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FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE CLOUD AND 3500 YEARS IN ONE CLICK: A CONTEXTUAL SUMMARY OF KOAN PREHISTORIC AND PROTOHISTORIC OCCUPATIONAL SEQUENCES

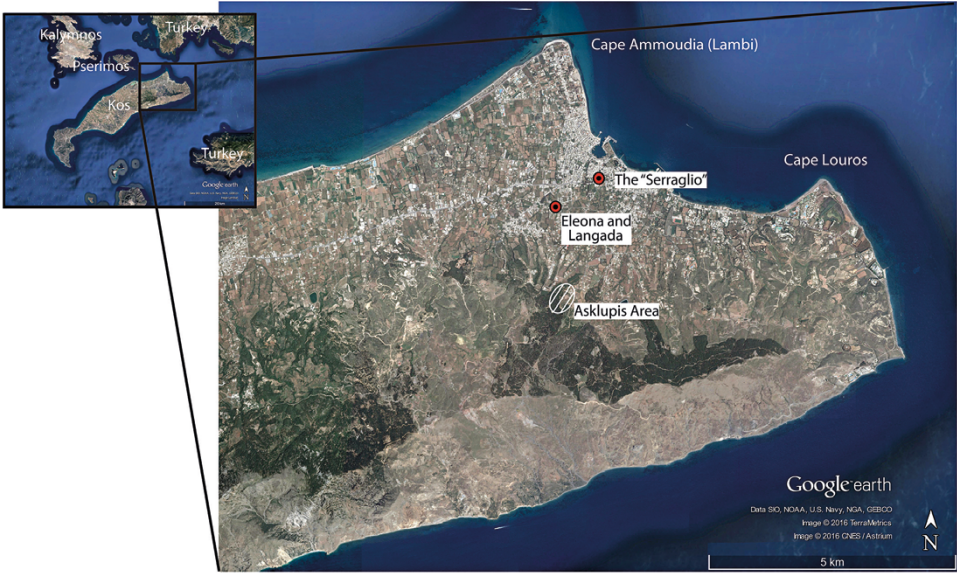
Abstract: This article presents for the first time a full contextual summary of Koan prehistoric and protohistoric occupational sequences, based on the results of the “Serraglio, Eleona, and Langada Archaeological Project” (SELAP). SELAP’s considered time span ranges from the local Final Neolithic 1 up until the end of the Late Protogeometric phase, approximately encompassing 3500 years. In addition to providing a synopsis of Koan sequences in their wider contextual and stratigraphic settings, the goal of this contribution is also to present the project’s baseline dataset to the wider academic community. While incorporating information from more recent archaeological research, SELAP’s work is primarily based on legacy data from L. Morricone’s excavations and Hope

Simpson and Lazenby’s survey, respectively carried out on Kos from 1935 to 1946 and from 1967 to 1968. SELAP’s proposed chronological sequences rely on the project’s holistic theoretical approach to periodization, which is fully disclosed and discussed in this article. SELAP’s results demonstrate that, when biases and limitations are critically addressed, legacy data can still be relevant for our current understanding of ancient human communities.

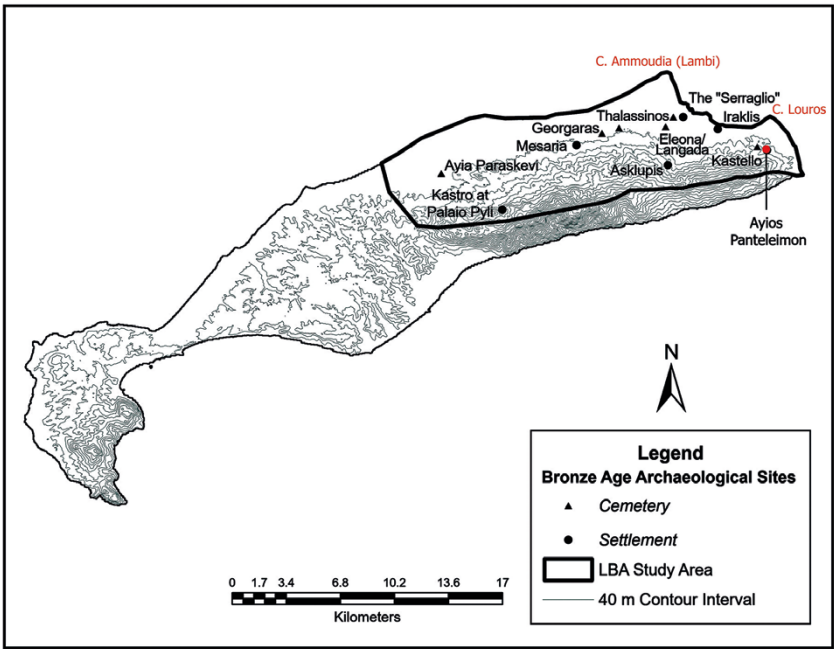
Keywords: Occupational and chronological sequences; Contextual analysis of legacy data; Theory and methods of archaeological periodization; Prehistory and protohistory of the Aegean; Southeast Aegean-Southwest Coastal Anatolian Region (SASCAR).

This article presents for the first time in full a contextual summary of Koan prehistoric and protohistoric occupational sequences based on the results of the “Serraglio, Eleona, and Langada Archaeological Project” (SELAP; for previous summaries of SELAP’s work, see Vitale, 2012; Vitale et al., 2017). SELAP’s considered time span encompasses approximately 3500 years, framed between the local Final Neolithic (FN) 1 and the end of the Late Protogeometric (LPG) phase (circa 4500 to 900 B.C.E.)¹.

¹ SELAP is a multidisciplinary research endeavor under the scientific auspices of the Italian Archaeological School at Athens. SELAP’s broader research scope is to provide new information on the socio-cultural developments that occurred on northeast Kos and the wider southeast Aegean from the FN 1 up to the end of



a



b

fig. 1. Maps of northeast Kos including the main sites and areas under SEALP's study, with the addition of the settlement of Ayios Panteleimon from KASP's investigations (a: base map from Google Earth adapted by C. McNamee, S. Vitale, & T. Marketou; b: C. McNamee & S. Vitale).

Since 2009, through a diverse international team of scholars and students, SELAP has studied a rich array of finds deriving from early investigations on northeast Kos, especially from (but not limited to) the sites of the Asklopis, the “Serraglio”, Eleona, and Langada (fig. 1). In addition to offering a synopsis of Koan sequences in their broader contextual and stratigraphic settings, the goal of this contribution is also to present the project’s primary dataset to the wider academic community.

The subjects of this article are discussed within six main sections. The first one outlines SELAP’s research background, providing summaries of the history of excavations and research at the four main sites mentioned above. The second section examines the problematic character of the dataset and illustrates SELAP’s methodology, focusing on the project’s approach to periodization and data storage strategies. The third, fourth, and fifth sections present SELAP’s results on Koan occupational and stratigraphic sequences, with details on the various types of contexts and associated finds used to establish the local chronological framework. The six and final section proposes some concluding remarks on the broader methodological and theoretical implications of SELAP’s approach to legacy data and research strategies.

1. Research Background

This section outlines the history of prehistoric and protohistoric research at the Asklopis, the “Serraglio”, Eleona, and Langada from the middle of the 5th millennium to the end of 10th century B.C.E. (fig. 1). The evidence is presented in chronological order, based on the foundation dates of these sites: FN 1 for the Asklopis; Early Bronze Age (EBA) 3 for the “Serraglio”; Late Bronze Age (LBA) II for Eleona; and Late Helladic (LH) IIIA2 for Langada. The chronological range indicated in the titles of Sub-Sections 1.1-1.3, as well as in other sub-sections of this paper, does not take into account any human activity that may have occurred at the targeted sites after the end of the LPG. The occurrence of occupational gaps at the Asklopis, especially between the EBA 3 and the Middle Bronze Age (MBA), as well as during shorter LBA and Early Iron Age (EIA) time spans, is thoroughly discussed below, in Sub-Section 3.1. All tabs. presented in this paper can be found in the Data Repository (DR) section (Folder 1, File 1_a).

the LPG phase. In addition to occupational sequences, that form the main subject of this contribution, the project’s research focus is concentrated on the following four subjects: landscape analysis, cultural identities, political trajectories, and funerary practices. To investigate these complex and multifaceted research questions in a methodological coherent fashion, SELAP implemented a composite theoretical approach (Vitale et al., 2022a; Vitale, 2023a, pp. 33-35; Vitale et al., 2023; Nani et al., forthcoming) using a diverse array of interpretative lenses, including, among others: mobility (Mokrišová, 2016, with previous bibliography), acculturation (Guarnaccia & Hausmann-Stabile, 2016, with previous bibliography), cultural entanglements (Hodder, 2012; Stockhammer, 2012), cultural fusion (Kramer, 2019), and social agency (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1993; Dornan, 2002, with previous bibliography).

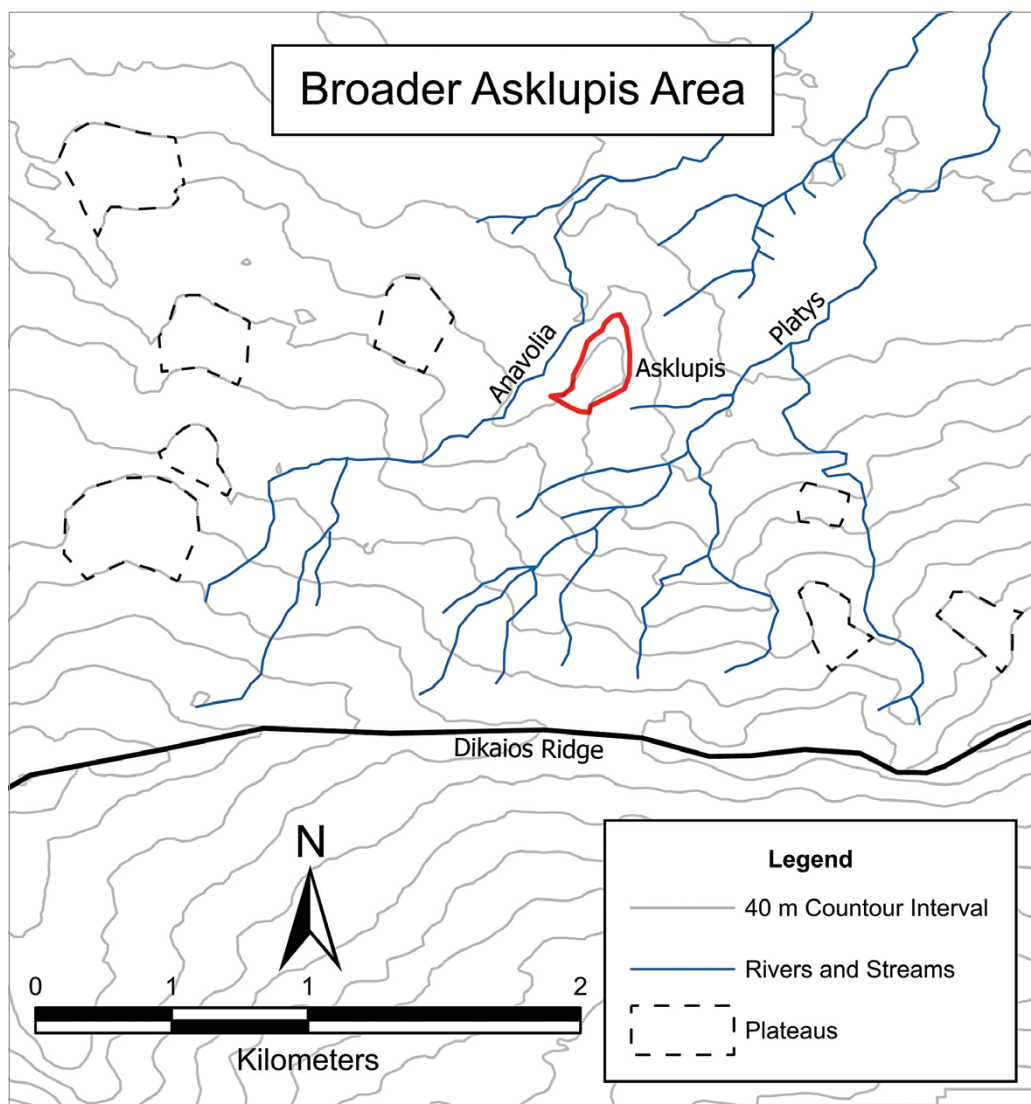


fig. 2. Significant landscape features characterizing the broader Asklopis area (C. McNamee & S. Vitale).

1.1 The Asklopis: FN 1 to LPG (with possible gaps)

The Asklopis was originally identified in the spring of 1943 by G. Lazzara (figs. 1-2). Following Lazzara's discovery, rescue excavations at the site were carried out from May 8th to May 12th of the same year by L. Morricone (Morricone, 1975, pp. 261-271, figs. 210-224). Successively, during the summers of 1967 and 1968, the Asklopis area was again explored by R. Hope Simpson and J.F. Lazenby, in the context of their extensive surveys in the Dodecanese (Hope Simpson & Lazenby, 1970, pp. 55-66, figs. 5-7, pls. 19-20). Most recently, between 2018 and 2023, the Asklopis region was again investigated by the Επιφανειακή Έρευνα στο νησί της Κω-Kos Archaeological

Survey Project (KASP), a research endeavor conducted by M. Michailidou and T. Marketou in collaboration with S. Vitale and C. McNamee (McNamee et al., 2021; Vitale et al., 2021).

Morricone's excavations brought to light four EBA 2 graves, including three pithos burials and one stone-lined pit, as well as a limited amount of unstratified materials from a trial trench dug in the vicinity of the tombs (Morricone, 1975, pp. 261-271; Vitale, 2013). Inhumation was the only identified mortuary treatment for all burials (Vitale, 2013, p. 52, tab. 1; Vitale et al., 2017, p. 247, tab. VIII). Hope Simpson and Lazenby's work resulted in the collection of a small assemblage of surface finds scattered on top and around the Asklopis Hill. The materials from Morricone's trial trench and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey have a wide chronological range, spanning from the FN 1 to the Roman period (Vitale & Morrison, 2018; Vitale, 2024).

Hope Simpson and Lazenby were the first to suggest the existence of a prehistoric settlement on the east slopes of the Asklopis ridge, which they identified as «an obvious prehistoric acropolis» (Hope Simpson & Lazenby, 1970, p. 57; see also Marketou, 2004, pp. 23-25; Marketou, 2010, p. 762). As implied by SELAP's study of the finds from both Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey and Morricone's trial trench, some form of settlement must have existed in this area in the phases between the FN 1 and the EBA 2, during which the Asklopis was likely a hamlet made of a few family units (Vitale & Morrison, 2018, pp. 57-61). The EBA 2 burial cluster must have represented the cemetery area of the small community living at the site at some point during the 3rd millennium B.C.E. An important rural village also existed at the Asklopis in the LBA and the EIA (Vitale, 2024). These conclusions were all recently confirmed by the first published results of KASP (McNamee et al., 2021; Vitale et al., 2021).

1.2 The “Serraglio”: EBA 3 to LPG

Archaeological fieldwork at the prehistoric site of the “Serraglio” (figs. 1, 3-5) was originally carried out by L. Morricone from 1935 to 1946 (Morricone, 1975; Morricone, 1982) and later by the Greek Archaeological Service, especially T. Marketou, in the late 1970's and the 1980's (Marketou, 1990a; Marketou, 1990b; Marketou, 2010). Despite having investigated also the so-called Pizzoli, Fadil, and Halvaghia sectors (Morricone, 1975, p. 145), Morricone's excavations were mainly concentrated in Zones I and II of the “Serraglio” (fig. 3). Marketou completed numerous rescue excavations in the broader “Serraglio” area that were, however, more limited in size compared to Morricone's (Marketou, 2010, with previous bibliography).

Above the EBA 3 Early to LBA settlement brought to light by Morricone's and Marketou's excavations, a large Middle Protogeometric (MPG) to Late Geometric cemetery was unearthed by Morricone (Morricone, 1982), with the most significant concentration of burials located in Zones I-II of the “Serraglio” (fig. 3). The deceased mostly consisted of children, but a few adults were also recovered. The tombs included only single burials in cists, pits, or pithoi and inhumation was the standard body treatment (Morricone, 1982; Vitale 2023b, p. 62).

Although an occupational gap was proposed between the latest LBA structures at the settlement of the “Serraglio” and the construction, in the same area, of the first



fig. 3. The LBA settlement of the “Serraglio”. a: Map showing Morricone’s main excavation sectors outlined in grey. b: Map showing the EIA tombs and the LBA vessels found *in situ* within the buildings of Sub-Phases III:2, 3, and 4. The locations of the EIA tombs are indicated by the occurrence of cardinal numbers (a: after Morricone, 1975, p. 152, fig. 7; b: after Morricone, 1975, p. 159, fig. 21, adapted by C. McNamee & S. Vitale).

MPG tombs, SELAP’s recent study of the stratigraphy and the finds has demonstrated the existence of an interrupted LBA-EIA sequence at the site (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 231-233, fig. 4; Vitale, 2023b, both with previous bibliography). This conclusion agrees with Morricone’s preliminary assessment of the data (Morricone, 1982, pp. 46-50; Vitale, 2023b). According to SELAP’s results, Zones I and II of the “Serraglio”, which were the center of the LBA urban space, gradually turned into the settlement’s outskirts and, eventually, became the ideal location for the EIA cemetery in the MPG phase (Vitale, 2023b, p. 74).

1.3 Eleona and Langada: LBA II to LH IIIC Middle/Late

Eleona and Langada were the main cemeteries used by the LBA community living at the “Serraglio”. Morricone excavated these necropoleis in their entirety in two main campaigns during the autumn of 1935 and the autumn of 1940 to the winter of 1941 respectively (figs. 1, 6-8). The results of these investigations were published some 25 years afterwards (Morricone, 1967). Because of the lack of excavation diaries for Tombs 1-20 from Eleona (Morricone, 1967, p. 9, with note 1), few details are known about the exact location, stratigraphy, and architectural features of the graves from this

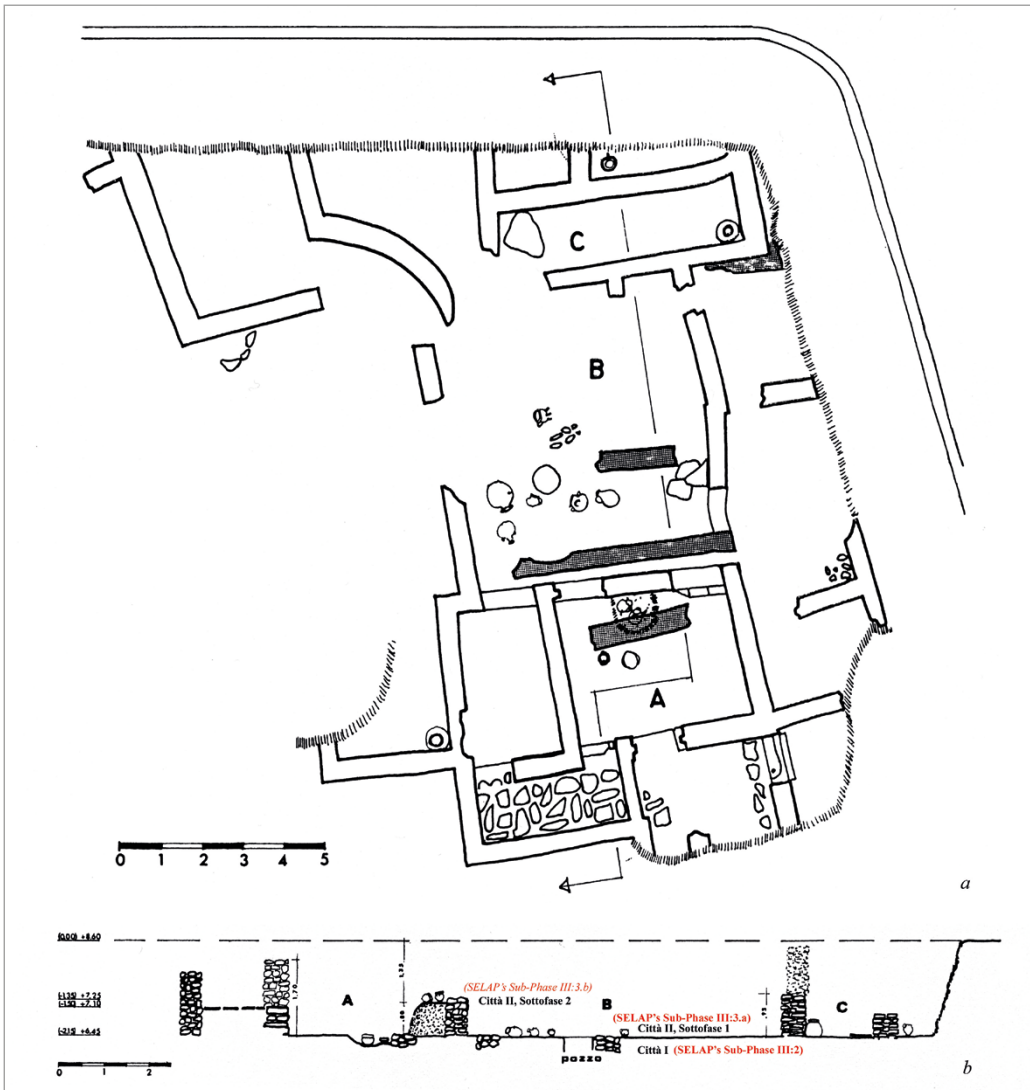


fig. 4. The LBA settlement of the “Serraglio”. a: Structural remains from Sub-Phases III:2 (grey) and III:3.a-b (white) from Morricone’s 1941 excavations in Zone II of the “Serraglio”; b: Reconstructed section of the same structural remains (after Morricone, 1975, p. 210, figs. 121-122, adapted by S. Vitale).

cemetery (Vitale, 2023a). More precise information is available for Langada, where the resolution of the data, although not comparable with modern standards, permits a fuller spatial and contextual analysis (Morricone, 1967, pp. 13-17, 22-25, figs. 1-3; McNamee & Vitale, 2020).

Morricone described the modern terrain at Eleona and Langada as a gentle hill sloping towards the north and west, with a small ephemeral drainage separating the two cemeteries, Langada being located on the east side and Eleona on the west (Morricone, 1967, p. 7). While not providing the exact locations of the Eleona tombs,

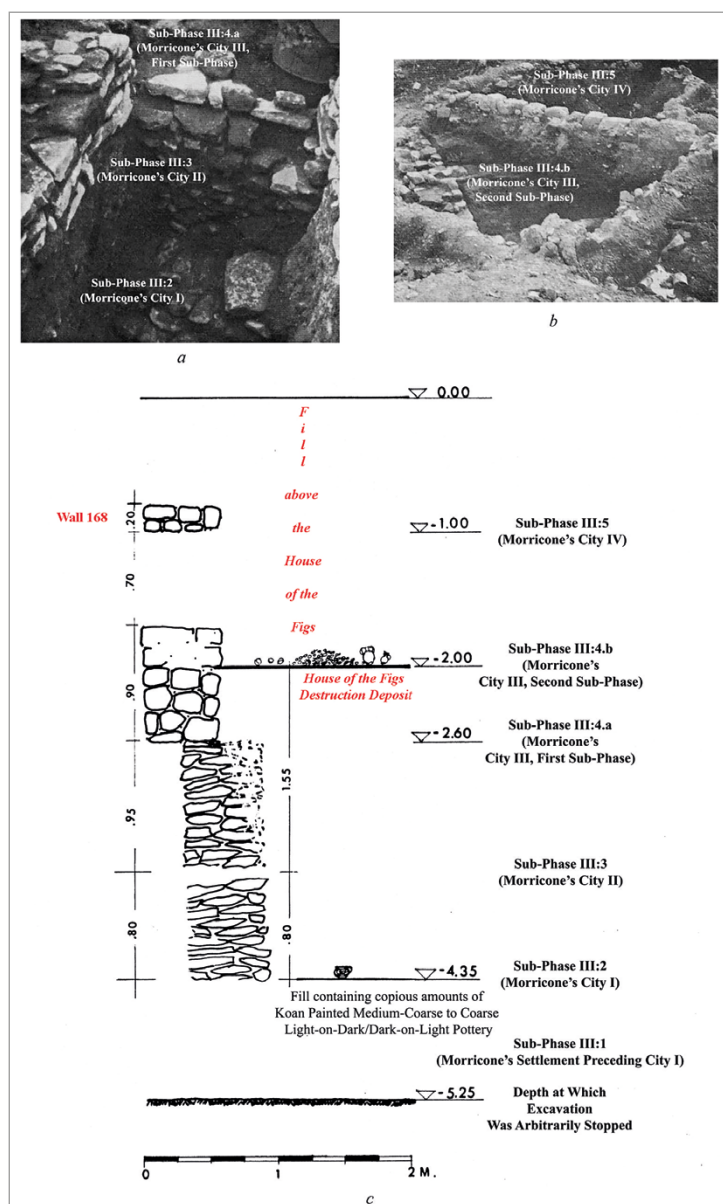


fig. 5. The "Serraglio", Zone II, NW corner. a-b: View of the walls of Sub-Phases III:2-5; c: Reconstructed stratigraphic section (a-b: after Morricone, 1975, pp. 227, 231, figs. 154, 159, adapted by S. Vitale; c: after Morricone, 1975, p. 230, fig. 158, adapted by S. Vitale).

Morricone reports that they were all built in a single row on the slopes of a low hill facing north (Morricone, 1967, pp. 7-9). The Langada tombs were set on the slopes of a hill facing west and, with a few exceptions, their exact position is known (Morricone, 1967, pp. 13-17).

Because of the gentle modern topography, the cemeteries of Eleona and Langada were initially interpreted as pit graves by Morricone's assistant G. Lazzara (see Laurenzi, 1936, p. 141). However, Morricone later envisioned a significantly altered LBA landscape with a wide, but deeply incised south-west to north-east drainage creating the hills into which the tombs were built (Morricone, 1967, pp. 13-17). In his

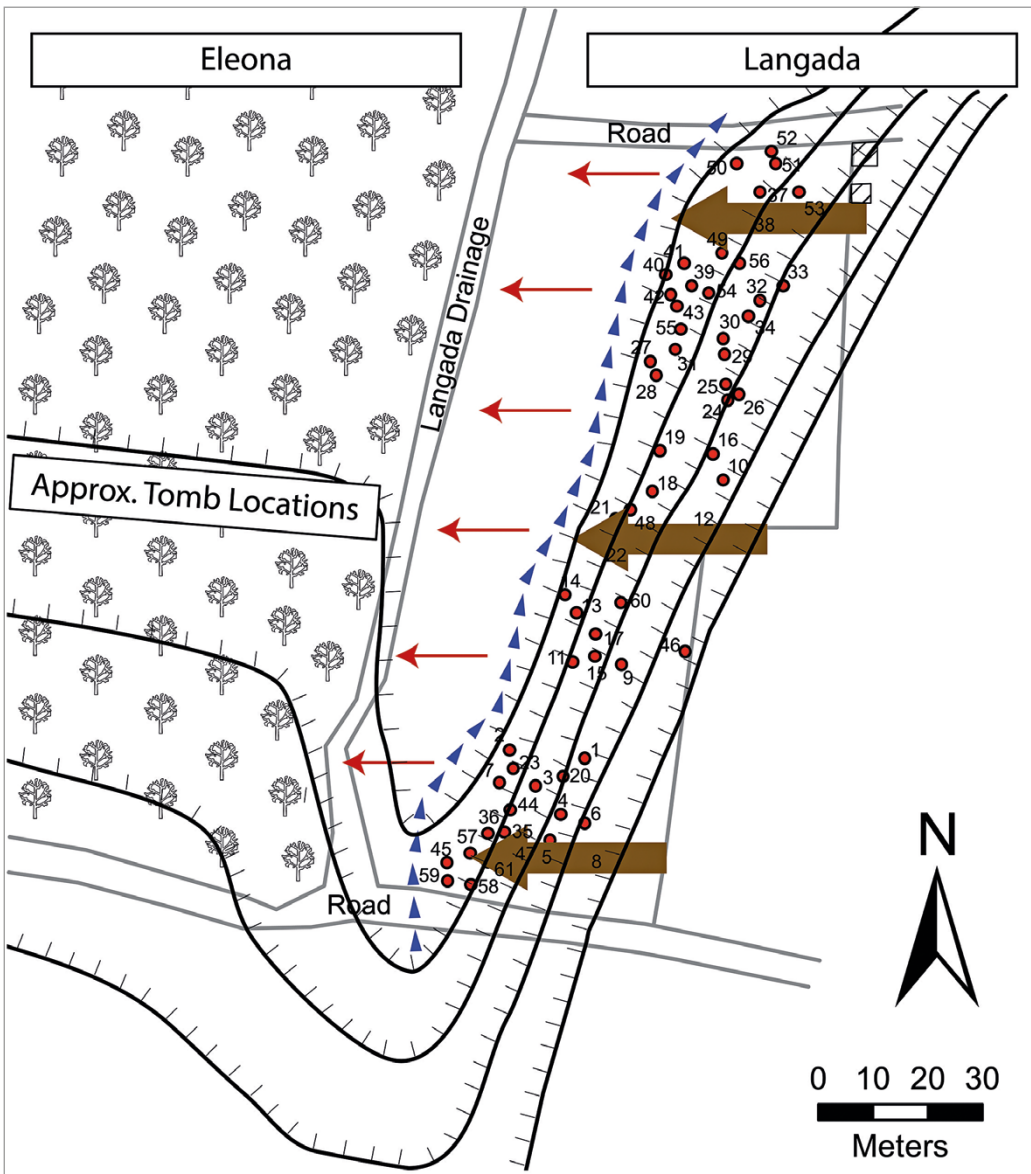


fig. 6. Map showing Morricone's reconstructed burial landscape at Langada, with SELAP's revisions and interpolations for both Eleona and Langada (C. McNamee & S. Vitale, after Morricone, 1967, pp. 9-10, figs. 2-3).

reconstruction (**fig. 6**), the migration of the drainage and the deposition of sediments eroded from the Langada Hill gradually leveled out the topography at the site, with all the burials being eventually identified as chamber tombs (Morricone, 1967, 13-17; see also McNamee & Vitale, 2020, pp. 216-218; Vitale, 2023a, pp. 9-12).

SELAP's recent modeling of the Eleona and Langada burial landscapes (**fig. 7**) has to a large extent confirmed Morricone's original reconstruction (McNamee & Vitale,

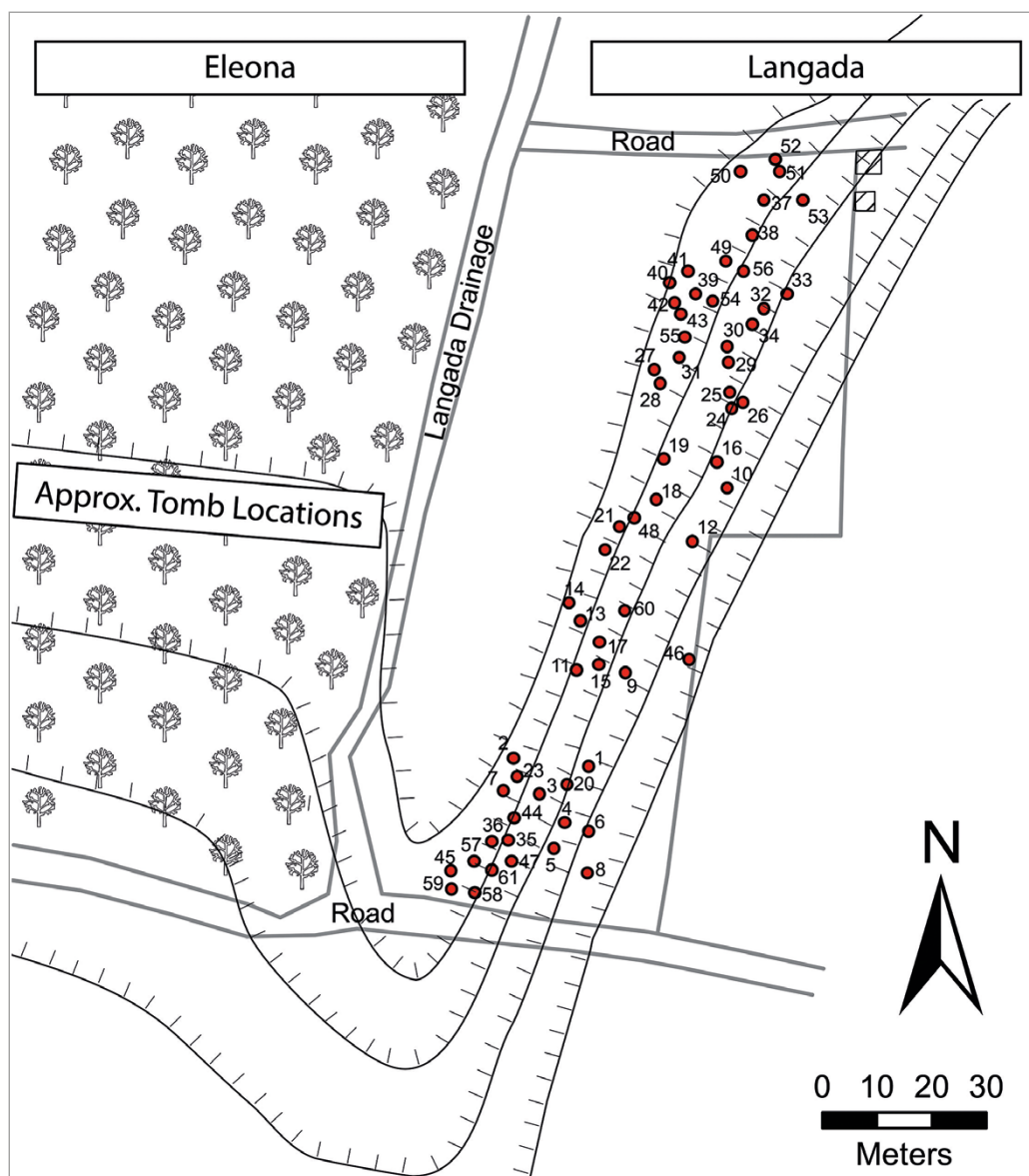


fig. 7. Map showing SELAP's reconstructed burial landscape at Eleona and Langada (C. McNamee & S. Vitale, after Morricone, 1967, pp. 9-10, figs. 2-3).

2020; Vitale, 2023a, pp. 14-20). The re-study of tomb categorization, however, has significantly modified Morricone's conclusions. Based on a thorough contextual analysis of the tombs' shapes, architectural features, mortuary remains, and associated finds, SELAP's demonstrated that only 44 graves at Langada were in fact chamber tombs (DR, File 1_a_tab. 1). The remaining 17 graves from this cemetery were identified as possible simple pits (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 243-247, tabs. IX-XI; McNamee & Vitale, 2020, p. 222, tabs. 11:3-11:4; Vitale, 2023a, pp. 20-21, tab. 6). At Eleona, at least 14

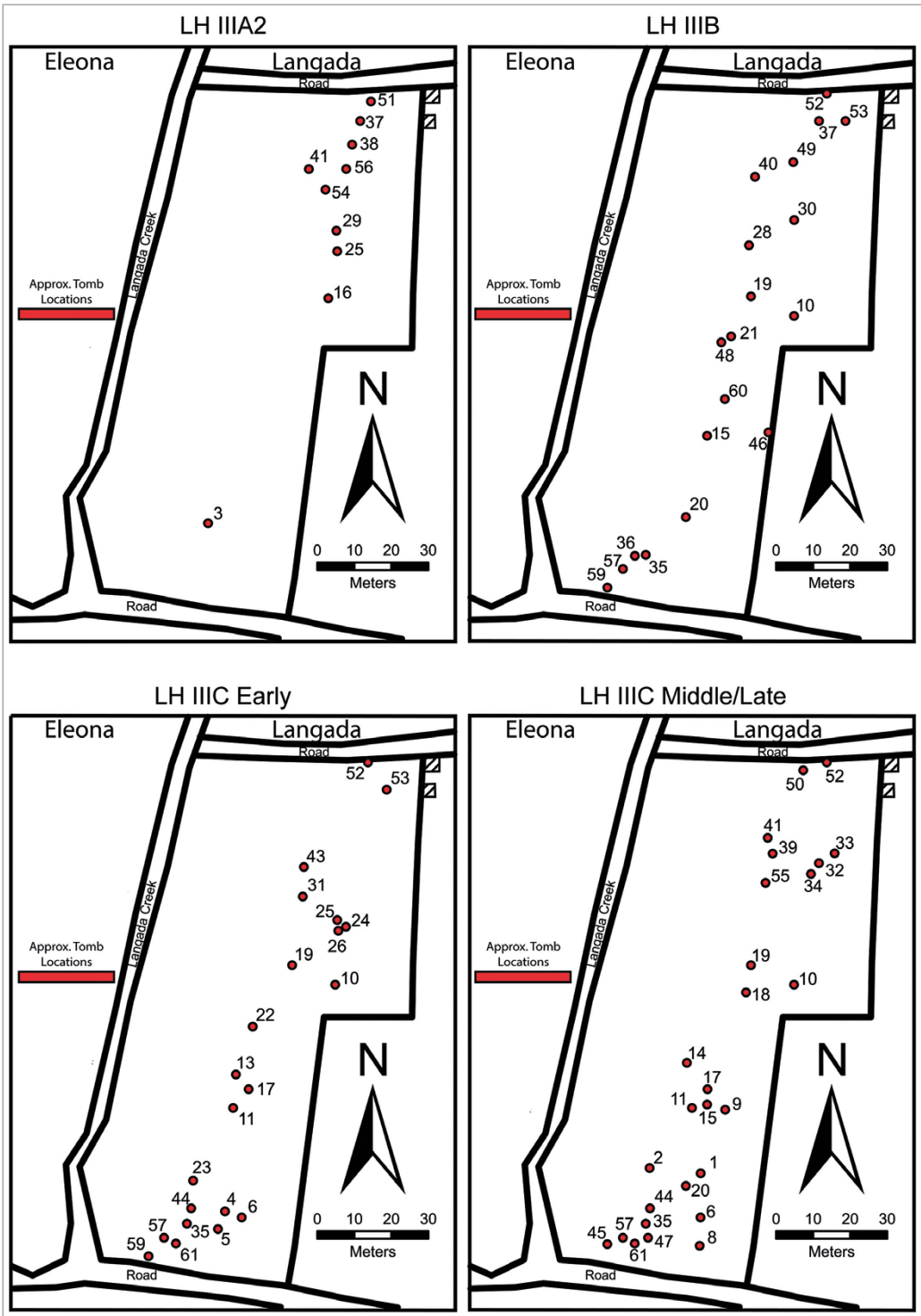


fig. 8. Spatial distribution of the tombs used at Langada during LH IIIA2, LH IIIB, LH IIIC Early, and LH IIIC Middle/Late (C. McNamee & S. Vitale).

tombs can be classified as chamber tombs, because of the presence of multiple interments and, in one case, based on the remains of the original blocking wall (DR, File 1_a_tab. 2). It is possible that the other eight graves from this cemetery were pits, but this conclusion must be considered hypothetical, because of the limited information available for Eleona's Tombs 1-20.

Regardless of the tomb type, inhumation was the standard body treatment also at Eleona and Langada (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 249-254). A few cases of cremation, dated between LH IIIA2 or LH IIIB and LH IIIC Middle/Late, did nevertheless occur at both cemeteries (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 250-254, tab. XIV).

2. Dataset and Methodology

SELAP's uses a holistic approach to the study of relative chronologies and occupational sequences (fig. 9). The project's methodology places at the very center of the epistemological process the concept of archaeological context, seen within its broader urban or funerary landscapes. Understanding formation processes is also of key importance, because they have significant implications for the chronological definition of archaeological deposits. The implementation of standardized terminologies and definitions is another decisive feature of SELAP's methodology. Rigorous nomenclatures, adequately reflecting and at the same time informing the project's research questions, are key to data storage strategies and the performances of effective chronological queries.

2.1 Data Challenges

As seen in Section 1, while incorporating information from more recent archaeological research, SELAP's analysis of the sites of the Asklepis, the "Serraglio", Eleona, and Langada is primarily based on L. Morricone's excavations (Morricone, 1967; Morricone, 1975; Morricone, 1982) and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey (Hope Simpson & Lazenby, 1970). Being affected by the typical limitations of legacy data, this large body of materials requires extreme analytical and interpretative caution.

Despite Morricone's attention to stratigraphy, the quality of the information from his excavations is uneven, especially if compared to modern standards. For example, the materials recovered by Morricone exhibit important biases due to the discard strategies typical of the 1930's and 1940's. Most unpainted and medium-coarse to coarse pottery sherds were not kept, especially if not immediately associable with Minoan, Mycenaean, and Greek EIA shapes. In the late 1960's, Hope Simpson and Lazenby operated in similar ways, picking up mostly painted fragments or fine unpainted feature sherds.

Another problem affecting the resolution of Morricone's excavations data is the partial destruction of the original field notebooks, which occurred during the dramatic events of World War II (Morricone, 1967, p. 9 with note 1; Morricone, 1975, pp. 147-149). Lost information includes most of the diaries from the excavations at the "Serraglio", those from Eleona's Tombs 1-20 (see above, Section 1), as well as detailed drawings of plans, archaeological sections, and architectural features (Morricone, 1967, pp. 9, 76, 80, 82; Morricone, 1975, pp. 147-149, 388).

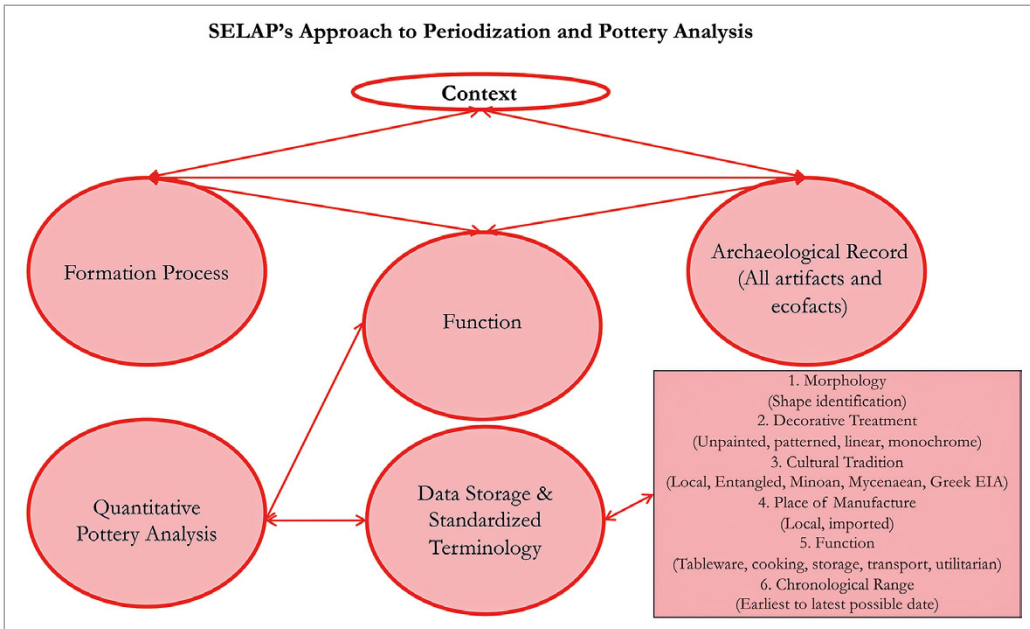


fig. 9. Diagram showing SELAP's contextual approach to periodization and pottery analysis (S. Vitale).

2.2 Context

Context was recently described as «the critical study of artifacts and ecofacts, matrices, features, and their unique spatial and temporal associations» (Haggis & Antonaccio, 2015, p. 2). This definition is of chief importance, because it emphasizes the significant role of formation processes in shaping the archaeological record. The latter is «a fluid, dynamic, and open-ended construct born of archaeological practice, formed initially by excavators, but also from an on-going dialectic between investigators, sites, assemblages, objects, and a myriad of analytical and theoretical framework» (Haggis & Antonaccio, 2015, p. 9). This definition of what the term archaeological record means is particularly relevant for a project like SELAP, the main focus of which is represented by legacy data that were produced in a completely different methodological, theoretical, and heuristic setting.

2.3 Formation Processes

In terms of formation processes, within the wide range of Morricone's excavations, the most significant distinction concerns primary (or closed) vs. secondary (or mixed) contexts (Vitale et. al., 2022b, pp. 123-124, with previous bibliography). The former typically consist of four types (Vitale, 2012, 1235, with previous bibliography): (a) Floor deposits; (b) Underfloor terracing fills stratified in-between a sequence of floor deposits; (c) Single burials in chamber tombs or pit graves (Morricone, 1967, p. 26); and (d) Individual interments (and their associated objects) that do not appear to have been disturbed after their original placement in pitthoi, chamber tombs, or pits (Morricone, 1967, pp. 27-28).

Finds from a miscellaneous array of secondary contexts, typically mixed fills, mixed underfloor fills, or unstratified materials of known and unknown provenance, are also cautiously considered as an additional, although problematic, analytical resource. In fact, even these contexts sometimes include items that, because of their place of manufacture, their morphology, and/or their decorative treatment, can provide basic evidence for time periods or cultural contacts that are otherwise scanty or completely missing.

Within secondary contexts, a special group is represented by the pithos burials, chamber tombs, and pit graves, which included what A. Furumark called “homogeneous find groups” (Furumark, 1941b, pp. 32-33; Vitale, 2012, 1235, with previous bibliography). These groups consist of assemblages, which may be stylistically assigned to a single broad chronological phase, e.g. EBA 2, LBA II, LBA IIIA1, LH IIIA2, LH IIIB, LH IIIC Early, and LH IIIC Middle/Late, although their original context was disturbed.

2.4 Periodization

SELAP’s approach to periodization is strictly dependent on the project’s definition of archaeological contexts and formation processes. The establishment and the study of occupational phases and chronological horizons is based on the combined observation of two interrelated factors: (Vitale et. al., 2022b, pp. 123-124, with previous bibliography): (a) The stratigraphic and functional characteristics of contexts; and (b) The quantitative distribution of diagnostic features and their variations through space and time. Through this methodology, all the chronological components of a given deposit are integrated within a wider understanding of context and its functional meanings.

As is typical in Aegean prehistory and protohistory, the main analytical tool used to build SELAP’s periodization is pottery seriation. As far as ceramic sequences are concerned, SELAP’s methodology uses a combination of traditional systems based upon the appearance/disappearance of diagnostic features and the quantitative approach developed by K. Kilian, G. Schönfeld, and C. Podzuweit during the 1970’s and 1980’s excavations at Tiryns (Kilian, 1988, p. 118; Schönfeld, 1988; Podzuweit, 2007; Vitale, 2012, p. 1235; Vitale et al., 2022b, 123-126). According to this methodology, pottery styles go through three successive stages, which can be visualized as a bell curve showing their manufacturing and consumption trajectories. These stages encompass: (a) An initial phase, where innovative elements begin to be manufactured on a small scale; (b) A floruit, which represents the peak of production, and (c) A fading stage, when a style slowly disappears. As a result, the periods of manufacture and consumption of different styles may overlap, and closed deposits may contain features of different styles. In this case, primary deposits are dated based on the ceramic types that constitute the majority of the sample. The presence of single or isolated features associated with the innovative and/or fading stages of a given style must not be considered decisive for dating purposes.

2.5 Storage Data Strategies

SELAP’s database reflects in a summarized fashion the project’s methodology and is built as a handy tool to enable a wide array of queries that concern the project’s main research questions. To do so, Filemaker layouts have been implemented to record relevant information on contexts, ceramics, and a diverse array of other finds (Folder

1, File 1_b), with individual fields within each layout designed to address the project's primary research questions (Vitale et al., 2023, pp. 17-19; Nani et al., forthcoming).

Dropdown values exist for most fields to maintain recording consistency, facilitate queries, and standardize the analysis and the study of the dataset. The layouts are linked to high resolution context and artifact illustrations (including photographs, pencil drawings, and inkings), and are relational, thus enabling, when needed, the automatized population of interconnected fields, as well as the easy and fast performance of complex queries (Folder 1, File 1_b).

3. Occupational and Stratigraphic Sequences

This section presents the occupational and stratigraphic sequences identified through SELAP's research in the northeast Koan region. As in Section 1, the data are presented in chronological order, based on the foundation date of each site.

3.1 The Asklopis: FN 1 to LPG (with possible gaps)

SELAP's work has demonstrated the existence of a long occupational sequence at the Asklopis and its surrounding area (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 3-4). Three main horizons with human occupation have been recognized for the periods under study. Phase I includes the time span between the FN 1 and the EBA 2. Phase II can be broken down into three Sub-Phases, indicated as II:1-3. Sub-Phase II:1 dates between LBA IA Early and LBA IA Mature. Sub-Phase II:2 includes LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB, while Sub-Phase II:3 corresponds to LH IIIC Middle to LH IIIC Late. Finally, Phase III includes the LPG period. Cultural material gaps do exist between the abovementioned phases. Missing horizons include the following temporal ranges: EBA 3-MBA, LBA II-LBA IIIA1, LH IIIC Early, Early Protogeometric (EPG), and MPG.

The occurrence of a hiatus between the EBA 3 and the MBA periods is possible at the Asklopis, based on broader site distribution patterns on northeast Kos during these phases (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 238-241; Vitale et al., 2021, p. 116). The absence of materials dating to LBA II-LBA IIIA1, LH IIIC Early, EPG, and MPG, on the other hand, should not be considered as definitive proof for occupational gaps in these periods, but rather as the outcome of the limited number of the materials recovered at the Asklopis and the dearth of a significant amount of contextual data (Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 238-241, 243-247, 278-279; Vitale et al., 2022a, pp. 156-157, 161-162; McNamee & Vitale, 2020, pp. 240-244; Vitale, 2021, pp. 529-545, 553-555; Vitale, 2024).

3.2 The "Serraglio": EBA 3 to LPG

During prehistory and protohistory, the "Serraglio" was continuously occupied from the EBA 3 up until the end of the LPG period. For the LBA, while Morricone had identified four macrophases defined as "Cities" I-V, collaborative research between SELAP and Marketou has recognized the existence of five Sub-Phases, categorized as III:1 to III:5, with further bipartite sub-divisions for III:1, III:3, and III:4 (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5). In this more recent framework, Phases I and II correspond to the EBA 3

and MBA periods respectively, with Phase I being further sub-divided into Sub-Phase I:1 (EBA 3 Early) and Sub-Phase I:2. (EBA 3 Late).

Finally, based on SELAP's recent results (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5), the Protogeometric (PG) period at the "Serraglio" is broken down into two sub-phases. The earlier one, Sub-Phase IV:1, dates to EPG-MPG and corresponds to the time span when the size of the settlement had likely shrunk and Zones I-II had become the outskirts of the urban space (Vitale, 2023b, p. 74). Sub-Phase IV:2 dates to MPG-LPG and corresponds to the initial phases of the EIA cemetery. Specifically, Sub-Phase IV:2 includes 4 MPG, 1 MPG-LPG, and 16 LPG graves (Morricone, 1982, pp. 13-50; for a few additional PG tombs, which were recently discovered by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese, see Lemos, 2002, pp. 17, 22-23, 180-182; Palmieri, 2015, p. 135, both with previous bibliography).

3.3 Eleona and Langada: LBA II to LH IIIC Middle/Late

Overall, three main phases of use can be recognized at Eleona and Langada (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 6-8). The earlier one is only found at Eleona (Morricone, 1967; Vitale et al., 2017, 233-234, tabs. IV-VII). It corresponds to Phase III:3.a-b at the "Serraglio" (LBA II-LBA IIIA1) and equates to the late Prepalatial period of Mycenaean civilization on the Greek mainland. The second phase of use is common to both Eleona and Langada, with the latter now representing by far the largest cemetery used by the community of the nearby settlement of the "Serraglio". This second stage corresponds to Phase III:4.a-b at the "Serraglio" (LH IIIA2-LH IIIB) and equates to the Palatial period of Mycenaean civilization on the Greek mainland. The third and final temporal range of use of Eleona and Langada corresponds to Phase III:5 at the "Serraglio" (LH IIIC Early-LH IIIC Middle/Late) and equates to the Postpalatial period of Mycenaean civilization. Langada remains the largest of the two cemeteries used by the "Serraglio" inhabitants also during this final time span.

The only burial, which may postdate the end of the LBA, is a pithos single interment of a child set into the original dromos of Chamber Tomb 58 at Langada. This type of mortuary behavior is similar to that characteristic of infant burials at the EIA cemetery of the "Serraglio". Unfortunately, only a bronze awl and a bronze scalpel were found within the burial pithos from the dromos of Chamber Tomb 58, preventing any precise dating of this context.

4. Contexts

This part of the paper discusses the contexts used by SELAP to identify and date the occupational and stratigraphic sequences presented in Section 3. For each of the main four sites considered by the project, an overview of the evidence is provided, according to the formation processes recognized (see above, Sub-Section 2.3). Additional information is included in the associated DR section (Folders 2-4), with tabular charts summarizing the main features of each context, its stratigraphic position, and its chronological placement.

4.1 The Asklopis: FN 1 to LPG (with possible gaps)

4.1.1 Primary Contexts

According to Morricone, at least one of the deceased individuals from Tomb 1 at the cemetery of the Asklopis was recovered in a primary position (Vitale, 2013, p. 52). This conclusion cannot be verified based on the currently available sample of osteological remains.

4.1.2 Secondary Contexts

All the materials from Tombs 1, 2, 3, and 4 at the Asklopis represent stylistically homogeneous find groups (DR, Files 2_a-c). Based on these items, the entire cemetery can be assigned to the end of Phase I at this site, dating to the local EBA 2 period (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 3-4). Unstratified materials from Morricone's trial trench and Hope Simpson and Lazenby's survey (DR, Files 2_d-e) have little contextual meaning, but they are useful to reconstruct the main chronological trends in human activities at the Asklopis, especially when seen in the wider picture of settlement patterns in the northeast Koan region, as known through SELAP's and KASP's recent research (Vitale, 2012; Vitale et al., 2017; McNamee et al., 2021; Vitale et al., 2021; Vitale, 2024). As stated in Sub-Section 3.1, these materials can be assigned to the Asklopis Phase I (FN 1-EBA 2), Phase II:1-3 (a large portion of the LBA), and Phase III (LPG).

The complete list of identified secondary contexts from the Asklopis is provided within Folder 2 of the DR section (File 2_a), including summarized tabular catalogues of the relevant finds (Files 2_b-e).

4.2 The “Serraglio”: EBA 3 to LPG

4.2.1 Primary Contexts

No primary contexts were uncovered by Morricone from Phases I (EBA 3 Early to EBA 3 Late) and II (MBA) at the “Serraglio”. The only available information for this time periods comes from the excavations conducted by Marketou (Marketou, 1990a; Marketou, 1990b; Marketou, 2010). Morricone, on the other hand, brought to light several floor deposits dating to Phase III (LBA). These assemblages (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5), attributable between Sub-Phase III:1.a (LBA IA Early) and the end of Sub-Phase III:5 (LH IIIC Middle/Late), represent a precious dataset to understand the relative chronology of the building phases at the site (DR, Files 3_a-c).

In addition to floor levels, the most informative underfloor terracing deposit recovered by Morricone at the “Serraglio” is the fill stratified underneath the so-called House of the Figs (DR, Files 3_h-i). Despite being partially disturbed, this context provides valuable data on Sub-Phase III:4.a (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5; LH IIIA2 to LH IIIB1). Several other underfloor fills stratified below horizons assignable to Sub-Phase III:2 (LBA IB) are discussed by Morricone in the original publication of his excavations at the “Serraglio”. Dating to Sub-Phase III:1.a-b (LBA IA Early to Mature), these deposits were characterized by large numbers of locally produced Minoan Unpainted Fine (MiUF) conical cups and Koan Painted Medium-Coarse to Coarse, Light-on-Dark/Dark-on-Light (LoD/DoL) fragments (for Koan pottery classes, see

below, Sub-Section 5.2). Unfortunately, among the materials currently kept in the storerooms of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Dodecanese on Kos, there is not a single box that can be conclusively matched with these underfloor terracing fills (see Vitale, 2018, 53-59).

The complete list of identified primary contexts from the “Serraglio” is provided within Folder 3 of the DR section (File 3_a), including a summarized tabular catalogue of the relevant finds (Files 3_b-c, h-i).

4.2.2 Secondary Deposits

Within secondary contexts from the “Serraglio”, a special mention is needed for the Fill above the House of the Figs (fig. 5; DR, Files 3_a, f-g). This deposit was excavated in a hasty fashion in 1946, in the last days of Morricone’s investigations on Kos (Morricone, 1975, pp. 227-232, figs. 154-160). Due to time constraints, the finds from underneath and above the structures of Sub-Phase III:5 were partially mixed, as demonstrated by a LH IIIC Middle to Late stirrup jar of Furumark’s Shape 175/176 with joins from above and underneath Walls 168 and 169, both of which date to Sub-Phase III:5 (fig. 5c; Vitale, 2023b, p. 63, fig. 3). Nevertheless, the Fill above the House of the Figs is particularly important for at least two reasons. First, no stratigraphic hiatus in ancient human activities in this part of the “Serraglio” was recognized by Morricone (Morricone, 1975, pp. 227-232, figs. 154-160). Second, the fragments from this deposit show the occurrence of all chronological phases between LH IIIB2 Late to LH IIIC Early and the LPG period (Vitale, 2023b, pp. 63-66, figs. 4-5). Combined, these data demonstrate that occupation continued uninterrupted at the “Serraglio” during the LBA to EIA transition (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5), bringing to a close long-lasting debates associated with major historical questions, such as the so-called first wave of Greek colonization in the 10th century B.C.E. (Vitale, 2023b, p. 75). Moreover, the information from the Fill above the House of the Figs also proves that LH IIIC Late and EPG vessels did exist at the “Serraglio”, although the latter occurred only on a small scale (see Vitale, 2023b, 72-75).

Finally, a limited but occasionally important contribution to our knowledge of the chronological sequence of the “Serraglio” is provided by a small number of stray finds from unknown contexts (DR, Files 3_d-e). The most relevant cases concern the MBA, the MBA to LBA transition, and the LBA to EIA transition. First, a stray Middle Minoan (MM) IIA to MM IIB LoD polychrome cup recently published by SELAP represents the earliest known Cretan import from the “Serraglio” (Vitale & Querci, 2024, p. 436, fig. 2: a). This single stray find does not come from Morricone’s excavations but was identified by SELAP within the materials stored in the collection of the British School at Athens. This vessel demonstrates that the first contacts between Crete and Kos began in the Minoan Protopalatial phase, i.e. approximately as early as at other important centers in the Southeast Aegean-Southwest Coastal Anatolian Region (SASCAR), such as Miletus and Ialysos on Rhodes. Second, a few stray MiUF handleless cups with a shallow profile from Morricone’s excavations indicate that the earliest manufacture of Cretan type vessels on Kos dates to a phase contemporary with MM IIIA (Morricone, 1975, p. 282, nos., 1244, 1361, fig. 244), i.e. around the MBA to LBA transition in the island’s local sequence (DR, File 1_a_tab. 5; Files

3_d-e). Third, together with the materials from the Fill above the House of the Figs, some stray pottery fragments from Morricone's excavations that can be typologically assigned to the LH IIIC Late, EPG, MPG, and LPG phases confirm that all these ceramic styles did exist on Kos and that no occupational break took place during the LBA to EIA transition or later before the establishment of the EIA cemetery of the "Serraglio" (Vitale, 2023b, pp. 73-75). The presence of stray EPG to LPG pottery imports from central Greece, the Argolid, and Attica (Vitale, 2023b, pp. 67-68, 70) demonstrates that cultural relationships between Kos and the Greek mainland existed throughout the 10th century B.C.E.

The complete list of identified secondary contexts from the "Serraglio" is provided within Folder 3 of the DR section (File 3_a), including a summarized tabular catalogue of some of the relevant finds (Files 3_d-g). Secondary contexts from other smaller sites explored by Morricone or Hope Simpson and Lazenby are also listed in Folder 3 (File 3_a, d-e).

4.3 Eleona and Langada: LBA II to LH IIIC Middle/Late

4.3.1 Primary Contexts

The contextual study of the vases from Langada established the existence of 20 closed groups (DR, Files 4_a-e). Among these assemblages (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 6-8), 12 are single interments from three chamber tombs (Langada's nos. 7, 21, 38), eight pit graves (Langada's nos. 1, 18, 23, 24, 36, 42, 43, 46), and one pithos burial (from the dromos of Langada's Chamber Tomb 58). The remaining eight closed groups (DR, Files 4_a-e) represent undisturbed assemblages assignable to specific interments, all from two multiphase chamber tombs (Langada's no. 25, Groups 1-5; and Langada's no. 57, Groups 2-4). These contexts cover the entire time span between LH IIIA2 and LH IIIC Middle/Late, corresponding to Sub-Phases III:4.a-b and III:5 at the "Serraglio".

The complete list of identified primary contexts from Eleona and Langada is provided within Folder 4 of the DR section (File 4_a), including summarized tabular catalogues of the relevant finds (Files 4_b-e).

4.3.2 Secondary Contexts

A total of 38 stylistically homogeneous groups were identified at Eleona and Langada (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 6-8; DR, Files 4_a-e). Eight were recognized in Eleona's Tombs no. 1, 3, 5, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, which might have been pit graves. The remaining 30 stylistically homogeneous groups from Langada come from a variety of contexts, including 21 chamber tombs (Langada's nos. 4, 5, 9, 13, 14, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 39, 40, 45, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 60) and nine pit graves (Langada's nos. 2, 3, 8, 16, 22, 26, 32, 33, 47).

Outside these assemblages, the materials from tombs with multiple phases of use at Eleona and Langada, as well as some stray finds from Langada were dated either stylistically or by association with other diagnostic specimens (DR, Files 4_f-m).

The finds from secondary contexts from Eleona and Langada cover the whole temporal range from LBA II to LH IIIC Middle/Late, corresponding to Sub-Phases III:3.a.b, III:4.a-b, and III:5 at the "Serraglio" (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 5-8).

The complete list of identified secondary contexts from Eleona and Langada is provided within Folder 4 of the DR section (File 4_a), including summarized tabular catalogues of the relevant finds (Files 4_b-m).

5. Finds

The FN 1 to LPG materials from the contexts presented in Sections 3-4 comprise a large and diverse assemblage (DR, Files 2_b-e; 3_b-i; 4_b-m). For SELAP's analysis, these items were broken down into two main categories: ceramics and non-ceramic objects. Ceramics objects include all types of Koan prehistoric and protohistoric pottery vessels. Non-ceramic objects consist of bronze vessels, bronze weapons and implements, stone tools, terracotta figurines, and weaving equipment, as well as precious and semi-precious adornments for the body and clothing. In addition to this array of man-manufactured items, SELAP's analysis also focused on the available sample of human osteological remains unearthed at the cemeteries of the Asklopis, Eleona, and Langada (Vitale, 2012; Vitale, 2013; Vitale et al., 2017).

In the following sub-sections, SELAP's approach to the analysis and the study of ceramic and non-ceramic finds is illustrated, with a major focus on pottery, which represents the most effective chronological type-fossil for the prehistoric and protohistoric Aegean.

5.1 Documentation and Catalogue Forms

All inventoried finds studied by SELAP are illustrated through drawings and high-resolution photographs and are documented and described through individual forms designed for this purpose. The reference systems used for the identification of ceramic objects are those provided by Furumark (Furumark, 1941a; Furumark, 1941b) and P.A. Mountjoy (Mountjoy, 1986; Mountjoy, 1999). The reference systems used for the identification of non-ceramic objects largely conform to those provided by the following scholars: N.K. Sandars and I. Kilian-Dirlmeier for bronze weapons (Sandars, 1963; Kilian-Dirlmeier, 1993); H.-G. Buchholz for arrowheads (Buchholz, 1962); N.G. Blackwell for bronze implements (Blackwell, 2011); E.B. French for terracotta figurines (French, 1971); and E.M. Konstantinidi for jewelry and other miscellaneous adornments (Konstantinidi, 2001).

For each inventoried ceramic entry, an analytical and a summarized tabular catalogue form exist. The former records the following features: (a) Dimensions; (b) Weights; (c) Shapes, decorations, and functions; (d) Chronological ranges; (e) Non-plastic inclusions (f) Maximum sizes of non-plastic inclusions; (g) Potting traditions, according to the Koan Ceramic Classification System (KCCS; see below, Sub-Section 5.2); (h) Macroscopic fabric groups (see below, Sub-Section 5.3); (i) Surface treatments; (j) Forming techniques; (k) Colors of surfaces, paints, and fractures, according to the Munsell Soil Color Charts; (l) Numbers and percentages of preserved parts; (m) Hardnesses, according to Moh's scale; and (n) Degrees of depositional and use wear. SELAP's summarized tabular catalogue form includes exclusively the

information mentioned at points a, b, c, d, f, g, h, and l (for most of which, see DR, Files 2_b-e; 3_b-i; 4_b-c, f-g, j-k). The summarized tubular catalogue is also filled out for non-inventoried pottery objects, in order to have a quantitative assessment of all the ceramics under SELAP's study. No drawings or photographs, however, exist for non-inventoried pottery objects.

As far as non-ceramic objects are concerned (DR, Files 2_b-c; 3_b-g; 4_d-e, h-i, l-m), the most significant information recorded through SELAP's catalogue form includes: (a) Dimensions; (b) Weights; (c) Shapes, decorations, and functions; (d) Chronological ranges; (e) Materials of manufacture; (f) Colors, according to the Munsell Soil Color Charts; (g) Numbers and percentages of preserved parts; and (h) Degrees of depositional and use wear. Among non-ceramic finds, because of their material of manufacture, the information recorded for terracotta figurines, loom-weights, and spindle whorls includes a mix of features common to both the ceramic and non-ceramic forms. All non-ceramic objects studied by SELAP' have an inventory number.

5.2 KCCS

Locally manufactured and imported vessels under SELAP's study are identified and described according to the KCCS, a comprehensive analytical tool organized according to four hierarchically applied criteria (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 9-11; see Vitale, 2017; Vitale, 2018, pp. 27-32; Vitale et al., 2017, pp. 255, tab. XV; Vitale & Morrison, 2017, p. 76, tab. 8:1; Vitale & Morrison, 2018, p. 41, tab. 2; Vitale, 2024, p. 31, tabs. 1-3). These criteria include: (a) Pottery tradition (Local vs. Entangled vs. Minoan vs. Mycenaean vs. Greek EIA); (b) Decorative treatment (Painted vs. Unpainted); (c) Color (Pale vs. Grey vs. Red vs. Dark vs. Black); and (d) Size of non-plastic inclusions ("Fine" vs. "Medium-Coarse" vs. "Coarse"). The term "fine" refers to fabrics with non-plastic inclusions no larger than 0.002 m. The term "medium-coarse" designates fabrics with the largest non-plastic inclusions ranging between 0.002 and 0.004 m. The term "coarse" indicates fabrics with non-plastic inclusions larger than 0.004 m (see Vitale, 2017, p. 153, with previous bibliography).

The benefits of the KCCS for the initial identification and classification of large pottery assemblages are simplicity, consistency, and flexibility. In addition, this system provides a ready and easy tool to assess and compare major cultural trends in deposits from different contexts and regions (for a similar approach, see Rutter, 1995, pp. 13-14, with previous bibliography). On Kos, for example, chronological shifts in the occurrence of vessels of Local, Entangled, Minoan, Mycenaean, and Greek EIA traditions reflect major cultural transitions that occurred on the island and the wider SASCAR between the MBA and the LPG phases.

5.3 Macroscopic Fabric Groups

While the KCCS is conceived for an initial and broad assessment of pottery assemblages, SELAP's macroscopic fabric analysis highlights more subtle differences that demonstrate material processing by ancient potters to create clay bodies. Macroscopic fabric analysis is thus an essential tool for a deeper comprehension of pottery

assemblages in preparation for petrography. Additionally, macroscopic fabric analysis is also extremely useful for exploring manufacturing technologies and their broader cultural meanings.

SELAP's macroscopic fabric groups are established based on paste characteristics, density and types of non-plastic and soft inclusions, hardness, and voids within the paste (DR, File 1_a_tabs. 12-13; Vitale & Morrison, 2017; Vitale & Morrison, 2018; Vitale et al., 2017). The density of non-plastic inclusions to the paste ranges from a "fine" to a "very coarse" clay body. The use of these terms for macroscopic fabric analysis does not correspond to the use of the terms "fine", "medium-coarse", and "coarse" in the context of the KCCS, as the latter only takes into account the maximum size of non-plastic inclusions, regardless of their frequency.

According to SELAP's analysis, the entire FN 1 to LPG Koan local assemblage corresponds to four main macroscopic fabric groups (DR, File 1_a_tab. 12; Vitale & Morrison, 2017; Vitale & Morrison, 2018; Vitale et al., 2017). Based on the density of non-plastic inclusions to paste, Group A includes fine and fine-medium fabrics, Group B includes medium fabrics, while Groups C and D include coarse to very coarse fabrics. All four groups have internal subdivisions based on the paste granularity of the dominant inclusions and the arrangement of non-plastic inclusions within the paste. In particular, Group A has eight sub-groups, Group B has 11 sub-groups, Group C has four sub-groups, and Group D has three sub-groups, thus making up a total of 26 sub-groups (DR, File 1_a_tab. 12).

6. Concluding Remarks

SELAP's results, entirely illustrated for the first time within this contribution, provide the most detailed set of chronological data ever produced on Kos and in the wider SASCAR during prehistoric and protohistoric times. In addition to the information gained on occupational sequences at the "Serraglio" and its surrounding areas, this article also shows that, when biases and limitations are critically addressed, legacy data still provide relevant insights for our current understanding of ancient human communities.

The proposed chronology, seen in the broader framework of its contextual data and associated finds, relies on SELAP's holistic approach to periodization, which is fully disclosed and critically reviewed in this article. The discussion of the project's core methodology and primary dataset reflects SELAP's deep conviction that sharing baseline information is not simply an effective publication strategy, but also a fundamental requirement of any proper scientific research carried out today.

An open approach to data sharing within an archaeological project and/or within the broader community of scholars is of crucial importance for the development of new methodological and theoretical questions. This contribution represents one of the first Aegean archaeology articles in which such a wide set of primary information is openly presented and discussed. It would certainly be good for the discipline if an increasingly large number of projects adopted in the near future the same approach as that undertaken here by SELAP.

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