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A Countryside in Transition: The Galinoporni-Kaleburnu Plain (Cyprus) in the Passage from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (ca. 600 – ca. 850)

Mění se krajina: planina Galinoporni-Kaleburnu (SV Kypr)
na přechodu mezi pozdní antikou a raným středověkem
(ca 600 – ca 850)

Luca Zavagno — Bülent Kızılduman

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This paper aims to both tip the chronologically-unbalanced rural surveys conducted on the island of Cyprus in the last decades (as focusing almost exclusively on the Roman and Late Antique period) and re-assess the traditional historiographical interpretation of the fate of local rural settlements and population in the passage from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages (i.e. between the late sixth to the early ninth century). Indeed, we cannot simply take for granted that at the time under scrutiny Cyprus was overwhelmed by Arab incursions turning the island into a no man's land, severing commercial and shipping routes, bringing to an end any economic, social and cultural form of life in the countryside, causing massive depopulation and abandonment of prosperous rural villages along the coasts in favor of hastily built and fortified (often seasonal) hilltop settlements.

In the light of the latter remark, the authors will use the preliminary results of a recent extensive rural survey conducted in the plain of Galinoporni/Kaleburnu on the Karpas peninsula to propose a picture of the Cypriot landscape as characterized by the early medieval resilience of the varied range of rural settlements (farms, hamlets and villages) dating back to previous centuries and by the lack of any catastrophic occupational gaps after the mid-seventh century.

Cyprus, Mediterranean, Rural, Archaeology, Byzantium, Late Antiquity, Middle Ages

Cílem tohoto článku je jak doplnit chronologicky nevyvážené průzkumy uskutečněné ve venkovských oblastech ostrova Kypr v uplynulých desetiletích (zaměřující se téměř výhradně na dobu římskou a pozdní antiku), tak nově vyhodnotit tradiční historiografické interpretace osudu místního venkovského osídlení a populace na přechodu mezi pozdní antikou a časným středověkem (tj. mezi sklonkem 6. a počátkem 9. století). Nemůžeme jednoduše přijmout předpoklad, že ve zkoumaném období byl Kypr zcela paralyzován arabskými nájezdy, které ostrov změnily v zemi nikoho, přerušily obchodní a dopravní trasy, skoncovaly s jakoukoliv formou venkovského hospodářského, společenského a kulturního života a způsobily masivní vyhlazení a opuštění prosperujících venkovských sídel podél pobřeží ve prospěch narychlo budovaných a opevněných (často sezónních) výšinných sídlišť.

V souvislosti s posledně uvedenou poznámkou využijí autoři předběžné výsledky nedávného extenzivního průzkumu venkovských oblastí, uskutečněného na planině Galinoporni/Kaleburnu na poloostrově Karpas, aby navrhli obraz kyperské krajiny v časném středověku charakterizovaný rezistencí různých druhů venkovských sídel (jednotlivých statků, osad a vesnic), datujících se do předchozích staletí, a absencí jakýchkoliv katastrofických přeryvů v osídlení po polovině 7. století.

Kypr, Středomoří, venkov, archeologie, Byzanc, pozdní antika, středověk

1. Prolegomenoi: out of reach but not out of trouble

In the last four decades any archaeological study of the Cypriot urban or rural Medieval settlement pattern has suffered from the contradictions resulting from the current political situation on the island, which have virtually brought all the archaeological campaigns and surveys of the northern half of the island to a halt (see on this *Zavagno 2011–12*, 121–155).¹ As a result, to quote the recent seminal work of *Allan Langdale (2012)*, the architectural, artistic, and archaeological heritage located on a substantial portion of the island has found

¹ See also the recent “Forum on Cypriot Cultural Heritage” hosted by the Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies («Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies» 3/2 /2015/). It is also worth noticing that we are using here both the Greek and Turkish names of the village (as currently and commonly used by both communities) although we are perfectly aware that “the 15th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites condemned name change of Gallinoporni (sic!) [as] part of the destruction of the intangible heritage of Cyprus” (*Hadjisavvas 2015*, 130).

itself in a “contested realm”: completely out of reach to scholars who were therefore forced to reassess the results of old surveys (like those conducted by the Department of Antiquities in the 1950s and 1960s) or to focus the attention on a simple architectural and stylistic analysis (in a comparative perspective) of single buildings like the eighth-century rural churches dotting the Karpas peninsula or the basilica of Campanopetra (Megaw 2006). The latter approach, as C. Stewart (2010) has recently showed, can provide us with invaluable information concerning the developments of urban and rural settlement patterns and even allowed architectural historians to assess the role Cypriot master builders played in introducing innovative new designs – like flying buttresses or pointed arches when renovating older structures in the early as well as in the late Middle Ages (Stewart 2016). Nevertheless, the results of these attempts at researching on the cultural heritage of Northern Cyprus (Summerer — Kaba 2016) have been always regarded questionable as the impossibility of conducting extensive or intensive surveys as well as stratigraphically aware archaeological excavations not only renders any comparison problematic but more important leave these structures in a vacuum as it is impossible to relate them to the transformation experienced by the urban and rural landscape which once encapsulated them.

To the abovementioned logistic difficulties one should also add the problems of investigating the period labeled as the Byzantine Dark Ages (Decker 2016). Indeed, in the territory of the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus (covering the southern part of the island) a large score of international projects has been launched in order to systematically survey the Cypriot countryside (Papa-costas 2001; Decker 2016, 139–140). Although they have included both extensive and intensive surveys and archaeological excavations in rural contexts, they nevertheless present us with some methodological caveats. Indeed, in Rautman’s words, they provide us only “with a patchwork coverage of the Cypriot countryside [moreover they] proceeded under varied circumstances, with different goals requiring rapid, uneven coverage of large areas” (Rautman 2003, 32). One could for instance mention projects, like the Sydney Cyprus Survey Project, the Canadian Paleopaphos Survey Project, the Akamas-Cape Kormakiti Surveys, the Trodos Archaeology and Environmental Survey Project, and the recently published the Kalavassos-Kopetra excavations and the Athienou-Malloura Archaeological Survey (to quote just a few) which however show a tendency to focus their analysis on the Roman and Late Antique eras with scarce attention for the Middle Ages.² Few exceptions nevertheless are worth mentioning here; in particular, the results of recent surveys at Polis-Chrysochus and the Trodos mountains have cogently documented that a complex and slow change in rural landscape does not necessarily mean a catastrophic collapse of rural life once Cyprus moved into the eighth century (Caraher — Scott Moore — Pettigrew 2010; Papa-costas 2013 and Rautman 2014, 44).

Nevertheless, as M. Decker (2016, 64–65) has cogently showed, studies on Cypriot handmade ceramics

have contributed to reassess the role of non-wheeled turned pottery as commercially produced (alongside wheeled turned ones) and integral to the local material culture and not simply as debased successor of the specialized Roman production.³

However, although recent researches have contributed to shed light on the relative archaeological invisibility of the chronological span between the middle seventh century and tenth century (Vionis 2013a, 104), a further problem in analyzing is represented by the interpretative scheme contemporary historiography has often used to analyze the events unfolding in Cyprus during the passage from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. The idea is that the general prosperity the island experienced in the fourth to sixth century as “one of the ‘most stable Roman provinces’ ended abruptly amid the military conflicts of mid-seventh century, which left Cyprus a shared possession of Constantinople and Damascus” (Rautman 2005, 453). The abovementioned tripartition and the historiographical rendition of the “*evodi mezzo*” as the Dark Ages of Cyprus, indubitably taps into the concept of “eastern Mediterranean Dark Ages” as introduced by Clive Foss from the 1970s onwards (for instance, Foss 1977; Foss — Winfield 1986). Indeed, C. Foss concluded that since the seventh century universal desolation and desertion of coastal regions was brought by the attacks of the Persians and the Arabs. In the very case of Cyprus this train of thoughts, has brought about an almost obsessive impulse to prove the catastrophic impact of the Arab invasions (Dikigoropoulos 1961; Kyrris 1997) and, more important, an almost endless debate on the philological aspects of the treaty signed by the Umayyads and the Byzantines, which – according to Theophanes – in 686–688 stated that “they would share in equal parts the tax revenue of Cyprus, Armenia and Iberia” (Theophanes 506).

In other words, historiography has flirted with the idea of a catastrophe brought about by the two Arab raids dated to 649 and 653/654 which supposedly caused “the decline of urban (and rural) life, [...] the lack of firm government and the reversion almost everywhere to a non-monetized economy” (Metcalf — Pitsillides 1995, 11–12). As a result, the current limits imposed on doing archaeology in the northern part of the island chimed with the historiographical metanarratives regarding seventh-to-ninth century Cyprus as an island neutralized after the local population was transplanted by the Byzantines (when Justinian II transferred the Archbishop and his flock to Nea Justinianoupolis to the Hellespont in 691) or taken captive by the Umayyads as witnessed by Anastasius Sinaite in the early eighth century.⁴ According to this interpretation Cyprus became a maritime continuation of the Taurus-Anti Taurus frontier (Lounghis 2010); an empty land where few fortified strongholds could be used as key for a strategy of avoidance of a permanent Arab presence. Therefore, it was only after the return of the island under Constanti-

² For an overview of the abovementioned surveys see Zavagno 2011–12 with further and detailed bibliography on the abovementioned surveys; for Kalavassos-Kopetra see Rautman 2003.

³ On Cypriot Medieval handmade and coarse wares see also the important works by Gabrieli and others: Gabrieli et al. 2007 and Gabrieli 2014 with further bibliography.

⁴ On the Nea Justinianoupolis: Englezakis 1990; Anastasius of Sinai, 96.

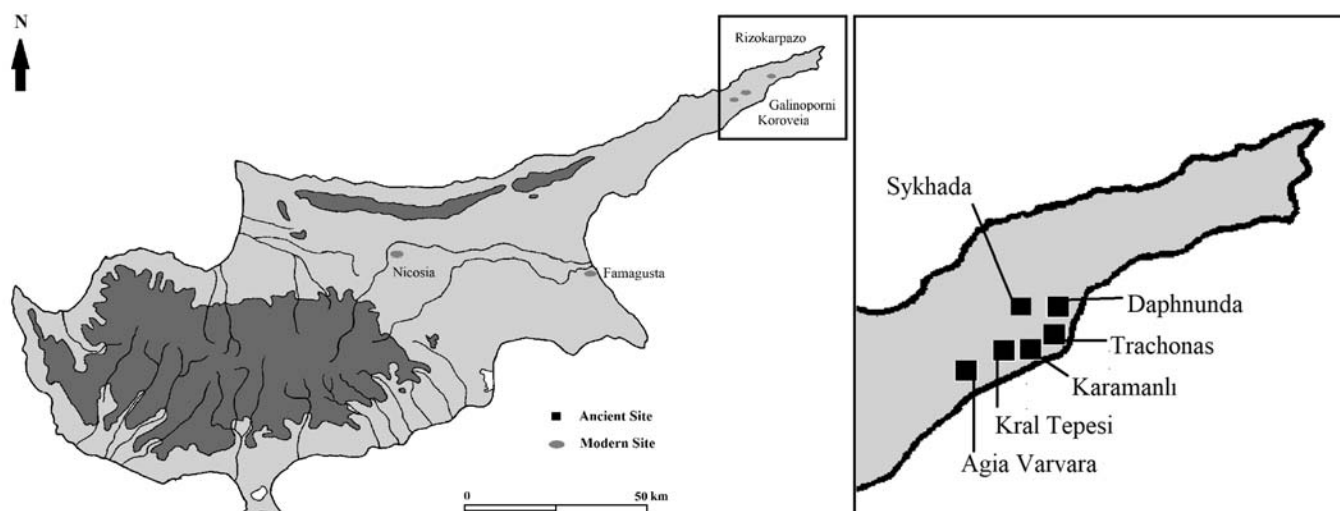


Fig. 1. Map of Cyprus. — Obr. 1. Mapa Kypru.

nopolitan realm in 965 that Cyprus started a recovery fully epitomized by the appearance of a new capital (Nicosia) at the heart of the Mesaoria plain (as the old one – Salamis-Constantia – was abandoned) and an economic and demographic recovery (Papacostas 2012).

Indeed, the present paper is an attempt not only to overcome the ineffectiveness of this chronological tripartition but also to use the preliminary evidence gathered through a documentary and photographic extensive rural survey to propose a different picture of the development of the Cypriot countryside in the period under scrutiny here. The survey has been conducted in the plain of Galinoporni/Kaleburnu on the southern coast of the Karpas peninsula (Fig. 1). As both the idea of an Arab-Byzantine land and maritime frontier has been recently reassessed (Eger 2015; Picard 2016) pointing to the permeability and the porosity of a supposedly firm barrier, it is our intention to try and pair the results of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu survey with others having as their objects specific areas of other insular contexts like Sicily (Kaukana) and the Balearics (Mallorca and south Menorca) (Mascarò 2017; Pelagatti — Di Stefano 1999). As in the case of Galinoporni-Kaleburnu, the latter “were not specifically designed to solve questions about Late Antique [and Dark Age] settlement patterns” (Mas Florit — Cau Ontiveros 2007, 171) but they nevertheless used architectural, artistic and material evidence to catalogue and propose and interim synthesis for the rural world of these islands. In both instances, we are dealing with insular coastal districts and as will be seen with areas that have “no natural frontiers or boundaries if not administrative (artificial) [...] as no epigraphic or literary evidence is available” (Mascarò 2017, 1).

More important, both in Kaukana and the Balearics we are still far away from proposing conclusive evidence which could help us understanding and fully document the transformation of urban landscape and the distribution patterns of the population in the period under scrutiny (Mas Florit — Cau Ontiveros 2007). This mainly because proper archaeological excavations are missing. Nevertheless, they have been able to show that the so-

called Dark Ages should be interpreted less as a period in which Muslim expansion simply engulfed the economic, social and cultural life of countryside and city alike allowing us to reassess the idea of simply rural fortified sites dotting a rarified landscape. In a similar vein, we cannot simply take for granted that at the time under scrutiny Cyprus was overwhelmed by Arab incursions turning the island into a no man’s land, severing commercial and shipping routes, bringing to an end any form of life in the countryside, causing massive depopulation and abandonment of prosperous rural villages along the coasts in favor of hastily built and fortified (often seasonal) hilltop settlements. In fact, here we are not discounting the impact of Arab-Byzantine warfare (peaked in the two failed sieges of Constantinople in 674 and 717), the end of the Egyptian fiscal tax-spine, the contraction of production and distribution, and the marked regional decline in supra-regional trade and exchange beginning in the mid-seventh century (with a *nadir* in the mid-eighth) as described among the others by Chris Wickham and John Haldon (Wickham 2004; 2005; Haldon 2012). Rather, we are proposing a reassessment of the available evidence (in particular ceramics) in order to draw a less gloomy picture of the Cypriot countryside in the transition from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.

Indeed, in our opinion, this picture has been the result of archaeological evidence read in retrospect, that is as a confirmation of a picture already sketched through literary and documentary sources. These in turn present us with a score of methodological problems and are often than not later than the events they narrate as well as biased to serve the political-ideological purpose of the hour (Brubaker — Haldon 2009). As partially mentioned, Michael Decker alerted us to the troubled waters one has to navigate through when embracing the idea of Dark Ages. “Dark Ages represents in Byzantium an increasingly problematic term. It is profitable [when it is used] to draw attention to the lack of documentary evidence and juxtapose this with the growing body of archaeological material of seventh-to-ninth centuries” (Decker 2016, 187).



Fig. 2. Overview of the north-western part of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 2.** Přehled severozápadní části planiny Galinoporni-Kaleburnu.

With all these caveats in mind and considering that as *M. Milwright* (2010) states “changes on agricultural practices or rural settlement patterns [nevertheless] usually occur relatively slowly [and ...] frequently exhibit little observable correlation with wars, dynastic changes or other major events” (60), it is our intention to propose a picture of the Cypriot landscape as “characterized by a possible continuation of the varied array of rural settlements (farms, hamlets and villages) of previous centuries” (*Vanhaveerbeke et al.* 2009, 184); this by using as a convenient starting point the results of the extensive survey in the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain (*Fig. 2*). We are perfectly aware that this survey presents us with many issues: the first and more important being its location in the abovementioned problem of its location in the so-far “archaeologically inaccessible” northern half of the island. Here we have been less “Indiana Jones” than one could possibly think for we were perfectly aware of the limitations imposed by the International convention regulating archaeological activities in conflict zone (*Harpster* 2008, 4, 7–8).

However, as any problem may also be an opportunity in disguise, it is obvious that the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu survey represents yet another reminder of the fact that any archaeologically-based conclusion on the fate and changes experienced by Cyprus in the period under consideration (and even beyond) cannot be proposed without taking into account the elephant in the room; that is the total lack of archaeological documentation for a territory as large as on third of the island and including the late antique and Byzantine capital of the island (Salamis-Constantia), two urban centers in which residential building and economic activities had already been documented during the late seventh and early eighth centuries (Soloi and Kyrenia), and finally

some rural areas which although partially documented in the pre-1974 period, still escape modern and stratigraphically aware investigation. Among these one should mention the Dhiorios-Mersineri settlement and the Kornos cave on the northern side of the Kyrenia range, the Famagusta district and above all the Karpas peninsula, where the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain lies.⁵

In the light of the abovementioned issues, the scope of the current analysis to the monumental evidence and the settlement pattern it mirrors yet without being able to document (and therefore use) the large amount of pottery seen on the ground. We remain, however, convinced that the observations resulting from the field walks, photographic surveying of rural churches and mapping of possibly related areas of rural settlement (deduced by remains of building material and pottery shards scattered across them) could be interpreted in a comparative perspective as the settlement pattern which seemed to have characterized the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain in the early Medieval period presents us with remarkable similarities with other islands of the Byzantine Mediterranean like Sicily, the Balearics (and partially) Naxos. As will be seen, we can match the results of the documentary survey with the on-going reassessment of ceramic assemblages found in other sites of the island as well as in different areas of the eastern Mediterranean to point (again in a comparative perspective) to the strategic relevance that Cyprus maintained

⁵ On the Dhiorios-Mersineri and Kornos Cave, see *Catling* 1972 and *Catling — Dikigoropoulos* 1970, 37–62. On Famagusta district see *Rautman* 2004, 193–195; *Papacostas* 1999, 10 ff; on Karpas peninsula see *Megaw* 1946, 46–56; *Stewart* 2008, 22–90; *Metcalf* 2009, 472–474.

Fig. 3. The Vasili / Kral Tepesi site (authors' personal archive). —

Obr. 3. Lokalita Vasili / Kral Tepesi.



lying at the intersection of three regional economies and acting as a stepping-stone for cross-frontier and long-distance exchange.

Finally, it seems possible to make some tentative observations concerning the model of rural life in early medieval Cyprus, which although experiencing a contraction in demographic and economic terms, shows no catastrophic occupational gaps after the mid-seventh century. Here one can indeed look at the recent reassessment of material evidence proposed for the territory of Sagalassos in Anatolia and Beotia in Greece. Indeed, H. Vanhaverbeke, J. Vroom and A. Vionis have clearly proved that although number of sites decreased and defended villages provided shelter to local population, the rural landscape in these regions was far from empty with evidence of substantial production of domestic wares, long-distance transport and economic links with other areas of the eastern Mediterranean (as showed by imported amphorae), smaller communities quite modest in architectural terms as located in proximity of rural churches, and changes in land-use methods (permanent occupation associated to a more pastoral way of living) (Vanhaverbeke *et al.* 2009, 185 ff.; Vionis 2013b; Vroom 2003).

2. A brief history and archaeology of the Galinoporni/Kaleburnu plain

The focus of the present survey has been the sub-regional landscape of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain. The plain is a flat area of roughly 12 km, length in south-west-north east direction and of 4 km width. It extends in a slight trapezoid form and it is bounded on three sides (north, east and west) by the Karpas hilly

ridge, a bumpy and less rugged continuation of the mountainous spine (Kyrenia range) running parallel to the northern coast of the island. The south side of the plain faces the southern coast of the Karpas peninsula and is in the form of flat sandy beaches. Moreover, the plain is speckled with few steep mounds some of which – although not as large and substantial like the above-mentioned Vasili / Kral Tepesi mound (Fig. 3) – showed spectacular (but not studied or documented) ceramic evidence of human settlement across different ages as proved by the large amount of pottery shards of the Greek and Roman period found scattered on the large areas of the so-called Mesovouni mound (Fig. 5) (Guillou 1998, 11–12). The plain can be approached either by sea, as many small coves and natural bays along the coast offer convenient but temporary shelter to ships, or by land, through the road connecting the village of Lythrankomi (home of the famous twelfth-century church of Panagia Kanakariá) to Rizikarpazo (Megaw — Hawkins 1977). The road wiggles from the west end of the flat area and passes through the villages of Korovia, Galinoporni/Kaleburnu as it then continued its way to the east side of the plain coasting by the sites of Sykhada and Trachonas to reach the tip of the peninsula where the famous Monastery of Apostolos Andreas is located. There is no documentary or material (as for instance prompted by Roman milestones) evidence that the road system encompassing the whole island of Cyprus extended into the Karpas peninsula. Indeed, the island could boast only one substantial road (Mitford 1980, 1332–1336; Bekker-Nielsen 2004; Pazarli 2009). Mitford concludes that “on the [fourth-century] *Peutinger Table* a route is shown following the narrow but easy coastal plains of the north and south [of Cyprus]. At no great distance to the east of Cerynia this swings inland,



Fig. 4. The results of the erosion process (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 4.** Výsledky erozních procesů.

and cuts directly through the Kyrenia Range via Chytri to Salamis, bypassing the Karpas peninsula" (Mitford 1980, 1333).

Notwithstanding the lack of relevant documentation, however, we can surmise that the Karpas peninsula was served by a land road, which should have connected the main ring road with the cities of Urania and Carpasia located on its northern coast (Metcalf 2009, 472–474). According to T. Bekker-Nielsen, no substantial land route would have been built across the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain as supposedly showed by a detailed reconstruction of the roads built in Cyprus between the Hellenistic and the Roman period based on the fourth-century Tabula Peutingeriana as compared with the tracks (often inaccurately) reported by Kitchener in his famous triangulated survey of Cyprus dated to 1878–1882 (Bekker-Nielsen 2004, 42).⁶ This seems, however, not the case if we consider that the area seems to have been continuously inhabited and frequented from the

⁶ For the Kitchner's Map see <https://maps.nls.uk/cyprus/> (retrieved on 01/02/2018).

Hellenistic to the Medieval period and even later as proved by the relative dense settlement pattern as documented by sixteenth-century maps. As we will return to this in a few moments, it is interesting to notice that the Karpas peninsula has remained relatively unmentioned by the large score of late medieval and early modern travelers which visited the island from the thirteenth century one (Calvelli 2009, 132); moreover, scholarly attention has been centered mainly on its churches (like the early Christian basilicas of Agios Philon or Agias Trias and the late medieval ecclesiastical buildings of Aphendrika-Urania while an all encompassing survey of the peninsula is still waiting to be attempted (Du Plat Taylor — Megaw 1981; Langdale 2009; Stewart 2010).

Courtesy of the recent discovery of two hoards of bronze artifacts, it has been possible to date the first settlement on the Galinoporni/Kaleburnu plain to the Bronze Age (Bartelheim et al. 2008, 161–162; Kızılduman 2008; 2017a; 2017b), although – as partially mentioned above – no documentary or literary evidence can shed light on the development of the local settlement pattern in the subsequent periods.⁷ As A. Stylianou (1971) points out, the village (and the plain and it is named after) are first mentioned in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) written and illustrated by Abraham Ortelius in the early 1570s (Fig. 6). The atlas included a map of the island *Cypri Insulae Nova Descripta* (dated to 1574) which showed the plain as dotted with three small villages (Galinoporni, Suasili and Sicada (tod. Sykhada around the surveyed church of Panagia Aphendrika). Apart from later versions of

⁷ EMU, DAKMAR (Eastern Mediterranean University, Eastern Mediterranean Cultural Heritage Research Center) and the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung Foundation have been conducting an emergency excavation on the so-called Kral Tepesi mound at the center of the plain since 2005 (Fig. 4). The project has been developed in two stages. The first one took place between 2005 and 2009 and was led by (former) DAKMAR chair Dr. Uwe Müller, the president of the Troy Excavation Committee Dr. Ernst Pernicka from the University of Freiberg, Dr. Martin Bartelheim from the University of Tübingen and Dr. Bülent Kızılduman from the Eastern Mediterranean University in Cyprus. The second one started in 2014 and it is currently undergoing. It has been directed by the current DAKMAR's Chair Dr. Bülent Kızılduman.



Fig. 5. Mesovouni / Karamanlū site (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 5.** Lokalita Mesovouni / Karamanlū.



Fig. 6. The Karpas Peninsula with the villages of Sicada, Galinoporni and Suasili. From Abraham Ortelius (publisher), Ioannes a Deutecum (engraver)'s *Cypri Insulae Nova Descripta*, 1573, (350 x 495mm) page 52, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Antwerp 1574. Latin. (Reproduced with permission). — **Obr. 6.** Poloostrav Karpaz s vesnicemi Sicada, Galinoporni a Suasili. Z Abraham Ortelius (vydavatel), Ioannes a Deutecum (rytec) *Cypri Insulae Nova Descripta*, 1573, (350 x 495 mm) str. 52, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Antverpy 1574. Latin. (Reprodukcce povolená).

Theatrum (like the one dated to 1647 as made by Willem Janszoon Blaeu), no later maps or cartographers (like Fernandus Bertelli or Alphonsus Lazor a Varea) recorded the sites in question. Indeed, it was only in the late nineteenth- early twentieth century (after Cyprus became part of the British empire) that the Galinoporni plain resurfaces courtesy of the abovementioned triangulated survey made by Kitchener and the travel log of *David Hogarth* (1889), a British explorer and amateur archaeologist who excavated and traveled in Cyprus in 1887. Hogarth mentions the scenic valleys of the Karpas including the fertile plain of Sykhada east of the village of Galinoporni. According to *D. Hogarth* (1889, 79), at the village one could see “a hundred other rock-cut graves honeycomb the eastern slope on which the village is built: the houses are often built on to them, and they are used as inner rooms, as store-chambers, as stables”. Hogarth’s detailed log is of particular importance as he reports about both a small “Byzantine” village on the coast located at the mouth of a small stream called Karamani (in an area which should correspond to the site recorded by the present survey as Trachonas) and the two churches of Agia Varvara and Panagia Aphendrika at Sykhada; the latter is indeed mentioned by Camile Enlart, who compiled his famous handbook on the Gothic Art and Architecture of Cyprus just few years after Hogarth’s travel (Enlart 1899, 400–401). As we will return to his description of the church later, it is worth mentioning that Enlart also visited the village of Galinoporni-Kaleburnu where two small Gothic churches (now completely disappeared) were still

standing yet not in use. Local traditions still preserved memories of one of these churches – dedicated to Saint Anne – which still under the British rule was the goal of ceremonial procession especially when the area was affected by serious drought.

Following in the footsteps of D. G. Hogarth, *George Jeffery* (1918), the first Curator of Ancient Monuments in Cyprus (between 1903 and 1935), wrote a description of the historic monuments of Cyprus which mentioned Galinoporni as well as other sites across the plain including Agia Varvara and Sykhada where the church of Panagia Aphendrika stood in complete ruin.⁸

The walls are traceable all-round the base, but only fragments of vaulting and arcades remain over the two side aisles. The plan of the church has been of the usual Romanesque barrel vaulted three-aisled terminating in semi-circular apses; but a large narthex has, by diminishing the length, rendered the proportions more in accord with Byzantine traditions. The three bays of this narthex were covered with barrel vaulting, that in the centre in a line with the nave, those on the sides at right angles. Some slight attempt at decoration has been made by giving a moulded impost to the semi-circular arches of the nave arcades (Jeffery 1918, 259–260).

Few years later, it was the turn of the well-known Swedish expedition in Cyprus (dated to the 1920s and

⁸ For a detailed overview of the first archaeological surveys in Cyprus see Davis — Stewart 2014 with further bibliography. See also Hogarth 1889, 74–76.

1930s) to provide us with the first archaeological pieces of information concerning the plain⁹. Indeed, Einar Gjerstad, one of its members reported that in 1926 a newly built road badly damaged a necropolis area in the territory of Galinoporni-Kaleburnu allowing him to identify some Middle Bronze Age ceramics (*Gjerstad 1926*, 11). It is worth mentioning that Rupert Gunnis referred to some Muslim settlers who built their houses on top of the cemetery documented by E. Gjerstad (*Gunnis 1936*, 238–239). The first and only archaeological studies and researches in the plain began in April 1928, as led by Erik Sjöqvist, one of the assistants of Gjerstad, and including the sites of Trachonas and Nitoviklia (*Mand — Gjerstad 1935*, 461–466). These as well as the village of Galinoporni-Kaleburnu were later include in the famous *Opuscula Atheniensia* (listing the major archeological sites on the island) as published by Hector W. Catling in 1962 although no information concerning the mound was included (*Catling 1962*, 156–163).

After the pioneering investigations by the Swedish in 1930s the plain and its main sites remained virtually forgotten until A. H. W. Megaw investigated the area. Building on his previous interest in the church of Agios Philon which he excavated with J. Du Plat Taylor, A. H. W. Megaw included the Church of Panagia Aphen-drika in Sykhada in his famous article entitled “Three Vaulted Basilicas in Cyprus” (*Megaw 1946*). Megaw’s conclusions were based on a small survey of the ruined building and on a comparative study of the two churches located on the site of Urania-Aphendrika on the northern coast of the Karpas Peninsula.¹⁰ Megaw asserted that the churches were built over early Christian basilicas.

The churches must then have fallen into disuse and ruin, if they were not actually burnt by the invaders. At the time of their repair, an incomplete and damaged shell seems to have been all that remained in each case. There is no indication how long the period of abandonment was, except that it was long enough for the building technique employed on the original basilicas to have been forgotten and to have been replaced by a distinctive vaulted architecture (*Megaw 1946*, 50).

Megaw’s conclusions were reassessed by A. I. Dikigoropoulos (1961), A. Papagheorgiou (1965) and more recently by C. Stewart (2008) who run an extensive and detailed survey of the ecclesiastical buildings dotting the Karpas peninsula (including those in the Galinoporni/Kaleburnu plain) and slanted towards a late seventh to mid eighth-century date for both Panagia Aphen-drika and Agia Varvara. Stewart’s conclusions were based upon an attentive analysis of the architecture, planning, style and building technique boasted by the abovementioned building as paired with similar churches as located in Salamis-Constantia, the Byzantine capital of the island, and Paphos. Indeed, Stewart points out that “the churches of Afentrika [like Panagia

Aphendrika and Agia Varvara] were clearly rebuilt as barrel-vaulted basilicas sometime after their original structures were destroyed. Their plans closely followed the earlier basilicas and fully incorporated the apses, indicating that the remains were easily traceable” (*Stewart 2008*, 51). As will be seen, although some doubts have been cast on Stewart’s conclusions, the date of the so-called barrel vaulted church has still to be challenged and retained its validity as it will be also used in the current paper as harbinger of the resilience and catalyst for continuous occupation of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain during the Dark Ages.

3. A shot in the dark: surveying the Early Middle Ages in the Galinoporni/Kaleburnu plain¹¹

As Michael Decker has recently pointed out “[extensive and intensive] survey and its cognates [...] represent the subfield of archaeological investigation whose principal characteristics are the mapping of terrestrial surface artefacts [...] and non-intrusive means of inquiry” (*Decker 2016*, 124; also *Sollars 2003*). More important, he also recognized its importance in particular in areas where excavations would be impossible or too costly as well as the role played by surveys in recording information from larger areas (concerning settlement density, intensity of land use and livestock regimes) and documenting materials from different periods of time. In this light, surveys, and in particular, those focusing on the Dark Ages rural landscape have moved beyond a rather “simplistic” quantitative approach to assess the qualitative aspects of economic life (for instance building activities and burials), and become the “dominant means by which settlement history is constructed” (*Decker 2016*, 134; also *Veikou 2013*). Indeed, Cyprus, as mentioned above, has witnessed numerous extensive and intensive surveys as conducted mainly in its southern half (the territory of the Republic of Cyprus). The results of the surveys have often pointed towards the “changing in land-use strategies in response to the collapse of regional markets as showed by the lower proportion of pottery finds datable after the sixth century” (*Decker 2016*, 139). Here, once again, a quantitative approach seem to tally with the need to prove the decline of economic, social and material standards of life post-sixth century as enhanced by the tripartite historiographical model. Things being so in the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu survey we have tried to move beyond the idea that scarce pottery sherds or absence of nucleated villages

⁹ On the Swedish Archaeological Expedition see *Whitling 2014*.

¹⁰ *Megaw 1946*, 52: “Clearance was limited to the interior; what is left of the external faces of the apses remains concealed in debris, consequently the thickness of their masonry could not be measured”.

¹¹ The survey was run in full compliance of the first and second protocol of the (Hague) Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1956 and 1999) as the team (including students from University of Venice and University of Calabria) engaged only with a detailed photographic documentation and mapping of the sites (including measurements of the standing monuments). We would like to thank here Valentina Farace, Juna Bazzan, Antonino “Totò” Bucalo e Maria Vittoria “Mavi” Gabriele for their invaluable help and support. This part of the article is indeed ideally dedicated to them. On the (Hague) Convention see *Hardy 2010*, 92–93; *Kızılduman 2008*; *Şevketoglu — Tuncel — Şahoğlu 2015*.

Fig. 7a. The site of Trachonas view towards south (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 7a.** Lokalita Trachona s výhledem na jih.



Fig. 7b–c. Remains of Hellenistic/Roman structures. — **Obr. 7b–c.** Pozůstatky staveb helenistických / z doby římské.

should be regarded as evidence of a decline of rural human activity.

One should indeed on the lookout for different markers of demographic resilience, economic activity and differentiated typology of rural settlement patterns. In this light, the surveyed area offers a privileged viewpoint due to both the extraordinary number of religious buildings scattered across a rather concentrated coastal area and evidence of nucleated settlements as well as coastal sites. Unfortunately, as repeatedly stated, the very limited nature of the survey and the restrictions imposed upon by the ban pending on any archaeological investigation in the northern half of the island forced us simply to produce a detailed photographic reconnaissance of the structures and remains (with the idea of documenting their current state as compared with the studies produced before 1974) followed by a punctual assessment of their plan and size (intended to update or confirm the mapping produced in previous publications) and finally by an assessment of the important role

played by ecclesiastical buildings in the medieval rural landscape.

The Galinoporni-Kaleburnu survey has indeed covered small areas around three settlements centered around the surviving ecclesiastical buildings (Agia Varvara, Panagia Aphendrika in Sykhada and Panagia Daphnounda-Monastiraki) as well as a fourth site (Trachonas) (Fig. 7) couched on a larger stretch of gently degrading terraces. The terraces face a small bay where traces of docks and quays can still be observed few inches below the sea. They were often littered by remains of larger structures (so far never studied or even scientifically documented) tentatively dated to the Hellenistic or possibly Roman period.¹²

Along the coast traces of quarry activities have been also recognized as large ashlar blocks were clearly cut

¹² See *Diary from the Swedish Expedition in Cyprus, Oura DII: 1c*. <https://archive.org/details/Ouradii1c> retrieved 1. 3. 2015



Fig. 8a–b. The Church of Agia Varvara (authors' personal archive). —
Obr. 8a–b. Kostel Agia Varvara.



out of the small rock cliffs abutting into the sea. It is impossible to propose a time-span for the activity of these quarries which can be traced along the whole sea-coast of the surveyed area. Their proximity to the bronze age site of Nitovikla, the Hellenistic and Roman port of Urania-Aphendrika, the Late Antique and Byzantine capital of Salamis-Constantia and finally Medieval Famagusta could account for the chronologically broad timespan of activity. In particular, in one small site large concentrations of (Roman and Late Antique?) pottery on the surface have been documented as paired with evidence of in-situ attempts to carve and model the quarried blocks. It is also worth mentioning that once the ashlar blocks were cut out the resulting rectangular carved-spaces were often reused as salt or fish tanks as

also documented elsewhere on the island (Lambousa-Lapethos).¹³

All the above-mentioned sites are located within an eight-kilometer range from each other and present us with possible different typologies of settlements with Agia Varvara (*Fig. 8*), located two kilometers to the south of modern Korovia on a terrace just few hundred meters from the sea, and Sykhada, possibly representing the foci of a medium-size rural villages, whereas Trachonas (facing the seas just two kilometers to the south-west of Sykhada) could have hosted a small community ben-

¹³ On the building and use of Roman fish tanks see Zarattini *et al.* 2010 and Bombico 2015 with further bibliography.

Fig. 9a. *Panagia Aphendrika in Sykhada (authors' personal archive).*
 — **Obr. 9a.** *Panagia Aphendrika v Sykhadě.*



efiting from the presence of the small harbor and seafaring activity (as the ruins of some fish tanks would lead to believe). Finally, on the summit of a higher hill *de facto* closing the northern side of the plain, we documented a site mentioned in the 1950s cadaster map as Monastiraki and preserving extensive ruins of a small barrel-vaulted church, chamber tombs, two massive caves and other structures for which a possible identification with the site of Panagia Daphnonda is been proposed here (Fig. 10).

None of the sites we surveyed has been documented by any literary or documentary source and only the churches of Agia Varvara and Panagia Aphendrika in Sykhada (Fig. 9) have been extensively studied and published (although never fully excavated) (Megaw 1946, 48–56; Stewart 2010, 171–174).¹⁴ Pending a detailed future examination of the pottery, glass and other material evidence, which we encountered in our survey as scattered over the surface, one could infer a relative continuous frequentation of at least some of the above-mentioned sites across the Prehistoric, Classical and Medieval (early and later period). It is also interesting to notice the diverse typology of the surveyed buildings: from ecclesiastical edifices like Panagia Aphendrika which boasted at least three chronological phases (a fifth-century basilica, an eighth century smaller three nave church and eleventh-twelfth century rural chapel) or Agia Varvara (where glass mosaic *tesserae* seem to point to the existence of an earlier phase of the building whose current structure is dated to the eighth century), to a late medieval monastery (Panagia Daphnonda-Monastiraki) (Fig. 10) to chamber-type tombs, and more elaborate town-like structures like that inferred by the presence of well-carved capitals and columns lying in the vegetation on a large terrace in Trachonas.

As already hinted at, it is possible that the three edifices constituted the focus of different agricultural set-



Fig. 9b. *Panagia Aphendrika in Sykhada – Southern nave arcade (authors' personal archive).* — **Obr. 9b.** *Panagia Aphendrika v Sykhadě – arkáda jižní lodi.*

¹⁴ On Agia Varvara see Farace 2015.



Fig. 10a–b. The Church of Panagia Daphnonda (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 10a–b.** Kostel Panagia Daphnonda.



tlements. In particular, Panagia Daphnonda-Monastiraki, located in a rather secluded area on a commanding hilltop, seems to fulfill the description of a medieval Byzantine *khori* as proposed by E. Akyürek (2008) and J. Lefort (2002). As E. Akyürek (2008) states: “these settlements varied greatly in size [and] were usually established in places difficult to access and away [...] from the main roads, for security reasons [although] not usually encircled with fortifications [and making] use of natural protection” (Akyürek 2008, 298). Not planned organically as need arose, these rural settlements often did not contain any public structures other than churches as central or local political and administrative authorities did not interfere with their development (Akyürek 2008). As will be seen, a similar planning can be documented at Kaukana in Sicily. In fact, the site of Panagia Daphnonda-Monastiraki, which extends over an area about 350 m. long and 250 m. wide around the church, has revealed traces of continuous frequentation predating the medieval period, as it boasts a large score of chamber tombs (at least eighth, which remain unexcavated or looted and should be similar to those docu-

mented at Trachonas), the ecclesiastical building (of which only the perimetral walls are preserved) and two grottos close to the latter. One should also notice that a large amount of stones, and even a capital possibly belonging to the church could be found scattered around the area.

Although it cannot be seen from the plain or from the coast, it is likely that the flat area on which the church and the tombs are located could be in contact with the plain via the main access on the north of the hill as well as from its east side. The church was a single-nave barrel-vaulted church – as proved by the corbels and lower parts of the arches – and was approximately 15 m. long boasting a semicircular apse (which is standing to a height of 0.5 meters). The vault covered the three standing bays while the walls and (possibly) the vault were built with varying size limestone ashlar and reused columns (*spolia* hinting at the possible existence of first constructive phase). Moreover, that external walls boast a (poor) use of brick patterning which R. Ousterhout (2006) has defined as one of the distinguishing features of Byzantine architecture. This would

provide a tentative and rather loosen *terminus post quem* for the building of the vaulted church (pending comparative studies with other buildings on the islands) for this type of decorative pattern appeared in Constantinople in the ninth and tenth century and became more common from the eleventh century onwards (Ousterhout 2006, 194–200). Indeed, we are confronted by a very poor attempt of imitating a type of surface brick ornamentation which is better outlined in larger and richer Byzantine ecclesiastical buildings. Nevertheless, this could point to some sort of contacts of the local clergy (or monastic community) with Constantinople and other regions of the Byzantine Mediterranean.

The edifice itself is not well preserved notwithstanding the south and northern wall still standing in their full height, as the roof has completely collapsed *de facto* filling the entire nave and hampering any attempt to locate and document the floor. A deep hole has been dug in correspondence of the apse pointing to the activity of looters (also documented in many of the tombs). The church presents no lateral openings as only one small triangular window opens in the middle of the southern wall. The poor state of preservation of the ruins did not allow us further investigations for excavations are required to clarify status, chronology and function of the building and the existence of possible small annexes. The proximity with the two caves (located few meters to the north of the church and curiously reminding us of the subterranean shrine at Aphendrika-Urania (Stewart 2010, 164) as well as the analysis of the building technique and the scanty use of *spolia* could point to a medieval date and may infer to the continuous importance of the building as a local pilgrimage site.

Here, however, further research is necessary, in particular on the origins of the toponym Daphnonda (which seems to be the name the local inhabitants attributed to the site). Although it is not always possible to date the buildings of the island according to their masonry, the presence of a large amount of pottery shards (both transport containers, coarse wares and fine wares, some possibly dating back to the Roman period) and furnace wastes could suggest the presence of either a small monastic chapel which would be related to a small village (“the most fertile land in the [Byzantine] countryside was owned by the monasteries [which] acted like feudal landlords in many rural settlements”) or a church located in between houses or even a funerary chapel (with a local importance as pilgrimage site).¹⁵

It is nevertheless possible to regard the abovementioned site as an integral part of the rather complex and differentiated medieval settlement pattern boasted by the plain. Here the two other churches documented during the survey are of the utmost importance to reconstruct the functional organization of the rural settlement pattern across the plain. The first one, Panagia Aphendrika, as Stewart asserts, “stood near a settlement called Sykhada, which is now deserted. The toponym *sykhada* (σῦκα) means “fig” and could possibly be the town where the ninth-century Demetrius, bishop of Chytroi, was born” (Stewart 2010, 171–172). As already mentioned, it is a three-nave barrel-vaulted



Fig. 11. The eighth-century fresco on the southern arcade of the church of Agia Varvara (authors' personal archive). — **Obr. 11.** Freska z 8. století, jižní arkáda kostela Agia Varvara.

church, which was built over a preexisting sixth century basilica in the eighth century (Stewart 2008, 46). The second building, Agia Varvara is located not far away from the coast, few kilometers to the south-west of Panagia Aphendrika. Although in a ruinous state as only the northern wall and the pier arcade stand, it is clear that the church was almost contemporary to Panagia Aphendrika as it is also barrel-vaulted and built over a previous early Christian basilica. The large amount of blue stone and glass mosaic tesserae scattered across the southern nave point unequivocally to the mosaic decoration of this basilica.¹⁶ Both churches have been exhaustively studied by A. H. S. Megaw (1946), A. Papageorgiou (1985) and C. Stewart (2008; 2010), who have described their architectural history and their decoration (a stunning interlaced wheel-pattern Umayyad fresco motifs survives in Agia Varvara (Fig. 11) but no attempt has been made to contextualize the building as part and parcel with the rural world of the plain in the period of their construction (that is in

¹⁵ The quotation is from E. Akyürek 2008, 302.

¹⁶ Some of these tesserae still show traces of golden-leaf decoration and lie on the ground as mute witness of the wealthy decoration of the basilica, which lies underground. Unfortunately, it is not possible to collect and therefore analyze them in further detail.

the so-called Dark Ages of Byzantium). Indeed, it is to this issue we want now to move.

In our opinion this should allow us to offer an interim synthesis of the Medieval rural settlement pattern across the plain as assessed in a comparative perspective which we regard as the best way to circumvent the abovementioned impossibility of conducting systematic archaeological excavations or surveys. In particular, we will present the reader with a comparison with other insular contexts where only extensive preliminary surveys have taken place (like in Sicily or at Cabrera, Mallorca and Saint Lluís in Menorca) or where small churches seem to have filled the rural landscape (Naxos) in the period under scrutiny; this in the hope of providing a methodologically balanced assessment of the role played by ecclesiastical building in the (re)-organization of the local rural settlement pattern in the passage from Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. We are perfectly aware that this can be regarded purely as a shot in the dark or worse as a futile exercise of academic imagination, nevertheless we strongly believe it is a good way to put the disappearing cultural heritage of northern Cyprus to the best possible scientific fruition while at the same time preparing the ground for possible future (and non-) investigation, and analysis of the material evidence documented to this date.

4. Comparing what is hidden from sight: rural settlements in the Balearics, Sicily and Naxos

The Balearics present us with a similar historiographical challenge to the one encountered in Cyprus. Indeed, historians have too often lingered on the idea that the first Arab raid against the Balearics (dated to 707) supposedly ushered the islands into a Dark Age which was characterized by a status of political semi-independence, economic regression and an ambivalent although peripheral role along the frontier between the Christian and the Muslim halves of the western Mediterranean (Signes-Codoñer 2005). In a similar vein to Cyprus, the historiographical narrative concerning the early medieval period in the Balearics was based upon the archaeology and in particular the results of the excavations of a large number of early Christian basilicas as all dated to the late fifth century-early sixth century.¹⁷ These ecclesiastical edifices often boasted large mosaic floors although they had a rather smaller size than their Cypriot counterparts (Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 37–39). However, some of these basilicas have indeed showed evidence of later frequentation well into the eighth century as for instance enhanced by two golden solidi (dated to 737–738) yielded in the basilica of Son Fedrinet in Mallorca where building activity may have continued in the Muslim period.¹⁸ Archaeology and analysis of material indicators seem indeed to point to

a very late abandonment of at least some of these basilicas (Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 39).

In this light, it is interesting to notice that some of the ecclesiastical buildings played an essential role in the settlement patterns of the Balearics' countryside. They seem to have often served the purpose of agglutinating local nucleated and non-nucleated settlements for as Mas Florit and Cau Ontiveros (*Mas Florit — Ontiveros 2007; Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013*) conclude "although the reduction of site numbers is clear, the settlement patterns do not seem profoundly modified. [...] There is no evidence of an extensive flight to the hills" (*Mas Florit — Ontiveros 2011*, 210). A further example of this peculiar settlement pattern can be found in the southern part of the island of Menorca in the territory of Sant Lluís. Here, notwithstanding the absence of early Christian basilicas, metal object as found in different sites of the area point to the continuous presence of settlement and people until the late ninth century with a possible military connotation of some of the inhabited sites as located both on the hinterland as well as along the coast (Mascarò 2017).

A recent reassessment of the evidence yielded by Sicilian rural surveys as recently summarized by A. Molinari (2013) and E. Vaccaro (2013) have similarly countermand the narrative of hastily retreating of local population to fortified hilltop settlements. This does not imply that fortified farms or small villages did not dot the local landscape. Indeed, in the Balearics we could prove that fortified settlements (Alarò and Santueri) existed next to churches like Ses Fraeres and Son Peretò sitting along communication routes or used to gather people living in their proximity whereas others were located on the coastline and visible from the sea (Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 38). In a similar vein in Kaukana located on the south-eastern coast of Sicily the survival of a Late Antique settlement along the coast pairs with scattered villages and fortified farmsteads located on its hinterland (as occupied well into the eighth century) (Pelagatti — Di Stefano 1999, 39–40). The Sicilian comparison is even more important here as the "results of past and recent field surveys have produced an increasing number of datasets on the settlement network in the long period from Roman to the Middle Ages" (Vaccaro 2013, 36). These in turn have led to reinterpret the traditional narrative of *incastellamento* as a consequence of the creation of a theme on the island on the part of Byzantine authorities. Only in a few instances the origins of fortifications or hilltop sited can harken back to the early medieval period as large and undefended rural sites mainly appear in the lowlands or the plateau and even on the coast (Vaccaro 2013, 40–43).

Moving to a different regional context, in Naxos (in the Aegean half of the so-called Byzantine hinterland (Wickham 2005, 29), as A. Vionis has recently asserted, "dark ages" rural chapels pairs with pottery fragments recovered around them "testified to the existence of small and large settlements associated with this ecclesiastical monuments. Interestingly enough, sites of this period are not merely restricted to the interior of the island but also close to the coast" (Vionis 2013a, 113). More important, Naxos has been recently proved to be a zone of cultural interaction as enhanced by aspects

¹⁷ On these basilicas see Vizcaino 2009, 509–527; Orfila /ed./ 2006, 228–239.

¹⁸ On the coins see Bordoy 2006 (quotation from p. 311) with further bibliography; on Son Fedrinet see Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 39 and Vizcaino 2009, 472–474.

of material culture and settled landscape (Vionis 2017). Indeed, analysis ceramic evidence yielded around some of the late seventh, eighth or ninth century ecclesiastical buildings (as dated by their aniconic frescos and decorations) has led A. Vionis to conclude that the island was not desolated in the trouble period of Arab raids but boasted the importance of the island as hub of a regional network of communication linking together two supposedly antagonistic powers (Vionis 2017, 174). Indeed, the examples of the Balearics, Sicily and Naxos can help to shed some light on the architectural evidence as documented in the survey of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain.

On the one hand, it is indeed possible to interpret the restoration of Panagia Aphendrika and Agia Varvara and transformation into barrel-vaulted churches as a sign of demographic and economic resilience. As Aphendrika was located farther away from the coast than Agia Varvara the two churches could have been played a rather complementary role in the local settlement pattern; a role further supplemented by a (monastic?) site perching above the top of a hill although out of sight from the coast (Daphnounda) and the survival of a possible coastal outlet (harbor) for needs of the local communities. Indeed, as in the eighth-century Balearics, the local rural landscape seems to present us with a coast-hinterland dichotomy. According to Ontiveros and Mas Florit: “the basilicas of the hinterland were parishes as well as productive areas that exploited the resources of the territory and were interconnected with other sites in their surroundings [some of them located on high hills other fortified] while the coastal examples were more likely linked to a port community and its activities, not excluding a parochial role” (Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 38). This, and in tune with the evidence unearthed in Sicily and Naxos, would disprove the idea of a simple demographic retrenchment on the part of the local Cypriot rural communities away from the coast as the survivors of the Arab incursions regrouped around fortified settlement on the hilltops.

In the light of this evidence it also worth mentioning that the monumental evidence tallies with the result of the analysis of locally made pottery as yielded by pre-1974 surveys in northern Cyprus and later in the Republic of Cyprus. In fact, although the volume of shipping and the amount of local production were declining, hand and wheel-form pottery, ranging from plain tableware to cooking ware and storage vessels, continued to be manufactured in Cyprus well into the eighth century. Plain vessels and coarse fabric cooking wares have been found in different rural sites on the island (on sites like Kornos Cave and Dhiorios, located on the northern coast) as they do not show a fundamental cultural break following the mid-seventh century Arab raids but rather as shift in the scale of pottery production along similar lines to Syrian and Palestinian material culture

As the Cypriot countryside was therefore not deserted, one can stress with M. Decker, the increased importance assumed by local “vernacular” pottery in the seventh-to-ninth century; this however was not limited to domestic consumption but could sometimes indicate modest local surpluses and commercialization as well

as changing diet and rural conditions (as dictated by a increased reliance on animal husbandry) (Decker 2016, 172). This is also enhanced by the mushrooming of barrel-vaulted local churches which started appear in the eighth century particularly (but not exclusively) on the Karpas peninsula showing considerable local sources and vitality. If we pair the latter evidence with the results of the surveys held in Naxos, Sicily and the Balearics, we can conclude with Ontiveros and Mas Florit that “the establishment of churches [...] even in difficult to reach locations [...] gave the community a shared identity linked with the surrounding landscape [and] emphasize the community’s rural territory” (Ontiveros — Mas Florit 2013, 41).

5. Conclusions

The survey of the Galinoporni-Kaleburnu plain offers a glimpse into the reality of post-seventh century rural life for it shed some light on the possible fate of farmers who adopted rather differentiated strategies of survival and quite flexible settlement patterns even within the same sub-regional contexts. Indeed, the rather limited (in scope and methodology) survey we have conducted has not only revealed the existence of the “expected” (i.e. a rather secluded and hilltop rural settlement with no public buildings as centered around a monastic (?) church) as well as the “unexpected” (i.e. a coastal vs. inland, highly functionalized rural foci of settlement which wedded with the material evidence yielded in other islands of the Byzantine empire (like Sicily, Naxos and the Balearics).

First, and notwithstanding the rather limited evidence and the lack of any pottery sampling or real excavations and considering the geomorphological peculiarities of the Karpas peninsula, it seems clear that to the contrary of what M. Rautman and M. McClellan concluded almost twenty years ago – the farmers were not all gone in Cyprus (McClellan — Rautman 1995).¹⁹ At least in some parts of the islands rural sites continued to be occupied and coastal settlements were not abandoned in favor of inland fortified sites. Here a quite interesting comparison can be proposed with the hinterland of the Anatolian city of Sagalassos where – as M. Decker asserts – the end of the urban activities in the second half of the seventh century was contemporary to “an increase in [rural] sites and a rise in the ratio of villages to farms [reflecting] a more natural dynamic that prevailed for centuries before the intrusion of Greco-Roman urbanism” (Decker 2016, 143).

Second, the refinement of chronology of Cypriot coarse and kitchen wares as found in different areas of the islands could point to the demographic, social and economic resilience of the countryside, although predicated upon a variety of settlement types (in terms of size, density, location and functionality) for in the area of Galinoporni-Kaleburnu eighth-century barrel vaulted churches are a clear indicator of settlement.

¹⁹ The title of their article centered on the Medieval Cypriot countryside was indeed “Where have all farmers gone?”

Third, the presence of coastal sites or of possible harbor installations in the surveyed plain could also point to the role played it played in provisioning and supplying the Byzantine capital of the island Salamis-Constantia which remained active as main ecclesiastical and administrative focus of the island well into the ninth-century (Zavagno 2013). This in turn would stress the survival and resilience of local landowning elites who (as showed in other Byzantine insular contexts like Sardinia or the Naxos) supported the efforts of the local rural communities and most probably partially sponsored the erection and decoration of local ecclesiastical buildings.

It is clear to us that the abovementioned assertions have to be further tested as one should try and map other Medieval residential hubs and/or ecclesiastical buildings across the plain and on the hills at its very edge. Indeed, it is quite compulsory to underscore the difficulties, which such endeavor is going to face in the lack of proper excavations; without them one can only dream of reaching the usual standards of surveying activity both in terms of methodology, analytical approach and conclusive interpretations. But the alternative would be even more painful to consider as it will lead us to relive the fate of the medieval town of Sijilmassa (on the fringe of the Sahara desert) as described by Amin Maloouf:

“of its walls, once so high, only few sections remains, half ruined and covered with grass and moss. Of its population, there remain only various hostile clans each living in a fortified village near to the ruins of the former [city]. Their main concern is to make life difficult for the clan living in the neighboring village. They seem merciless towards each other [...] so it seems to me that they deserve their fate” (Maloouf 1994, 157).

Souhrn

Průzkum planiny Galinoporni-Kaleburnu nabízí vhled do reality venkovského života od 7. století, neboť objasňuje možný osud zemědělců, kteří v totožném sub-regionálním kontextu přijali dosti odlišné strategie přežití a poměrně flexibilní sídelní vzory. Poměrně omezený (co do rozsahu a metodologie) průzkum, který jsme uskutečnili, odhalil nejen existenci „očekávaného“ (tj. spíše skrytých výšinných venkovských sídlišť bez komunálních budov, soustředěných kolem klášterního /?/ kostela), ale i „neočekávaného“ (tj. pobřežních – oproti vnitrozemským, vysoce funkčních ohnisek venkovského osídlení, úzce spjatých s materiálními pozůstatky pocházejícími z jiných ostrovů Byzantské říše, jako Sicílie, Naxos a Baleárské ostrovy).

Předně, nehledě na poměrně omezené nálezy a absenci vzorkování keramiky nebo systematického výzkumu a berouce v potaz geomorfologické zvláštnosti poloostrova Karpaz, se zdá jasné, že – oproti závěrům M. Rautmana a M. McClellana před téměř dvaceti lety – z Kypru nezmizeli všichni zemědělci (McClellan — Rautman 1995).²⁰ Alespoň v některých částech ostrova osídlení venkovských sídel pokračovalo, a pobřežní sídla nebyla opuštěna ve prospěch vnitrozemských opevněných lokalit. Nabízí se zajímavé srovnání se zázemím anatsolského města Sagalossos, kde – jak tvrdí M. Decker – byl konec urbánních aktivit v druhé polovině 7. století současný s „nárůstem [venkovských] lokalit a zvýšením podílu vesnic vůči

statkům [odrážejícím] přirozenější dynamiku, která přetrvala po staletí předcházející průniku řecko-římského urbanismu“ (Decker 2016, 143).

Za druhé, zpřesnění chronologie kyperské hrubé a užitkové keramiky z nálezů v různých oblastech ostrovů by mohlo poukázat na demografickou, společenskou a hospodářskou rezistenci venkova, byť předvídanou na základě rozmanitosti druhů osídlení (co do velikosti, hustoty, umístění a funkcionality), neboť pro oblast Galinoporni-Kaleburnu jsou v 8. století kostely s valenou klenbou jasným indikátorem osídlení.

Za třetí, přítomnost pobřežních lokalit nebo možných přístavních objektů na zkoumané planině by mohla poukazovat na roli, kterou hrála v zásobování byzantského hlavního města ostrova Salamis-Constantia, které zůstalo aktivní jako hlavní církevní a administrativní středisko ostrova hluboko do 9. století (Zavagno 2013). To by zároveň zdůraznilo přežití a rezistenci místních elitních vlastníků půdy, kteří (jak je zřejmé z jiných byzantských ostrovních kontextů, jako je Sardinie nebo Naxos) podporovali snahy místních venkovských komunit a pravděpodobně částečně financovali stavbu a výzdobu místních církevních budov.

Jsmo si vědomi, že výše uvedená tvrzení musí být dále prověřena – měla by být zmapována další středověká sídelní střediska a/nebo církevní budovy na celé planině a na pahorcích při jejím okraji. Je však důležité zdůraznit potíže, kterým bude toto úsilí čelit ve světle absence řádných archeologických výzkumů, bez nichž je těžko možné dosáhnout obvyklých standardů průzkumných aktivit jak co do metodologie, tak analytického přístupu a průkazné interpretace. Druhá možnost by nicméně byla ještě horší, protože by nás přiměla znovu prožít osud středověkého města Sijilmassa (na okraji saharské pouště), jak ho popisuje Amin Maloouf (1994, 157): „z jeho hradeb, kdysi tak vysokých, zůstalo jen pár segmentů, polorozpadlých a pokrytých trávou a mechem. Z jeho obyvatel zbývá jen několik znepřátelených rodů, žijících odděleně v opevněných vesnicích poblíž rozvalin bývalého [města]. Jejich hlavním zájmem je ztížit život klanu žijícímu v sousední vesnici. Zdají se být vůči sobě nelítostní [...] a tak se mi zdá, že si svůj osud zaslouží.“

Český souhrn Sylvie Květinová

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²⁰ Název jejich článku zaměřeného na středověký kyperský venkov byl opravdu “Where have all farmers gone?” (“Kam zmizeli všichni zemědělci?”).

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