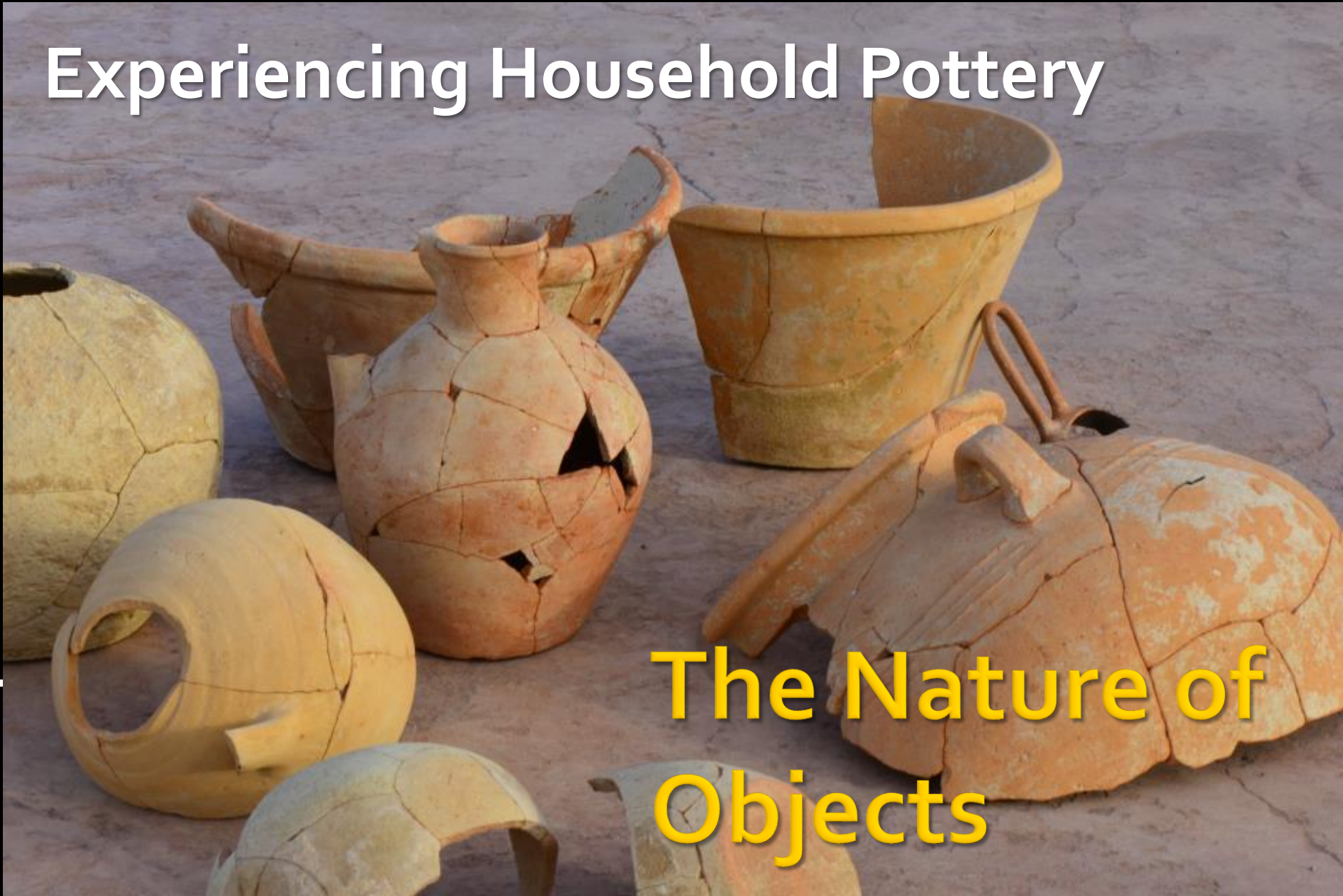


Experiencing Household Pottery

The Nature of
Objects



Transforming Clay

- Very ancient technology:
 - Most ancient transformation of physical properties of material
 - Dolní Věstonice: Upper Palaeolithic, c.29,000–25,000 BCE
- Indicates development of several skills:
 - Procurement & treatment of clays
 - Manipulation of clays
 - Pyrotechnology



Figurines from
Dolni Vestonice



Pottery Production

- Clay pots first develop in Near East in 8th millennium BP
 - Yarmukian culture
 - Bowls & globular jars with tall necks
 - Some decorated
- Used for serving & consuming food
 - Socialised communal activity
 - Not for storage or cooking



Yarmukian pottery



Pottery and Daily Life

- How we use & handle pottery shapes daily experiences:
 - *Habitus*



Sensory Archaeology: Experiencing Pottery

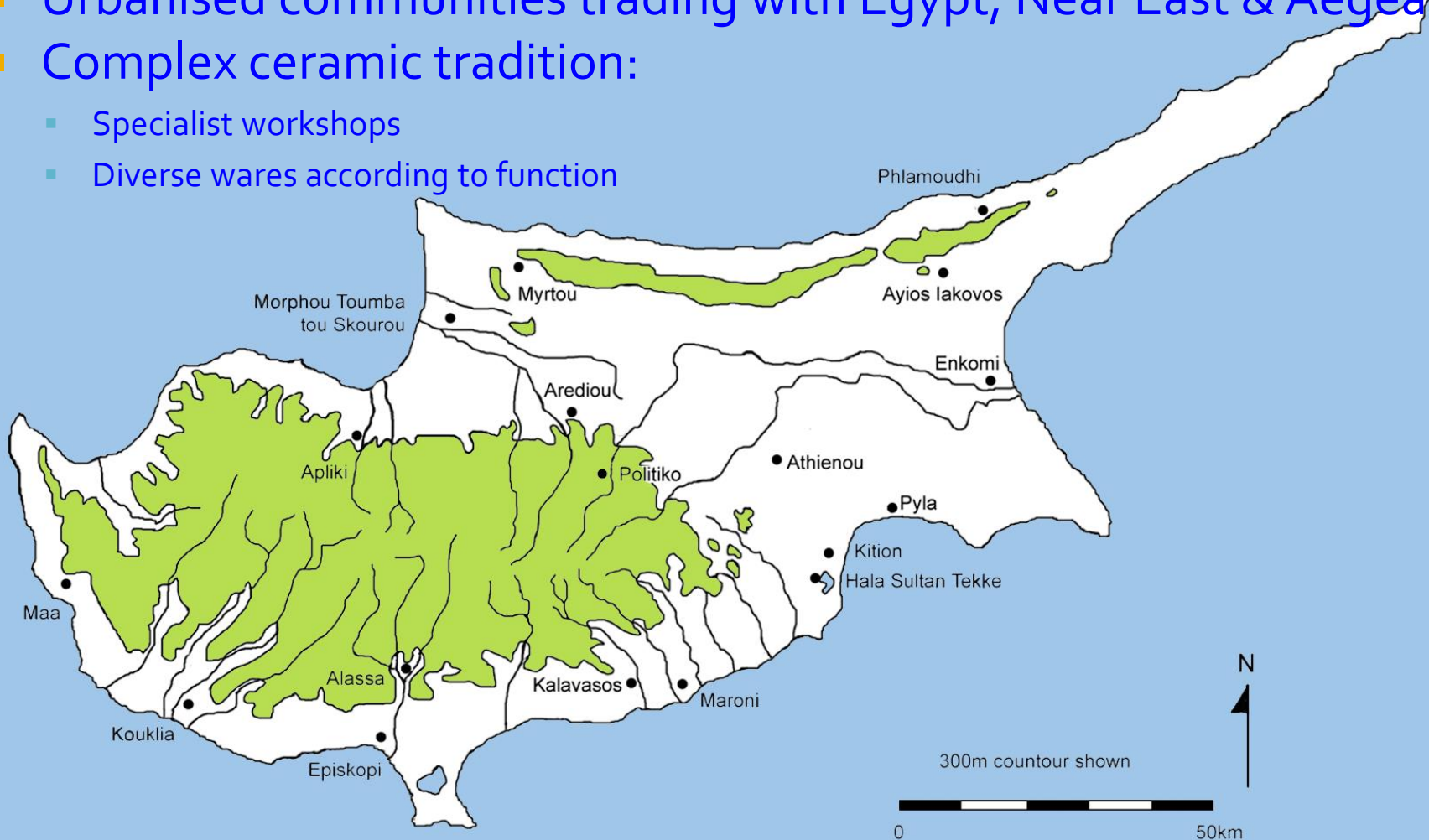
- People become social beings through repeated, culturally situated & embodied interactions with the material world
- We cannot **observe** people using objects...
 - ... nor **question** them about their household practices
- Haptic engagement with the materiality of ancient pottery:
 - We can share some of the physical, tactile sensations of handling their pots & pans
 - What this might tell us about ancient embodied practices & daily household



Restoring pottery, Cyprus

Case Study: LBA Cyprus

- Late Cypriot (LC) II: 1400-1200 BCE
- Urbanised communities trading with Egypt, Near East & Aegean
- Complex ceramic tradition:
 - Specialist workshops
 - Diverse wares according to function



Production

- Essentially conservative industry: potters are resistant to change
- Forming vessels: mastering several motor-neuron skills acquired from childhood
- Cyprus: sophisticated production:
 - Network of specialist workshops
 - Mix of handmade & wheelmade technologies
 - Greatly valued **beyond** Cyprus



Late Cypriot Innovations

- Wheelmade pottery
- Increased firing temperatures & more elaborate production:
 - Specialisation
- Round-bottomed vessels gradually replaced by flat or ring based vessels
- Implications?
 - Production: easier to throw on wheel
 - Handling & functionality: laid out on a table?



Black Slip jug



Plain ware jug

Base Ring Ware



Krater, Alalakh



Bull vase



Juglet



Figurines



cup

Late Cypriot Table Ware

- White Slip bowls:
 - Embedded in Cypriot daily life
 - Expression of personal identity & belonging
- How were these handled & used?
 - Material habitus
- Representational information:
 - Cupped in right hand



White Slip bowl



Red Lustrous arm vessels

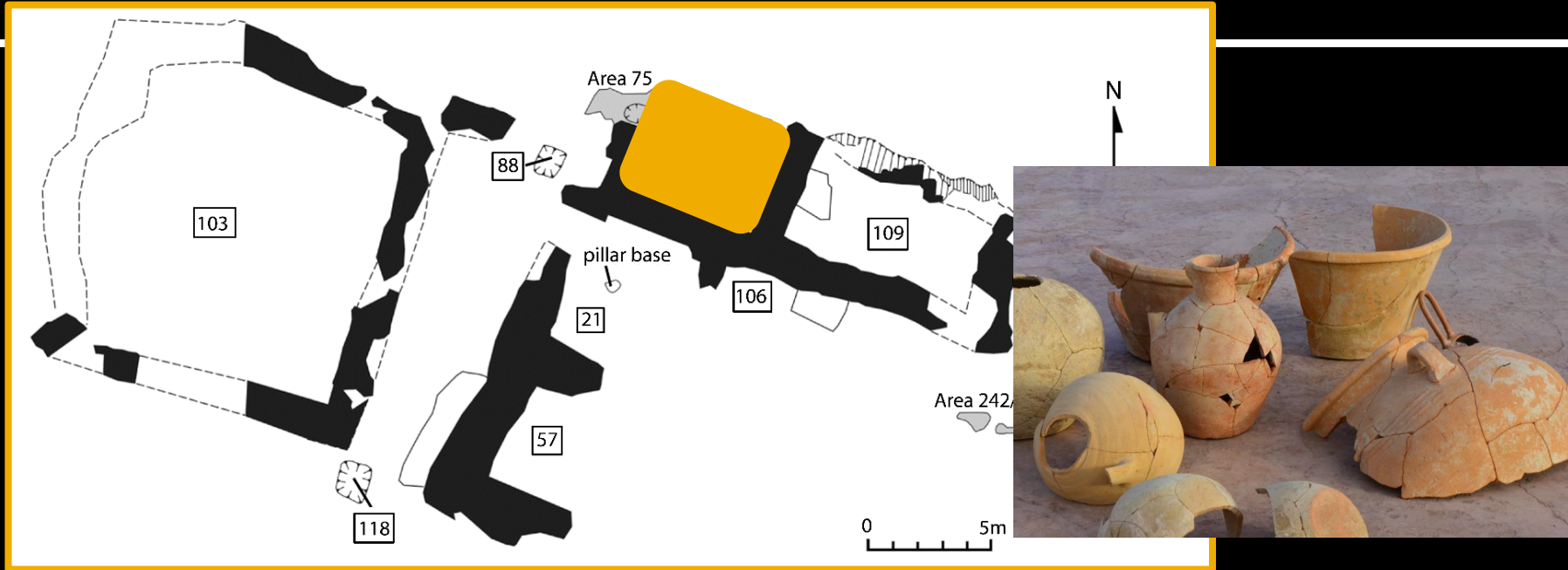
Household Pottery

- Daily household experience in LBA mediated through Plain ware:
 - Jugs
 - Basins
 - Storage jars
- Standardised forms, sizes, fabrics:
 - Specialist products
 - Development of supra-household economic network
- Associated with everyday storage & preparation of foodstuffs



Plain ware pottery

Experiencing Pottery at Arediou



- Arediou: 13th century BCE farming site supporting copper mines
- Building 1: apparently associated with extra-household processing & consumption of foodstuffs
 - Unusually well-preserved assemblage of Plain ware vessels

Bowls

- Flat bottomed bowls:
 - Designed to be placed on a flat surface:
 - Portable furniture incorporated within dining activities
- Small size: amount of food & drink being consumed
- Pairs of bowls:
 - Sets of vessels
 - Dining in pairs
 - Probably cupped in the hand
- Supported by representational material



Megiddo ivory

Commensality & Material Habitus

- Bowls are possibly the most intimate of the Plain ware vessel
 - Thoroughly entangled in people's lives
 - Incorporated within the **body schema** of the person holding & drinking from the bowl
 - Liquid contents **becoming-with** the body



Bowl

Jug

- Most common vessel at Arediou
- Typically round-mouthed
- Particularly suited to hold & pour water
 - Compact fabric
 - Sufficiently porous & permeable to allow liquids to slowly seep through vessel walls & evaporate
- Arediou: provisioning of workers with water was a primary concern

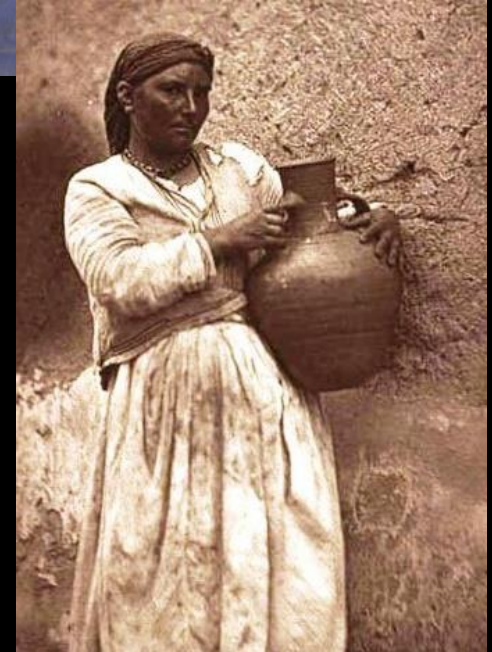


Jug

- Around 25cm tall
 - Substantial body
 - Heavy items: held by the handle for pouring the liquid contents & probably also supported at the body
- Regularly handled on a daily basis & regularly broken:
 - Embedded in LC material habitus & sensory experience



Jug



Water carrier

Basin

- Found in significant quantities, usually in a very fragmented state:
 - Heavy usage
- Large, cumbersome & probably be used in situ
 - Bulk processing of non liquid foodstuffs
 - Presentation & serving of foodstuffs for large numbers of people
- Association with jugs is intriguing:
 - Mixing liquid & dry substances



Basin

Working with the Pithos

- Around 0.5m high
- Essentially non-portable & occupied a substantial space within Building 1
 - People would have to move around it as they performed tasks
 - Part of their embodied knowledge of movement within an enclosed space



Pithos

Working with the Pithos

- Open neck: contained dry foodstuffs
 - Relatively short-term storage, perhaps replenished annually
 - Contents easily accessed
 - Probably used on a daily basis
- Physical interaction restricted to those responsible for preparing food
 - Replenishing & extracting food
 - Not essentially handled, just held around rim?



Pithos

Summary

- The only way we can know the lived experiences of past communities is through the material world:
 - The objects people made & used on a daily basis.
- Pottery has been entangled in people's lives since the Neolithic: daily experiences of preparing & consuming food
- LBA Cyprus: extremely rich & varied world crafted from clay
- Plain wares from Arediou Building 1:
 - Think about how people physically interacted with this group of material in repeated daily activities