

PROGRAMME



An international, hybrid workshop, organised in the frame of ComPAS (ERC Starting Grants, GA 947749)

6-7 November 2025
University of Cyprus Campus

Thursday, 06 November

- 14.30** **Registration**
- 15.00-15.30** **Welcome addresses**
Artemis Georgiou
Principal Investigator, ComPAS ERC Starting Grant
Vasiliki Kassianidou
Deputy Minister of Culture
Giorgos Georgiou
Director, Department of Antiquities, Cyprus
George Pappasavvas
Deputy Director, Archaeological Research Unit,
University of Cyprus
- 15.30-16.30** **Plenary lecture**
Maritime Transport Containers and Ceramic Landscapes: Tracing Technological Traditions Across the Eastern Mediterranean
Evangelia Kiriati (British School at Athens)
- 16.30-17.15** **Coffee break**
- Chair: Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou**
- 17.15-17.45** **The Past and Present Consequences of Mediterranean Maritime Transport Containers (online)**
Andrew Bevan (University College London)



17.45-18.15 The Marine Transport Ceramic Container as Design Problem

Anno Hein (National Centre for Scientific Research 'Demokritos')

18.15-18.45 'ἄπτεσθαι τοῦ κεραμεύειν': Investigating Partonomy and Sequence in the 'Discontinuous' Throwing Techniques of Maritime Transport Containers

Stella Demesticha (University of Cyprus)

18.45 Reception

Friday, 07 November

Chair: Jenny Webb

10.00-10.30 Shaping Function: Investigating the Use and Morphology of Levantine Amphorae

Cydrisse Cateloy (University of Cyprus)

10.30-11.00 The Morpho-functional and Technical Aspects of Egyptian 'Pointed-base Amphorae' from New Kingdom Egypt

Kazumitsu Takahashi (Kindai University, Osaka)

11.00-11.30 Crafting Connectivity: Form, Function, and Technological Practice in the Levantine Storage/Transport Jars in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Ages

Tatiana Pedrazzi (National Research Council, Milan)

11.30-12.15 Coffee break

Chair: Lindy Crewe

12.15-12.45 Gestures in the Making: Exploring Labour-Scapes in the Crafting of Transport Maritime Containers Imported to Late Bronze Age Cyprus

Maria Choleva (University of Cyprus)

12.45-13.15 Utilitarian by Design? The Small-sized Amphoras from the Uluburun Shipwreck

Cemal Pulak and Rachel Matheny (Texas A&M University)

13.15-14.30 Lunch

Chair: Ourania Kouka

14.30-15.00 "All that Scratchin' is Makin' Me Itch": Incised Transport Stirrup Jars in the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean

Eleftheria Kardamaki¹, Peter M. Day^{2,3}, Jeremy B. Rutter⁴, Marta Tenconi^{3,5} and Alessandro Vanzetti⁶
(¹University of Heidelberg; ²National Centre for Scientific Research 'Demokritos'; ³University of Sheffield; ⁴Dartmouth College; ⁵University of Cambridge; ⁶Università di Roma 'La Sapienza')

15.00-15.30 Seasick Diogenes: Maritime Mobility of Stable Storage Jars in the Late Bronze Age

Peter M. Day^{1,2}, Eleftheria Kardamaki³, Valentina Cannavò⁴, Donatella Serino⁵ and Alessandro Usai⁶
(¹National Centre for Scientific Research 'Demokritos'; ²University of Sheffield, ³University of Heidelberg; ⁴University of Modena and Reggio Emilia; ⁵Università di Roma "La Sapienza"; ⁶Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle

arti e paesaggio per la città metropolitana di Cagliari e le province di Oristano e Sud Sardegna)

LIST OF ABSTRACTS

15.30-16.15 Coffee break

Chair: Henning Franzmeier

16.15-16.45 Maritime Transport Containers in Egypt: a Petrographic and Chronological Perspective on Changing Technological Traditions

Mary Ownby (Ownby Analytical, LLC)

16.45-17.15 Commercial Patterns across the Sea: Science-based Analysis of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age Maritime Transport Containers from Cyprus

Marcella Giobbe¹, Noemi Müller², Andreas Charalambous¹, Demetris Ioannides^{1,3}, Anna Georgiadou¹, Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou¹, Artemis Georgiou¹

(¹University of Cyprus; ²British School at Athens; ³The Cyprus Institute)

17.15-18.00 Discussion

Moderated by Lindy Crewe, Artemis Georgiou and Evangelia Kiriati

The Past and Present Consequences of Mediterranean Maritime Transport Containers

Andrew Bevan

Institute of Archaeology, University College London

Maritime transport containers such as amphoras were, and are, consequential things. They were an unusually precocious specialisation in packaging that successfully delivered certain added-value foodstuffs associated with a distinctive Mediterranean diet over large geographical distances. Side-effects or further causal components of their success have included, amongst other things, their ability to carry considerable brand identity and their capacity to conjure up new ways of thinking in the minds of their Mediterranean handlers and consumers. I therefore wish to take a slightly different view of an important statement in the workshop brief which mentions a “dialectical interplay between technological choices in [transport jar] manufacture and the affordances of their use”. Although this brief is surely correct, I wish to construe ‘use’ even more broadly, in terms of not only of their use in the past but also of their academic use in the present. In so-doing, this paper will consider five themes that are ever-present in any discussion of Mediterranean maritime transport jars: (a) conceptual culture (how containers become good or bad for societies to think with), (b) pottery perspectivism (the extent to which we as archaeological interpreters do or do not situate our Bronze Age and early Iron Age understanding of these objects in deeper, later tradition about what they would become), (c) landscape legibility (how does the varying degree to which we can type and date these objects impact our comparative understand of how they were used across whole Mediterranean landscape, for example via survey), and (d) knowledge pathways (how we learn and share knowledge about these objects as archaeological practitioners and how these knowledge-building practices are now changing with additional approaches such as machine learning).

Shaping Function: Investigating the Use and Morphology of Levantine Amphorae

Cydrisse Cateloy

Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus

Levantine amphorae are among the most widely distributed Maritime Transport Containers across the eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. From their initial emergence at the start of the 2nd millennium BCE, their shape

already proved to be well suited to seaborne transport. Nevertheless, their evolution over time reveals numerous improvements, involving both the overall morphology and certain specific features. These transformations reflect a functional optimisation, whereby the forming process of these ceramic vessels was continually adapted to the challenges of long-distance exchange.

The design of Levantine amphorae most likely resulted from an ongoing dialogue between potters and their commissioners, seeking to fulfil the practical requirements of maritime trade. A detailed examination of the various features that define each type of amphora offers insights into how these vessels were filled, sealed, handled, stored, and arranged in batches within the holds of merchant ships.

This presentation investigates the technological traditions and functional innovations behind the manufacture of Levantine amphorae, with the aim of shedding light on the logistical advances and economic shifts they underwent. Ultimately, it also proposes a reconstruction of the gestures and practices related to the use of such containers, informed by a hands-on approach of the material and its morpho-functional characteristics.

Gestures in the Making: Exploring Labour-Scapes in the Crafting of Transport Maritime Containers Imported to Late Bronze Age Cyprus

Maria Choleva

Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus

In recent years, ceramic studies have increasingly emphasised the socio-historical significance of pottery forming techniques. This shift in focus, from the users to the producers of ancient ceramics, calls for a bottom-up perspective on pottery production: one that seeks to recover the mundane habitual gestures that shaped ceramic objects. Such an approach foregrounds the material and social construction of labour, situating the embodied relationships between humans, tools and materials within the physical and social spaces where producers learn and practice their crafts.

Within this framework, the paper explores the ‘labour-scapes’ involved in the production of maritime transport amphorae that travelled from various Eastern Mediterranean regions to Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age. These pots, characterised by strict design form, complex parthood and demanding mechanical requirements for the efficient transport of cargo, are typically considered products of standardised craft behaviours driven by functional constraints. This paper, however, considers the expertise embedded in the making of amphorae from the standpoint of the learnt bodily habits of their makers, emphasising ‘individualised’ ways of perceiving and performing the shaping of this vessel form.

To this end, the paper presents the results of a technological study of amphora assemblages from the settlements of Kition and Pyla-Kokkinokremos. By combining macroscopic observation with digital radiography, the study examines the traces left by the synergies of gestures and tools, with the aim of reconstructing specific operational sequences and identifying distinct ‘hands’ involved in clay shaping. This approach not only provides insights into the appropriation of embodied, skilled practices but also opens new pathways for exploring the degree of social intimacy and interaction among crafting communities enacting the labour-scapes of amphorae production across the Eastern Mediterranean.

Seasick Diogenes: Maritime Mobility of Stable Storage Jars in the Late Bronze Age

Peter M. Day¹, Eleftheria Kardamaki², Valentina Cannavò³, Donatella Serino⁴, and Alessandro Usai⁵

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Despite their bulk and weight, large storage jars, or pithoi, are known to have been transported by ship over long distances during the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean. Evidence from Egyptian iconography, from shipwrecks, and from major anchorages highlights Cypriot pithoi that were used as maritime containers and found use again as storage jars at nodal points along the sea routes.

Ethnohistoric studies of characteristic pithoi from Koroni in the southern Peloponnese have been linked with the changes in control of certain sea routes in the 18th to 19th centuries CE, following major political change. Similar considerations pertain to the contemporary characteristic biconical storage jars linked by tradition to Mytilene, but produced in Ainos in Thrace.

The finding of Aegean and Cypriot pithoi in the Bronze Age Central Mediterranean and the introduction of dolii in the south of the Italian peninsula have often been linked with the role of Crete and Cyprus in such movement and often used as an indication of a ‘southern route’ in the movement of goods. A reconsideration of the source of pithoi found in Sardinia that are considered Cretan and the analyses of a number of large storage vessels from Nuraghe Antigori on the Gulf of Cagliari in Sardinia, Cannatello in Sicily, Tiryns in the Argolid, and Kommos in Southern Crete

extends substantially our knowledge of the sources and distribution of pithoi from the end of the Late Bronze Age. We discuss these, highlighting characteristic large storage jars from Sardinia and Kythera and their wide distribution at nodal points in maritime networks. This new evidence offers insights into mobilities, sea routes and shifting regional influence at the close of the Bronze Age.

‘ἄπτεσθαι τοῦ κεραμεύειν’: Investigating Partonomy and Sequence in the ‘Discontinuous’ Throwing Techniques of Maritime Transport Containers

Stella Demesticha

Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus

Maritime Transport Containers (MTCs) were closed ceramic vessels of varying capacities. One of their most consistent features throughout their prolonged use in the Mediterranean—apart from their narrow orifice and two handles—was their base, which was typically narrow, rounded, pointed, or stemmed, but rarely flat. This distinctive feature, related to the stowage of containers in multiple tiers within a ship’s hold, added to the challenges of producing standardized vessels on a large scale. A manufacturing process that not only had to be cost- and time-efficient, but also relied on ‘discontinuous’ throwing techniques, i.e. constructing vessels in two or more joined segments.

Adopting the chaîne opératoire approach and drawing on van der Leeuw’s (1993) concept that ‘topology’, ‘partonomy’, and ‘sequence’ are fundamental aspects of the pottery shape conceptualization, and thus serve as anchors in any ceramic tradition, this paper examines case studies from different periods in the history of MTCs. It investigates the technological choices made by potters across regions and time periods in response to the practical challenges of MTC production. The goal is to identify some key technical features that may shed light to diachronic phenomena, such as the imitation and/or adoption of MTC forms by diverse Mediterranean communities of pottery practice.

Commercial Patterns across the Sea: Science-based Analysis of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age Maritime Transport Containers from Cyprus

Marcella Giobbe¹, Noemi Müller², Andreas Charalambous¹, Demetrios Ioannides^{1,3}, Anna Georgiadou¹, Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou^{1,3}, Artemis Georgiou¹

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The ComPAS Project is a five-year research programme (ERC Starting Grant GA no. 947749), which investigates the dynamics of interregional trade and cultural exchange in the Eastern Mediterranean between ca. 1650 and 750 BCE. ComPAS focuses particularly on the role of Cyprus as a central node in maritime networks connecting the Levant, Egypt, and the Aegean. The project adopts innovative, interdisciplinary analytical methods for the study of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age Maritime Transport containers, combining traditional typo-chronological approaches with an extensive science-based research programme.

This contribution presents preliminary results from two case studies, i.e., the archaeological sites of Pyla-Kokkinokremos and Kition-Bamboula, both coastal sites located in the Larnaca district, in southern Cyprus. An integrated analytical programme, comprising ceramic thin section petrography, elemental analysis (Wavelength Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence; Neutron Activation Analysis), and Scanning Electron Microscopy, has been designed to provide both quantitative and qualitative data, to address questions of ceramic provenance and technology.

Particular attention is given to ceramic fabrics, raw materials and their processing, firing regimes, and surface treatments (including slips) of selected vessel classes. Macroscopic and microscopic analyses reveal distinctive technological patterns associated with specific container types, such as Egyptian amphorae and Canaanite jars. Despite their geographic proximity, Pyla and Kition exhibit notable differences in the frequency and origin of ceramic fabrics and vessel forms. These variations reflect distinct patterns of engagement with maritime exchange networks and, importantly, differing local responses to the acquisition, use, and circulation of maritime transport containers. Taken together, they offer valuable insights into site-specific maritime roles, ceramic production and distribution, consumption practices, access to goods, and the technological underpinnings of long-distance connectivity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Marine Transport Ceramic Container as Design Problem

Anno Hein

Institute of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, National Centre for Scientific Research “Demokritos”

The basic functions of utilitarian ceramic containers have always been storage, transport or processing of commodities. These different functions, though, required different performance of the ceramic vessels resulting in different approaches of design and manufacture. A ceramic vessel used for marine transport had to provide the secure containment of various kinds of solid or liquid commodities even under extreme conditions, such as rough sea and heavy motion of the cargo ship. At the same time its size and weight were restricted on the condition that it had to be lifted

usually by one person when loading or unloading the cargo ship. During wide distance trade it can be assumed that the transport vessels were stored in larger number inside the cargo hold of the ship so that the particular vessel shapes should have allowed for an appropriate use of space. Eventually, the exterior of the vessel, even if only through inscriptions or stamps, commonly represented its content in terms of type of the commodity and the region of its origin. For this, a ceramic container used for marine transport can be considered as a design problem, which had to be solved in order to fulfil the above listed operational principles. The performance of the transport vessels can be investigated on different levels starting with investigating the intrinsic material properties of the ceramic body and assessing parameters, such as raw material selection, clay paste preparation, vessel forming and firing conditions. The material properties can be used in three-dimensional digital models of ceramic vessels, the mechanical performance of which can be simulated under presumed static or dynamic loads. In this way, different vessel designs can be assessed in view of functionality and damages observed in archaeological finds can be interpreted in terms of failure scenario.

“All that Scratchin’ is Makin’ Me Itch”: Incised Transport Stirrup Jars in the Late Bronze Age Mediterranean

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Cypro-Minoan (CM) signs incised on the handles of pottery vessels and other objects found in Cyprus and across the east Mediterranean are products of a marking system with a long history. As a physical notation scratched post-firing onto vessels with such a wide distribution, they have been considered evidence for the direct involvement of Cypriot merchants or those familiar with the script in long distance maritime trade across the Mediterranean.

This paper considers transport stirrup jars (TSJs) from the key coastal sites of Tiryns in the Argolid and Cannatello in Sicily, along with vessels from the Uluburun shipwreck. The varied fabrics of the TSJs thus incised perhaps testify to the re-use of these maritime transport containers, and certainly their characterisation and the

establishment of their provenance offers insights into debates around whether these are notations referring to destination, content or ownership. The chronology of this phenomenon is discussed, and a comparison made with similar marks on Canaanite Jars.

A newly characterised Cretan-style TSJ group of the late 13th century BCE that stands out due to its distinctive morphologic-stylistic, technological and chronological coherence, has a wide distribution from the Central Mediterranean to the Levant. A proposed origin for this group in the Argive Plain and its frequent association with incised CM signs draws our attention to the site of Tiryns, one of the few sites, outside Cyprus, with a very high concentration of pottery vessels marked with CM-signs

We consider the implications of these insights for our understanding of maritime networks and trade strategies, especially in the late 13th century BCE.

Maritime Transport Containers and Ceramic Landscapes: Tracing Technological Traditions Across the Eastern Mediterranean

Evangelia Kiriati

Fitch Laboratory, British School at Athens

This keynote addresses the technological traditions of Maritime Transport Containers (MTCs) in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Late Bronze to the Early Iron Age, exploring how these traditions were sustained, transformed, or transferred across periods of significant sociopolitical and economic change. The discussion is framed within the Ceramic Landscape approach developed at the Fitch Laboratory, which integrates technology, provenance, and social context to better understand ceramic production and circulation.

By examining the chaînes opératoires of certain container types this lecture investigates how technological choices were embedded in particular landscapes of practice, shaped by ecological conditions, craft traditions, and user needs. These vessels, designed for maritime transport, provide a valuable lens through which to explore the interplay between function, craft, and regional connectivity.

Through a diachronic lens, the lecture will consider how ceramic technologies reflect broader processes of historical change, including the decline of centralised palace economies, the reorganisation of production, and the reconfiguration of exchange networks. The discussion will be illustrated through selected case studies, highlighting how the transmission and transformation of technological knowledge across time and space created dynamic ceramic landscapes that were both locally rooted and regionally interconnected.

Maritime Transport Containers in Egypt: a Petrographic and Chronological Perspective on Changing Technological Traditions

Mary Ownby

Ownby Analytical, LLC

The presence of maritime transport containers in Egypt is well-known and has traditionally been viewed from the perspective of elucidating trade networks within the Eastern Mediterranean. However, petrographic study that provides data on specific areas in the Levant supplying Egypt, also offers knowledge on paste recipes and technological choices. This information has not been broadly discussed but is important for understanding the development of these vessels towards trade purposes. The study of LBA transport vessels from Memphis and Qantir highlights both uniformity in certain paste recipes for some sites, while variability is still present. In comparison to the MBA and EBA vessels, a gradual shift towards more consistency in raw materials selection is notable and likely co-occurred with shape changes that facilitated ship transport. These results highlight the dynamic between potters, traders, and customers in terms of how these vessels functioned within the Eastern Mediterranean trade networks.

Crafting Connectivity: Form, Function, and Technological Practice in the Levantine Storage/Transport Jars in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Ages

Tatiana Pedrazzi

Institute of Heritage Science, National Research Council of Italy

This paper explores the technological and social dimensions embedded in the chaîne opératoire of Levantine storage/transport jars from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. By working backward from the finished ceramic products, this study aims to reconstruct the decision-making processes of ancient potters, emphasizing how each vessel stands as a material witness to a complex interplay of functional needs, local practices, and external influences. Focusing on a few types of storage and transport jars from the Levantine coast, this research examines the various factors that shaped production choices.

First, the functional demands placed on these vessels by consumers or end-users are considered. These include the jars' role in short-, medium-, or long-term storage, and in facilitating transport over varying distances, all of which directly influenced decisions about form, size, surface treatment, and fabric composition. Second, the paper highlights the cultural and technical background of the potters themselves, their inherited craft traditions, learned skills, and localized production logics. These

internalized practices not only guided how jars were made but also framed the ways potters responded to external stimuli. Third, attention is given to interaction and exchange across cultural boundaries. Some types of jars can be studied as outcomes of encounters with 'the other'—whether through trade, migration, or other forms of contact—revealing how alternative traditions and foreign demands contributed to the evolution of ceramic typologies and technological adaptations in the Levant.

By integrating these perspectives, the paper argues for a dynamic model of transport vessels' production in which technological practice is not merely technical, but socially embedded and historically contingent, ultimately shaping and reflecting broader patterns of connectivity across the eastern Mediterranean.

Utilitarian by Design? The Small-sized Amphoras from the Uluburun Shipwreck

Cemal Pulak and Rachel Matheny

Institute of Nautical Archaeology, Texas A&M University

Excavated between 1984 and 1994 off the southern coast of Turkey, the Uluburun shipwreck yielded one of the largest and most diverse Late Bronze Age assemblages discovered to date. Among its cargo were 150 Canaanite transport amphoras, including 87 small, mostly intact vessels with fabric sourced to the Carmel coast that form a distinct group within the assemblage. Designated as Type 1, these amphoras are characterized by carinated shoulders, conical bodies, and unusually thick bases narrowed by compression, making them exceptionally heavy in comparison to their size; their somewhat careless construction suggests their utilitarian function. While morphologically similar to amphoras often regarded as ideal for maritime transportation of commodities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, these amphoras are smaller with more substantial bases of which only a few examples have been found in Greece and are absent thus far from the Levant or Egypt, despite being manufactured in the former region. Almost all of these small, heavy amphoras survived the ship's wrecking and were raised intact from the site, preserving traces of their contents and detritus conglomerates inside their bases. This paper presents a comprehensive examination of these amphoras and their lading on board the Uluburun ship, emphasizing their technological attributes, preserved contents, purpose-made marks, and surface wear and damage from handling and transportation. In doing so, the study explores the intersection of technology, function, and maritime trade, demonstrating how seemingly crude transport vessels can contribute to broader discussions on specialized craft practices and the possible operational choices made by potters and traders active around the Carmel coast during the Late Bronze Age.

The Morpho-functional and Technical Aspects of Egyptian 'Pointed-base Amphorae' from New Kingdom Egypt

Kazumitsu Takahashi

Department of Cultural and Historical Studies, Kindai University

Amphorae from New Kingdom Egypt can be categorized into three main types: Egyptian pointed-base amphorae, Egyptian wide-base amphorae, and Levantine amphorae. This study focuses on the Egyptian pointed-base amphorae and examines diachronic changes in their morpho-functional and technical aspects. The pointed-base amphorae date from the early Eighteenth Dynasty and continued to be produced until the mid-Twentieth Dynasty. They were primarily used as transport containers for wine, oil, and resin—key trade commodities of the period. A study of their capacities and vessel proportions reveals a consistent decrease in both the capacity and maximum body diameter of the pointed-base amphorae throughout the New Kingdom. The observed decrease can be explained as follows: In the early Eighteenth Dynasty, the Egyptians began producing their own amphorae, modelled after Levantine designs used for long-distance maritime transport. As a result, the size, capacity, and shape of Egyptian pointed-base amphorae were similar to those of contemporary Levantine amphorae, which had a larger capacity compared to those from later periods. The distribution was limited in major cities of the New Kingdom, and in the frontier regions. From late Eighteenth Dynasty onwards, the distribution and quantity of pointed-base amphorae began to increase. As production shifted to meet domestic needs in Egypt, the amphorae became smaller capacity and more slender to allow for broader distribution. The 'smaller-diameter' amphorae would have been more suitable for easier and faster production, making them more appropriate for large-scale manufacturing, and probably for easier loading on river-barge cargo, thus facilitating widespread distribution across Egypt. This adaptation had gradually occurred through the late Eighteenth Dynasty, and became especially evident by the mid-Nineteenth Dynasty. At the same time, production techniques became gradually simplified from the late Eighteenth Dynasty to the mid-Nineteenth Dynasty. These developments suggest that ancient Egyptian potters were able to produce large quantities of vessels with less effort than in earlier periods.