

## **Cyprus, Part 1: Twelfth to Eleventh Centuries BC**

The twelfth to eleventh century BC marks the transition between the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age on Cyprus. The period is characterized by an island-wide shift in settlement pattern, which is associated with a series of violent destructions and the incremental abandonment of major urban centres, as well as smaller communities in the hinterland. Alongside this there is a clear break in material production, most notably in the field of pottery production, and significant changes in funerary and ritual practices. Many of these changes have been attributed to a migration from the Aegean following the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces (Leriu 2002; 2007; Vanschoowinkel 1994). Similar unsettled conditions are evident throughout the East Mediterranean; the breakdown in international maritime trade and the disappearance of the major palace economies denote the demise of the cosmopolitan, international world of the second millennium BC (Bachhuber and Roberts 2009; Ward and Joukowsky 1992).

### **Terminology and Chronology**

The chronological framework for the transitional Bronze-Iron Age is based on changes in the pottery sequence. The twelfth century equates to Late Cypriot (LC) IIIA. During this phase the traditional handmade Late Cypriot tableware (Base Ring, White Slip and Monochrome) was increasingly replaced by wheelmade painted pottery apparently of Aegean derivation, which is designated White Painted Wheelmade III (Kling 1989; Sherratt 1991; Steel 2004: 191-2). Although the traditional culture-historical narrative suggests a major break between LC II and LC IIIA, there is in fact considerable continuity between the two phases. Instead, the significant cultural break between the Bronze and Iron Age occupation of the island dates to the earlier part of the eleventh century, in LC IIIB. This is identified by the introduction and predominant use of a new style of pottery – the Proto-White Painted (PWP) ware (Pieridou 1973; Iacovou 1988; Sherratt 1991). Although culturally LC IIIB belongs to a newly emerging Iron Age world, archaeological convention places the beginning of the Cypriot Iron Age at the LC IIIB-Cypro-Geometric (CG) I interface, traditionally dated to 1050 BC (Gjerstad 1944). This new phase is heralded by the development of the PWP style into the White Painted I ware.

## LC IIIA

### *Settlement*

The unsettled conditions of the final years of the LBA resulted in a dramatic reduction in settlement (Fig. 1; Iacovou 1994; Karageorghis 1990; Steel 2004: 187-9). During LC IIIA there was island-wide abandonment of ancient sites; their inhabitants never returned, in some cases leaving behind them valuable metal hoards (Knapp 1988). Localised burning in the vicinity of the ashlar buildings in the towns along the south coast, for example at Kalavassos-*Ayios Dhimitrios*, indicates that this process was sometimes violent; nonetheless, there was no evidence for destruction in the wider settlement at Kalavassos, which was simply abandoned (South 1989: 322), a pattern which is repeated at other sites. Whole regions of the island were deserted and left unoccupied over many generations, implying severe disruption to the local economic and political structures, based on copper extraction and maritime trade. Occupation, albeit much reduced, continued at only a small number of the coastal towns – Enkomi, Palaepaphos, Kition and Hala Sultan Tekke. These sites continued to function as political and economic centres, and in the case of Palaepaphos and Kition survived to form the nucleus of the later Iron Age city kingdoms.

The establishment of fortified strongholds at Sinda, Pyla-*Kokkinkremos* and Maa-*Palaeokastro* (Furumark and Adelman 2003; Karageorghis and Demas 1984; 1988) reflects the unsettled conditions of the twelfth century. Each stronghold was located within the territory of one of the surviving urban centres and demonstrates attempts by the urban communities to extend their political and economic influence into the hinterland. The Cyclopean fort at Sinda, located in the Mesaoria plain, protected the transport of copper from the Troodos mountains to Enkomi. Pyla was located within the territory of Kition and likewise was established to ensure movement of goods between the coast and the Cypriot hinterland. The inhabitants of Pyla prospered from these activities and were able to accumulate considerable wealth (Steel 2004: 188). The establishment of these extra-urban strongholds illustrates the continuing economic importance of copper production during this period. Even so, all these sites were short-lived and were destroyed or abandoned before the end of LC IIIA. Maa-*Palaeokastro*, which was built on a small promontory, has been identified as a military outpost; a formidable Cyclopean fortification wall with a watch tower and dog-leg gate protected the entrance to the site and a second wall built along the narrow

tip of the promontory protected the site from seaward attack (Fig. 2). There was a large storage facility in Building III, and two large communal halls with a central hearth were identified in Buildings II and II, each associated with drinking equipment (Steel 2013: 42-3). All three sites were all short-lived, reflecting the violent upheavals involved in negotiation of the emerging regional power structures as they carved out new territorial claims.

Despite considerable social and economic upheaval the surviving urban communities at Enkomi, Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke and Palaepaphos all continued to prosper. Resource secured by continuing control of copper production was invested in significant building programmes within the towns. At both Kition and Palaepaphos for example, large ashlar-built temples were constructed. These were surrounded by megalithic ashlar *temenos* walls and were embellished with stepped capitals and horns-of-consecration (Steel 2004: 201-03; Iacovou 2006: 35). Cyclopean defences were erected at Kition and Enkomi, shortly before their final destruction (Karageorghis 2001).

### *Craft Production*

Craft specialisation flourished during LC IIIA, most notably ivory carving and bronze production (Steel 2013: 164-5, 172-7). Some craft production was controlled by the temples: there is significant evidence for metallurgical production in association with the sanctuaries at Enkomi and Kition, also for textile production within the sacred area at Kition (Steel 2004: 203). Ivory-working debris has been found in wells at Palaepaphos (Maier and Karageorghis 1984: 70) and elaborately carved products of the ivory workshops decorated with lion and bull fights, warriors and hunting scenes, including mirror handles (Fig. 3), gaming boxes and circular *pyxis* lids, were commonly placed in tombs. One of the more elaborate pieces, a gaming box from Enkomi British Tomb 58 was decorated with Near Eastern style hunting scenes; one of the figures brandishing a double axe is dressed in the costume typical of the Philistine warriors depicted on the Medinet Habu reliefs, with a kilt and feathered headdress – a tantalising insight into the convoluted population movements of the period. Metal smiths crafted myriad bronze objects, most notably tripods and four-sided stands with figured decoration (Papasavvas 2001); these prestige goods were placed in sanctuaries, bronze hoards and tomb groups and were also exported beyond Cyprus, many turning up in EIA contexts in Crete and Italy (Steel 2004: 209). Another high point of artistic production was the ceramic

Pastoral Style, primarily used to decorate bell-shaped kraters – the centrepiece of the Cypriot drinking set (Steel 2013: 88-90). The iconography – bulls eating plants, and goats and birds – was influenced by the International Style and symbolized fecundity and the natural order of things.

### *Burials*

Throughout the LBA Cypriots typically buried their dead in family rock-cut chamber tombs located within the settlement, either beneath the courtyard of houses or under the streets (Keswani 2004: 86-8). Although a few of these tombs continued to be used in the twelfth century, for the most part they were abandoned. Instead the dead were buried in shallow shaft graves, which usually housed only a single inhumation (Niklasson-Sönnnerby 1987).

Alongside the change in tomb type the ancient rite of secondary burial was abandoned and there was little or no memorialisation or ritual at the graveside. The abandonment of the ancient family tombs and the abbreviation of funerary ritual suggest some dislocation of community within these uncertain times; families no longer had access to their ancestral burial grounds and disposed of their dead in a more expedient manner.

For the most part the grave goods were modest, typically comprising a pottery jug and a bronze bowl. Exceptionally, some of the tombs were fabulously wealthy. Stone pestle and mortar cosmetic kits were increasingly common in the twelfth century. The products of local craft specialists – ivories and bronze drinking sets and stands – were placed in some tombs. Hala Sultan Tekke Tomb 23 stands out in particular for the accumulation of prestige items placed in with the single adult male burial: amongst the grave goods was a silver finger ring, numerous bronzes including a wine set, an ivory gaming box, several faience gaming pieces, and numerous beads of semi-precious stone, lapis lazuli and turquoise (Nikasson 1983). The tomb assemblages from Palaepaphos were also lavishly provisioned; especially impressive were the grave goods found in *Evreti* Tomb 8, which included two silver bowls, six massive gold finger rings (the bezels of which were decorated with cloisonné enamel), a large gold signet ring, fourteen pairs of gold earrings and four gold toe rings (Catling 1968). This demonstrates that some individuals were still able to accumulate great wealth and also a conscious strategy for augmentation of social position by the obvious removal of luxurious prestige items from circulation as a form of sumptuary display.

### *Cult Practice*

Religious practices continued in established cult places with very little change. Several sanctuaries were reworked, and there was extensive use of ashlar masonry; for example the massive stone altar topped with horns-of-consecration at Myrtou-*Pighadhes*. The bull was an important religious symbol and bull figures were common, both occasional large wheelmade bulls and large numbers of small solid figurines (Webb 1999: 216-19). Bucrania, which are found in large quantities, were selectively retrieved after sacrifice to be hung on walls or placed on benches. Incised bull scapulae, possibly used in divination, were found in wells, *bothroi* and on the floors of the temples at Kition. The use of scapulae in Cypriot cult survives into the Iron Age (Webb 1999: 249). Terracotta masks, found at Enkomi and Kition, represent a new element of cult equipment. Two types are attested: anthropomorphic and demonic masks. Nys (1995) has suggested these objects, which were slightly smaller than life-size, were incorporated within initiation rituals at the onset of puberty; Webb contends that they were used in mythological re-enactments. Only two possible cult figures have been identified: the Ingot God and the Horned God, both from Enkomi (Steel 2004: 205-06); a polished stone *baetyl* from Palaepaphos (Maier and Karageorghis 1984: 99, fig. 83) might have been an object of veneration in the LC III sanctuary.

### **LC IIIB**

Although classified as the final phase of the LBA, LCIIIB in fact marks a major break in the protohistoric occupation of Cyprus. It is characterised by a dramatic transformation in settlement pattern, which marks a clear move away from the preceding five centuries of LBA occupation and to a certain extent foreshadows the physical distribution of the Iron Age city kingdoms. Culturally, this phase heralds the new social and political world of the Cypriot Iron Age. This period is very difficult to document as for the most part the settlements are not archaeologically visible as centuries of continuous occupation have erased the earliest habitation levels at many of the city kingdoms (Iacovou 1994: 150). In the absence of published stratified settlement remains other than from the sanctuaries at Kition (Karageorghis and Demas 1985) and Enkomi (Courtois 1971) the period is better known

from the funerary evidence; even so the only complete sequence of tombs covering the LC IIIB period is at Palaepaphos, and these are unpublished (Catling 1979).

### *Settlement*

Following the disruptions of the twelfth century, there was a further wave of settlement abandonment in the early years of the eleventh century BC (Iacovou 1994; 1999: 146-7). Other than brief continuity of activity at the Ingot God Sanctuary (Courtois 1971) the ancient town of Enkomi was finally abandoned after some 500 years or so of occupation; of the ancient urban communities only the centres at Kition (Smith 2009) and Palaepaphos survived. Vast fertile areas appear to have remained unpopulated during the period and where settlement activity has been recorded the emphasis appears to be on protection. New hilltop settlements were established at Amathus (Aupert 1997; Iacovou 2002) and Kourion, further west than the Bronze Age settlement of Kourion-*Bamboula* (Young and Young 1955: 224); otherwise settlements were defended by fortification walls, best illustrated at Salamis (Yon 1980; Jehasse 1980). While many of these changes reflect dramatic social upheaval some of the population movement appears to have been economic. For example, the silting of the river at Enkomi could have necessitated the move of a harbour town to Salamis; similarly silting of the harbour resulted in the abandonment of the town at Hala Sultan Tekke (Iacovou 2006: 326).

### *Burials*

There is clear evidence for the development of new funerary and religious ideologies during LC IIIB. Even so, the extant evidence is very fragmentary. Only one cemetery, at Gastria-*Alaas* in northwest Cyprus (Karageorghis 1975), has been partially excavated; otherwise, there are only scattered individual tombs, largely uncovered during rescue excavations (Steel 2008). Two significant changes have been documented: burial in extramural cemeteries rather than within the perimeters of the settlement and the introduction of the Mycenaean type chamber tomb approached by a long *dromos* (Steel 1995). Although these were large burial facilities, they were not established as family tombs to be used over generations, as most tombs contained only a single burial. Likewise, there was no return to the elaborate secondary funerary ritual or manipulation of the bones that was common during the LBA. There was some variability in tomb architecture: pit graves are attested at Palaepaphos (*Marcello* and

*Kaminia*); some chamber tombs were entered via a vertically cut shaft *dromos* and Tomb 40 at Kourion-*Kaloriziki* comprised a large shaft grave cut into the bedrock (Steel 2008: 158). Although for adults extramural burial was the norm, infant burials were kept within the walls of the settlement, where they were placed in re-used Canaanite jars, in shallow pits. Such burials have been identified at Salamis, along the city ramparts, and at Kition (Calvet 1980; Yon and Caubet 1985: 29). There were no funerary offerings and the overall picture is one of a private expression of grief rather than a communal ceremony used to reaffirm social ties. Such practices have an ancient pedigree in the Bronze Age Levant and might illustrate a Canaanite component in the island's population.

Inhumation was typical for adult burials; the body was laid out in an extended position on its back directly on the floor of the tomb. The presence of pins, fibula and small items of jewellery indicates that the deceased were placed in the tomb clothed. Cremation was introduced at the end of the LC IIIB period, but was rarely used and was usually the preserve of high status individuals (Steel 2008: 160-1). Cremation is first attested in Kourion-*Kaloriziki* Tomb 40 (McFadden 1954: 132-3). The burnt remains of an elderly female were placed in an antique Minoan bronze amphora, together with what appear to be her personal possessions: a bronze finger ring, nine bronze fibulae, a gold pin, a spindle whorl and a loom weight. Other objects were positioned around the funerary urn on a low bench cut into the bedrock. A possible second cremation burial in a similar bronze amphora has been posited, based on reports of the tomb looters. It was allegedly equipped with a gold and cloisonné enamel sceptre, although the dating of this object is contentious (Goring 1992).

For the most part burials were modestly furnished with small quantities of PWP ware vessels and small items of personal adornment, typically bronze pins and fibulae. The choice of vessels placed in the tomb was not rigidly prescribed but instead appears to have been a matter of personal preference; examples might include small stirrup jars or *lekkythoi* (containers of perfumed oils) (Fig. 4). The deep two-handled bowls (*skyphoi*), and trefoil jugs (*oinochoai*) illustrate the adoption of new practices in the serving and consumption of wine or some other alcoholic beverage and the bronze wine-set from Kourion-*Kaloriziki* Tomb 40, reflects a memory of Egyptianising drinking practices (Steel 2008: 166). Other objects, usually loomweights or spindle whorls, were rare. This simple mortuary display contrasts

with the practice of placing bronze bowls in tombs and the occasional elaborate display of gold jewellery, ivories and bronzes during the preceding twelfth century. This might reflect the uncertain conditions of the period, with people choosing to hold onto material wealth; alternatively it is possible that Gasteria-Alaas, which provides most evidence for LC IIIB, was a provincial backwater and does not reflect the wealth of the urban centres (Steel 2008: 162).

### *Religious Practices*

Only the urban sanctuaries at Kition (Smith 2009) and Palaepaphos survived the upheavals of LC IIIB; the Ingot God Sanctuary at Enkomi (Courtois 1971) was abandoned early in the period, but nonetheless provides important information for the practice of cult during this period. New religious sites were established, such as the sanctuary at Limassol-Kommisariato (Karageorghis 1977). There is evidence for changing ritual practices at all these sites. New forms of ritual paraphernalia were introduced, including ceremonial vases of apparent Aegean derivation, namely duck, cylindrical and horse *askoi* (Lemos 1994), horn bottles and ring *kernoi*; these might rarely be placed in tomb groups but were more typically used within the sanctuaries. These vessels were visually distinctive and were probably used for the pouring of some liquid substance, perhaps in libation ceremonies. Some cult objects had very specific links to LM III Crete: for example the cylindrical shrine models (*naiskoi*) and large wheelmade female figures with upraised arms and wheelmade quadrupeds, such as the double headed centaur from the Ingot God Sanctuary. This equipment was the preserve of the practitioners of cult for use in specific ceremonies. There is also a glimpse of the agency of the worshippers in the form of small anthropomorphic clay figures, typically with upraised arms, found in large numbers and which were left as votive offerings (Fig. 5). Tableware was common, including a variety of bowls and *kylikes* for communal ritual consumption (Smith 2009: 93-7).

### *Pictorial Pottery*

The cultural high point of LC IIIB was the PWP ware pictorial style (Iacovou 1988). A wide range of forms was decorated in this style, in particular large belly-handled amphorae, kraters and deep bowls – vessels associated with the serving and consumption of food and drink. The iconography, usually in silhouette, includes male figures engaged in a variety of activities suitable for a warrior: hunting (Iacovou 1988, figs. 10, 11), horse-riding (Iacovou 1988, figs.

19, 21, 50) and drinking (Iacovou 1988, figs. 34, 36). These were very likely restricted objects, ownership of which signified membership of an elite warrior caste (Sherratt 1992: 333).

### **Transition to Iron: Metallurgical Production**

Snodgrass (1982: 290) has suggested that Cyprus was one of the first areas in the East Mediterranean to make a transition to the Iron Age, with iron replacing bronze as the primary material for production of utilitarian tools and weapons. The introduction of large-scale iron production on Cyprus dates to LC IIIA; although a small number of iron objects has been identified in earlier LBA contexts (Kassianidou 2012: 238) these were rare and exceptional objects rather than the products of a sustained industry on the island. During LC IIIA and B iron was restricted to small objects of personal display, namely small curved knives usually with bone or ivory handles and decorative bronze rivets (Fig. 6; Sherratt 1994: 60). These were typically placed in tomb groups and may have been markers of status. By CG I iron had replaced bronze as the metal of choice for weaponry, primarily swords, and the earliest attestation of carburised iron (steel) weapons and tools supports Snodgrass' assertion that iron technology was developed on the island (Kassianidou 2012: 238-40).

### **Links with the Philistines**

Many of the changes evident in Cyprus during the twelfth and eleventh centuries have direct parallels in the southern Levant, where the appearance of novel features in the archaeological record have similarly been attributed to a group of Aegean migrants, the Philistines (Yasur-Landau 2010; Hitchcock 2011). Parallel trends are evident in pottery production, not just the Aegeanising painted table ware, in particular the deep bowls and side-spouted jugs, but also Mycenaean style globular cooking pots. These suggest significant changes in household production, with the adoption of new modes of food preparation and consumption; the introduction of spool loomweights made of unbaked clay might suggest the adoption of Aegeanising modes of textile production, possibly significant alongside the changes in dress accessory, in particular the adoption of bronze fibulae. Cult spaces at Tel Mique (ancient

Ekron) and Qasile were built around large hearth rooms similar to those attested at Maa and Enkomi (Fig. 7). Cult equipment, such as ring *kernoi*, has parallels in Cyprus, as does the iron knife with an ivory handle from Ekron.

### **Hybridity or Hellenisation?**

The most significant debate surrounding the troubled events at the end of the LBA on Cyprus focuses on a potential population movement from the Aegean (Leriu 2002; Voskos and Knapp 2008: 659-60). It is usually assumed that these migrants were responsible for the destruction and abandonment of the ancient settlements and that they brought with them their own cultural traditions which formed the core of the social and material world of Iron Age Cyprus. Commonly attributed to the Aegean (Mycenaean) settlers are wheelmade decorated pottery, handmade burnished ware, new fighting equipment (bronze greaves and cut-and-thrust swords), Cyclopean architecture and new dress accessories (bronze fibulae) (Steel 2004: 190-9). More recently scholars have moved away from the simplistic equation of pots and people and have instead chosen to highlight the cultural mix on Cyprus during these years, the effects of which are evident in the island's hybridised material culture (Voskos and Knapp 2008; Hitchcock 2011: 271-3; Steel 2013: 40-8). In the final years of the Bronze Age the island provided a common ground where people of diverse social (ethnic) origins interacted and where their material worlds became entangled.

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## Illustrations

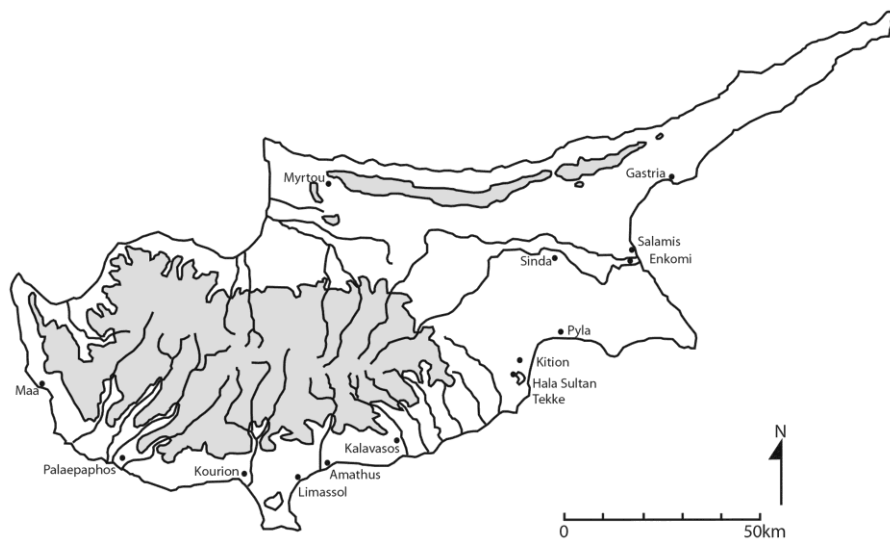


Fig. 1 Fig. 1: Map showing LC III settlement (LS)



Fig. 2 Cyclopean wall at Maa-Palaeokastro (photo Steve Thomas)



Fig. 3: Ivory mirror handle from Enkomi British Tomb 17 (courtesy British Museum)



Fig. 4: PWP stirrup jar and lekythos (courtesy British Museum)



Fig. 5: Iron knife with ivory handle and bronze rivets from Enkomi British Tomb 58, (courtesy British Museum)

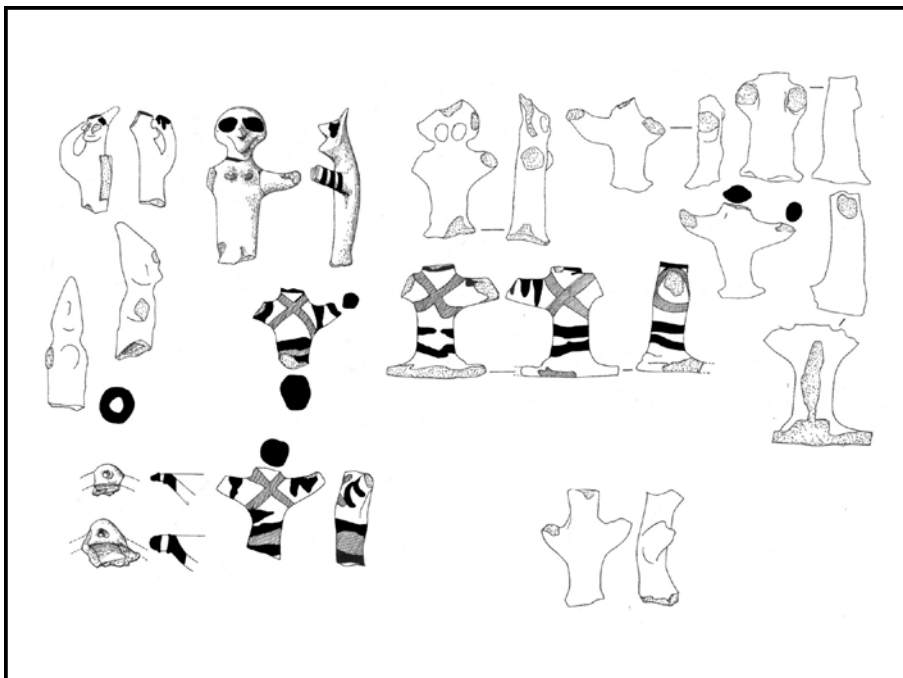


Fig. 6: figurines with upraised arms from Enkomi, Sanctuary of the Ingot God (after Steel 2008, fig.10)

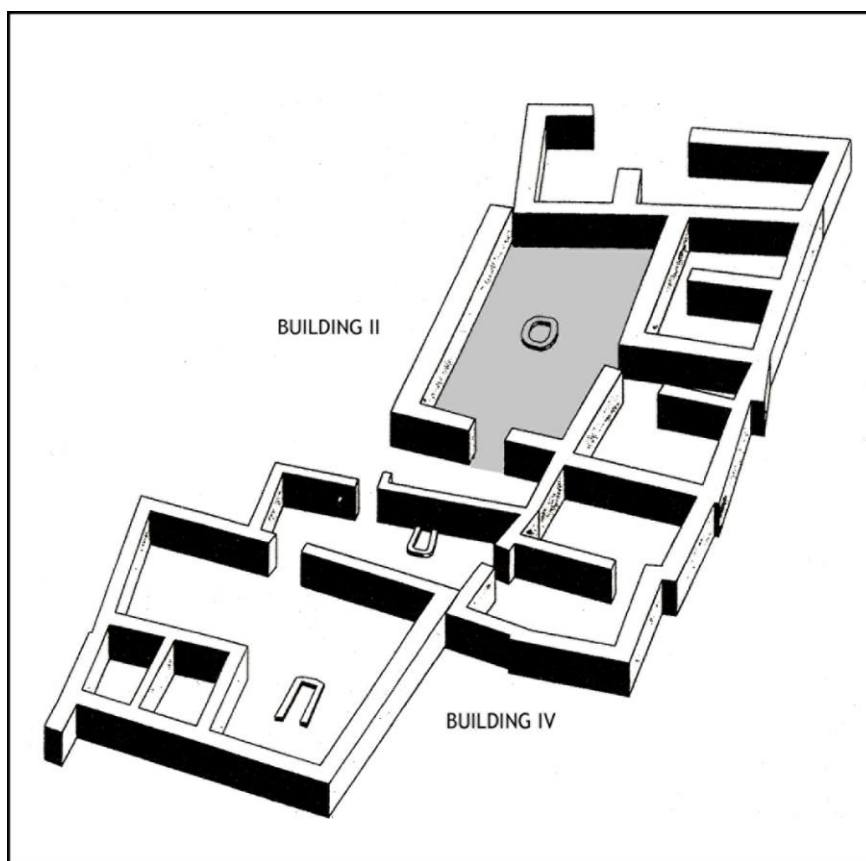


Fig. 7: Maa *Palaeokastro*, hearth building (after Steel 2013, fig. 2.8).

Table 1. Relative Chronological Phases on Cyprus

| Relative Chronological Period | Approximate Date B.C.E. |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Late Cypriot (LC) II          | 1400-1200               |
| Late Cypriot (LC) IIIA        | 1200-1125/1100          |
| Late Cypriot (LC) IIIB        | 1125/1100-1050          |
| Cypro-Geometric (CG) IA       | 1050-1000               |
| Cypro-Geometric (CG) IB       | 1000-950                |