NEW DIRECTIONS IN CYPRiot ARCHAEOLOGY
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The archaeology of the north coast of Cyprus: the evidence from Lapithos

This paper discusses the archaeology of the north coast of Cyprus during the Bronze Age and through the Iron Age. Using Lapithos as a case study, the goal is to reconstruct the cultural, social and economic landscape of the region, with a particular emphasis on the Early Iron Age. Taking a landscape approach, this paper uses new sets of data and argues that a macro-historic perspective may the most useful in illuminating periods for which the archaeological evidence is still lacking.

The archaeology of the north coast of Cyprus is beset with problems: the inaccessibility of the region because of the current political situation, the limited scope of previous archaeological projects, inadequate mapping, and an almost complete absence of excavated settlements. Recent research, however, has emphasized the paramount role of the north coast in metal trade during the Early and Middle Bronze Age. Following a hiatus in visibility during the Late Bronze Age, the archaeological record picks up again in the Early Iron Age with extensive cemeteries at Lapithos. These cemeteries constitute the extent of our knowledge during this period. Following a poorer understood Cypro-Geometric period, Lapithos rises as a kingdom, toward the end of the 6th century BCE as it is indicated by coins with the names of Lapithian kings. Lapithos is the only known, albeit elusive archaeologically, kingdom on the north coast.

This paper attempts to overcome some of the problems that are specific to the archaeology of Lapithos and follows current research models in Cypriot archaeology, which advocate a thorough study of the landscape and topography as well as an approach intrinsic to the island and an effort to look at processes and developments over the long term. In particular this paper utilizes newly constructed maps of Lapithos, showing the distribution of sites, both excavated and identified by survey. These maps allow us to explore the topography and role of Lapithos as well as the development of sites and communication networks over time. The reconstruction proposed here demonstrates the dynamic role of the landscape in site development and indicates how internal and external changes had an impact on political and economic processes of the north coast.