

FEASTING AS PART OF THE MULTICULTURALISM OF LATE BRONZE AGE CYPRUS*

Introduction

In this paper, I shall argue two theses:

Firstly that the visibly dramatic changes in Cyprus, from the beginning to the end of the Late Bronze Age, I believe, is evidence for an early form of multiculturalism. The evidence in relation to Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age implies substantial penetration of other cultures into the island, even though it retained its independence.

Secondly, I shall argue that feasting was an important part of this multicultural exchange between the indigenous Cypriots and the other civilizations with which they were in dynamic interaction on Cyprus itself. Thus, understanding the historical development of Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age helps us to understand the evolving patterns of feasting during that 400 plus year phase in its history.

Hitchcock defines feasting in broad philosophical terms using the ideas of "Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodiment, and Georges Bataille's concepts of heterology (the world of otherness and the sacred)." She sees feasting as "that which is made sacred through sacrifice, excessive consumption, and perceived as wasteful in a modern world driven by use-value."¹ We shall call this the sacred/sacrifice function of feasting; it is important because here feasting is tied in with practices and beliefs which are religious and mystical in character. This function of feasting often involved sacrifice, and achieving other states of consciousness through the consumption of alcohol and was sometimes associated with funerary practices.²

There are two other functions of feasting in Late Bronze Age society. One of these sees feasting as an important part of the sustenance of social structures and social identity. In his 1998 paper on feasting in Aegean Bronze Age societies, Hamilakis states that "humans as social entities make themselves through the consumption of food and drink.", he sees the consumption of food and drink used in the construction of social identities, shared experiences of consumption resulting in a corporate sense of identity.³ We shall call this the social identity function of feasting.

The third function of feasting in the Late Bronze Age, we term "politico/elite feasting." This function associates feasting practices with the sustenance of political and social elites. Here specific forms of feasting are seen as an expression of the power of the "palace" and even the socio-political standing of the person who attends the feast.

Undoubtedly, Bronze Age feasting in the Aegean was comprehensively influenced by the Mycenaeans. The significant thing about the Mycenaeans is that they combined all three of these functions of feasting into their various practices. A major source of our knowledge here

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¹ L.A. HITCHCOCK, this volume.

² R. TYÖRINOJA, "Communitio Sanctorum: Remarks on the Ideal Community," in V. MÄKINEN (ed.), *Lutheran Reformation and the Law* (2005) 117, states: "It is interesting to compare the early Christian ideal of community with some ideas put forward by French post-modern thinkers like George Bataille and Jean Baudrillard. These theories criticise the idea that economic-legal exchange relationships ... are the fundamental relationship in the history of communities. The theory of gift exchange, in particular the developed by French anthropologist and ethnologist Marcel Mauss, has been of interest in this context. Mauss used various anthropological arguments to claim that the original mode of social relations is not economic exchange but the exchange of gifts."

³ See Y. HAMILAKIS, "Eating the Dead: Mortuary Feasting and the Politics of Memory in the Aegean Bronze Age Societies," in K. BRANIGAN (ed.), *Cemetery and Society in the Aegean Bronze Age* (1998) 116; quoted in L. STEEL, "A goodly feast ... a cup of mellow wine: feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus," in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 161.

is the very important work of Palaima who has translated Mycenaean texts from Linear B and has shown that all three functions of feasting were present in Mycenaean society of the Bronze Age.

In his Introduction, Wright sums up Palaima's contribution as:

*"a significant advance on previous scholarship. He examines the tablets for evidence of the administrative structure of feasting...and by considering the geographical and political implications posed by the tablets. From his study we learn that feasting was administered in similar fashion by the palaces at Knossos, Pylos, and Thebes; it was part of a highly centralized palace bureaucracy that had firm control of territories and provincial localities up to 100 km distant; and that state feasting was sponsored not only at the major palaces, but also at secondary centers or localities within them."*⁴

We should note that, in contrast to the Mycenaeans, we currently do not have much evidence that the Cypriots used the state centred, bureaucratic form of feasting in their practices.

Our key thesis in this paper is that, in Late Bronze Age Cyprus, the practices of feasting reflected a combination of the indigenous culture with the various different external influences impacting on the island at each period of the Late Bronze Age. In her writing on this topic, Steel recognizes certain aspects of this general proposition. Thus in Early Bronze Age Cyprus, she sees feasting as a combination of indigenous Cypriot and Anatolian influences. Steel says:

*"The equipment and major dietary components of this feasting (cattle and possibly also alcoholic beverages such as wine), were introduced to the island from Anatolia. Rather than explaining these changes in the context of diffusion of population, it is preferable to view them in terms of the transferral of esoteric knowledge of exotic drinking customs and the novel use of external referents in the expression of identity and status."*⁵

Later, during the latter part of the Late Bronze Age [13th century], she sees feasting as characterized by a combination of Mycenaean, Ugaritic and indigenous Cypriot influences.⁶

In this paper, Steel's general intuition will be developed in a more systematic way. My general thesis is that feasting in Late Bronze Age Cyprus did develop in a unique way, drawing on diverse influences from other lands at different times and combining them with the indigenous feasting traditions of the Cypriots.⁷ But in order to understand this more comprehensively, it is important to tie this insight more closely into our knowledge of historical developments in Late Bronze Age Cyprus and the way in which the various surrounding societies interacted with Late Bronze Age Cyprus as an independent, multicultural society.

The Development of a Multicultural Society in Late Bronze Age Cyprus

Returning now to our first thesis, the full argument that Late Bronze Age Cyprus was a vibrant, multicultural and independent country is developed in great detail in my recently published book, *The Creative Independence of Late Bronze Age Cyprus*.⁸

Drawing primarily on the evidence and analysis of Cypriot wares – but also supplemented by other archaeological evidence from Cyprus and the lands surrounding the Eastern Mediterranean, this book seeks to demonstrate that the island remained essentially independent and that it had active relationships with all the surrounding civilizations. These included the

4 J.C. WRIGHT, "The Mycenaean Feast: An Introduction," in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 5.

5 STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 168.

6 See STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 169, 174, "A particularly intriguing axis of cultural and economic interaction existed between Mycenaean Greece, Ugarit and Cyprus. This ... is also reflected in the importation of Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus and Ugarit, which occurs at a larger scale than elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean."

7 Archaeological evidence suggests that feasting was an important part of the culture of the early and middle Bronze Age Cyprus. Steel in fact believes that an indigenous form of feasting developed in Cyprus as early as the Chalcolithic period. Whether this is so or not, it seems clear that feasting was an important part of the formation of the social identity of the Cypriots from the Early Bronze Age. See STEEL (*supra* n. 3).

8 K.O. ERIKSSON, *The Creative Independence of Late Bronze Age Cyprus. An account of the archaeological importance of White Slip ware* (2007).

Minoans and Mycenaeans from the Aegean; the Ugaritic groups from the Levant; the Hittite empire and of course the Egyptians. We believe that these five societies are significant in the analysis of feasting during the Late Bronze Age.

Further evidence in this book shows that independent Late Bronze Age Cyprus established extensive trade and diplomatic links with all these societies – notwithstanding the various conflicts between them. The ancient Cypriots managed this in the context of complex and changing interrelationships between the empires during very turbulent times. In so doing, Late Bronze Age Cyprus managed to develop its creative skills especially as reflected in the range and production of its ceramic wares (such as White Slip, Red Lustrous and Base-ring).

The existence of the trade and diplomatic relations between Cyprus and the other civilizations suggests that there was also a considerable presence of the people and cultures of these surrounding lands on Cyprus itself forming a multicultural community.⁹ A major factor here was the role of shipping, not just of copper, but of many goods – to and from Cyprus. Great interest must have accompanied the arrival of a foreign ship or even fleet to Enkomi, *Toumba tou Skourou* or Hala Sultan Tekke. The Cypriots themselves also carried their goods to many lands on their own ships.

External Relations of Late Bronze Age Cyprus and the Impact of Feasting

The long era which is identified as Late Bronze Age Cyprus extends for hundreds of years; it begins with the first Late Cypriot period – LC IA:1 – and extends until LC IIC. In my 2007 book, I utilize the earlier classifications of the periods based on the ceramics, particularly those of Åström,¹⁰ and identify seven Late Cypriot periods which go to constitute the whole historical era known as Late Bronze Age Cyprus. These seven key Historical Periods relate to particular Late Cypriot chronological phases, using Åström's earlier definitions (see Table below).

Cyprus Late Cypriot Period	LC IA:1	LC IA:2	LC IB	LC IIA	LC IIB	LC IIC:1	LC IIC:1-2
Historical Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minoans							
Egyptians							
Hittites							
Mycenaeans							
Ugarit							

Table : The major periods of contact between Cyprus and other key societies during the LBA.

The above diagram is a rough indication of the times at which the five societies mentioned above interacted with Cyprus. In the analysis below, we shall refer to each society as an economic/political/cultural entity having an impact on the multicultural society of Late Bronze Age Cyprus.

I shall say something about feasting with regard to each group. However, because of the limits of time in this presentation, I cannot develop my analysis in detail in relation to every one of these groups: I shall reserve the majority of my comments for the Egyptian, the Hittites and the Mycenaeans.

⁹ The appearance of a great diversity of foreign artefacts in Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age strongly supports this view. These include Late Minoan pottery and artefacts from New Kingdom Egypt. There is also the very extensive Mycenaean pottery in Cyprus – which P. ÅSTRÖM, *The Late Cypriote Bronze Age. Architecture and Pottery*, SCE IV 1C; and, *The Late Cypriote Bronze Age. Relative and Absolute Chronology, Foreign Relations, Summary and Historical Conclusions*, SCE IV 1D (1972) sees as very important in the separation of the historical periods in Cyprus itself.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

1. The Minoan interaction with Cyprus

The first three historical periods of the Late Bronze Age Cyprus are distinguished in terms of the external relations of Cyprus with two key societies: Egypt /Levantine coast and the Minoan civilization. In brief, these periods are characterized so:

During the first period of LC IA:1, there were extensive links with Canaan and with the Hyksos regime in Egypt. During this period, Cyprus was only just opening cautiously to the influence of other societies – it was still essentially monocultural. However, during this period, we find significant amounts of Cypriot wares in Egypt and the Levant.

The second period, LC IA:2, I identify as having the time span beginning just before the start of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt and extending through the reigns of Ahmose, Amenhotep I, Thutmose I, and Thutmose II. The Minoan civilization dramatically extended its links with Cyprus during this period. As evidence of this, we have the discovery of some WS I on Thera, Crete; Rhodes and Melos and we also have LM IA pottery being recorded at quite a number of sites on Cyprus.

The third period, LC IB, begins from the start of the reign of Thutmose III (including the coregency with Hatshepsut) and extends to the last part of the reign of Amenhotep II. More extensive links developed between Cyprus with Egypt and the Levantine area during this time. Thus it is no coincidence that we have a big increase in the numbers of Cypriot pottery occurring in Egypt, around the time of Thutmose III (see below).

We can see that during these periods, Cyprus opened up more dramatically to contact with peoples from the Minoan Civilization. In my 2007 book, I give an analysis of the contexts of the LM IA and LM IB cups in Cyprus referring to finds from *Toumba tou Skourou*, Ayia Irini, Enkomi, Maroni *Vournes*, Limassol, and Palaepaphos *Teratsoudhia*. These findings, and the finding of Cypriot wares in Crete and Thera at this time, reflect significant interaction between the societies of Cyprus and the Minoans at this time.¹¹

The question now arises: did Minoan feasting practices of this time have an impact on the Cypriots? We submit that the relations between Cyprus and the Minoans are significant in the study of feasting in the Aegean, especially as we are now learning more about the nature of Minoan feasting, as in the work of Borgna.¹² This is a subject worthy of further investigation – but I cannot do so here.

2. The Long Period of Egyptian – Cypriot Relations

During the first three historical periods, we saw the beginnings of multiculturalism in Cyprus. There was an opening up to the Egyptian, Canaanite and Minoan civilizations. From periods 4 to 7, the Hittites and the Mycenaeans entered the picture in a very big way, playing a major role in Cyprus. However, the Egyptians were significant because they extended their relations with Cyprus over all seven historical periods. These relations were maintained notwithstanding dramatic changes in Egypt itself, and in its relations with its neighbours.

Two time spans are worthy of comment here: the first three periods to the end of the reign of Thutmose III, and Periods 4 and 5 which cover the relations between Cyprus and the Amarna pharaohs. Of great significance in the analysis of these changing times is the role of Red Lustrous Wheel-made and other Cypriot wares found in Egypt.

11 ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 8) 200-4.

12 In a lengthy and detailed paper on the issue of Minoan feasting, E. BORGNA, "Aegean feasting: a Minoan perspective," in *The Mycenaean Feast*, 138, she concludes that: "...that in palatial Crete banqueting practices consisted of an articulated series of events in terms of location, function and purpose; moreover, it would seem to imply that in Neopalatial times in particular, elite ideology of consumption was materialized according to a common and codified architectonic language." However, Borgna makes it perfectly clear that there were significant differences between Mycenaean and Minoan feasting practices, at least until late into the LM III period.

In my 1993 book on Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware, I established a number of theses concerning this Cypriot ware in Egypt and Anatolia. One thesis was the strong association between Red Lustrous Wheel-made spindle bottles and Base-ring I juglets in graves in Egypt in contexts well dated to the reign of Thutmose III. David Collard referred to the recovery of Base-ring I vessels from mortuary and 'cult' contexts as a means of investigating the possibility that opium may have been consumed as a component of certain ritual practices.¹³ In 1993 I observed some evidence in Egyptian and Cypriot graves for the Red Lustrous Wheel-made spindle bottles to be placed near the head.¹⁴

The use of perfumed oil (eg as referred to in the Amarna tablets, Linear B and Hittite texts)¹⁵ was certainly associated with feasting practices.

Fappas has referred to some Linear B documents that record the provision of perfumed oils supplied for feasting activities in a ritual context. According to Fappas, there is written evidence that it was practiced in contemporary Near East and included the anointment of kings.¹⁶ Similar practices were found in Egypt.

3. Cyprus during LC IIA and LC IIB and the Amarna Tablets

These two periods are defined so: Period 4 = LC IIA:1-2 refers to the first appearances of White Slip (WS) II and its export throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Significant events involving Cyprus occurred during this time; we have the rise of Suppiluliumas I and the increasing influence of the Hittites in the Northern Levant, including statements that Hittites were sent to Alashiya (Cyprus) as exiles. We also have the increasing links between Cyprus and Ugarit (as revealed for example, by the excavations at Ras Shamra). This period incorporates two phases of Mycenaean pottery in Cyprus, LH IIIA:1 and LH IIIA:2a. The first set of the Amarna letters referring to links between Egypt and Alashiya (Cyprus) appeared at this time.

Period 5 = LC IIB. During this period, Cyprus experienced an increase in contacts with the Hittite Empire under Suppiluliumas I and also with the Mycenaean civilization. Cyprus' relations with Egypt were transformed as result of the religious upheavals under the reign of Akhenaton, who had documented contacts with the king of Alashiya (the second set of the Amarna letters). The beginning of this period is specifically identified with the introduction of Mycenaean LH IIIA:2b in Cyprus and Egypt.

In the Amarna letters, there are important references to sacrifice rituals and to gift exchanges, both of which are related to feasting practices.¹⁷ In relation to gift exchanges, Barker says:

*"Mauss argued that gift exchange was characterized by three obligations – the obligation to give, the obligation to receive; and the obligation to repay. The giving of gifts to others demonstrates the power of the donor. The receiving of gifts puts the recipient in the 'moral debt' of the donor, creating a relationship of subordination.... It was impossible to avoid getting into 'social debt' by refusing a gift, since normally refusal resulted in loss of face and social subordination."*¹⁸

An example of this type of gift exchange may be seen in the Amarna letters from the king of Alashiya to the pharaoh of Egypt. These letters are relevant to both the sacrifice function and the political function of feasting in Egypt. Consider two examples:

¹³ D. COLLARD, this volume.

¹⁴ K.O. ERIKSSON, *Red Lustrous Wheel-made Ware* (1993) 90, fig. 28.

¹⁵ H.A. HOFFNER, "Oil in Hittite Texts," *Biblical Archaeologist* 58.2 (1995) 108-114.

¹⁶ I. FAPPAS, this volume.

¹⁷ The first group of the Amarna Letters (EA 36, 37, 39 and 40) - those of a general nature, are generally ascribed to either Amenhotep III or Akhenaton. In overall terms, this first group of Amarna letters supports the view that Cyprus (Alashiya) was significantly independent at this time and that it made strenuous efforts to maintain its friendship with Egypt during LC IIA:1-2.

The second group of Amarna Letters are those which seem more definitively ascribable to Akhenaton (EA 33, 34, 35, 38 and 114) and which are relevant to the Historical Period 5 (LC IIB). This group show a warm and generally positive relationship between the pharaoh and the king of Alashiya. They indicate a relationship based on respect and a considerable level of mutual understanding.

¹⁸ G. BARKER and A. GRANT (eds), *Companion Encyclopedia of Archaeology* (1999) 642.

In EA 33, which scholars believe was directed to the pharaoh Akhenaton, it states:

To the king of Egypt, my brother: message of the king of Alashiya, your brother. For me all goes well. For you may all go well. For your household, your wives, your sons, your horses, your chariots, and in your country, may all go very well.

Moreover, I have heard that you are seated on the throne of your father's house. (You said), "Let us have transported back and forth gifts of peace." I have heard the greeting of my brother, and I ...

You wrote, "Have transported to me 200 (?) of copper," and I herewith have transported to you ten talents of fine copper.¹⁹

In this letter, the king of Alashiya is congratulating the pharaoh for ascending to the throne of his father. The Alashiyan king asks for a specific arrangement to be put into place, so that they can transport gifts to each other back and forth and deal with each other on the basis of 'peace.'

In EA 34 the king of Alashiya says to the Pharaoh:

Message of the king of Alashiya to the king of Egypt, my brother: be informed that I prosper and my country prospers. And as to your own prosperity, may your prosperity and the prosperity of your household, your sons, your wives, your horses, your chariots, your country, be very great.

Look, you are my brother. As to your having written me, "Why did you not send your messenger to me?", the fact is that I had not heard that you were going to perform a sacrifice. Do not take this at all seriously. Since I have now heard about it, I herewith send my messenger to you.

And behold, I also send to you with my messenger 100 talents of copper. Moreover, may your messengers now bring some goods: one ebony bed, gold trimmed, ... ; and a chariot, šuhītu, with gold; two horses; two pieces of linen; fifty linen shawls, two linen robes; 14 beams of ebony; 77 habannatu-jars of 'sweet oil.' And as to byssos, four pieces and four shawls.

And as to goods that are not available in your country, I am sending in the charge of my[messenger a donkey-hide ... of a bed, and habannatu-jars that are not available ...

So an alliance should be made between the two of us, and my messengers should go to you and your messengers should come to me. Moreover, why have you not sent me oil and linen? As far as I am concerned, what you yourself request I will give.

I herewith send a habannatu-jar that is full of 'sweet oil' to be poured on your head, seeing that you have sat down on your royal throne.²⁰

Here we have a response to a letter from the pharaoh to the king of Alashiya in which the pharaoh has complained about the failure of Alashiya to provide a messenger at an important festival. The king of Alashiya is very concerned that the pharaoh not takes offence and sends him large numbers of gifts. These include fine clothes and sweet oils for the body. He also is belatedly supplying a messenger to participate in the event. Note that the festival involved an important sacrifice and would certainly have included feasting.

4. Cyprus and the Hittites: the export of feasting culture?

The role of the Hittites in relations with Cyprus becomes very clear from LC IIA (period 4) and continues through to the end of LC IIC (period 7). I have defined periods 4 and 5 above. They were significant because Cyprus maintained relations between both of the conflicting empires, the Hittites and Egypt under Amenhotep III and Akhenaten. However, the picture changed again during periods 6 and 7. The historical events of these periods are defined so:

Period 6: = The first part of LC IIC:1. This period refers to a time of major conflict between the Hittite Empire and Egypt; there were also internal intrigues within Egypt with a succession of rulers: Tuthankamun, Ay and Horemheb. It ends with the conclusion of the 18th Dynasty in Egypt. During this period, there was a dramatic increase in the links of Cyprus with the Mycenaeans, as illustrated by the introduction of LH IIIB:1 wares. This was a most

19 After B.G. OCKINGA, "Hieroglyphic/Egypt," in A.B. KNAPP (ed.), *Sources for the History of Cyprus II: Near Eastern Texts from the Third to the First Millennia BC* (1996) 21.

20 *Ibid.* 21.

challenging time for the independence of Cyprus, which had to balance the demands of the Mycenaeans and the Hittites – while retaining relatively friendly links with Egypt.

Period 7: = The second part of LC IIC:1 and LC IIC:2. This period refers to the 19th Dynasty in Egypt under the reigns of Rameses I, Seti I and Rameses II; it then continues to some time before Year 8 of Rameses III in the 20th Dynasty, which is when Egypt did battle with the Sea Peoples. During this long period, the power of independent Cyprus increased; we have records of relations with a number of surrounding countries – including Egypt, Ugarit, the Mycenaeans and the Hittites. During this lengthy period, there was an even bigger increase in Mycenaean ceramics in Cyprus; in fact this period covers two ceramic phases, the second part of LH IIIB:1 and the whole of the LH IIIB:2 phase.

Thus, in the four periods [period 4 to period 7], relations between Cyprus and the Hittites went from what the texts indicate to be a moderately cooperative one, to a very hostile time at the end of Period 7. In this latter time, there were sea battles between Cyprus and the Hittites under Tudhaliyas IV and 20 years later under Suppiluliumas II.²¹

The ceramic material is of enormous interest. In my 1993 book, I provide a detailed examination of the contexts in which the ware occurs in Cyprus, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the 'Amuq, Anatolia, Crete and Rhodes. It was demonstrated that, from Period 4 onwards, we see a dramatic rise in the distribution of Cypriot Red Lustrous Wheel-made in Anatolia, at the same time as Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware was diminished in Egypt. Not only is the chronological range of Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware vastly different in Anatolia and Egypt, but there is also difference in the shapes that occur within each region. In Egypt, it is the spindle bottle that is the predominant shape, with only a few bowl sherds, pilgrim flasks and one fragment of an arm-shaped vessel. On the other hand, in Anatolia, it is the arm-shaped vessel that is predominant, with spindle bottles, (mostly of a type not recorded in Egypt), pilgrim flasks and some bowl sherds.

The importance of Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware in the analysis of the relations between Anatolia and Cyprus is explained thus by Todd:

*"One of the more intriguing problems posed by the relations between Cyprus and Anatolia in the Late Bronze Age concerns the origins of Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware. While it has usually been considered in the past as a mainland product, perhaps Syrian, ERIKSSON (1993) has demonstrated that Cyprus is the most likely candidate. If this conclusion is accepted, then the relations between Cyprus and the mainland have to be viewed in an entirely different light, at least with reference to Anatolia....instead of only one or two stray Cypriote sherds being found on the major sites within the Hittite region, there would be a considerable amount of evidence for contact between this northern plateau region, especially Boğazköy, and the island."*²²

The question now arises: what was the impact of Cyprus on the Hittites? In my 2007 book, I argue at length that there is no evidence that the Hittites conquered Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age – although they made claims. Furthermore, there is little evidence of the impact of Hittite cultural practices, including feasting, in Cyprus itself.

On the other hand, however, it is a plausible hypothesis that Cypriot cultural traditions, including feasting, impacted substantially on the Hittites. A study by Bryce has produced the following general proposition, which supports the view that the Hittites had extensive feasting practices:

21 During the second half of this Period 7, the Hittites carried out a major attack on Cyprus, which by now was even more powerful as indicated by her possession of her own naval force. Although this attack allegedly succeeded in destroying the Cypriot naval forces, the Hittite king still failed in his attempt to conquer the island. The initial attack by Tudhaliyas IV was followed about 20 years later by an attempted invasion by Suppiluliumas II, final ruler of the Hittites; the fall of Boğazköy ending his reign and that of the Dynasty. The massive, but not fully successful, battle with Alashiya – occurred right at the end of Period 7, somewhere between ca 1200-1180 BC (see H.G. GÜTERBOCK, "The Hittite Conquest of Cyprus Reconsidered," in H.A. HOFFNER and I.L. DIAMOND (eds), *Perspectives on Hittite Civilizations: Selected Writings of Hans Gustav Güterbock* [1997] 195).

22 I.A. TODD, "Early Connections of Cyprus with Anatolia," in V. KARAGEORGHIS (ed.), *The White Slip Ware of Late Bronze Age Cyprus. Proceedings of an International Conference Organised by the Anastasios G. Leventis Foundation, Nicosia, in Honour of Malcolm Wiener. Nicosia 29th-30th October 1998* (2001) 212-3.

*"Records of festival programs survive in abundance in the archives. ...The Hittites were an eclectic people. They borrowed freely from predecessor as well as contemporary civilizations in the Near East, weaving strands from a number of different cultures into the fabric of their own. ... Their civilization was a highly derivative one..."*²³

My hypothesis here is that the extensive importation of Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware into Anatolia raises the possibility that these wares were used for specialized religious functions, which might be associated with feasting practices there. As Mielke also observed, Red Lustrous Wheel-made "... is the only 'foreign ware' in Anatolia appearing in a notable scale."²⁴ In fact, there are more of the unusually formed arm-shaped vessels, a shape almost exclusive to this ware class, found in Anatolia than have been recorded in Cyprus.²⁵

In relation to the function of the arm-shaped Red Lustrous Wheel-made vessels, Mielke, is critical of my proposal that they could be used as containers for perfumed oil. He argues that the rims are not formed to allow "someone to close it satisfactorily."²⁶ However, I would like point out that of all the arm-shaped vessels I examined, the internal diameter of the opening through the 'wrist' area was usually around 1.0 cm, the same as the internal diameter of the spindle bottles. One vessel from Cyprus "can be easily stood on its base which suggests that it was used as a container for a fluid, and the narrow opening (ca 1.0 cm) through the wrist into the cup would support this as it could have been easily plugged."²⁷

Even if Mielke rejects them as containers for some 'special' substance, he does not go so far as to say they were not used for offering libations. Certainly some analyses have indicated the presence of oil in the arm-shaped vessels. Meilke says:

*"If we accept that the AsVs [Arm-shaped vessels] were indeed used as ritual instruments for libation we will face many problems which have not been researched properly yet. If we are dealing with ritual instruments imported from Cyprus, we would also have to assume that it was not the instrument itself that was imported but rather the corresponding ritual. This would not be unusual for the Hittites."*²⁸

Yet an examination of Hittite written sources and depiction by Mielke leads him to rule out their use as a Hittite ritual vessel, although he cannot deny that they may have been used in a broader cultic context.²⁹ Their appearance in so-called 'temple' contexts cannot go unnoticed here. I believe it is certainly possible that the arm-shaped vessels may still link up with a ritual use, which originated in Cyprus and was associated with cultic feasting practices associated with the dead.

The evidence from Ayios Iakovos in Cyprus may be critical to any resolution of this matter. There Red Lustrous Wheel-made was found together with 10 silver and gold funnels;³⁰ an association also observed in Tomb 11 at Kalavassos Ayios Dhimitrios.³¹ These funnels are found elsewhere in Cyprus at Ayia Paraskevi,³² Maroni;³³ but the only place outside of Cyprus where the funnels are associated with Red Lustrous Wheel-made is in Anatolia at Mashat Höyük.³⁴

23 T. BRYCE, *Life and Society in the Hittite World* (2002) 6-7.

24 D.P. MIELKE, "Red Lustrous Wheelmade from Hittite Contexts," in I. HEIN (ed.), *The Lustrous Wares of Late Bronze Age Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, Papers of a Conference Vienna 5th-6th of November 2004* (2007) 155.

25 ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 14), 174, fig. 45 type VIII.

26 MIELKE (*supra* n. 24) 164.

27 ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 14) 27, although not all arm-shaped vessels can be placed in this position as some have convex bases, see ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 14) 28, fig. 7.

28 MIELKE (*supra* n. 24) 164.

29 MIELKE (*supra* n. 24) 164-5.

30 E. GJERSTAD, J. LINDROS, E. SJÖQVIST, and A. WESTHOLM, "Finds and Results of the Excavations in Cyprus 1927-1931," *SCE I* (1934) 357 nos 16, 24-6.

31 A. SOUTH personal communication.

32 J.L. MYRES, *Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus* (1914) 378-9.

33 J. JOHNSON, *Maroni de Chypre* (1980) 19, 20, 57, pls XVI:61-4 (Tomb 8), XIX:86-7 (Tomb 12).

34 T. ÖZGÜC, *Mashat Höyük II. A Hittite Center Northeast of Boğazköy* (1982) 115, pl. 55:14.

Was Red Lustrous Wheel-made used only for export and not in the practices of the Cypriots themselves? I do not believe that this is the case. The Cypriot evidence shows that it was also during the second part of Historical Period 4, (LC IIA:2), that Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware had its most popular phase on the island. The slender bodied spindle bottle (VIA1b)³⁵ and the one handled pilgrim flask (VIIAa)³⁶ (the latter introduced during LC IIA:1) continued, but were now joined by an additional diverse range of shapes.

Furthermore, the Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware continued to be found in burial contexts and also in the sanctuaries at Ayios Iakovos and Myrtou *Pigadhes*. Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware was thus tied up with the drinking and feasting practices of the Cypriots themselves. However, at this same time in Cyprus, such feasting was intermixed with Mycenaean practices.

5. Mycenaean feasting in Cyprus: A mixed Picture

As we have already indicated, from Period 4, LC IIA, there was a huge and increasing amount of Mycenaean pottery imported into Cyprus. Sandars states: "In Cyprus large quantities of Mycenaean pottery have been found in the coastal emporia - more in fact than in the whole of the Levant."³⁷ Indeed this was such a dominant ceramic repertoire that Åström used the Mycenaean imported ware to define several of his Late Cypriot periods. For example, historical Period 5 (LC IIB) is identified by the first appearance of Mycenaean LH IIIA:2b wares in Cyprus and Egypt.

A number of writers on feasting in Cyprus have emphasized the importance of the increasing presence of Mycenaean culture in the second half of the Late Cypriot era on the island. A good example is the work of South who believes that there is good evidence that feasting in Cyprus was associated with the Mycenaean tradition. She refers to a group of material from Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios which "provides some of the best evidence for possible feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus." South says of this particular location:

*"Although most of the surrounding buildings were devoted to storage, industry and administration, there are some spaces which are possible locations for the feasts, especially the nearby central courtyard of Building X. The location within an important and architecturally impressive building and the unusual concentration of imported pottery suggest that these meals were special or elite occasions."*³⁸

At the beginning of this paper, I referred to the detailed archaeological analysis of Mycenaean feasting in Greece, and its export to the surrounding societies. This analysis, combined with the material evidence in Cyprus, clearly implies that certain feasting practices must have been shared between the Cypriots and the visiting Mycenaeans. As Steel states in relation to Cypriot drinking practices:

*"It is entirely plausible that wine (which had a long history of consumption in the Near East) was the preferred beverage in Cyprus, and also that the dissemination of this beverage was strictly controlled by certain elements of LC society. Initially the indigenous fine-wares (Base Ring and White Slip) were used both for serving and consumption of liquids. By the 14th and 13th centuries, however, there is considerable evidence from both settlement and funerary contexts for the incorporation of Mycenaean forms into the Cypriot drinking set."*³⁹

However, as I have indicated, I also agree with the further view of Steel who recognizes that the Mycenaean feasting on the mainland had significant differences to the feasting practices occurring in Cyprus. Steele states:

³⁵ ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 14) 22, fig. 5a.

³⁶ ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 14) 24, fig. 5b.

³⁷ N.K. SANDARS, *The Sea Peoples. Warriors of the Ancient Mediterranean, 1250-1150 B.C.* (1978) 75.

³⁸ A. SOUTH, this volume.

³⁹ STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 172.

*"Although Mycenaean pottery is the preferred tableware for LC competitive feasting, it appears that the Cypriot elite did not emulate the cultural practices and feasting paraphernalia of the Mycenaean palatial elite, who preferred drinking equipment of gold or silver. Instead, the Cypriots used Mycenaean imports according to local practices and taste, and appear to have been referencing Ugaritic patterns of wine consumption. The Cypriot elite thus invested the krater with the symbolic connotations of belonging to an exclusive group with esoteric knowledge of foreign patterns of consumption."*⁴⁰

This last point is very significant in the light of the fact that indigenous Cypriot kraters existed in Base-ring and Red Lustrous Wheel-made ware prior to the Mycenaean version arriving in Cyprus.⁴¹ Indeed it is quite possible that the Base-ring krater may have had a Minoan, rather than a Mycenaean origin, as Bergoffen has argued.⁴²

At the beginning of this paper, I referred to the detailed archaeological analysis of Mycenaean feasting in Greece, and its export to the surrounding societies. This analysis, combined with the material evidence in Cyprus, clearly implies that certain feasting practices must have been shared between the Cypriots and the visiting Mycenaeans. Steel's general thesis in her paper is that Cypriot feasting was a kind of balance between the Mycenaean traditions and indigenous Cypriot cultural forms. In my 2007 book, I present considerable evidence that supports this view of Steel. The major point of the evidence is the way in which Cypriot wares, especially Red Lustrous Wheel-made, White Slip and Base-ring are often found together with Mycenaean wares in various contexts in Cyprus. This occurs over several key Mycenaean periods which are clearly identifiable in Cyprus.

Period 5 is when LH IIIA:2b wares are dominant in Cyprus. In this period, Mycenaean feasting was most prominent on the island. The intermixing between the two cultures reached such a level of sophistication that it produced a special pictorial decoration of Mycenaean ware which occurs primarily in Cyprus and the Near East. Mountjoy has identified this as follows:

*"The Pictorial Style of decoration, which may have its origin in fresco, begins in LH IIIA1, but is rare then. It is more common on LH IIIA2 pottery, but it should be noted that it appears on a very small percentage of Mycenaean pottery, most of which, so far, has been found in Cyprus and the Near East."*⁴³

There is a consensus amongst archaeologists that the Mycenaean feasting practices had the deepest impact on Cyprus, as compared to all other cultural forms that impacted on the island. Nevertheless, the indigenous Cypriot element remained strong – and it was also evolving on the basis of the influences from the other societies outlined in this paper. Furthermore, as we have already indicated, there is very little evidence of the palatial/political function of feasting which was probably the most dominant feature of the practices of the Mycenaeans on the mainland.

6. A Special relationship: Cyprus and Ugarit

In her paper, Steel says:

*"A particularly intriguing axis of cultural and economic interaction existed between Mycenaean Greece, Ugarit and Cyprus. This ... is also reflected in the importation of Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus and Ugarit, which occurs at a larger scale than elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean."*⁴⁴

40 STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 174.

41 As STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 173, says: "The krater formed the centerpiece of the LC drinking set. It was primarily intended for display, hence the preference for kraters with elaborate pictorial decoration, especially chariot scenes referring to elite lifestyles. These objects were deliberately removed from circulation and deposited in tombs as elements of elite funerary display, further enhancing their prestigious status. Although jugs (either local wares or Mycenaean imports) are also found, it appears that the more common Cypriot practice was to serve the wine or other liquid directly from the krater."

42 C.J. BERGOFFEN, "Reflections on Two 'Lustrous' Base Ring I Kraters from Alalakh," in HEIN (*supra* n. 24) 25-36.

43 P.A. MOUNTJOY, *Mycenaean Decorated Pottery: A Guide to Identification* (1986) 67.

44 STEEL (*supra* n. 3) 169.

As already indicated, Steel says that Ugaritic feasting customs and those of Cyprus were probably intermixed. However, she does not present much evidence for this view. An analysis of the available ceramic and textual data provides further support for Steel hypothesis.

In my 2007 book, I present a large amount of material attesting to the very close relationship between Cyprus and Ugarit; during historical periods 4, 5 and 6 these links increased dramatically. It was in the city state of Ugarit that the Ras Sharma tablets were discovered. They testify to the close alliance with Cyprus and even the existence of a Cypriot colony at Ugarit. Cypriot pottery and Cyprus-Minoan writing were discovered at the site, as well as funerary practices which are similar to those found on the island.

It is also very significant that we discover Cypriot style funerary practices and the associated artefacts in Ras Shamra. An early investigator, Virolleaud has stated:

*"The influence which seems to be dominant, if not at Ras Shamra itself, then, at least, at the near-by necropolis of Minet el Beida, is that of the island of Cyprus. The graves of Minet el Beida are of Cypriote shape and construction, and the funeral equipment largely consists of bases of painted baked clay of which is distinctly and almost totally Cypriote."*⁴⁵

Ceramic evidence has also been very important in demonstrating the increased links between Cyprus and Ugarit. Marguerite Yon had much to say about the level of White Slip in Ugarit, and Syria generally, at this time.⁴⁶

The relationship between Cyprus and Ugarit also appears to have had a political foundation. In my 2007 book, I present evidence of the domination of Ugarit by the Hittites at this time.⁴⁷ Notwithstanding this, however, the kings of Ugarit of this period sought to assert this spirit of independence by forming strong links with independent Cyprus. There is direct evidence of this in the strong bonds which clearly exist between the next Ugarit ruler, Niqmandu and the king of Alashiya. Indeed we have a Ras Sharma letter from this king of Ugarit in which he addresses the king of Alashiya as 'my father' and seeks his advice and assistance.⁴⁸

The available historical information further confirms the closeness and cultural interaction between the peoples of Ugarit and Alashiya. All this provides strong evidence in support of Steel's provisional thesis that the feasting practices of Cyprus and Ugarit were influencing each other and sharing each other's practices. This matter needs further investigation. What is clear is that, by the 13th century BC, both societies were heavily influenced by Mycenaean feasting practices.

In conclusion, the important point that emerges from this necessarily brief survey is that, during periods, 4, 5, 6 and 7, Cyprus was subjected to pressures from all these civilisations – Mycenaeans, Canaanites, Hittites and Egyptians. Cypriot wares are found in all these areas – but as we have seen the distribution changed as historical events unfolded. Judging from the continuing production of pottery such as White Slip II and Red Lustrous Wheel-made, as well as the strength of trade between Cyprus and these other civilizations, Cyprus during these many years managed to retain its creative spirit and its independence. Within Cyprus, a multicultural society developed which incorporated cultural elements from these other societies. Feasting in Cyprus was one major activity, which evolved through this cultural interaction.

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⁴⁵ C. VIROLLEAUD, "Les inscriptions cunéiformes de Ras Shamra," *Syria* 10 (1929) 304-10.

⁴⁶ M. YON, "White Slip Ware in the Northern Levant," in KARAGEORGHIS (*supra* n. 22) 117-24.

⁴⁷ ERIKSSON (*supra* n. 8) Chapter VII.

⁴⁸ RS 20.168: 1'-8'.