

‘Feasting with the dead? Tomb 66 at Enkomi’ - Lindy Crewe

Gwenllian Anthony - 26th of October 2026

Brief Overview

- Late Bronze-Age Site
- Excavated by the British Museum in 1896
- Article centred around 'Excavations in Cyprus' - published in 1900
- Also uses Percy Christian's field notebook and pulls from the subsequent Swedish and French excavations
- 185 tombs excavated



Figure 1: Alabaster jar

Bronze Age Cyprus

- Cyprus went from a isolated and rural island to a well connected island with urban centres
- ‘Third Space’ - cosmopolitan hubs where different cultures, values, beliefs and material practices intersect (Steel, L. 2023).
- Positioned between palatial societies of the Hittites in Anatolia, Mycenaean Greece, New Kingdom Egypt and the Levant.

Turner Bequest Expedition

- Expedition by the British Museum in 1896
- Excavations in Cyprus (1900)
- “important finds” were collected and recorded, “unimportant finds” such as local pottery were not
- Percy Christian’s original field notebook gives context to the artefacts

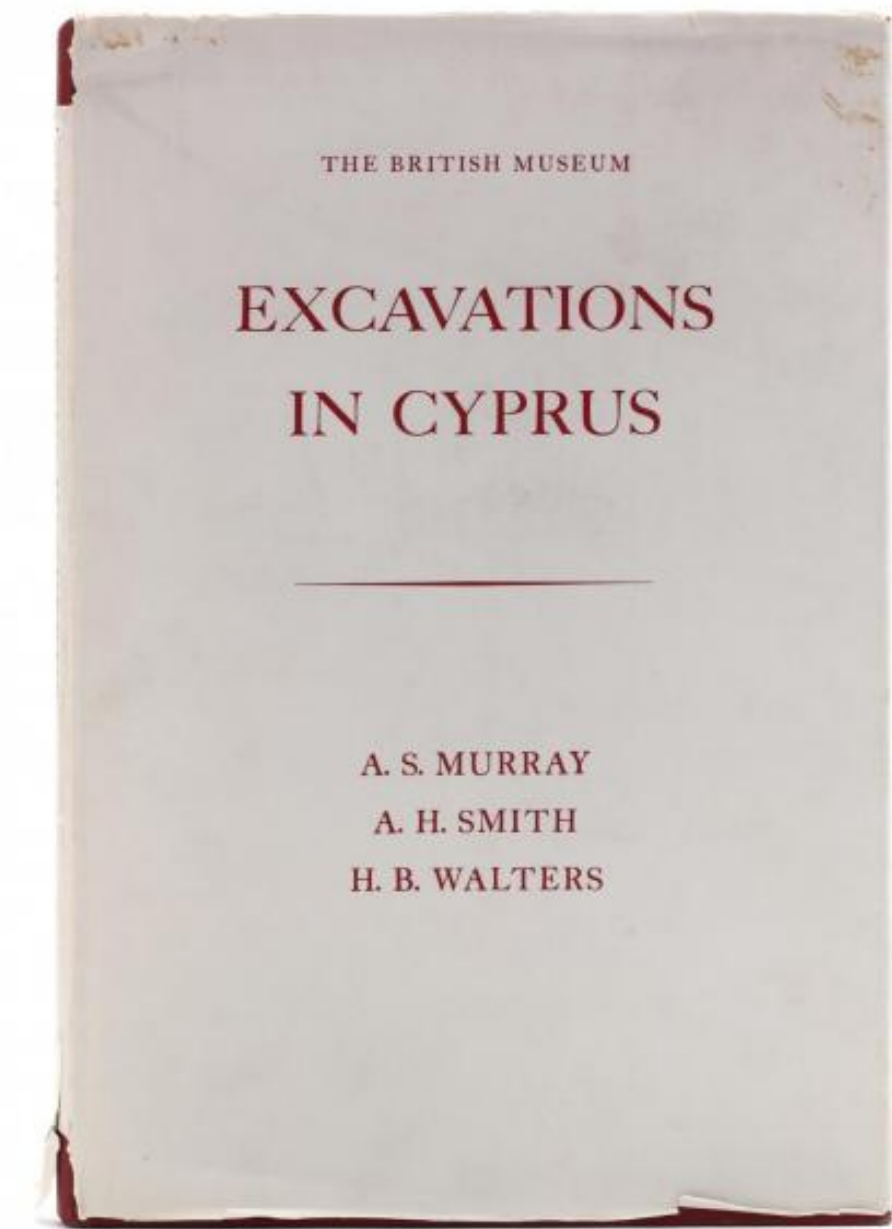


Figure 2: 'Excavations in Cyprus'

Data from Tomb 66

Table 1 Overview of contents of Tomb 66 by type of object and material

Object Type	Local Pottery	Imported Pottery	Bronze/copper	Gold	Silver	Glass	Faience	Stone	Amber, semi-precious stone	Total
cup/bowl/dish	6	16	6	1	2		7	1		39
krater	1(?)	2								2
closed serving vessel		2								2
small/miniature container	1	14				6				21
large container		2						1		3
personal ornament			1	164	5		2	1	8	181
seal							1			1
weapon			6							6
tool							2			
tomb furnishing			5							5
mirror			1							1
lamp	1		1							2
Total	8	36	20	165	7	6	12	3	8	265

Beaded 'Necklaces'

- Scattered beads found across the tomb floor
- Traditionally they would be listed as 'necklaces'
- Possibility that they were a part of ritual fragmentation
- Breaking precious items to transform wealth and linking the living and the dead



Figure 3: Gold and carnelian necklace

The Physical Space

- Large underground rectangular cut chamber
- 11ft in length, 8ft wide
- 3 flat stones as the roof and a stone platform opposite the door
- 5 copper nails driven into the chamber walls
- Evidence of life within the chamber

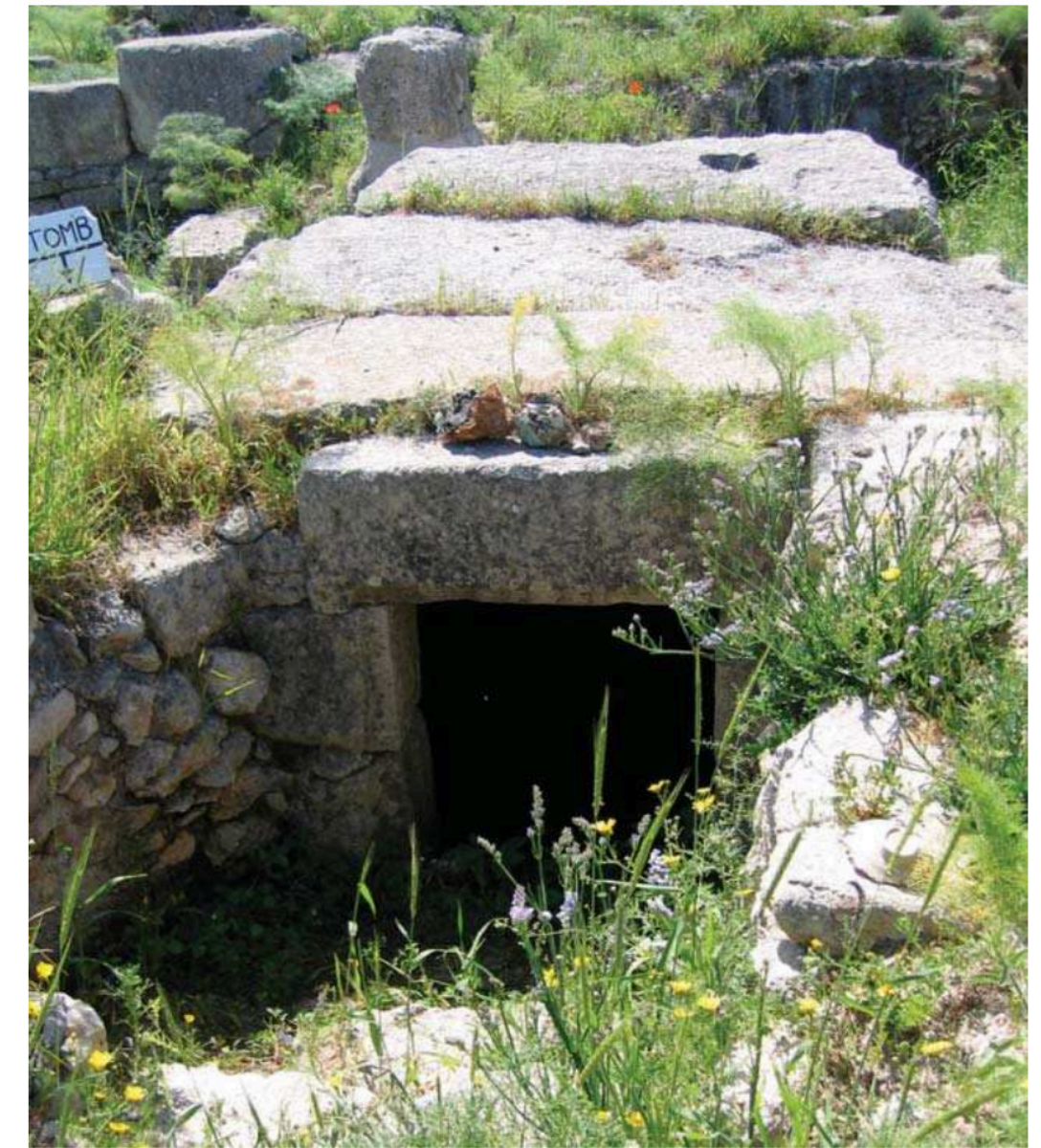


Figure 4: Exterior view of Tomb 66

Kispum

- Ugarit, Minet el-Beida and Qatna have evidence of kispum
- Kispum is a way of interacting with the dead through feasting, conversing and pouring libations
- Enkomi tombs don't have evidence of kispum infrastructure like Ugarit, but presents evidence of ritual activity being acted within the tomb

Ceramics and Food Waste



Figure 5: cup

- Exceptionally high proportion of pouring and drinking vessels
- Vessels depicting animals suggest they are ritual vessels not ordinary kitchen pots
- Other tombs in Enkomi show evidence of animal bones with butchery marks but not Tomb 66

Strengths of the Paper

- Ability to move away from processual summaries that focus on the amount of grave goods
- Turning the incomplete data of Tomb 66 and creating a dynamic and humanistic space
- Presents theories on how the emerging elites of Enkomi used mortuary tombs as a guidance
- Shows that both modern archaeological tools and paper archives can coexist and work together

Weaknesses of the Paper

- Limitations of data
- Being bound to the 1896 excavation
- No organic residue to test whether food and drink was consumed
- Lack of stratigraphic and soil sampling so unable to determine how often the tombs were opened
- 1896 excavation largely ignored human skeletal remains therefore we are unable to learn more about the interred through DNA testing

Balancing

- Paper shows its possible to provide detailed and important analysis even when data is missing
- Artefacts lose half of their interpretive value when taken from context
- Great example of how interpretive framework can be used to understand modern excavations in the wider Mediterranean

Conclusion

- Important and informative piece on spatial and mortuary archaeology
- Provides clear evidence of feasting with the dead and how it was used to express political power
- Tombs are not only a way to hide the dead, but they were a place of celebration, ritual and unity.

THANK YOU!

List of illustrations

Figure 1: Alabaster jar. British Museum in (n.d)

Figure 2: 'Excavations in Cyprus'. Leland Little (2018)

Figure 3: Gold and Carnelian Necklace. Crewe, L. (2009)

Figure 4: Exterior view of Tomb 66. Crewe, L. (2009)

Figure 5: LHIIIA2/IIIB cup. Crewe, L. (2009)

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