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THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF MYCENAEAN IMPORTED POTTERY IN CYPRUS¹

INTRODUCTION

CONSIDERABLE quantities of Mycenaean pottery have been found throughout the Near East, Egypt and Cyprus. Most interest in this pottery has focused on its chronological and geographical distribution and the range of imported vessel types.² There has been rather less emphasis on how these imports were integrated within the Near Eastern cultural assemblages: specifically looking at the context in which the imports were found, their relationship with the indigenous ceramics and what overall impact they had on the indigenous material culture and its associated social activity. Thus the value and function of Mycenaean pottery within specific Late Bronze Age oriental cultures is still poorly understood. Certain elements of the cultural repertoire, primarily those associated with dress, diet, and utilization of living space, are closely integrated with a specific cultural or ethnic identity; these cultural elements will be assigned certain meanings by the social or cultural groups which create them. As a corollary, once these artefacts move from their indigenous environment to a new cultural setting they will be attributed new functions and imbued with new meanings.³ Therefore the distribution of imports (whether they are restricted to specific contexts and/or social groups) and the impact that they might have on the indigenous material culture (either functionally, technologically or artistically) and associated activities, should be indicative of the role and value of these imports within the recipient society. This article examines the context and function of Mycenaean pottery imported to Cyprus during the Late Cypriot II period, from the late fifteenth to the mid-thirteenth century BC, to assess its impact on Late Cypriot society.

¹ This article is based on a paper presented to the Institute of Classical Studies, September 1996, and presents the preliminary results of research carried out at the Department of Archaeology, the University of Edinburgh, funded by the Michael Ventris Scholarship and a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. Abbreviations in addition to those in standard use:

Acts = *Acts of the International Symposium 'The Mycenaeans in the East Mediterranean'* (Nicosia, 1973).

Cypriot Ceramics = J. A. Barlow, D. L. Bolger, and B. Kling (eds) *Cypriot Ceramics: Reading the Prehistoric Record* (Philadelphia, 1991).

ESC = E. Peltenburg (ed.) *Early Society in Cyprus* (Edinburgh, 1989).

KAD ii = A. South *et al.*, *Kalavassos Ayios Dhimitrios, ii: Ceramics, Objects, Tombs, Specialist Studies (Vasilikos Valley Project 3)* (SIMA 71.3; Göteborg, 1989).

LC = Late Cypriot.

MPVP = E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).

SCE i = E. Gjerstad *et al.*, *Swedish Cyprus Expedition I* (Lund 1934).

SCE iv.1c = P. Åström *et al.*, *Swedish Cyprus Expedition iv.1c The Late Cypriot Bronze Age: Architecture and Pottery* (Lund, 1972).

² V. Hankey, 'Mycenaean pottery in the Middle East: notes on finds since 1951', *BSA* 62 (1967), 107–47; G. Cadogan, in *Acts*, 166–74; id. (1993) 'Cyprus, Mycenaean pottery, trade and colonisation', in C. Zerner (ed.) *Wace and Blegen. Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Aegean Bronze Age. 1939–1989*, (Amsterdam, 1993), 91–9; most recently A. L. Leonard, *An Index to the Late Bronze Age Aegean Pottery from Syria-Palestine* (SIMA 114; Jonsered, 1994).

³ A. Appadurai, 'Introduction: commodities and the politics of value', in A. Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986); K. Arafat and C. Morgan, 'Athens, Etruria and the Heuneburg: mutual misconceptions in the study of Greek-barbarian relations', in I. Morris (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge, 1994), 108. For the adoption of specific elements of another culture see L.V. Watrous, 'The role of the Near East in the rise of Cretan palaces', in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Function of Minoan Palaces* (Stockholm, 1967), 66; J. Smith, 'Cylinder Seals in the Aegean: Contextual and Spatial Analyses of Exchange', (unpublished MA thesis, Bryn Mawr, 1989); Y. Marshall and A. Maas, 'Dashing dishes', *World Archaeology* 28.3, 275–90.

The use of Mycenaean-type pottery on the island after the destructions of c.1200 BC is not under discussion as this is a quite separate phenomenon and was a reaction to very different social and economic systems and different modes of cultural interaction.

DISTRIBUTION⁴

There are three main phases of Aegean imported pottery to Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age. Between LH I and LH II A (or LM I) only small quantities of Aegean imports are found on the island. As is typical throughout the contemporary East Mediterranean, the bulk of this pottery comes from Crete, and there are few Mycenaean imports. There is a dramatic increase in the quantity of Mycenaean pottery imported to the East Mediterranean in LH II B–III A₁ alongside a decrease in the levels of imported Minoan pottery. This reflects political and economic changes in the Aegean with the emergence of the Greek mainland as the predominant economic and political force superseding Minoan Crete. In LH III A₂–III B₁ (during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC) there is a flood of Mycenaean imports to the East Mediterranean, which is largely centred on the island of Cyprus.

The main concentration of Mycenaean imported pottery in Cyprus is in the major urban centres and emporia along the south and east coast, such as Enkomi, Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke, Maroni, Kourion. While significant quantities of Mycenaean pottery have been found on Cyprus it comprises only a small percentage of the total ceramic assemblage.⁵ In fact fine wares, including the indigenous Base Ring and White Slip, are consistently outnumbered by the utilitarian wares—cooking ware, plain ware, pithos, and monochrome. Mycenaean imports are particularly rare in settlement deposits and rubbish dumps, and are most frequently found in ceremonial⁶ and more specifically in funerary contexts.⁷

The range of Mycenaean shapes is restricted in comparison to the full repertoire available in the contemporary Aegean. The most popular imported shapes are closed vessels. These can be divided into containers with wide mouths—the squat and the angular alabastron and the piriform jar—and slow pouring vessels. Examples of the latter included a variety of stirrup jars, globular flasks, and small juglets. These vases were imported for their contents rather than the intrinsic value of the vessel itself; the most popular contender for the exported commodity is scented oils.⁸ Fine drinking sets were also imported to Cyprus and include the quintessential pictorial krater, a variety of shallow cups, bowls, and occasionally chalices or kylikes. Certain peculiarities of the Cypriot repertoire might indicate the existence of a

⁴ G. Cadogan in *Acts*, 168–71.

⁵ H. W. Catling 'Aegean pottery in Late Bronze Age Cyprus', in R. E. Jones, *Greek and Cypriot Pottery: A Review of Scientific Studies* (Athens, 1986), 591. At Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, for example, Aegean imports at most comprise only 1–2% of the total excavated ceramics (before the inclusion of the plain wares and pithos to the total counts), A. K. South and P. Russell, 'Mycenaean pottery and social hierarchy at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Cyprus', in C. Zerner (ed.), *Wace and Blegen. Pottery as Evidence for Trade in the Aegean Bronze Age. 1939–1989*, (Amsterdam, 1993), 303.

⁶ For example note the predominance of Mycenaean

pottery in the LC II A sanctuary at Ayia-Irini, *SCE* i. 356–61, pl. lxvi. Also note the dump of Mycenaean drinking equipment in a LC II C pit/latrine in Building X at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios (A. 173), together with meat-bearing bones of caprine, probably the debris of elite feasting in the administrative/public area of the site: A. South, 'Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios 1987', *RDAC* 1988, Part 1, 227–8: South and Russell (n. 5), 304–6.

⁷ Cadogan, in *Acts*, 169.

⁸ A. L. Leonard. 'Considerations of morphological variation in the Mycenaean pottery from the southeastern Mediterranean', *BASOR* 241 (1989), 94–100.

specifically targeted export market:⁹ bowls with wishbone handle, undoubtedly influenced by the local Cypriot ceramic repertoire,¹⁰ the pictorial krater, in particular the chariot krater, and the shallow bowl. While it has been suggested that the chariot kraters had been specifically commissioned as fine funerary gifts,¹¹ Keswani notes that Mycenaean vases found in LC tomb groups, including the large kraters, frequently exhibit signs of wear (abrasion, chips on the rim, handles, base, etc.) which does not appear to be post-depositional. Instead, Keswani suggests that the vases were in use for some time in settlement contexts before being deposited in tombs.¹² This is supported by the occurrence of a chariot krater which had been mended in antiquity with a lead clamp.¹³

The character of Mycenaean imports to Cyprus changes during the thirteenth century, alongside a reduction in their number.¹⁴ Moreover, the range of shapes begins to diverge sharply from that on the Greek mainland.¹⁵ The principal differences in Cyprus are the absence of the LH III B deep bowl or skyphos and the popularity of the shallow bowl (FS 295).¹⁶ The first locally made Mycenaean pottery (White Painted Wheelmade III) is produced on Cyprus from the thirteenth century. This was perhaps a reaction to the decline in quantities of imported Mycenaean vases. The Cypriots had developed a taste for certain vessel types, which had become prerequisite elements of funerary equipment, and the absence of a continuous supply from the west may have forced them to seek other alternatives.¹⁷

There is a close relationship between the Mycenaean imports found on Cyprus and along the Levantine coast, implying that both areas were the focus of a single trading endeavour. The major difference is one of quantity rather than quality or type.¹⁸ Cyprus was apparently the more important or primary recipient of the Mycenaean imports and perhaps controlled this aspect of trade with the Aegean. Hankey suggests that there was an intensive selection process on the island, where the Cypriots selected their choice of vases before they passed on the remainder to the Levant together with large quantities of Cypriot Base Ring and White Slip.¹⁹

Because of certain peculiarities in the repertoire of shapes found in the East Mediterranean, and in particular the popularity of the pictorial syle in this area (which is found in far greater quantities in Cyprus and the Near East than on the Greek mainland), it was originally believed that the Mycenaean pottery found in the East Mediterranean was made locally.²⁰ Subsequently, chemical analyses of Mycenaean pottery have shown the vessels to be imports from the Aegean²¹—although it has also been suggested that the clay itself was imported from the Aegean and the vessels made locally on Cyprus.²² Even in archaic and classical times,

⁹ E.S. Sherratt, 'Patterns of contact between the Aegean and Cyprus in the 13th and 12th centuries BC', *Archaeologia Cypria*, 3 (1994), 36.

¹⁰ V. Karageorghis, *Kition: Mycenaean and Phoenician Discoveries in Cyprus* (London, 1976), pl. iv.

¹¹ MPVP 8.

¹² P. S. Keswani, 'Mortuary Ritual and Social Hierarchy in Bronze Age Cyprus' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan), 1989, 562.

¹³ V. Karageorghis, 'A Late Mycenaean III B chariot crater from Cyprus', *RDAC* 1982, 82.

¹⁴ Catling (n. 5), 594.

¹⁵ But see Sherratt (n. 9), 35.

¹⁶ Ead. 'Regional variation in the pottery of Late Helladic IIIB', *BSA* 75 (1980), 196.

¹⁷ Ead. (n. 9), 36.

¹⁸ V. Hankey (n. 2), 145.

¹⁹ *ibid.* 146.

²⁰ E. Sjöqvist, *Problems of the Late Cypriote Bronze Age* (Stockholm, 1940), 30: the Levanto-Helladic ware.

²¹ H. W. Catling *et al.*, 'Correlations between composition and provenance of Mycenaean and Minoan pottery', *BSA* 58 (1963), 94–115; H. W. Catling and A. Millett, 'A Study in the composition and provenance of Mycenaean Pictorial Pottery from Cyprus', *BSA* 60 (1965), 212–24; H. W. Catling *et al.*, 'Composition and provenance problems in Late Bronze Age pottery', *RDAC* (1978), 70–90; F. Asaro and I. Perlman, 'Provenience studies of Mycenaean pottery employing Neutron Activation Analysis', in *Acts*, 213–24.

²² MPVP 9.

however, it is difficult to substantiate the movement of clays for manufacturing fine wares.²³ Moreover, the technical skill involved in the manufacture of Mycenaean pottery would probably have been outside the expertise of local potters who were schooled in a very different ceramic tradition,²⁴ although this does not preclude the movement of itinerant potters with the clay(s) of their choice. Instead, I have worked on the assumption that Mycenaean pottery found on Cyprus from the fifteenth to the thirteenth century BC is intrusive to the island and was imported from the Aegean. Only with the manufacture of the White Painted Wheelmade III ware from the latter part of the thirteenth century were vessels of Aegean type manufactured on the island on a large scale.²⁵ Visually the distinction between imported Mycenaean vases and the White Painted Wheelmade III ware can be made according to the quality of the clay, surface finish, and painted decoration,²⁶ but wherever possible this distinction should be supported through chemical and petrographic analyses.²⁷

THE LATE BRONZE AGE ON CYPRUS

The place that Cyprus occupied in the cosmopolitan world of the East Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age is still somewhat equivocal. The contemporary Levant was divided into small city states which fell under the political or military hegemony of the various major powers of the Near East, principally the Egyptians, the Mitanni, and the Hittites. Whether or not Cyprus was subsumed within these larger political entities is unclear, as is the internal political organization of the island. The question remains, moreover, whether Cyprus (or any part of it) should be equated with the important copper-producing power of Alashiya. If this is the case then the island (or part thereof) was an independent and wealthy power whose ruler certainly regarded himself as the equal of the Egyptian Pharaoh. On the other hand, if

²³ Boardman suggests the movement of clay from Chios to Naukratis as ballast in corn ships, J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas. Their Early Colonies and Trade*, (London, 1980), 123. D. W. J. Gill, 'METRUMENECE: an Etruscan painted inscription on a mid-5th-century BC red-figure cup from Poulonia', *Antiquity* 61 (1987), 82–3 for example suggests that an Attic red-figured sherd found at Populonia marked in Etruscan before firing is evidence for the movement of clays to Etruria as no Athenian painter-potter would have marked a vase in Etruscan. See Arafat and Morgan (n. 3), n. 1 for objections to transport of clay. Keswani (n. 12), 557 has also suggested that it was not feasible to move substantial quantities of clay by sea without some difficulties because of the bulkiness of the clay. More importantly a possible production centre for Mycenaean pottery apparently specializing in vases specifically targeted at the eastern market has been identified at Berbati, A. Åkerström, *Berbati ii, The Pictorial Pottery*, 119–20; J. H. Crouwel, *Well Built Mycenae. The Helleno-British Excavations within the Citadel at Mycenae, 1959–1969*, Fascicule 21 (Oxford, 1991), 27.

²⁴ Ethnographic studies of pottery production have shown that the motor habit patterns and skills involved in learning a particular ceramic technology are usually acquired over a long period and most easily and effectively during childhood.

It is more difficult to acquire these skills and to achieve the same level of competency as an adult. D. E. Arnold, *Ceramic Theory and Cultural Process* (Cambridge, 1985), 205–6. As a corollary, Arnold notes the enormous difficulties involved in transmitting technological innovations across cultural boundaries: 'First, the motor habit patterns of the innovation may be incompatible with the motor habit patterns already existing in the society. The wheel for example, may be resisted because the traditional motor habit patterns may not conform to those required by this innovation' (ibid. 221). This has enormous implications for the appearance and eventual adoption of wheel-made Mycenaean fine wares (both imports and local copies) in Cyprus.

²⁵ Sherratt interprets the increasing standardization and apparent mass production of pottery (specifically the WPWM III ware) as part of a general process of urbanization and administrative centralization on Cyprus during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC: c. f. *Cypriot Ceramics*, 191.

²⁶ P. Russell, in *KAD* ii. 7, 8.

²⁷ For a summary of provenience studies of Late Bronze Age Cyprus and bibliography c. f. A. B. Knapp and J. F. Cherry, *Provenience Studies and Bronze Age Cyprus: Production, Exchange and Politico-Economic Change* (Madison, Wis., 1984), 18, 21–3, 45–6, 61–2.

Alashiya is to be located elsewhere then the question of the ancient identity of Cyprus remains unresolved.²⁸

The political organization of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age is difficult to determine; whether the island was a single political unit or was subdivided into a number of smaller polities is beyond the scope of this article.²⁹ It is possible, however, to make certain, broad generalizations as to the internal organization of the island. Cyprus was characterized by a number of prosperous, large urban centres along the south and east coast. The high level of intra-site organization at these sites is indicated by the large ashlar-built structures, possibly administrative centres and/or residences of the local élite, at Alassa, Maroni, and Kalavassos.³⁰ Many towns were dependent on the exploitation of their hinterland for agricultural and mineral sources, primarily copper,³¹ whereas others derived their wealth from their participation in the East Mediterranean trading system. In addition to these urban centres there were a number of smaller inland settlements; some were no doubt associated with the exploitation of the island's rich copper resources while others would have been small farming communities.³² This lowest level of Cypriot settlement organization is little known archaeologically.

THE MARZEAH, DRINKING SETS AND MYCENAEAN POTTERY

Alongside the increasing urbanization and Cypriot participation in Late Bronze Age trade networks there was a concomitant concentration of large quantities of wealth in the hands of a few and the emergence of a new social class or élite group. These social changes are particularly evident in Late Cypriot funerary practices.³³ Elaborate mortuary display was one vehicle through which the emergent élite group could express its new identity and differentiate itself from other social groups; there was a floruit of wealthily equipped burials, in particular

²⁸ Cf. R. Merrillees, *Alashiya Revisited* (Paris, 1987) for a review of the history of research on the Alashiya question. A. B. Knapp *et al.*, *Sources for the History of Cyprus II: Near Eastern and Aegean Texts from the Third to the First Millennium BC*, Greece and Cyprus Research Centre. Cf. also J. Smith, 'Seals for Sealing in the Late Bronze Age', (unpublished PhD. thesis, Bryn Mawr, 1994), 9–44, for discussion of historical and systemic models of LC political complexity (chiefdom or state) and discussion of Alashiya.

²⁹ It has been suggested that there was a unified island-wide kingdom [of Alashiya?] on Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age, possibly dominated by a pre-eminent centre, usually assumed to be Enkomi; A. B. Knapp, 'Ideology, archaeology and polity', *Man*, (NS) 23 (1988), 151–2, J. Muhly, 'The organization of the copper industry in Late Bronze Age Cyprus', in *ESC* 303. Keswani, however, 'Models of local exchange in Late Bronze Age Cyprus', *BASOR* 292 (1993), 74–5 argues against an island-wide polity, noting the very great regional variation in 'state' architecture (temples etc.), the lack of evidence for a coherent administrative technology, and the lack of evidence for an administrative or social hierarchy centred on Enkomi as indicated by the patterning of élite funerary assemblages across the island. Others have also noted the regional-based organization of Late Bronze Age Cyprus, based on local control of copper or

agricultural resources, J. M. Webb and D. Frankel, 'Making an impression: storage and surplus finance in Late Bronze Age Cyprus', *JMA* 7 (1994), 5, or the élite's privileged access to the Late Bronze Age international trading systems.

³⁰ A. B. Knapp, 'The bronze age economy of Cyprus', in V. Karageorghis and D. Michaelides (eds), *The Development of the Cypriot Economy from the Prehistoric Period to the Present* (Nicosia, 1996), 79–80.

³¹ A. K. South, 'From copper to kingship: aspects of Bronze Age society viewed from the Vasilikos valley', in *ESC* 319.

³² H.W. Catling, 'Patterns of settlement in Bronze Age Cyprus', *Op. Ath.* 4 (1963), 144–5; c.f. also discussion in Keswani (n. 29), 76–80. For example a LC I smelting site at Politiko-Phorades, A. B. Knapp, *The Archaeology of Late Bronze Age Cypriot Society. The Study of Settlement, Survey, and Landscape* (Glasgow, 1997), 41. Analiondas-Palioklichia is probably an example of a small agricultural village, c. f. J. M. Webb and D. Frankel (n. 29), 5–26 and the so-called LC IIIA sanctuary at Ayia Irini (*SCE* i. 820–1) likewise demonstrates all the characteristics of an agricultural production and storage centre, probably dating to LC II C.

³³ P. S. Keswani, 'Dimensions of social hierarchy in Late Bronze Age Cyprus: an analysis of the mortuary data from Enkomi', *JMA* 2 (1989), 49–86.

associated with the prosperous urban centres. Membership of this élite group might have been expected to be expressed through privileged access to luxury exotica from the Near East, such as faience vases, gold jewellery, ivories, and admission to particular mortuary facilities. Certain ceremonial and leisure activities were likewise apparently restricted to the élite group. Of particular interest is ritual drinking which appears to have become an important, but restricted, element of mortuary display, as is indicated by an increasing variety of types of drinking and serving vessels forming elaborate drinking-sets that were deposited in tombs. Elaborate drinking ritual was widespread throughout the ancient Near East and is known from both textual evidence, for example the activities of the Ugaritic *marzeah*,³⁴ and archaeological remains: the widespread occurrence of drinking-sets often in funerary assemblages. Such drinking ritual was exclusively aristocratic and often had funerary connotations. This exotic lifestyle incorporating ritual drinking appears to have been disseminated to Cyprus³⁵ where it was adopted by the emergent élite group as a means of defining their status and establishing ancestral rights. There is no evidence that such activity on Cyprus was specifically restricted to male participants, unlike the Near East. Instead both females and males were buried with drinking-sets, such as the three females from Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios tomb 11 buried with a pair of kraters, each containing a cup.³⁶ This practice continued into the Iron Age, again with evidence for female participation. Particularly noteworthy are the cremation burial from Kourion-Kaloriziki provided with a metal urn and strainer (the cremation urn), as well as a ceramic krater and several deep bowls,³⁷ and the Hubbard amphora decorated with a seated female drinking through a siphon from a large jar.³⁸

Close examination of the range of ceramics deposited in Late Cypriot tombs reveals that elaborate drinking services, made in a variety of wares and comprising a wide range of shapes, are represented between the sixteenth and fourteenth centuries BC. Typical sets comprise kraters for mixing wine, jugs, so-called tankards (probably jugs), large spouted bowls, and various forms of drinking vessel. In the south-central part of the island, around Kalavassos and Maroni there was a particular taste for such drinking-sets in the White Slip ware, perhaps best illustrated by the range of shapes deposited in Kalavassos tombs 1, 4, and 5.³⁹ Many shapes, and in particular the vessels made in the Base Ring ware, appear to imitate metal vases, perhaps indicating metal dinner services were associated with such activities within the settlement but that these vases were not taken out of circulation for deposition within a mortuary context. On the other hand, it should be noted that considerable technical expertise was invested in the manufacture of these drinking-sets, in particular the impressive large jugs in the Base Ring ware, which might stand at around 50 cm in height, but with a wall thickness

³⁴ J. B. Carter, 'Ancestor cult and the occasion of heroic performance', in J. B. Carter and S. Morris (eds), *The Ages of Homer. A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* (Austin, 1995), 303. C. f. e.g. S. Langdon, 'The return of the horse-leader', *AJA* 93 (1989), fig. 13, or scenes on cylinder seals of the late second millennium BC, G. Contenau, *La Glyptique syro-hittite* (Paris, 1922), pl. XXVII, figs. 193, 196.

³⁵ See for example E. Hersher (forthcoming) in R. Laffineur (ed.), *Four Thousand Years of Images on Cypriot Pottery*.

³⁶ E. Goring, 'Death in everyday life: aspects of burial practices in the Late Bronze Age', in *ESC* 102.

³⁷ G. H. McFadden, 'A Late Cypriot III Tomb from Kourion Kaloriziki no. 40', *AJA* 58 (1954), 131–42.

³⁸ P. Dikaios, 'An Iron Age painted amphora in the Cyprus Museum', *BSA* 37 (1936–7), 56–72, pls. 7, 8a. V. Karageorghis and J. des Gagniers, *La Céramique chypriote de style figuré. Âge du fer (1050–500 av. J.-C.)* (Rome, 1974), 6–9.

³⁹ *KAD* ii, figs. 43, 48–52, 57, pls. xxi, xxiii–xxv, xxviii. See also the range of White Slip vessels in M. R. Popham, 'White Slip ware', *SCE* iv.1c, fig. 55, many of which are from the Kalavassos region.

of only 2–3 mm, and a very fine surface finish. These were obviously made by highly skilled craftsmen, involving a considerable input of man-hours, and appear to be specifically commissioned for élite burials. Other fine wares with a similar range of shapes are also represented, such as the Bichrome Wheelmade ware widely disseminated throughout Cyprus, the Near East, and Egypt.⁴⁰ This might imply that the associated activity was likewise widely distributed and that through active participation in this ritual the Cypriot élite could claim membership of the cosmopolitan aristocracy of the Near East.

The question arises therefore, how Mycenaean imports of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries were incorporated within this well-established pattern of behaviour? It is evident that the massive influx of Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus during this period had a significant impact on this élite activity with far-reaching consequences for the indigenous ceramic industry. Mycenaean pottery was immediately very popular and drinking-sets in this ware, comprising shallow cups, occasional chalices, and of course the krater, were adopted for use within a funerary context. An interesting feature of these drinking-sets is that they were frequently decorated in the pictorial style, especially the kraters. Indeed, one of the characteristic exports to Cyprus was the chariot krater, of which numerous examples are found in the wealthy burials in the large urban centres. This is paralleled to a certain extent on the Levantine mainland,⁴¹ but the chariot krater was only exceptionally included amongst funerary furniture back in the Aegean.⁴² It should be noted that the drinking-sets (and, as a corollary, Mycenaean pictorial pottery) were restricted to the wealthier burials of the Cypriot élite group, implying that the imports were quickly appropriated by this group and incorporated within a pre-existing funerary drinking ritual as an emblem of their status. It might be argued that, as in the sixteenth to fourteenth century, ritual drinking activity within a settlement context probably would have been associated with metal vases, but that within a funerary context the élite sought a ceramic substitute rather than remove large quantities of metal vases from circulation.⁴³ This is not to argue, however, that the vessels themselves were not of intrinsic value. Their popularity in élite tombs clearly indicates that they were a valued element of the cultural repertoire in LC society. The activity with which these vases were intrinsically associated had a purely élite connotation: the distribution of the Mycenaean

⁴⁰ C. Epstein, *Palestinian Bichrome Ware* (Leiden, 1966), fig. 1: for distribution of ware.

⁴¹ Leonard (n. 2), 23–7.

⁴² P. A. Mountjoy *Mycenaean Pottery. An Introduction* (Oxford, 1993), 73.

⁴³ E. S. Sherratt, pers. comm. Excavations at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, however, indicate that most Mycenaean pottery, or the greatest variety of shapes, is found in the élite administrative North-East Area: P. J. Russell, 'The Pottery from the Late Cypriot II C Settlement at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Cyprus: the 1979–1984 Excavations Seasons', (unpublished PhD dissertation University of Pennsylvania, 1986, 81); South and Russell (n. 5), 304. Particularly noteworthy is the deliberate deposition of Mycenaean drinking equipment in a latrine (A. 173) inside Building X: South (n. 6) 227–8; South and Russell (n. 5), 304–6. Also note that drinking-sets in bronze, or more exceptionally in gold or silver, were included in LC tomb groups, such as the gold cup which accompanied the

famous Zeus krater in Enkomi Swedish tomb 17: *SCE* i, pls. lxxxvii.1 no. 61, cxlvii.11. There is definitely a change in fashion in LC II C–III A, with a move towards depositing bronze vessels in tomb groups possibly, as the more readily available locally produced WPWM III ware ousted Mycenaean imports, this became a further means of social differentiation. By LC III A the hemispherical bronze bowl had become the funerary gift *par excellence*. Note for example the set of ten bronze bowls with a bronze jug with the LC II C burials in Enkomi Swedish tomb 18 (*SCE* i, pl. lxxxviii), the bronze drinking-set deposited with the LC III A burial in Hala Sultan Tekke tomb 23 (K. Niklasson, 'Tomb 23. A shaft grave of the Late Cypriot III period', in P. Åström *et al.*, *Hala Sultan Tekke 8. Excavations 1971–1979* (SIMA 45.8, Göteborg, 1983), figs. 488–90: N1220–2), and the set of bronzes in Kouklia-Teratsoudhia tomb 104 chamber N, also of LC III A date (V. Karageorghis *et al.*, *Tombs at Palaepaphos. 1. Teratsoudhia, 2. Eliomylia* (Nicosia, 1990) pls. xxiv, liv, nos. 66, 67, 69, 90).

drinking-sets was certainly restricted within Late Cypriot society. In many respects they qualify as luxury imports, or as 'goods whose principal use is rhetorical and social': they were restricted (either by price or sumptuary laws) to the élite, they conveyed complex social messages, and their appropriate use required specialized knowledge.⁴⁴

This widespread adoption of Mycenaean table wares in a mortuary context by the élite group had a dramatic impact on the indigenous Cypriot repertoire of fine wares. During the course of the fourteenth century these are completely replaced by the intrusive fine wares imported from the Aegean specifically within the context of the the funerary drinking ritual. While both Base Ring and White Slip continue to be manufactured and to be widely used in domestic and, to a lesser extent, funerary contexts, and also to be exported east in large quantities, it is evident that there is some diminution of the role of these ceramics locally. This is illustrated by the dramatic contraction in the range of shapes made in both wares: the kraters, tankards and jugs (shapes specifically associated with drinking ritual) disappear. The vast range of bowls represented among the White Slip II repertoire in the earlier part of the Late Cypriot II period⁴⁵ contracts to a mundane selection of rather ugly hemispherical bowls decorated in the 'Normal Style'.⁴⁶ Likewise the Base Ring repertoire shrinks, only to include small juglets (bilbils) and the ubiquitous carinated cup. The latter shape was especially popular in sanctuary contexts, and might have been more specifically associated with libations,⁴⁷ but its predominance amongst the fine wares in settlement contexts indicates that it was the preferred drinking cup,⁴⁸ at least when Mycenaean cups were not available. Therefore, it appears that the influx of luxury drinking-sets from the Aegean resulted in a cessation in demand for the highly specialized drinking-sets in the indigenous fine wares; the market contracted to a more restricted range of mass-produced, although still handmade, vessels, which are found across the spectrum and are not restricted to the élite.

Therefore, while it is evident that Mycenaean imported pottery had a significant impact on social activity in Cyprus, and as a result on the indigenous material culture, this is not evidence for the introduction of an Aegean custom to Cyprus. Instead, the élite activity of social drinking with funerary connotations was already well established in Cyprus. The Mycenaean imports were consequently integrated within a pre-existing custom, much as the later import of Greek pottery to Hallstatt Europe was 'incorporated within an existing pattern of élite consumption'⁴⁹ as one element in a package of élite display and consumption.

PICTORIAL POTTERY

Why should Mycenaean pottery have had such a powerful impact on Late Cypriot social behaviour and ultimately on its material culture? A similar phenomenon has been noted in Etruria and Hallstatt Europe during the first millennium BC, with the adoption of Attic black-and red-figured pottery. In this instance it has been suggested that part of the attraction might be the novel pictorial decoration of the Attic imports.⁵⁰ A similar hypothesis might equally be

⁴⁴ A. Appadurai (n. 3), 38.

⁴⁵ Russell (n. 26), 4. See for example figs. 48–52.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* (n. 26), 3.

⁴⁷ S. Vaughan (1991), 'Material and technical classification of Base Ring ware: a new fabric typology', in *Cypriot Ceramics*, 124.

⁴⁸ Russell (n. 43), 66, she notes that the shape would have been particularly suited for drinking wine as the sediment would have settled in the central cavity, leaving a clear liquid over the top.

⁴⁹ Arafat and Morgan (n. 3), 124.

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 113.

put forward for the attraction of the Mycenaean drinking-set in Late Bronze Age Cyprus: namely its very different appearance and in particular its use of an exclusive form of decoration, the pictorial style.⁵¹ In Cyprus Mycenaean pictorial vases occur primarily in high status funerary contexts, as elements of the elaborate drinking services, in particular the krater for mixing wine. This suggests a very restrictive distribution system within Late Cypriot society. By being buried, the drinking-sets were removed from general circulation within the Cypriot context by the pre-eminent social group as one of the many elements of luxury exotica through which they chose to define themselves. This does not explain, however, why these vases should have been so readily incorporated within Late Cypriot funerary ritual.

First it should be noted that the Cypriots already had a taste for pictorial vessels, which had largely been met through the Bichrome Wheelmade Ware. Pictorial images on Bichrome pottery mainly comprised panels of birds, fish, trees, or quadrupeds,⁵² and were not generally incorporated into elaborate scenes. A local response to the developing taste for pictorial pottery is demonstrated at Kalavassos by the rare (to date unique) pictorial White Slip krater, on which the painter-potter appears to have been attempting a more elaborate scene than was usually the case on the Bichrome kraters and tankards.⁵³ It is in this context that the appeal of the Mycenaean pictorial drinking-sets should be interpreted. Far more sophisticated than anything available in the Near East (in ceramic terms) the pictorial style would have been eagerly welcomed by the élite. The élite group had privileged access to this style and the ability to read and interpret the novel images. Closer analysis of the types of scenes that were so popular on the Mycenaean pictorial style indicates that for the most part they had strong aristocratic connotations and drew heavily on the iconography being used to decorate the contemporary Mycenaean palaces. This reflects the élite group's ability and desire to participate (or be seen to participate) in the cosmopolitan lifestyle current throughout the East Mediterranean.

The quintessential pictorial scene is the chariot, an explicit reference to this aristocratic lifestyle, and used in hunting or warfare.⁵⁴ Only members of the upper echelons of society would have been able to support the team of horses required to pull a chariot and would have had the leisure time to pursue hunting activities. This is reflected in the Amarna letters, where the formal greeting to Pharaoh invariably included an enquiry as to his chariots and teams of horses. The Mycenaean chariot krater therefore was probably used as a symbol to indicate high-status and advertised its owner to be a participant in the high status gift-exchange network of the East Mediterranean. The chariot scene itself might refer specifically to warfare, or more probably to hunting (the main activities associated with the chariot), or might be a shorthand reference to an elaborate funerary procession to the tomb, similar to the scenes of *ekphora* on Geometric vases from Athens.⁵⁵

Hunting scenes might be implied by various wild-life images, such as deer and lions.⁵⁶ Some scenes appear to refer to agonistic activities, such as boxing, running, horse-riding, and bull-

⁵¹ For example the Vapheio cup: R. Higgins, *Minoan and Mycenaean Art* (London 1980, 2nd edn.), ill. 180; or the fine series of decorated metal amphorae from the end of the Late Bronze Age on Cyprus, e.g. Palaepaphos-Tératsoudhia, tomb 104, V. Karageorghis (n. 43), pls. xxiv, liv, and Kourion, *CBMW*, pls 23–4.

⁵² Epstein (n. 40), 23–56, esp. 54.

⁵³ L. Steel, 'Pictorial White Slip—the discovery of a new

ceramic style in Cyprus', in R. Laffineur (ed.), *Four Thousand Years of Images on Cypriot Pottery* (Liège, in press).

⁵⁴ Cf discussion in Keswani (n. 12), 563–5.

⁵⁵ *GGP*, pls. 8a, 9a–b.

⁵⁶ e.g. krater 4460 from Ugarit: J.-C. Courtois, 'Sur divers groupes de vases mycéniens en Méditerranée orientale (1250–1150)', in *Acts*, figs. 2–3, pl. xxi.5; *MPVP* III. 26, v. 55, v. 60.

leaping.⁵⁷ Some of these activities might have been incorporated within mortuary ritual as funerary games, but on the whole they appear to refer to types of agonistic activity more common in the Aegean world (in particular associated with the Minoan civilization), and might not have been current in Late Cypriot society. Occasionally there are ladies in Minoan court dress, such as the famous Window Krater from Kourion⁵⁸ and fragmentary pieces from the temple complex at Kition⁵⁹ and from Kouklia.⁶⁰ There is no reason to believe that these scenes refer to any Late Cypriot reality, and the fact that such scenes were never incorporated within the mainstream of Mycenaean pictorial vessels in Cyprus implies that they were of limited appeal to the Late Cypriot market.

Religious scenes are very infrequent, but occasional scenes of processions, such as on the Hommage krater and the Kalavastos shrine krater,⁶¹ might have a specifically élite connotation, as it was presumably within aristocratic contexts that such processions took place. There are occasional rare scenes of fantastic animals such as griffins and sphinxes,⁶² which were specifically used as emblems of royalty in the Near East and Aegean.

The use of the Mycenaean drinking service, often with pictorial decoration, was therefore restricted to a very limited social class, according to their social status, and had very precise aristocratic connotations. It was probably the ability of the Late Cypriot social élite to control the distribution of this style and read the images depicted on the vases which led to the rapid adoption of the Mycenaean (pictorial) drinking services within Late Cypriot funerary practices. It is possible that within settlement contexts they used metal versions of these sets, but did not choose to remove these from circulation for deposition within tomb groups. The restricted Mycenaean drinking-sets provided a very good alternative, and should not be seen as a cheap substitute for lower-status burials.

The ultimate stage in the adoption of Mycenaean drinking-sets occurred during the thirteenth century BC with the first local imitations of the Mycenaean ceramic style in the White Painted Wheelmade III ware. In the first instance this class of pottery was only used to manufacture elements of the drinking-set (deep kraters and shallow bowls); it is not until the twelfth century that a wider range of vases is manufactured, eventually replacing the indigenous Late Cypriot ceramics.

UNGUENT VASES

Not all Mycenaean imports to Cyprus, however, can be explained in terms of status symbols or exotica appropriated by the social élite. The vast majority of Mycenaean imports to Cyprus and the Near East comprise container vases, in particular various types of unguent container. In Cypriot contexts these vases are largely restricted to funerary deposits; again the Mycenaean imports appear to be incorporated within a pre-existing framework of funerary ritual.

⁵⁷ Boxing: *MPVP* v. 14, 29, 32–36; running: E. Rystedt, 'The foot-race and other athletic contests in the Mycenaean world. The evidence of the pictorial style vase', *Op. Ath.* 16 (1986), 103–16, *MPVP* v. 28; horse-rider: *MPVP* v. 26; bull-leaping: *MPVP* iii. 31, v. 48, 50; V. Karageorghis, 'Chronique des fouilles à Chypre en 1977', *BCH* 102 (1978), 914, fig. 78.

⁵⁸ H. B. Walters, 'Excavations at Curium', in A. S. Murray, A. H. Smith, and H. B. Walters, *Excavations in Cyprus*

(London, 1900, repr 1970), 73, fig. 127, *MPVP* iii. 12.

⁵⁹ *MPVP* iii. 10.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* iii. 11.

⁶¹ Hommage krater (Aradippo): *MPVP* iii. 29; Kalavastos shrine krater: L. Steel, 'Representations of a shrine on a Mycenaean chariot krater from Kalavastos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Cyprus', *BSA* 89 (1994), figs. 2, 4, pls 37–8.

⁶² *MPVP* V.27.

Fine ware unguent vases are typically deposited in tomb groups from the beginning of the Late Cypriot period (and indeed earlier: consider the range of small juglets in a variety of Middle Cypriot wares); it is possible that their contents had some specific funerary function, perhaps associated with the treatment of the corpse. Certain wares are particularly popular for unguent containers in funerary and other ritual contexts, especially the White Shaved ware and the Red Lustrous Wheelmade ware.⁶³ The three most popular Red Lustrous shapes are the lenticular flask, the spindle bottle, and the finely modelled arm-shaped vase. The very distinctive appearance of this ware and its exotic shapes were probably used to advertise its contents. The Red Lustrous vases no doubt contained particularly highly valued exotic unguents, as it is apparent that this ware was largely restricted to the highest status burials.⁶⁴ The Red Lustrous ware was widely disseminated around the East Mediterranean, suggesting the wide appeal of a luxury commodity. Within the Cypriot context the distribution of this ware was highly restricted, preventing its wider dissemination throughout Cypriot society. Instead it forms another element of the élite package of status symbols. There are imitations of some elements of the Red Lustrous repertoire—the spindle bottle and the flask—in indigenous Late Cypriot fine wares.⁶⁵ Unlike the Red Lustrous vases these imitations have a wider distribution and are not restricted to a small number of élite burials. Thus while there is some evidence for emulation of some elements of élite funerary ritual and its associated paraphernalia, access to particular elements was strictly controlled.

Mycenaean unguent containers appear in Cypriot funerary deposits in the fifteenth century but were not widely distributed until the fourteenth century BC. The earliest type of Mycenaean unguent container found in Cypriot contexts was the squat alabastron. In the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries there is a wider range of shapes, including small beaked juglets, and more commonly angular alabastra, a variety of stirrup jars, and globular flasks. There is no evidence that these Mycenaean imports were restricted to wealthier burials. Instead, it would appear that while only the highest strata of Cypriot society had access to the Red Lustrous unguent vases (and presumably their exotic contents) their Mycenaean counterparts were more widely available. Indeed, at Kalavassos, if a burial contained only one or two Mycenaean vases these were invariably perfume containers.⁶⁶ Alongside these exotic, imported wares (although there is a possibility that Red Lustrous was manufactured locally on Cyprus⁶⁷ this has yet to be demonstrated conclusively) there is also a fine range of locally manufactured juglets which might have been used as unguent containers, primarily the Base Ring bilbil.

Mycenaean imports had a limited impact if any on the range of perfume bottles deposited in Late Cypriot tombs. While they provided a greater range of shapes these were not incorporated in the indigenous ceramic repertoire, unlike the Red Lustrous shapes. This probably reflects the limited appeal of these vases for the Cypriot élite, who already had their own exclusive set of unguent vases, the Red Lustrous ware, which was highly valued throughout the Near East (including Egypt and Anatolia) for its luxury exotic contents. While

⁶³ K. Eriksson, *Red Lustrous Wheel-made Ware* (SIMA 103; Jonsered, 1993), 58.

⁶⁴ Of particular note is the unusually high incidence of Red Lustrous vases from the wealthy tomb 11 at Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, *ibid.* 44–5; Goring (n. 36), 102; South (n. 31), 318.

⁶⁵ e.g. White Slip spindle bottles: *SCE* ivv.1c, fig. 56.11; K-

AD 82, *KAD* ii, fig. 43. Base Ring spindle bottles: e.g. K-AD 161, 1088, *ibid.* fig. 44. Base Ring flasks: e.g. K-AD 125, 1085, 1087; *ibid.* fig. 44.

⁶⁶ e.g. Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios tomb 1 (K-AD 84, 1093), tomb 6 (K-AD 248, 249); *KAD* ii, figs. 45, 59.

⁶⁷ Eriksson (n. 58), 58, 139, 147, 149–53, 146.

the distribution of this ware was very restricted in Cyprus, the Mycenaean unguent vases were widely available, certainly within the larger urban centres, to a wide cross-section of society. Thus, while the Mycenaean perfume bottles could not compete with the Red Lustrous perfume vases in terms of prestige and value, they were imported in some quantity to Cyprus and from there to the Levant, and they were eagerly adopted by the emergent mercantile class in emulation of the élite funerary paraphernalia.

CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon of imported finewares has many parallels throughout the ancient world and the resulting impact on the indigenous ceramic repertoires is not unique. The example of imported Mycenaean pottery to Cyprus is, however, a clear example of the very precise roles that these imported finewares play within a recipient culture, how they are incorporated within pre-existing systems of social behaviour and what effect this might have on the local material culture. Mycenaean pottery had a multiplicity of roles within Late Cypriot society. On the one hand, the dinner services and pictorial style were appropriated by the élite as status symbols to define their own exclusivity. On the other hand, the smaller, more widely available unguent containers were adopted by those members of Cypriot society who chose to emulate the élite but who did not have access to the more highly valued Red Lustrous perfume bottles. The integration of the drinking-sets in particular had a dramatic impact on the indigenous ceramic industry and eventually resulted in the disappearance of the traditional handmade finewares.

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