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VAVLA - KAPSALAE: AN ARCHAIC SANCTUARY SITE  
(PLATES X - XV)

1. INTRODUCTION (by Ian A. Todd)

During the course of the field survey of the Vasilikos valley in recent years, numerous Cypro-Archaic sites have been located in both the northern and southern sectors of the region. The evidence resulting from examination of the sites, and collection of surface artifacts, indicated the presence of settlements and cemeteries stretching from the mouth of the Vasilikos river at the coast, northwards through the Kalavastos area, at least as far north as the copper mines near the modern Kalavastos Dam.<sup>1</sup> A pile of slag at Kalavastos - *Spilios* near the mines, which probably dates, at least in part, to the Archaic period, also indicated the existence in the valley of sites with a partially industrial character, but no evidence was retrieved for the existence of a contemporary sanctuary. In view of the occurrence of sanctuaries elsewhere in Cyprus at this time<sup>2</sup>, the lack of evidence from the Vasilikos valley suggested either that no Archaic sanctuaries were built there, or that they had remained unrecognized from the survey data. The latter conclusion seemed likely on the assumption that surface indicators might not be as conclusive as desired. The surface finds at Vavla - *Kapsalaes*, however, leave no doubt concerning the presence of a sanctuary, and they suggest that such sites are to be found in the higher reaches of the valley which have not yet been extensively surveyed.

2. THE SITE (by Ian A. Todd).

The village of Vavla in Larnaca District lies c. 28km. NE of the centre of Limassol, c. 7.5km. NW of the village of Khirokitia<sup>3</sup> and about the same distance NNW of Kalavastos (Fig. 1). The existence of an archaeological site at the locality *Kapsalaes*, 1.7km. SE of Vavla astride the road to Khirokitia,<sup>4</sup> was first reported to the author by an officer of the Kalavastos Police Station in December 1990.<sup>5</sup> Fragments of three clay figurines and a small quantity of sherds indicated an Archaic site, and the availability of multiple figurines on the surface suggested a site of more than usual significance. This was immediately

1. See Todd 1989 for the latest preliminary report on the survey and references to previous survey publications. Although much of the fieldwork of the Vasilikos Valley Project has centred on prehistoric sites, the field survey has been designed to retrieve information on sites of all periods through the Mediaeval.
2. See Karageorghis 1982, 139 - 152 for a convenient summary. See also Gjerstad 1948 for the primary publication of some of the sites and material.
3. By road the site is exactly 9km. from Khirokitia.
4. 1:5,000 Topographical Series map reference 258545 on sheet 49/XIX, named *Kapsales*. The spelling *Kapsalaes* follows that of the Cadastral Plan XLIX. 43. On the Topographical map the site lies on each side of the road adjacent to the bench mark LT 12 (493.3m.).
5. The writer is most grateful to the officer Dasos Thrasvoulou for informing him of the existence of the site and for his subsequent interest in trying to preserve it from further disturbance.

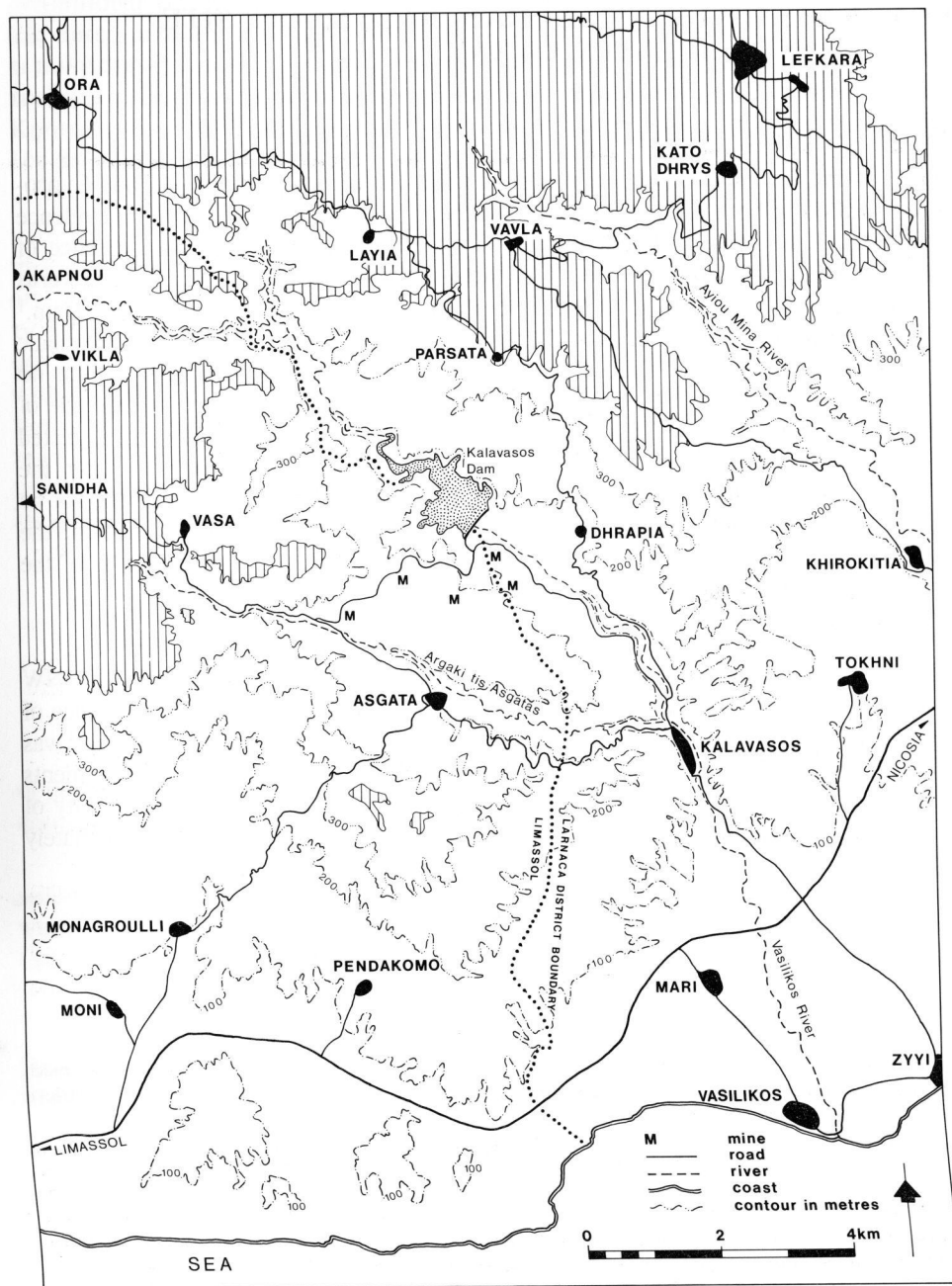


Fig. 1 Map showing the location of Vavla village. Land above 400m. is shaded.

confirmed by the writer's surface reconnaissance of the area.<sup>6</sup> Since recent looting was clearly in evidence, the site was brought to the attention of the Police at Lefkara, in whose jurisdiction the site lies, together with the Department of Antiquities. More recently it has been scheduled as an Ancient Monument.<sup>7</sup>

The sanctuary is situated in the broken terrain of the foothills of the eastern end of the Troodos mountains, at an elevation of 493m. It lies on the very top of a narrow, spine-like ridge, aligned approx. NW-SE, which separates the watershed of the Vasilikos river to the SW and the Ayiou Mina river to the NE (Fig. 2; Pl. Xa). It commands an outstanding view over both river valleys (Pl. Xb), and on a clear winter day the Akrotiri Peninsula and Cape Gata beyond Limassol are visible in the distance to the SW. To the NE the view is more restricted, but stretches as far as the village of Kato Dhrys on the far side of the Ayiou Mina valley. The sanctuary area is overlooked by higher ground immediately to the NW (in the *Stephanena* locality) and SE (*Shilia Nemia*). The modern asphalt road from Khirokitia to Vavla runs along the top of the ridge and bisects the site.

To the SW of the road the terrain descends immediately in a moderate slope to the SW toward the mainly abandoned village of Parsata and ultimately the Kalavastos Dam, c. 300m. below the elevation of the site. Most of this area is nowadays uncultivated with scattered carob trees, but terrace walls indicate some agricultural use in the past. Plot 339 beside the road has been partially ploughed in recent times. On the NE side of the road there is a small, flattish area with low scrub vegetation beyond which the terrain again descends quite steeply to the narrow Ayiou Mina valley floor in the area of the Ayios Minas Monastery (elevation 355m.).

According to the writer's brief surface survey, the sanctuary site covers all or part of plots 320, 321, 322, 339, 395/1 and maybe the NE side of 340 and 393 (Fig. 2); the SW limit of the site was not precisely established. Dense vegetation makes precision impossible, but the dimensions of the site may be estimated c. 150m. (NW-SE) X 100/150m. (NE-SW).

The present condition and environment of the site leave much to be desired, various plots having been damaged to a greater or lesser degree. The construction of the asphalt road through the site must have entailed the destruction of some features, and several dirt tracks have occasioned further damage. In addition to the terracing of plot 339 in the past, plot 394/1 has been heavily terraced by machine in recent years with bulldozed bedrock showing in places. Quantities of sherds and figurine fragments were found in this area. Recent looting has not been very extensive on this (SW) side of the road, but a sizable patch on the north side of 394/1 was affected by looting in the spring of 1991. The extent to which the present surface distribution of artifacts may reflect looting in the distant past cannot be ascertained.

6. An initial visit was paid to the site on 13th December, 1990 and a more extensive examination was made the next day. The site was again examined on the 15th December together with Dr. Dimitri Michaelides of the Department of Antiquities, an officer from the Lefkara Police Station and officer Thrasyvoulou from Kalavastos. All of the artifacts collected up to that time from the different parts of the site were then handed over to the Department of Antiquities where they presently reside. The site is no. 136 in the records of the V.V.P. survey. The site has been visited subsequently on a number of occasions by the writers and others, and some of the collected artifacts have also been handed in to the Department of Antiquities. Thanks are due to Diana Buitron and Andrew Oliver who visited the site in 1991 and offered their expertise on its chronology.
7. The writer is most grateful to Dr. Dimitri Michaelides, then of the Department of Antiquities, and to Dr. Demos Christou, the present Director of the Department, for their interest in the site and their efforts to safeguard it.

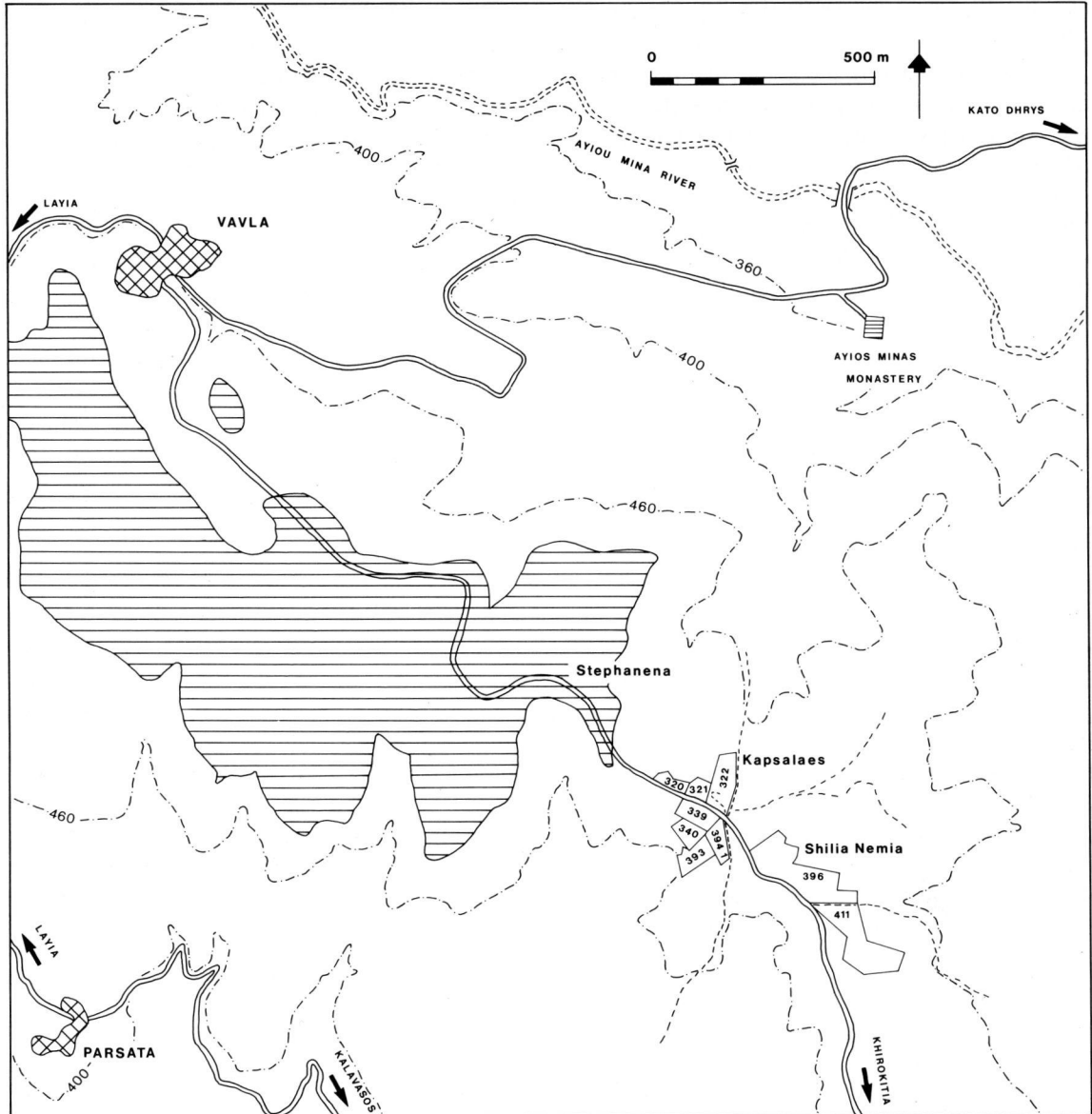


Fig. 2 Sketch map of the Vavla - Kapsalaes region showing plots in the area of the site. Land above 500m. is shaded. After the Cadastral Plan XLIX. 43 and the 1:5,000 Topographical Series Sheet 49/XIX of the Department of Lands and Surveys with the sanction of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. State copyright reserved.

Immediately NE of the road, the south end of plot 322 has been severely disturbed by looters, seemingly using metal detectors, and it is in this area that the greatest concentration of small figurine fragments has been found (Pl.XIa). Numerous sherds of the Archaic to Roman periods are also to be found here. A track has been cut down from the main road through the south end of the plot and the exposed sections beside the track have been thoroughly disturbed by looting. The track leads to the south-central portion of the plot which has been completely bulldozed to form a suitable repository for the rubbish from Vavla village, and there is much refuse around the whole area. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Department of Antiquities, the looting has not yet been brought to a halt.

Surface survey of the site revealed a number of significant features, including an apparent intra-site variation in the distribution of figurine fragments. To the SW of the road, fragments of large terracotta figures were most numerous toward the SE end of plot 339. Fragments of stone sculpture also occur in this area. The quantity of this type of material decreases toward the middle of the plot where only sherds (finer wares and pithoi) were found. Fragments of large terracotta figures were also found on the other side of the road in plot 321, but in lesser numbers than at the SE end of plot 339.

At the south end of plot 322, in the most heavily looted area of the site, small clay human and animal figurine fragments were most numerous, but pieces of larger figures were rare. Numerous sherds, some figurine fragments and animal bones were recovered from the disturbed, ashy soil from the sections beside the track down to the rubbish dump;<sup>8</sup> at least one stone-built wall (probably ancient) was visible for a time in this section. Several examples of stone sculptures were also found in this part of the site. It seems clear that there was originally a building in the limited flattish space at the south end of plot 322 adjacent to the modern road; in addition to probable wall stones, one fragmentary stone with a partly preserved curved exterior face was visible during one visit to the site, and several fragments of one or more large stone basins were also noted in the same area. Short stretches of walls exposed elsewhere in plot 322, and also on the other side of the road in plot 339, probably belong to comparatively recent terrace walls. The concentration of figurine fragments in plot 322 may indicate the presence of a *favissa* adjacent to the building.<sup>9</sup> Bearing in mind the extensive looting of parts of the site very recently, it is presently unclear whether or not any substantial archaeological deposits still remain *in situ*.

The survey of the *Kapsalae*s locality has, therefore, suggested the presence of a sanctuary building at the south end of plot 322 with an extensive scatter of fragments of small clay figurines and much larger terracotta figures in the immediately surrounding area. Slightly further away the surface finds are limited to pottery sherds, perhaps indicative of a settlement area (e.g. the centre of plot 339).

No evidence for the existence of tombs was found at *Kapsalae*s, but several looted rock-cut chamber tombs were found in the *Shilia Nemia* locality, c. 350m. SE of the sanctuary. The date of these tombs is unknown since no diagnostic sherds were found associated with them. The tombs occur on both sides of the very small valley which runs approx. east-west between the *Shilia Nemia* hill to the north and a small, unnamed hill to the south. The tombs occur at the north end of plot 411 and on the other side of the valley in the SE sector of plot 396. Most of the details of the tombs were obscured by vegetation, and only one *dromos* (to the south of the track in plot 411) could be measured in part.

8. Paul Croft identified the bones of goat, sheep/ goat and cattle from plot 322; his assistance is much appreciated.

9. Dr. Michaelides kindly made this suggestion.

Aligned NNE-SSW, it has a length of at least 1.90m. and a width of c. 1.35m.; chambers are visible opening off its east, west and south sides. The upper parts of the entrances to the chambers are curvilinear, but the lower parts are not visible. The width of the entrance to the east chamber measures 0.80m. In this area there are two *dromoi* within c. 10m. of each other, but a carob tree growing in the *dromos* of the other tomb obscures all other information.

The relationship of the tombs to the sanctuary (if any) remains to be established, but available evidence suggests that they are separate entities. Only very few sherds were found on the top of the *Shilia Nemia* hill, and there is no evidence to indicate continuity of the site from the sanctuary, over the top of the hill and down to the tombs. It should be stressed that no attempt has been made to undertake a thorough survey of the whole area, and other contemporary sites may exist close by. The detailed Vasilikos valley survey has not come closer to the *Kapsalaes* locality than the Parsata area c. 1.5km. to the WSW, and nothing is yet known about any sites which may exist in the intervening hilly terrain. Archaic sherds have already been found within the confines of Parsata village on its NE side. There is also a dense concentration of Roman material adjacent to this side of the village, but the site remains to be surveyed in detail.

### 3. THE FINDS (by Margaret E. Morden)<sup>10</sup>

In keeping with the nature of survey material, the finds consist of fragmentary pieces of stone sculpture, terracotta sculpture and pottery.<sup>11</sup>

#### A. The Sculpture

The sculpture was made from local limestone and fired clay. There is evidence for a few over life-size statues but most of the pieces were well under life-size. There may in fact be more statues but as the body fragments of statues and statuettes are often indistinguishable, they were counted as statuettes. Tables 1 and 2 show the frequency of fragments of the three sizes<sup>12</sup> of sculpture in stone and terracotta from the individual cadastral plots at the site.

It is interesting to note the relative infrequency of the figurines when compared to the counts from Ayia Irini where 85.5% of the assemblage were figurines, 10.5% were medium sized, and 4% were large-sized statues (Ikosi 1992, 288, fig. 7). We may have the same situation skewing our survey sample which Karageorghis noted at Patriki: «It is true, however, that the deposit may have contained also smaller complete figures which would have been easily recognised and carried away by looters» (Karageorghis 1971, 27).

10. The author would like to thank Dr. Ian Todd for the opportunity to study this material. Thanks are also due to Dr. Demos Christou who gave permission to study the material which had been handed in to the Cyprus Museum. Thanks also go to Dr. Pavlos Flourentzos who facilitated my study and made many helpful suggestions about the identification of some of the pieces. Special thanks are due to Mr. Gregori Christou who made working in the storerooms of the Cyprus Museum such a pleasure.
11. The material will be published fully with a catalogue, together with the other finds of the Iron Age, in the final publication of the field survey of the Vasilikos Valley.
12. The sculpture, both stone and terracotta, has been divided into three categories: 1. statues which are life-size or larger, 2. statuettes which are under life - size to c. 20 cm high, or one tenth life-size, 3. figurines which are under c. 20 cm. high, or one tenth life-size. Because the material ranges in subject matter, it is difficult to be precise in the cut-off points, especially at the top end of the scale.

Table 1 - Stone Fragments

	321	322	322S	339	394/1	TOTAL
Figurine	0	3	1	0	4	8
Statuettes	0	8	10	5	2	25
Statues	0	1	3	4	0	8
TOTAL	0	12	14	9	6	41

Table 2 - Terracotta Fragments

	321	322	322S	339	394/1	TOTAL
Figurine	1	18	21	5	1	46
Statuettes	0	28	49	44	48	169
Statues	3	3	13	4	3	26
TOTAL	4	49	83	53	52	241

The range and frequency of the subjects is summarized on Table 3.<sup>13</sup> 83% of the sculptures are male votives and include draped figures (Pls XIb - XIIa), warriors (Pls XIIb - XIIIa), a flute player (Pl. XIIIb, Hermary 1989, 285 - 286; Flourentzos 1991), and mounted riders (Pl. XIVa). The rest are horses (Pls XIVb - XVa) and animals (Pl. XVb). The god Pan is the only specific deity represented (Pl. XVc, Hermary 1989, 311 - 314). As most of the human figures represent male votives, this suggests that the deity worshipped at Vavla - *Kapsalaes* was male as well.<sup>14</sup>

The stone sculpture ranges in date from the early 4th century into the Hellenistic period. The terracottas appear to start earlier than the stone sculpture in the late Cypro-Archaic I but continue down to the end of the Hellenistic period.

13. Table 3 only includes catalogued, readily identifiable pieces which most likely do not join with the rest of the survey sample.
14. This is the standard method of identifying the nature of the deity for sanctuaries from which we have no linguistic evidence. See Ikosi (1992, 268 - 270) for a geographic analysis of male and female cults. A sample of other sites the cults of which have been tentatively identified using the same criteria include Ayia Irini as male (Gjerstad 1935, 820 - 823), Kakopetria as Athena (Karageorghis 1977, 197), Kazaphani as Herakles - Melkarth (Karageorghis 1978, 192), the archaic/ classical sanctuary at Polis as female (Serwint 1992, 384), and the *Peristeries* sanctuary at Polis as female (Serwint 1992, 393).

Table 3 - Sculptural Subjects

	321	322	322S	339	394/1	TOTAL
Males - bearded	1	0	0	1	2	4
-unbearded	0	4	3	0	0	7
-standing	0	11	16	10	7	44
-rider	0	2	1	0	0	3
-musician	0	1	0	0	0	1
-misc.	0	19	18	8	7	52
Females	0	0	0	0	0	0
Animals - horse	0	3	1	0	0	4
-quadruped	0	2	5	0	1	8
-w. rider	0	0	3	1	0	4
- bird	0	0	1	0	0	1
-dolphin	0	2	0	0	0	1
Chariot group	0	0	1	0	0	1
Deity	0	0	1	0	0	1
Misc.	0	2	3	0	1	6
TOTAL	1	45	53	20	18	137
# Categories	1	9	11	4	5	15



The ceramic corpus comprises 24.5% handles and 48% body sherds, with only 16% rims and 11.5% bases. Much of the material such as the Plain White, White Painted, Black Slip and Bichrome fragments can only be dated in general terms, but it spans the range between the Cypro-Archaic I through Cypro-Classical II periods. There is one Bichrome III/IV rim, as well as three fragments of imported Black Glaze pottery which date to the fourth century. There are four sherds of Sigillata A. The two green glazed mediaeval sherds are the latest material recovered from the site.

It is unknown whether all of the ceramics should be associated with the sanctuary, especially towards the north in plot 339, but the occurrence of cookpot fabric would not be surprising in sanctuaries where dining may have been incorporated into the ritual.<sup>15</sup>

### C. Conclusions

The material finds undoubtedly indicate that the site had a ritual nature revolving around a male deity, and that it was in use from the end of the Cypro-Archaic II through to the end of the Hellenistic period. It is interesting to note that offering trays like those found at Yeronisos<sup>16</sup> or statue bases like those from Lang's sanctuary at Idalion (Lang 1878; Gaber and Morden 1992) have not been found.

The mixture of stone and terracotta dedications is reminiscent of the nature of the assemblages from Lang's sanctuary at Idalion,<sup>17</sup> and contrasts sharply with those sanctuaries which have almost entirely terracotta assemblages such as that from Ayia Irini (Gjerstad 1938), Patriki (Karageorghis 1971), the Peyia-*Maa* bothros (Karageorghis 1988, 855, fig. 95)<sup>18</sup>, Polis - *Peristeries* (Serwint 1992), and Rantidi (Mitford and Masson 1983)<sup>19</sup> or stone assemblages such as that at Athienou - *Malloura*.<sup>20</sup>

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15. Cookpot fabric has been found in the University of Arizona excavations of the sanctuary of Apollo - Amyklæ (Gaber and Morden 1992, 20 - 26).
16. Prof. Joan Connelly presented the findings of the first two seasons of the excavation of Yeronisos on June 17th, 1993 at CAARI (Nicosia).
17. According to R.S. Poole's inventory of R.H. Lang's excavated material from the Apollo Amyklæ sanctuary in Idalion, which he compiled in Larnaca February 9th, 1870, for the British Museum, there were 250 pieces of stone sculpture and 78 terracotta fragments. The author is most grateful to the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities for permission to consult this unpublished manuscript.
18. There was one piece of stone sculpture found in the Peyia - *Maa* bothros, a figurine fragment of a draped torso. This small percentage of stone is echoed at Phlamoudhi - *Vounari* (Al-Radi 1983) as well as at both Meniko - *Litharkes* and Limassol - *Komissariato* (Karageorghis 1977b).
19. The site has since been surveyed by the CPSP under the direction of D.W. Rupp and by CAARI under the direction of G.B. Bazemore. No stone sculpture has been found, confirming the picture derived from the publication by Mitford and Masson.
20. The University of Davidson excavations under the direction of Prof. Michael Toumazou have been underway since 1992, and a paper on the sculpture was presented on May 18th at the conference «Cypriote Stone Sculpture», 2nd International Conference of the Groupe de Contact Interuniversitaire d' Études Chypriotes (Belgium).

### ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ένας μη ανασκαφείς χώρος ιερού ανακαλύφθηκε το 1990 νοτιο-ανατολικά της κοινότητας «Βάβλας» της επαρχίας Λάρνακας. Βρίσκεται στους νότιους πρόποδες της ανατολικής οροσειράς του Τροόδους και η θέα από εκεί είναι θαυμάσια. Ο χώρος υπέστη σημαντικές ζημιές από παράνομη επέμβαση και ένα μέρος του καταστράφηκε από μηχανικό εκσκαφέα, για να γίνει ο σκυβαλότοπος του χωριού Βάβλα. Επιφανειακή έρευνα αποκάλυψε την παρουσία μεγάλου αριθμού γλυπτών από λίθο και πηλό καθώς και ειδώλια, ενώ υπήρχε πληθώρα θραυσμάτων από αγγεία, οστά ζώων καθώς και κατάλοιπα λίθινης πιθανώς αρχιτεκτονικής. Τα αντικείμενα στο χώρο χρονολογούνται μεταξύ τους τέλους της Κυπρο-αρχαϊκής Ι και τους τέλους της Ελληνιστικής περιόδου.

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