

A reappraisal of the distribution, context and function of Mycenaean pottery in Cyprus

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Résumé

De grandes quantités de céramique mycénienne ont été trouvées à Chypre depuis les fouilles du British Museum sur l'île à la fin du XIXe s. Des fouilles récentes ont élargi le corpus de céramique mycénienne, alimentant, en particulier, notre connaissance du style pictural. Cette communication passera en revue les données concernant les importations mycéniennes sur l'île, et examinera plus spécialement :

- la distribution chronologique et géographique des importations ;
- le répertoire des formes importées ;
- les contextes dans lesquels on les trouve ;
- les nouvelles données sur la céramique de style figuré.

Elle mettra aussi en relation les données chypriotes et levantines, en notant au passage de frappantes différences en matière de répertoire d'importations.

Abstract

Large quantities of Mycenaean pottery have been found on Cyprus since the excavations of the British Museum on the island at the end of the 19th century. Recent excavations have increased the corpus of Mycenaean pottery, in particular adding to our knowledge of the pictorial style. This paper will review the evidence for Mycenaean imports to the island, examining in particular:

- the chronological and geographical distribution of imports;
- the range of shapes imported;
- the contexts in which they are found;
- new evidence for pictorial pottery.

It will also relate the Cypriot evidence with that of the Levant, noting certain striking differences in the repertoire of imports.

A REAPPRAISAL OF THE DISTRIBUTION, CONTEXT AND FUNCTION OF MYCENAEAN POTTERY IN CYPRUS

Louise STEEL*

ABSTRACT

Large quantities of Mycenaean pottery have been found on Cyprus since the excavations of the British Museum on the island at the end of the 19th century. Recent excavations have increased the corpus of Mycenaean pottery, in particular adding to our knowledge of the pictorial style. This paper will review the evidence for Mycenaean imports to the island, examining in particular:

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RÉSUMÉ

De grandes quantités de céramique mycénienne ont été trouvées à Chypre depuis les fouilles du British Museum sur l'île à la fin du XIX^e s. Des fouilles récentes ont élargi le corpus de céramique mycénienne, alimentant, en particulier, notre connaissance du style pictural.

Cette communication passera en revue les données concernant les importations mycéniennes sur l'île, et examinera plus spécialement :

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INTRODUCTION

Large quantities of Mycenaean ceramics have been found on Cyprus since the excavations of the British Museum at Kourion, Maroni, Hala Sultan Tekke and above all at Enkomi at the end of the 19th century (Murray 1900; Walters 1900; Bailey 1972; Johnson 1980; Cadogan 1992a; Steel 1994a; Manning, Monks 1998; Steel 2001). These early discoveries and those of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition in the 1920's (Gjerstad 1934) form the basis for the corpus of Mycenaean pottery found on Cyprus

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(Åström 1972). In recent years, however, excavations at a number of important Late Bronze Age (LBA) sites, such as Maroni-Tsaroukkas (Manning *et al.* 1994, 1994a; Manning, de Mita Jr. 1997; Manning, Monks 1998) and Vournes (Cadogan 1984, 1989, 1992), Hala Sultan Tekke, and perhaps most notably at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios (South, Russell 1993; Steel 1994; South, Todd 1997; South 1999) have yielded a wealth of additional information from stratified settlement deposits and tomb groups, with which to consider the distribution of Mycenaean imports to the island and the actual components of the Mycenaean repertoire within a Late Cypriot (LC) context.

DISTRIBUTION

Chronological

Prior to the LBA, archaeological finds attest to only sporadic contacts between Cyprus and the Aegean world and the main emphasis of international trading connections was with the Levant (cf. Maguire 1995). The earliest Cypriot contacts with the Aegean date to around 2000 B.C. (Catling, Karageorghis 1960; Catling, MacGillivray 1983). At the very beginning of the LBA small quantities of LM I (Vermeule 1973, p. 30, 31, pls. VI: 1, 3, VII; Portugali, Knapp 1985, p. 71-72, Cat. nos. 4-29; Maier 1983, p. 231, pl. 23d; Maier, von Wartburg 1985, pl. XIV: 1; Karageorghis 1990, p. 37, 66) and Late Cycladic I pottery are found in Cyprus (Vermeule 1973, no.6) and there are small quantities of Cypriot imports (LC I) in the Aegean, on Rhodes, Crete and Thera (Cadogan 1993, p. 93, no.30). The earliest imports from the Greek mainland date to LH II, but these number very few pieces. Mycenaean ceramics were imported on Cyprus from the 16th-15th century B.C., but its large-scale importation dates to the 14th and early 13th century B.C. (Cadogan 1973, 1991). During this period, particularly the 13th century, these imported ceramics had a significant impact on LC material culture (Steel 1998). The importation of Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus can be subdivided into three main stages (Cadogan 1972, 1993; Steel 1998, p. 286).

—*Early phase. LH I-II A*: small quantities of Aegean wares (either Cretan or Mycenaean). Main concentration in the north-west of the island, *e.g.* at Ayia Irini (Pecorella 1973, pl. V).

—*Middle phase. LH II B-III A:1*: the quantity of Mycenaean imports found on Cyprus increases. This represents the first stage of large-scale commerce between the Aegean and the East Mediterranean.

—*Main phase. LH III A:2-III B*: a “flood” of Mycenaean imported ceramics in Cyprus and the Levant.

Subsequent to this there is a phase during which the number of Mycenaean imports to the East Mediterranean decreases alongside the development of local ceramic workshops manufacturing imitations of Mycenaean wares—in Cyprus the WPWM III ware (Sherratt 1982, 1991, 1994; Kling 1989, 1991). The early manifestation of this phenomenon, in LH III B: 2 (LC II C) is concomitant with increasing localised production of Mycenaean ceramics and regionalism within the Aegean world and the breakdown of the Mycenaean cultural *koine* (Sherratt 1982, p. 181-182). The earliest shapes to be made in the WPWM III ware were elements of the drinking sets—the “Pastoral Style” mixing kraters and a variety of cups and bowls—(Cadogan 1991, p. 170; Sherratt 1991, p. 192)—in contrast to the Levantine coast, where stirrup jars and pyxides were among the first Mycenaean shapes to be copied locally (but see Cadogan 1991, p. 169-170).

Geographical

The earliest Mycenaean imports are concentrated in the north-west of the island (cf. Pecorella 1973; Vermeule 1973), but during the main phase of contact between Cyprus and the Aegean the emphasis is on the south-eastern zone of the island. The bulk of Mycenaean imports are found at coastal sites, in the large urban centres involved in trade or exploitation of the island's copper resources. To a certain extent this reflects the greater emphasis of archaeological activity in the coastal plains, with very little excavation in the Cypriot hinterland (Manning, de Mita Jr. 1997, p. 109). Even so, there has been extensive field survey in Cyprus allowing the identification of abundant Bronze Age locales throughout the island. Most important is the Cyprus Survey conducted by Hector Catling throughout the island between 1955 and 1959 for the Cypriot Department of Antiquities. More recently, numerous regional surveys have been undertaken on the island, supplementing the picture of LC topography and demography (summarised in Knapp 1997, p. 33-45, most recently Given, Knapp 2003).

There is a particular concentration of Mycenaean ceramics, in terms of quantity, chronological range and variety of forms, at the site of Enkomi; however it should be emphasised that Enkomi is the most extensively explored LBA site on Cyprus. Since the British Museum excavations at the end of the nineteenth century (Murray *et al.* 1900) the site has subsequently been excavated by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (Gjerstad 1934), a French team (Schaeffer 1952; Courtois 1986) and a Cypriot team (Dikaios 1969). The apparent economic wealth of Enkomi, as indicated by the concentration of luxury exotica and large quantities of imported Mycenaean ceramics found in the tomb groups (cf. Keswani 1989, 1989b), might well be due to her privileged position in terms of especially close economic and cultural ties with the wealthy kingdom of Ugarit on the northern coast of Syria. This relationship is reflected by the incidence of specific Mycenaean forms at both sites—most noteworthy is the limited occurrence of animal-head rhyta in both centres (Murray 1900, fig. 65 no.1077; Walters 1912 no.607; Schaeffer 1949, fig. 91: 1, 92: a-h, 93: 2, 3, 5-7; Courtois 1969, p. 109, fig. 12 lower left; Courtois, J.-C. and L. 1978, p. 316, fig. 40: 1), a shape which otherwise has a very limited currency in the Eastern Mediterranean.¹

There is a high incidence of Mycenaean imports around the Bay of Larnaca,² particularly manifest in the large number of pictorial vases found at sites in the region: Hala Sultan Tekke, Kition, Aradippou, Dhekelia, Klavdhia, Arpera, Moutti (cf. Vermeule, Karageorghis 1982). The sheltered bay of Larnaca was important for LB A trade, forming a natural harbour behind which the coastal plain could support large urban centres, specifically at Hala Sultan Tekke (from as early as MC III/LC I until LC III A) and Kition (from LC II C until the earliest stage of the Iron Age, LC III B-CG I). During the thirteenth and twelfth century B.C., LC II C-III A, the two towns co-existed and appeared to be exceptionally large: Kition covering an estimated area of 70 hectares (Swiny 1981, p. 78) while the town at Hala Sultan Tekke has been estimated at more than 27 hectares (Åström 1986, p. 8, fig. 1). The exact relationship between the two sites remains elusive, for example whether they were independent polities or belonged to the same political entity. It is clear however, that both towns were recipients of large quantities of Mycenaean imports and other exotica, which they perhaps received in exchange for copper from the Cypriot hinterland or finished metal products (Keswani 1993, p. 78; see however Leonard, this volume). There are peaks of concentrations of Mycenaean pottery in the large coastal towns further along the south coast of Cyprus, at Maroni and Kalavassos, Kourion, and as far west as Kouklia.

1. The animal head rhyton is only represented otherwise at Tell Abu Hawam (Balensi 1980, p. 441, pl. 39: 1, 2, 5, 6, 119: 5, 134: 48) and Tell es-Salihiyeh (Van der Osten 1956, p. 53, 86, pl. 34, 39).

2. In 1897, after a disappointing excavation season at Maroni-Tsaroukkas, Walters turned his attention to Larnaca. Writing to Murray (24 November 1897) he notes « There is said to be a very promising site at the Tekke, close to the Larnaka Salt Lake... It is strange how Mycenaean antiquities keep turning up all around Larnaka ».

Mycenaean imports rarely penetrated the Cypriot hinterland, which was largely occupied by small farming and mining communities (du Plat Taylor 1952; Catling 1962; Keswani 1993; Webb, Frankel 1994; Knapp 1997, p. 59-67; Knapp, Kassianidou, Donnelly 2002; Knapp 2003). No Mycenaean pottery was found in the specialised White Slip production centre at Sanidha (Todd, Hadjicosti 1991; Todd, Pilides 1993; Todd, Pilides 2001) in the foothills of the Troodos mountains, despite the site's proximity to the large urban centre at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios. Only tiny quantities of imported LH III B vases were found in domestic contexts at Apliki-Karamallos, a site located in the copper-mining belt of the northern foothills of the Troodos (du Plat Taylor 1952). In addition to the various production sites located throughout the Cypriot hinterland, there is evidence for a number of specialised religious sites, Ayios Iakovos-Dhima (Gjerstad 1934), Myrtou-Pigadhes (Catling 1957) and Athienou (Dothan, Ben-Tor 1983), which Knapp suggests were incorporated within a LC "sacred landscape" (Knapp 1997, p. 58-59). One characteristic of these sacred locales is the occurrence of precious or unique artifacts or exotica, such as the range of bronzes from Myrtou-Pigadhes or the concentration of Red Lustrous arm-shaped vessels from Ayios Iakovos-Dhima. The absence of specialised ritual paraphernalia in the Period I structure at Ayia Irini (usually dated to LC III, but more probably LC II C), the general character of the architecture, and the abundance of pithoi, pestles and grinders (Gjerstad 1965, p. 667-669, 797, 820-821) implies that rather than being a sanctuary, as suggested by the excavators, it was instead an agro-industrial installation.³ It is noticeable that the only pottery found at the site was of local Cypriot manufacture (mainly pithos and Plain White ware, but also Base Ring) and that there was not a single reported Mycenaean vessel, as is typical of a small agricultural centre in the LC landscape. It is significant that the penetration of Mycenaean imports to the hinterland was largely limited to the sanctuaries. Most other inland sites appear to have had only limited access to imported exotica, including Mycenaean ceramics, and the usual scenario posited at present is of a coastal elite controlling the dissemination of luxury imports within the Cypriot hinterland (Keswani 1993; Manning, de Mita Jr. 1997).

Form

The range of Mycenaean imports to Cyprus is restricted in comparison to the full Mycenaean repertoire found in the Aegean. There are three main categories:

- closed vases (containers);
- open vases (drinking sets);
- ceremonial/cultic vases.

Closed vessels are predominant and can be divided into two main subgroups: containers with wide mouths and slow-pouring vessels with narrow mouths, both of which probably functioned as containers for perfumed oils. Textual evidence from the Linear B archives from Pylos indicates that speciality scented oils were an important Mycenaean commodity produced by specialist craftsmen, the *a-re-pa-zo-o* or perfume-maker (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, p. 223-225, 441-442, 534; see also Shelmerdine 1985). Leonard has previously commented that the two types of speciality oil indicated in the Mycenaean

3. Gjerstad interpreted the Period I structure at Ayia Irini as a rural sanctuary associated with an agrarian cult, specifically the worship of deities protecting crops and cattle. This is apparently based on the single Base Ring bull (no.2770) found at the site in the central building (Gjerstad 1935, p. 821). There is no real indication that the building had a religious function during the LC III period. No cattle bones or bucrania were recovered, there are no bothroi and there is no altar. The only unusual elements are the group of coloured pebbles in the south-east corner of the central building and the glossy, dark stone (no.2785), 0.9 x 0.6 m, on a support of river stones found in the same room (Gjerstad 1935, p. 797). The latter is interpreted as an offering table but might feasibly be a press? Also, before the construction of the Cypro-Archaic sanctuary the site was covered with a layer of sterile red clay (Gjerstad 1935, p. 821). The re-use of non-religious LC sites as cult sites during the Cypro-Archaic period is attested elsewhere, such as the re-use of the ashlar building area at Maroni-Vournes (Cadogan 1988, p. 231).

archives (*po-ro-ko-wa* for pouring and *we-a-re-pe* an unguent) correspond to the two types of Mycenaean closed vessels imported in large quantities to Cyprus and the Levant (Leonard 1981, p. 96).

The first group of closed vessel comprises a variety of piriform jars, alabastra (FS 83-85) and pyxides (FS 94/5). Leonard has suggested that these vases were particularly well-suited as containers of a thick, viscous substance, probably extracted by hand or using a small utensil (Leonard 1981, p. 94). Such vases have no parallel within the indigenous Cypriot ceramic repertoire and possibly represent a new commodity or commodities that had hitherto been unavailable on the island. On occasion these vases might be imitated in local Cypriot wares (Cadogan 1991, p. 170), such as a White Slip II Parallel Line Style alabastron, imitating FS 83-4, from Maroni-*Tsaroukkas* (Steel in press). The second group includes a large range of stirrup jars (FS 166, 171-173, 183), globular flasks (FS 189, 190-192), and occasional small juglets with cut-away spouts (FS 134, 149). The stirrup jar was specifically designed to be a container of olive oil, the *ka-ra-re-we* of the Linear B texts (Ventris and Chadwick 1973, p. 324, fig. 16, ideogram 210; Leonard 1981, p. 91). Unlike the wide-mouthed containers this would be intended for an easily-poured liquid (Leonard 1981, p. 91).

The popularity of the stirrup jar as an import to Cyprus is rather curious. Since the MC period small bottles and flasks were an integral element of the Cypriot ceramic repertoire. These were containers for a desirable, luxury commodity, possibly an unguent (Maguire 1995, p. 55) or even opium (Herscher 1991, p. 48), which was widely traded throughout the island and to Egypt and the Levant (Merrillees 1968; Maguire 1995). In the LBA the MC bottles and flasks are replaced by small juglets and spindle bottles, usually in the Base Ring ware, which would be equally well-suited as containers of an easily-poured oil. The juglets in particular are widely exported throughout the Levant (Gittlen 1993, p. 112) where they are commonly found in funerary contexts. In addition, the Red Lustrous spindle bottle, and more rarely the arm-shaped flask, are also found in LC funerary contexts. Textual evidence from the Near East indicates the importance of Hittite, Syrian and Alashiyan (Cypriot?) perfumed and plain oils as a traded commodities (Leonard 1981, p. 96; Knapp 1991). Moreover, there is substantial archaeological evidence indicative of large-scale production of olive oil in Cyprus during the LC II period (Keswani 1992, 1993, p. 76-78). The Mycenaean slow-pouring containers therefore had to slot into a pre-existing pattern of trade and their success in penetrating the Cypriot and Near Eastern markets probably reflects their “considerable distinctiveness in the Late Bronze Levantine markets” (Leonard 1981, p. 96). Although Mycenaean unguent containers became predominant in funerary contexts in Cyprus during the LBA and were widely exported throughout the Levant, it can be inferred from the archaeological evidence that the high status unguent container throughout the East Mediterranean remained the Red Lustrous spindle bottle, or more rarely the arm-shaped bottle (Steel 1998, p. 295-296).

Elements of a Mycenaean drinking service, comprising a variety of cups and bowls centred around a pictorial krater, were likewise imported in seemingly large quantities to Cyprus. These vases did not come in a prescribed set and there is a certain amount of variation in the range of open vessels associated with the pictorial krater, either reflecting regional differences or personal preference. Jugs might be included in the drinking service, but the more common Cypriot practice appears to have been to serve the wine directly from the krater. Certainly bowls have been found inside kraters in tombs at Enkomi⁴ and Kalavassos (South and Todd 1997, p. 73). The main element of the Mycenaean drinking set was the krater, usually pictorial, of which three different types are represented on Cyprus: the open krater (FS 7-9), the amphoroid krater (FS 53-55) and the bell krater (FS 281-282). A diverse range of cups and bowls includes kylikes and goblets, shallow cups (FS 220), and the shallow bowl (FS 295-6). In general however, open vessels in local wares are more common, particularly the Base Ring carinated cups.

4. Swedish tomb 6: WPWM III cup (no.58) found inside Plain White Wheelmade krater (no.58). Swedish tomb 18: Mycenaean shallow cup with wishbone handle (FS 244; no.7) found inside amphoroid krater (no.6).

Occasionally the krater might be associated with a metal bowl, such as the gold bowl found with the so-called Zeus krater in Swedish tomb 17 at Enkomi (Gjerstad 1934, pls. lxxxvii.1, no.61, cxlvii.11).

The third category of ritual or cultic vessels is more restricted geographically and contextually. It is made up of a variety of rhyta, more usually conical rhyta (FS 199: Murray 1900, fig. 68 no.1091, fig. 75 no.1114; Walters 1900, fig. 124 no.28; Walters 1912, nos 604, 606), an ancient shape ultimately of Minoan origin, but also occasional examples of animal head rhyta (Murray 1900, fig. 65 no.1077; Walters 1912, no.607). These vases constitute the paraphernalia of specific cultic or ceremonial activities (Karageorghis 1965; Lagarce and Lagarce 1986; Yon 1986) and occur only in liminal contexts removed from normal domestic activities, either as funerary offerings (Johnson 1980, pl. XXVII.141) or in presumed sacred deposits, such as the sanctuary at Myrtou-Pigadhes (du Plat Taylor 1957). These ceremonial vessels also had a certain currency in the East Mediterranean as valued gift-exchange items and examples in metal and faience were circulated between the rulers of the East Mediterranean (Peltenburg 1972, p. 135; Bass 1986, p. 290; Zaccagnini 1987, p. 58; Pulak 1988, p. 23-23; Bass *et al.* 1989, p. 7-8; Peltenburg 1991). The exotic, prestige connotations of Mycenaean rhyta were transmitted to Cyprus where the deposition of ceremonial vases (and presumably the associated libation rituals) was explicitly linked with elite symbolism (Keswani 1989b, p. 59-60). This is demonstrated by the restricted occurrence of Mycenaean ceremonial vessels in a small number of particularly wealthy tombs at Enkomi alongside the aristocratic chariot krater: the conical rhyta in British Tombs 12 and 70 and the bull's head rhyton in British Tomb 67 (Walters 1912, p. 604, 606, 607). We have a rare glimpse of the LC or Mycenaean patrician libation ceremony on a fragment of a chariot krater from Enkomi British Tomb 67, a unique example of iconographic symbolism designed to be read only by those members of the elite involved in such ceremonies (Murray 1900, fig. 65 no.1076; Vermeule and Karageorghis 1982, p. 21-22; Keswani 1989b, p. 60).

Context

Settlement deposits

Despite the large quantities of Mycenaean pottery found on Cyprus it should be emphasised that it is a statistically insignificant percentage of the total LC ceramic repertoire. At Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, for example, it comprises at most 1-2% of the thin-walled sherds from domestic or settlement contexts (South and Russell 1989, p. 303), but this does not take account of the predominance of pithos and plain ware sherds. When all the pottery from the site is taken into account the Mycenaean component is less than 1% of the total (South 1997). Although it is not possible to accurately quantify the various ceramic types from all LC sites in Cyprus, especially those from earlier excavations in which utilitarian wares were not systematically retrieved and consistently recorded, a similar pattern appears to be replicated at other LC sites throughout the island. Moreover, the find context has an important bearing on the quantities of fine wares recovered, including Mycenaean imports.

Utilitarian wares are predominant in settlement, more specifically in domestic contexts: chief among them pithoi (Keswani 1989a), a variety of Monochrome wares (Sjöqvist 1940, p. 30; du Plat Taylor 1952, p. 159; Åström 1972, p. 90-111, fig. XIV-XIVII; Russell 1991; Pilides 1991, 1992) and plain wares (Åström 1972, fig. LXXII.1, 2, 5; Keswani 1989a, 1991). Fine wares are less commonly represented within the settlement, and of these White Slip hemispherical bowls and Base Ring carinated cups and small juglets are the most frequent (Russell 1989, p. 1-3). Imported fine wares, including Mycenaean vessels, are very rarely recovered from the settlement. However, there might be concentrations of more exotic fine wares in discrete locations within settlement contexts, possibly indicative of specialised zones of activity. At Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, for example, Mycenaean pottery tends to be accumulated within the so-called administrative Northeast Area of the site, in particular inside Building X, a large ashlar building with a regular tripartite plan (South and Todd 1997, fig. 1), where a greater variety

of forms is represented (South, Russell 1993, p. 304; South 1999, p. 798). Of particular note is Area 173 in Building X. This rich deposit of pottery, in which Mycenaean cups and bowls are predominant, was found together with meat bearing animal bones (caprids) in a pit (South 1988, p. 227-228; South, Russell 1993, p. 304-306) and appears to be the debris of elite feasting probably within the boundaries of Building X.

Accumulations of Mycenaean pottery are also found in wells (Öbrink 1979; Maier 1997, p. 101). Analysis of the ceramics from a well at Hala Sultan Tekke attests to very interesting patterns of disposal of fine and utilitarian wares within LC contexts. The material recovered from the well dates to the 14th century B.C. Unlike the pottery typically found in domestic or settlement contexts, fine wares were predominant, forming around three-quarters of the assemblage. Of these Base Ring was the most numerous (30%), followed by White Slip (21%). There are abnormally high concentrations of exotic wares, including Mycenaean (15%) and Red Lustrous (5%), and although the utilitarian Plain ware is represented in larger quantities (24%) (Öbrink 1979, p. 34) the other utilitarian wares are not present. The local fine ware vases are all associated with feasting: Base Ring jugs, tankards, bowls and kraters and White Slip hemispherical bowls and a single krater. In addition, there are a Red Lustrous krater and bowl, several Mycenaean krater fragments, including a single pictorial krater decorated with a fish (Öbrink 1979, fig. 138) and a few cups and stemmed cups. The majority of Mycenaean pottery from the well comprised piriform jars (Öbrink 1979, fig. 82-107, 109-135) and the Red Lustrous vessels likewise included a variety of unguent containers—spindle bottles, pilgrim flasks, a single arm-shaped vessel. The ceramic deposit from the well appears to be the discarded components of some ritual or ceremonial activity associated with feasting and some sort of libation rite, possibly using luxury imported oils (hence the Mycenaean piriform jars and Red Lustrous spindle bottles and arm-shaped bottles). From the inclusion of Red Lustrous vases in the assemblage, in particular the arm-shaped vessel, we can infer that this ritual activity was associated with the local elite (Keswani 1989b, p. 59; Eriksson 1993; Steel 1998, p. 295-296). Together with the Area 173 deposit from Kalavassos, the Hala Sultan Tekke well deposit implies that there was a very specific manner of disposing of the debris of high-status ceremonial feasting and other ritual activities, and in particular the fine ware ceramics, within LC settlements, which was distinct from the treatment of the more frequently attested utilitarian, domestic wares. The question of taphonomic processes in LC settlements together with analyses of differential retrieval of specific wares and forms in varying degrees of preservation merits further study and would greatly elucidate the function of Mycenaean imports and local ceramics within the settlement context.

Mycenaean vases found in settlement contexts at Apliki and Palaepaphos are largely open shapes. At Apliki, for example, around two-thirds of the imported ceramics recovered from the earliest occupation levels of Houses A and B comprise open shapes, a variety of cups and bowls (including FS 214, 220 267, 295-296) (du Plat Taylor 1952, p. 153). A similar pattern is replicated at Palaepaphos. Of the 1755 fragments or complete vessels recovered from the site, some 818 can be identified as open forms (skyphoi, bowls, cups and kylikes) as opposed to 537 closed forms, predominantly stirrup jars (Maier 1997, p. 93-95). However, much of this pottery is from the rich wells found in the East Settlement area (Maier 1983, p. 229-230), and might not be representative of the domestic use of Mycenaean imports within LC households. Likewise, the Apliki pottery was largely recovered from pits, and might represent specific disposal patterns rather than settlement use. Certainly, in the more recently excavated settlement at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, closed shapes are more common in settlement contexts, although the quantities of Mycenaean open vases from the settlement is skewed by the relatively large number of Mycenaean bowls found in the Northeast Area, associated with Building X (South and Russell 1993; South 1999, p. 797).

Sanctuaries-Tertiary Inland Sites (Knapp 1997, p. 58-59)

A small number of specialised, non-domestic, ceremonial locales have been identified in the Late Cypriot interior: Athienou-Bamboula tis Koukounninas, Myrtou-Pigadhes and Ayios Iakovos-Dhima.

These are characterised by distinctive architecture (which might be monumental), ceremonial installations, including lustral baths, altars, platforms and bothroi, repositories for storage of cultic paraphernalia, and the occurrence of precious or unique symbolic artifacts (Knapp 1997, p. 58). The exact function of these sites and their role within the LC socio-economic structure has yet to be determined but some at least appear to be closely integrated with the main staples of the LC economy. There is evidence for limited metallurgical activity at Athienou-*Bamboula tis Koukounninas* (Maddin *et al.* 1983, p. 136-138) and Myrtou-*Pigadhes* (du Plat Taylor 1957, p. 20, fig. 12) and the ritual paraphernalia at Myrtou-*Pigadhes* include a small collection of specialised bronze artefacts (du Plat Taylor 1957, p. 103-112). Moreover large-scale olive oil storage has been proposed for the sanctuary at Athienou (Keswani 1993, p. 78).

Small quantities of Mycenaean ceramics have been found at Myrtou-*Pigadhes* and Athienou-*Bamboula tis Koukounninas* but tend to be rare among the overall ceramic assemblage. The greatest variety of Mycenaean forms is found at Myrtou-*Pigadhes* (Catling 1957), and kraters, jugs and bowls or cups are predominant. The typical Mycenaean shapes usually found in LC contexts—the variety of stirrup jars and piriform jars, and in LC II C the shallow bowl—are only represented by a single example. The majority of the Mycenaean vases or fragments were found in the court. A complete conical rhyton, the earliest Mycenaean vase from the site, was found in the LC II C levels in room 15, suggesting it had a long period of use at the site, befitting its function as a rare and exotic ceremonial libation vessel. The corpus of Mycenaean vases from Athienou is largely similar to that at Myrtou-*Pigadhes*, but there is less variety overall. Most of the pottery was found in pits, but a group of miniature juglets were deposited with groups of other miniature votive vessels (up to around 10,000) in the sanctuary courtyard (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983, p. 20, 46, fig. 14: 1-6). Bowls, cups and jugs form the largest element of the Mycenaean corpus (Dothan, Ben-Tor 1983, fig. 12, 13: 2-3, 14: 7-8, 14) and there is a single krater (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983, fig. 13: 1). Fragments of a large Mycenaean stirrup jar (FS 164) were found in two adjacent pits (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983, fig. 13: 4, pl. 15: 1-2) as well as two Minoan oatmeal stirrup jars (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983, fig. 15, pl. 17) but no piriform jars. Although no ceramic rhyton or other ceremonial vase was recovered from the sanctuary, there was a miniature ivory conical rhyton with crude incised decoration, and other exotica included cylinder seals, Egyptian scarabs and an Egyptian bronze ring with the hieroglyph of Ptah (Dothan and Ben-Tor 1983, p. 14-20, 118-125).

Ayios Iakovos-*Dhima*, to the south of the Kyrenia mountain range, is a site which poses a number of problems and is very difficult to reconcile with the known range of LC settlement types. The site, located on the summit of a small hill and occupying a roughly circular area with a maximum diameter of 10m, is usually designated as an open-air, rural sanctuary, and has been included among Knapp's category of tertiary inland (sanctuary) sites. The character of the structure—the modest, ephemeral architecture and the remarkable degree of preservation of its exotic, luxury finds, found *in situ* as deposited in careful groupings on a single occasion—suggests a more transitory monument than a sanctuary, which one might expect to display signs of continuous ritual activity, rebuilding and displacement of the deposited finds. Noting its proximity to a number of cemeteries, two of which were in use in LC II A contemporary with the deposit in the so-called sanctuary, Webb suggests that the ceremonial structure at Ayios Iakovos-*Dhima* was associated with funerary ritual, possibly serving as cenotaph (Webb 1992, p. 94-96).

The artefacts recovered from the site underline its ceremonial nature, comprising a number of very rare and exotic imported accoutrements of an elite lifestyle: including an Egyptian alabaster vase and glass bottle, lumps of iron, fine gold jewellery, bronze weapons, a bronze lion statuette, and four cylinder seals (Gjerstad 1934, pl. XIII:2; Webb 1992, p. 95). The ceramics were likewise very specialised. Only a small number of vessels were recovered, fifteen in total. Of these almost three quarters were imported exotica: four Mycenaean vases (27%) and seven Red Lustrous vases (47%)—six arm-shaped bottles and one spindle bottle. The Mycenaean vases comprise a pair of piriform jars, a squat jug and an open amphora (FS 7). The local wares are represented by a single White Slip II krater, a Base Ring II jug, and a Plain White jug and krater. Åström noted the presence of possibly another five arm vessels, together with

a Red Lustrous spindle bottle and flask, four Mycenaean jars in the sanctuary and a Base Ring bowl (Åström 1972, p. 177, 202-203, 205), but their actual context is uncertain. While there are three kraters and jugs, the absence of any drinking vessel, except possibly a Base Ring cup, is noteworthy. Although the ceramic deposit did not include a rhyton, either ceramic or in some other material (ivory, faience), the arm-shaped bottles might be interpreted as ritual paraphernalia suitable for performing libations (Keswani 1989b, p. 59).

The range of Mycenaean vases found at the inland sanctuaries is very limited in comparison to the overall variety of Mycenaean vessels found in other contexts on the island. There does not appear to be any standardised range of ceramic equipment used within these sites although Mycenaean pottery tends to be in the minority. It is interesting to note the use of the conical rhyton of Aegean origin as a typical element of ritual equipment at Myrtou-Pigadhes and Athienou (cf. Keswani 1989b, p. 59-60). The very great contrast between the assemblage at Ayios Iakovos and those at Myrtou-Pigadhes and Athienou again underlines the unusual, indeed unique, character of the former.

Funerary deposits

Webb maintains that there is very little difference between mortuary and settlement ceramic assemblages in terms of form, fabric and decoration, although noting the higher percentage of decorated wares in funerary contexts (Webb 1992, p. 89, no.10). Likewise, she comments on the rarity in LC tomb groups of specialised, non-utilitarian vessels associated primarily with funerary ceremony (a variety of rhyta, zoomorphic vessels) and suggests that the ceremonies involved in burial ritual were distinct from the libation and other religious ceremonies performed in the large communal sanctuaries (Webb 1992, p. 89). However, it should be emphasised that certain elements of the ceramic repertoire deposited in tomb groups are distinct from the typical domestic pottery found in the settlements. Specific forms, such as Mycenaean conical and zoomorphic rhyta, and the entire Red Lustrous assemblage, are restricted to liminal contexts, either funerary or religious (Keswani 1989b, p. 59; Eriksson 1993, p. 58; Steel 1998, p. 295-296). Their limited distribution in the wealthiest tomb groups indicates that they were reserved for the LC elite.

Most imported Mycenaean ceramics in Cyprus are found in tombs and indeed discrete deposits of fine wares found within the settlement area are very frequently interpreted as the debris of ancient tomb looting (Cadogan 1993, p. 94), such as an LH II B squat alabastron (FS 82) found together with an LH III A: 1 kylix and other fine wares in the Northeast Area of Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios (South 1999, p. 798-799). This need not presuppose that Mycenaean imports had an exclusively funerary function in LC society, but instead much of the pottery deposited in tombs might have been removed from circulation with the settlement. Use-wear analysis of MC Red Polished pottery from Cypriot tomb groups suggests that there is significant evidence for re-use of domestic or settlement pottery within a funerary context (Dugay 1996) and a similar scenario might be posited for LC ceramics. Indeed, Keswani has noted that Mycenaean pottery found in LC tomb groups, including kraters, frequently exhibits traces of wear, such as abrasion or chips which are apparently not post-depositional (Keswani 1989, p. 562). The implication is that these vessels were used for some time in the settlement before being deposited in tombs.

The typical Mycenaean ceramic grave gift in a LC tomb is one of a variety of unguent containers—either a stirrup jar, a pyxis or alabastron or a piriform jar, often found singly or in pairs. These are very widely distributed throughout LC funerary contexts, regardless of the overall wealth of the funerary furniture, and do not appear to be particularly prestigious grave gifts. While the luxury contents of the Red Lustrous bottles and flasks were highly valued and their distribution was strictly controlled, the Mycenaean unguent containers were apparently widely available to most elements of LC society (Steel 1998, p. 295). However, in wealthier mortuary assemblages there was a far greater quantity of Mycenaean ceramics and more variety of forms. Small cups (FS 220) are frequent offerings in a middle range of LC burials but the inclusion of the pictorial krater was reserved specifically for the highest echelons of society

(Keswani 1989b, p. 59-60; Steel 1998) as one of the accoutrements of an aristocratic lifestyle. In the Enkomi tombs excavated by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition, for example, Mycenaean amphoroid kraters are restricted to tombs 3, 11, 17, and 18 and bell kraters to tombs 6A (with the first burial), 18, and 19, although other elements of Mycenaean drinking equipment (cups, shallow bowls and kylikes) are found in most of the tombs. Tombs not provided with Mycenaean drinking sets were frequently furnished with the equivalent in local wares (cf. Keswani 1989b, p. 64). To some extent this appears to be a chronological difference rather than a factor of wealth or social distinction. In the southern part of the island around the Vasilikos and Maroni valleys, for example, LC I B-II A burials might well be equipped with fine drinking sets in the White Slip wares, including a unique range of large spouted bowls that are only rarely found elsewhere on the island. In time, however, the standard Mycenaean krater and range of cups and kylikes replaced the White Slip table ware, resulting in a contraction in the range of forms manufactured within the local fine wares (Steel 1998, p. 292). This marks the first stage in the transformation of the Cypriot ceramic repertoire, resulting from increasing contact with the Aegean world. By the thirteenth century B.C. local imitations of the Mycenaean drinking sets were being manufactured and widely used within settlement and funerary contexts and there was a move towards deposition of bronze vessels in tomb groups as a means of social differentiation (Steel 1998, p. 291, no.43).

CONCLUSIONS

The context in which Mycenaean imported pottery is found is of prime significance for interpreting its function and its preciousness value within LC society (Steel 1998). While the majority of the Mycenaean corpus has been found in tomb groups, there is an ever-increasing body of material from stratified settlement contexts. This has greatly enhanced our knowledge of the role which Aegean vases played within the LC social, economic and ceremonial arena and their symbiotic relationship with the indigenous ceramic repertoire. Although there is a tendency to equate Mycenaean imports with a social elite (cf. Maning, Monks 1998), the funerary and settlement evidence reveals more complex patterns of behaviour. Certainly the more unusual ceremonial rhyta and pictorial kraters were restricted to the wealthier burials because of their aristocratic associations (ritual libations and elite dining), but more mundane Mycenaean vessels were readily available to a wide cross-section of LC society. To date, the Mycenaean pottery from Cyprus has been treated as a single entity, but given the varied regional responses to socio-economic organisation throughout the island, as demonstrated by Keswani (1993, 1996), there is a need for more detailed regional analyses to identify distinct patterns of importation and use between the various LC polities.

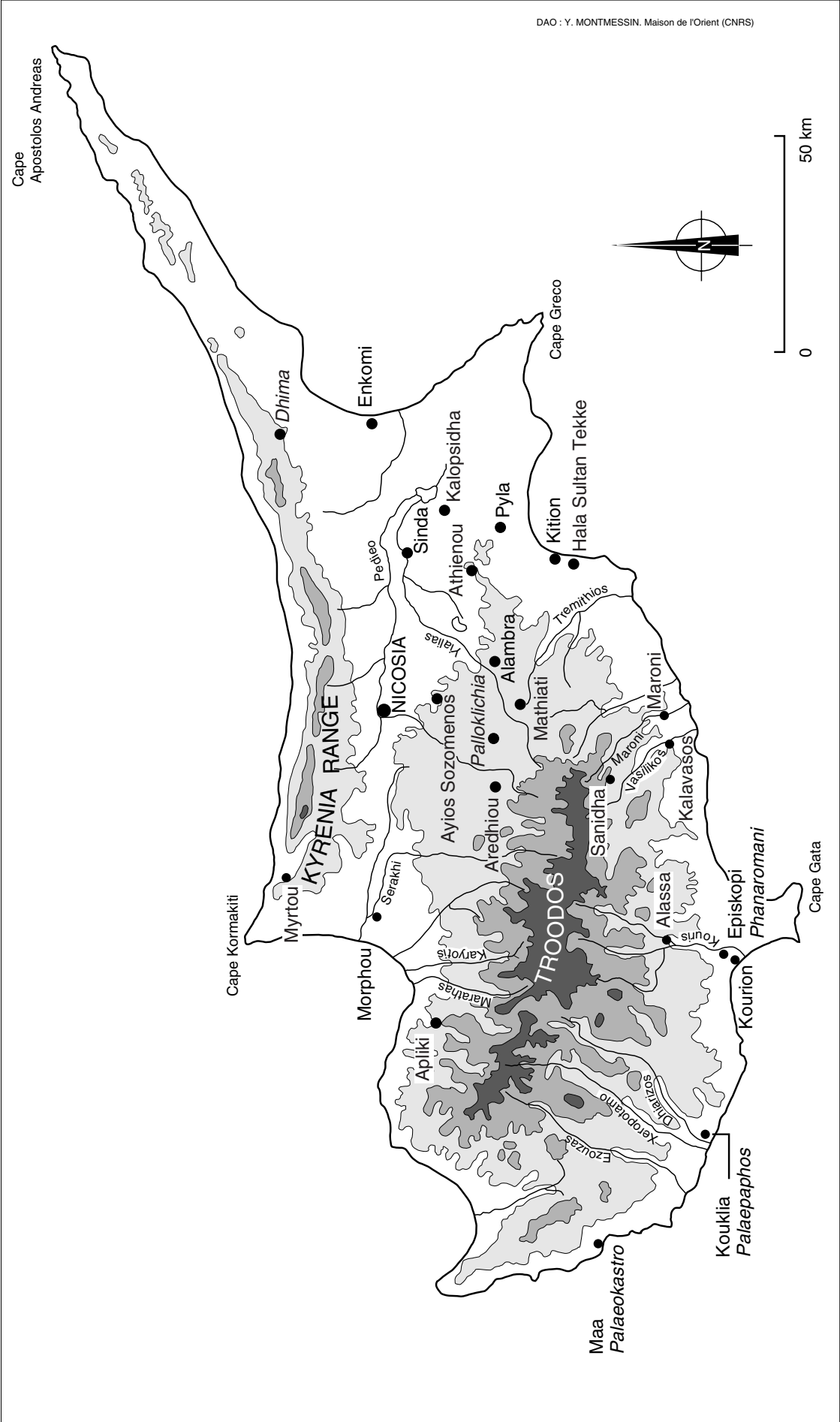
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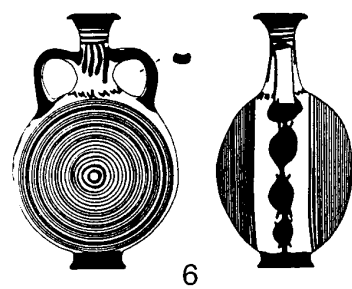
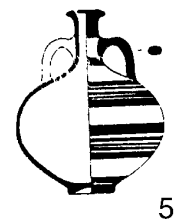
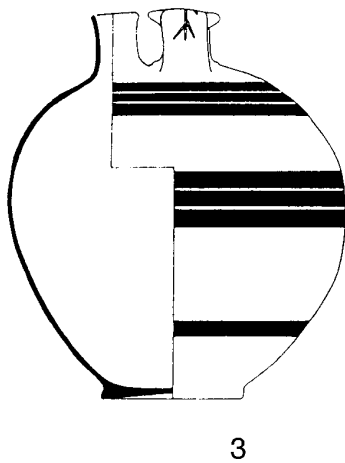
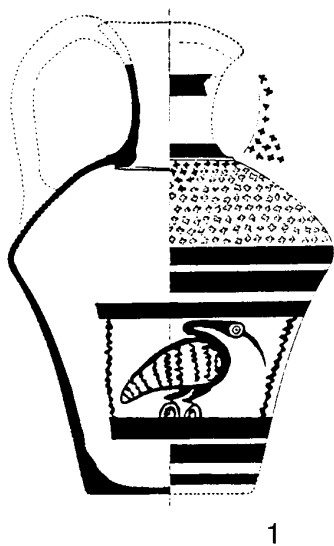
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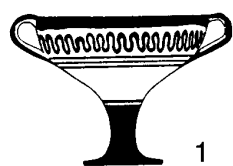
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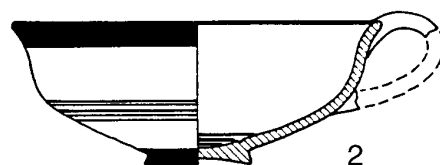
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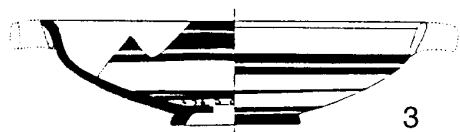
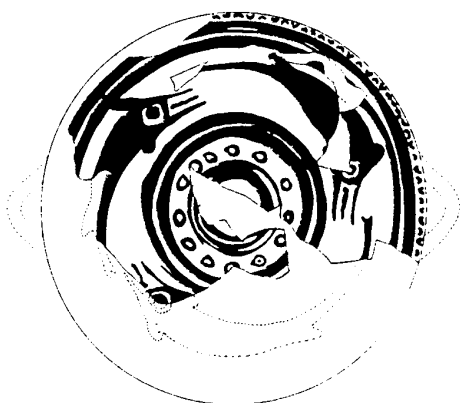




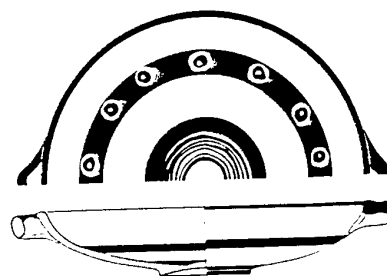
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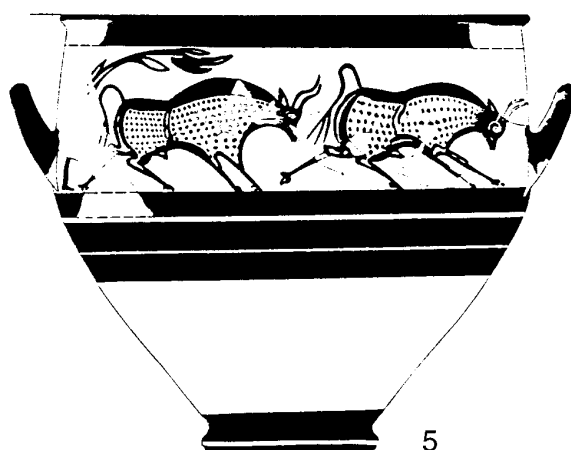
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