

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'REGIONALISM'?

David Frankel

The bewildering number of facts and facets presented by land use in Cyprus makes the task of synthesis very difficult. Patterns there are and they are discernable, but they are broken up into numerous microcosms and sharp contrasts side by side and within a small compass are frequent

D. CHRISTODOULOU 1959, 195.

*But if East is East and West is West, then won't you tell me why
When it's night-time in Italy it's Wednesday over here*

J. KENDIS and L. BROWN 1923.

INTRODUCTION

Georgiou¹ has recently briefly reviewed the long, continuous and varied use of the term 'regionalism' in Cypriot Bronze Age archaeology. As he and others have noted, it is so prevalent as to often be taken for granted. This leads inevitably to a multiplicity of understandings. In any such circumstance it is sometimes useful to take a fresh look at some key principles to clarify issues and identify changing attitudes and concepts.

In many other areas of archaeology 'regionalism' is used to refer to the characterisation of behaviour within defined areas or cultural zones or to the ways in which this can be investigated.² In Cyprus, however, the term is broadly understood to indicate cultural differences which can be identified between different parts of the island, often using the major topographic divisions to provide a natural framework for establishing 'culture areas'.³ In this way, and despite the relatively small size of the island, which could easily be lost within the far greater area of many neighbouring lands, Cypriot archaeologists are sensitive to sometimes relatively minor variations from one place to another, often operating at a finer spatial and analytical scale than is common elsewhere. Although not necessarily formally defined as such, this essentially involves identifying spatially discrete units which are internally homogenous and externally heterogenous. It also, however, includes the analysis of patterns of interaction between spatially separated sites or areas.

In this brief review I will not attempt to consider all the ways in which 'regionalism' has been or could be seen, but will selectively refer to a sample of opinions and approaches, with particular relevance for the 2nd millennium. These will serve to illustrate a range of underlying approaches and issues which need to be borne in mind in establishing spatial patterns and then explaining them. This involves disentangling questions of types of evidence, approaches to classification and measurement, units and scales of analysis and location and topography. Some critical and mutually interdependent factors are therefore briefly summarised first.

1. MATERIAL

Spatial variation may be perceived and measured using a wide array of material evidence, each type of which may reflect different patterns of association or different degrees of regional variation. The most commonly used material is, of course, pottery. This is not necessarily because of a disregard for other lines of evidence but because it is by far the most abundant artefact type in the 2nd millennium. It is also amenable to the measurement of degrees of relationship and to fine scale analyses of different dimensions of variation.

Other portable artefact types are more rare, so that inadequacies of sample size inhibit analysis. Architecture – whether domestic, public or funerary – carries some additional handicaps, being affected by local topography and geology. The spatial distribution of raw materials provides another layer of regional association, but this may reflect networks of interaction and exchange between areas rather than form the basis for defining cultural regions.

2. ASPECTS OF ARTEFACT VARIATION

Although it is not necessarily easy, and perhaps often impossible, to fully differentiate aspects or dimensions of artefact variation it is necessary to bear in

¹ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ 2007, 37–44.

² KANTNER 2008.

³ See BOLGER 1989.

mind that technological, functional and stylistic attributes each may have different relevance, value and meaning.⁴

3. SCALE AND UNITS OF ANALYSIS

In assessing spatial patterns, as with any other archaeological research, the definition of units of analysis is a critical step. Explanations of different forms of regional definition must take account of the scales of analysis, where the island might be divided into a few larger or many smaller units. Patterning may be seen at one scale but be masked at another. In one approach in an ideal world the site (or more strictly the chronological phase within a site) might provide the basis for analysis, with the potential for grouping neighbouring sites into larger local or even broader regional groups in order to observe at what level or spatial scale variations emerge. That is, at what point – if any – broad cultural homogeneity gives way to more localised, regional or site-specific variation. The limited and patchy reality of the available evidence militates against this, and most frequently sites and assemblages must in practice be grouped in advance. This is akin to the ‘double bind’ problem identified by Read in typological analyses, where definitions of types must of necessity precede, although they should rightly follow, analysis.⁵

While it is tempting, and sometimes most appropriate, to make use of the major topographic or geographic structures as the basis for setting up analytical units, the implications of doing so should be recognised. These geological, geomorphological or ecological zones may be critical in, for example, settlement pattern analysis, but they do not necessarily determine patterns of cultural association (*ie* regionalism) which might at times cut across these zones or develop to allow different groups access to particular resources. One should not be misled into thinking that because our analytical units are spatial zones that the patterns we observe reflect regionally-based structures.

4. MEASUREMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

Regional uniformity or variation may be measured in many ways. Degrees of similarity and difference can be assessed qualitatively or quantitatively, making use of standard typologies (considering the presence/absen-

ce or relative proportions of types, wares or other artefact classes) or by assessing the distribution of specific attributes. What types or elements are considered to be the same or significantly different is a key question, allowing the possibility of nested series of coarser and finer levels of similarity. As always, the choice of material and the method of measurement impact on, even where they do not determine, the type and nature of spatial patterning observed.

5. STRUCTURES AND BOUNDARIES

Bearing in mind the inherent effects of the nature of the evidence, the scales of analysis and the methods employed for measurement, different boundary effects may be identifiable.⁶ In any one period artefact types or individual attributes may co-vary across space, reinforcing one another to create a strong pattern of regional definition. In other circumstances patterning may differ depending on the material studied, so that, for example, similarities perceived in technology may differ from those of style, or those of metal may differ from those of pottery.

Regions may therefore be more or less well defined. Sometimes sharp divisions may be in evidence, forming relatively discrete culture areas, but, more often than not, boundaries are likely to be far less clear-cut, and the differences across space gradual or diffuse. It is therefore not enough to establish spatial variation, but to consider the degrees of difference and the rate of change from one locale to another.⁷

While the co-variation of several elements, especially when forming relatively sharp boundaries, might form a pattern which can best be understood as defining discrete regions, less neatly structured relationships across space can be regarded as showing patterns of interaction and association or networks of interaction⁸ rather than identifiable ‘culture areas’.

6. MODE OF EXPLANATION

Depending largely on the material selected for analysis and the nature of observed patterns, different modes of explanation may be appropriate. In some circumstances environmental factors – distance, physical barriers, ecology and resource availability – may be regarded as determining or strongly influencing regional boundaries or the nature of spatial relationships. Here it might also be necessary to recognise that

⁴ FRANKEL 1991.

⁵ READ 2007.

⁶ FRANKEL 2003.

⁷ FRANKEL 2001.

⁸ DRIESSEN and FRANKEL 2006.

the landscape and its resources are not fixed. Apart from landform changes (such as modifications to the coastline through sediment build-up and sea-level change), the landscape is a cultural construct, created by an interplay of natural, cultural and technological factors. The perceived and exploited cultural landscape may or may not map neatly onto the natural environment with consequences for understanding patterns of association between communities.

Trends toward diversification and the development of local traditions and styles may be inherent in underlying social processes or may be contingent on specific historical contexts or events. Here they may be understood in different ways, emphasising social, economic or political forces. Interest may also be focussed on the ways in which particular regional systems develop and vary through time: were there persistent and long-lasting patterns in some areas and more fluid and fluctuating associations in others?

A distinction may be made between spatial patterning visible in the archaeological record, such as the distribution of artefact types and styles or raw materials on the one hand, and political regional groups on the other. To what extent should we expect these to coincide, and to what extent is it appropriate to use material culture as an indicator of discrete polities or as proxy measures of other forms of regional organisation?

One more specific consideration may be relevant to developing explanations. Were the patterns we perceive understood or recognised in the past (*ie* emic distinctions) or are they etic patterns — a product of our archaeological analysis? The latter are of course the more common in archaeology (chronological distinctions could not have been known or recognised in the past) and the discovery or identification of previously unknown patterns is a key component of research. The possibility of recognising emic patterns provides, however, the basis for a different form of explanation, where the deliberate assertion of community identity at different scales becomes a matter of particular interest.

7. UTILITY

Beyond these many interdependent considerations it is possible to perceive two broad approaches to regional variation in Cypriot archaeology. For some the recognition of differences is most important for its instrumental value — for example in establishing

chronological differences which have a significance beyond Cyprus' shores. Others focus on the intrinsic interest of understanding the nature and development of variation in the archaeological record and the interplay between communities.

A selective history

The brief review that follows presents a selection of comments on regionalism which expose and illustrate some of the issues outlined above. It is limited to ceramic analyses, for these constitute the great majority of studies. These, for the most part, are essentially limited to the northern two-thirds of the island; the south coast and southwest have in the past played little part in most discussions, largely for want of adequate evidence. The focus here is on attitudes and approaches, rather than on the specific models of culture history adduced, some of which run counter to each other and may no longer represent the views of the scholars concerned.

It was difficult for earlier researchers, such as Myres or Gjerstad, to clearly identify spatial variation, especially given their primary concern to establish a basic chronological framework and the limited evidence available to them. Although such variation began to be recognised, study was inhibited, as 'despite the very great amount of Early Cypriot pottery in European and American museums, relatively little is known about that rich culture; the distribution in time and space of shapes and patterns and styles is almost as important as relative chronology, for Cyprus may be found to contain a number of local "schools" by the differentiation of which the internal flow of culture can be studied'.⁹

By 1948 Stewart was able to note that 'local variations in style are already visible in EC I, and by EC III the differences between certain areas are clear. The Vounous style is reflected at Mavro Nero, but even as near to Vounous as Vrysi tou Baba local variations can be seen. At Dhenia a most distinct regional school favoured an elaborate use of heavy relief ornamentation ... The Dhenia style is found also at Margi. Arpera, Alambra and Ayia Paraskevi seem to be closer to the North Coast style than to that of Dhenia, but have their own peculiarities. We must envisage EC III as split up into a number of groups of settlements, each with its own local ceramic ideas, neighbouring sites of each group showing similar developments'.¹⁰

⁹ STEWART and STEWART 1950, 8–9.

¹⁰ STEWART 1948, 136–137.

Despite his interest in the phenomenon, Stewart did not develop any particular explanation for the development of regional variation or the more site-specific micro-scale variations which he regarded as significant and which he referred to as 'particularism'.¹¹ Regional variation remained, however, a constant, if undeveloped, theme in his work, and may have influenced his preference for explaining the Philia facies of the Early Bronze Age as a regional rather than a chronological phenomenon.

In 1957 in his substantial study of the Middle Cypriot period, Åström was also interested in identifying variation within the broader sweep of chronological wares. As with Stewart, the primary focus was on pottery. Åström was able to show regional variation in decorative styles, and argued that from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age 'two distinct cultural areas can be distinguished in Cyprus, an

Eastern and a Western one. In Western Cyprus, or rather the North-western coast, the pottery was characterised by a geometrical style, while a linear style is typical of Eastern Cyprus'.¹²

This, in effect, defined two 'culture areas'. This primary geographical division, based initially on White Painted pottery styles, has had a persistent influence ever since. Åström later made use of a rough measure of relative proportions of major wares across the island and identified a similar pattern of ceramic 'regional peculiarities' in the Late Cypriot period (Fig. 1).¹³ He also identified an increase in uniformity by Late Cypriot II, 'although many regional peculiarities persist'.¹⁴ A significant aspect here is his recognition of fluctuations in the scale and degree of regional difference, with the persistence of some underlying geographical factors.

Hennessy, working at about the same time, also

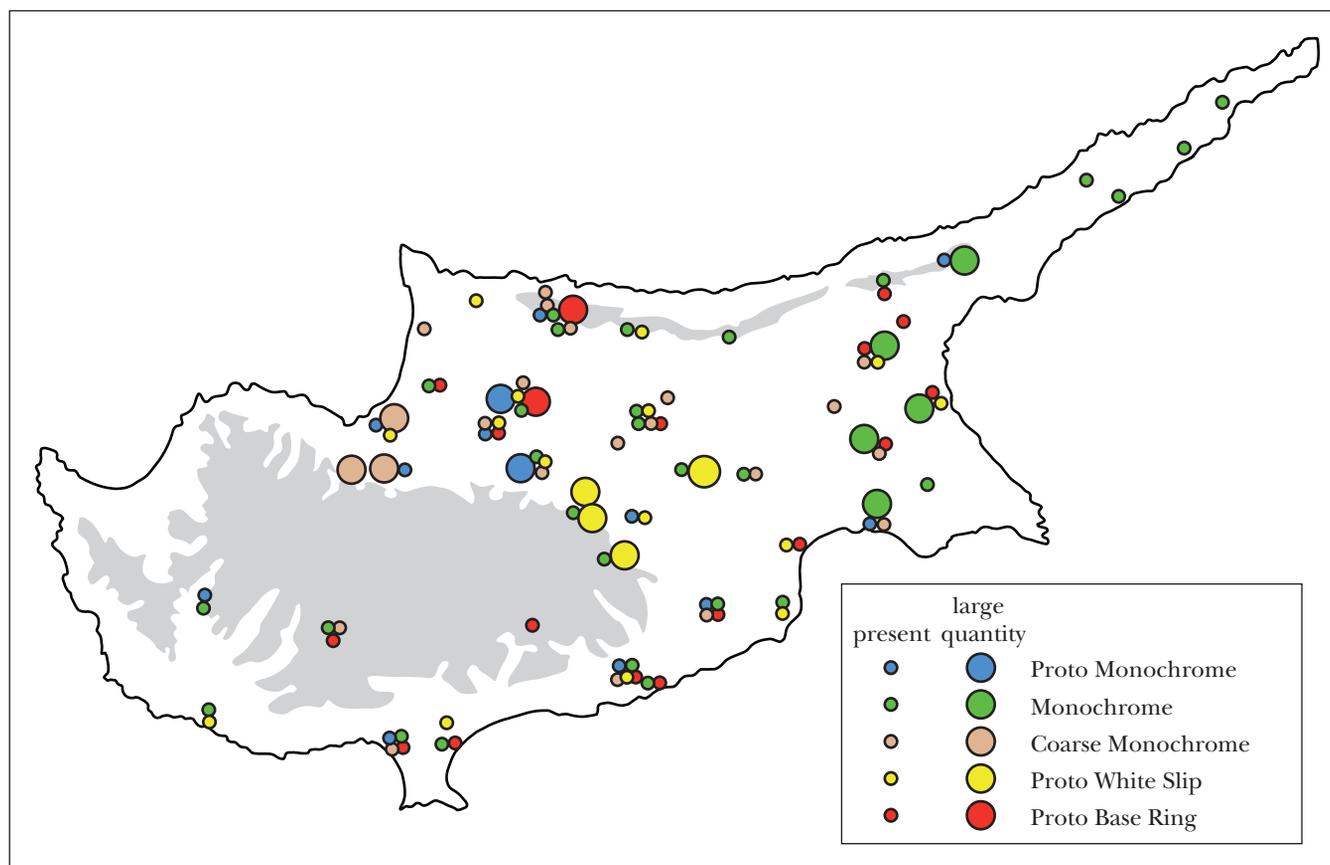


Fig. 1 The distribution and relative quantities of some Late Cypriot wares as documented by Åström in 1972. The local popularity of some wares is set against a background of their more generalised distribution (after ÅSTRÖM 1972, 766)

¹¹ STEWART 1962, 273.

¹² ÅSTRÖM 1972a, 275.

¹³ ÅSTRÖM 1972b, 765.

¹⁴ ÅSTRÖM 1972b, 769.

perceived local variations which had significance for developing a ceramic typology. He added an explicit historical and social explanation for these differences, and argued that it 'now seems just as likely that in the earliest Late Bronze Age burials at Stephanía one is dealing with a regional variant contemporary with Late Cypriot IA in eastern Cyprus. Certainly, at Stephanía, contact with the techniques and materials of the Middle Bronze Age seems closer than in the eastern sites; but this is probably due to the varying environments of, on the one hand, a western and central area continuing the age-old pursuits of a fairly isolated agricultural community and on the other an eastern and south-eastern coastal area growing in commercial importance and in closer contact with the more technically advanced mainland'.¹⁵

Here explanations for differences in pottery wares were sought in terms of geographical distance and associated socio-economic isolation, applying a perception of more and less 'advanced' communities. In this analysis regional variation is, to some extent, seen as a matter of opportunity.

A slightly different mode of explanation for ceramic variation is seen in Catling's review of Early Bronze Age Cyprus, where he favoured a more political perspective on regionalism and the significance of discrete culture areas. Although aware that a full analysis of historical developments 'must await the investigation of regional variations in material culture', he was prepared to suspect that by EC III 'Cyprus had become divided into mutually hostile tribal federations'; and that a 'further guess would equate such federations with the areas of some of the much later city kingdoms'.¹⁶ He also picked up on Åström's identification of two major culture areas, arguing that 'from the beginning of MC III onwards for centuries to come Cyprus can be divided into two cultural zones, east and west'. He recognised, however, that this 'division is too imprecise to define any frontiers, as it is too subtle to permit historical interpretation', arguing that 'the divergencies between the two are insufficient to suggest an intrusion of foreigners in east Cyprus during the Middle Bronze Age'.¹⁷ Here ceramic differences are seen to reflect political and historical events and structures, with an added belief

in the possibility of embedded, long-lasting regional structures, implying cultural continuities over many hundreds of years.

Merrillees, deeply influenced by Stewart and by general approaches to social geography,¹⁸ has always been concerned to emphasise 'the intricate pattern of cultural regionalism'¹⁹ as 'a determinative and recurrent feature of Cypriot civilization throughout the Bronze Age'²⁰ something 'decisively affected by topography'.²¹ In this way he saw a pattern reminiscent of Åström's earlier characterisation of the Middle Cypriot into a broad division of east and west where 'the proportionate distribution of distinctive pottery styles shows that at the beginning of Late Cypriot I the island's culture had resolved itself into two major subdivisions, one characterised by the painted wares of the eastern half of the island, the other, by the monochrome wares in the northwestern quarter'.²²

Although he also regarded regional variation as a technical problem 'which makes synchronisms between ceramic assemblages within the island, not to speak of those with contemporaneous civilizations abroad, far from easy to define',²³ Merrillees also included aspects of an historical, socio-political and, at times, judgemental explanation; arguing, for example, that 'in conjunction with the cultural retardation manifest in the pottery making of the region, it becomes evident that in the early Late Cypriot period the Karpas was cut-off from the mainstream of progress in the rest of the island and retreated into a kind of isolation where well established patterns of art and custom persisted long after they had begun to die out elsewhere in Cyprus ... Was the isolationism of the Karpas cultural zone self-imposed or enforced from outside by events over which the inhabitants had no control?'²⁴ A tension between a broad chronological analysis of ceramic developments, the time-lag involved in the introduction of new types in some areas and the underlying long-standing patterns of regional variation is more clearly evident in Merrillees' other discussion of the early history of Late Cypriot I.²⁵ Here he sees 'the cultural distinctions between east and west in Cyprus begin ... to assume more than co-incidental importance, as they appear

¹⁵ HENNESSY 1963, 50–51.

¹⁶ CATLING 1966a, 33–34.

¹⁷ CATLING 1966b, 40.

¹⁸ MERRILLEES 1983, 47.

¹⁹ MERRILLEES 1977, 34.

²⁰ MERRILLEES 1975, 30.

²¹ MERRILLEES 1965, 140.

²² MERRILLEES 1975, 31.

²³ MERRILLEES 1977, 34.

²⁴ MERRILLEES 1973, 56.

²⁵ MERRILLEES 1971, 70–72.

to have been related to a different pattern of commercial liaisons with the Levant'. In this case a 'co-incident', natural or innate tendency toward regional variation – a matter of geographical distance or isolation – is contrasted with specific external forces retarding or enhancing developments.

This political dimension to explanation appears increasingly regularly in more recent studies of the Late Bronze Age. However, the meaning of variation still often takes second place to its significance for chronological analysis. The understanding of LC I as a 'complex regional mosaic, which any description necessarily oversimplifies',²⁶ is seen to be particularly relevant for addressing broader questions of chronology within Cyprus and beyond.²⁷ Here a model of internal regional variation in Cypriot ceramics, with no fixed time-scale of change, is a convenient, perhaps essential, way to avoid chronological disjunctions outside of the island. This has the potential to lead to an exaggeration of the importance of ceramic regionalism and its use as a measure of broader social structures.

Thus Eriksson, while agreeing with Manning, Sewell and Herscher's characterisation of variation in pottery,²⁸ notes that 'there is no problem if by 'regionalism we mean that there were different centres of production of the ceramic industry... however it is one thesis to maintain that there were separate centres of production of specific wares and quite another to prove that there were barriers which prevented the island wide distribution of products'.²⁹ She goes on to say that 'we can see why Merrillees³⁰ adopted the position he did on the separation of the northwest and the east. He saw LC IA as a formative stage, with LC IB being the period when we get "a homogenous LC culture found all over the island". In the more modern version of Manning, Sewell and Herscher,³¹ we have the claim that the ceramics which define the LC IA – that is PWS/WS I and PBR/BR I – are products that all find their origin in the northwest of the island and were slowly adopted elsewhere (after a gap of between 40 and 100 years). They then draw the speculative conclusion that there was an almost absolute socio-cultural intra-island separation between these two areas during the LC IA period'.³²

In such discussions ceramic regional variation is given greater significance than others have been prepared to accept. One view on its relative importance has been most recently articulated by Knapp: 'the general patterning of these settlements, together with the nature of their finds, seems to indicate a general breakdown in earlier patterns of regionalism. The concept of regionalism has been crucially important in revealing the contemporaneity of sites with differing pottery traditions, particularly so within the ProBA I period. Although regional factions or polities certainly existed during both the PreBA and the ProBA, the primary criterion used to identify them has been the identification and classification of ideal pottery types. Without denying the importance of regionalism, in particular for relative chronology, it must be emphasised that such an approach blurs the more dynamic aspects of production (ceramic, metallurgical or otherwise), and tends to overlook broader social or spatial patterns'.³³

A somewhat similar view is expressed by Manning who draws attention to the 'relatively minor differences in ceramic decoration and form' which 'can be explained through factors centred in local production, and small-scale kin-based interaction, without resort to any higher level socio-political organisation or true geographic separation'.³⁴ Such forms of interaction may lead to the development of general spatial variation of both broad categories of major wares (Fig. 2) and of finer-level attributes of shape, technology and style.

An important distinction may therefore be drawn between the more informal interaction systems operating in the third millennium and for the earlier part of the second millennium and the systems which subsequently characterised the island. This is in part a recognition of different scales of analysis but also acknowledges a necessity to separate inherent trends toward local variation (especially within smaller independent communities) from the more formal boundaries which may be expected with the development of state organisation. How the boundaries of the latter are best established other than by analysis of ceramics remains a difficulty, as no other class of material has the same potential either as a measure of chro-

²⁶ MANNING, SEWELL and HERSCHER 2002, 100.

²⁷ MANNING 2001.

²⁸ ERIKSSON 2007, 56–57.

²⁹ ERIKSSON 2007, 56.

³⁰ MERRILLEES 1971.

³¹ HERSCHER 2002.

³² ERIKSSON 2007, 57.

³³ KNAPP 2008, 134.

³⁴ MANNING 2001, 80.

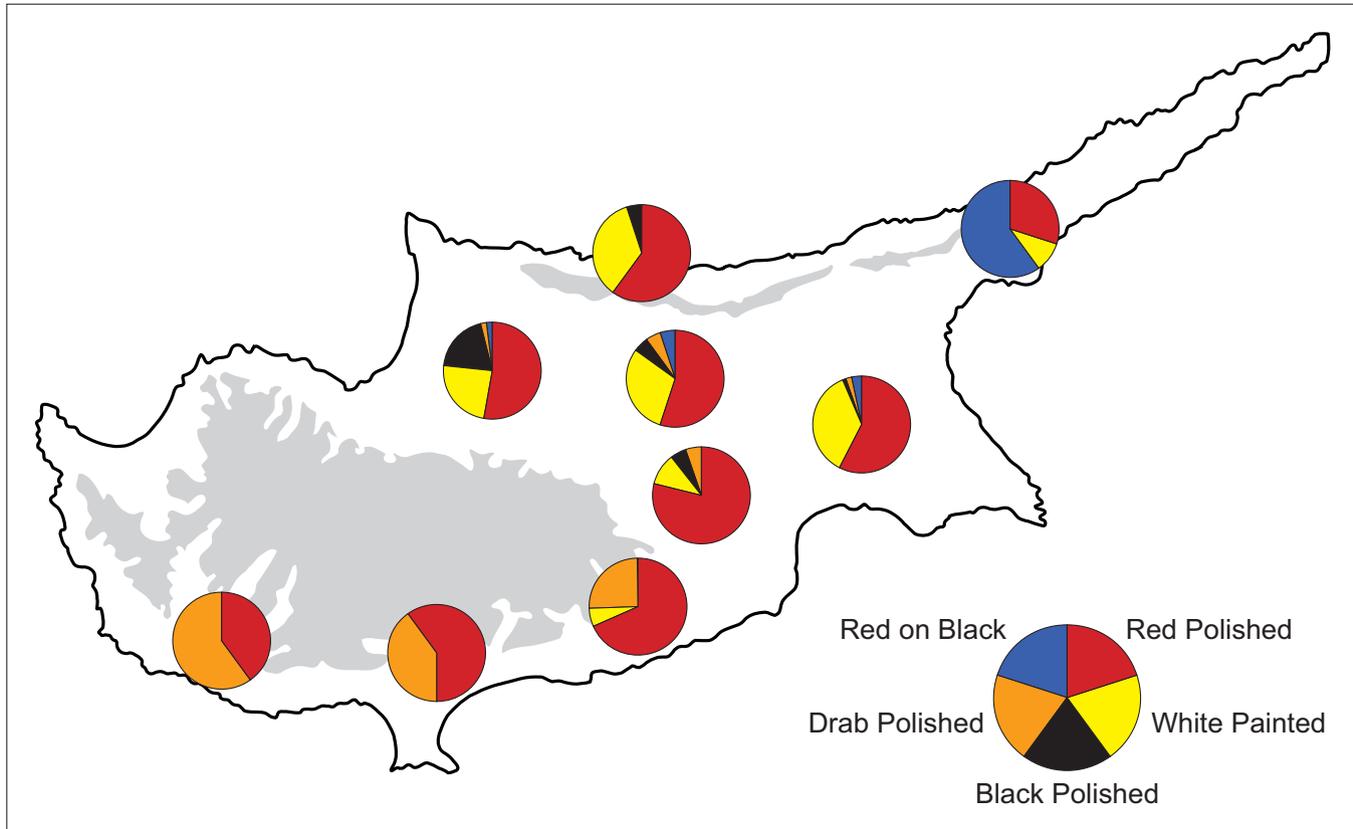


Fig. 2 A notional indication of the relative proportions of major Middle Cypriot wares in different areas, demonstrating broad-scale spatial variation in manufacture and to a lesser extent distribution of pottery

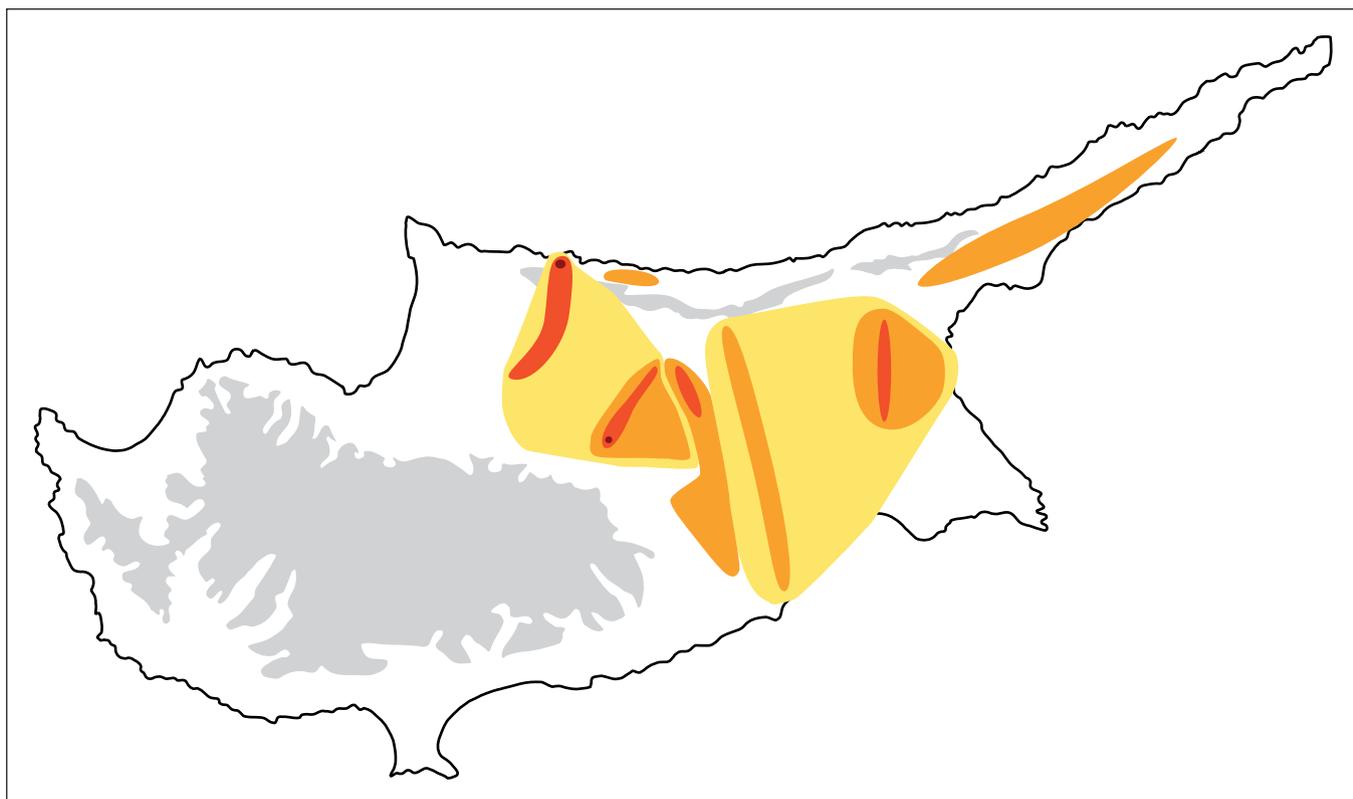


Fig. 3 Varied intensity of associations within and between areas reflecting patterns of social interaction as measured by the use of decorative motifs on samples of Middle Cypriot White Painted pottery available in the early 1970s (after FRANKEL 1974, fig. 13)

nological or of spatial variation. It is difficult enough to measure variability in pottery; it is even harder to find commensurate categories amenable to explanation in other artefact types, however desirable this may be. Beyond this more specific consideration is the extent to which the boundaries between polities need be reflected in the distribution of any artefact types or primary products. This is of greater concern with the development of more complex societies in the last two-thirds of the second millennium, while different types of questions and issues are more relevant to the simpler scale societies of the Early and Middle Bronze Age.

Turning, then, to the issues of variability inherent in small-scale societies, I will briefly consider some of my own early work. In looking at the decoration on White Painted pottery I deliberately avoided a conventional typological or broader stylistic analysis, in a somewhat abstract documentation of data and measurement of similarities between assemblages. Degrees of similarity measured by the presence or proportions of shared motifs were seen as a fairly direct measure of the degree of social interaction. This led to a somewhat different view of patterns of spatial variation so that 'instead of the two main cultural areas described by Åström it is possible to divide the island into a series of overlapping regions, each of which can be characterised by the greater popularity of different design motifs and structure'³⁵ (Fig. 3). To some extent this different pattern is a direct outcome of the particular approach to measuring similarity and the structure of the data used, and we must recognise here that method may often, if not always, pre-empt or determine the result. Be that as it may, the more complex pattern observed was not simply regarded as a natural phenomenon of regional difference, nor explained in terms of historical processes, but rather in terms of particular patterns of social interaction manifested through the 'exchanges of women between villages, normally with neighbours, but also across the island ... Women would bring to their marital homes ideas of pottery decoration common in their childhood villages, which would then either be accepted or rejected by their new neighbours' through the operation of different mechanisms of stylistic and technological transfer.³⁶

Here a specific socio-cultural mechanism for the diffusion of techniques and styles was advanced. To

some extent, however, in these and most other studies the general processes leading to the development of regional variation have remained assumed as an unproblematic given. For the smaller scale Early and Middle Cypriot communities at least this could now be expressed using some of the concepts being developed in Darwinian or evolutionary archaeological theory. For example 'cultural drift' (a rough analogue of genetic drift in biology), is one general mechanism whereby new traits are randomly generated in different populations and then reinforced through social processes of learning and familiarity, where different modes of transmission might apply. This leads inevitably to typological or stylistic separation. Such tendencies would be enhanced by geographical distance and mediated by varied degrees of social interaction including exchange of raw materials and associated movements of people. However, at the same time, other historically or culturally contingent factors also play a large role in selecting for or against new elements. Our attention should then move toward disentangling inherent or natural tendencies toward spatial separation from those involving these environmental and historically contingent forces, affected by particular social circumstances.

One set of examples of the latter is where Jennifer Webb and I have revisited issues of varied patterns of regional similarity and difference in regard to the significant shifts in the latter third millennium from an undifferentiated or homogeneous structure during the Philia phase to a more divided series of style zones in Early Cypriot I-II.³⁷ Here we have argued that any tendencies toward the evolution of spatial difference were inhibited in the Philia phase by strong pressures to maintain cultural conformity over much of the island. The breakdown of this system in the later third millennium is a reflection of changed circumstances, including new patterns of inter-village relationships. Major ceramic style-zones can be identified, indicating dynamic fluctuations in patterns of interaction with closer alliances or connections in some areas contrasted with lower levels of interaction in other directions. The development of some particular local variations can be seen as strongly influenced by complex internal social factors, including changing numbers.

In this way we find that at some times and in some

³⁵ FRANKEL 1974, 47.

³⁶ FRANKEL 1978, 157–159.

³⁷ FRANKEL and WEBB 2006, 307; WEBB and FRANKEL 2008.

places specific sets of social circumstances and forces drastically enhanced and reinforced the development and nature of locally distinctive styles. One second millennium example is seen in the pottery characteristic of Middle Cypriot Deneia where there was a more overt, perhaps even self-conscious assertion of local association and identity. That is, regional – perhaps even more local and site specific – differentiation was deliberate and recognised (an emic indication of difference) and not one only identified in archaeological analysis.³⁸ This goes some way to address Manning's concern that although regionalism is 'a dominant theme in all Cypriot archaeology ... such views are 'entirely derived from ceramic evidence, and are, as such, modern constructs'.³⁹ Here, however, we should recognise that all archaeological analyses are modern constructs, and even where they were never recognised, perceived or understood by people in the past they are useful to us. Neither types nor 'regions' need have been emic constructs (such as those suggested for Deneia) to have etic (*ie* analytical) value, including the potential for tracing social processes and chronological sequences. The nature and source of the variations and their explanatory potential differs, as does our understanding of them.

Many studies, including some of those alluded to above, take a utilitarian approach. They also tend to take regional variation for granted, and often treat it more as a problem to be overcome in chronological or typological studies than as a research domain to explore in its own right.⁴⁰ Sometimes this is a by-product of working at different scales of analysis, as where Herscher⁴¹ and Maguire⁴² identify particular wares or styles as distinct enough to be identified as

the products of individual craftspeople or small, localised and short-lived workshops. The distribution of these items has, they argue, the potential to provide specific cross-dating of distant assemblages – something that, given the regional diversity within the main traditions – would not otherwise be possible.

It is therefore possible to draw a distinction between two approaches to ceramic regionalism: one which looks to explain this phenomenon in terms of social or historical processes and the other which sees it less as a research problem to explore than a technical problem to be overcome or exploited in order to establish chronological systems. These are not, however, mutually exclusive: quite the contrary. One cannot fully appreciate and explain the ways in which settlements and regions evolve different patterns of relationships without understanding the rates at which innovations are introduced and adopted and at which divergence develops or is erased. Conversely, the tempo of processes involved is a vital part of assessing possible time-lags and associated chronological issues.

It is clear from this brief review that the concept of regionalism has a complex history within Cypriot Bronze Age archaeology, and is used as a shorthand to refer to a variety of different forms of spatial variation and analysis. It means different things in different contexts. A greater awareness of this, and of the ways in which our units of analysis, selection of measures and overall approaches each impact on the patterns observed should lead to a greater ability to distinguish networks of interaction, different boundary effects and the ever-changing nature of cultural diversity at site-specific, local and broader regional scales.

³⁸ WEBB this volume; FRANKEL AND WEBB 2007, 154–156, 161.

³⁹ MANNING 2001, 80.

⁴⁰ BARLOW, BOLGER and KLING 1991. See, for example, papers by HERSCHER, MAGUIRE and MERRILLEES in the *Cypriot Ceramics* volume.

⁴¹ HERSCHER 1991.

⁴² MAGUIRE 1991.

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