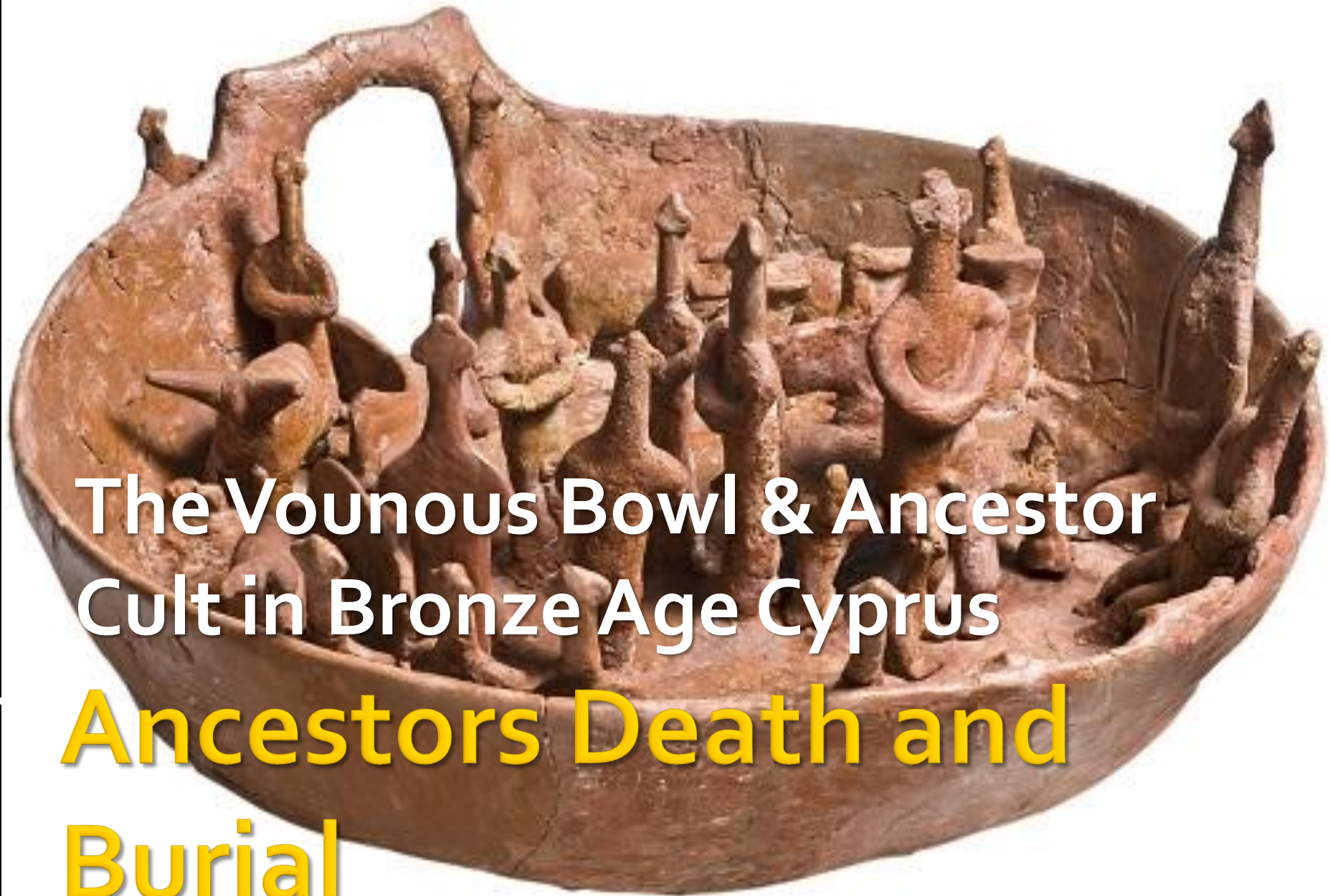


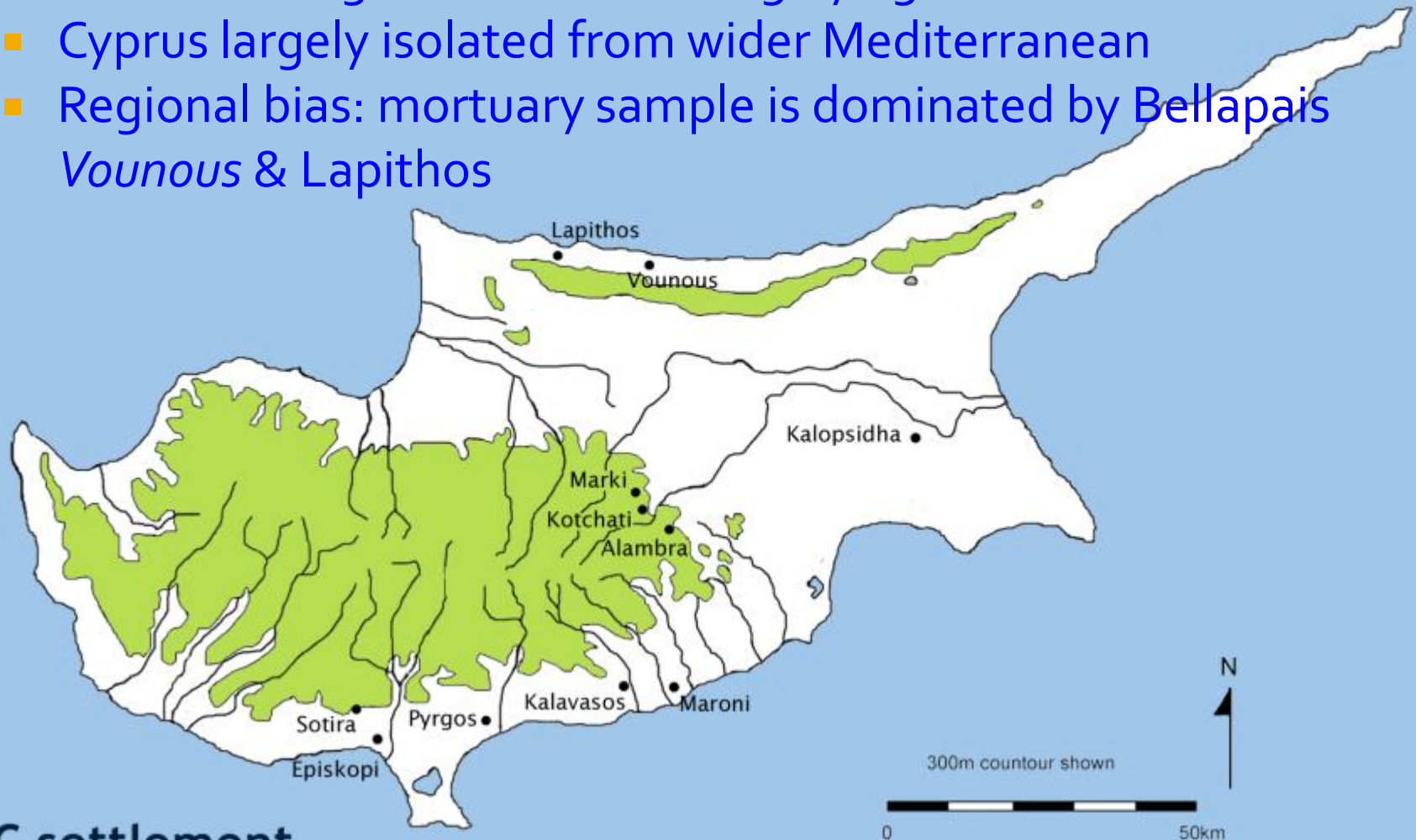


**The Vounous Bowl & Ancestor
Cult in Bronze Age Cyprus**

**Ancestors Death and
Burial**

Early-Middle Cypriot Period

- Small farming settlements & largely egalitarian communities
- Cyprus largely isolated from wider Mediterranean
- Regional bias: mortuary sample is dominated by Bellapais Vounous & Lapithos



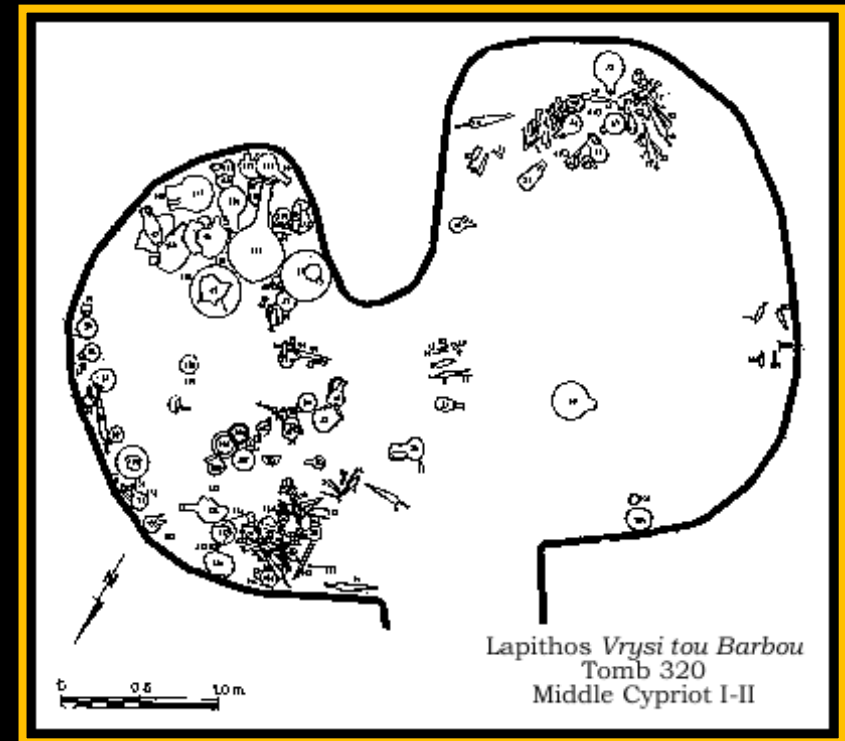
MC settlement

Problems with the Cypriot data

- Looting: ancient & modern
- Later building activity
- Multiple burials: disturbing earlier burials & associations between individuals/grave goods; deliberate removal of certain grave goods
- Early excavations: little attention given to details of tomb architecture, burial stratigraphy, the placement & condition of human remains etc
- Only limited osteological analyses
- Complexities of multi-phase burial treatment: something early excavators were not aware of

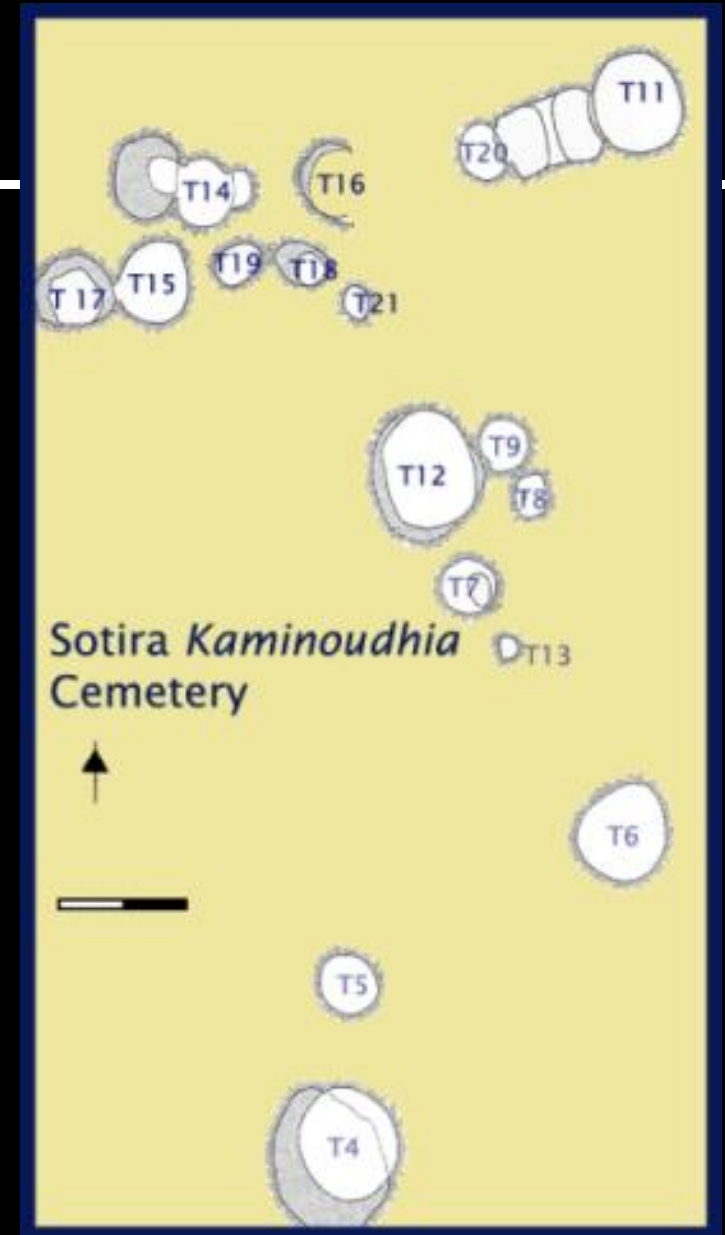
Characteristics of EC-MC Burials

- Extramural cemeteries
- Rock-cut chamber tombs & pit tombs
- Reuse of tombs for multiple primary & secondary burials
- Regular deposition of grave goods with the dead



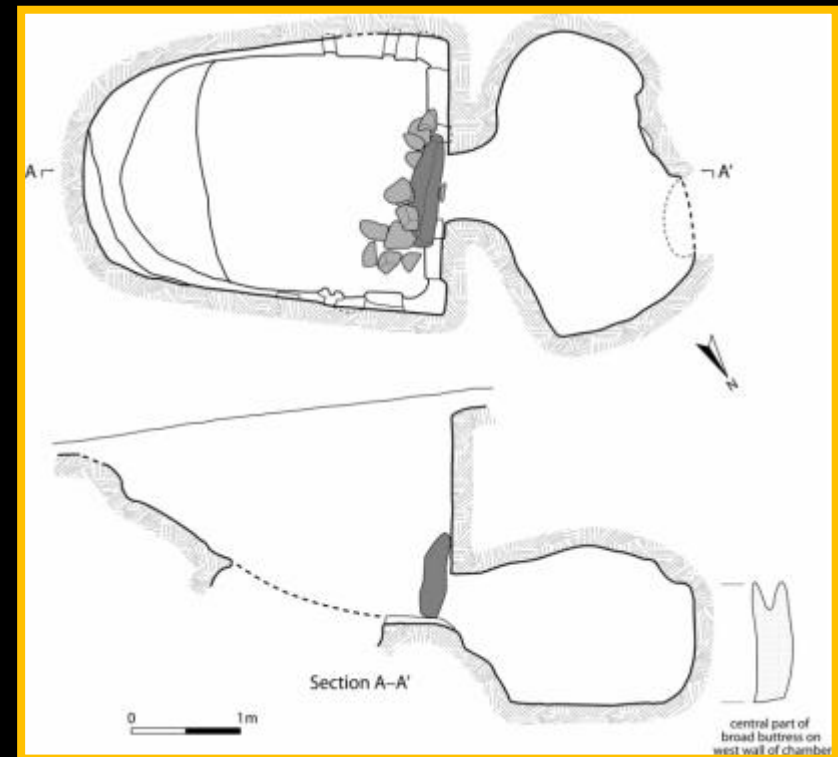
Cemeteries

- Extramural cemeteries:
 - Slopes of hills, in sight of the settlement
- Vary in size: small clusters of tombs to extensive cemeteries
- Formal bounded burial ground reflecting increasing competition over resources?
 - Goldstein 1981: corporate group rights over restricted resources will be legitimated by lineal descent & will be reaffirmed through ritual
 - Maintenance of a permanent bounded area for the exclusive disposal of their dead



Chamber Tombs

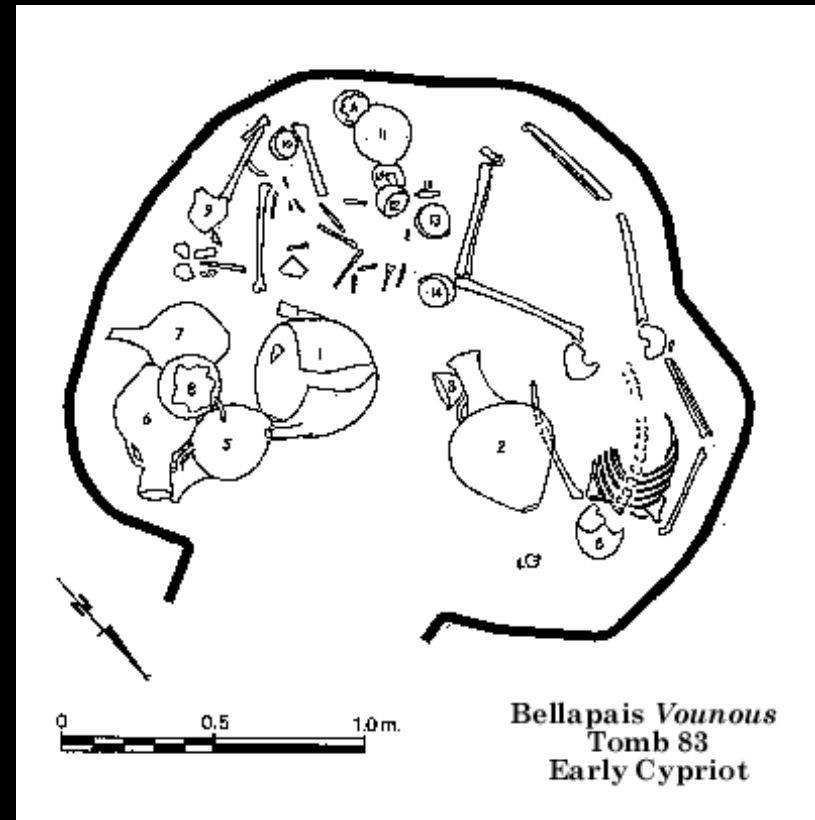
- Irregular chambers cut into the bed rock
- Approached by an open entrance passage or shaft: *dromos*
- Entered through a narrow passage or doorway: *stomion*
- *Stomion* was closed with a stone slab or rubble



Karmi *Palealona* Tomb 6

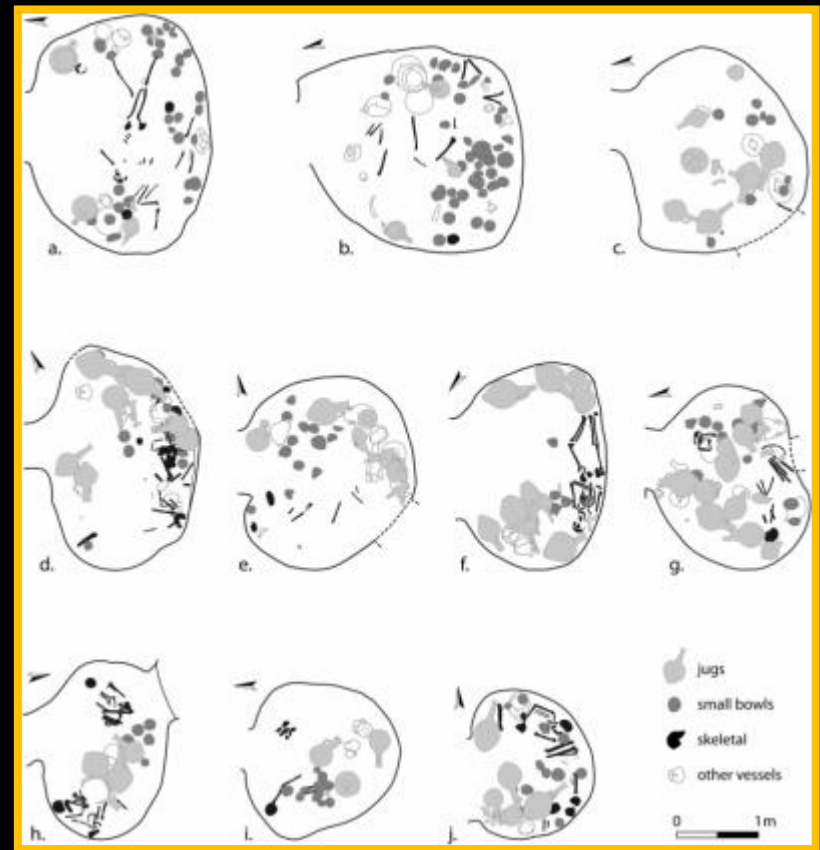
Disposal of the body

- Inhumation
- Multiple burials
 - Vounous: double burials (in extended dorsal or flexed position)
- Represent different kinship/family groups?
- Manning 1993: select collective tombs where the emergent elite families were buried



Multiphase Ritual?

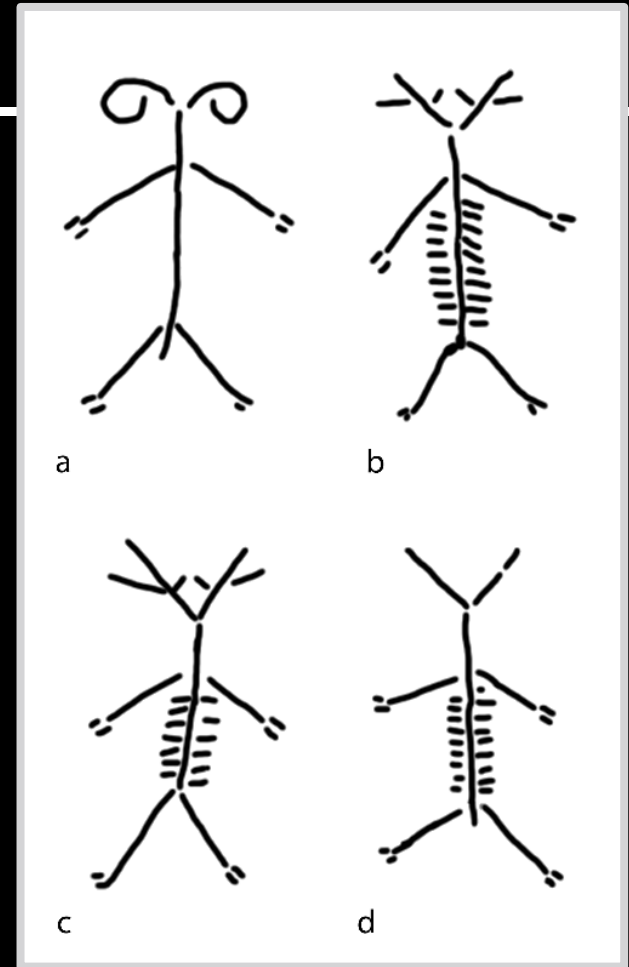
- Some tombs have mainly skulls & few postcranial remains
 - Deliberate disarticulation of body & rearrangement of bones
 - Handling of disarticulated bones an integral part of funerary ritual
- Tends to be associated with large tombs & rich burial assemblages
- Handling of bones & secondary funerary practices = evidence for ancestor cult



Disarticulated bones in chamber tombs

EC-MC Ritual

- Cemeteries: primary focus for social gathering & ritual performance
- Elaborate ceremonies:
 - “theatrically charged events involving feasting, dancing”, (Webb & Frankel 2010, 200, 203)
 - Costumes of animal hides, horns & antlers
 - Animal sacrifice & libations
 - Prestige display
 - Supernatural beings or humans dressed in animal skins & skulls?



Therianthrope figures

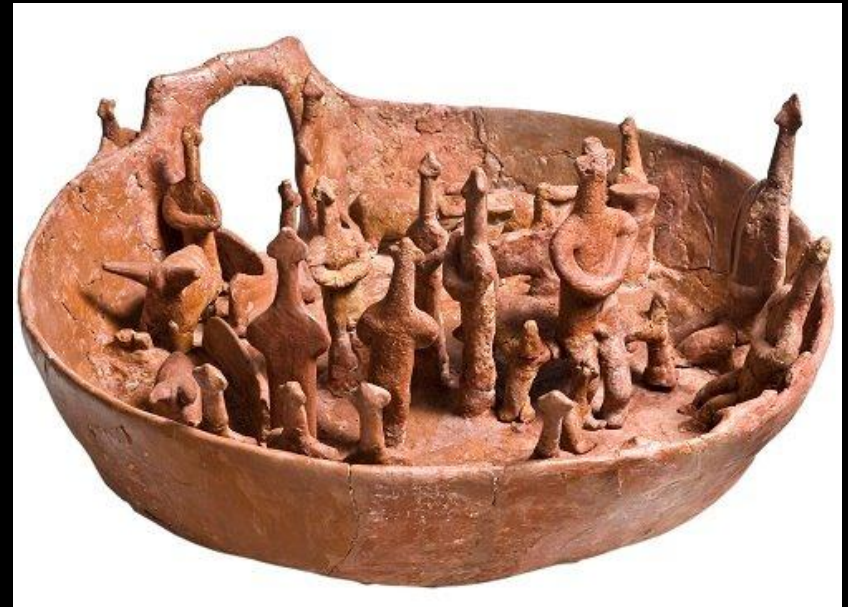
Practice of Ancestor Cult

- Elaboration of a small number of tomb entrances:
 - Pilasters & anthropomorphic carvings
- Large jars placed at the entrance of some tombs at *Vounous*
- Iconography of the Kotsiatis model & the Vounous Bowl



Vounous Bowl & Ancestors

- Various (male) figures in special enclosure:
 - Cattle – economic cattle/sacrifice
 - Large enthroned male figure
 - Shrine motif
 - Bench with seated male figures
 - “supplicant”
- Does this imagery fit in with our understanding of ancestor cult & EC/MC funerary ritual?



Vounous Bowl

Grave Goods

- Personal possessions/daily life:
 - Rich & diverse array of Red Polished pottery
 - Copper-based weapons, ornaments, & tools
 - Spindle whorls & whetstones



Red polished jug



Bronze spear-head



Spindle whorl

Special Grave Goods

- Objects made specifically for funerary ritual
- EC I: Red Polished ceramic models:
 - Spindles
 - Combs
 - Daggers
- Function, meaning, purpose?



Model dagger

Vounous Ceremonial Bowls

- Exclusive to *Vounoi*: product of a specialist workshop,
 - Deep bowls (c.16-24cm tall): modelled animal heads & discs attached at rim
 - Tall pedestalled bowls (c.23-53cm tall): with modelled tulip bowls & animals placed around rims
 - Basin (c. 23 cm tall): 3 miniature bowls on rim, each with pair of animal protomes & disc attached to the rim



Red Polished pedestal bowl

Vounoi Pedestalled Bowls

- Whole animals or animal heads alternating with miniature tulip bowls
- Visual display embedded in funerary ritual
 - One with 2 clay pegs in the rim & detachable animal models (boar & stag) – physically manipulated in funerary performance?



Vounous Deep Bowls

- Modelled animal heads alternating with pairs of discs
- Not clear how these are incorporated in ceremonial practices and handled?
 - Visual display significant & iconography reflects economic capital of the community
 - "...implies widespread promotional feasting behaviour & creation of social debt at this site in EC I & II" (Webb & Frankel 2010: 197)



Deep bowl

Competitive Feasting

- Complex, decorative ritual vessels found in around 1/3 of tombs at Vounous
 - "...implies widespread promotional feasting behaviour & creation of social debt at this site in EC I & II" (Webb & Frankel 2010: 197)
- Not clear how these are incorporated in ceremonial practice:
 - Visual display significant & iconography reflects economic capital of the community



Red Polished tulip bowl,
Vounous

Competitive Feasting

- Plentiful evidence for competitive feasting from *Vounous*
- Large numbers of decorated pottery: bowls & jugs
- Particular emphasis on individually distinctive drinking vessels:
 - Use of selected vessels as vehicles of 'symbolic style' intended to focus attention on particular actors
- Large quantities of animal bones:
 - Cattle, sheep & goat



Red Polished tulip bowl
Vounous

Red Polished Figures

- EC-MC transition
 - Between 20 - 35.5 cm high
 - Broken base: intended to be set up in ground
- “a focus on the face & on value-added attributes of jewellery & clothing; on the beautification & *social presentation* of the body” (Webb 2016, 15)
- Lapithos tombs: repeated placement of figures in metal rich burials near skulls, beaded faience necklaces, & ritual vases
- Attention focusing device in funerary ceremony?



Red Polished figures from Lapithos

Funerary Display

- Manning 1993: funerary ritual was the major arena for elite display:
 - **Conspicuous consumption** of the new metal artefacts
- Keswani: extravagant & escalating levels of copper consumption in some communities
- Lapithos & Vounous:
 - Increase tomb size & quantities of grave goods consumed at both sites implies “a high level of prestige competition” (Keswani 2005: 363)
 - But not a rigid hierarchical system of wealth



Bronze dagger

Funerary Display

- Elaborate composite vessels with exaggerated spouts
- Ceremonial consumption of exotic alcoholic drinks as an element of funerary ritual?
 - Linked by Herscher (1997) to the Near Eastern *marzeah*
 - Or a local version of the Near Eastern *kispum*?



Red Polished jug, Vounous

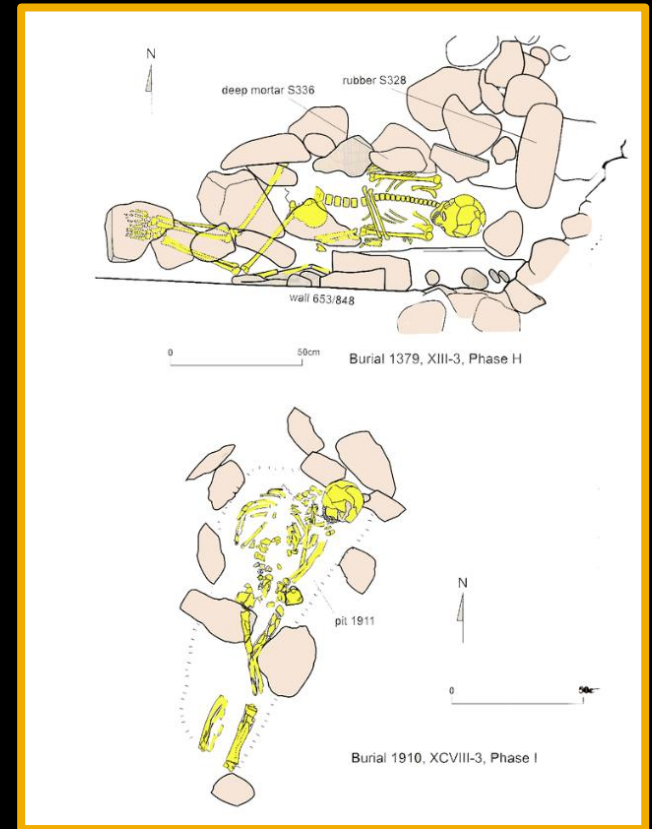
Intramural Burials: Philia

- Occasional burials within settlement
- Marki *Alonia* & Kissonerga, Philia phase: child burials in pithos in pit outside identified buildings
- Why different treatment of children:
 - Not a full member of the community & not afforded full ritual
 - Emotional response to loss of child?



Intramural Burials: MC Period

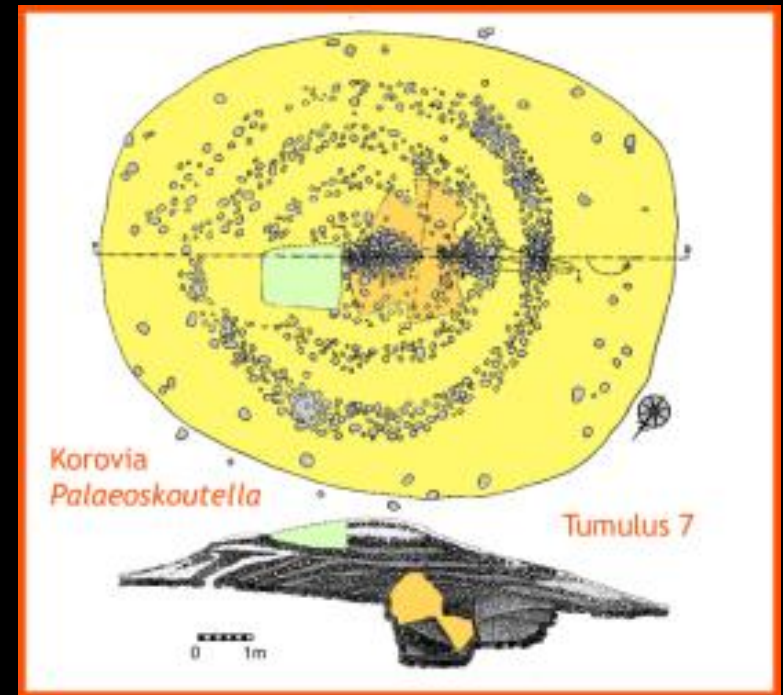
- Slight bias towards women & children
- Tend to be disarticulated & incomplete: secondary deposition of disarticulated bones typically with no grave goods
- MC II: final occupation phase. Fragmentary, incomplete burial of woman (in 20s) & 3 children
- Bodies placed on back supine
- Some grave goods:
 - Cooking pots, jug, hemispherical bowls, dentalium bead. Mostly have no grave goods.



Marki Alonia

Ritual Landscapes: Cyprus

- MB III: creation of ritual landscape takes place against significant social changes
- Korovia *Palaeoskoutella*: a specialised burial location
 - Physically dominates surrounding landscape
 - Modified landscape with tumuli
 - Special features for libations/sacrifices
 - Manipulation of bones



Ritual Landscapes on Cyprus

- Repeated rituals at special locale within newly constructed LC landscape:
 - Creation of a sense of place
 - Played important role in the mediation of new social relations



Burials, Korovia *Palaeoskoutella*

Summary

- Rich source of evidence for examining social relations in EC-MC Cyprus
- Extramural cemeteries provided the primary focus for social gathering & ritual performance:
 - Main arena where social relations were mediated & individuals competed to accumulate social capital.
- Complex funerary ritual might indicate importance of ancestors?
- Some RP imagery reiterates our understanding of ancestor cults