissions to study the material from *Sykhari-Lakkin*. I also would like to thank to Kadir Kaba for the photographs of the finds, and to Dr. Mete AKSAN together with Gina COULTHARD for their valuable support regarding the English text.

³ The post-1974 Republic of Cyprus comprises 59.74% of the island.

⁴ Christodoulou 1971; Christou 1975; Hadjisavvas 2004.

⁵ Hadjisavvas 1983; Kassapis ve diğ. 2001; Ammerman – Sorabji 2005; Ammerman ve diğ. 2006; Ammerman ve diğ. 2007.

⁶ Conwell – Manning 1992.

⁷ Menozzi – Fossataro 2010.

⁸ Maliszewski 1994, Maliszewski 1999a; Maliszewski 1999b; Maliszewski 2003.

⁹ Todd 1996.

¹⁰ Given – Knapp 1999.

¹¹ Sørensen – Rupp 1993.

¹² Bağışkan 1996; Durugönül 2002; Kaba 2007; Öztepe 2007.

¹³ For the northern portion of the island, even the conservation and maintenance of previously identified archaeological sites and monuments constitute significant problems: see Şevketoğlu ve diğ. 2015, 141-144.

those projects focused on the identification of archaeological landscapes, that conducted in the Çınarlı/Platani region during the 1990s should be regarded as pioneering for the northern part of the island¹⁴. A later project conducted in the Kyrenia/Girne region revealed groundbreaking new finds related to Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlements¹⁵. This was followed by another survey project, carried out in the Morphou/Güzelyurt region by the Eastern Mediterranean Cultural Heritage Research Center (DAKMAR) of the Eastern Mediterranean University¹⁶. A further survey project, focused on underwater cultural heritage, was conducted in Karpas a few years later in 2008¹⁷. A recent, and not yet published, survey project conducted by the Gazi Üniversitesi Doğu Akdeniz Arkeolojik Kazı ve Yüzey Araştırmaları Uygulama Merkezi (Gazi University Eastern Mediterranean Archaeological Excavation and Surface Survey Application Centre) focused only on the prehistoric periods of northern Cyprus, but covered a wide area¹⁸.

The limited number of published surveys and projects relating to the identification of new archaeological sites in the north has given rise to a significant gap in the archaeological data for this portion of the island. In fact, the available archaeological information related to the north of the island has remained

largely the same since the pre-1974 period; this, of course, inevitably affects understanding of the archaeological integrity of Cyprus as a whole.

Whilst our understanding of the archaeological landscape of the north has not frequently been updated as a consequence of scientific studies, it has been substantially enriched through chance discoveries. However, for many reasons, which fall outside the scope of this paper¹⁹, such discoveries can be neither evaluated in their archaeological context nor formally announced to the scientific community²⁰.

In the midst of this unsatisfactory situation, a scientific study conducted for non-archaeological purposes in the Kyrenia mountain range between 2010 and 2012 coincidentally opened the way for the addition of a new and previously unknown locality to the archaeological inventory of Cyprus²¹, when numerous archaeological artefacts were encountered in an area within the boundaries of Sykhari/Yukarı Taşkent village. The artefacts, most of which were surface finds with some found during the course of excavation, indicate a previously unknown industrial and religious landscape.

¹⁴ Koral 1995.

¹⁵ Şevketoğlu 2000.

¹⁶ Kızılduman 2005.

¹⁷ Harpster 2009.

¹⁸ For more information related to this project, see www.prehistoriccultures.com.

¹⁹ Simply by scanning the Turkish-language news, it is possible to establish that at least three *necropoleis*, one sanctuary, one prehistoric settlement and a ceramic workshop – all previously unknown – were discovered by chance between 2009 and 2015.

²⁰ For a brief and recent evaluation of this on-going situation see Summerer 2016, 9-12.

²¹ This scientific study, comprising surveys and excavations, was conducted by teams including archaeologists working under the Committee of missing Persons in Cyprus, whose rationale and aims were not archaeologically oriented.

The location and geography of Sykhari-Lakkin

The artefacts were discovered within the boundaries of Sykhari/Yukarı Taşkent village (formerly Kaynakköy) in the Kyrenia mountain range (Fig. 1)²². This locality, which is 2.2 km. north the village itself, is identified as *Lakkin* on the cadastral maps²³. Sykhari-*Lakkin* is situated within a relatively small valley, located between the southern side of the Kyrenia mountain range facing the Mesaoria plain and the northern side facing the Kyrenia region. Access to the valley is provided by four different dirt roads. Two of these roads, which come from Sykhari/Yukarı Taşkent and Dikomo/Dikmen, provide relatively shorter and more convenient access to the region. The other two roads, one of which connects the valley to Bellapais/Beylerbeyi to the north whilst the other leads towards Klepini/Arapköy in the far west, both offer longer and less favourable journeys. All these roads link to a single dirt road running east-west, which unevenly divides the valley into two sections. The valley, limited by mountain slopes to the north and south, expands widely from east to west, measuring 1.56km in length. It is 240m wide in the western portion and 300m wide in the east (Fig. 2). Accordingly, Sykhari-*Lakkin* has an approximate surface area

of 390,000m². The valley rests 540m above sea level and 500m above of the Mesaoria plain.

The northern part of the valley rises rapidly until it reaches a relatively arid and rough slope. The southern part, on the other hand, forms a fertile plain which also develops into a rough slope, although the southern slope is less rough than the northern. Thus, while the northern part of the valley largely exhibits a rocky structure, this is true of only some areas in the southern part. According to government sources, the valley was used for agricultural purposes only until the mid-1980s, but almost the entire plain was systematically afforested at the end of the 1980s (Fig. 3). The only man-made structures that can be seen in the valley are two modern lime kilns (known locally as *gamini*), pointing to long-term industrial activity in the valley. One of these lime kilns is located at the edge of the northern slope, about 280m from the western entrance to the valley; the other stands at the eastern end, next to the road leading to Klepini/Arapköy²⁴.

Thanks to its location, positioned at the centre of an undeveloped yet existing transportation network reaching out to many regions, Sykhari-*Lakkin* can be considered an "intersection point" in an archaeo-geographical sense. This geographical and logistical character, offering an alternative to the well-known main

²² As a result of the post-1974 changes to the cadastral and demographic structure of the northern part of the island, the area is now called Yukarı Taşkent by the Turkish-Cypriot authorities.

²³ Sykhari-*Lakkin* is located on the cadastral map of Cyprus on two sheets: Sheet XII 46.W.2 and Sheet XII.46.E.2.

²⁴ A ruined church, named "Stavros Church (Ruins)", is also indicated on the cadastral map (Sheet XII.46.E.2) situated next to the dirt road leading to Bellapais/Beylerbeyi. Unfortunately, the remains are almost impossible to locate nowadays.

routes from Boghazi/Boğaz and Kythrea/Değirmenlik providing access to the north from Mesaoria, must be principal reason for why the area in Sykhari-Lakkin once inhabited²⁵.

The archaeology of Sykhari-Lakkin

Almost all the archaeological artefacts found at Sykhari-Lakkin were located during survey work and general vegetation clearance; only a small portion was found during excavations. Neither the surveys nor the excavations were archaeological in nature, and thus a non-archaeological methodology for the general documentation of the finds and contexts was employed²⁶.

The total area where archaeological artefacts were encountered is only a small portion of the valley as a whole. However, this is due to the surveys being conducted in certain areas only; the whole valley has not been assessed. Two narrow areas, rectangular in shape, one to the north (Area 1) and the other to the south (Area 2) of the dirt road, and both measuring 150m in length and 60m in width were the only areas covered by the surveys (Fig. 4). Excavation and vegetation

clearance works were also conducted only within the boundaries of Areas 1 and 2. Thus, the total area where archaeological finds were encountered covers just 18,000m² (i.e. 5% of the whole valley).

The archaeological finds discovered in these two areas vary in terms of distribution and diversity (Fig. 4 and Chart 1). The finds located during the survey and vegetation clearance works consist of architectural elements, tombs, a vast amount of ceramics and many production tools. Of the finds identified during the survey, none other than tombs were found in situ. The excavations, on the other hand, yielded more in situ architectural remains but fewer artefacts, which were limited mostly to figurines.

Area 1

Area 1, in terms of archaeological remains, is dominated by the presence of fragmentary architectural elements. Architectural remains were also present in this area in the form of tombs and some partial still standing remains. Ceramics and production tools were rarely identified, but figurines are notable for being found only in this area (Chart 2).

Rock-cut tombs too appear to be unique to Area 1. They were traced within one locality at the eastern end of the area. This locality is characterized by a rocky structure, visible on the surface, which is extremely suitable for the cutting of tombs. Eight tombs were located in this area; all were observed to have been looted.

The tombs reflect the well-known Cypriot type of rock-cut chamber tombs.

²⁵ There are no certain proofs for the existence of all these dirt roads in antiquity. However, in light of the archaeological remains within the valley it can be speculated that at least some of these roads existed in antiquity as well.

²⁶ Documentation of the archaeological context within the valley was done by the archaeologists who were part of the teams working there (including the present author). The numeric documentation of the finds (ceramics, industrial tools, etc.) comprises a combination of records made by different archaeologists.

The pits opened during illegal excavations conducted by looters revealed tomb chambers reached through arched or angular entrances (Figure 5a-c). None of the Sykhari-*Lakkin* tombs were observed to have a *dromos*²⁷. The absence of *dromoi* may be due to destruction caused by the illegal excavations, but there remains a strong possibility that at least some remain under the unexcavated soil stretching in front of the tombs. It is not possible to date the tombs as no distinctive tomb architecture is present and there are no archaeological finds that can be certainly associated with the tombs.

It is noteworthy that all the architectural elements found so far within the valley have come from Area 1, mostly located around the modern lime kiln standing towards the western entrance of the valley. Architectural elements, apart from the tombs, that were observed on the surface include building blocks and architectural decorative elements dispersed freely around.

Two well-cut ashlar blocks, lying on the surface, were the first architectural elements located in Area 1. No jambs or bracket holes could be traced on the blocks, but the fact that they display fine workmanship and nearly identical dimensions (1.00 x 0.80m and 1.00 x 0.76m) demonstrates that they are the result of deliberate production.

Another architectural element located in the same area is a fragmentary decorative element. Based on its curved outer edge, it is understood to have been circular or semicircular when it was complete. Even though some decorative executions, such as a flute and a depression (*scotia*?), are visible on this fragment, it is not possible to establish the full nature of its decorative character or how was it used.

The only artefact from Area 1 that can be related to a production oriented use is a small-sized mortar which was found near the lime kiln. Carved from limestone, the mortar displays an imprecise workmanship. Its reservoir is oval in shape, like its general outline; it was not complete when found, having been broken in half. Its preserved length measures 30cm, with a width of 28cm and a thickness of 10cm. The oval reservoir has a maximum depth of 7cm.

As noted above, only a small portion of the ceramics recovered from the valley was found within Area 1. All the ceramics from this area, 15 fragments in total, were collected from around the rock-cut tombs. The assemblage from Area 1 mainly comprises bases, body fragments and handles of *amphorae* and other storage vessels. These fragments, all belonging to coarse-ware vessels for liquid storage, exhibit Late Roman or Byzantine traits, in terms of both their clay and typology.

The artefacts which were found during the excavation conducted in Area 1 can be considered to be the most important remains recovered so far from Sykhari-*Lakkin*. During the course of

²⁷ All Cypriot chamber tombs dating from the Late Bronze Age until the end of the Roman Era were always carved to the bedrock and characteristically had a *dromos*. For this longlating special character of the Cypriot tombs see Gjerstad 1948, 29-42.

excavation that was carried out in a small trench situated approximately 15m west of the lime kiln, a wall was revealed within one of the sections (Fig. 6). The wall has a preserved height of 0.70m and a width of approximately 0.50m. It is formed of irregularly shaped rubble stones which were secured with a muddy mortar. The wall was followed northwards for only a few metres before attention was diverted elsewhere on site²⁸. Nevertheless, it can be stated that the continuation of the wall to the north appears to be longer than the fully exposed section.

During the excavation, an artefact assemblage was found buried in a small pit just in front of the wall. This group of objects consists of a metal item, which was located close to the surface, two terracotta figurines and a nearly complete limestone figurine²⁹. The circumstances of this find point to the deliberate deposition of these artefacts. Although the excavation area was extended, no other finds were located within close vicinity to this assemblage.

One of the terracotta figurines, found in three pieces within the pit, is understood to have been mould-made and of medium size. Only two of the fragments could be joined (Fig. 7). The third, although it could be joined to nei-

ther of the other two, surely belonged to the same figurine. The two adjoining fragments formed a portion measuring 13cm wide and 17cm high, possibly belonging to the left side of the figurine. This section clearly reveals that at least the lower portion of this figurine was formed in low relief. A standing lion with a hand holding it by its mane is visible on the preserved portion. The lion has a simply carved body with a slender muscle structure. Its mane has been made explicit with many incised lines. A closed mouth, nostrils and vacuous eyes are also depicted. The hand holding the lion by its mane belongs to a human figure that is much larger than the lion. A bracelet is seen on the wrist. It is hard to engender the owner of the hand in this extremely fragmentary artefact, but the presence of the bracelet points to the likelihood of this being a female figure.

Although only a small portion of the figurine has been preserved, it can be confidently concluded that it once consisted of a deity (a goddess?) sitting on a throne flanked by lions. Presuming this reconstruction is correct, the goddess could be identified as Cybele. This seems highly likely since this iconographical representation of the goddess is well exemplified within the Cypriot repertoire³⁰. As no exact similar could be traced within the coroplastic or plastic art of Cyprus it is not possible to offer a complete and accurate stylistic evaluation of the artefact. However it is possible to give an approximate date, especially in consideration of the slender body structure of the

²⁸ The scope of the excavation for the teams of CMP was not focused to the revealing of the wall but towards another aim of locating burials from the conflict year of 1974. As a result of this the full extension of the wall was not revealed by any means.

²⁹ These objects will be evaluated in more detail in an forthcoming publication by the author.

³⁰ Nicolaou 1979, 172-176.

lion. The sphinxes from two funerary *stelai* from Golgoi, both dated to the end of the 5th century BC, are the best parallels for the lion of the Sykhari-*Lakkin* figurine³¹. Thus the latter too can be placed within the late 5th century BC. This date, more or less, also falls within the time span of the emergence of the cult of Cybele on Cyprus³².

The second terracotta figurine also depicts a figure sitting on a throne and flanked by animals (Fig. 8). This mould-made figurine was produced as a single hollow piece. Its outer surface is extremely worn, and so it is not possible to offer a detailed examination, especially regarding anatomical details. Nevertheless, despite the poor state of preservation, it is possible to identify two protrusions on the chest as breasts, thus confirming this to be a female figure (a goddess).

The extremely worn nature of the surface also obstructs the identification of the animals that flank the throne. A cautious suggestion – bearing in mind the lion on the first figurine – is to identify them as lions too. If this is the case, then this can also be recognized as a Cybele figurine; given the very poor state of preservation, it is, however, impossible to determine a date.

The final figurine from the deposit is larger in comparison to the previous two and is also different in that it was carved from limestone. It depicts a male sitting

on a throne, this time flanked by two rams (Fig. 9). This is the best-preserved of the three figurines; the surface is not excessively worn and it is missing only the top portion of the head. The figurine, together with the throne and rams, sits on a rectangular plinth with a width of 8 cm and a height of 1cm. The preserved total height of the figurine is 24cm. The divine iconography – a throne flanked by two kneeling rams – identifies the seated male figure as a god. The presence of the rams also helps to identify the deity as the Cypriot ‘Master of the Ram’³³ or, more commonly, Zeus Ammon³⁴. The figurine personifies the god as a bearded man wearing a long *chiton* and holding a *cornucopia* with his left hand. A shallow and circular bowl-like depression is carved in the lap of the seated god, and this was presumably used as a censer.

The artefact displays a close resemblance to some Cypriot figurines exhibited in the Louvre, especially in terms of its distinctive iconographic features. General iconographic similarities can be drawn with at least four examples from Athienou³⁵, Golgoi³⁶, Malloura³⁷ and one without provenance (Fig. 10)³⁸.

From the aforementioned parallels especially the Malloura example and the specimen without the provenance, both

³¹ Tatton – Brown 1986, 443, pl. XLVII.6; Masson 1989, fig. 2.

³² Nicolaou 1979, 170.

³³ Even though this cult is widely known as that of Zeus Ammon in the archaeological literature, Cypriot variants of it are sometimes referred as “Master of the Ram”, Counts 2010, 138.

³⁴ Counts 2009, 105-106; Kleibl 2010.

³⁵ Hermary 1989, 306 No. 610.

³⁶ Hermary 1989, 307 No. 611.

³⁷ Hermary 1989, 309 No. 616.

³⁸ Hermary 1989, 310 No. 617.

dated to the end of the 4th century BC, show very distinct iconographical similarities to the Sykhari figurine. This iconographical similarity is not caught only on the fact that figurines were carved as seated on a throne flanked with rams but also with the figures holding a *cornucopia*. Gologi example dated to the first half of the 5th century BC, on the other hand, draws very similar traits especially with its workmanship of the clothing.

In light of the parallels, especially when less detailed body and clothing traits were taken into consideration, the Sykhari-*Lakkin* figurine can be accepted as a close parallel of the Golgoi example dated to the first half of the 5th century BC³⁹. But the *cornucopia* held at the left hand of the Sykhari example enables us to move this date half a century forward as the first examples with *cornucopia* are not seen earlier than the second half of the 5th century BC⁴⁰. In light of this evaluation a final date given to the second half of the 5th century BC seems acceptable for the Master of the Ram figurine from Sykhari-*Lakkin*.

The bronze artefact from the deposit, which was found on top the figurines, must have been functionally related to the rest of the group. It has a convex profiled base, a concave profiled body and an out-flaring rim (Fig. 11). It is 7cm high; the diameter of the base measures 11.5cm and the diameter of the rim is 12cm. At first glance, the object might be interpreted as some kind of a bronze ves-

sel, but a circular socket with a diameter of 6cm, located at the bottom, suggests it served a different purpose. It seems that the socket must have been used to secure the vessel onto a foot or another carrier element (a pedestal or a shaft?). The socket and the resemblance of its shape to some known *thymateria*⁴¹ suggest that this piece was once belonging to a *thymaterion*.

Area 2

Area 2, situated to the south of the dirt road that divides the valley, is characterized by a preponderance of ceramics and industrial tools (Charts 1 and 3). This area is particularly notable for being the only one with firm evidence of structures.

The most important surface find from Area 2 was located during work to clear vegetation. This find, a fragment broken in a polyangular manner, is the only marble artefact recovered from the valley. The maximum preserved width of the fragment is 0.30m; it has a height of 0.265m and a maximum thickness of 0.10m.

On one side of the fragment is an ornamentation in relief, depicting bunches of grapes hanging from interlaced branches which are adorned with leaves (Fig. 12a). As understood from the iconography, this side must have been a portion of a rich vegetal motif. On the back of the ornamented side, which has a finely processed smooth surface, two letters carved close to one of the broken

³⁹ Hermary 1989, 307 No. 611.

⁴⁰ Kleibl 2010, 150.

⁴¹ Ambrosini 2013, fig. 9.

edges are visible. The first and more easily readable is the letter "Θ"; the next letter can be cautiously interpreted as "Π", based on the two vertical lines visible (Fig. 12b&c).

The fragment could possibly be part of a sarcophagus. In which case, the decorated side would be the outer face of the sarcophagus, while the undecorated smooth side would be the interior. The fragmentary inscription from the inner side could then be interpreted, with caution, as a mason's mark related to the quarrying of the marble or the signature of the artist who carved it. Due to the poor state of preservation, the loss of details and the fact that it represents only a small portion of the whole decoration, it is impossible to offer any conclusions regarding the type of sarcophagus to which this fragment possibly once belonged.

Among the other surface finds from Area 2, artefacts related to production oriented usage are notable due to their significant quantities. Among them, in addition to grinding stones of various sizes (four in total), there are fragments of mortars (four fragmented examples) and basins (six fragmented examples) (Fig. 13). A single millstone was also found in the same area, at a point further from the dirt road. The millstone, which was partially damaged by machinery during the uprooting of a large bush, has a diameter of 0.60m (Fig. 14). There is a central socket - approximately 0.20 x 0.20m - for fixing it to a mechanism.

The production oriented character of *Sykhari-Lakkini*, indicated by these

finds, is reinforced by two structural remains from Area 2. Found during excavation, these remains consist of a subsurface cylindrical structure adjacent to a small portion of tessellated floor. These were situated next to the main dirt road and close to the area whence the industrial artefacts came.

The partially damaged cylindrical structure measures 1.80m in diameter and has a preserved depth of 1.60m. Its inner wall was formed of irregular rows of stones coated with a 0,02m-thick layer of pinkish hydraulic plaster (Fig. 15). The presence of this plaster identifies the structure as a storage vat built to store some type of liquid. A smaller and rectangular secondary vat, measuring 0.50 x 0.20m with a depth of 0.50m, was installed at the bottom of the main structure. A Roman roof tile (0.40 x 0.25m) was found purposely placed into the hydraulic plaster at the bottom of the main vat. The capacity of the vat, in light of the measurements taken from the surviving remains, has been calculated as 5.18m³ (approximately 5,180 litres).

Its overall character surely defines this subterranean storage structure as a "collecting vat", with the smaller second vat located at the bottom being a "sedimentation pit". Similar collecting vats with the same features have been found in great numbers along the Levantine coast⁴² and in lesser numbers on Cyprus,

⁴² Ahlström 1978; Hirschfeld 1983; Hirschfeld – Birger – Calderon 1991; Al Houdaich 2009; Avrutis 2015.

and are identified as structural parts of wine presses⁴³.

Even though it is only partially preserved and missing associated structural elements such as walls, storage depots, etc., the collecting vat from Sykhari-*Lakkin* can be paralleled with the collecting vat of a Byzantine winery at the Nesher-Ramla quarry in Israel⁴⁴. Accordingly, a date between the 5th and 6th centuries AD, as given to vat from Nesher-Ramla, can also be suggested for the Sykhari-*Lakkin* example.

The tessellated floor that was found adjacent to the collecting vat was located only 0.10m below the surface level. Due to its close proximity to the surface, the floor was extremely damaged and only partially preserved (Figure 16). The preserved portion measures 1.70 x 1.40m, covering a very small area of just 2.38m². This is understood to be the only surviving portion of the treading floor of the winery to which the vat also once belonged. The floor displays a production technique in which broken river pebbles were cut as irregularly shaped *tesserae*. The pebble *tesserae* were laid on a greyish and gritty mortar that was traceable at the broken edges to form an undecorated floor pavement.

High numbers of wine presses with tessellated floors survive along the Levantine coast⁴⁵ as well as in southeastern

Turkey⁴⁶. The fact that most of the similar examples from the Levant and Turkey are characterized by elaborate tessellated floors makes it hard to date the Sykhari-*Lakkin* winery with its more simply furnished floor. Nonetheless, its partial similarity to a floor from a winery in Khirbet el-Lauz might point to a late Roman or early Byzantine date for the floor at Sykhari-*Lakkin*⁴⁷. Finally, taking account of both the collecting vat and the tessellated floor, it can be proposed that the Sykhari-*Lakkin* winery was actively in use between the late Roman and early Byzantine periods.

Among the small finds, the largest assemblages from Area 2 are those of ceramics and terracotta artefacts. All the ceramics were found concentrated in a small area measuring approximately 50 x 40m. Among the sherds collected and documented during the survey and vegetation clearing, bases, body fragments, handles and rim fragments of *amphorae* and *pithoi* are notable due to their substantial numbers (113 fragments in total). Fine-ware fragments of common, everyday forms were also present, but in lower quantities in general (28 fragments).

Although exact dates cannot be established for each ceramic find, due to them being mostly partial fragments and belonging to coarse wares, it is possible to suggest a generalized dating. Evaluation of traceable forms, decorative traits and clay typologies reveals a concentration especially in the late Roman period.

⁴³ Hadjisavvas – Caniotis 2012, 161-163.

⁴⁴ Avrutis 2015, 50, Fig. 2.69.

⁴⁵ Roll – Ayalon 1981, 111-125; Hirschfeld 1983, 211-218; Hirschfeld – Birger – Calderon 1991, 107-109; Rahmani 1991, 95-110; Sidi ve diğ. 2003, 253-266; Al Houdaieh 2009, 346-348; Avrutis 2015, 21-52.

⁴⁶ Gider – Büyüközer 2013, 28-30.

⁴⁷ Al Houdaieh 2009, 348.

Late Roman repertory, attracts attention with the vast prepotency of Late Roman Amphora 1 (LRA1) form especially traceable through the handles (Fig. 17)⁴⁸. The vast presence of LRA1 amphorae among the pottery repertory of Sykhari contributes a lot to the identifying the utilization reason of the valley as well as to the case of the dating.

The vast presence of the LRA1 amphorae, a trade oriented form of vessel, enables us to place Sykhari within a wider trade network. In this aspect, LRA1 amphorae can be attested as the main mediator for the transport of the produced goods from the valley.

As for the dating, even though a detailed form analyses is strongly essential in order to express solid inferences related to the Late Roman repertory, an overall dating can be still established again in light of the LRA1 amphorae. As much expressed previously, the popularization of the LRA1 within the Cypriot production system was not achieved earlier than the 6th century AD⁴⁹. In this aspect, it would be reasonable to state that the *terminus post quem* for the most intense period of production in the valley must be around 6th century AD.

On the other hand, some black-glazed and painted Hellenistic fragments clearly supply us with a much earlier date (Fig. 18a). The presence of few glazed Byzantine ceramics, on the other hand, enables us to extend the ceramic chro-

nology to later periods as well (Fig. 18b). However, one must always keep in mind that, none of the repertories from this earlier and later periods can be solidly attested with a production oriented character.

The terracotta artefacts from the same locality include mostly roof tiles (30 fragments) (Fig. 18c) and a few lamp fragments. Since neither the roof tiles nor the lamp fragments are complete enough to establish proper chronologies and typologies, no further details can be offered about these finds.

A final find group –glass fragments – is represented by very few examples (8 in total). Remarkably, fragments of glass vessels consist of only the bases of small vessels. They offer little in the way of hard data, but are useful in offering a sense of the nature of the use of the valley.

Conclusions

Due to the small scale of the evaluation and the nature of the finds, the artefacts and architectural remains found in Sykhari-Lakkin can offer only a superficial evaluation of this newly discovered Cypriot archaeological landscape. As noted above, just 5% of the valley area was investigated by survey and excavation, whilst the finds themselves are very fragmentary. This limited data, plus the non-archaeological nature of the recording of the finds, makes it impossible to offer a detailed and in-depth evaluation of how, and for how long, the area of Sykhari-Lakkin was utilized and/or inhabited.

⁴⁸ For a brief information related to LRA1 amphorae see Peacock – Williams 1986.

⁴⁹ Demesticha 2003, 471; Reynolds 2005, 577-578.

The building blocks and architectural decorative elements, found only in Area 1, unfortunately offer little regarding the character and the chronology of the utilization/habitation of the valley. The fluted architectural block presumably comes from a monumental building, but such a structure is not traceable, even at foundation level, within the valley. The ashlar blocks that were found very close to the wall that was documented in the section of one of the trenches might, however, have been used in this as yet unrevealed monumental structure (a sanctuary?).

The absence of structural remains of the monumental building, or buildings, which once housed the decorative and non-decorative architectural elements found in Area 1 can be explained in one of two ways. The first, and probably the most likely, is that these architectural elements were brought to the valley from their original location as *spolia* for the construction of the modern lime kilns. If this is the case, the site of ancient Chytroi, which lies 13km to the southeast of the valley, is the most likely original locality of these elements. The second possibility is that the structural remains of the buildings which once housed these architectural elements have not yet been identified since they continue to be hidden under the soil. The presence of the winery in Area 2 and the wall located in Area 1 indicate that there may well have been substantial structures within the valley.

The uncertainty that surrounds the identification of the buildings to which the architectural elements found in Area 1 originally belonged, mean that it is not possible to determine the architectural

layout of the valley. On the other hand, the tombs and figurines from Area 1, together with the tools of production, ceramics and remains of the winery from Area 2 are very useful for understanding how the valley was utilized in antiquity.

The vast number of production tools, varying from mortars to basins and a millstone, demonstrate that the principal impetus for habitation of Sykhari-Lakkin in antiquity was production oriented. The ceramic finds also support this conclusion. The abundance of coarse-ware fragments, together with the storage- and transport-oriented character of the majority of the traceable forms is also important at this matter. Especially the vast presence of a trade oriented form, namely the LRA1 amphorae, clarifies the production-oriented basis of the utilization of the valley. The geographical location of this area – at the centre of a road network – would have enabled any product produced in Sykhari-Lakkin to be transported to Mesaoria and to the north beyond the mountain range.

The collecting vat and the tessellated floor of the winery are the only two pieces of architectural evidence for the production-oriented utilization of the valley. Studies conducted on Cypriot olive-oil and wine production clearly concludes that the situation regarding wine production and consumption is not clear⁵⁰. Thus, the winery at Sykhari-Lakkin is an important piece of evidence since it is one of the few wine-production struc-

⁵⁰ Hadjisavvas – Chaniotis 2012, 161.

tures that have survived from ancient Cyprus.

Unfortunately, the attachment of this sort of production unit to a particular settlement is difficult to determine, as they are generally situated away from urban centres. Nonetheless, it is possible to suggest cautiously that the winery of Sykhari-*Lakkin* once fell within the territory of ancient Chytroi (modern-day Kythrea/Değirmenlik). A secondary, and more likely suggestion, is that such production units were most probably elements of family-based agricultural estates⁵¹. This family-based system must have been controlled from rural residences (manor houses?) situated across the countryside, which were, of course, ultimately all related to an urban centre.

Considering the smaller finds, the roof tiles found around the remains of the winery presumably formed part of the upper structure of the building. Also, it is highly likely that the storage- and/or transport-oriented ceramics were used within the production-system of the winery. When the lamp fragments are considered together with the glass vessel fragments and other everyday ceramic vessels, it is clear that they are markers of a settled existence in and/or around the winery.

The presence of many tombs in a specific area is also significant in this respect. The formation of a cemetery is the strongest indicator of settled life, social unity and a sense of “regional belonging” among the residents of Sykhari-*Lakkin*.

Even if the decorated fragment should be taken into consideration as a sarcophagus, it is not necessary to relate it to a settlement. This one example is not sufficient solely to suggest the existence of elaborate sarcophagus burials within the cemetery of Sykhari-*Lakkin*. Whilst the possibility of the existence of sarcophagus burials should not be ruled out completely due to a lack of evidence, it should be acknowledged that this fragment may, in all likelihood, be a *spolia* which was transported to the valley from elsewhere.

The figurines found in the area are all votive-oriented, and this demonstrates that Sykhari-*Lakkin* once also had a religious function. Although most of the figurines point, quite remarkably, to the existence of a cult of Cybele, the worship of Zeus-Ammon is also notable. The presence of these votive sculptures brings with it the inevitable need for a sacred structure, or structures, to host the related cults. However, no architectural evidence has yet been revealed that might identify such a structure. The partially excavated wall in Area 1, in front of which the figurines were found, is the only architectural element revealed to date that might shed light on this matter, but it is not possible to draw firm conclusions from such inadequate evidence. Only further archaeological excavations might reveal more about the structure of the religious function of the valley.

As for the dating of the habitation and utilization of the valley, unfortunately the tombs, the architectural elements and the production oriented artefacts are all inadequate. The ceramics and the figu-

⁵¹ Hadjisavvas – Chaniotis 2012, 161.

rines, together with the winery are the principal pieces of evidence for reliably establishing a chronology.

Preliminary studies on the ceramics, both fine (Chart 4) and the coarse wares (Chart 5), indicate that activity at Sykhari-*Lakkin* extended from the Hellenistic period to the Byzantine era. Although the number of forms that cannot be attributed to a particular period is undeniably large, all the ceramic evaluations indicate that the most intensive use of ceramics in the valley can be related to the Late Roman period. On the other hand, the date of the votive figurines from Area 1, falling within the Classical period (second half of the 5th century BC), confirms that the valley was utilized earlier than the Hellenistic period.

In light of all this, admittedly scarce yet informative, evidence, Sykhari-*Lakkin* can be identified as an archaeological landscape which was habited, probably intermittently, for at least 800 years. Some sort of religious function seems to have been the initial impetus for utilization/habitation of the valley; where as later, economic functions seem to be dominated. At this certain point, of course one should always take into consideration that this present inference is only based on the existing data and is strongly open to changes or updates through future studies.

The evidence revealed during the survey and excavation characterizes Sykhari-*Lakkin* as a landscape that was utilized/inhabited at different periods for different purposes. As demonstrated by this preliminary study, Sykhari-*Lakkin*

offers an archaeological-landscape profile with high potential, even in the light of the limited nature of the evidence collected to date. Although the vast majority of the information about this archaeological landscape is obtained from the surface finds, the existence of architectural elements, buried figurines, a partially buried wall and the remains of a winery indicate that the real 'wealth' of this site is to be found under the ground. It is evident, in light of the data presented here, that Sykhari-*Lakkin* has the capacity to shed more light on the often debated religious- and industrial-oriented utilization of the Cypriot landscape in antiquity. In order to achieve this and to understand better the character and structure of this untouched landscape of the Cypriot past, systematic surveys together with further excavations are necessary.

List of Figures and Charts

Fig. 1) Location of Sykhari-*Lakkin* on Kyrenia Mountain Range (Visual from Google Earth[®], editing by the author).

Fig. 2) General satellite imagery of Sykhari – *Lakkin* (Visual from Google Earth[®], editing by the author).

Fig. 3) General view of Sykhari-*Lakkin* with the Mesaoria Plain in the background (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 4) Satellite image showing the surveyed areas and main find spots in Sykhari – *Lakkin* (Visual from Google Earth[®], editing by the author).

Fig. 5) Entrances of the looted tombs (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 6) Excavation cross-section with the partial wall visible inside (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 7) Partial terracotta figurine (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).

Fig. 8) Terracotta figurine of a setaed goddess (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).

Fig. 9) Limestone figurine of “Master of the Ram” (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).

Fig. 10) Limestone figurines of Zeus-Ammon from Louvre: a) from Athienou, b) from Golgoi; c) from Malloura; d) Unknown provenance (Hermay 1989, 306-310).

Fig. 11) Bronze object (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).

Fig. 12) Marble piece with partial inscription and relief decoration (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).

Fig. 13) Basins (Photograph by the author, drawings by Nalan Kaba).

Fig. 14) Millstone at its find spot (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 15) Collecting vat of the winery (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 16) Pebble floor (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 17) Handles collected from the survey (Photograph by the author).

Fig. 18) Some of the fine wares and tile fragments collected from the survey (Photograph by the author).

Chart 1) Distribution of the finds to the surveyed areas

Chart 2) Ratio of finds from Area 1

Chart 3) Ratio of finds from Area 2

Chart 4) Periodical distribution of fine wares

Chart 5) Periodical distribution of coarse wares.

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Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

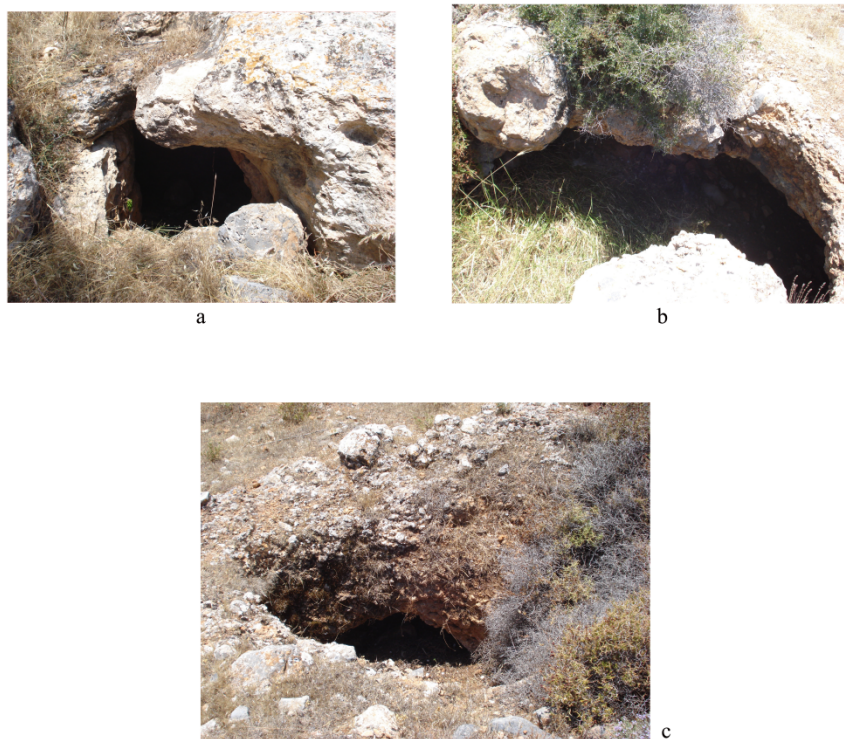


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figür 8



Figure 9

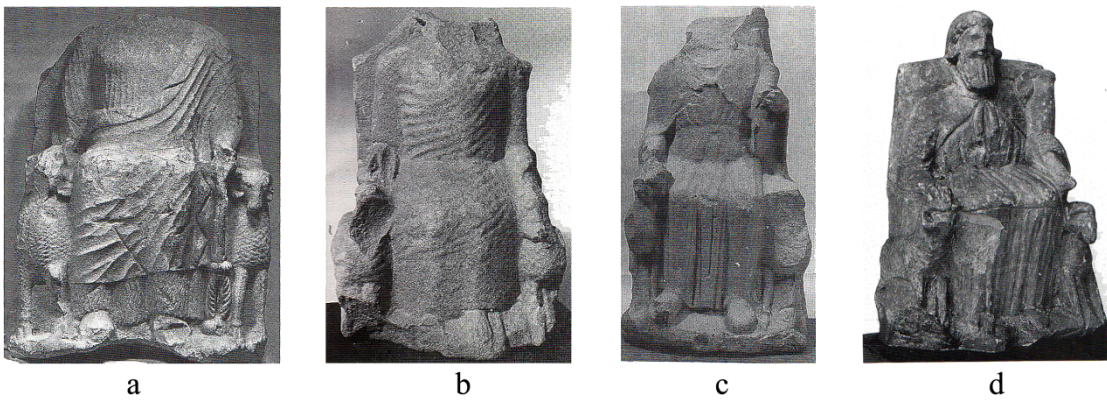


Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

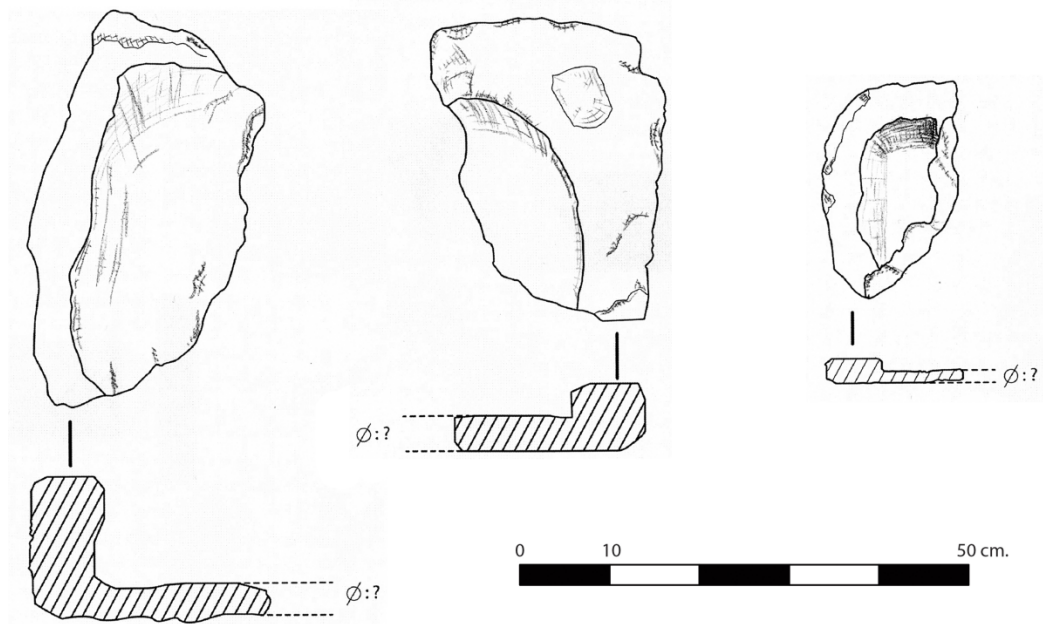


Figure 13



Figure 14

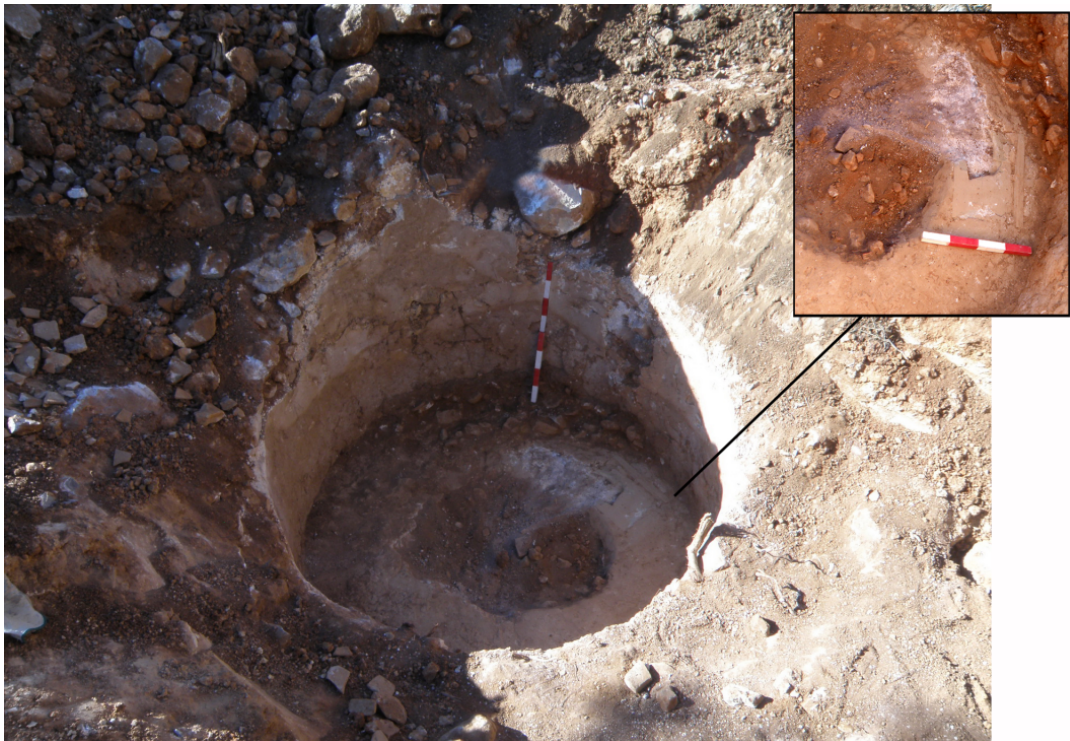


Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

