

FOUNDATION ANASTASIOS G. LEVENTIS
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS – DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
ARCHAEOLOGY

ON COOKING POTS, DRINKING CUPS, LOOMWEIGHTS
AND ETHNICITY IN BRONZE AGE CYPRUS AND
NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

International Archaeological Symposium

Nicosia, 6th – 7th November 2010

*Conference Hall: Foundation Anastasios G. Leventis
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ABSTRACTS

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ON COOKING POTS, DRINKING CUPS, LOOMWEIGHTS AND ETHNICITY IN BRONZE AGE CYPRUS AND NEIGHBOURING REGIONS

The eastern Mediterranean has been a field of cultural interaction since early Prehistoric times. Due to the need for the acquisition of raw materials, ceramic technologies and metalwork, interaction became more intensive in the second half of the third millennium BC. Cultural interaction reached its peak in the second millennium BC, when population groups deriving in particular from palatial political-economic entities reached neighbouring coasts in order either to establish *emporion* and expand their economic influence within the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean or in order to escape from their homeland for social and political reasons.

The presence of foreign traders or immigrants can be traced in material culture. The categories of finds and the intensity of the presence of ‘foreign’ customs in everyday life (cooking), industrial activities (textile production, metalworking) and symbolic actions (feasts of elite groups) from the Aegean through Anatolia and Cyprus to the Near East are strong indicators for the tracing of ethnicity in the eastern Mediterranean.

The aim of this International Symposium is to study the aforementioned aspects based upon new archaeological and analytical evidence and possibly to reconstruct the networks of population movements in Bronze Age Cyprus and neighbouring regions.

The Symposium will take place on the 6th and 7th November, 2010 in Nicosia. The papers will be in English and will last 20 minutes each. The proceedings of the symposium will be published by the end of 2011. There will be no charge for attendance at the symposium.

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The cooking pot tradition at Tell Kazel

Leila Badre

Cooking pots were generally used either by being placed in direct contact with the fire or hanging slightly above it, hence the necessity for a special clay used for their manufacture. Their discovery in various rooms of a house may indicate their double use for cooking and eating. It would be of interest to discover whether the locations in which they were found were in any way associated with those of the tannours (bread ovens); alternatively, if they were concentrated in one special space in the house this might indicate the existence of a 'kitchen'.

The evolution of cooking pots in the southern Levant during the Late Bronze Age witnessed a large variety of forms. In its earliest phase (LB I), cooking pots generally belong to the type where the rim forms an S shape with the carination just below the rim. This type is common in Palestine and Tell Kazel seems to indicate its northern border. During LB II, new types were introduced, still related to the Palestinian shapes; their evolution continued into the Iron Age. The cooking pot types of the northern coast (Ugarit and Ras Ibn Hani) are in some ways different from the southern types.

In the Iron Age, the southern Levant tradition of the cooking pot with the triangular rim extended to the Syrian hinterland, and conversely the globular, rimless cooking pots of inner Syria became quite popular on the coast.

Cooking habits and cultural interaction in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages in southern Israel

David Ben-Shlomo

The study of various aspects relating to the changes in cooking vessels and installations during the Late Bronze and Iron Ages in southern Israel may have chronological and cultural significance. It is well known that dietary and cooking habits can be seen as sensitive markers of ethnic, technological and social changes, and thus also of cultural interaction. Particular emphasis will be placed on the morphology, manufacturing technology, and regional distribution of cooking jugs and the study of cooking installations. This archaeological evidence can shed light on Canaanite cooking habits during the Late Bronze Age, and the subsequent interactions in these aspects of daily life between the Canaanites and the Philistines in Philistia during the Iron Age. For example cooking jugs, first appearing in Philistia, are vessels used in the Aegean region and Cyprus; however, these vessels subsequently spread to other regions in the southern Levant. The possible incorporation of Philistine cooking practices into the neighbouring Iron Age cultures is discussed. This phenomenon may have implications for understanding the multifaceted relationships between the Philistines and their neighbours.

‘Us’ and ‘Them’: the distribution of 12th century BC cooking pots and drinking cups as identity markers

Shlomo Bunimovitz

The issue of ‘Pots and People’ has been torturing archaeology since the days of Gustav Kossina and Gordon Childe. Childe’s paradigmatic approach in equating recurring archaeological assemblages with ‘people’ has been criticized by recent generations of archaeologists and more nuanced ideas concerning the materiality of past identities are now in vogue.

Within the context of the turbulent 12th century BC eastern Mediterranean, archaeological evidence for migrant groups in Cyprus – primarily pottery – has been questioned, and alternative explanations for its appearance have been suggested (e.g. new trade patterns, cultural hybridization). However, in the heat of the debate two important factors have been side stepped: spatial distribution of new types of pottery and their relative quantities.

These characteristics have been studied with respect to a variety of foreign groups that settled in Canaan during the Bronze and Iron Ages (e.g. Egyptians, Khirbet Kerak Ware people, Philistines, Greek mercenaries). This body of research brought into relief – in all these cases – patterns of differential distribution of indigenous vs. foreign pottery types (especially kitchen ware and drinking vessels). Such differential patterns are explained by anthropology and ethnoarchaeology as demarcating cultural borders between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’.

Importing these insights into 12th century BC Cyprus makes it possible to identify cultural boundaries that evolved on the island between indigenous and incoming communities. However, since the political and cultural landscape of Cyprus during the 13th and 12th centuries BC was much more complex than that found in contemporary Canaan, the archaeological picture here is more ambiguous and demands further scrutiny.

Loomweights and the textile industry in north Syria

Serena Maria Cecchini

The study of the textile industry in Iron Age Syria, as in all of the Near East, presents particular problems. We have no direct knowledge of the finished products, but rough representations on stone relief sculptures and written Assyrian material make it abundantly clear that the textile products of the region were highly valued. Regarding the technique, archaeological evidence shows that in Syria the use of the warp-weighted loom began to spread at the start of the Iron Age. We could support the hypothesis that the use of this type of loom from the start of the Iron Age onwards on sites of inner Syria such as Tell Afis, resulted from Anatolian influence or that it came from the Aegean, possibly Cyprus, via the coast as a result of the transfer of material culture of foreign peoples. However, pottery evidence from Tell Afis shows that the inhabitants came into contact with new cultures of certain Aegean provenance.

Over the hills and far away: Handmade Burnished Ware and Mycenaean cooking pots at Tell Arqa (Lebanon)

Hanan Charaf

The discovery in 2004 of six fragments of Handmade Burnished Ware (HMBW) at Tell Arqa (northern Lebanon) shed new light on the end of the Late Bronze Age at this site. Level 11, which corresponds to this period, had always displayed flimsy remains that made it difficult to assess the date for the end of this level. However, with this new type of ware found in a silo attributed to one of the last occupation layers of Level 11, a reexamination of the local pottery of the end of Level 11 was undertaken. The results showed that locally manufactured ceramics differed little from the previous period, attesting to a strong continuity of pottery tradition since the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The HMBW at Arqa consists of four cylindrical pots and two cups with raised handles that could indicate an Italian link where this type of vessel is common. Petrographic analyses of the six pots are being undertaken within the framework of a regional study being conducted by D. Pilides and V. Karageorghis. Those results might indicate an origin at nearby Tell Kazel, where dozens of HMBW were found in levels attributed to the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 12th century BC. However, one must bear in mind that not a single one-handed cup has been found to date at Tell Kazel, suggesting a possible indigenous or other origin for some of the Arqa examples. Correlated with the HMBW vessels, but not found with them in the same context, is a possible Mycenaean cooking pot identified by R. Jung. This culinary vessel made in dark red sandy fabric was found crushed on a floor dated to the last occupation of Level 11, together with two identical jars similar to those found in the 12th century BC at Tell Kazel.

Early Iron Age society in the northern Levant: architecture, pottery and finds

Lione du Piéd

The end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200/1180 BC) is marked by destructions and upheavals in the whole eastern Mediterranean area. After the destructions some important sites are deserted, e.g. Ugarit, but reoccupation of old sites and the foundation of new settlements can be noted at several places in the Levant and Cilicia, just as in the Aegean and Cyprus. The material evidence associated with these (re-) occupations shows continuity in some aspects, but new innovations and techniques also occur. Similar to the contemporaneous situation on Cyprus, at several sites in the Levant pottery and objects occur that can be related to Aegean types, often in combination with local styles and shapes.

By discussing some aspects of the continuities and changes in northern Levantine societies and their material culture, questions concerning the possible origin of the inhabitants of northern Levantine sites and their contacts with other regions and Cyprus will be addressed.

Of potters and weavers: intrusive acculturation at Tell Ta‘yinat in the Early Iron Age

Brian Janeway

The renewed excavations at Tell Ta‘yinat, beginning in 2004 by the University of Toronto under the direction of Dr. Tim Harrison, have revealed a rich cultural assemblage from the Early Iron Age, including abundant material relating to the production of textiles and metals, in addition to a ceramic assemblage featuring large quantities of Mycenaean IIC pottery. The settlement later expanded to become a regional capital and the most important urban centre in the ‘Amuq Valley during the Iron II period, prior to its conquest by the Neo-Assyrians in 738 BC. Epigraphic discoveries and textual sources from this period indicate that the rulers of Ta‘yinat (ancient Kunulua) were Neo-Hittites who wrote in the language of Hieroglyphic Luwian.

However, the Iron I settlement presents a quite different picture, with strong cultural connections to the Aegean region, Cyprus, and the coastal southern Levant. Coupled with recent inscriptional finds from Syria and Turkey, these discoveries raise intriguing historical and political questions as to the nature of the Early Iron Age settlement at Tell Ta‘yinat and the identity of its inhabitants during this little known period in the northern Levant.

Changes in the Cypriote pottery repertoire of the 13th and 12th centuries BC and their historical interpretation

Reinhard Jung

The pottery record of Cypriote settlements during the 13th and 12th centuries BC has been a much debated subject of Bronze Age archaeology in Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean. The quantitative and qualitative changes of Aegean-type pottery were the focus of the discussion. So, one may ask, why a new contribution on this matter? While various theoretical approaches have been proposed in past years, it seems that the debate has come to a dead end. An input of new primary data is considered necessary to test old and new hypotheses on the meaning of changing pottery repertoires for historical interpretation in Cypriote protohistory. In this paper some results will be presented, which were obtained in ongoing studies of pottery finds from LC IIC and IIIA levels at Enkomi, Maa-*Palaeokastro* and Pyla-*Kokkinokremos*.

Kastrokephala (Crete): strangers or locals in a fortified acropolis of the 12th century BC

Athanasia Kanta

Defensive settlements in Crete have been considered in the bibliography to reflect the movement of Greek mainland people to Crete and their establishment on the island. New research carried out by the author in the fortified LM IIIC settlement of Kastrokephala near Heraklion, has offered plentiful evidence for cooking pots from the destruction levels. Such pots were also discovered on the hearths which were used for food preparation, at the time of the destruction of the citadel by fire. A sword of Naue II type may provide a suggestion of events at the time of the destruction.

The architecture of the citadel points to Pyla-Kokkinokremos in Cyprus as do some metal finds. The existing evidence from elsewhere in Crete, which has relevance to the Kastrokephala and Cyprus finds of the 12th-11th centuries BC, is also examined in this paper in order to establish the historical traits of events at this period.

What happened in Cyprus just after 1200 BC: hybridization, creolization or immigration? An Introduction

Vassos Karageorghis

Twice in the prehistory of Cyprus we have indications of the introduction of cultural innovations that have been attributed by some scholars to the settlement of immigrants: the first instance is dated ca. 2400 BC, when immigrants from Anatolia introduced elements of the so-called Philia culture. They relate mainly to domestic practices belonging 'to a cultural matrix which is unlikely to have taken hold in Cyprus without people and, in particular women, as agents of social reproduction' (to use the words of Webb and Frankel in a recent publication). The innovations are represented by braziers and horseshoe pot stands as well as loomweights.

The second instance is dated ca.1200 BC, a period of 'crisis' in the Mediterranean that is characterized by political instability which resulted in the movement of populations. But whereas for the middle of the third millennium BC scholars almost generally accept the arrival in the island of settlers from Anatolia, there has been a long controversy about the arrival of settlers from the Aegean ca. 1200 BC, although several cultural innovations have been observed in the archaeological record, relating to architectural, artistic, and domestic practices.

Similar innovations have been observed all along the Levantine coast. These involve, *inter alia*, the appearance of new types of cooking pots, drinking cups and weaving techniques. The same innovations have been recorded at various sites in Cyprus. The purpose of this international conference is to examine these innovations, also taking into account, as far as possible, the 3rd millennium model, and to investigate whether they were caused by immigrants or were the result of 'hybridization' or 'creolization'. If there was an immigration, what was the reaction and fate of the local population?

The Handmade Burnished Ware in Cyprus and elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean

Vassos Karageorghis

Several scholars have dealt with the provenance and distribution of the Handmade Burnished Ware, which is linked directly with the topic of our Symposium. Though the vessels of this fabric may or may not have been used for cooking, they are very much connected with the 'kitchen' and most probably were made by women. In several cases they were made of local clay, in other cases they were imported in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean, directly or indirectly from the Central Mediterranean.

In the spring of 2010 a fragmentary Handmade Burnished Ware jar of Sardinian type was found at Pyla-Kokkinokremos. An attempt will be made to draw some 'historical' conclusions relating to the appearance of this fabric in Cyprus and elsewhere in the Levant, at the time of the 'crisis' years, ca. 1200 B.C.

Cooking, ritual feasting and ethnicity in Early Bronze Age Cyprus

Ourania Kouka

Ethnicity is an issue that has already been extensively discussed regarding both the earlier and the later parts of the Bronze Age in Cyprus. However, modern studies of previously excavated material, such as architecture, burial habits, domestic activities, pottery technology and style, metallurgy and other features lead us to reexamine this topic.

This paper aims to discuss specific aspects of social behaviour and symbolism based on settlement and funerary data of selected micro-regions of Cyprus and the neighbouring mainland, in order to enlighten some of the, so far, less discussed aspects of ethnicity for the Cypriote Early Bronze Age (2400-1900 BC).

Cooking and eating in a Philistine village: new evidence from Qubur el-Walaydah, Israel

Gunnar Lehmann

The excavations at the small village site Qubur el-Walaydah, Israel, have exposed a large so-called 'Egyptian Residency' building of the 12th century BC in the lower level and a small Philistine village of the 11th century in the upper level of Field 1.

In the 'Egyptian Residency' building of the 12th century BC, a kitchen was excavated with a cooking installation and numerous vessels *in situ*. These vessels include the typical local cooking pot types with triangular rims. With the appearance of the Philistines a new cooking jar is introduced that has close parallels in the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean and Cyprus. While a large number of these cooking jars were recorded in the 11th century BC level of the Philistine village, almost no local cooking jug types were found in this level. On nearby sites excavated only 20 km further to the east, the assemblages appear to be quite different. There 'Philistine' cooking jars are rare and local cooking jugs are abundant. There appear to be clear differentiations in the ceramic assemblages connected with food production in the region during the 11th century BC. The paper will discuss the implications of the finds at Qubur el-Walaydah that are interpreted as markers of social, economic and ethnic interaction.

Home cooking at Ashkelon in the Bronze and Iron Ages

Daniel Master

As a cosmopolitan port city, Ashkelon's culinary traditions always had the potential to draw on influences from around the Mediterranean. By examining cooking pots from four distinct periods (MB IIA, LB IIB, Iron 1a, and Iron 2c) Ashkelon can provide a glimpse into various ways in which cooking pots can reflect a variety of international social processes. In particular, a long term perspective, combined with the use of microscopic clay analysis, can aid in our understanding of the transformations in culinary practice in the transition from the Bronze to Iron Age at Ashkelon.

Cooking pots and people at Bronze Age Miletus

Wolf-Dietrich Niemeier

The Minoan and Mycenaean features in the settlement phases IV to VI of Bronze Age Miletus which have been explained by the actual presence of Minoans and Mycenaeans by the author of this paper, were seen by P.A. Mountjoy (in 'The East Aegean-West Anatolian Interface in the Late Bronze Age: Mycenaeans and the Kingdom of Ahhiyawa', *AnatSt* 48, 1998, 33, 36) not as reflecting Minoan and Mycenaean presence at the site but as signs of the acculturation of local people, in which these came to be absorbed into the Minoan and Mycenaean culture adopting pottery, among them the household wares, and other features. However, as is evident from social anthropology, acculturation can only happen where two different population groups are living close together for a certain period of time. The thorough Minoanization and later Mycenaeanization of Miletus IV-VI could not have taken place without the actual presence of Minoans and Mycenaeans at the site. In this paper, the problematic terms 'Minoans' and 'Mycenaeans' will also be discussed.

Revisiting the Handmade Burnished Ware of Cyprus: new analytical results

Despina Pilides and Marie-Claude Boileau

A number of sherds identified as Handmade Burnished Ware on account of style, fabric characteristics and shape, along with handmade sherds of traditional Cypriote fabrics normally classified as Coarse Monochrome, were analysed using neutron activation analysis. The chemical results indicated the presence of five different groupings with Groups 1 and 2 consisting of samples which could not, visually at least, be classified as Coarse Monochrome. However, the results were rather inconclusive with regards to provenance, mainly due to lack of comparative data at the time.

Many years have gone by and the problem of the interpretation of Handmade Burnished Ware and its possible origins has been discussed extensively but never resolved. The whole issue resurfaced when new excavations at the sites of Tell Arqa and Tell Kazel, two sites located on the northern Levantine coast, brought to light more material of this category in entirely new contexts. These discoveries, along with recent analytical data on the Tell Kazel HMBW, have rekindled discussion and opened up new possibilities for interpretation of the material. In this context, an analytical programme using thin section petrography to study a very small number of purposefully selected HMBW sherds from Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke, Enkomi, Maa-*Palaeokastro* and Sinda, is being carried out in an effort to (a) characterize the raw materials used for their manufacture; (b) identify their origin of manufacture; and (c) attempt to establish whether a distinct technological tradition may be identified with regard to the manufacture of Handmade Burnished Ware.

Handmade pots and figurines, crumbling loomweights: ‘Barbarian’ elements in the eastern Mediterranean in the 12th and early 11th centuries BC

Lorenz Rahmstorf

This contribution discusses various material traits during the 12th and early 11th centuries BC in the eastern Mediterranean which are considered to be ‘Barbarian’. Starting from the evidence of the clay spools from several dozen sites in the central and eastern Mediterranean, the contextual association of these objects with other ‘Barbarian’ elements, such as the handmade burnished ware and figurines, is analysed in a sample of sites in different regions in the eastern Mediterranean which have been published in a sufficient way, such as Tiryns, Lefkandi and Kastanas in Greece, Maa-*Palaeokastro* and Kition on Cyprus, Tell Afis in Syria and Tel Mique-Ekron in Israel. Through such an approach it is hoped that new insights about the context, variation, association, chronology and possibly also the connected questions of ethnic implications will emerge.

A survey of Bronze Age Cypriote faunal remains

David S. Reese

This paper examines animal bones from Bronze Age sites on Cyprus, with particular attention being paid to the major food animals: sheep and goat (*Ovis* and *Capra*), cattle (*Bos*), pig (*Sus*) and deer (*Dama*). The evidence comes from numerous sites, although few date to the earlier periods of the Bronze Age. The usefulness of the various collections varies: some sites yielded few bones, have not yet been fully studied, or are still under excavation. The faunal material to be briefly surveyed comes from the following sites:

Early Cypriote (two sites: *Marki-Alonia*, *Sotira-Kaminoudhia*);

Middle Cypriote (three sites: *Alambra-Mouttes*, *Politiko-Troullia* and *Kalopsidha-Tsaoudhi Chiftlik* (MC-LC));

Late Cypriote (18 sites: *Apliki-Karamallos*, *Athienou-Bamboulari tis Koukkouninas*, *Dhali-Ambelleri* lower slopes, *Enkomi*, *Episkopi-Phaneromeni*, *Episkopi-Bamboula*, *Phlamoudhi-Melissa*, *Phlamoudhi-Vounari*, *Hala Sultan Tekke*, *Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios*, *Kition*, *Kition-Bamboula*, *Korovia-Nitovikla*, *Kouklia well-fill*, *Maa-Palaeokastro*, *Morphou-Toumba tou Skourou*, *Myrtou-Pigadhes* and *Sinda-Sira Dash*).

The three major domestic food animals are compared between the various Cypriote sites and periods. Then the material is contrasted with that from Greece (particularly my own work on fauna from the Mycenaean sites of Mycenae, Midea, and Lerna and Minoan sites of Kommos, Mochlos, and Pseira). Finally the Cypriote fauna is compared with that published from the Levant, particularly sites in Philistia. In general, the Cypriote collections are different from the mainland sites in having more deer and usually less pig.

Early Philistine spinning and weaving at Ashkelon

Lawrence E. Stager

The Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon has provided fresh evidence for a new and dominant culture, beginning in the second quarter of the 12th century BC. It bears little or no resemblance to the preceding Egyptian and Canaanite cultures of the Late Bronze Age. From Egyptian and Biblical texts as well as Egyptian depictions, this new group should be identified with the Philistines. The list of distinctive characteristics of the early Philistines (12th-11th centuries) include the following: 1) domestic architecture reminiscent of the Mycenaean mainland; 2) rooms arranged with linear access, the main one with pillar and raised hearth; 3) ‘bathtubs’; 4) locally made Mycenaean IIC painted pottery and Aegean-style cooking jugs; 5) pictorial pottery, locally made, with painted portraits of warriors wearing ‘feathered’ head gear; 6) preference for pork in the diet, with occasional consumption of dogs; 7) intramural burial of infants beneath house floors; 8) Cypro-Minoan notations on imported and locally made amphora handles and an ostrakon of local origin bearing nine Cypro-Minoan signs; 9) ‘spoolweights’ (usually unbaked, unperforated, cylindrical clay loomweights), the primary subject of my paper.

At Ashkelon we have conclusively shown that spoolweights were related to vertical looms used in domestic weaving. They are closely associated with spindle whorls and distaffs.

Spoolweights are attested in four of the Philistine Pentapolis sites: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gath (=Tell es-Safi). (The fifth site, Gaza, has not been excavated in the early Iron Age.) In all cases spoolweights coincide with the coming of the Philistines. They are attested in their earliest settlements, i.e. ca. 1175/70 BC. This form of unperforated, cylindrical loomweight does not appear prior to their arrival in Canaan and is extremely rare outside the heartland of Philistia.

Hand made cooking pots from the early IA in Tell Tweini (Syria)

Klaas Vansteenhuyse

Tell Tweini is situated at the southernmost border of the Ugaritic kingdom in the Late Bronze Age. The material culture of the site reflects the influence of Ugarit during this period, including classic material of the LB II period such as Aegean and Cypriot ceramic imports. The local ceramic material such as cooking pots, for example, is very similar to that used at the capital of this regional kingdom.

In a destruction layer, dated by C14 to c. 1200 BC and containing the material culture linked to LB II, not only imported Mycenaean wares were found but also a peculiar black handmade and burnished cooking pot. The fabric is without parallels in the region, so far, and is different from the Handmade Burnished Ware which is found more to the south on the Levantine coast. The ware may have appeared in the local material complex due to the influence of newcomers in the region or it may have been a local invention. Most importantly, it was present before the major destruction of the site at the end of the LB II period. The current evidence indicates that this peculiar cooking ware remained in use at Tell Tweini until the end of the 11th c. BC. A second destruction layer, covering the entire site once more, and also dated by C14, seals the contexts in which this ware was used.

Local Mycenaean deep bowls were discovered in the 2010 campaign in relation to the oldest destruction layer. The current evidence indicates that these deep bowls were in use at the moment of the destruction of the site at the end of LB II. However, no floor contexts with this type of pottery has been uncovered until now.

In the destruction layer of the 11th c. BC several heaps of spherical loom weights (c. 50 in total) were discovered. Similar examples have been uncovered at nearby sites and invite a discussion on the stylistic relations of these utensils.

Hearth and home as ethnic identifiers in Early Bronze Age Cyprus

Jennifer M. Webb and David Frankel

This paper will examine an array of domestic equipment and facilities from the Early Bronze Age in Cyprus, including hearths and ovens, hearth furniture, cooking equipment (hobs, cooking pots, baking pans and braziers), spindle whorls and loomweights. These will be viewed in the context of a broad set of innovations in economy, technology and society visible in the second half of the third millennium in Cyprus, many of which are encoded with information on bounded cultural practices which allow us to identify their point of origin and trace population movements. This provides an opportunity to investigate a number of issues relating to technology transfer, adaptation and transmission across a relatively short time frame within a closed island environment and to explore the ways in which the adoption or rejection of particular ways of making and using objects becomes a means of reaffirming, contesting or negotiating ethnic identity.

Feasts, foodways and interregional interactions in 12th century Cyprus and the Levant

Assaf Yasur-Landau

As a form of theoretical introduction, this paper aims at exploring some of the key methodological concepts used in the study of foodways in Cyprus and the Levant, through the lens of research history – the process of dissemination of ideas from world archaeology into Mediterranean archaeology, and their gradual implementation.

The study of interregional interactions between Cyprus, the Aegean and the Levant in the 12th century BC has closely followed, and benefited, during the first decade of the 21st century, from advances in several methodological hot topics, widely discussed in world archaeology in general and the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean in particular: feasts and their political meaning, the mechanisms of technological change and cultural transmission, household archaeology and the analysis of domestic activities, as well as studies of the impact of ancient migrations on the material culture record.

These were by no means a paradigm shift, but the result of the fact that the archaeology of the ‘Sea People’ or the ‘Philistines’ has been much attuned since the late 1980’s to developments in archaeological theory, much more, at least in Israel, than other branches of the archaeology of the Bronze and Iron Ages. Thus, following developments in the archaeology of gender, household archaeology, and ceramic production, the study of Philistine material culture was characterized in the 1990’s and in the last decade by a clear shift from the study of material culture traits (e.g. pottery, architecture, seals etc.) to the study of behavioural patterns: cooking and foodways, the role of women in the migrant society, and the impact of migrant potters on practices of pottery manufacture.

At the same time we may clearly detect some shift away from trends widely discussed during the 1990’s. The search for a straightforward identification of ethnicity in the material culture assemblages, mainly in relation to Aegean migrants, is giving way to more subtle attempts to define group identity and recognizing the existence of multiple strategies of acculturation. The shift occurred together with another important development in interpreting 12th century BC material culture assemblages in Cyprus and the Levant: rather than paying almost exclusive attention to the material culture introduced by the migrants, there is a growing interest in viewing the response of the local

population to the migration process, investigating, among other matters, phenomena of cultural resistance and creolization.

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