

A Land for Strangers

Non-Native Individuals and Communities in Cyprus

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The Role of Aegean Pottery in the Community of Late Bronze Age Hala Sultan Tekke, Cyprus

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Abstract Hala Sultan Tekke in southeastern Cyprus was a major Late Bronze Age Mediterranean trade hub. A wide range of materials was imported from the Aegean, Anatolia, Egypt, the Levant and as well as from central Mediterranean. Imported exotic materials were means of expression of identity and display of social status among the community living in the city. The paper focuses on typological and functional analysis of the Late Helladic IIIA-B Aegean pottery imported at Hala Sultan Tekke. The presence in the settlement and in the funerary area of large amount of Aegean imported materials reflects complex processes of deliberate selection of shapes and types, adaptation of uses, and appropriation, hybridisation and imitation of a stranger ceramic tradition in the local Cypriot social context. The choices made in importing and imitating the Aegean pottery represent various dynamics of direct and indirect engagement with and between ‘strangers’ in Late Bronze Age Cyprus.

Keywords Hala Sultan Tekke. Late Helladic. Late Cypriot. Aegean pottery. Functional analysis.

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1 Introduction

In the Late Bronze Age, Hala Sultan Tekke in southeastern Cyprus was a trade hub. A range of material culture was imported from the Aegean, Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt, as well as from further afield, most recently evidenced by the presence of Sardinian ceramics at the site (Bürge, Fischer 2019). Frequently, this imported material becomes parts of expressions of identity and social status,¹ and processes that have been associated with adaptation, appropriation, hybridisation and imitation (e.g. van Wijngaarden 2008; Knapp 2010; Stockhammer 2012). This paper will examine the role of Aegean pottery at Hala Sultan Tekke as a case study of a type of material culture that was imported via several identifiable trajectories (Mainland Greece, Crete, the Dodecanese). The vessel types were subject to selection and adapted for Cypriot use; certain shapes and motifs were imitated in the local pottery production in the so-called 'White Painted Wheelmade III' tradition.² The choices made in imported and imitating pottery represent various types of direct and indirect engagement with 'strangers' in Late Bronze Age Cyprus.

One of the most complex and debated topics in the recent history of archaeological research in the eastern Mediterranean concerns the economic and cultural relationships between Cyprus and the Aegean during the Late Bronze Age (c. 1650-1100 BC), especially regarding ceramic finds.³ Van Wijngaarden has collected data concerning the distribution of imported Aegean ceramics in Cyprus, resulting in maps that reveal a rather broad but uneven pattern (Van Wijngaarden 2002). The maps record 96 Cypriot sites where Late Bronze Age imported Aegean ceramics have been recovered (Van Wijngaarden 2002, map 8). Although the ceramics are widely diffused in all parts of the island, from the largest harbours to the smallest inland sites, the presence of Aegean material culture in Cyprus is far from consistent, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view. Among the sites that have produced Aegean pottery, a limited number contains

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1 See also Steel 1998 for the social role of imported Mycenaean pottery in Cyprus.

2 This designation (suggested in Åström 1972) does cause some problems in that distinguishing between White Painted Wheelmade I-III is very difficult; alternative terms have been suggested by Fischer (White Painted Wheelmade Geometric Style and White Painted Wheelmade Pictorial Style; Fischer 2012b). The local production of Aegean-type ceramics in Cyprus and the Levant dated to the final stage of the Late Bronze Age has recently been reviewed in detail by Mountjoy (2018).

3 See Cline 1994; Cline, Harris-Cline 1998; Van Wijngaarden 2002; Maran, Stockhammer 2012, to name but a few.

more than ten sherds or vessels, and very few have produced large quantities (500 specimens or more) (Van Wijngaarden 2002, map 9). Only Hala Sultan Tekke, Kition and Enkomi have finds of more than 500 specimens of imported Aegean pottery (sherds and complete vessels), and evidently interaction with the Aegean sphere was particularly intense at these sites compared to the rest of the island.

2 Background

Hala Sultan Tekke is a large metropolis located on the southern coast of Cyprus, near the international Larnaca airport and close to the famous mosque from which it gains its name, on the banks of the Larnaca Salt Lake. As determined by previous archaeological surveys, the city flourished primarily during an advanced phase of the Late Bronze Age, from the fourteenth to the twelfth centuries BC. Extensive excavations were carried out from the 1970s onwards by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition. Recent research carried out by the New Swedish Cyprus Expedition, however, has proved that the site must have been an important, active and international harbour as early as the sixteenth century BC, at the very beginning of the Late Bronze Age.

The excavations of the New Swedish Expedition have partly unearthed four City Quarters (CQ1-4) located near the ancient city's harbour, and a significant number of wells, tombs and 'offering' pits on the plateau approximately 600 m east of CQ1, known as Area A.⁴ All areas of excavation have produced Aegean ceramics. Although occasional references will be made to objects from Area A, the main focus in this paper is on the material from the settlement itself - the so-called City Quarters. Three main horizons or strata have been identified in the stratigraphic sequence of the City Quarters. Stratum 1 is the most recent. In all areas, it is extremely disturbed, and due to its proximity to the surface, plough marks are clearly visible in some parts. Stratum 2 also suffers from some disturbance, but not to the same degree. Extensive buildings with domestic spaces, a possible shrine, storage space and workshops (especially for the production of textile and metal) have been uncovered from this stratum. The earliest stratum that has been excavated to a greater extent so far is Stratum 3, best illustrated in CQ1. There is a significant change of the use of space and the features of the architecture between Stratum 3 and Stratum 2, with broader walls made of larger stones

⁴ Fischer 2011; 2012a; 2019; Fischer, Bürge 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b; 2019; 2020; 2021; see map of the site with location of CQ1-4 in Fischer, Bürge 2020, fig. 1.

characteristic of Stratum 3. The investigations so far suggest a date of LC IIIA⁵ for Stratum 1, LC IIC-III A for Stratum 2, and LC IIC and earlier for Stratum 3 (Fischer, Bürge 2018b, 606-7).⁶

In CQ1 there is now also good evidence for an earlier Stratum 4, with hints of even earlier strata below this (Fischer et al. 2020), but the excavation of these areas is still quite limited and the ceramics very few (sherds from five different imported Aegean vessels, including four joining pieces of a pictorial amphoroid krater, tentatively dated to LH IIIA2 late).

3 Aegean Ceramics at Hala Sultan Tekke

The material included here comes from our preliminary analysis of the imported Aegean pottery recovered at Hala Sultan Tekke over the past seven excavation seasons in the settlement, conducted on the site from 2013 to 2019 by the New Swedish Cyprus Expedition. An overview of the implications of typological and functional classifications is followed by a reconstruction of possible intercultural trajectories between Cyprus and regional areas of the Aegean in light of the more notable finds from the recent excavations. At the end, we shortly present and discuss some of the local production of Aegean-style pottery in the community of Hala Sultan Tekke.

Sherds or vessels imported from the Aegean⁷ appear in every part of the settlement and Area A. A total of 925 sherds have been recorded from the settlement from 2013-19,⁸ respectively 478 from CQ1, 232 from CQ2, 179 from CQ3 and 36 from CQ4 [graph 1]. Although the number of Aegean finds at Hala Sultan Tekke is among the highest in Cyprus in the Late Bronze Age, they only make up a small percentage of the total ceramic assemblage – typically around 3% in the City Quarters. Some contexts in Area A have greater concentrations, with for example 35.7% in Pit V and 28.6% in Tomb X.⁹

5 LC = Late Cypriot; LH = Late Helladic; LM = Late Minoan.

6 Stratum 3 is sub-divided into 3A-C, with material from 3B and 3C dated to LC IIB and possibly earlier, but analysis of these substrata is still ongoing (see preliminary comments in Fischer, Bürge 2020, 97 and Bürge 2022).

7 We have opted for the term 'Aegean' over 'Mycenaean'. As will be seen below, not all sherds come from the Greek mainland, and 'Aegean' is therefore more accurate for the entire assemblage.

8 Sherds belonging to the same vessel are recorded as one; a complete but restored from fragments vessel is also recorded as one. Every effort is made to identify sherds coming from the same vessels. A previous preliminary analysis can be found in Mazzotta, Recht 2015.

9 These numbers are based on Class 1 and 2 finds (from Fischer, Bürge 2017b), which are the complete or nearly complete vessels from these contexts, and the numbers may therefore be higher than for all sherds, but nevertheless represent a significant difference.

In the settlement, the sherds are almost all residual, with a very high level of fragmentation.¹⁰ Most sherds are fairly small, sometimes quite worn, and only rarely do we find several sherds coming from the same vessel [figs 1-2]. So far, very few complete Aegean vessels have been found in the settlement.¹¹ There are, however, degrees of fragmentation as we move down through the strata: the Stratum 3 sherds are larger and, in some instances, we can reconstruct substantial parts of vessels (e.g. figs 1d, 1f). The residual nature of the ceramics (which applies not only to the Aegean finds, but also all other types) means that we generally do not find them in their primary use context, but rather as fills and disturbed deposits.

4 Methodology

All specimens of imported Aegean ceramics uncovered from the settlement throughout the 2013-19 excavations have been systematically gathered in a customised database. Each recovered vessel or sherd is typologically classified using the system developed by the Swedish scholar Arne Furumark (1941), which has since been adopted by most researchers and further developed by Penelope Mountjoy (1986; 1999). This classification scheme permits identification of a specific shape or decorative motif using standardised terminology and numeration – *Furumark Shape* (FS) and *Furumark Motif* (FM). For the Hala Sultan Tekke ceramics, wherever possible, the shape and decoration of each sherd or vessel is identified through this typological classification, allowing a tentative reconstruction of their age and the chronological placement of the stratum in which it was recovered. This typological classification has resulted in preliminary suggestions regarding the origin of the vessels (pending petrographic and chemical analyses), as well as the network of exchange connecting Cyprus to the Aegean region during the Late Bronze Age.

¹⁰ This is in marked contrast to Area A, where there are many complete vessels as part of burials and ritual deposits. The total number of Aegean imports in that area is likely also significantly higher than in the settlement, but this material is still under analysis – preliminary reports appear in the references given above (Fischer, Bürge publications).

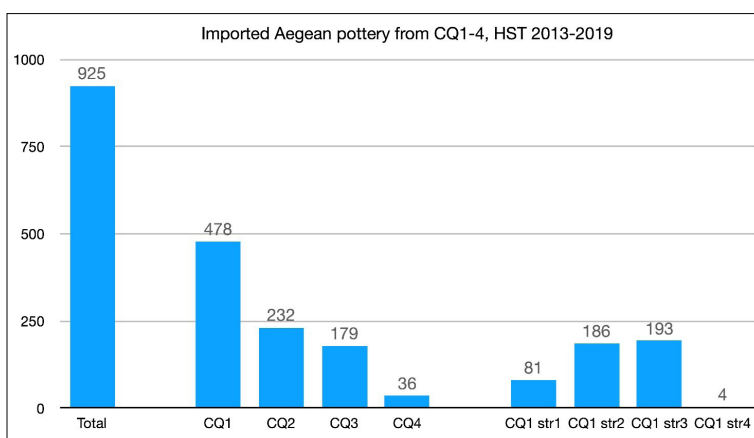
¹¹ Examples include two miniature juglets (Fischer, Bürge 2018b, 312, fig. 3.60.1-2).



Figure 1 Selection of sherds from CQ1-4. a. deep bowl, b. cup/kylix, c. cup/goblet, d. cup/kylix, e-f. shallow bowl. Photographs by L. Reicht/E. Peri (a-c, e-f) and T. Bürge (d)



Figure 2 Selection of sherds from CQ1-4. a. stirrup jar, b. transport stirrup jar, c. kylix, d. piriform jar, e. amphoroid krater. Photographs and drawing by L. Recht



Graph 1 Imported Aegean sherds from Hala Sultan Tekke CQ1-4, 2013-19 excavations

Each sherd or vessel is also categorised according to the functional classification developed by Giampaolo Graziadio and Elisabetta Pezzi specifically for the study of Mycenaean ceramics recovered in funerary contexts at the Enkomi tombs (Graziadio, Pezzi 2009; 2010; 2013). This system, developed based on both the morphological characteristics of the vessels and the results of gas-chromatographic analyses of Aegean and Cypriot ceramic materials (Tzedakis, Holley 1999; Beck et al. 2003; 2008), distinguishes four main functional categories of Aegean pottery, as illustrated in figure 3: F1) fine tableware, F2) small closed shapes for precious commodities, F3) storage vessels, and F4) ritual vessels and figurines.¹² Of these, fine tableware (F1) and small closed shapes for precious commodities (F2) are further divided into sub-categories: F1.1) drinking sets - vessels for mixing, pouring and drinking, F1.2) eating/drinking vessels, F2.1) liquid substances containers, and F2.2) viscous substances containers [fig. 3ab]. There may be some overlap between the categories, and certainly some vessels would have been used for a variety of purposes, not all of which we are able to reconstruct. Nevertheless, it offers a general idea of the kinds of vessels that were of interest to ancient Cypriots and how they might have been used.

¹² Figurines are not included here. For some examples, see Bürge 2018.

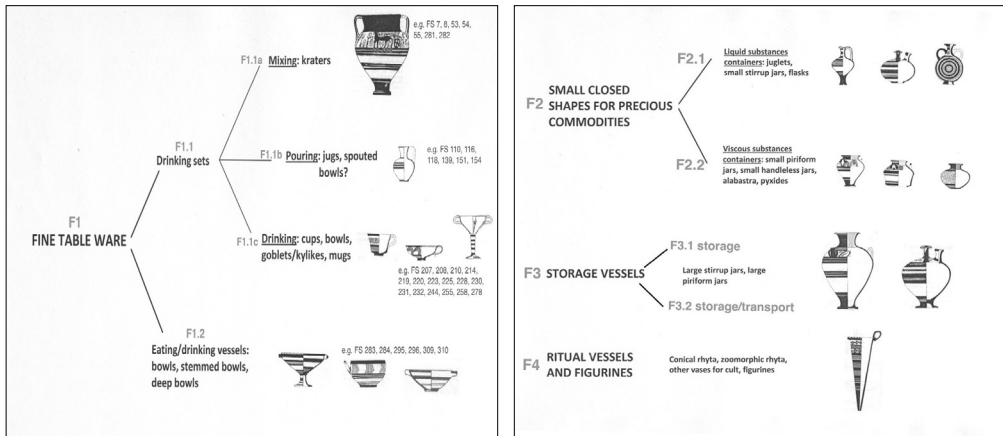


Figure 3ab Classification by function (based on Graziadio, Pezzi 2013, figs 3-4)

5 Typological and Functional Analysis

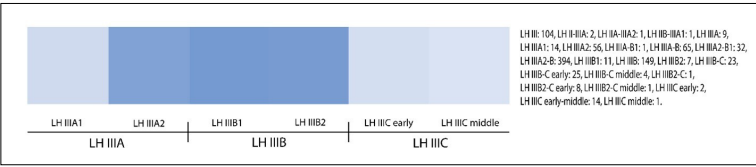
The Aegean imported pottery from CQ1-4 ranges in date between LH IIIA1¹³ – LH IIIC. The typological-based chronology shows a peak in Aegean imports between LH IIIA2 and LH IIIB (LC IIB-C, c. 1400-1200 BC) [graph 2]. Still present, but in much smaller percentages, are Aegean ceramics from LH II – LH IIIA1 (LC IB-IIA, c. 1600-1350 BC) and LH IIIC Early – Middle (LC IIIA, c. 1200-1100 BC).¹⁴ The oldest Aegean imports, from LH IIA/LM IB, were recovered in Area A (Fischer, Bürge 2017a, fig. 13). This seems to be principally due to the fact that, in the settlement, excavations have still not uncovered substantial parts of occupational levels datable to LC IB. This chronological tendency is in line with the global diffusion of Aegean ceramics in Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean.

A significant range of Aegean shapes and motifs is present in the Hala Sultan Tekke repertoire. Jars, bowls, *kylikes* ‘cups’ and kraters are the dominant shapes [graph 3]. The jars are the mostly the characteristic Aegean stirrup and piriform shapes, bowls come in both the deep and shallow variations, identifiable cups and kylikes are almost evenly distributed, and most identifiable krater sherds come from the amphoroid and ring-based types. The other shapes

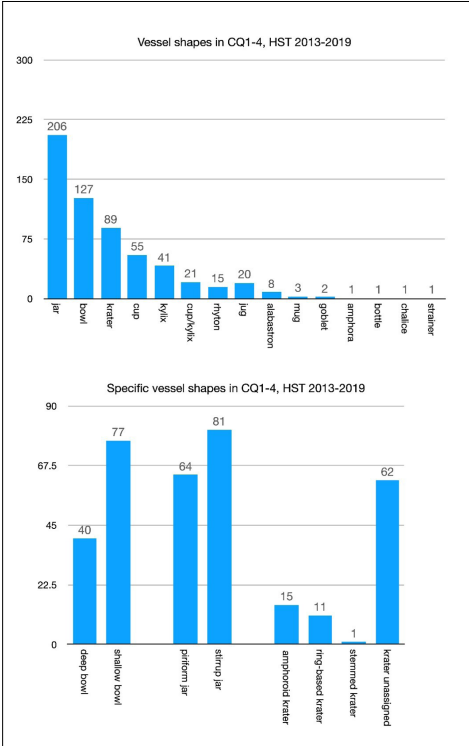
¹³ One sherd of a conical rhyton is dated LH IIA/LH IIIA2 (see Recht, Mazzotta 2015, no. 1), but all other sherds from the settlement are LH IIIA1 or later.

¹⁴ It should be noted that any LH IIIC dates are very tentative, and that most sherds with this designation have been given a range of LH IIIB-C.

that are present occur in very small numbers and functionally mirror the main shapes: chalice, amphora, alabastra, goblets, jugs and mugs. The presence of sherds from 15 different *rhyta*, all of the conical type, suggests that this shape also held some importance. Despite the range of shapes, it is clear that careful selection took place. Some shapes which are fairly common in the Aegean are very rare or completely absent at Hala Sultan Tekke.

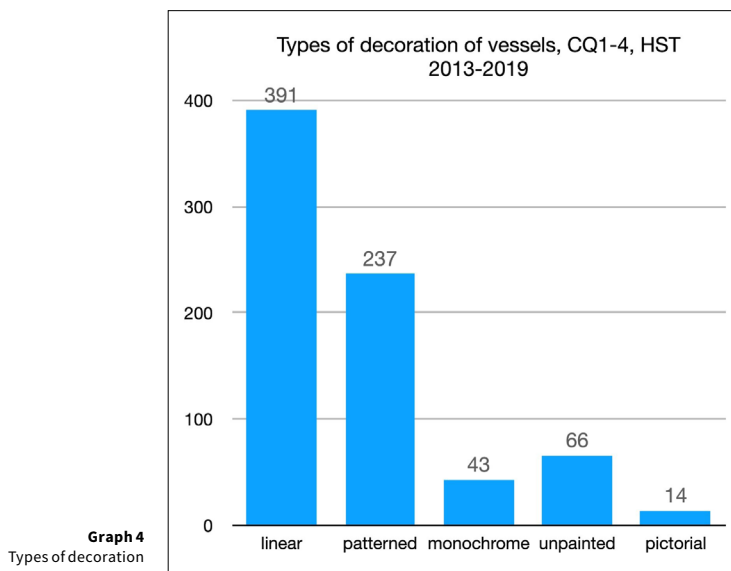


Graph 2 Chronological distribution of imported Aegean sherds (based on typology)



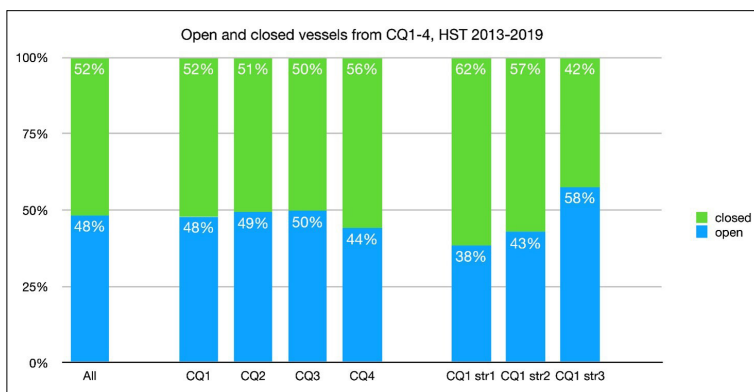
Graph 3
Vessel shapes, by main shape
and sub-shape

Along with very hard-fired clay and lustrous paint, one of the characteristic features of the imported Aegean pottery is its finely burnished surface treatment (both exterior and interior for open vessels; exterior with interior of neck of some closed vessels). The vast majority of the imported material has also been decorated with lustrous paint that ranges from orangey-red through shades of brown to black. The paint is always lustrous (as opposed to the locally made White Painted Wheelmade, which is usually matt, though it can also be glossy). Only one colour is used, although differences in shading may occur due to conditions of firing during the process of production or conditions of preservation. Added white is occasionally used, especially on shallow bowls and amphoroid kraters. The decoration has been divided into linear, monochrome, patterned, pictorial and unpainted (as preserved on the individual sherds) [graph 4]. The vast majority of sherds are painted with simple linear bands of varying thickness. It is possible that some of these in fact come from patterned vessels, since the designation is necessarily based on the preserved fragment only. Patterned vessels are also frequent. No particular motifs dominate, although spirals, wavy lines and triglyphs seem slightly more popular. Monochrome sherds are less common, and in most cases the monochrome surface is only on either the interior or the exterior of a vessel. As with the linear sherds, some may in fact belong to linear or patterned vessels; most of the sherds without preserved paint very likely also come from decorated vessels. Sherds with pictorial decoration are extremely rare in the settlement, with only 14 examples securely identified so far – 12 of which come from kraters. Only very rarely do we get other types of decoration, such as plastic decoration or knobs, if indeed such are decorative rather than functional. In contrast to the shapes, there is no clear indication of deliberate selection in the range of motifs. It seems that, broadly speaking, shape (and content) was more important than decorative types when the people of Hala Sultan Tekke chose which vessels to import.



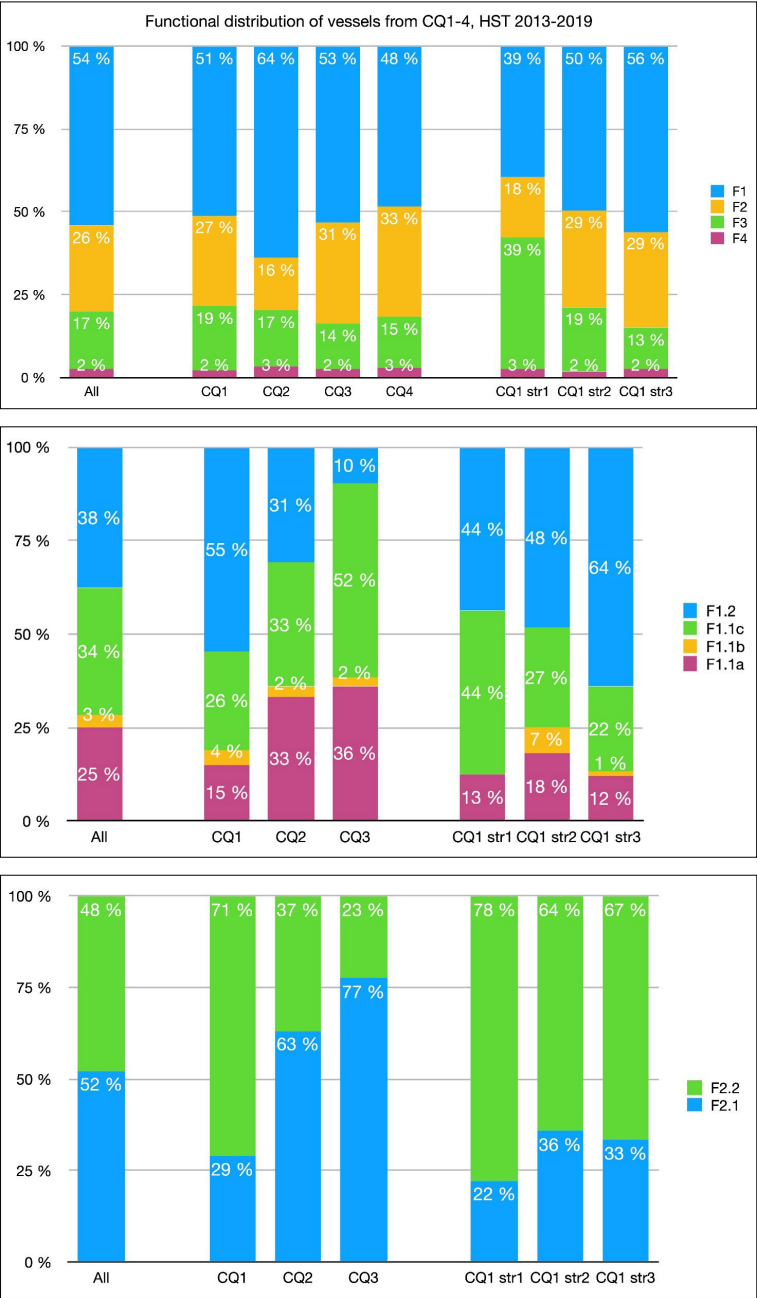
Dividing the sherds broadly into open and closed vessels, we can observe an almost equal distribution between the two [graph 5]. This observation applies not only overall, but also for each of the City Quarters 1-3, while there is a slight preference for closed vessels in CQ4.¹⁵ The implication is that a variety of goods were imported, and that Aegean vessels were imported both for their contents (closed vessels) and for their own sake, primarily as tableware (open vessels). However, looking at the sequence in CQ1 (the only area where substantial Stratum 3 material has been excavated so far), there is a clear change between Stratum 3 on the one hand, and Stratum 2/1 on the other hand. Stratum 3 has a preponderance of open vessels, whereas there is an increasing preference for closed vessels in Stratum 2 and 1. This is entirely consistent with the architectural and archaeological sequence, where there is a substantial change in the use of space and building technique between Stratum 3 and 2, and a less marked change between Stratum 2 and 1. While keeping the residual nature of the material in mind, the Aegean pottery suggests that there may have been an equivalent change in the types of goods that were imported, at least in terms of settlement use.

¹⁵ Note, however, that the number of Aegean sherds from CQ4 is still quite low, in line with the excavations in that area not yet reaching the lower strata.



Graph 5 Distribution of open and closed vessels

We can break this functional analysis down even further [graph 6a]. Looking at the overall distribution, tableware of mostly open vessels (F1) makes up about half the assemblage, while vessels for precious substances (F2) and larger storage vessels (F3) cover the remaining; 'ritual' vessels (F4) only occur in small numbers. In City Quarters 1, 3 and 4, tableware stays at roughly half, but there are some variations in the distribution of vessels for precious substances and transport vessels. In CQ2, the proportion of tableware (F1) is even higher than elsewhere, possibly suggesting slightly different uses of the imported wares in different parts of the settlement. Returning to the stratigraphic sequence as represented in CQ1, we again see clear changes from Stratum 3 to Stratum 2, but also from Stratum 2 to 1. In Stratum 3, there was a strong emphasis on tableware, which is over half of the entire assemblage. In Stratum 2, tableware vessels were reduced to 50%, with corresponding increase in storage containers. The functional distribution also reveals a distinction between Stratum 2 and Stratum 1 that is less obvious in the simpler open-closed vessels distribution. The most significant change is in the further decrease in tableware, increase in storage vessels, which now make up as much as 39% of the assemblage, and decrease in small closed shapes for precious commodities (from 29% to 18%). These chronological features are striking, and reflect developing trading relations, social values and changes in the engagement with imported material culture directly and its producers indirectly.



Graph 6ac Distribution of vessels by function and sub-function

The fine tableware category consists, as seen in figure 3, of vessels for mixing [fig. 1.1a], pouring [fig. 1.1b], drinking [fig. 1.1c] and drinking/eating [fig. 1.2]. Analysing these in further detail, we can see that, overall, drinking/eating vessels are the most common, closely followed by drinking vessels [graph 6b]. Pouring vessels are few, but there is a substantial number of mixing containers (kraters). The more detailed distribution again reveals both slightly different assemblages in the city quarters, and some changes over time. The popularity of tableware suggests that Cypriot engagement with Aegean imported pottery was frequently focused on consumption and very likely on a public display of this consumption.¹⁶ The composition of the F1 vessels indicates sets of several cups/kylikes and bowls, and contents distributed from kraters and to a lesser extent jugs (and/or vessels of local wares). The high number of kraters may indicate that distribution was primarily through this shape (which also has a large surface suitable for decoration), perhaps by dipping a drinking vessel into it. Combined with the sometimes striking painted decoration and a prestigious yet not extremely luxurious or expensive product, such tableware would be fitting for communal or public events. That such shapes and functions were particularly important to the Cypriots is also reflected in the preference for similar vessels in the later, locally produced 'White Painted Wheelmade III' ware, where kraters, shallow and deep bowls often mirror the Aegean counterparts.

Concerning the small closed shapes for precious commodities (F2, [graph 6c]), we can note the predominance of viscous substances containers in CQ1 (71%), compared to liquid substances containers (29%). The reverse trend can be observed in both CQ2 and CQ3, where liquid substances containers are the vast majority (ranking from 63% to 67%) while viscous substances containers are attested in smaller quantities. Furthermore, CQ1 seems to maintain the same overall trends for F2 vessels in Stratum 1, 2 and 3 (with an even greater preference for small containers for viscous substances in Stratum 1), indicating a continuity of the choices made by the community in this area in relation to small closed vessels, and possibly their contents.

The F4 category, 'ritual' vessels, consists primarily of conical rhyta and miniature jars and jugs [fig. 4], and includes the highest concentration of conical rhyta from settlement contexts in Cyprus (Recht, Mazzotta 2015). They are mostly found in settlement contexts at Hala Sultan Tekke, and appear to be rare in the tombs. The exact function of these vessels in Cyprus is not clear. Conical rhyta in the Aegean may have had both symbolic and practical uses, perhaps acting as filters in the spicing of wine (Koehl 2006). Whether or

¹⁶ See also Steel 2004 on the use of tableware in consumption and feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus.

not they had the same function at Hala Sultan Tekke cannot be determined from the preserved sherds and contexts. It is possible that at least some of the miniature vessels were used in cult activities: three miniature jars/jugs found in the same small area in Stratum 3 of CQ1 were in a context that suggests large-scale ritual and feasting [fig. 4c-d] (Fischer et al. 2020).



Figure 4 Selections of sherds of rhyta (a-b) and miniature jars/jugs (c-d).
Photographs and drawings by L. Recht

6 Strangers from the Aegean and Cultural Trajectories

The imported Aegean pottery found at Hala Sultan Tekke suggests networks of exchange and interaction between Cyprus and the Aegean region during the Late Bronze Age. The inferences concerning these exchanges are here typological; ongoing archaeometric analysis may support or prompt a review of some of the implications discussed. The island of Cyprus and the Aegean region are connected by a system of cultural trajectories consisting of interconnected hubs (Cline 2009). The ceramic finds at Hala Sultan Tekke help identify some of the main active hubs in this complex web of long-distance interactions.¹⁷

The first and most obvious node is mainland Greece, the heartland of the Mycenaeans. Many of the imported Aegean artefacts recovered on the island of Cyprus, in particular from the advanced phases of the Late Bronze Age, are widely regarded as being of Peloponnesian origin. Imported artefacts from the formative phases of the Mycenaean civilisation (between LH I and LH II), however, are much rarer.

Pictorial style vases, in particular, are documented on the island as early as LH IIIA (Morris 1989; Anson 2017). Various archaeometric analyses carried out since 1986 confirm that the vast majority of these artefacts, as well as other Mycenaean ceramics, is of Peloponnesian origin (Jones 1986, 599-601; Mommsen, Maran 2000-01). Many more samples recovered in the Levant, in particular from Ugarit, have been scientifically proven to be from the Peloponnese (Asaro, Perlman 1973; French 2004).¹⁸ The pictorial style is relatively poorly represented in Mycenaean urban and funerary contexts, as opposed to the strong presence found in Cypriot funerary contexts.¹⁹ This has led to the hypothesis that some Peloponnesian ceramic production was specifically intended for export to Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean.²⁰ These styles were tailored to fulfil international demand, catering in particular to the tastes of the Cypriot elites. Potter's workshops such as that found at Berbati (Åkerström 1987; Schallin 1997) may have functioned as production centres of much of the pictorial style ceramics destined for Cyprus. Based on our analysis, the majority of the imported Aegean ceramics found at Hala Sultan Tekke is consistent with a provenance from the Greek mainland.

17 Ceramics was not only imported from the Aegean at Hala Sultan Tekke: Levantine and Egyptian ceramics are also represented at the site (see e.g. Fischer, Bürge 2017b), as are many other types of imported objects.

18 For the modalities of arrival and distribution, and the use and social meaning of the imported Aegean ceramics at Ugarit, see Mazzotta 2017; 2019.

19 See for example Recht, Morris 2021 for the case of the so-called chariot kraters.

20 As discussed in for example Sherratt 1994.

A second fundamental node in the web of interactions that connected people from Cyprus with the Aegean region, particularly in the early phases of the Late Bronze Age, is the island of Crete. Almost all of the earliest pieces from the Late Bronze Age recovered in Cyprus were in fact imported from Crete.²¹ Several pieces recovered in recent excavations bear testimony to the close ties between Hala Sultan Tekke and Crete. The most common type of import from Crete at Hala Sultan Tekke is the so-called Minoan transport stirrup jar dated to Late Minoan IIIA-B [fig. 2b]. Sherds from at least 25 different transport stirrup jars with a fabric and ware consistent with Cretan production have been identified in the settlement so far (with more examples from Area A); they confirm the existence of lively interaction between the two areas, whether direct or indirect. By their very nature, these large transport vessels demonstrate that the object of economic transactions between the two islands must not have been limited to the pottery *per se*. Liquids transported in these jars and vessels, quite possibly oil or beverages (wine, beer), were as much part of the trade. The sherds found at Hala Sultan Tekke are not enough to reconstruct actual size, but a general estimate of these types of vessels is that they can contain 12-14 litres (Haskell et al. 2011, 3). Large transport stirrup jars were produced both on Crete and in mainland Greece. They attest to movement of goods both within the Aegean and in the eastern Mediterranean, as they are widely distributed (Haskell et al. 2011, 4, illustration 1.4). Their part in this broader trade network is confirmed by their presence on the Uluburun shipwreck (Bass et al. 1989, 11). The identification of fragments of transport stirrup jars found at Hala Sultan Tekke as of possible Minoan origin is based on fabric and decoration. Further, eight of these have the deep wavy line and/or octopus motif, which is strongly associated with transport stirrup jars produced in central Crete. This is demonstrated by a combination of chemical, petrographic and typological analysis (Haskell et al. 2011, 90). Other imports from Crete come from Area A, for example in the form of a piriform jar, recovered during the 2017 excavation season from Tomb LL (Fischer, Bürge 2018a, 53-8, fig. 20), which is markedly Minoan in its characteristics, such as decorations and fabric, and could be dated LM II-III A1.

A third node of great importance in this network of interaction appears to be the southeastern Aegean, specifically the Dodecanese islands, and in particular Karpathos and Rhodes. The role of the Dodecanese islands in the long-range international trade between

21 See for example the cups published in Pecorella 1977; Vermeule, Wolsky 1990. There are also examples of even earlier imports from Crete dating to MM IA and MM IB-IIA (Buchholz, Karageorghis 1973).

Cyprus and the Aegean, particularly during the early phases of the Late Bronze Age, is best understood with a brief description of current archaeological evidence. In Rhodes, the site of Trianda is noteworthy for its role as a necessary transit point in the trade routes between Cyprus, Crete and the Aegean area. Several imported Minoan pieces, dated to between LM IA and LM II, have been found here, in association with White Slip I, Base Ring I and Red Lustrous Wheelmade Ware imported from Cyprus (the most remarkable collection of Cypriot exports in the Aegean after Kommos) (Hirshfeld 1996; Marketou et al. 2006). This picture is completed by local imitations of Cypriot pottery also found at Trianda (Karageorghis, Marketou 2006), Rhodes playing a crucial role in the process of assimilation of the wishbone handle in Neopalatial Crete and the Aegean islands (Graziadio 2005, 332), and by imported southeast Aegean vessels found at Enkomi and Maroni Vournes in Cyprus. Some of the ceramic finds at Hala Sultan Tekke seem to be part of this network, and shed new light on the possible role of this area as a node in the connection between the other major vertices – mainland Greece, Crete and Cyprus.

One example suggests a route where the Dodecanese acted as an intermediary between Crete and Cyprus. It consists of a narrow-necked jug dated to LM IIIA2, found in Pit V in Area A (Fischer, Bürge 2017a, fig. 13.1). It is remarkably Minoan in its decoration and shares many similarities with the Minoan pottery found at Karpathos, the first Dodecanese Island encountered on the seaway connecting Crete to Cyprus.²² A similar iconographic model is also found on the pottery from the Ialysos necropolis in Rhodes.²³ It is thus possible that some goods from Crete were imported into Cyprus through the Dodecanese islands.

Another example, a beaked jug dated to LH IIIA1, was also found in Pit V (Fischer, Bürge 2017a, fig. 12.5). The pieces it shares most similarities with – both in shape and in specific decorative motif of the curved-stemmed spiral (FM 49) – are found on the island of Rhodes, specifically in the Ialysos necropolis (Mountjoy 1999, 991, fig. 401.10, 998, fig. 404.29). This very same curved-stemmed spiral occurs on other pieces from Hala Sultan Tekke, for example on a cup/goblet from one of the deepest strata yet investigated in the settlement [fig. 2c]. In this case, too, there are many similarities with Rhodian pieces – in particular from Lachania (Mountjoy 1999, 993, fig. 402.13-14). If it was indeed a favourite decorative motif in Rhodes, this find could be added to the evidence sustaining the hypothesis of the Dodecanese islands as a node in the route between Cyprus and the Aegean.

22 Mountjoy 1999, 972, fig. 395.3, LM/LH III A1 amphoroid krater.

23 See examples in Benzi 1992.

The use of the so-called 'multiple stem' pattern (FM 19) in its angular and semicircular variation, is very common on Rhodes in the large closed shapes (Mountjoy 1999, 1000, fig. 405.37, 1002, fig. 406.38). This also occurs at Hala Sultan Tekke in some closed vessels both from the settlement and from the Area A, and points to Rhodes and the Dodecanese as a node of particular relevance in the network of interactions between Cyprus and the Aegean. Finally, the relationship with Rhodes is not limited to pottery, as demonstrated by a finely decorated stone mortar from CQ1 (Fischer, Bürge 2018b, 71, fig. 2.54). It has exact Rhodian counterparts, which are believed to be exports from Cyprus (Buchholz 1999, 319-20).

The typological study of the Aegean ceramics at Hala Sultan Tekke thus highlights a complex network where the community at Hala Sultan Tekke encountered material culture, if not people, from various areas of the Aegean, including mainland Greece, Cyprus and the Dodecanese. There was a diachronic dimension to this: early Late Bronze Age ceramics came primarily from Crete, while mainland Mycenaean pottery dominates in the later phases, Minoan examples still occur (especially in the form of transport stirrup jars), and ceramics from the Dodecanese are also found. Throughout, there is a clear selection of shapes, and presumably contents, and the imported vessels became part of a broader pattern of engaging with strangers at Hala Sultan Tekke and/or the material culture of surrounding and far away regions. Regardless of the exact nature of the personal interactions, the imported vessels were adapted to and used in local Cypriot customs.

7 Cypriot Imitations of Aegean Ceramics

The ancient Cypriots did not, however, stop at import. The potters of Cyprus enjoyed experimenting, borrowing, imitating and combining. The oldest known testimony of Cypriot production of Aegean-type ceramics has recently been the topic of a monograph by Giampaolo Graziadio (Graziadio 2017). The production is that of small three-handled jars, in Furumark's typology, FS 46 and FS 47. Remarkably Aegean in appearance, they have nonetheless been confirmed by petrography to be of local Cypriot production (Mommesen et al. 2003), made in imitation of northwestern Peloponnesian models dated to LH IIIA. This rare Cypriot production, of which 122 pieces have been recovered, is found in tombs of middle or high-ranking individuals dated to LC IIA-B. Notably absent in the Aegean, the production is found in the Levant and in Egypt. Rather importantly, the time frame in which it is placed predates the oldest Cypriot 'White Painted Wheel Made III' finds by several decades, which instead were mass-produced on Cyprus in the final phases of the Late Bronze Age.

Graziadio identifies two examples of small three-handled jars, both FS 47, from old excavations at Hala Sultan Tekke (Graziadio 2017, 143, cat. nos 63 and 64). To this, we can now add further possible examples found during the current excavations at the site, including one from Area A, Pit V (Fischer, Bürge 2017a, figs 12.4, 15.6). It may also be represented in a few sherds from the settlement, but here the examples are too fragmentary to securely identify this type. Considering the existence of a parallel from Tomb 24 from Hala Sultan Tekke (Åström, Nys 2007), dedicated workshops might have been located in the Larnaca area, once again demonstrating Hala Sultan Tekke's interest in engaging with Aegean models and cultural elements.

Moving further along chronologically to the latest phases of occupation at Hala Sultan Tekke (LC IIIA), it is well known that 'White Painted Wheelmade III' pottery imitates not only Aegean technology, but also certain shapes and motifs, to the extent that it can at times be difficult to distinguish from the imported vessels. At Hala Sultan Tekke, the inspiration can be seen especially in kraters with painted complex figural scenes, such as the so-called 'Creature Krater', 'Horned God Krater' and 'Bird krater' (Fischer 2019, fig. 7). The shape in these cases is related to but often different from the Aegean ring-based krater, and the inspiration is equally obvious in the decorative scheme. Another example is a stirrup jar found in CQ2 Stratum 1 (Fischer, Bürge 2018b, 403, fig. 2.124.3), which has the glossy paint that is so typical Aegean, but features such as the shape of the false spout and upside-down scale pattern divulge a local production.

Both deep and shallow bowls imitating Aegean shapes and decoration occur in the local production in large quantities. The deep bowls often have linear decoration combined with various types of spirals and lozenges.²⁴ The shallow bowls are sometimes carinated and can very closely resemble their Aegean counterparts. They are usually either unpainted or have linear bands on the exterior and linear bands combined with a geometric pattern on the interior.²⁵

²⁴ See examples e.g. in Fischer, Bürge 2018b, 285, fig. 3.43, 337, fig. 3.78.

²⁵ For complete examples from Area A, see Fischer, Bürge 2017b, fig. 26.6-8.

8 Conclusions

In Late Bronze Age Hala Sultan Tekke, the imported Aegean ceramics played an important role in the expression of identity and in the display of social status among the community living in the city. The choices made in importing and imitating the Aegean pottery represent various dynamics of direct and indirect engagement with and between ‘strangers’ in Late Bronze Age Cyprus.

The presence in the settlement and in the funerary area of such a large amount of ceramic materials imported from the Aegean, mainly dated to the LH IIIA-B period, reflects complex processes of deliberate selection of imported shapes and types, adaptation of uses in the local Cypriot social context, and appropriation, hybridisation and imitation of a stranger ceramic tradition.

In terms of the range of imported Aegean shapes and types, it is clear that careful selection took place. Aegean vessels were imported both for their contents (closed vessels) and for their own sake, primarily as tableware (open vessels). Some shapes which are fairly common in the Aegean are very rare or completely absent at Hala Sultan Tekke. Only some specific ceramic shapes and types among the wide *corpus* of Aegean production were selected by the Cypriots for import to the island and in Hala Sultan Tekke. Those are mainly represented by kraters, shallow bowls, cups, stirrup jars and piriform jars; deep bowls and kylikes, commonly occurring on Aegean sites, were also imported but in significantly smaller quantities. In contrast to the shapes, there is no clear indication of deliberate selection in the range of motifs beyond a preference for painted vessels. Shape (and content) was more important than decorative types when the people of Hala Sultan Tekke chose which vessels to import.

Overall, the Aegean ceramic imports from the settlement area CQ1-4 are almost equally distributed between open and closed shapes. However, in CQ1 (the only area where substantial Stratum 3 material has been excavated so far), it has been possible to observe a preponderance of open vessels in Stratum 3, corresponding to an increasing preference for closed vessels in the later Stratum 2 and 1. This shift seems to be entirely consistent with the architectural and archaeological sequence, characterised by a substantial change in the use of space and building technique between Stratum 3 and Stratum 2 and 1. The trends observed for the Aegean pottery collected from CQ1 suggest that there might have been a change in the types of goods (ceramics and contents) that were imported from the Aegean between LC IIB and LC IIC-III A. Furthermore, the trend in the amount of Aegean ceramic imports observed in CQ1 shows a significant and progressive decrease of the imports from Stratum 3 to Stratum 1 (from LC IIB to LC IIC-III A), once again confirming changes in the relations between Cyprus and the Aegean during this time.

Describing the implications of the functional classifications, tableware of mostly open vessels (F1.1a, F1.1c and F1.2) make up about half the assemblage collected, while small vessels for precious substances (F2) and larger storage vessels (F3) cover the remaining; 'ritual' vessels (F4) only occur in small numbers. Once again CQ1 seems to present a special scenario, characterised by clear changes from Stratum 3 and Stratum 2 and 1. These trends are striking and reflect developing trading relations, social values and changes in the engagement with imported material culture in different periods of the life of the city. Among the City Quarters of the settlement, the pattern of distribution of tableware (F1), small closed shaped for precious commodities (F2), storage and transport containers (F3) and ritual vessels (F4) suggests the existence of different uses of the imported wares in different parts of the settlement.

Once distributed in the city of Hala Sultan Tekke, the Aegean ceramics were subject to adaptation for local use in the different contexts of the site, both in the settlement and in the cemetery. The popularity of tableware on the site suggests that Cypriot engagement with Aegean imported pottery was largely focused on consumption and very likely on a public display of this consumption. Cups, kylikes, shallow bowls and deep bowls were the most common vessels used for drinking and eating/drinking contents which may have been distributed from kraters and only to a much lesser extent from jugs. Kraters, with their large surface suitable for decoration in pictorial style, were vehicles of complex iconographic repertoires rich in social meanings particularly appreciated on occasions of public or communal display of consumption.

That such shapes and functions were particularly important to the people of Hala Sultan Tekke and Cyprus more broadly is also reflected in the preference for similar vessels in the locally produced 'White Painted Wheelmade III' ware, where kraters, shallow and deep bowls often mirror the Aegean counterparts.

The ceramic finds at Hala Sultan Tekke help identify some of the main active hubs in the complex web of long-distance interactions which link Cyprus with the Aegean (and the people of Cyprus with those from the Aegean), therefore giving us a chance to reconstruct possible intercultural trajectories and point of contact between the two areas. The typological analysis of the imported Aegean ceramics at Hala Sultan Tekke suggests three main Aegean areas linked with Hala Sultan Tekke during different stages of the Late Bronze Age: Crete, the Dodecanese and Mainland Greece. While almost all of the earliest Aegean vessels recovered in Cyprus in the early Late Bronze Age were imported from Crete, the most common evidence of interaction between Crete and the settlement of Hala Sultan Tekke is represented by numerous fragments the so-called Minoan transport stirrup jars, dated to LM IIIA-B.

On the other hand, Mainland Greece represents the most important area of provenience of the vast majority of the Aegean ceramics dated to the LH IIIA-B period so far collected in Cyprus and in the Levant. Some Peloponnesian ceramic production was likely specifically intended for export to Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean, such as the amphoroid kraters with pictorial decoration, and were tailored to fulfil international demand, catering in particular to the tastes of Cypriot elites.

A third crucial node in this complex system of interaction as suggested by the Aegean material from the settlement of Hala Sultan Tekke is represented by the Dodecanese, especially by the islands of Karpathos and Rhodes. These acted as a connection between Mainland Greece and Crete at one end and Cyprus and the Levant at the other. This connection between the three islands of Cyprus, Rhodes and Karpathos is strongly suggested by affinities in the decorative repertoire visible on the Aegean ceramics found on all of them.

In terms of the dynamics of appropriation, hybridisation and imitation of the Aegean ceramic tradition in the community at Hala Sultan Tekke, the first and small-scale local production of Aegean-style pottery on the island is that of the three-handled small piriform jars, dated to LC IIA-B and imitating LH IIIA models from the northwestern Peloponnese. During the following LC IIC-III A period, specific shapes and motifs were massively produced in the local so-called 'White Painted Wheelmade III' tradition, in particular deep bowls decorated with spirals and triglyphs and kraters decorated in the 'Pastoral Style'.

The imported Aegean pottery at Hala Sultan Tekke thus not only demonstrates a complex network of interaction between various parts of the eastern Mediterranean, with Cyprus as one key meeting place, but also how a specific type of material culture can mediate encounters between the people living at the site and 'strangers' from other regions. In turn, this material culture was integrated into local traditions and used in the expression of status, identity and consumption, including as 'imitated' in local ceramic production. The relative abundance of Aegean-imported ceramics at Hala Sultan Tekke indicates that the material culture-people entanglements were particularly pronounced at this site.

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