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The Relevance of Authenticity. Mycenaean-Type Pottery in the Mediterranean

Gert J. van Wijngaarden

Abstract

In this article, the question is posed whether our modern concerns with the authenticity of objects can be projected into ancient patterns of consumption. The case studied is that of Mycenaean-Greek type pottery dating to the Late Bronze Age that has been found in many areas of the Mediterranean. In Cyprus, Syro-Palestine (the Levant) and Italy Genuine imports and locally made imitations have been found. Analyses of the repertoire of pot shapes, of the spatial distribution and of contexts sheds light on the different roles that Mycenaean authenticity played in consumption patterns in each of these areas.

Резюме

В статті розглядається питання, чи може бути спроектованою наша сучасна зацікавленість в аутентичності предметів на давні моделі споживання. В основу дослідження взятий мікено-грецький тип посуду, який був знайдений в багатьох ареалах Середземномор'я і датований добою пізньої бронзи. На Кіпрі, в Сирії і Палестині (Левант), в Італії були знайдені справжній імпортований посуд та зроблені на місці його імітації. Аналіз асортименту форм посуду, його просторового розподілу і контексту проливає світло на різну роль, яку відігравала аутентичність мікенської продукції в моделях споживання у кожному з зазначених ареалів.

Introduction

In the material culture of modern-day western society, the concept of authenticity is of great importance¹. In our continuous dealings with the material world around us, the question of whether a specific item is real or not, is asked frequently. This pre-occupation with authenticity originates in the reactions to the growing influence of bourgeois culture in early Modern Europe². The increased wealth of middle-class consumers enabled them to acquire objects that

had previously been reserved for traditional élites. The technical and digital possibilities for mass-production and imitation in the industrial and post-industrial world have challenged further the restricted use of exclusive goods and services³. The notion of authenticity serves to maintain exclusivity so that commodities may be used by people to materially express themselves in an amorphous modern society: many people may possess an oriental-style carpet, but a distinct few can acquire a true Persian rug.

Such a pre-occupation with the genuineness of things, is visible especially in the arts, its history and the art market⁴. In modern western society, the aura of an authentic work, revolves around issues of good taste, expert knowledge, social distinction and 'originality'. In the middle Ages, the copy of an original work of art had its own value and significance. Since the European Renaissance, however, and in particular since the 19th century, copies and forgeries are not considered real art⁵. Art objects may decrease dramatically in financial worth if proven not to be authentic. The criteria by which authenticity is defined, however, are not self-evident. The definitions of authenticity in the arts are continuously being negotiated between experts from the art world, dealers, producers, scholars and purchasers⁶. Rather than an artistic quality, authenticity is an elusive conceptualisation through which art remains a prime medium for sumptuary distinction: the Coca-Cola bottle placed in a museum by Marcel Duchamps became an authentic piece of art through this action and through subsequent reactions and discussions in the art world.

The concepts of falsity and authenticity are cultural constructs that vary in time and across cultures⁷. The modern understanding of what is original and what are imitations is valid only in the context of modern, western society. The way in which these notions have relevance for the study of material remains from the past is by no means self-evident.

¹ Spooner 1986, 225 ff. esp.; Lowenthal 1992, 184; Miller, 1995, 24 ff.; Groom 2001a, 2 f.

² Elias 1969; Berman 1971; Jones 1992.

³ Benjamin (1936) 1974; Trilling 1971; Spooner 1986; Lowenthal 1992, 187; Smith 2000; Punter 2001.

⁴ Baudrillard 1981; Mukerji 1983; Bourdieu 1984, 63 ff.; Kemal 1999; Groom 2001b.

⁵ Savage 1963; Jones 1992, 8; Hoving 1996; Hebborn 1997.

⁶ Phillips 1997, 40; Groom 2001b.

⁷ Pastoureau 1988, 23 f.; Groom 2001a.

Authenticity in Archaeology

In archaeology, the notion of authenticity has come to play a major role. Archaeologists employ a whole range of stylistic, technical and chemical techniques to determine the genuineness of objects⁸. To a large extent such techniques are applied in order to investigate whether an item is really old. In spite of the variety of techniques, a consensus cannot always be reached, as is clear from the famous case of the Getty Kouros, to which a whole conference was devoted, without a firm conclusion⁹. In various other cases, forgeries of archaeological artefacts have been exposed, which were meant either for the art market or to claim academic fame¹⁰.

Many of the stylistic and archaeometric techniques used to determine the age of objects are also used for provenance research. The physical characteristics of archaeological artefacts sometimes connect them irrefutably to specific geographical areas, as in the case of obsidian which in the Mediterranean area is found at a limited number of places only and shows clear differences among these¹¹. More problematic are cases in which archaeological finds are associated with specific archaeological groups or cultures on the basis of previous definitions of these groups or cultures. A case in point is the so-called Handmade Burnished Ware which has been found in Mycenaean Greek contexts¹². Due to its stylistic and technical differences, this type of pottery is considered not to be Mycenaean, even though, at the same time, it is thought to be locally produced in the majority of cases. Obviously, the characteristics of this class of artefacts do not meet the definitions of Mycenaean authenticity.

Especially in the archaeological research of interaction between different culture groups, it is important to distinguish originals and imitations. The assumption here is that different patterns of interaction may have varying archaeological results¹³. Trade relations would lead to imports of originals and vice versa. Migrations would lead to the large scale local production of foreign-type objects (imitations). And infrequent contacts may lead to distant derivations which are inspired by the originals. In order to identify patterns of interaction, it is important to know

whether, for example, a vase found outside Greece is truly Greek, or a local imitation.

For archaeologists the notion of authenticity refers not only to age, but in particular to geographical and cultural provenance. Archaeological definitions of authenticity are being formed in academic debates and usually include stylistic and archaeometric criteria¹⁴. In this article, I explore the question whether such archaeological definitions of authenticity had relevance for the societies that we study. In other words: did it matter to the people in Cyprus, the Levant and Italy whether a Mycenaean pot actually came from Greece or was imitated elsewhere?

Mycenaean pottery in the Mediterranean

Beyond the Aegean, Mycenaean-type pots have been found in Anatolia, Cyprus, the Levant, Egypt and in the Central Mediterranean (*fig 1*)¹⁵. The earliest of these can be classified stylistically as Late Helladic I, which is traditionally dated to the 16th century BC¹⁶.

The latest Mycenaean vessels stylistically date to LH IIIC, the period after the collapse of the palatial system on the Greek mainland around 1200 BC. The chronological pattern of the distribution of this pottery varies highly for each of these areas. Whereas in the eastern Mediterranean there is a marked peak in the numbers of finds from the Mycenaean palatial period (LH IIIA2-LH IIIB1), in Italy, there are also substantial quantities of vessels from the pre- and post-palatial periods.

The majority of sites beyond the Aegean with Late Helladic pottery have yielded only a few specimens. In all areas, however, there are some sites with substantial quantities of Aegean finds, as many as several hundred vessels in some cases¹⁷. The corpus

¹⁴ Cf. Jones 1986, 15 ff.; Baer 1993, 66; Åström 1998.

¹⁵ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 9 ff. For particular areas, see: Mee 1978; Özgünel 1997; Niemeier 2003 (for Anatolia); Åström 1972; Pacci 1986; Steel 1998 (for Cyprus); Leonard 1994; Steel 2002 (for the Levant); Hankey 1993; Cline 1994, 31 ff.; Merrillees 1998, 153 (for Egypt); Vagnetti 1999; Marazzi 2003 (for Italy).

¹⁶ The absolute chronology of the ceramic styles of the Late Bronze Age Aegean is by no means undisputed; see for example, Betancourt 1990; 1998; Manning 1990; Warren 1996; 1998; Wiener 1998, 313 ff.; Marketou et al. 2001. Absolute dates given here are only indicative.

¹⁷ Examples of sites with more than hundred finds are Deir el-Medina and Tell el-Amarna in Egypt; Ugarit, Minet el-Beida, Sarepta, Amman-airport, Tell Abu Hawam, Megiddo and Lachisch in the Levant; Enkomi, Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke, Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, Maroni and Kouklia Palaeopaphos in Cyprus and Scoglio del Tonno, Broglio di Trebisacce, Torre del Mordillo and Lipari in Italy; see Van Wijngaarden 2002, 15 ff., with many refs.

⁸ For an overview of these techniques, see Aitken 1990, 166 f.; Brothwell/Pollard 2001, 1 ff. See also: Wainwright 1992.

⁹ Getty Kouros Colloquium 1993. See Walker 1992, for a similar case in the British Museum: the female statue known as Clytie.

¹⁰ Muscarella 2000; Brodie/Tubb 2002, 3.

¹¹ Renfrew et al. 1965, 225 ff.; Tykot 1996, 42 ff.

¹² For overviews: see Pilides 1994; Betelli 2002, 117 ff.

¹³ Polanyi 1975, 135; Dalton 1975, 104; Smith 2001.

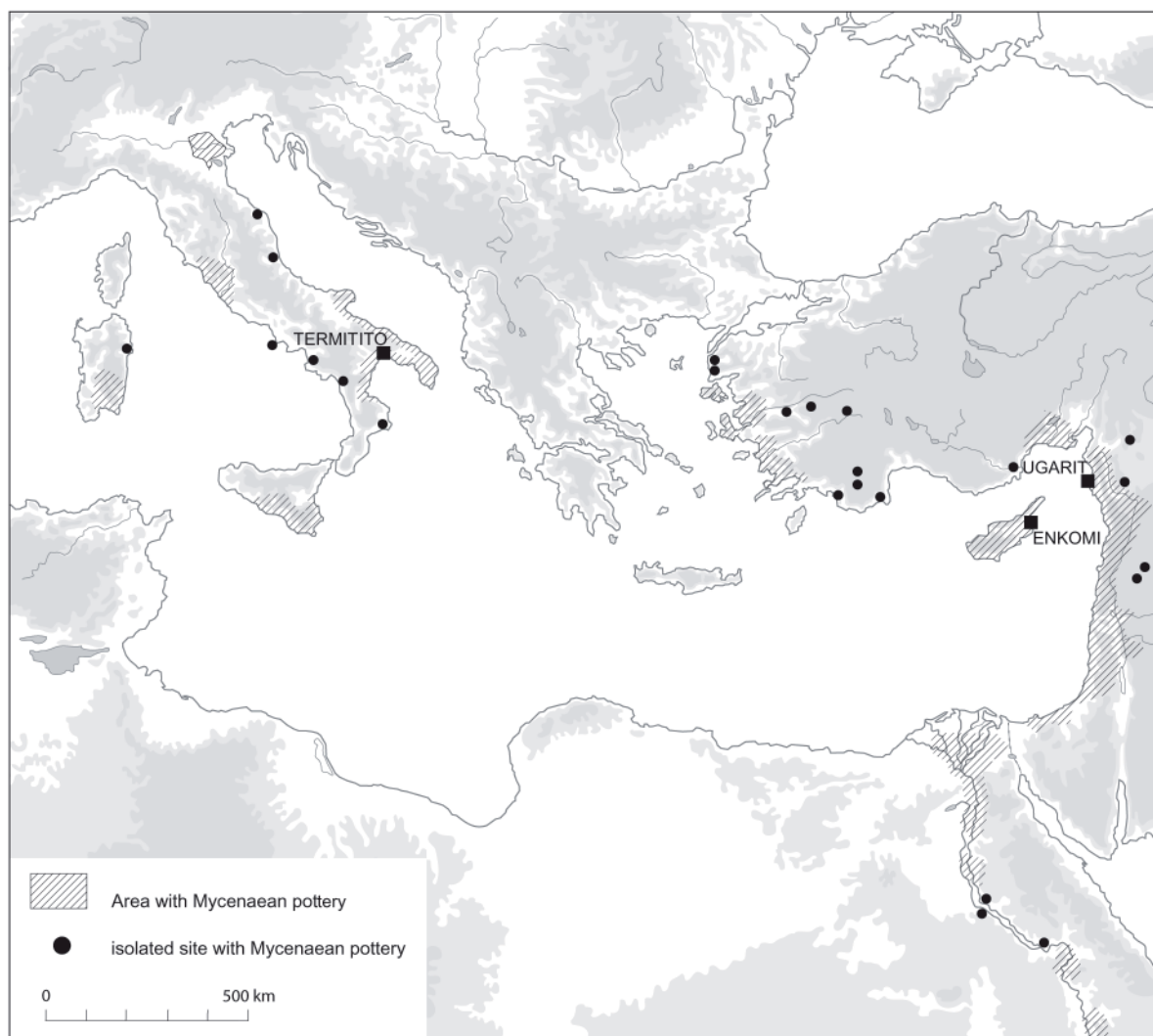


Fig. 1. Distribution of Mycenaean pottery in the Mediterranean

of Mycenaean pottery found outside the Aegean, differs from that found in its area of production. This is especially true of the pottery found in the eastern Mediterranean. One of the most notable differences is that the finds consist almost exclusively of decorated fine wares. Almost all Mycenaean vessels are of fine, hard-baked, well-levigated clay, decorated with geometrical and floral designs. A number of pot shapes have been found in large quantities in the eastern Mediterranean which are comparatively rare in Greece itself¹⁸. Examples of these types include shallow bowls, chalices, angular jugs and zoomorphic rhyta. This distribution pattern of specific Mycenaean vessel types suggests that a specialised production of pottery for markets in the eastern Mediterranean

took place in the Mycenaean world during the LH IIIA2-LH IIIB period¹⁹.

Interestingly, the type of vessel found is not limited to ceramic containers²⁰. A substantial part of the ceramic repertoire consists of Mycenaean tableware, such as cups, bowls and jugs, indicating a genuine appreciation at the importing places for the pottery itself. The repertoire of Mycenaean pots is not the same for all sites in the Mediterranean²¹. In specific areas there are clear preferences for certain Mycenaean types. In the northern Levant, for example, there is a marked concentration of Mycenaean mugs and rhyta²². Variations are also visible among sites situated close together. For example, at tell Abu Hawam in Israel open pot shapes are more

¹⁸ These pot shapes have been referred to as “Levanto-Helladic”, see Karageorghis 1965, 204 ff.

¹⁹ Sherratt 1982, 183; Jones 1986, 599 f.

²⁰ Sherratt 1999, 170 f.

²¹ Van Wijngaarden 1999, 7.

²² Gilmour 1992, 115.

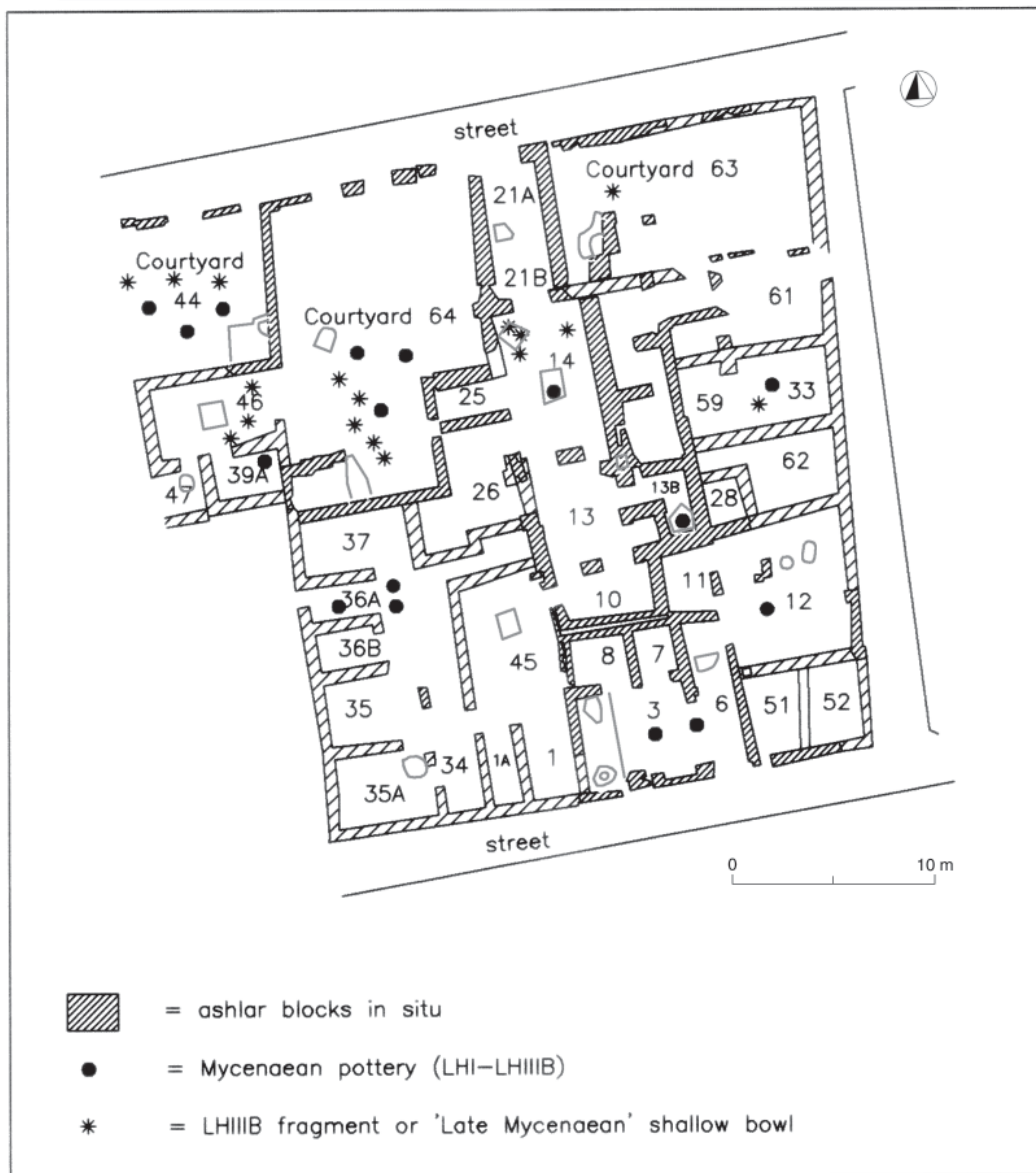


Fig. 2. Enkomi: plan of Ashlar building, indicating find spots of Mycenaean finds and of Mycenaean-type bowls

numerous than closed vessels, which contrasts with most other sites in the same area²³. Such variations in the frequency of certain vessel types indicate that importing societies could exert preferences for specific products, which suggests the possibility of specialised systems of distribution.

In each of the areas under discussion, the Mycenaean-type vessels are clearly distinguishable from products of the local pottery industry, suggesting a foreign origin for these products. Nevertheless, in all areas where imported Mycenaean finds occur, there are also products of local or regional manufacture imitating these vessels or incorporating specific ele-

ments in their own ceramic repertoire. In Miletus, for example, there is evidence for the manufacture of Mycenaean ceramics from LH IIIA onwards, which is to be considered in relation to the likely presence of a Mycenaean population in the town²⁴. For Egypt, the local production of Aegean-style ceramics seems to have been limited to only a small number of vessels²⁵. It is important to realise that such regional products of Mycenaean type could be exchanged and

²⁴ Gödecken 1988, 311; Niemeier 1997, 347; 1998, 30 ff.

²⁵ Bell (1982, 150) identified only two imitations of the stirrup jar, probably based on LH IIB prototypes. Additionally, Mycenaean stirrup jars were imitated in stone and faience, see Hankey 1995a, 117, 123.

²³ Balensi 1980, 485; see also Steel 2002, 32, 44.

transported over large distances, as is clear in from Mycenaean-type pottery in the Levant that probably was manufactured in Cyprus²⁶. We cannot exclude the possibility that these ‘imitations’ were transported together alongside Mycenaean originals.

The main question I will pose in this article is whether the origin of Mycenaean vessels was of importance for the way they were used and appreciated in antiquity. I will investigate this topic for the three areas which have yielded the majority of Mycenaean finds outside the Aegean: Cyprus, the Levant and Italy.

Cyprus

The island of Cyprus is without any doubts the area outside the Aegean with the most numerous Mycenaean pottery finds. Almost every Late Bronze Age site on the island yields some Mycenaean-type pots and there are a few sites with hundreds or even thousands of Aegean finds, as for example at Enkomi, Kition, Hala Sultan Tekke and Kalavassos - Ayios Dhimitrios²⁷. The systematic introduction of Aegean-type ceramic products in Cyprus began in the beginning of the Late Bronze Age: there are small numbers of Late Minoan I and II and Late Helladic I and IIA finds at various sites, notably at Enkomi, at Toumba tou Skourou and at Ayia Irini - Palaikastro²⁸. The quantities of Mycenaean pottery increase dramatically during the LH IIIA and LH IIIB periods²⁹. In the period immediately after the fall of these palaces, the quantities of the Mycenaean-type pottery remain very high, but the ceramic repertoire in terms of pot shapes and decoration is much more limited.

The Mycenaean type pots at Cyprus clearly stand out from the native ceramic industry on the island³⁰. The Mycenaean products are of fine wheel-made ware and they are decorated with lustrous paint. In contrast, Cypriot ceramic products continued to be hand-made until very late in the Late Bronze Age. Painted decoration is scarce and, generally, consists of simple Geometric motifs only.

The provenance and area of manufacture of the Mycenaean pottery on Cyprus has been a topic of dis-

cussion since the late 19th century³¹. The repertoire of Mycenaean pots on the island differs substantially from that in the Aegean and, indeed, there are several classes of pots, which occur more frequently in Cyprus than in Greece itself. Examples of this are the large amphoroid kraters decorated with scenes involving chariots or bulls³². They have been found in large numbers in Cyprus, especially in tombs. They also occur in Greece, but in smaller numbers.

Scientific analyses by various methods since the 1940's have indicated that most of the Mycenaean pottery at Cyprus was imported from the Peloponnese³³. At the same time, however, it has also become clear that Cypriot potters some time during Late Cypriot IIC (c. 1320-1200 BC) began using the potter's wheel for their products and incorporated part of the Mycenaean repertoire alongside the traditional White Slip and Base Ring Wares³⁴. This has resulted in a number of Cypriot pottery classes of Mycenaean type, such as vessels in the ‘Rude’ or ‘Pastoral’ pictorial style and a variety of bowls (*pl. I*). These local products occur side by side with imports from Greece.

We are in a good position to study the use of Mycenaean vessels at the site of Enkomi, which is situated in the north-east of the island and has been substantially excavated since 1896 by British, Swedish, French and Cypriot teams³⁵. These excavations have revealed a substantial town which was inhabited during the whole of the Late Bronze Age. Mycenaean-type pottery is very abundant at Enkomi. It occurs in all excavation areas of the town, both in settlement and in tomb contexts³⁶. The earliest Mycenaean finds date to the very beginning of the Late Bronze Age and they continue to be imported during the whole of the Late Bronze Age.

In settlement levels dating to the later Bronze Age periods (LC IIC-LC IIIA: c. 1325-1190 BC), both Mycenaean imports and local products of

²⁶ Leonard et al. 1993, 119; Killebrew 1998, 162; 2000, 12. For a Cyprus-made Mycenaean-type krater in the so-called ‘Rude’ or ‘Pastoral’ style at Eboli in Italy, see Vagnetti 2001, 82.

²⁷ Cadogan 1993, 91 ff.; Sherratt 1998, 296 note 8; 1999, 170.

²⁸ For Enkomi, see: Smith 1925, no. 29; Dikaios 1969 230 nos. 27-29. For Toumba tou Skourou, see Vermeule/Wolsky 1978; 1990, 381. For Ayia Irini, see Graziado 1995.

²⁹ Kanta 2003, 32.

³⁰ Sherratt 1991, 191 ff.; 1994, 37.

³¹ Myres/Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899, 40; Karageorghis 1965, 201 ff.; 2000; 2000-2001, 91 f.

³² Furumark 1941, 431; Vermeule/Karageorghis 1982; Crouwel/Morris 1985; Steel 1998, 292 ff.; Van Wijngaarden 2001.

³³ Immerwahr 1945, 555 note 7; Catling/Millet 1965, 212 ff.; Asaro/Perlman 1973, 221 f.; Catling et al. 1978; Jones 1986, 523 ff.; Bryan et al. 1997. V. Karageorghis (1999, 398 f.; 2000-2001, 92), however, argues for the transportation of Greek clays and craftsmen to Cyprus.

³⁴ Sherratt/Crouwel 1987, 341 f.; Kling 1987; 1989, 80 f.; 2000, 281 f.; Sherratt 1991, 186 ff.; Åström 1998.

³⁵ Murray et al. 1900, 1 ff.; Myres 1945, 70; Gjerstadt et al. 1934, 467 ff.; Schaeffer 1936; 1952; Courtois 1981, 1984; Lagarce/Lagarce 1985; Dikaios 1969; 1971. The site is currently inaccessible due to the military occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkish troops.

³⁶ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 133 ff.

Mycenaean type have been found³⁷. In the so-called Ashlar Building (LC IIIA: c. 1225-1190 BC) both types of pottery were in use, as can be attested from the distribution of such pottery, often only in fragments and on the floors of the building. *Figure 2* shows the distribution of Mycenaean vessels and of shallow bowls which on visual grounds can be considered as the local type³⁸. Of course, various factors involving deposition and post-deposition probably have had an effect on the final distribution within the house³⁹. Nevertheless, there does not appear a notable difference in this house in the use of Mycenaean originals and imitations.

At Enkomi, the tombs are notable archaeological features⁴⁰. They are caves cut into the rock which are situated between the houses. Generally, they have been used for multiple internments, each time involving the deposition of grave goods. In several cases, it is clear that tombs were used for many generations. This long period of use makes it difficult to identify objects that were part of the funerary inventories of particular burial ceremonies. Nevertheless, it is clear that in the periods LC IIC- LC IIIA both imported Mycenaean pictorial kraters, as well as locally produced vessels in the so-called 'Rude' or 'Pastoral' Style were deposited side by side⁴¹. There are no indications whatsoever that these two classes of ceramic vessels played different roles in the funerary rituals at Enkomi.

In refuse contexts dating to LC IIC-LC IIIA, Mycenaean pots also occur side-by-side⁴². It appears that both in daily life as well as in funerary rituals at Enkomi during this period, imitations of Mycenaean pottery were treated exactly the same as imported vessels.

Another site at Cyprus with substantial amounts of Mycenaean pottery is Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios, along the southern coast of the island⁴³. Occupation at the site began early in LC II (c. 1500-1450 BC), as is clear from a number of wealthy tombs. The site was abandoned before the end of LC IIC (c. 1200 BC), that is earlier than Enkomi. Mycenaean-type pottery belonging to the latest stylistic phases (LH IIIC) is lacking. The range of Mycenaean-type

pots at Kalavassos is wide and comprises a number of storage and dinner vessels, as well as large pictorial kraters. There appear to be some Mycenaean-type vessels of local manufacture, but the bulk of the pottery is clearly imported from the Aegean.

The spatial distribution of Mycenaean pottery at Kalavassos shows a remarkable pattern⁴⁴. Small Mycenaean containers are widely distributed in the settlement, while dinner vessels are restricted to one building: building X and its associated tombs. Building X is the largest building at the site, situated in the middle and it may be described as Palace-like⁴⁵. In the centre of building X, a pit has been discovered, which yielded the remains of a copious dinner as was evident from large quantities of bones and from large numbers of ceramic vessels. About three quarters of the total of these vessels were imported, suggesting that their foreign origin made them special somehow. However, there were also significant numbers of locally produced vessels. Among imports and local ceramic products alike, shapes associated with serving, drinking and eating dominated by far. In the case of Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios the function of ceramic vessels, rather than their origin appears to have been of prime importance in the way that they were used and appreciated.

It has been argued that the Mycenaean dinner vessels at Kalavassos were part of a material repertoire referring to élite practices of ritual dining and drinking⁴⁶. In this case it is of interest that from the middle of the Late Bronze Age onwards, increasing numbers of Mycenaean dinner vessels appear at many sites all over the island⁴⁷. These vessels occur together with other items that refer to élite practices and international trade, such as cylinder seals and ivory objects. Many tombs from the Late Bronze Age at small inland sites on the island contain limited numbers of Mycenaean vessels, usually kraters, bowls or cups. This suggests that the Mycenaean pots were part of a material repertoire that was used by local élites in the emulation of élite practices in the large coastal centres at Cyprus⁴⁸.

The adoption by the local ceramic industry of Mycenaean pot shapes primarily relating to dining and drinking, should be interpreted in this regard. These practices had become an integral part of Cypriot Culture. The functions of the vessels and the way they could be used in local cultural practices determined their appreciation, not so much their Aegean origin.

³⁷ Catling et al. 1963, 103 ff.; Asaro/Perlman 1973, 221; Catling et al. 1978, 72, 77.

³⁸ To my knowledge none of these vessels have been subject to scientific determination. See, however, Maier 1985; Kling 1987, 103, 106; Sheratt 1991, 186 for the local provenance for these types of shallow bowls.

³⁹ La Motta/Schiffer 1999, 25.

⁴⁰ For an overview, see Keswani 1989 (with bibliography).

⁴¹ Keswani 1989, 64 f. tabl. 2.

⁴² For example in pit 202 in Quartier 5E; see Courtois et al. 1986, 57, 61 pl. 16, 1-3.

⁴³ South 1988; Russell 1989; Goring 1989; South/Russel 1993.

⁴⁴ South/Russel 1993.

⁴⁵ South 1988, 227 f.; South/Russel 1993, 305 f.

⁴⁶ Steel 1998, 291.

⁴⁷ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 192 ff.

⁴⁸ Keswani 1993, 78 f.; Knapp 1996, 20 f.; Steel 1998, 292.

The Levant

In the area of coastal Syria, the Lebanon and Israel/Palestine, Mycenaean-type pottery has been found on some 120 sites⁴⁹. The distribution pattern clearly shows that such pottery circulated widely, with some sites far away from the sea yielding notable quantities of it, for example Kamid el-Loz in Lebanon⁵⁰ or Amman airport in Jordan⁵¹. As in Cyprus, at the majority of sites only a very limited number of Mycenaean finds have been made. However, some large coastal sites, notably Ugarit, and Tell Abu Hawam have yielded several hundred of these vessels⁵².

In general, the repertoire of Mycenaean pots is similar to that in Cyprus, with many vessel types occurring frequently in both areas⁵³. However, there are also substantial differences in the distribution pattern of Mycenaean pots between the two areas. Mycenaean finds dating to the period before LH IIIA are rare in the Levant in comparison with Cyprus, while the earliest Mycenaean finds in the Levant are notably later than on the island LH IIA (c. 1500 BC) rather than LH I (c. 1600 BC)⁵⁴. Similarly, Mycenaean-type pottery in LH III C style is less abundant in the Levant⁵⁵. Another important difference is that whereas Mycenaean vessels in Cyprus are being found at nearly all Late Bronze Age sites, in the Levant this type of pottery does not often occur at smaller sites and only in low quantities. In general, Mycenaean-type pottery in the Levant is part of an urban, cosmopolitan material repertoire.

Systematic research into the provenance of the Mycenaean type pottery combining chemical, petrographical and morphological criteria has not been conducted for the Levant, but various studies suggest that the vast majority of these vessels were produced in the Aegean⁵⁶. In fact, local production in the Levant of Mycenaean-type pottery appears to have been quite modest in comparison to Cyprus⁵⁷. Only at the very end of the Late Bronze Age, in the transitional period to the Iron Age (late 13th – early

12th centuries BC) does there appear a limited range of closed Mycenaean-type vessels such as flasks and stirrup jars⁵⁸. These appear not to have originated in the Aegean, but in a variety of sources in the eastern Mediterranean, among which Cyprus. The occurrence of such vessels at coastal sites such as Tell Nami, and in the interior such as at Beth Shean and Megiddo, suggests that Mycenaean-type pottery from various sources in the Mediterranean circulated in pre-existing exchange networks. It is clear that some of this Mycenaean-type pottery was imported from Cyprus⁵⁹. Only at a later stage, well into the 12th century BC, does a substantial production of so-called Mycenaean IIIC1b pottery begin in the Levant⁶⁰. The occurrence of this type of pottery, especially bowls, may be related to the influx of various groups of migrants in the area.

Mycenaean-type pottery in LH IIIA and LH IIIB styles (c. 1400-1200 BC) occurs in substantial quantities at the majority of the Levantine Late Bronze Age urban sites. In these cities, Mycenaean pottery appears to have been an integral part of the material culture⁶¹. It was used in the daily life of many different social groups in the cities, as is evident from its presence in many different types of settlement contexts. It occurs in small habitation structures such as those in the *Ville Basse* at Ugarit, or the small house H in Ashdod⁶². It has also been found in structures with evidence of industrial activities, such as those in Tell Abu Hawam or in Sarepta⁶³. However, Mycenaean pots have also been reported from palaces and temples in the Levant that are associated with the ruling élites in the region. At these urban sites, the Mycenaean-type vessels are usually associated with objects of local manufacture or with other imports such as Cypriot and Egyptian-type pottery. In the urban context, Mycenaean pottery seems to have been a fairly common class of material, with a wide variety of uses (*pl.* 2).

Mycenaean-type pottery also occurs frequently in funerary contexts in the Levant. In the majority of cases, only a limited number of Mycenaean pots occur in these tombs: one or two stirrup jars or cups that are accompanied by larger quantities of Cypriot

⁴⁹ Stubbings 1951; Hankey 1967; 1993; Leonard 1994; Van Wijngaarden 2002, 33 ff.

⁵⁰ Adler 1994; Marfoe 1995.

⁵¹ Hankey 1974; 1995.

⁵² For Ugarit, see Yon et al. 2000 (with many references). For Tell Abu Hawam, see Balensi 1980.

⁵³ Hankey 1967, 145 f.; Gilmour 1992.

⁵⁴ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 261 f.

⁵⁵ Hankey 1967; 146; Leonard 1994; Barako 2000, 514 ff.; Killebrew 2000, 12.

⁵⁶ Asaro/Perlman 1973, 222 f.; Lambert et al. 1978; Gunneweg et al. 1986; 1992; French/Tomlinson 2004; Tomlinson, forthcoming.

⁵⁷ Leonard et al. 1993; Killebrew 1998, 163 ff.; D'Agata et al. 2004.

⁵⁸ Killebrew 1998, 161, 166; 2000, 12.

⁵⁹ Leonard et al. 1993; Killebrew 1998, 162; Tomlinson, forthcoming, also identifies two fragments of Mycenaean type probably made in Cyprus at Lachisch in Israel.

⁶⁰ Killebrew 1998, 159 f.; 2000, 13; Barako 2000.

⁶¹ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 111 ff.

⁶² For Mycenaean finds from the *Ville Basse* at Ugarit, see Yon 2000, 7 f.; Yon et al. 2000, 29 ff. For house H in Ashdod, see Dothan 1993, 96.

⁶³ For Tel Abu Hawam, see: Balensi 1980, 25 ff. For Sarepta, see Khalifeh 1988; Anderson 1988, 82.

and, especially, local wares⁶⁴. In several places in various parts of the Levant, we find tombs with extraordinary quantities of Mycenaean pottery. Such is the case, for example, in the so-called “Mycenaean tomb” at Tell Dan⁶⁵ as well as in a tomb at Sarepta in Lebanon⁶⁶. In each of these cases large numbers of open and closed Mycenaean vessels were discovered, in addition to Mycenaean figurines. These were associated with local wares, but also with many imports from other areas in the Mediterranean: scarabs and faience amulets from Egypt, stone cylinder seals and ivory boxes from Mesopotamia and pottery from Cyprus. Obviously, certain groups in the Levantine society chose to emphasize international relationships in their funerary rituals. It may be of significance that at Ugarit these exceptional tombs are situated not in the vicinity of the royal palace, but in the harbour town⁶⁷. Likewise, at Tell es-Saidiyeh, it was not the wealthiest tomb that incorporated large quantities of foreign imports, but one near to it⁶⁸. These exceptional, cosmopolitan tombs probably testify to the degree in which items from international trade were part of urban material culture in the Levant.

In the Levant, Mycenaean pottery functioned as part of the cosmopolitan urban material culture, in daily life as well as in funerary practices. In both types of contexts the Mycenaean imports usually occurred in association with imports from other areas. In this respect, it may be of significance that at the very end of the Late Bronze Age Mycenaean type pots are being imported from several sources in the eastern Mediterranean, amongst which is Cyprus. This suggests that the Mycenaean origin of these vases was not important for their use and appreciation in the Levantine cities. Perhaps, they were regarded simply as international goods from far away and as such suitable for the material expression of the urban middle classes. They probably did not serve as markers for the Aegean world and culture.

Italy

In the Central Mediterranean, Aegean-type pottery has been found at more than 70 sites on the Italian Mainland, Sicily, Sardinia and the Aeolian islands⁶⁹. It also occurs in Malta and sporadic finds have been made in Spain. The distribution pattern of Mycenaean pottery in this area can be divided into

three distinct chronological phases: an early phase contemporary with LH I and LH II (c. 1600-1400 BC), a second phase coinciding roughly with the existence of the Mycenaean palaces during LH IIIA and LH IIIB (1400-1200 BC) and a later phase after the fall of those palaces in LH IIIB2-LH IIIC (c. 1350-1100 BC). Each of these chronological phases shows clear geographical shifts within the general distribution pattern.

Very helpful for the purposes of this article is the extensive programme of provenance research that has been conducted for the Mycenaean-type pottery in Italy⁷⁰. It has become clear that a substantial part of the Mycenaean-type pottery in Italy has been manufactured locally. Such local production of this type of pottery began already in the first phase of the Mycenaean pots in Italy, as is evident from finds at Torre Mordillo and from the locally produced wheel-made coarse ware in Vivara⁷¹. Local production of Aegean-type pottery was particularly extensive in the Late and Final Bronze Ages (c. 1300-900 BC), during which the majority of these pots, at least at some sites, were of local manufacture. Local products of Mycenaean-type also circulated regionally as is clear from vessels found in Latium and the Veneto that appear to have a south Italian origin⁷².

During the early phase of Mycenaean contacts with Italy, there are some twenty sites with this type of pottery, with concentrations of this pottery at the island of Vivara near the coast of Naples⁷³, at the Aeolian islands⁷⁴, and in southern Sicily⁷⁵. The Aegean-type pottery that is present in Italy during this phase includes wares of various traditions within the Aegean: fine lustrous wheel-made wares, but also several types of matt-painted wares and some coarseware⁷⁶. Even though there is evidence for local production in Italy of Mycenaean-type pottery during the period, the majority of these classes appear to have been made within the Aegean⁷⁷. The various Mycenaean-type wares probably reflect contacts with different areas within Greece, where different regional pottery traditions existed during the early stages of the Late Bronze Age⁷⁸.

⁷⁰ Vagnetti/Jones 1988; Jones/Vagnetti 1991; 1992; Jones, et al. 1994; Vagnetti 1999; Jones 2001; Jones et al. 2001

⁷¹ For Torre Mordillo, see Jones 2001, 333 ff.; For Vivara, see: Jones/Vagnetti 1991, 131.

⁷² Vagnetti/Jones 1993, 211 ff.; Angle 2003, 116 f.; Jones et al. 2001, 254 ff.

⁷³ Re 1993; Marazzi/Tusa 1994, 25 ff.; Marazzi/Mocchegiani-Carpano 1998.

⁷⁴ Marazzi/Tusa 1994, 28 f.; Vagnetti 1999, 138 f.; Van Wijngaarden 2002, 249 ff.

⁷⁵ Castellana 1999, 433 ff.; 2000.

⁷⁶ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 249 f.

⁷⁷ Jones/Vagnetti 1991, 131.

⁷⁸ Marazzi/Tusa 1994, 30 f.; Dietz 1991, 300 ff.

⁶⁴ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 122.

⁶⁵ Biran 1994, 111 ff.

⁶⁶ Baramki 1958.

⁶⁷ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 70; 124.

⁶⁸ Pritchard 1980, 28 ff.

⁶⁹ Vagnetti, 1999; 137 ff.; Betelli 2002; 19 ff.; Marazzi 2003.

It is interesting to note that sites vary substantially with regard to the internal frequency of these Aegean wares. At the island of Vivara and the island of Filicudi, for example, there are relatively large numbers of coarse and matt-painted wares⁷⁹. In smaller numbers, Aegean matt-painted pottery is also widely scattered along the Apulian coast⁸⁰. At Lipari, however, Mycenaean lustrous ware dominates. At all sites both dinner and storage vessels are part of the repertoire of imported pots. Such a pattern is easiest to explain by assuming that different sites were able to exert preferences for pottery from specific areas within Greece. This indicates that the origin of the Mycenaean-type vessels was indeed of importance in this period.

The distribution of Mycenaean finds within a settlement, can for this period be investigated at the site of Capo Graziano on Lipari. This site was excavated from 1950 to 1966, with additional campaigns in the 1970's and 1980's⁸¹. These excavations revealed a substantial Bronze Age settlement that was occupied continuously from some time in the Early Bronze Age (c. 2000-1400 BC) until the Early Iron Age (c. 850 BC). The Mycenaean-type pottery belonging to the earliest strata at the site, encompasses a range of open and closed vessel types, with a clear majority of dinner vessels⁸². Apart from true Mycenaean lustrous ware, there is also some monochrome and matt-painted pottery.

The spatial distribution of the Mycenaean-type finds within the Capo Graziano settlement shows concentrations at a few buildings (*fig. 3*). Of particular interest are the concentrations at two buildings (δ III and δ V) that are situated adjacent to a large and exceptional structure (δ V), which showed evidence for cultic activities. These concentrations of Mycenaean-type pottery include various functional types, including dinner, serving and storage vessels. Even allowing for insufficient excavation data, it is clear that Mycenaean pottery as a whole was unequally distributed among the population of Lipari. Concentrations of a diverse range of Mycenaean pots at particular structures dating to this early period have also been noted at Filicudi⁸³, Vivara⁸⁴, and Monte Grande⁸⁵. It appears that not the function of the Mycenaean pots, but primarily their origin determined the restriction to specific groups within the early Italic societies.

In the period immediately after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces (LH IIIB2-LH IIIC c. 1350-1100 BC), Mycenaean pottery occurs at some 45 sites with concentrations in Apulia, Sardinia and even northeastern Italy⁸⁶. The majority of these pots were manufactured in Italy, as has become clear from the extensive programme of provenance research that has been carried on this type of material. The result is a wide range of Mycenaean-type pottery during this phase: true Mycenaean imports, imitations of Mycenaean pots, but also various classes of derivations: wheel-made grey ware; hand-made impasto with Mycenaean elements, *dolia cordonati* (*pl. 3*)⁸⁷.

At Broglio di Trebisacce, which has been excavated since 1979⁸⁸, hundreds of Mycenaean-type pots have been found, of which only a very small minority appears to have been imported from the Aegean⁸⁹. A clear concentration of Aegean-type finds can be seen at the central habitation building (*complesso del monte*), which probably is to be associated with some sort of central authority⁹⁰. Having said this, it should also be noted that there is no difference in this pattern between the true imports and the Mycenaean imitations. Apart from three Aegean imports, numerous imitations were found in association with this building, as well as locally produced, wheel-made grey ware. Apparently, the appreciation for wheel-made pottery of Aegean and non-Aegean origin was similar at Broglio.

The *complesso del monte* at Broglio di Trebisacce yielded a particular high number of Mycenaean-type dinner vessels, indicating that a differentiation was made according to function rather than origin.

At the contemporary site of Termito, in the modern province of Basilicata, a large quantity of Mycenaean pottery has also been found⁹¹. Much of this material came from a large silo, which yielded more Mycenaean dinner vessels than storage pottery. A large number of open vessels of local manufacture has also been found and the pit contained seeds and other evidence for food storage or consumption. Elsewhere on the site, a smaller silo yielded Mycenaean pottery of similar type. The fact that a relatively large proportion of Mycenaean dinner vessels was found in these structures indicates that such vessels had a

⁷⁹ Re 1993; Marazzi/Tusa 1994, 225 ff.

⁸⁰ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 256; Radina 2003, 121 f.

⁸¹ Bernabò-Brea/Cavalier 1976; 1980.

⁸² Van Wijngaarden 2002, 214.

⁸³ Vagnetti 1991, 285.

⁸⁴ Marazzi/Tusa 1994, 119.

⁸⁵ Castellana 1993-1994, 737-741.

⁸⁶ Vagnetti 1999, map 5; Betelli, Levi/Vagnetti 2001/2002, 66 ff.; Betelli 2002, 19-32.

⁸⁷ Betelli 2002, 43 ff.

⁸⁸ Bergonzi/Cardarelli 1982; Peroni 1982; Peroni 1984; Peroni/Trucco 1994. See, also, the other articles in the same volumes. Peroni/Vanzetti 1993; 1998; Betelli et al. 1998.

⁸⁹ Vagnetti/Panichelli 1994, 407; Betelli 2002, 165 ff. From the more than 300 Mycenaean-type fragments found in the excavations from 1978-1985, only twelve proved to be imports.

⁹⁰ Van Wijngaarden 2002, 239 ff.

⁹¹ De Siena/Bianco 1982; De Siena 1986.

special significance in practices of dining. The emphasis in the Mycenaean-type pottery on practices of drinking and dining suggests consumptive strategies of elite groups⁹². The main criterion for the use and appreciation of this type of pottery, appears to have been not their origin, but in particular the way in which they could function in such local consumptive practices.

Conclusions

Without systematic diachronic research programmes in which the contexts of known Mycenaean imports are compared with those of Aegean-type pots of certain local manufacture, any conclusion of this exploratory article is necessarily indicative. In pre-modern societies, objects retained cultural associations that refer to their origins and the circumstances of acquisition⁹³. The exotic nature of imports may become part of their identity and this aspect may, to a smaller or larger extent, determine the way they are used, appreciated and discarded.

In each of the three areas which have been dealt with here, the Mycenaean origin of the ceramic vessels under discussion appears to have influenced their role in local cultural contexts. However, the way in which this was the case and the interrelation of the imported nature with other characteristics differed in all three areas. In Cyprus, it appears that the use of Mycenaean-type vessels in Cypriot social practices made them part of Cypriot Culture to the point that the origin of the pots was no longer relevant. In contrast, in the Levant, the exotic character of Mycenaean-type ceramic vessels appears to have been of

importance, but it remains to be established whether it mattered if they came from Greece, or simply from 'overseas'. In Italy, finally, we can distinguish a process where the imported nature of the Mycenaean pots, diminishes in importance in favour of their function. Obviously, the relevance of Mycenaean authenticity varied highly in time and place.

Both in Cyprus and in Italy, the local potting industry incorporated Mycenaean forms. To some degree, this resulted in hybrid ceramic forms in which different traditions were combined⁹⁴. In both areas, however, classes of pottery developed which were clearly distinguishable from the local potting industry and, indeed, Aegean-like, to the point of being imitative. This suggests that changes in the definitions occur with regard to Mycenaean pottery in these areas. Rather than on geographical provenience, the concept of authenticity appears to have been based on references to Mycenaean Culture through morphological and stylistic resemblances. The possible presence of travelling craftsmen may have added to the diminishing importance of geographical origin⁹⁵. In any case, it is clear that authenticity is not an inherent quality of an object, but a cultural conceptualisation based on a varying set of definitions.

Archaeological classifications are generally tied to modern research questions. Whether archaeological remains are considered as evidence for external influences or as incentives for autochthonous development has important consequences for the interpretations of cultural groups⁹⁶. The relevance of a concept such as authenticity for past societies is not self-evident, however. Modern definitions of authenticity cannot automatically be applied in the past.

⁹² For example Voutsaki 1997.

⁹³ Appadurai 1986, 44; Humphrey/Hugh-Jones 1992, 3; Strathern 1992, 185.

⁹⁴ For Cyprus, see Kling 1987; 1991; 2000; Sherratt 1991; Åström 1998. For Italy, see Vagnetti 1999; Betelli 2002.

⁹⁵ On travelling potters at the end of the Late Bronze Age, see Peroni 1983, 258; Papadopoulos 1997; Vagnetti 1999, 148.

⁹⁶ Smith 2001.

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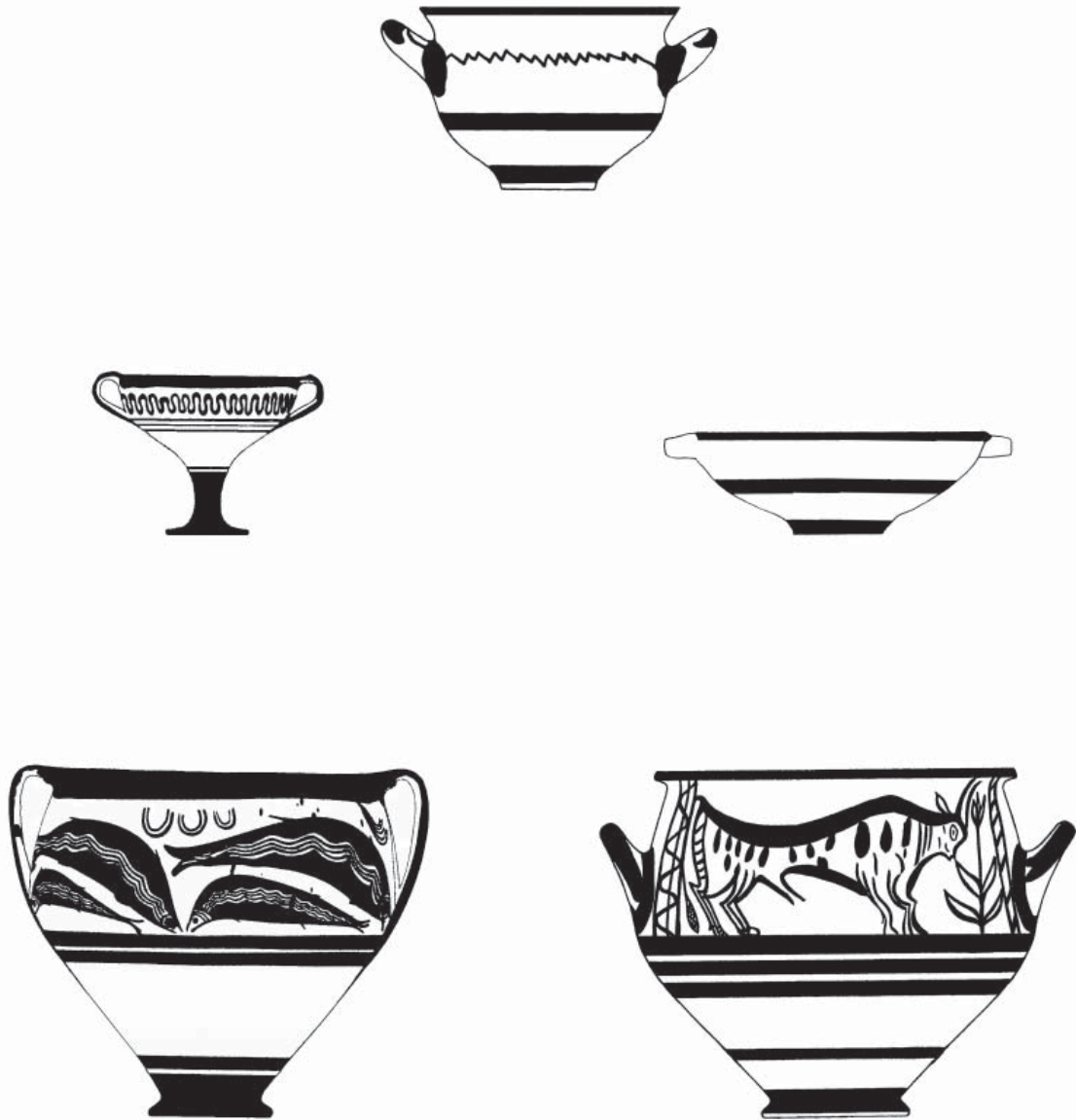
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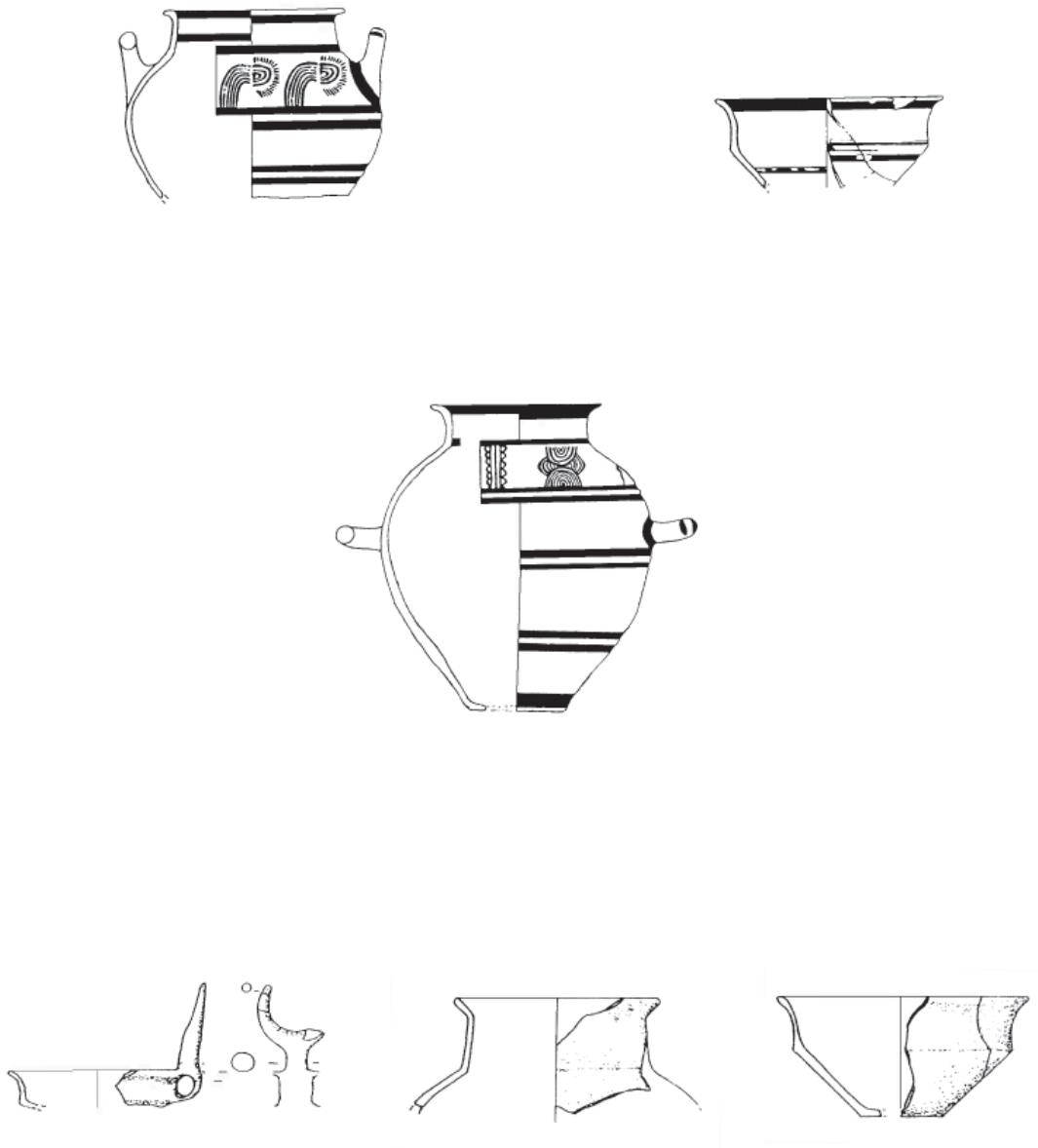
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Pl. 1. Mycenaean amphoroid Krater and stemmed cup (left) from Kalavassos, Cyprus and Cypriot made krater and bowls (right). After Kling 1989; South/Russel 1993, 308; Karageorghis 1965, 251



Pl. 2. Imported Mycenaean and Cypriot and local pottery from tomb 387 in Tel Dan. After Biran 1994, 113, 114, 118



Pl. 3. *Locally-made Mycenaean pottery and wheel-made grey ware from Broglio di Trebisacce. After Vagnetti 1999, 144, 146*

