Ports of Trade: Ugarit & Enkomi

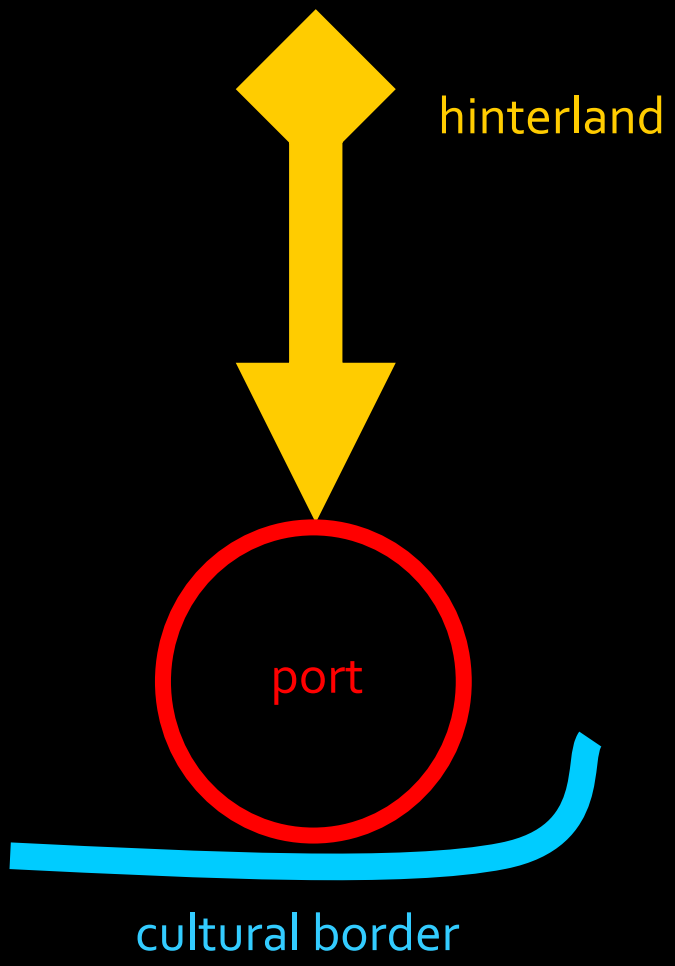
Entanglements

Ports of Trade

- Central regulation of commercial exchanges within ports of trade
- Port of trade: a (specialised) location for cross-cultural exchange
  - "A universal institution of overseas trade" (Polanyi 1963: 31)
  - Gateway communities
- Polanyi identifies 3 distinct types of port of trade

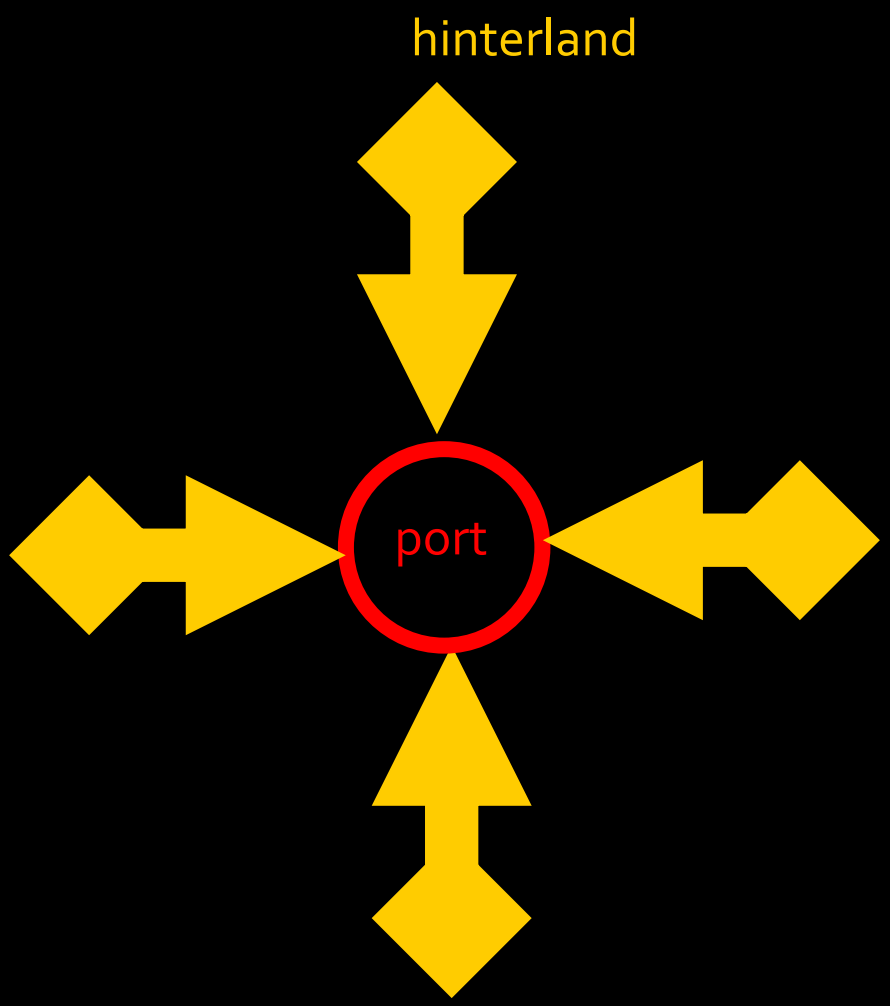
Ports of Trade: Type A

- Sites controlled by hinterland power in whose territory the port lies & which the port primarily serves
  - State-sponsored operation
  - Control of port, trade & imports essential to authority & leadership
  - Administered trade between elites
  - Regulation of traders



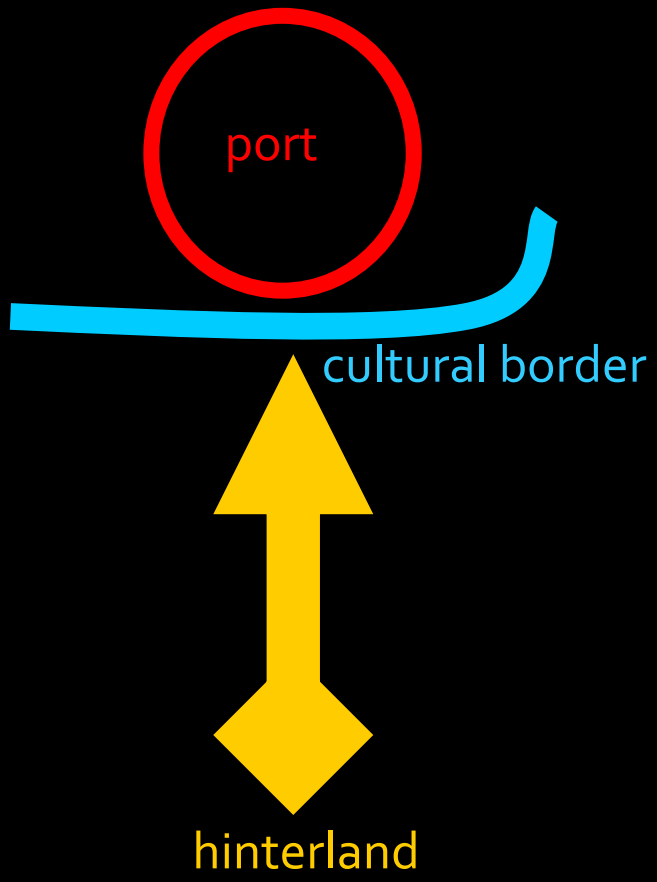
Ports of Trade: Type B

- Ports are politically & administratively anonymous & neutral
- No specific institutionalisation/ regulation
  - Periodic meeting place sufficient to meet needs of all parties
  - No separation of local or long-distance trade & a wide range of people have access to imports
  - Foreign traders act freely within these ports



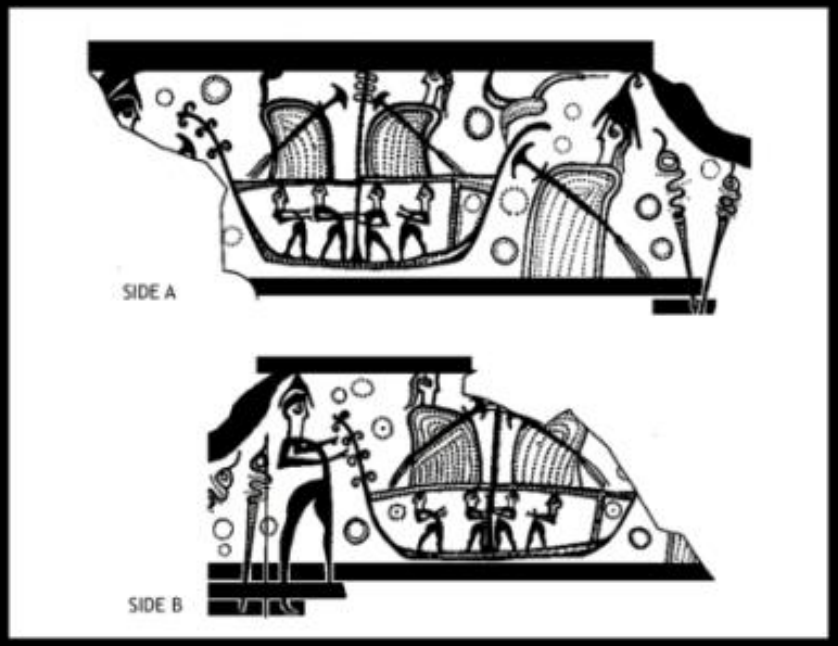
Ports of Trade: Type C

- Controlled by trading community
- Founded & controlled to exploit resources of a less developed area:
  - Settlement
  - Enclave
- Control of imports by trading community
- At edge of host region:
  - Most efficient channelling of goods
  - Safest for foreign community
- Intermarriage with native women:
- Clear evidence for foreign cultural elements



Bronze Age Ports of Trade

- Can we identify any/all of these in the archaeological record?
- MBA: Kültepe (Kanesh)
  - Polanyi's Type C
  - Controlled by trading community in politically less developed area
- Type A: Ugarit?
- Type B/C: Enkomi?



Mycenaean traders on pictorial vase

The Kingdom of Ugarit

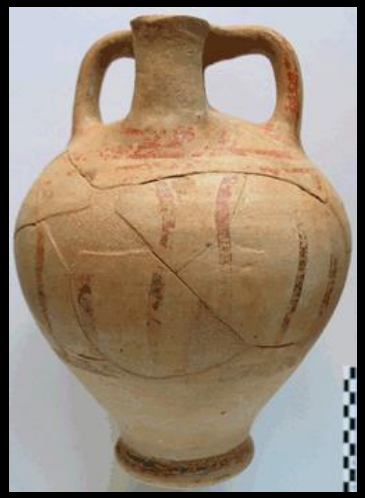
- Wealthy city kingdom: capital at Ras Shamra
  - Acropolis: religious complex & royal palace
  - Lower town: wealthy households with access to imported goods
- Archives give insight into mechanics of trade:
  - Ugaritic alphabet
  - Foreign scripts: Egyptian, Akkadian, Sumerian, Hurrian & Cypro-Minoan

Aerial of ancient Ugarit

Ugarit's Harbour Town

- Minet el Beidha:
  - Identified with *Ma'<u>h</u>adu*: primary port of Ugarit
- Evidence for primary trade:
  - Warehouse with Canaanite Jars
  - Minoan stirrup jars
- Wealthy tombs with cosmopolitan goods:
  - International style ivories
  - Large quantities of Cypriot & Mycenaean pottery

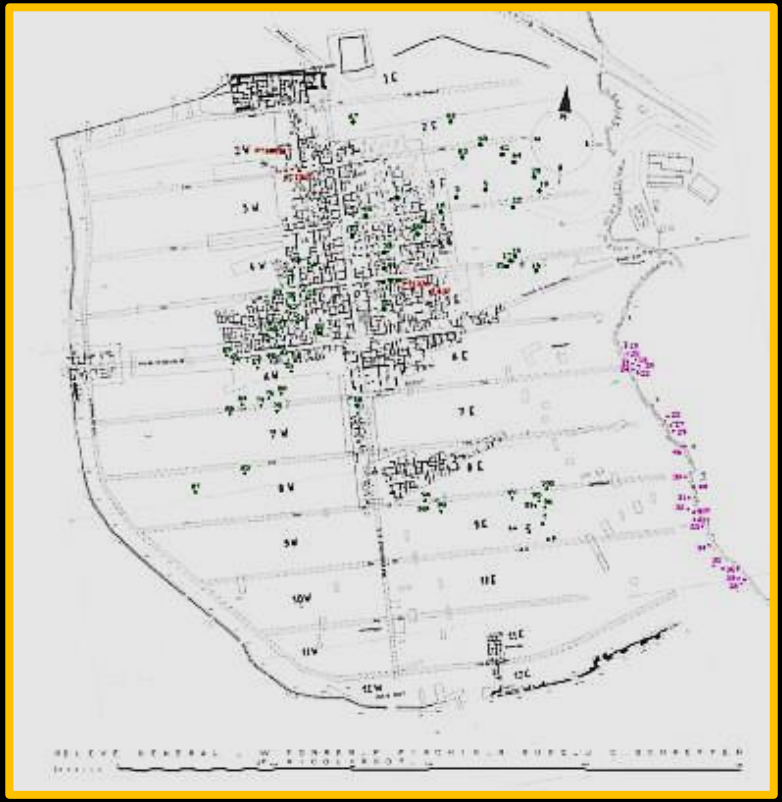
Warehouse: Minet el Beidha



Minoan stirrup jar

Enkomi

- Established in MC III-LC I
- Clear links with mercantile activity & Levant from beginning:
  - Metallurgical production
  - Local production of wheelmade pottery
  - Writing & seals
- By LC II a major urban centre with ashlar buildings



Plan of Enkomi

Enkomi

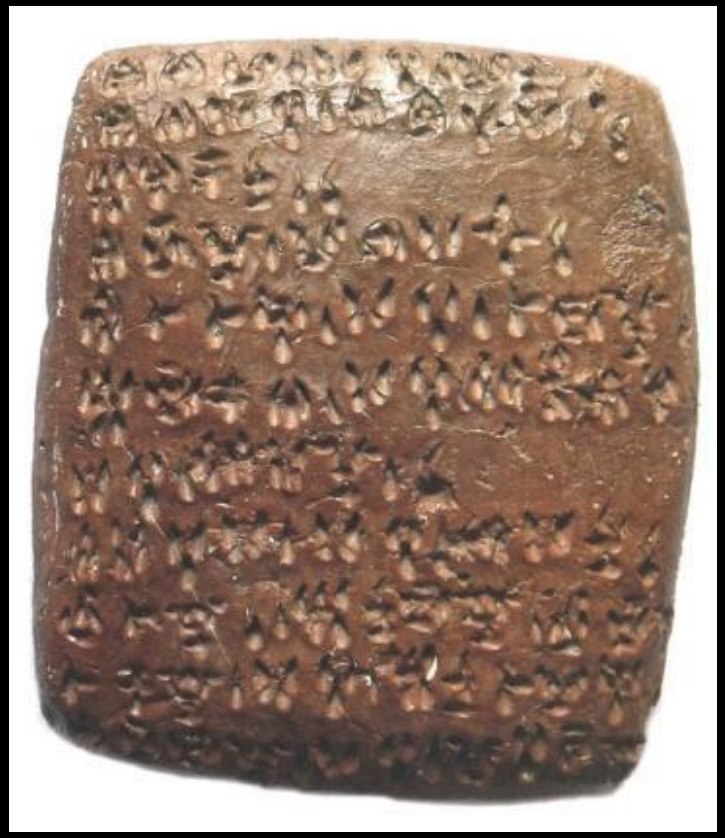
- Very wealthy burials placed in family tombs in household courtyard
- Explicit manipulation of exotic imports as items of status
  - Egyptian faience & jewellery
  - International style
  - Mycenaean pottery

Egyptian pectoral, British Tomb 93

Gold jewellery, French Tomb 2

Textual Evidence: Ugarit

- Resident foreigners at *Ma'ḫadu*:
  - Hittites, people from Ashdod, & from Alashiya
  - No mention of people from the Aegean
- UT119: register of heads of family
  - Lists 29 families from Alashiya
  - Involved in mercantile activities: ship ownership & metals trade
  - Hence spread of Cypriot writing?



Cypro-Minoan tablet from Ugarit

Textual Evidence: Ugarit

- Some resident foreigners acquired wealth & status:
  - Holding tenure of estates
  - Membership of the elite chariot class (*maryannu*)
- People from Alashiya played role in palace activities:
  - Received rations distributed by the palace
  - Worked as craftsmen, temple officials & royal personnel
- People from Ugarit resident in Alashiya

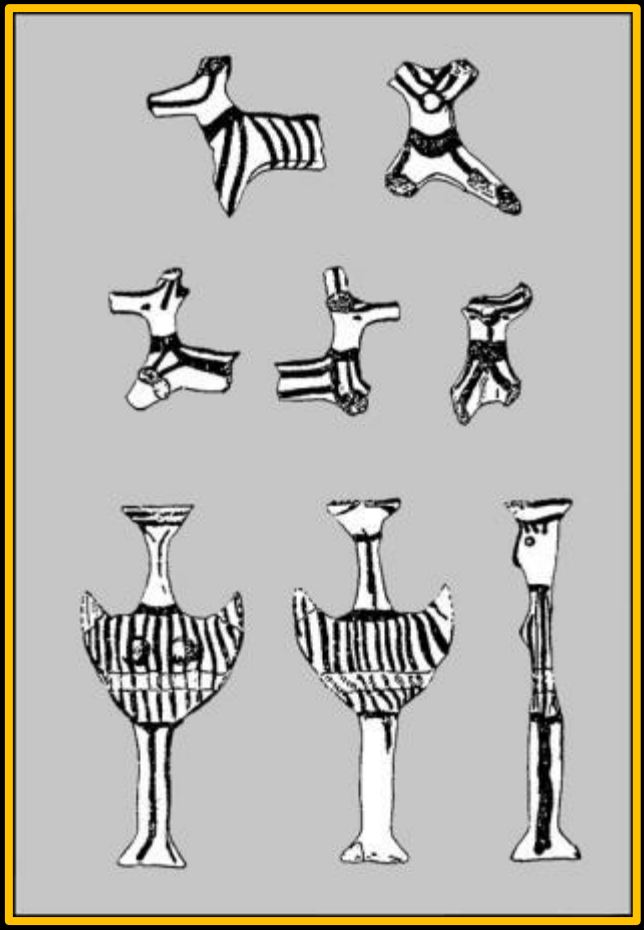
Tablet from Ugarit

Texts & Archaeology

- Texts clearly tell us about resident foreigners in Ugarit & Alashiya
- Can we pick these up using archaeology?
- Analogy with Kültepe:
  - Foreign migrants would maintain close ties with their homeland but they more or less adopted the material culture of their host community

Archaeological Evidence

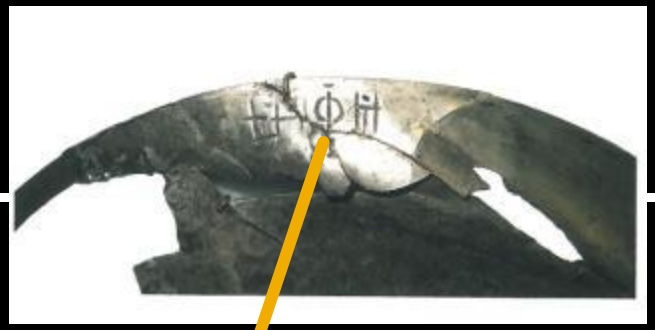
- What archaeological evidence for:
  - Presence of a migrant population
  - Establishment of foreign trading enclaves?
- Material evidence for entanglement of people & things:
  - Inscribed objects
  - Pottery
  - Tombs



Mycenaean figurines, Ugarit

Inscribed Objects

- Hala Sultan Tekke: silver bowl with an Ugaritic inscription
  - *Aky son of Ykhd made this bowl*
- Ugarit: similar silver bowl inscribed in Cypro-Minoan
- Personal possessions of foreigners or gifts?
- People with ability to read these scripts resident at Ugarit & on Cyprus



Inscribed silver bowl from Ugarit

People & Pottery

- Greek pottery privileged by classical archaeologists
- Assumption that the presence of Greek pottery indicates overseas resident Greeks (Iron Age & Classical periods)
  - "I am not one of those who thinks that masses of Greek pottery in the east can mean no direct Greek interest there. The recent fashion of divorcing pottery from the people who made, used, & carried it is self-defeating" (Boardman 2001: 34)
  - "While it might be appealing to picture bands of Greek adventurers toting their favorite cups, like erstwhile coffee mugs, to remind them of home in far-off lands, lugging a krater for personal use might be a little more cumbersome." (Waldbaum 1997: 7)

Mycenaean Pottery in Ugarit

- Widely distributed in Ugarit
  - Particular concentration at Minet el Beidha
  - Found with large amounts of Cypriot wares
  - Incorporated within funerary ritual
- Nothing specifically Mycenaean about burials

Mycenaean pottery

Mycenaean Pottery in Ugarit

- Range of grave goods would not be out of place in Cyprus:
  - Very close cultural interaction between Ugarit & Cyprus
  - Shared cultural milieu
  - Perhaps even the presence of resident Cypriots?

Mycenaean pottery

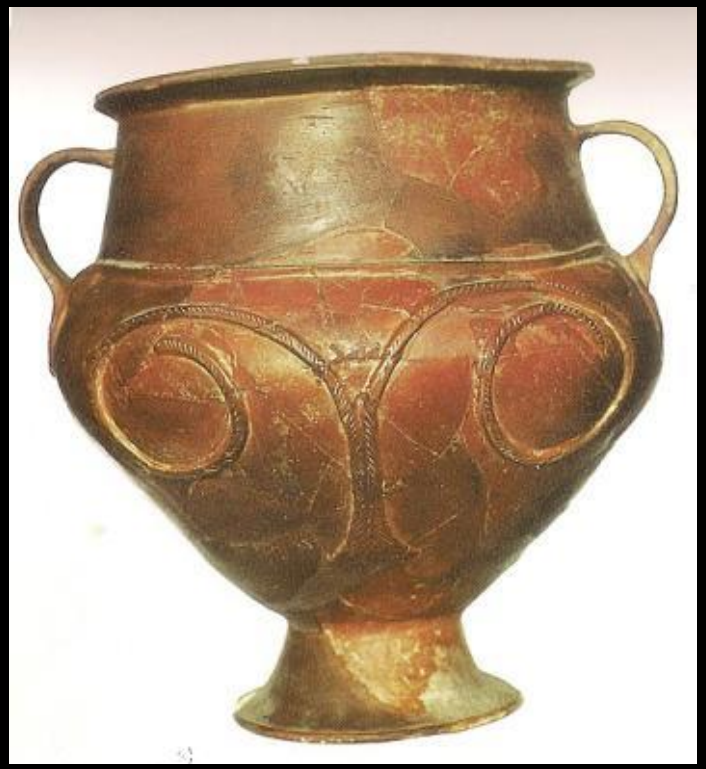
Colonialism of Wealth

- Specific idiosyncrasies of Mycenaean pottery found at Ugarit & Enkomi:
  - Chariot kraters: ideology of the *maryannu*, & essential equipment for the *marzihu / marzeah*
  - Zoomorphic *rhyta*
- Thoroughly integrated within Ugaritic social practices as a statement of identity for the mercantile elites

Specialised vases

Shared Cultural Practices

- Shared Cultural milieu of East Mediterranean:
  - Widespread relationships & shared cultural practices
- LC I: adoption of krater by newly urbanized Cypriot elite
  - Shared drinking practices (marzeah)
  - Shared knowledge & appropriate paraphernalia

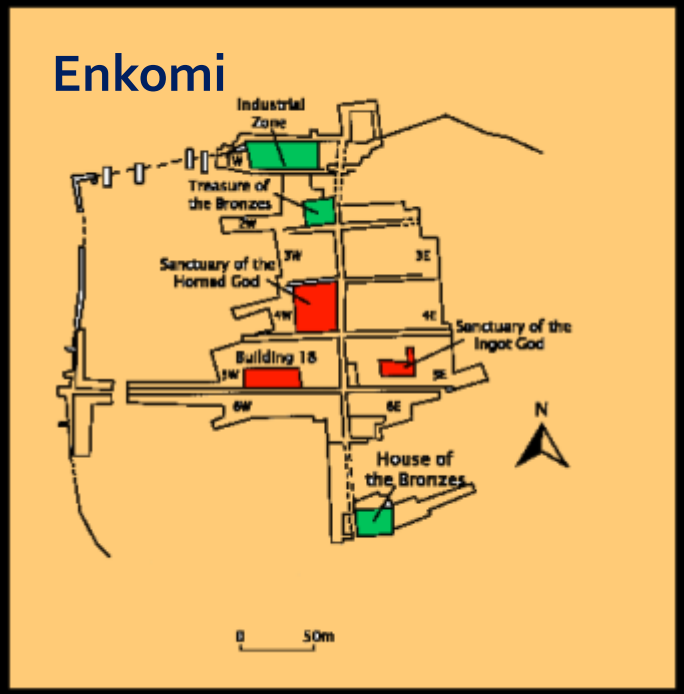


Base Ring krater Alalakh

Tombs

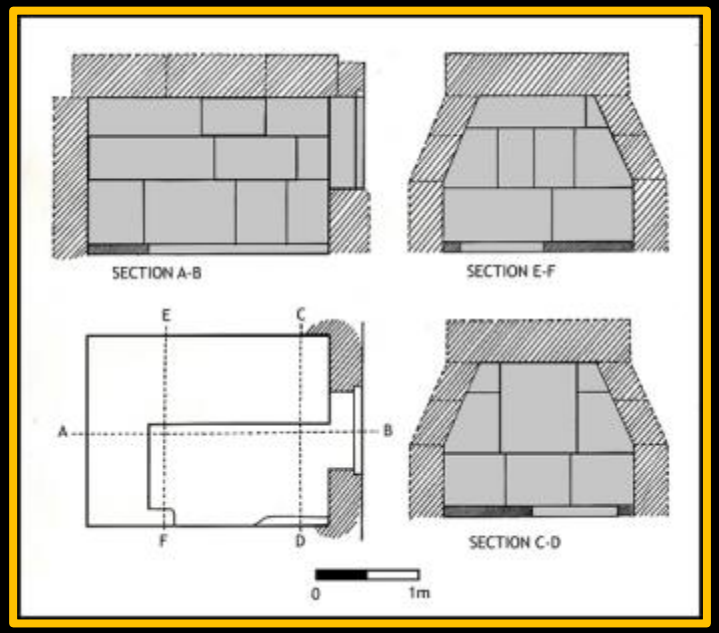
- Corbel-vaulted, ashlar-built tombs at Enkomi (Fig. 2.7): clustered in Q4E & Q3E
  - Architecture resembles the built tombs of Ugarit
- Spatial grouping might suggest small enclave of colonists living close to each other
- Incorporated within the space of the household beneath rooms (not courtyards): Ugaritic practice

Built tomb at Ugarit



Tomb 66: Evidence for Ugaritic Cult?

- Reinterpretation of Tomb 66 as a space visited regularly as part of ancestor cult: *kispum*
  - Stone bench
  - Lighting fixed to chamber wall
- Private location where traditional Ugaritic rituals were enacted
- Resident foreigners living in Cypriot community
  - Proclaiming Ugaritic identity through funerary cult & relationship with their ancestors



Enkomi British Tomb 66

Summary

- Should Enkomi & Ugarit be identified as ports of trade
- Ugarit: clearly within territory of powerful city kingdom & textual evidence for regulation of trade:
  - Polanyi's Type A (state regulation)
- Enkomi: evidence for Ugaritic traders (supported textually) & shared cultural practices with Ugarit
  - Polanyi's Type B: no evidence for state regulation of trading enclaves