

INTRODUCTION

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“The formation of Cyprus in the 2nd Millennium B.C.”. For the Middle and Late Cypriot Bronze Age there are many unanswered questions especially concerning chronology, social transformation and the development of local entities or industries. The title of this collection of papers, “The Formation of Cyprus” was chosen to pinpoint the fact that local community activities and exchange at a local scale have a considerable influence on island-wide development and in this instance the formation of society in the Bronze Age.

In Cyprus some geographical partitions can be adopted to provide a framework from which to organise our current studies (cf. GEORGIU 2007, MERRILLEES *et al.* 1971). In order to obtain a detailed picture of society models, we also need to have a solid foundation of knowledge concerning the chronological development, architecture and material culture, to serve as a platform for interpretation.

The chronology of the 2nd Millennium B.C. is the topic of the special research program SCIEEM 2000, by the Austrian Science Fund, and the variety of results show potential for further interpretation (BIETAK 2003). The section of Cyprus within this program has undertaken several studies dealing with the distribution of Cypriot wares in the entire eastern Levant.

A focus of these studies is devoted to the transition from the MC into the LC period, since this is a crucial time in the Ancient Near East, where the volume of Cypriot pottery is evident in the fluctuating trade and network operations. Moreover from a historical view, this is the time of considerable movement including the large and complex topic of the Hyksos history in Ancient Near East and Egypt, the Hurrian question (MERRILLEES 2007) and also technological transfer. The appearance of Cypriot pottery in the Levant has a bearing on these events. Whereas other cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean have fully developed writing systems, the Cypriot culture of the 2nd Millennium and its chronology is dependent on the interpretation of archaeological artefacts and pottery, as well as the crosslink of their distribution in the Ancient Near East. In discussions which consider the origin of several Cypriot pottery wares, White Slip Ware for example (ERIKSSON 2007), or Lustrous wares (cf. HEIN ed.

2007), it has become evident that a reflective base is needed in order to get a deeper understanding for the emerging patterns. During the last years two studies have focussed on the investigation of pottery ware on Cyprus, L. Maguire analyses stylistic components of the White Painted (WP) wares and White Slip (WS) wares, and L. Crewe elaborates on the Red on Red and Red on Black (RoR/RoB) development in combination with the Plain White (PW) wares.

A further major study by the Cypriot section is the production of a Manual of Bichrome Wheelmade Ware. The collection of the data and the ensuing research reiterates that our present knowledge about the internal situation on the island could be further elucidated in order for us to understand the distribution patterns. Taking this as a starting point in several discussions with colleagues, the idea was raised to attend to the intra island structure of Cyprus in terms of regional development. This was the impetus behind a workshop which would focus on the phenomenon of regionalism in Cyprus.

The idea was to highlight the complexity and variability in the historical formation of the island during the 2nd Millennium B.C., which resulted in the island-wide material culture of the Late Cypriot Period II and later stages. In the discussions at the congress it became clear that a focussed debate for the Bronze Age was essential, and the broad interest in this topic was also clearly evident in the number of many renowned scholars of Cypriot archaeology auditing the workshop, to name only a few of them D. Bolger, G. Cadogan, M. Iacovou, A. B. Knapp, E. Peltenburg, D. Pilides, D. Sewell, and many others. The scientific community will remember in particular the late P. Åström for his valuable comments at his last conference in Cyprus.

The contributions emerging from the workshop which are presented within this volume also show the diversity of various approaches to the topic. D. Frankel in his solid contribution gives a critical summary on statements considering regionalism in the past. He includes a valuable account on the sometimes diverging criteria which can be taken as parameters to define a region. Besides geographical measurements, he also points to local production or political influ-

ence, which appears from the LC period onwards, and brings in other components for regional networks. Other papers concentrate more on the view from some local entities. J. Webb reflects the Deneia structure and the change of a network functioning together with Lapithos, for a direction towards the west in the MC III period, L. Steel gives an overview of Areiou in the Northern Troodos foothills as a complex structure and independently working production zone in the hinterland, with connections to the coastal sites in LC I, whereas G. Georgiou highlights the important function of the central zone in the MC III period as a bridge between the Northern and Southern, and the Eastern and Western zones respectively. Three papers deal with the Alassa region, in the southwest, at the end of the LC period: A. Jacobs, investigating pottery fabrics versus types, P. Keswani, who presents ideas for the pithoi production of the region by taking into account the manufacturing process of these voluminous vessels, and finally, S. Hadjisavvas examines large scale architecture and the social meaning of those buildings from Alassa.

The WP wares are discussed in two papers, by L. Maguire and K.O. Eriksson. Maguire takes a fresh look at the application of decoration through detailed brush stroke analyses. She compares the underlying embedded brushstroke behaviour of WP and WS wares. Eriksson in contrast raises the problems of the WP grouping systems, which were developed by P. ÅSTRÖM in the 70s (1972), *versus* the theory of FRANKEL (1971) about functionality and structural relationship in geographical locations. In her opinion the WP CLS ware, for instance, is apparently a product of individual pottery workshops, so WP V and WP VI emerge from the north west of the island, whereas WPPLS comes out of a north eastern tradition.

The potential of ware group analyses is discussed in the contribution by L. Crewe, as she investigates the initial stages of the PW Handmade ware, from the MC II period onwards into the LC period. She confines the origin of the ware to the east of Cyprus which brought in new types during the MC with considerable Levantine influence, before PW became transformed into Wheelmade production in the LC period, as it is found all over the island. She regards the ware as an indicator of social transformations in intra-island communication.

It became clear during the workshop and during the very vivid discussions, that the characterisation of the regions of Cyprus is problematic and needs further discussion not just for the Middle Cypriot and Late Cypriot phases. As we can see from the contri-

butions, the detailed interpretation of material groups, of local entities, of architecture, distribution of wares and of fabrics is essential in order to enhance our understanding of Cypriot life and social development in the 2nd Millennium B.C.

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