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ΣΤΕΛΙΟΥ ΑΧ. ΧΑΤΖΗΣΤΥΛΛΗ



ΧΟΡΗΓΙΑ ΙΔΡΥΜΑΤΟΣ Α.Γ. ΛΕΒΕΝΤΗ

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LATE BRONZE AGE BURIALS AT KALAVASOS-AYIOS DHIMITRIOS

The large Late Bronze Age town and cemetery site of Kalavasos-Ayios Dhimitrios has been excavated by the Vasilikos Valley Project from 1979 until the present,¹ and was featured on the 30 cent postage stamp in a series commemorating the Third International Congress of Cypriot Studies. The settlement of about 10 to 12 hectares is located halfway between Larnaca and Limassol, 3.5km. north of the coast and 8.5km. south of the Kalavasos copper mining area. It has revealed extensive architectural remains ranging from fairly prosperous domestic buildings, some with evidence of metallurgical activity, to the large ashlar complex of Building X, which was probably the residence of elite members of the community who controlled production and storage of produce, especially olive oil, on an impressive scale. Most of the excavated remains date to the 13th century B.C. (Late Cypriot IIC), but traces of 14th century occupation survive in some areas. At about 1200 B.C. the town was abandoned and some of the buildings were burned.

Ayios Dhimitrios probably corresponds to a "Mykenaeen necropolis reported 1895-6" near Mari village which was briefly mentioned in the records of late 19th century archaeological activity in the island (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899, 9). Fortunately the site does not appear to have suffered too severely from either unofficial looting or the activities of the British Museum's excavations in the area of Kalavasos and Maroni (cf. Cadogan 1992, 126).

Tombs have been found in most of the various areas excavated by the Vasilikos Valley Project, and no doubt there are hundreds more within the site as a whole, only a small percentage of which has yet been investigated. Several tombs which were discovered during the earlier seasons of our work have been fully published (South *et al.* 1989, 41-69, fig. 2 for location of the tombs), and will be mentioned only very briefly here. The main purpose of this article is to summarize the evidence from more recently excavated tombs, notably several large, elite tombs in the North-east Area of the site, adjacent to the large ashlar building which was probably the administrative centre for the community.

1. For bibliography of the site see references in South 1997, South *et al.* 1989.

1979-81 EXCAVATIONS

The tombs excavated in 1979-81 (Tombs 1-7 and 10) were mostly small to medium sized examples of typical Late Cypriot tombs with rectangular *dromoi*, from which narrow entrances, sealed with limestone or more often gypsum slabs, led into approximately circular, oval or kidney-shaped chambers. The contents of most of them had been disturbed by looting either in antiquity or in the last century; furthermore, some were damaged by the construction work for the new Nicosia to Limassol highway, or had been affected by previous erosion or levelling, so that in most cases neither the complete original contents, nor the full plan of the tomb and its relationship to any nearby architecture, could be ascertained. The orientation of the tombs varied, with entrances facing to the east slightly more often than other directions, probably simply because of the slope of the land in this direction. In these mostly emergency excavations, no large area of the site was cleared down to bedrock, so the tombs were discovered sporadically and no overview of cemetery organisation could be obtained.

The only undisturbed example was Tomb 6 in the South-East Area, where a fairly large (3.0m. diameter) oval/circular chamber had been used during Late Cypriot IIC for the burial of only one adult and a child, together with grave goods of only seven not very distinguished pots (two Plain White kraters, two Base-Ring cups, two Mycenaean straight-sided alabaster and a Monochrome jug), a bronze ring and one or two ivory objects. The human remains were located near the wall of the chamber on the right of the entrance; together with the scattered artefacts they occupied only a small portion of the space available, and the large chamber may have been created with the intention of using it for further burials, perhaps of the same family, though the common assumption that such tombs were used by family groups (e.g. Sjöqvist 1940, 26-7) has not been confirmed by any positive evidence such as inscriptions or DNA analyses. After the interments, the *stomion* was sealed with a rectangular gypsum slab. The tomb was located close to contemporary buildings, on the edge of a depression or channel in the bedrock which was subsequently filled in, at least partly as an intentional levelling prior to the construction of walls later within the Late Cypriot IIC period. Presumably, the tomb was not considered important enough for access to it to be preserved, or else the group who were using it ceased to need it.

Partly looted tombs can reveal significant information even though their contents are incomplete. We may briefly mention the example of Tomb 4 where looters had systematically searched through the contents, removing all traces of any metal objects there may have been, and piled the unwanted ceramics at one side of the chamber. We know from experience that usually a few small objects such as beads, seals, or small metal and ivory fragments are missed by the looters and can be retrieved by careful cleaning of the tomb floor and sieving; in this case, not a single fragment of metal, ivory or Mycenaean pottery was recovered, which suggests to us that the Late Cypriot IB-IIA:1 users of this tomb did not have access to imports or to large numbers of cop-

per or bronze objects. However, they certainly did have a rich repertoire of local ceramics, including at least 37 White Slip vessels and 30 of Base-Ring ware. The quantity of ceramics, and their apparent range in date, might lead us to expect a long use of the tomb with burial of several individuals, yet the scanty skeletal remains (with relatively few unidentified bones), show only two adults as having been present.

NORTH-EAST AREA EXCAVATIONS

In the North-East Area of the site an extensive area (about 2500m.²) has been excavated systematically without the limitations of rescue excavation (Fig. 1). Several tombs have been excavated, all relatively well-preserved and untouched by looters since the Late Bronze Age (see South 1997 for a summary; the final report is in preparation, South *et al.* forthcoming). These comprise one ordinary small chamber with

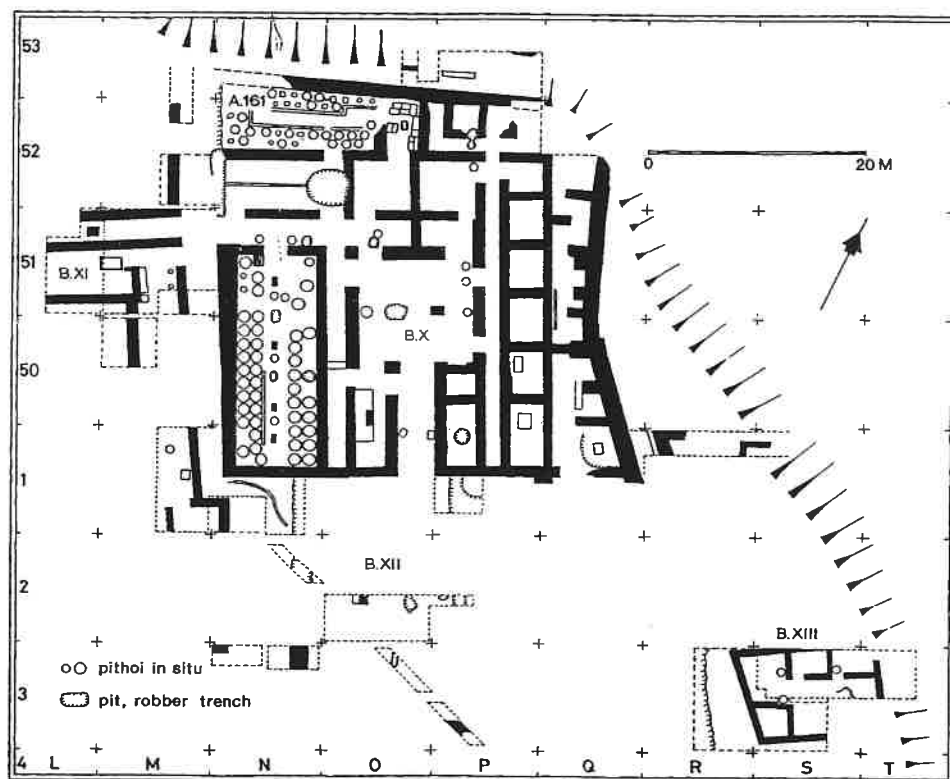


Fig. 1. Plan of 1982-95 excavations in the North-east Area at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, showing the tombs in relation to the 13th century B.C. architecture and earlier traces.

a subsidiary niche in one side of the *dromos* (Tomb 16 and 16A), three larger complexes each with a large chamber at the north end of the *dromos* plus either a subsidiary chamber and/or small niches opening from the same *dromos* (Tomb 11 with Tomb 9 and a *dromos* niche, Tomb 14 and niche 15, Tomb 13 with Tomb 12), and a separate very small burial with a rudimentary *dromos* and chamber (Tomb 17).²

When the richest of these, Tomb 11, was discovered several years ago during excavation of a trial trench next to the ashlar building, it was not clear how this tomb of Late Cypriot IIA:2 (late 15th or early 14th century) related to the adjacent Late Cypriot IIC (13th century) architecture. However, recent excavations have revealed a continuous stratigraphic and architectural sequence from Late Cypriot IIA-IIC in the area of the street west of Building X, together with further tombs, all similarly oriented to the south and arranged more or less in a line. The small Tomb 16 is the northernmost, while three large, rich complexes are arranged in chronological order from Tomb 11, the earliest at the north, to Tomb 13, the southernmost so far excavated. Tomb 11 is now seen to be parallel to, and probably contemporary with a 20m. long stretch of wall which predates the construction of Building X and other adjacent structures. There may have been even earlier tombs nearby, for a cluster of sherds found on one of the earliest surfaces includes two Mycenaean vessels dated to LH IIB/IIIA:1, the earliest Mycenaean material found at the site. The last opening of the Tomb 11 *dromos* was cut through a street surface contemporary with the original construction of Building X, which probably took place in Late Cypriot IIB, and this building was extensively rebuilt, with the installation of much of the ashlar masonry, in Late Cypriot IIC. Tomb 14, just to the south of Building X, was used in Late Cypriot IIB, and Tomb 13, immediately south of Tomb 14, in IIB through most of IIC, as the ceramics included locally made Mycenaean-style shallow bowls like those belonging to the last use of Building X. It is not known whether the tombs were located in a street at the time of their first use, but by the later periods of use they certainly were. Presumably the *dromoi* were re-filled with soil after each re-use of the tombs. The corners of the *dromoi* were marked by small upright stones (some of which were found *in situ*; Fig. 6: 3), and probably small posts (evidenced by holes and settings of small stones), no doubt simply to aid in locating the *dromos* when it had to be cleared again. In 1997, the *dromos* of another large tomb (Tomb 21; Fig. 6: 3) was discovered

2. The only other numbered tomb in this area is Tomb 8, which was located on the slope down to the valley north of the NE part of Building X; most of its *dromos* and chamber had been eroded, leaving only part of the *dromos* and the entrance, which was oriented to the east. Other probable very badly looted and damaged tombs are known to exist elsewhere along the northern edge of the site, but have not been excavated. The numbering system used for the tombs has not been entirely consistent with regard to the subsidiary chambers and small "niches". The niche in the east wall of the Tomb 11 *dromos* was not given its own number, but referred to by the deposit number (M51D, 7.1); the niche at the west side of Tomb 16's *dromos* was numbered Tomb 16A, while the niche in the south end of the T.14 *dromos* is known as Tomb 15.

in grid square O1C (12m. NE of Tomb 14); this tomb underlies the NW part of Building XII, rather than a street, but has the same southern orientation as the tombs beneath the street.³

Tombs 16 and 16A (Fig. 3)

Tomb 16 has a small oval chamber 1.85m. long (area 2.48m.²), among the smallest tomb chambers at the site (very similar in size to Tomb 2). The upper parts of the chamber roof and *dromos* had been cut away during the Late Cypriot period by leveling prior to the construction of the adjacent buildings. Presumably at the same time, most of the contents were removed, leaving only a few bones belonging to a middle adult (female?) and an infant, and a few sherds indicative of a Late Cypriot IIA-B date (White Slip II, Base-Ring I, Red Lustrous and White Shaved). In the middle of the west side of the *dromos* was a small niche (Tomb 16A, 0.35×0.30m.) which contained the remains of an infant (without any grave goods), and was carefully sealed by a miniature stone slab chocked with small pebbles. The existence of Tomb 16, located only 6m. north of Tomb 11, shows that this area was not exclusively reserved for large high-status tombs.

Tombs 11 and 9 (Fig. 2)

Tomb 11 (cf. Goring 1989, fig. 13: 1 for detailed tomb plan) has a chamber 4.20m. wide (area 9.96m.²), divided into two lobes by a buttress projecting from the rear wall. The *stomion* is exceptionally large, and may have been enlarged at some time as it has cut away the NE corner of the *dromos*; also, the rectangular limestone slab which sealed the tomb when found was not large enough to fully cover the *stomion*. At each side of the chamber, bed-sized benches were cut in the rock, the one to the left of the entrance being wider, twice the area of the east bench. The remains of three young women were placed on these benches. On the left bench was the fully articulated skeleton of a woman of 19-20 years old, lying on her back with her head towards the tomb entrance and her arms extended slightly out from her sides, with large quantities of gold, glass and silver jewellery in place. On the other, narrower bench, were bones of a woman of 21-24 years, and another woman of 17, together with many jewellery, ivory and other items. The former individual was represented only by the skull and a few other bones, mainly located at the north end of the bench, with some on the floor. The latter was more complete but not articulated; her bones had been carefully positioned covering much of the bench top, but in a purely artificial arrangement with some arm and leg bones incorrectly paired together; her skull was

3. The chamber of Tomb 21 has not yet been excavated, but as a large pit, located just above it, contained Late Roman sherds it is likely that the tomb was looted in the latter period.

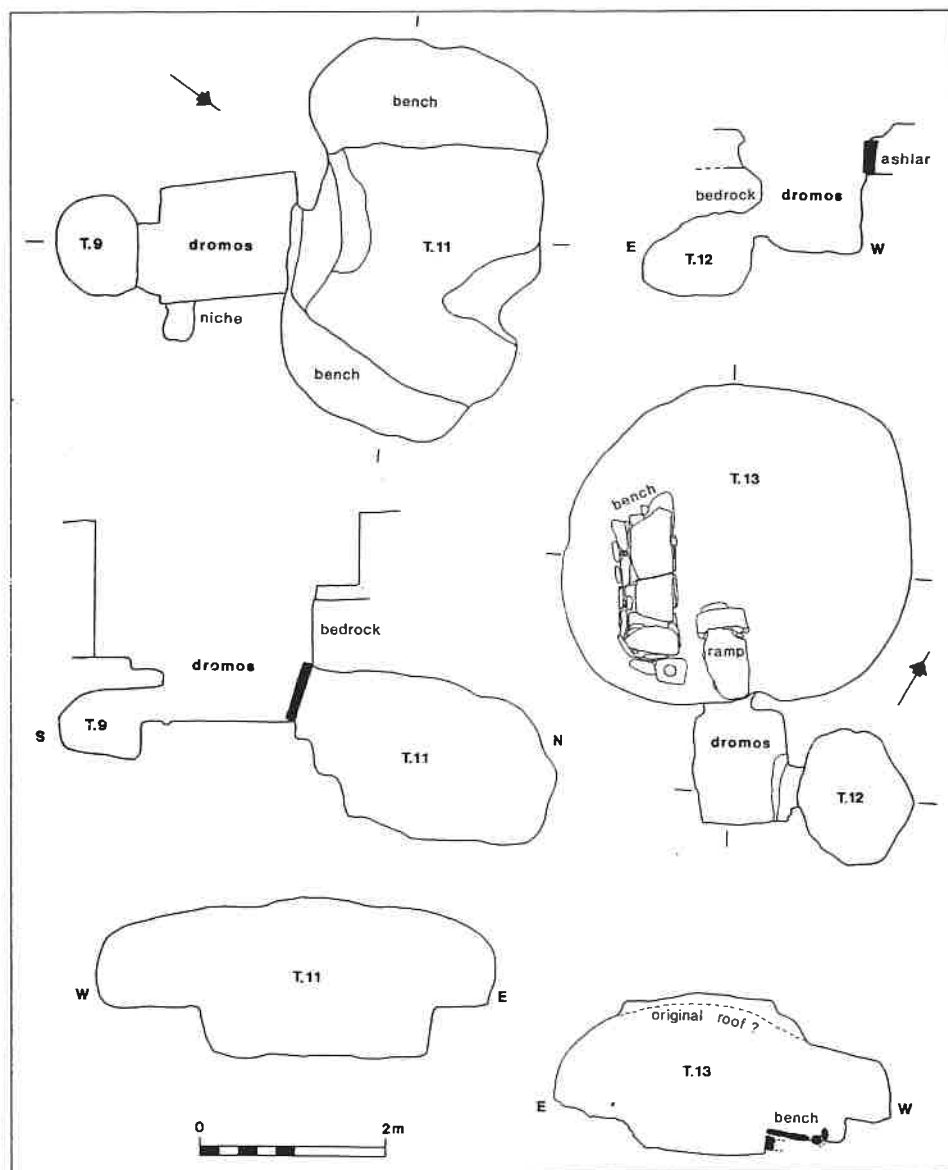


Fig. 2. Plans and sections of Tombs 11+9 and 13+12.

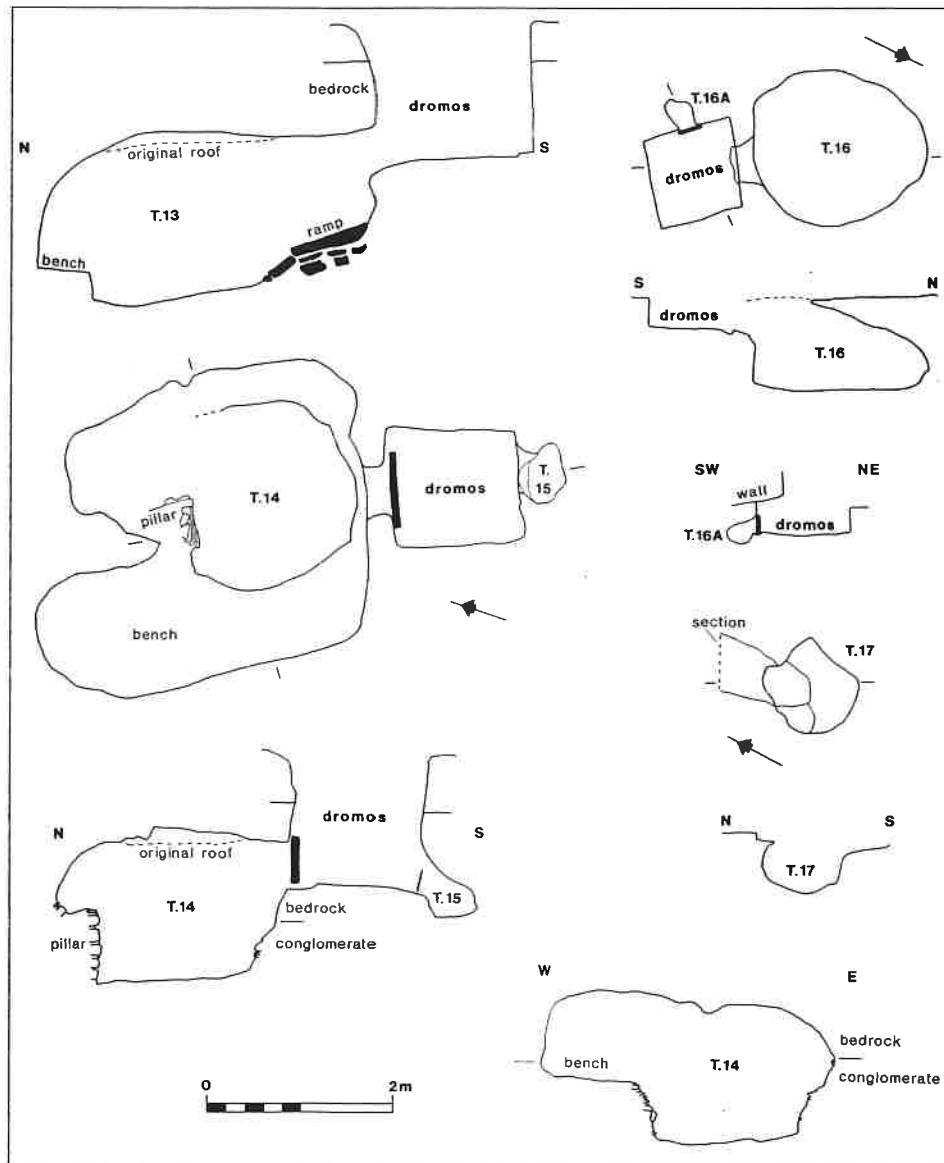


Fig. 3. Section through Tomb 13 and plans and sections of Tombs 14+15, 16 and 17.

at the south end of the bench nearest the entrance. The bones of a child of three years old were found among various grave goods on the floor near the right bench. Three new-born infants were found in a cluster (perhaps originally in a basket or bundle) nearer to the left bench; they were placed on top of a layer of silt which covered part of the chamber floor and the grave goods of the earlier burials. The spatial arrangement of these skeletons suggests a burial program in which the wider left bench was reserved for the most recent interment, while the remains of earlier burials were transferred to the narrower east bench (there was no stratigraphic evidence for the order of burials, except that the three infants were buried last). It is also tempting to assume that the child and infants were the offspring of the three women, or even to imagine that these three women of child-bearing age died young as a result of giving birth to the three babies. However, matters may not be so simple. It is equally possible that the two incomplete and rearranged women on the right bench may have been secondary burials which had originally been interred elsewhere, as no bones belonging to them were found on the wider bench, as might be expected if they had been moved from one part of the tomb to the other. The three infants were certainly buried together, but some time after the women; thus if they were the women's babies, they had been kept elsewhere for a period of time before being placed in the tomb chamber. They were probably secondary burials, as their bones were thoroughly mixed with each other and also with some bird and fish bones.

At the south end of the large *dromos* of Tomb 11 lies a small oval chamber, Tomb 9, its maximum diameter of 1.10m. (area 0.96m.²) making it far too small for extended adult burials. It was not sealed by a stone slab when found. The near-complete skeleton of one infant was found in it, with only a few ivory fragments. The niche located halfway up the east wall of the *dromos* contained, not one infant as one might expect for such a small facility, but bones belonging to a child of 20-24 months and an adult of 17-25 years; both were very incomplete, and these certainly must be secondary burials, the bodies originally having been deposited elsewhere. A Base-Ring I juglet and a large bronze ring (too large for a finger) were also placed in the niche.

Tomb 11 contained a rich array of grave goods (177 registered items), many of which were imports or at least manufactured from imported materials. It is evident that the objects included were carefully selected, in several cases forming "sets" of identical or matching items. The two Mycenaean kraters (one decorated with large dolphins or fish, one with lilies; South and Russell 1993, fig. 3) were each found with a Base-Ring cup inside, perhaps to serve wine — a similar association has occurred in other tombs at *Ayios Dhimitrios*, but with Base-Ring cups in White Slip kraters in Tomb 4, or Plain White kraters in Tomb 6. In the case of Tomb 11, we have two krater and cup sets with three adult burials, but probably the vessels were associated with the two women whose remains were more complete. Other "sets" of items included three identical Mycenaean piriform jars, a graded set of pedestalled Base-Ring bowls, two almost identical Base-Ring bull vessels, two Egyptian glass jars, two ivory duck vessels, and a graded set of three similar White Slip II bowls, the latter placed with the

three infants. An exceptionally large number of Red Lustrous ware vessels, including at least 17 spindle bottles and five lentoid flasks, was provided, with some of the spindle bottles standing in a row against the east bench. Some of the gold jewellery (much of which showed signs of wear) may have functioned as hard currency as well as an impressive display of wealth, for as Elizabeth Goring has shown, the sets of plain, heavy hoop earrings, of which a set of 6 was found on each bench, have standardized weights which may be subdivisions of known units. Two gold rings with Cypro-Minoan signs and other motifs on their bezels were among Skeleton 1's adornment, and a double-sided stone stamp seal was also found.

Tomb 11 is the only intact, sealed tomb group found at *Ayios Dhimitrios* (except for the far poorer Tomb 6) and is valuable for its evidence of burial customs although various different interpretations of the evidence are possible. It shows that some young, female members of society could attain high status, in terms of wealth of luxury and imported objects, possession of seals and seal rings, and the use of pictorial Mycenaean kraters probably for drinking ritual in connection with burial (cf. Steel 1998). The relationship between Tomb 11 and its "subsidiary chamber" Tomb 9 is intriguing: if Tomb 9 was intended for the burial of infants and children, why was the main chamber Tomb 11 re-opened solely to bury three infants?

Tombs 14 and 15 (Fig. 3)

Between Tomb 11 and Tomb 14 to the south there is on present evidence a gap of over 20 metres (although between them there is a deep rectangular cutting in the rock largely concealed beneath the massive foundation of the west wall of Building X). Tomb 14, excavated in 1994, has a large chamber up to 3.70m. long (area 9.85m.²), roughly rectangular in shape but subdivided by a rock-cut buttress which was reinforced by a stone-built pillar. Almost the entire left (west) half of the chamber with its northern lobe comprised a very large bench (area 3.93m.²). As the entrance was sealed by a stone slab, we believed the tomb to be intact. The grave goods were found scattered in apparently random fashion on the floor, with a large heap of ceramic vessels immediately inside the entrance. The only items found on the bench were a Mycenaean juglet and a gold "diadem" and a few fragmentary bones, among which were some skull fragments found in the south part of the bench, nearer to the tomb entrance. Together with other skeletal remains found scattered on the floor, the bones show that the occupants of the tomb were two middle adults, one definitely male and the other probably also male. In fact it appears that the bench must have been deliberately cleared, either to make ready for its use for a new burial which never happened, or perhaps simply as a Late Bronze Age looting operation; but whatever happened, the entrance was carefully re-sealed. The contents of Tomb 14 as we found them, then, probably do not represent the complete original grave goods, but nevertheless included a range of luxurious and unusual items (130 registered objects, including many small fragments). The nine Mycenaean vessels included one krater

and several juglets, stirrup jars, a flask, cup and bowl. As well as Red Lustrous spindle bottles and large lentoid flasks, the latter with very grey fabric under their stroke burnished red slip, there were three of the rather rare arm-shaped vessels, which have been found occasionally in tombs and sanctuaries in Cyprus but are more common in Anatolia (Eriksson 1993, 27-8). Eight pedestalled bowls, mostly with traces of a red slip, are probably imports from the Levant. White Slip II was represented by several of the usual hemispherical bowls, but also a large krater fragment with highly unusual pictorial decoration (Steel 1997). A few Plain White and Base-Ring vessels were also found. Numerous unrecognisable very small bronze fragments were found, with 3 daggers the only complete objects. Many small fragments of gold foil, some decorated, may represent overlay for objects of other materials, and there were also finger rings and several types of beads. The only surviving substantial gold objects were two of the decorated strips usually known as "diadems", the only examples from the site so far, one decorated with rows of impressed dots, the other with stamped spirals. Ivory objects were extremely fragmentary, except for some discs, presumably pyxis lids. One ivory object appears to represent a duckling, which would have been attached to the cover of a duck-shaped cosmetic container, but no fragments of the main duck vessel could be identified. Square glass plaques must have belonged to a gaming box, and there were faience gaming pieces to go with it.

Judging from the ceramics, Tomb 14 seems to have been used during Late Cypriot IIB; the Mycenaean pottery was entirely of LH IIIA:2 late, except for one example of IIIB. A tiny niche (Tomb 15) at the bottom of the south side of the *dromos* was partly sealed by a gypsum slab, but contained no bones — at any rate, none which survived, although a small White Slip bowl was placed inside the niche. After the main use and subsequent clearing or looting and re-sealing of Tomb 14, Late Bronze Age looters began to cut down into the *dromos* fill, but stopped before reaching the tomb entrance.

Tombs 13 and 12 (Figs 2 and 3)

Tomb 13 is immediately south of Tomb 14, indeed they almost meet underground. Its large, maximum 3.8m. diameter circular chamber (area 11.16m.²) was again at the north end of the *dromos*, with a subsidiary oval chamber Tomb 12 (max. diameter 1.45m., area 1.37m.²), very like Tomb 9, on the east. Late Bronze Age looters had entered the chamber, and presumably removed larger metal objects (although they missed some, including many small jewellery items) — but 90 ceramic vessels, many even intact, and many other interesting objects survived (totalling 242 registered objects). The chamber had evidently also suffered from flooding and silting, so the arrangement of most of the contents is probably not meaningful. However, part of the original arrangement is preserved in the form of a carefully built stone bench, again to the left of the entrance; on it was the skeleton of a middle-aged individual, probably female, with her head towards the entrance. Some stones were placed on edge to protect the head area. Next to the skull was a flat clay slab with a central depression,

perhaps some form of offering table; three small bronze blades were found on it. Various ceramic, faience and alabaster vessels found on top of and around the skeleton were probably left there by looters or flooding (Fig. 5: 2). Many other bones were scattered on the floor of the chamber, especially around the east side, representing several individuals of various ages, including one possibly male adult. It seems probable that the bench to the left of the entrance was used for a final burial, while earlier remains were pushed aside. An interesting detail of tomb construction is the sloping ramp inside the entrance, carefully built from stones and a large clay slab, which greatly facilitated entry to the tomb. The ceramics included three fine Mycenaean kraters, two with octopus, and one showing chariots and horses approaching a lady in a building topped by horns of consecration — a unique representation of probable religious significance (Steel 1994). About half of the numerous ceramics were Mycenaean, an exceptionally high proportion. Red Lustrous, White Slip, Monochrome, and Plain White vessels were also present, as were a few red slipped, probably Levantine bowls and pedestalled bowls. Also among the grave goods were several faience and alabaster vessels, many ivory objects often in a fragmentary state but including rods, decorated discs (one with an incised pictorial scene) and fragments of duck vessels, while grooved and pierced strips of bone may have belonged to wooden boxes. One cylinder seal was found.

This tomb may have been first used in Late Cypriot IIA, judging from some sherds of early White Slip II and LH IIIA:1. Much of the material, with plentiful LH IIIA:2, dates to Late Cypriot IIB, but local Aegean-style shallow bowls and cups show that its use continued well into Late Cypriot IIC.

Tomb 12, the subsidiary chamber, was not entered by the looters and was sealed by a slab. It housed the skeletal remains of 4 infants and a child of 5-6 years old. They were provided with 7 vessels, at least some of which could be considered as "miniatures" suitable for children (a large Monochrome jar, three Base-Ring II cups, a Plain White shallow bowl, one Mycenaean and one locally made Aegean-style bowl). A set of at least 49 astragali (knuckle-bones), was also included, also a gold earring, and a silver Hittite figurine (South 1997, pl. XV: 1), a most unusual and exotic object which suggests a high status for one of the children, probably the oldest. The group may be dated to Late Cypriot IIC.

Tombs 13 and 12 provide another good example of a large tomb with a subsidiary chamber reserved for infants and children. As in the case of Tomb 11, however, some infants and children were also buried in the main chamber. Perhaps they died about the same time as an adult, for whom the main chamber was opened, or perhaps there are other reasons for the distinction.

Tomb 17 (Fig. 3)

Only two metres east of Tombs 13 and 12 a very small burial facility, Tomb 17, was cut through the street surfaces. A roughly rectangular shallow pit led to a minia-

ture chamber only 60cm. long, where some bones belonging to a child of 8-12 years old were found with a Base-Ring cup and a White Slip bowl. The feature is unusual, and it is notable that the trouble was taken to create a real, though unimpressive, chamber for this burial, rather than simply making a small pit or using a *dromos* niche.

TOMBS 18-20 (Fig. 4)

An unexpected addition to the range of tomb types at the site was found in August 1995 when a tractor accidentally collapsed part of the roof of Tomb 18 in the west part of the settlement, about 150m. west of Building X and 75m. north of the buildings excavated in the West Area in 1979. Tomb 18 was excavated via the hole in the roof in 1995, and the *dromos*, Tomb 19 at the SE end of the *dromos*, and the large niche Tomb 20 on the south of the *dromos*, were investigated in 1996. This is the only tomb complex so far found at *Ayios Dhimitrios* with two large chambers opening from the same *dromos*; the two are of the same general type, not previously found at the site, with wide benches around the sides of the chamber and a deep, narrow rectangular depression in the centre.

Tomb 18

The chamber is rectangular with a maximum dimension of 3.35m. (area 11.565m.²), and is very neatly shaped and symmetrical with a central axis through the entrance. Rectangular benches at each side are separated by a long narrow central depression 60cm. deep, and there is a semicircular lobe or large niche at the end opposite the entrance (Fig. 6: 1). Four steps lead down from the *stomion* into the central depression (Fig. 6: 2). The very rectangular, symmetrical shape is unique at the site and unusual among Late Cypriot tombs in general (see below). From the type and condition of the material found, it appears that the tomb had been re-used perhaps a number of times over a considerable period extending at least through Late Cypriot IIB and IIC and probably earlier. The last re-use may have been in the late Geometric period, as shown by the presence of an intact Bichrome III barrel-shaped juglet, the first example of such re-use encountered at the site, but there were no other restorable vessels or great quantity of sherds belonging to this period. About 40 non-restorable small sherds of various periods from Cypro-Geometric III to Classical occurred throughout the tomb fill, thus the tomb may have been looted several times, and perhaps remained partly open through all these periods. Most of the material recovered (28 registered items) was very fragmentary and incomplete due to the disturbance of multiple re-use and flooding, but it included a gold and silver earring, a silver ring, bronze fragments, an ivory spindle-whorl, a stone tripod mortar fragment and a glass pomegranate vessel. As well as the usual Cypriot ceramics (Base-Ring I and II, White Slip II, Monochrome including several large jars, and Plain White), there were several Mycenaean vessels including one sherd from a pictorial krater and a larger fragment

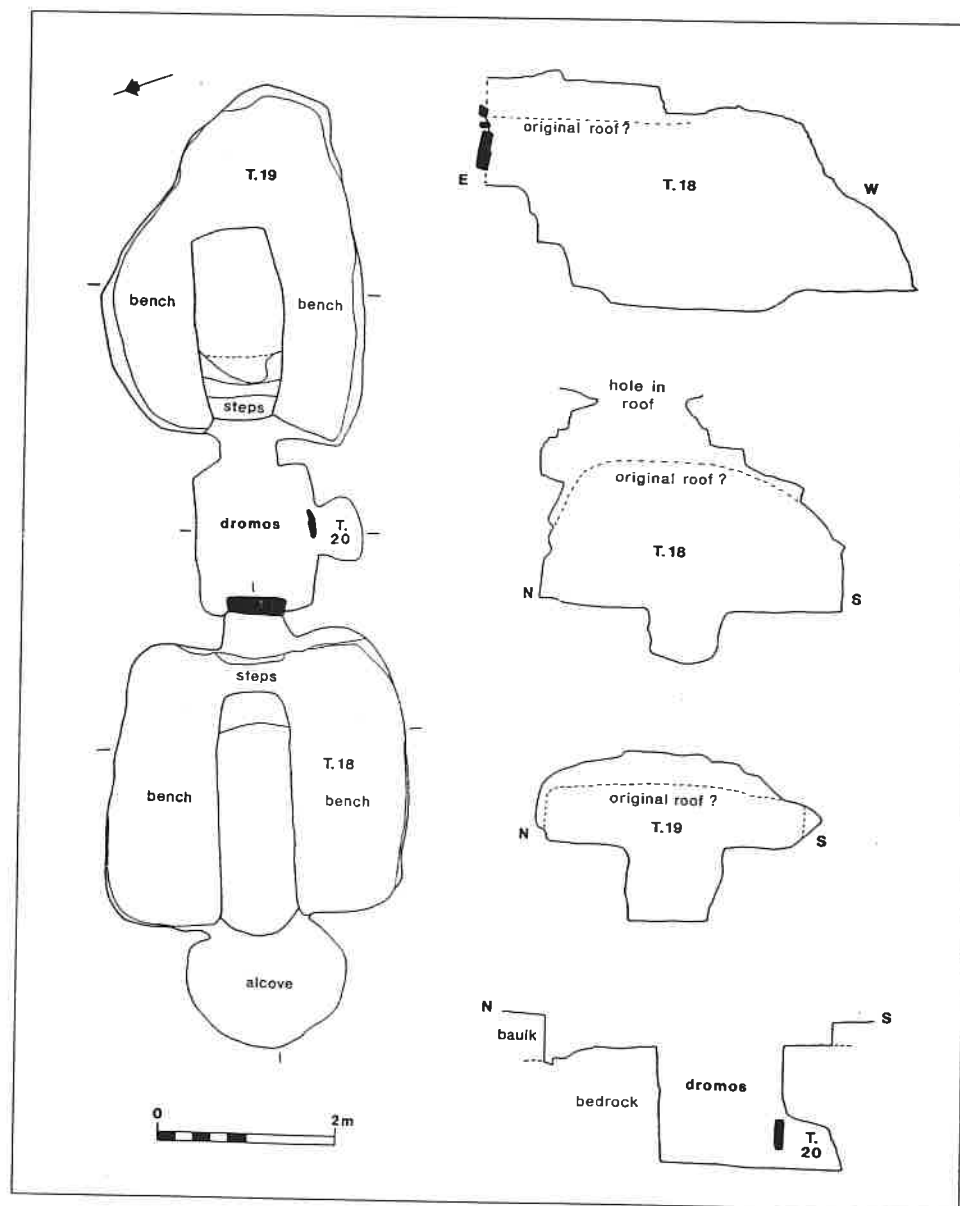
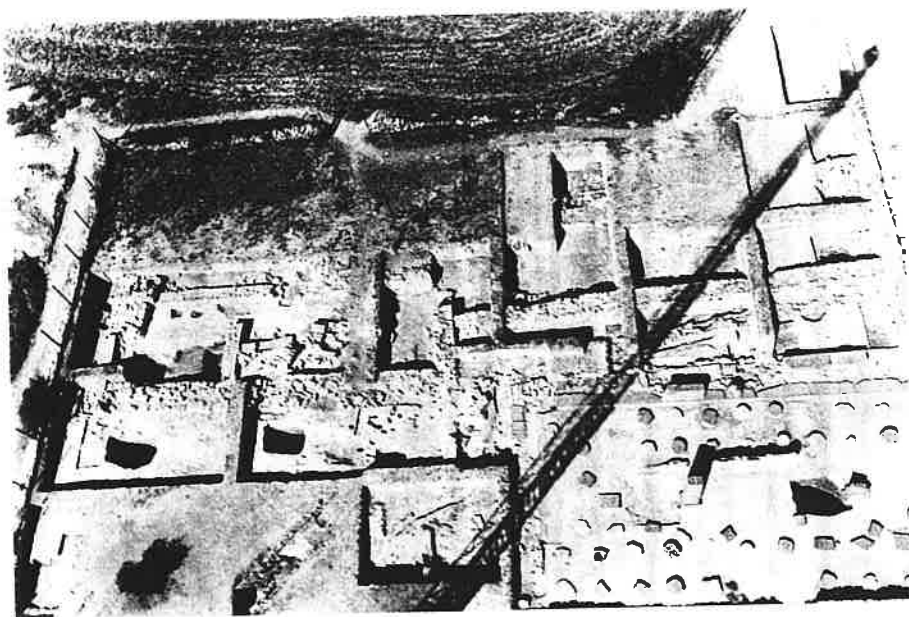


Fig. 4. Plan and sections of Tombs 18-20.



1. View of SW part of the North-East Area at *Ayios Dhimitrios*, showing the dromoi of Tombs 13 and 14 (at lower left) in the street south of Building X.



2. West bench of Tomb 13 with Skeleton 1 (a middle-aged adult, probably female) and various ceramic, faience and alabaster vessels.

Fig. 5

from a Pastoral style krater showing a bull, and some Minoan sherds from large stirrup jar(s) with painted octopus tentacles, such as are rarely found at the site. The skeletal remains of several individuals were in a better state of preservation than most at the site, but because of the mixed nature of the material they cannot be reliably assigned to the Late Bronze Age.

Tomb 19 (Fig. 4)

Like Tomb 18, Tomb 19 has a deep narrow rectangular depression, but the chamber is an irregular ovoid, rather pear-shaped, with a bench around all three sides (max. width 3.8m., area 8.63m.²). Again steps led down from the stomion into the central depression. It is impossible to be certain whether the chamber was cut at exactly the same time as that of Tomb 18: the different shape might hint that it was not. The alignment of the central axis of the chambers is very slightly different, though this difference is hardly noticeable.

Like Tomb 18, Tomb 19 had suffered badly from looting and silting, although only one Iron Age sherd was found. Fragmentary remains of four adults (including at least one female) and two children were found scattered on the benches and in the central depression. Some ceramic vessels were restorable from the many sherds. Mycenaean material includes several stirrup jars, a juglet, two flasks, a cup and a shallow bowl with added white painted decoration, dating to LH IIIA:2 and IIIB. Local wares include an Aegean-style stirrup jar, Base-Ring II cups and a miniature pyxis, a large Monochrome jar with raised wavy bands and a Plain White krater. Other materials included 11 barrel-shaped and two oval gold beads and a gold hoop earring, blue glass beads, a silver or bronze pin, ivory pyxis fragments and a biconical stone spindle whorl or bead (registered items total 23). The tomb appears to have been in use during the Late Cypriot IIB and IIC periods.

Tomb 20

Tomb 20 is a large niche (0.680×53m.) at the bottom of the middle of the south side of the Tomb 18/19 *dromos*. Only a few sherds and a skull fragment of an adult were found in it.

Tomb 18 and 19 are the only examples at *Ayios Dhimitrios* of the type of tomb chamber with a deep, narrow rectangular central depression. Similar tombs have been found at various sites in the south and south-western regions of the island, such as Alassa, Episkopi-*Bamboula* (Tomb 32, Benson 1972, 7, 27, pl. 11), and Kouklia. The neatly designed chamber of Tomb 18 is particularly similar to those of the tombs excavated by K. Nicolaou at Yeroskipou (Nicolaou 1983). Despite the limitations in the evidence due to looting, Tombs 18 and 19 demonstrate that a tomb type new to the site, with fairly rich material including Mycenaean and Minoan ceramics and limited



1. West part of Tomb 18 with benches and alcove.



2. East part of Tomb 18 showing the tomb entrance (blocked with a stone slab by the looters), steps and benches.



3. *Dromos* of Tomb 21 showing the circular stone slab sealing the tomb entrance, and a stone placed at the corner of the *dromos* as a marker.

Fig. 6

types of gold and silver jewellery, existed in the far west of the settlement, an area only previously known from hasty emergency excavation of some rather poor domestic buildings. The Tomb 18/19 burial complex as a whole is of course the largest at the site, being the only one with two large chambers opening from one *dromos* (total area including *dromos* and Tomb 20: 23.065m.²).

Conclusions

Although not very great in number, the tombs so far excavated at *Ayios Dhimitrios* can contribute significantly to our knowledge of Late Cypriot tomb types and burial customs, and the relationship of tombs to architecture. The tombs vary from relatively small, oval chambers (Tombs 2 and 16 of around 2.5m.²), through medium-sized circular or kidney-shaped (Tombs 1, 4, 5, 6 of 5.7-6.8m.²), to the largest chambers, which all have benches (Tombs 11, 13, 14, 18, 19 of 8.6-11.5m.²: Tomb 18 is the largest). With the exception of Tombs 18 and 19, the latter type have been found only in close proximity to Building X, the probable residence of the elite of the community; they are oriented in the same direction as this building, and some were located in a street (as were tombs at other sites such as *Episkopi-Bamboula* (Benson 1972) and *Enkomi* (Dikaïos 1969)). All of the large North-East Area tombs contained a great range of grave goods with many imports and luxuries, although the repertoire in detail varies considerably from one tomb to another (cf. French Tomb 2 at *Enkomi* for a similarly "aristocratic" tomb with benches; Schaeffer 1952, 111-35). Few conclusions can be drawn concerning the precise function of the elaborate grave goods. A few definite observations can be made, such as that some of the jewellery had been worn, or that kraters with Base-Ring cups inside occurred frequently, with Mycenaean kraters reserved for elite burials. Bones of sheep and goat, fish and birds, and eggshells may either be remnants of funerary feasts, or offerings to sustain the dead in an afterlife. Although we are in the habit of loosely referring to "offerings" or "gifts for the dead", in fact we really do not know the function of the artefacts placed in the tombs, whether they were gifts in honour of the dead or for their use in the afterlife, objects which belonged to them in life, were prestige gifts selected to demonstrate the wealth or taste or kinship of the guests at the funeral, or any other purposes not imagined by us (cf. Morris 1985, 114). Various aspects of a complex burial program are suggested by the reservation of Tomb 11 to young women, the use of the subsidiary chambers and niches and the occurrence of at least a few definite secondary burials.⁴ Concerning the skeletal remains, study of the new evidence by Jack Moyer and Sherry Fox will add about 23 (excluding the uncertainly dated remains from Tomb 18) to the total of 34 skeletons previously published by Moyer (1989). Together

4. See Keswani 1989a and 1989b for extensive discussion of Late Cypriot mortuary rituals and their relation to social hierarchy, and the evidence for secondary burials.

with a forthcoming study by Moyer of skeletons from Late Cypriot IIA-IIC tombs at *Mangia* (a site only 500m. east of *Ayios Dhimitrios*), this will give a total of 80-90 individuals of this period from the Vasilikos valley, which will be a significant contribution to the fairly modest number of well-studied Late Bronze Age Cypriots (cf. 212 individuals included in Domurad's (1986) study of ancient Cypriot populations; Angel's (1972) study of 81 individuals from Episkopi-*Bamboula*). It is hoped that further excavations will throw more light on some of the problems so far raised.

ADDENDUM

Tomb 21 (briefly mentioned above) was fully excavated in 1998. It is of similar type to Tomb 18, rectangular (approx. 3.05×2.62m.) with a deep rectangular central depression. It had been looted or cleaned out during the Late Bronze Age, in a rather similar manner to Tomb 14, with very few bones remaining in the clamber, and a large heap of broken ceramics lying just below the *stomion*, extending down into the central depression. This material included two Mycenaean amphoroid kraters (one an exceptionally large example with pictorial decoration of antithetic chariots, one unusually showing only ladies), Base-Ring I and II, White Slip II, Monochrome and Plain White vessels. Fragmentary ivory objects and five gold "diadems" or mouth-pieces were also found. This tomb thus provides a fourth example (with Tombs 11, 14 and 13) of the elite tombs adjacent to Building X.

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