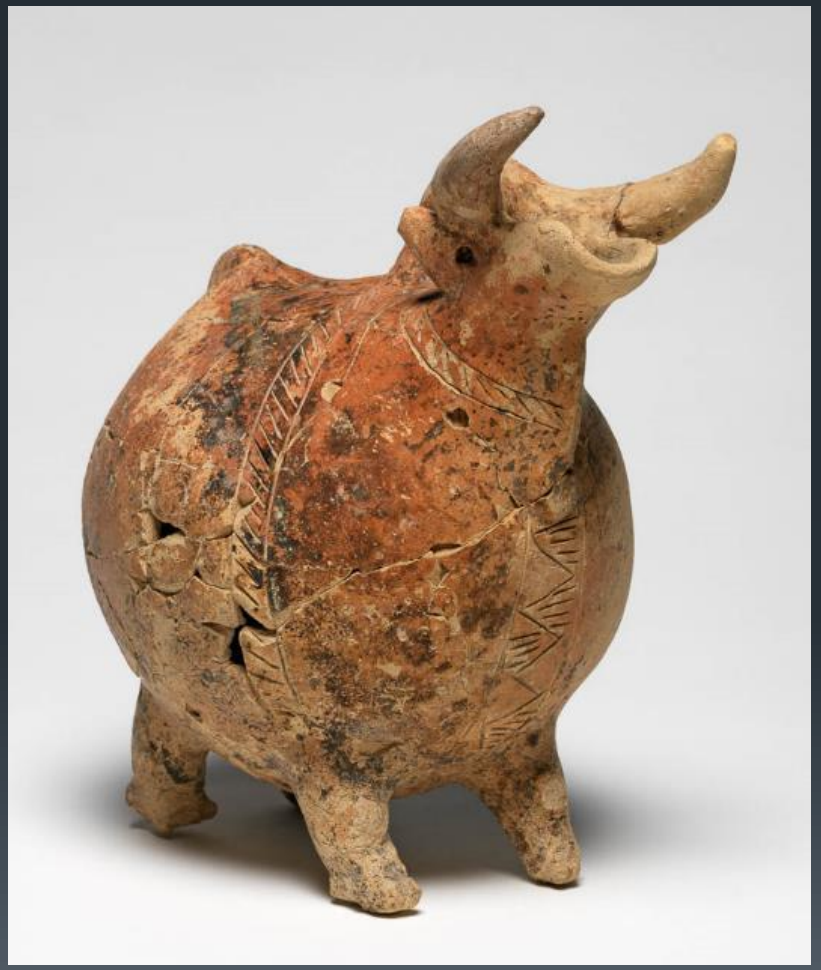


AHAR7007

Animals in Bronze Age Cyprus

Art and Representation

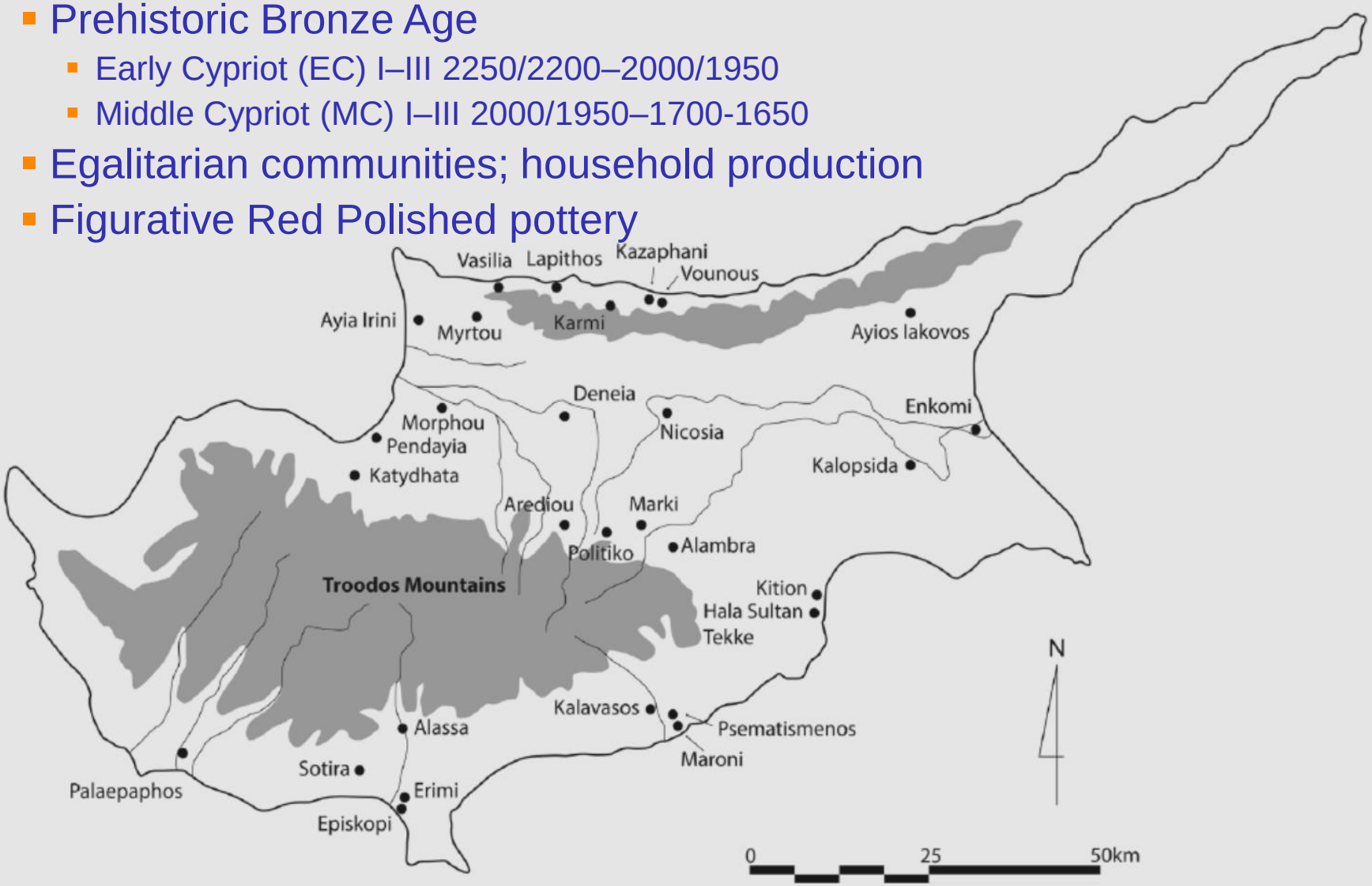
- Artistic representation in BA Cyprus has not been focus of sustained enquiry
  - Morris, D. 1986. *The Art of Ancient Cyprus*. Oxford: Phaidon
  - Karageorghis, V. 1991. *The Coroplastic Art of Ancient Cyprus, Vol. I: Chalcolithic–Late Cypriote I.* Nicosia: Leventis Foundation.
  - Various museum catalogues
- Rich repertoire, largely in clay on animals & humans
  - Red Polished
  - Base Ring ware



Red Polished bull vase

Pre-BA Context

- Prehistoric Bronze Age
  - Early Cypriot (EC) I–III 2250/2200–2000/1950
  - Middle Cypriot (MC) I–III 2000/1950–1700-1650
- Egalitarian communities; household production
- Figurative Red Polished pottery



RP Figurative Decoration

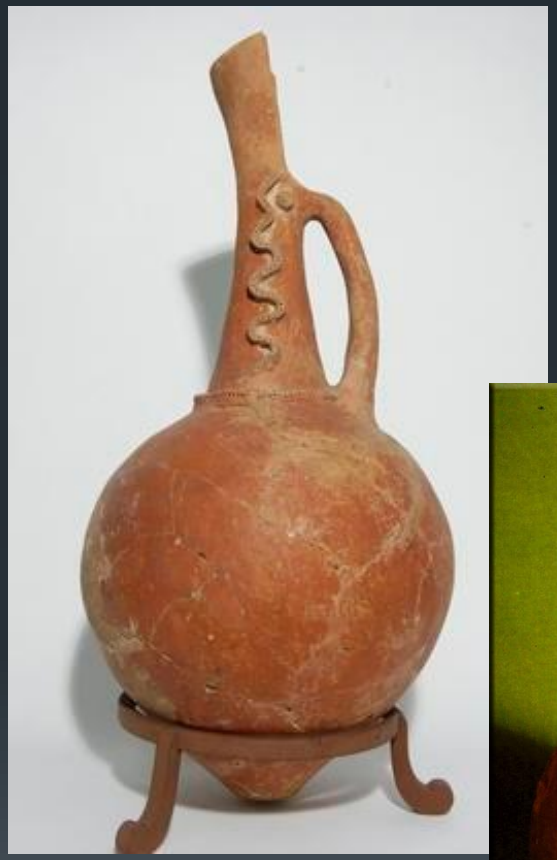
- EC I: largely concentrated at *Vounoi*
  - Jugs with simple relief decoration
  - Ceremonial bowls with quadrupeds & animal heads around rim
- EC III: explosion in figured decoration at *Vounoi*, central Cyprus& south coast
- *Vounoi* bowls with modelled birds
  - Modelled scenes on planks (humans & animals)
  - Zoomorphic vessels
- EC III-MC I: scenic compositions (largely human with some animals)
- Simple, mimetic?
- Non utilitarian – ceremonial aspect?

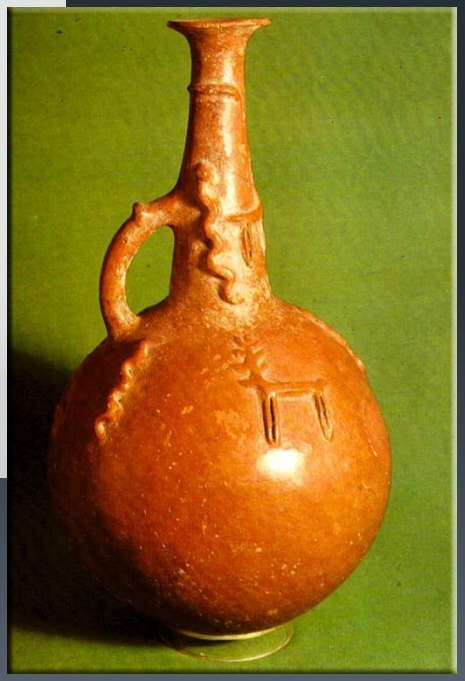


Modelled Red Polished vase, Arpera

Origins of RP Figurative Art

- EC I beak-spouted jugs:
  - Knobbed eye or rivet
  - Might have vertical wavy band (snake?)
  - Purely decorative – aesthetic?
- EC III-MC I: jugs
  - Relief wavy lines
  - Relief animals: bulls, rams, stags
  - Animals embedded economically: social & economic capital?





Jugs from *Vounoi*

Vounoi Ceremonial Bowls

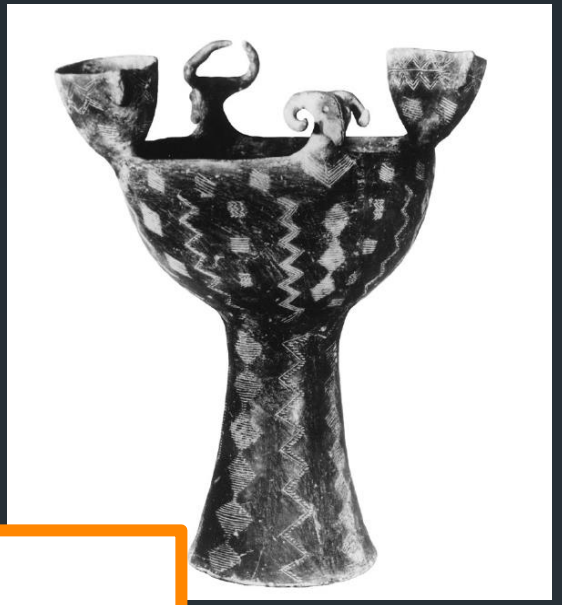
- "visually attractive...[&] emblematic of Early Cypriot art & iconography" (Knox 2013: 47)
  - Deep bowls (c.16-24cm tall): modelled animal heads & discs attached at rim
  - Tall pedestalled bowls (c.23-53cm tall): with modelled tulip bowls & animals placed around rims
  - Basin (c. 23 cm tall): 3 miniature bowls on rim, each with pair of animal protomes & disc attached to the rim
- Exclusive to *Vounoi*: product of a specialist workshop,
  - 'a technically achieved level of excellence' (Gell 1992: 42)

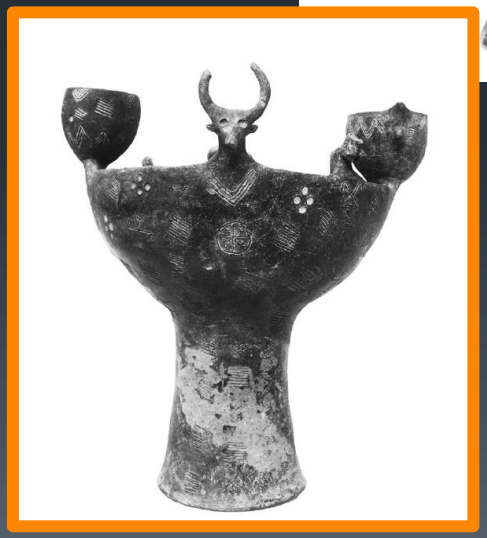


Red Polished pedestal bowl

Vounoi Pedestalled Bowls

- Design carefully considered:
  - Whole animals or animal heads alternating with miniature tulip bowls
  - Regularly placed, some symmetry & use of empty space
- Haptic engagement?
  - Visual display embedded in funerary ritual
  - One with 2 clay pegs in the rim & detachable animal models (boar & stag) – physically manipulated in funerary performance?





Vounoi Deep Bowls

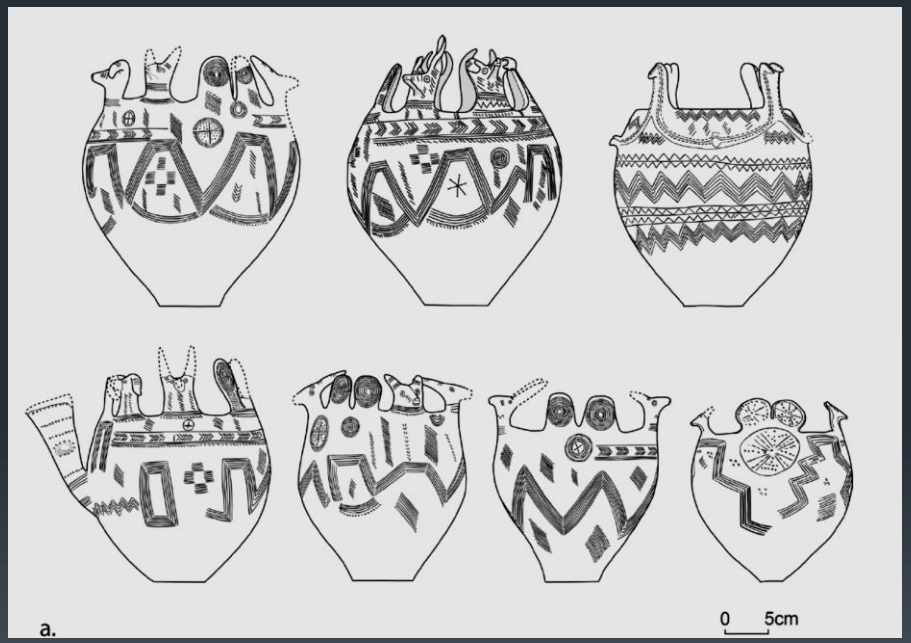
- Appear more crowded, but follow a set design pattern:
  - Modelled animal heads alternating with pairs of discs
  - Modelled devices are closely packed
- Handling of objects & potential use?
- No overlap in the decorative schema with pedestalled bowls:
  - Prescription in decorative designs & handling practices



Deep bowl

Vounoi Ceremonial Bowls

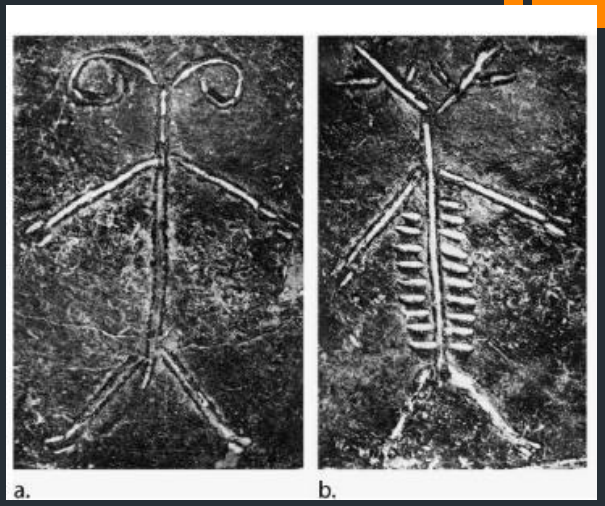
- Animals modelled in the round:
  - Cattle, sheep/goat, pig, stag
- Some mix with human material world – bowls
  - & cosmological world? Identification of discs?
- Range of conventional images reflecting world view, economic & cultural capital of the EC community
- Symbolic communication, enchantment, aesthetic?



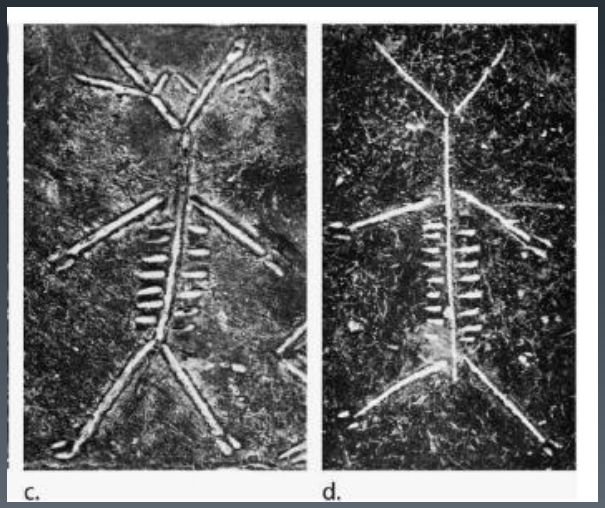
Blurred Boundaries?

- Symbolic communication embedded in representations of animals?
- Used to blur boundaries between human & non human realms?

- EC I *Vounoi* – deep bowl with incised therianthropic figures?
  - Depicting embodied practices as part of funerary ritual?
  - Or depicting human-animal hybrids?

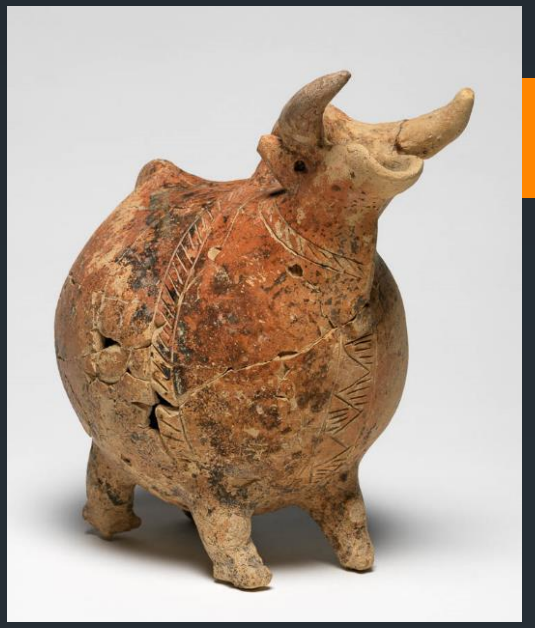


Vounoi, therianthropic figures?



Zoomorphic Figurines

- EC III: Usually quadrupeds
  - Emphasis on bull vases
  - Occasional pack animals
- Reflect economic & cultural capital of PreBA Cyprus
- Found in tombs & settlements
  - Significant wear
  - Stringholes for suspension, might be broken
  - Frequently handled (ceremonial use?), not carefully curated
- Social significance?



Bull vase, Fitzwilliam



Pack donkey, Larnaca Museum

Plank Scenes

- EC III: bucranial shrines:
  - Kotsiatis & Kalopsidha
  - (similar motif on Vounous bowl?)
  - Topos?
- Simple modelling
- Mimesis? Depicting funerary ritual?
- Bucrania marking boundary between human world & “ancestors”/non human realm?
- Object with agency?
- Symbolic communication?



Kotsiatis model

Plank Scenes

- Humans and animals engaged in a variety of daily activities
  - Focus is on human life
  - Animals are subsidiary: only found in association with human action
- Mimetic images possibly with funerary function
- Simple modelling



Plough model, *Vounoi*



Model now in Louvre



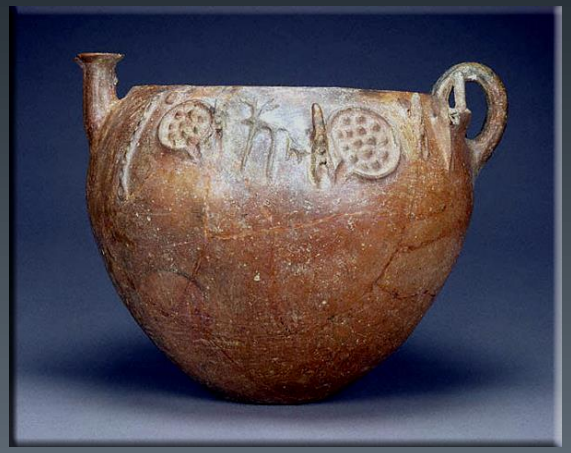
Table model, *Vounoi*

Scenic Compositions

- Placed around rim of large bowls & shoulder of jugs
- Primarily found in central & southern Cyprus
- Continue genre of representations of daily life:
  - Focus is human activity
  - Animals (typically quadrupeds) are secondary
  - Working for/with animals
  - Or marking landscapes
- Simply modelled or relief



Pyrgos jug



Oxford bowl

Vounous Bowl

- Typically interpreted as liminal space:
  - Human actors (& exclusion)
  - Elders
  - Ancestors
  - “sanctuary motif”: blurring boundaries of human & no human world
- Animals:
  - Oxen in pen: daily life
  - Tripartite shrine: snakes & (missing) bucrania? Cosmological?





Detail of shrine

Red Polished Repertoire

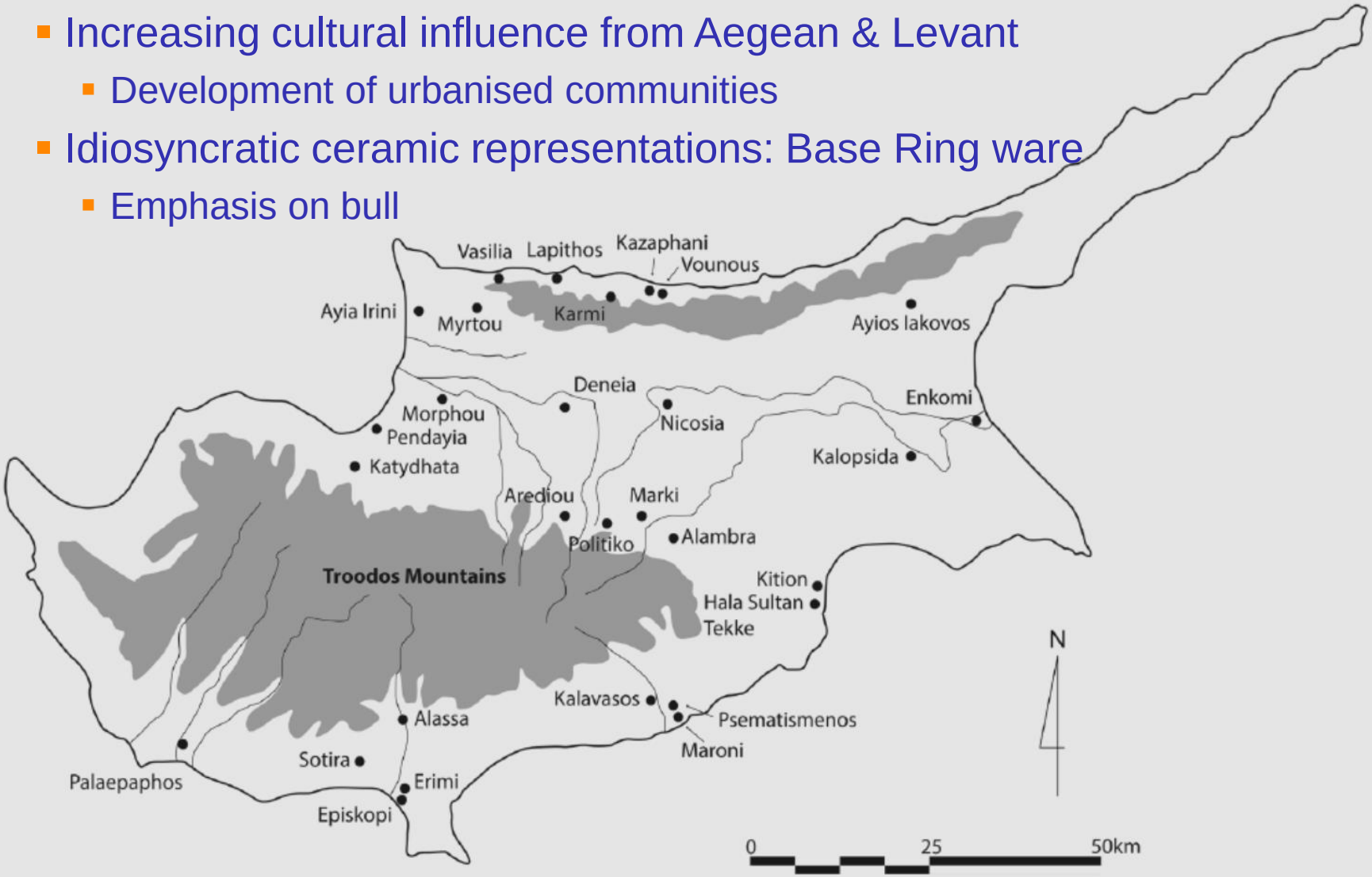
- Under analysed
- Potentials for research?
  - Cheirotic approach & haptic engagement
  - Agency, enchantment, symbolic communication?
  - Narrative devices?
  - Humour?
- Rather than what do they mean what are these objects doing?



Jug, Desmond Morris collection

Late Cypriot Animals

- Increasing cultural influence from Aegean & Levant
  - Development of urbanised communities
- Idiosyncratic ceramic representations: Base Ring ware
  - Emphasis on bull



Owl Rattles

- LC I: White Painted VI ware:
  - Contain small pebbles
  - Sensory objects: music
- Primarily from East Cyprus & have links with Levant
- Funerary objects
  - Performative objects in funerary ritual
- Significance of owl imagery?
- Short lived in Cyprus



Owl rattle, Cyprus museum

Base Ring Animals

- LC II: Continuation of bovine imagery (symbolic importance):
  - LC IIA-C: Base Ring bull vases
  - LC IIC: Base Ring bull figurines
- Occasional horse figurines (& Plain ware)



Base Ring bull figurine, Maroni



Base Ring bull vase, Kalavasos

Base Bull Rhyta

- Product of specialist ceramic workshops:
  - Typically with painted decoration
  - Well modelled
  - Range from 8cm-24 cm in length
  - Containers for (small) quantities of a liquid
- Widely distributed in Cyprus & traded to Levant
- Found in tombs & settlements:
  - Some link with crafting areas
- Wear on handles: regularly handled



Base Ring bull vase, Kazaphani

Base Ring Bull Figurines

- Later addition to corpus
- Primarily found in settlements:
  - Some link with crafting & storage areas
- Also found in sanctuaries:
  - Ayia Irini & Idalion
- Not clear how used/displayed
- Generally assumed that bovine imagery in LC period is symbolic



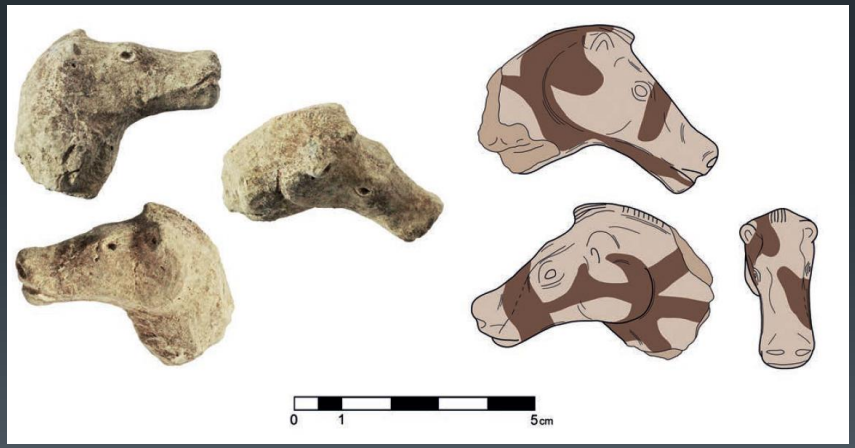
Base Ring bull figurine, Apliki

Horses

- Base Ring horses: 5 from Kazaphani (tombs), crudely modelled
  - Exported to Ugarit & Tell Abu Hawam
- Plain ware: Aredhiou, Enkomi, Hala Sultan Tekke,
  - Not clear how used, handled & displayed but tend to be fragmentary
- Horse models rare in Cypriot context
- Horses highly valued in Near East: cultural, economic and social capital embodied by a team of chariot & horses



Base Ring horse, Kazaphani



Plain ware horse fragment, Hala Sultan Tekke

Summary

- Limited repertoire of animals modelled in clay
- Drawn from the domestic sphere – reflecting concerns of daily life
- But also embedded in ritual, ceremonial action: creating specialised forms
- Inventive ceramic tradition, especially centred on site of *Vounoi* at beginning of Bronze Age
- Some understanding that animals blur boundaries between human and cosmological / spiritual worlds