

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

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The coastal district of Pyla-*Koutsopetria* in the Sovereign Base Area of Dhekelia ten kilometers east of Larnaca marks the location of several important buried settlements on and beneath prominent coastal ridges and alongside a natural embayment (fig. 1.1). Alluvial wash long ago filled in the embayment and buried the splendid and rich archaeological settlements on the ridges and coastal plain. Excavations by Cypriot and, more recently, Belgian archaeologists, have exposed important remains of the Late Bronze Age at the easternmost ridge of Pyla-*Kokkinokremos*. Archaeological investigations at another prominent coastal ridge, Pyla-*Vigla*, on the western edge of the Dhekelia Cantonment, have produced evidence of Classical-Hellenistic settlement on a hilltop surrounded by a fortification of that period. At the coastal site of Pyla-*Koutsopetria* on the plain below, excavations since the 1990s have revealed a splendid and rich assemblage of late antique and early Christian remains (fig. 1.2).

In our first volume, *Pyla-Koutsopetria I: Archaeological Survey of an Ancient Coastal Town* (2014), we detailed the methods and results of a pedestrian survey carried out across the Dhekelia cantonment between 2003 and 2011. This work of the Pyla-*Koutsopetria* Archaeological Project demonstrated the ubiquity, complexity, and longevity of settlement in this micro-region. The seemingly single-period Hellenistic site of Pyla-*Vigla* and Late Bronze Age site of Pyla-*Kokkinokremos*, for instance, both produced later remains, while the coastal plain showed traces of material from the Bronze Age and Iron Age, and especially the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, which formed important earlier phases at the site long before a late antique town developed there. Survey showed above, all that, excavation over the last sixty years had revealed only a small segment of the buried habitation and features of the region.

This second volume accounts for two unique programs of more intensive archaeological investigation at the Late Roman coastal town of Koutsopetria and the fortified Hellenistic settlement of Vigla. The first program was a clearance excavation in 1993 and 1999 under the direction of Dr. Maria Hadjicosti, which exposed the apse of an Early Christian basilica and a substantial room to its south (Christou 1993; Flourentzos 1999). The second program of remote sensing, geophysical survey, and small-scale trial excavation occurred as part of the Pyla-*Koutsopetria* Archaeological Project between 2007 and 2017 and brought to light Hellenistic domestic structures and a fortification at Vigla (Caraher et al. 2011/2012[2018]) and Late Roman levels at Koutsopetria. This new volume marks the collaborative publication of these two expeditions carried out over the last generation and presents an opportunity to reflect further on themes that were important in our earlier publication, namely, intensive survey, regionalism, town and territory, connectivity, and religious landscapes.

#### 1.1. Excavations at Pyla-*Koutsopetria* in 1993 and 1999

Archaeological investigations at Pyla-*Koutsopetria* began in October 1993 under the direction of Dr. Maria Hadjicosti, who was then serving as an archaeological officer for the Department of Antiquities (Christou 1993). Deep plowing on the coastal plain in the preceding

years had churned up sizable architectural elements from buried buildings ca. 200 meters north of the coastal road. A small team of about a dozen people, assembled from the technical staff of the Department of Antiquities together with volunteers and students, worked over the course of several weeks to clear a substantial building of Late Roman date, which, later excavations revealed, was a kind of annex to an early Christian basilica to the north. Excavation revealed the tops of wall remnants almost immediately, within the first half meter below ground surface. By the first week of November, the teams reached the floor of the building, some two meters below ground surface and eight meters above sea level (fig. 1.4).

Excavation in 1993 exposed a building with a central room (“Room 1”) 5.6 x 6.8 m in dimension, cement floor, the debris of a second story (also with cement floor), a massive double arch that supported the superstructure, and decorative architectural elements including marble floors, windows, and plaster walls with Christian graffiti and paintings. Excavation also uncovered a narrow portico (1.6 x 6.1 m) immediately to the west of the room, and adjoining architecture to the south and north, which pointed to a private domestic complex owned by a Christian family in the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

No additional work occurred between 1994 and 1998 apart from cataloguing objects in 1994 and revisiting the site, but in late fall 1999, Dr. Hadjicosti, now Ephor of Antiquities, initiated another campaign of excavation (Flourentzos 1999). The work of the second season centered on two goals: 1) cleaning the floor of Room 1 and exploring the areas immediately to its north, and 2) exposing the apse of an Early Christian basilica to the east-northeast. Clearance of Room 1 entailed the excavation of a small circular recess (called a “well” at the time of excavation) sunk almost half a meter below the floor. The work of the 1999 season had two main outcomes. It demonstrated the existence of an early Christian basilica little more than 10 m to the north of Room 1 and it established an architectural relationship between the basilica and the room (fig. 1.3bis). If this was an early Christian house, as originally concluded, it was also an annex to a Christian church.

The investigative program of 1999 marked an end of fieldwork until the PKAP regional survey commenced in 2003. Hadjicosti’s team continued to study the finds even as the *Pyla-Koutsopetria* Archaeological Project got underway. They photographed finds, inventoried tiles (2007), and illustrated nails and metal objects (2009).

## **1.2. The Work of the Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project (2003-2017)**

The programs of trial excavation at Vigla and Koutsopetria by the *Pyla-Koutsopetria* Archaeological Project (PKAP) grew out of pedestrian survey in the region between 2003 and 2011 (Caraher et al. 2014). Intensive survey on the coastal plain revealed a notably dense scatter of material extending 250 m to the east of the fenced area enclosing the late antique site excavated in the 1990s. The material of this scatter dated mostly to the Late Roman period, but survey revealed earlier occupation of the Hellenistic to early Roman periods, and light traces of even earlier periods (Bronze Age to Iron Age) and later periods (Medieval to Modern). The survey of the ridges recorded evidence for diachronic settlement that expanded earlier views of single-period occupations. At the well-excavated Late Bronze Age site of *Pyla-Kokkinokremos*, for example, intensive survey documented traces of later material from the Archaic, Hellenistic, and Early and Late Roman periods. On the ridgetop of *Pyla-Vigla*, where plowing and illegal metal detecting had turned up plentiful Classical and Hellenistic remains—a Hellenistic inscription on monumental limestone basin (Hadjisavvas 1993: 75–76), a statue of Bes dating to the Iron Age (Counts 2008 with citations), and bronze spear points and sling bullets (Olson 2014;

Nicolaou 1977)—the PKAP survey recorded dense remains of objects from the Iron Age to the Late Roman eras.

Other archaeological methods added important details to our developing picture of the settlement history of the region. Aerial photography in 2007 illuminated buried architecture at Vigla that had gone undetected during previous seasons (fig. 1.3). In our visits to the area since 2003, we had driven up and down the Vigla ridge hundreds of times. When, on June 11, 2007, the 84 Sqn RAF Akrotiri assisted us by capturing oblique low-altitude aerial photography across the entire site, we discovered a clear feature encircling the hilltop just below the ridgetop. Autopsy investigation revealed a massive fortification wall some two meters thick enclosing the ridge as a fortified acropolis, as well as a *taphros*—a dry moat—cut into the bedrock stratum on the northern side of the acropolis. Aerial photography revealed what we had failed to see in our daily trips to the acropolis or in our programs of pedestrian survey: an imposing and important defense circuit surrounded by steep slope and a moat on the northern end, guarding the coastal road between Kition and Salamis (Caraher et al. 2011/2012[2018]).

Aerial photography coincided with a new program of electrical resistance survey in May 2007 on the plain and ridges (fig. 1.5). This program grew out of a collaboration with Michael Brown, then a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh (Brown 2012) and Mr. John Hunt, a geophysics technician from Limassol. The resistance survey across 23,000 square meters of the coastal plain of Koutsopetria, the plateau of Vigla, and areas of Kokkinokremos produced mixed results but suggested buried architecture at Vigla in the form a series of parallel and traverse lines. Indeed, the results appeared to the Pyla-Koutsopetria project directors to have the form of an Early Christian basilica, even though pedestrian survey had documented only light amounts of later Roman pottery. We reasoned that a buried Early Christian church surrounded by a fortification wall might represent a significant Late Antique acropolis overlooking a richly-appointed coastal site.

This background informed our conversations with Dr. Hadjicosti in 2007 and 2008 about initiating new programs of trial excavations. She supported this request as an extension of the survey and a means of gaining additional information about the Early Christian site she had previously revealed on the plain. We recognized that limited excavation at Koutsopetria would serve to clarify the stratigraphy revealed in the 1990s excavation and expand knowledge of the site. We expected to find new contemporary Late Roman buildings on the height of Vigla. In 2008, the Cyprus Department of Antiquities granted the Pyla-Koutsopetria Archaeological Project permission—in collaboration with Dr. Hadjicosti—to conduct soundings on Vigla to ground-truth the results of geophysical survey during the previous season.

A sizable team assembled in 2008 and included faculty and students from the University of North Dakota (Dr. William Caraher), Indiana University of Pennsylvania (Dr. R. Scott Moore), and Messiah College (Dr. David K. Pettegrew), as well as specialists from the University of Toronto (Dr. Dimitri Nakassis), University of Edinburgh (Michael Brown), Penn State University (Brandon Olson) and Princeton University (Maria Andrioti). Several teams excavated four soundings on Pyla-Vigla between May 14 and June 23 (fig. 1.6). The most important trench was Excavation Unit 1 ([EU 1](#)), which was positioned directly to intersect the apse of a putative basilica detected in the electrical resistance survey. Within three days, however, excavation came down on a large chunk of conglomerate that had created an appearance of an apse. Several additional days of excavation in this trench and another unit to the south ([EU 2](#)) indicated that the buildings on Vigla were domestic structures of earlier date (Classical to Hellenistic). An excavation sounding ([EU 5](#)) on the western end of the plateau, meanwhile, revealed additional phases of this settlement,

and a small cut across the fortification on the ridge ([EU 6](#)) brought conclusive evidence for a Hellenistic construction date of the wall. By the end of the season, ground-truthing had effectively disproven our hypothesis of an Early Christian basilica and brought to light a fortified Classical and Hellenistic settlement.

We continued the work of excavation the following year through two additional units at Vigla and two new soundings at Koutsopetria (fig. 1.7). One new unit ([EU 9](#)) at Vigla was designed to determine the date of the fortification wall at the northwestern corner of the ridge where surface investigation pointed to multiple and later phases of construction; we opened the other ([EU 8](#)) to gain additional information on the function and chronology of the architecture of Classical-Hellenistic date revealed the previous season. Under the direction of Dr. Sarah Lepinski, our teams also opened two new trenches at Koutsopetria ([EU 12](#) and [13](#)) to clarify the chronology of the phases of the annex building excavated by Dr. Hadjicosti, the relationship of that building to the basilica, and the nature of earlier remains beneath the Late Roman material. The soundings in 2009 did not answer all our questions but contributed significantly to our understanding of both sites. At Vigla, the two trenches verified the presence of domestic architecture and the lack of monumental architecture in the center of this plateau and documented at least two building phases for the fortification wall. At Koutsopetria, the soundings south of the annex room clarified the stratigraphy of the late phases of the site and revealed a complex pattern of late antique use, reconstruction, and repair. Excavation at both sites uncovered an enormous amount of new information about the sites of the area.

The 2009 season also marked our first season implementing a program of survey with Ground Penetrating Radar. We adopted this method to resurvey areas previously investigated through two seasons of electrical resistivity and to sample additional areas of the sites. We were especially interested in determining whether we could produce clearer results more efficiently than electrical resistivity. We expected that this new period of geophysical survey could produce another independent layer of evidence for settlement in the region. Unlike the earlier program of electrical resistance, which led directly to excavation, we carried out the GPR survey initially for comparison, and eventually to produce new evidence for settlement in the region. The survey occurred in 2009 under the direction of Dr. Beverly Chiarulli (a colleague of Dr. R. Scott Moore at Indiana University of Pennsylvania) and continued the following season under the direction of Ms. Amanda Gill, a student of Dr. Chiarulli (Gill 2011).

The following two seasons (2010 and 2011) were busy and productive years for project. The directors and staff officially concluded the pedestrian survey across the micro-region and prepared a catalogue of objects and manuscript interpreting the artifact distributions. The staff also studied, catalogued, and illustrated the material recovered from the excavations of 2008 and 2009. The plan then was to publish in a single volume the results of pedestrian survey, trial excavation, and the earlier work of Dr. Hadjicosti and her team. The complexity of integrating the survey and excavation proved unwieldy, and it appeared that the ongoing study of excavation material—both old and new—would unnecessarily delay the publication of the survey material that was by then completely studied. Some of the excavated material, such as painted plaster and fauna, required additional study by specialists, while metal finds such as Hellenistic coins awaited cleaning by technicians in Nicosia. A delay in publication seemed inevitable since some of these objects, such as the coins, were foundational to our interpretation of the phases of occupation, destruction, and rebuilding. In conversation with Dr. Hadjicosti in summer 2011, we made the decision to publish the survey separately from the excavations.

This decision and the delay in publication opened the door to move forward with one

final season of trial excavations on the Vigla plateau in 2012. Our goal was to ascertain the extent of Hellenistic settlement there, the nature of the settlement's destruction, the phases of the fortification walls, and the possibility of a cemetery on the slope below the plateau. A team of faculty and students from the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State, Messiah College, Ohio State University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Boston University excavated four new units (EU 14-17) on Vigla in 2012 that revealed remains of habitation on the center and eastern side of the ridgetop (fig. 1.8). Excavations in EU 16 uncovered one of the most important finds to date: a trash deposit of Late Classical-Early Hellenistic ceramic objects just within the fortification wall that represented a period of cleanup of the site after an episode of destruction. This assemblage of table wares, kitchen wares, amphora sherds, and utilitarian objects form one of the best-preserved deposits of Late Classical to Early Hellenistic objects on the island and is the subject of Chapter 11. We reached bedrock in 2012 in all trenches except for EU 16, the storage area containing the ceramic deposit.

In the following seasons (2013-2017), we plodded on slowly with analysis, cataloguing, and illustration of objects excavated at Koutsopetria and Vigla, entangled in the complexities of publishing an excavation and encumbered by other fieldwork and publication projects. With the survey volume published, our aim was to complete the analysis of artifacts from excavations and learn more about the site without stacking new data on our efforts. Two groups of students from Messiah College and Indiana University of Pennsylvania came to Larnaca in 2015 and 2017 to study the remains of objects from the excavations. In 2015, we conducted gridded resurvey of the height of Vigla to understand better the surface distribution of artifacts across the ridge and their relationship with subsurface finds. We also carried out an additional week of ground-penetrating radar across the height of Vigla, as well as several units on the plain of Koutsopetria.

Further delay of publication of the excavated remains opened the door for a small collaborative team led by Drs. Brandon Olson (a former team leader and field director in PKAP) and Thomas Landvatter to undertake new excavations at Vigla in the summers of 2018 and 2019. Since their work marks a new phase in the investigation of Pyla-Vigla, we have decided not to include the results within this volume. The 2017 season, then, marked the final season of our initial efforts in PKAP to explore the subsurface remains of Vigla and Koutsopetria.

### 1.3. Plan of the Work

This volume presents our collaborative work in the area through four different sections. Beyond this introduction (Ch. 1), Part I surveys the diverse methods of excavation (Ch. 2) and reports on the nature of the archaeological data produced by the project and archived via the site Open Context.

Part II presents the results of work at the Late Roman site of Pyla-Koutsopetria. It begins with a discussion of the architecture and stratigraphy revealed through older and more recent excavations (Ch. 3). A robust catalogue of Late Roman ceramics (Ch. 4) follows as well as chapters on painted plaster (Ch. 5), metal finds (Ch. 6), small finds (Ch. 6b), faunal remains (Ch. 7), Christian iconography (Ch. 8), the opus sectile (Ch. 9), and glass (Ch. 10). This section also includes a discussion of the results of Ground Penetrating Radar (Ch. 10b), which shed light on additional buried architecture beyond the excavated area.

Part III presents the results of excavation, remote sensing, geophysics, and study of the finds from the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic site of Pyla-Vigla. The chapter begins with a fulsome overview of the stratigraphy and architectural remains of the settlement and fortification at the site (Ch. 10) before turning to catalogues of ceramics (Ch. 11); figurines (Ch. 12); coins

and metal objects, utensils, and weapons (Ch. 13-16); a gaming board (Ch. 17); faience scarab (Ch. 18); lithic objects (Ch. 19); stone bowls and utilitarian vessels (Ch. 20); and faunal remains (Ch. 21). This section includes discussion of the results of Ground Penetrating Radar on the heights of Vigla and the nearby ridge of Kazamas (Ch. 22).

Part IV takes a broader view to situate these intensive archaeological studies within broader methodological and historical contexts. Here we offer a broad historical conclusion (Ch. 23) about the history of the region in the ancient Mediterranean.

Several appendixes follow, one providing the reader with information about the PKAP data (Appendix I), another discussing archaeological recording techniques using paper methods vs. custom-built apps for iPads (Appendix II).

#### **1.4. Acknowledgments**

The investigations outlined in this volume moved forward with the support and assistance of many working on the island. Former and current directors of the Department of Antiquities including Drs. Sophocles Hadjisavvas, Pavlos Flourentzos, Despo Pilides, and Marina Solomidou-Ieronymidou, kindly permitted the work undertaken in this study. Dr. Hadjicosti, who led the first expedition at Pyla-*Koutsopetria* in the 1990s, was herself instrumental in the subsequent phase of intensive investigations by PKAP from 2008 to 2017. At the British Dhekelia Base, Giorgos Giorgoudes, Gareth Wilmot, Michael Gregoriou, and Kostas Kaloumis, among many others, kindly facilitated our work and guided us through the entanglements of conducting fieldwork on a military base.

Others on Cyprus encouraged our work. Former and current CAARI directors, Drs. Tom Davis, Andrew McCarthy, and Lindy Crewe, as well as Vathoulla Moustoukki of CAARI, helped us navigate the innumerable challenges of leading a foreign archaeological mission on the island. Dr. Anna Satraki and the entire staff of the Larnaca District Archaeological Museum were always generous in facilitating our study of materials. Our friends and associates on the Athienou Archaeological Project—Drs. Michael Toumazou, Derek Counts, P. Nick Kardulias, Erin Averett, and Jody Gordon—provided resources and good conversation.

The intensive investigations of the Pyla-*Koutsopetria* Archaeological Project received financial assistance from agencies and institutions over the years, including the American Schools of Oriental Research, the Institute of Aegean Prehistory, the Kress Foundation, the Mediterranean Archaeological Trust, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Faculty Professional Development Council, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Dean Yaw Asamoah, IUP's Department of History, the IUP University Senate, and Dr. Mark Staszkievicz, IUP Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), Messiah College (Office of Faculty Development), and the University of North Dakota (Office of Instructional Development, University of North Dakota Office of Research and Compliance, and the University of North Dakota Department of History). Messiah College funded a number of capable student research assistants who supported post-processing each season, data entry, transcription, and preparing data. These included Melissa Hogan, Nick Schmuck, Andrew Henry, Megan Piette, Timothy Hampton, Kelly Henderson, and Cassy Baddorf.

Finally, the production of this volume reflects the collective energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of dozens of archaeologists, students, and volunteers over many seasons. Our volunteer field workers came from as nearby as the communities in the region and Nicosia, in the case of earlier investigations, and as far afield as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Their collective efforts have literally unearthed the past history of this important

site in the Cypriot landscape.

[Insert Pictures of Field and Study Teams in 1993 and 1999, 2008-2017]

*1993 Team* (fig. 1.9)

Dr. Maria Hadjicosti

*1999 Team* (fig. 1.10)

Dr. Maria Hadjicosti

*2008 Team* (fig. 1.11)

Andrioti, Maria

Brown, Michael

Caraher, Susan

Caraher, William

Crowley, Jon

Dalton, Mat

DeForest, Dallas

Freas, Jessie

Gust, Chris

Horowitz, Mara

Howell, Jennifer

Kochinski, Joe

Moore, R. Scott

Nakassis, Dimitri

Olson, Brandon R.

Pettegrew, David

Pettegrew, Kate

Pflager, Julie

Richards, Dan

Weber, Bret

Wise, Nick

*2009 Team* (fig. 1.12)

Babcock, Caitlin

Brown, Michael

Caraher, Susan

Caraher, William

Costello, Sarah

Crowley, Jon

DeForest, Dallas

Federer, Paul

Henesy, Matt

Hey, Kyle

Hogan, Melissa

Horowitz, Mara  
Karatjas, Nick  
Lepinski, Sarah  
Little, Dalton  
Lovelace, Alex  
Moore, R. Scott  
Nakassis, Dimitri  
Olson, Brandon R.  
Pettegrew, David  
Ragsdale, Ian  
Ragsdale, Randi  
Savaria, Becky  
Schmuck, Nick  
Skotnicki, Rachel  
Stander, Ryan  
Weller, Courtney

*2010 Team* (fig. 1.13)

Bachert, Zane  
Beltowski, Chester  
Caraher, William  
Crowley, Jon  
DeForest, Dallas  
Fortnam, Sarah  
Gill, Amanda  
Hartline, Andrew  
Henry, Andrew  
Hogan, Melissa  
Horowitz, Mara  
Jagnarain, Matthew  
Lepinski, Sarah  
Mace, Luke  
Moore, R. Scott  
Nakassis, Dimitri  
Olson, Brandon R.  
Pettegrew, David  
Pirone, Ashleigh  
Savaria, Becky  
Weaver, Valerie

*2011 Team* (fig. 1.14)

Caraher, William  
Crowley, Jon  
Moore, R. Scott  
DeForest, Dallas  
Olson, Brandon R.



Pettegrew, David

*2012 Team* (fig. 1.15)

Barth, Aaron  
Bisciotti, Carrie  
Caraher, William  
Cheng, Jeff  
Crout, David  
Crowley, Jon  
DeForest, Dallas  
DeForest, Elizabeth  
Fee, Samuel  
Goodling, Laura  
Hampton, Timothy  
Heagy, Cody  
Kercy, Nick  
King, Danielle  
Kozuhowski, Stephen  
Lepinski, Sarah  
Moore, R. Scott  
Nelson, James  
Olson, Brandon R.  
Pettegrew, David  
Piette, Megan  
Schofield, Kaylee

*2013 Team* (fig. 1.16)

Caraher, William  
Moore, R. Scott  
Olson, Brandon R.

*2014 Team* (fig. 1.17)

Hampton, Timothy  
Moore, R. Scott  
Nelson, James  
Olson, Brandon R.  
Pettegrew, David K.  
Schofield, Kaylee

*2015 Team* (fig. 1.18)

Baddorf, Cassandra  
Falk, Emily  
Heinicke, Aliza  
Henderson, Kelly  
Moore, R. Scott  
Mueller, James

Neuman, Kaitlyn  
Olson, Brandon R.  
Pettegrew, David K.  
Robison, Rachel  
Senum, Kariana  
Stone, Tyler  
Thomes, Colin

*2016 Team (fig. 1.19)*

Caraher, William R.  
Moore, R. Scott  
Masten, David  
Olson, Brandon R.

*2017 Team (fig. 1.20)*

Caraher, William R.  
Carter, Joshua  
Chandon, Alexandra  
Headland, Nick  
Hearn, Devon  
Jasitt, Rachael  
McCoy, Jeremiah  
McKeehan, Ryan  
Moore, R. Scott  
Pettegrew, David K.  
Rollins, Kayla  
Wilson, Sarah