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Citation

Düring, B. S. (2025). Connecting Cyprus: interregional interaction and society in the third millennium BC. *Journal Of World Prehistory*, 38(4), 1-35. doi:10.1007/s10963-025-09192-6

Version: Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



Connecting Cyprus: Interregional Interaction and Society in the Third Millennium BC

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Accepted: 18 June 2025
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Abstract

How and why communities on Cyprus connected with the broader eastern Mediterranean in the third millennium BC has been much debated. In particular, the nature of the so-called Philia horizon, with its clear affinities with Anatolian assemblages, has been the topic of widely divergent perspectives on what happened and what role people on the island played. Using a constructed boundary perspective, I will reconsider the manner in which communities on Cyprus connected to adjacent lands in the third millennium BC during the Late Chalcolithic (2900–2500 BC) and the Philia (2500–2200 BC) periods. The aim is to demonstrate the selective nature of Anatolian assemblages and practices taken up in Cyprus in these periods, and how they are appropriated in local cultural practices that diverge considerably from those known on the mainland. This perspective leads to a marked shift in our ability to understand how Cyprus became increasingly connected to the broader eastern Mediterranean in the third millennium BC.

Keywords Prehistoric Cyprus · Chalcolithic · Philia · Isolation · Boundaries · Early Bronze Age Anatolia

Introduction

How Cyprus connected to the wider eastern Mediterranean in prehistory has been a central topic of research for scholars working on Cypriot archaeology. The consensus perspective is that Cyprus was colonized and was part of broader developments in the eastern Mediterranean twice during prehistory: once at the start of the Holocene and into the Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, between about 9000 and 7000 BC (Knapp, 2013, 2020; Manning et al., 2010; Vigne et al., 2012); and once in the so-called Philia period, between about 2500 and 2200 BC (Bachhuber, 2015a; Frankel,

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2000; Mellink, 1991; Webb & Frankel, 1999). In both periods colonization episodes are reconstructed that were primarily driven by developments and dynamics occurring outside Cyprus. Thus, the Neolithic colonization was supposedly facilitated by the development of seafaring technologies which presumably first crystallized in the Younger Dryas, just before the start of the Holocene (Broodbank, 2006; Knapp, 2010, 2020; Vigne et al., 2012), and has been linked to diminishing resources and the flooding of alluvial plains in Cilicia (i.e. climate refugees) (Watkins, 2004, p. 31; Broodbank, 2013, pp. 154–155; Knapp, 2013, pp. 78–79). Likewise, the Philia colonization in the mid third millennium BC has been interpreted as driven in part by an increase in the demand for copper, and in part by refugees fleeing war in Anatolia (Dikaïos, 1962, pp. 202–203; Knapp, 2013, pp. 266–267; Bachhuber, 2015a), and might once more have been facilitated by innovations in shipping (Broodbank, 2010, pp. 255–256; Knapp, 2018, p. 22).

Thus, in such reconstructions Cyprus is seen as a largely passive recipient of waves of mainland settlers bolstered by new technologies and incentivized by mainland pressures (with some notable exceptions by Bolger, Peltenburg and Knapp, which will be discussed below). In contrast, the period in between these two ‘colonization episodes’—known as the Khirokitian, the Ceramic Neolithic, and the Chalcolithic, and lasting from 7000 to 2500 BC, thus no less than four and a half millennia—is often held to be a period in which Cyprus was ‘out of touch’ with the rest of the eastern Mediterranean, and in which the Cypriots embarked on their own, highly quaint, cultural trajectories.

In this paper, the aim is to critically re-assess connectivities between Cyprus and the adjacent Mediterranean lands in the third millennium as a whole, in order to better contextualize what happened on the island around 2500–2200 BC, in the so-called Philia period, when a large number of Anatolian assemblages and technologies are introduced to the island, and how we can understand this increase in manifestations of connectivities in social terms. To do this I will first introduce the Late Chalcolithic and Philia periods, and how ideas about island cultures have affected the study of prehistoric Cyprus. Next, I will present a constructed boundary perspective to the study of interregional interactions, which I will then apply to the Late Chalcolithic and the Philia assemblages from Cyprus.

The Late Chalcolithic—c. 2900–2500 BC

The Cypriot Late Chalcolithic is mainly known from a series of excavations in the south of the island (Fig. 1). The first substantial research on the Chalcolithic took place at *Erimi-Pamboula*, but excavated deposits at this site date predominantly to the Middle Chalcolithic (Bolger & Webb, 2013; Dikaïos, 1936). For the Late Chalcolithic, the best investigated sequences are from the sites of *Lemba-Lakkous* (Peltenburg ed., 1985); *Kissonerga-Mosphilia* (Peltenburg ed., 1991; 1998), *Chlorakas-Palloures* (Düring et al., 2023); and *Souskiou-Laona*, (Peltenburg et al., 2019) all located in the southwest of the islands, as well as *Politiko-Kokkinorotsos* (Webb et al., 2014).

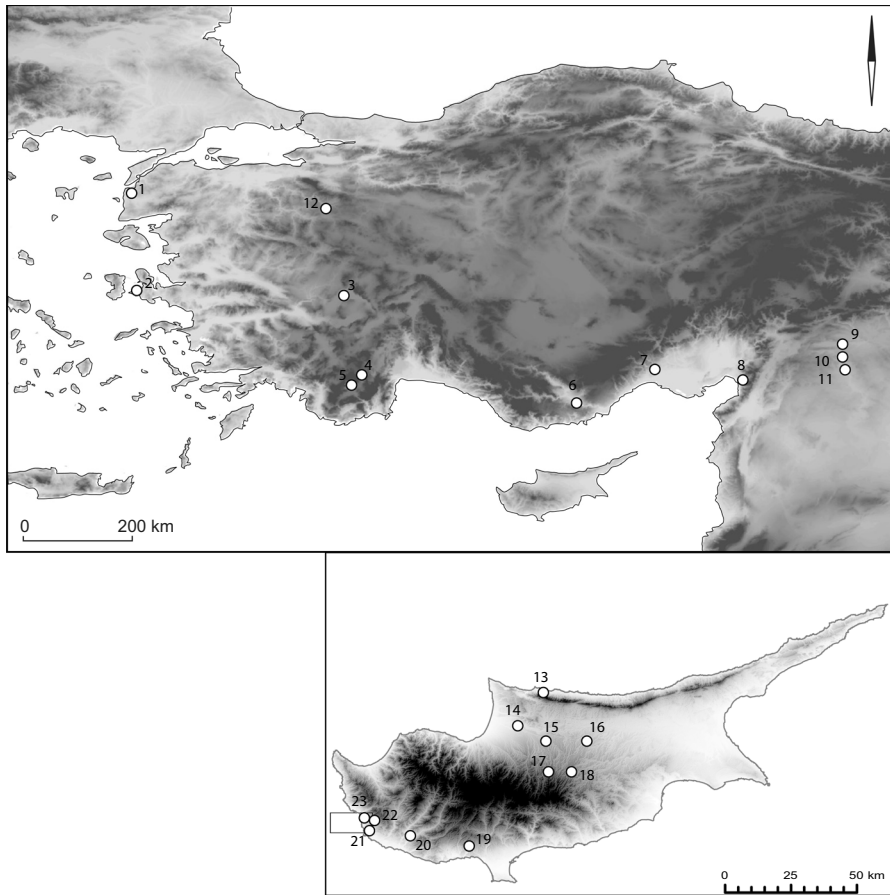


Fig. 1 Location of main sites discussed in this paper (produced by the author). (1) Troy; (2) Çesme-Boyalık; (3) Beycesultan; (4) Elmalı-Karataş; (5) Hacımusular Höyük; (6) Kilisi Tepe; (7) Tarsus-Gözlükule; (8) Kinet Höyük; (9) Gre Virike; (10) Jerablus Tahtani; (11) Selenkahiye; (12) Çiledir Höyük; (13) Vasilia-Kafkalia/Kilistra; (14) Philia-Vasiliko/Laksia tou Kasinou; (15) Dhenia-Kafkalla; (16) Nicosia-Ayia Paraskevi; (17) Politiko-Kokkinorotsos; (18) Marki-Alonia; (19) Soitira-Kaminoudhia; (20) Souskiou-Laona/Vathyrkakas; (21) Chlorakas-Palloures; (22) Lemba-Lakkous; (23) Kissonerga-Mosphilia

The Late Chalcolithic in western Cyprus is characterized by a dense occurrence of settlements located a few kilometres apart, and some of these reach up to 10 hectares in extent (Düring, 2024; Knapp, 2013; Peltenburg, 2014). Although we are dealing with a mixed economy, in which agriculture, hunting, and wild plant resources were all crucial, in the Late Chalcolithic we see shifts in meat consumption (for example, less deer), and plant cultivation that suggest more extensive cultivation and increased subsistence pressure (Croft, 1991; Lucas & Fuller, 2020). The villages consisted of roundhouses of various sizes but with a more or less standardized spatial configuration of domestic structures and activities (Peltenburg, 1998). These were sunken into their surroundings and executed in various degrees

of elaboration, from monumental to makeshift, suggesting that not all the households living in these buildings could muster equal resources (Klinkenberg & Düring, 2023). Late Chalcolithic assemblages include well fired monochrome red burnished pottery, occurring predominantly in table ware shapes and storage vessels (Bolger et al., 1998; Bolger & Webb, 2013), a rich assemblage of ground stone tools, including both percussive tools and objects for the processing of foods and other materials (Elliott-Xenopontos, 1998), expedient chipped stone industries dominated by scrapers and informal tools made on flakes (Finlayson et al., 1998), and ornaments and figurines made in picrolite (a type of rock similar to serpentine), as well as a small corpus of copper objects (Peltenburg, 2011; Düring et al., 2021).

The Philia—c. 2500–2200 BC

The name ‘Philia’ derives from a village in the Ovgos Valley in northern Cyprus in the Morfou hinterlands, where tombs with distinct assemblages, which were later also recognized at other sites, were first excavated in the 1940s by Dikaïos. The pottery from these tombs was clearly different from previously documented Chalcolithic and Early Bronze assemblages. While Dikaïos (1962, pp. 160–76) dated the Philia after the Chalcolithic and before the known Early Bronze assemblages, Stewart (1962, pp. 223–232) saw the Philia as a regional variant of the Early Bronze and therefore contemporary to assemblages from that period. While this chronological question can now be solved (subsequent research and dating of archaeological contexts clearly show that Dikaïos was correct: Paraskeva, 2019a; Peltenburg et al., 2013), a second difference of opinion between Dikaïos and Stewart proved less easy to resolve. Dikaïos (1962, p. 202–203) argued that the Philia assemblages were associated with Anatolian migrants, whereas Stewart (1962, p. 296) argued that the Philia was better understood as a Cypriot assemblage and that the Anatolian influences were superficial (see Webb, 2013 for a more detailed discussion). Subsequent researchers have largely followed these two positions, in which the Philia was interpreted as either the result of an Anatolian migration (Bachhuber, 2015a; Frankel, 2000, 2005; Webb & Frankel, 1999, 2007, 2011) or a Cypriot assemblage that was influenced by Anatolian prototypes (Swiny, 1986; Knapp, 1993; Manning, 1993; Peltenburg, 1996; Bolger, 2007; Knapp, 2001; Bolger, 2013; Knapp, 2013, pp. 264–277).

This large corpus of interpretive studies on how best to understand the Philia assemblages might suggest that the Philia is a clearly defined cultural horizon for which well consolidated datasets and publications exist. This is actually not the case. The Philia assemblages are best documented at six sites: first, in the graves found at Philia-Vasiliko/Laksia tou Kasinou (Dikaïos, 1962, pp. 160–176); second and third, in the cemeteries of Nicosia-Ayia Paraskevi and Vasilia-Kafkallia/Kilistra (Hennessy et al., 1988); fourth, in Cemetery A at Sotira-Kaminoudhia (Swiny et al., 2003), fifth, in the period-5 settlement of Kissonerga-Mosphilia; and sixth, at the settlement of Marki-Alonia (Frankel & Webb, 1996, 2006a). The data from all these sites have limitations of various types. With the exception of the tombs from Sotira-Kaminoudhia, the Philia cemeteries were mostly documented in the 1940s

and 1950s and the documentation of the excavated graves was limited; for example, no absolute dates or good data on the skeletons retrieved are available. At Kissonerga-Mosphilia Philia assemblages were found in the upper deposits near the surface which were disturbed, and as a result hardly any contextual or structural information is available for these deposits, whereas at Marki-Alonia Philia deposits were located at the base of the sequence and have been exposed only in small areas. Although additional Philia assemblages are known from other sites, we mostly have very limited information on these sites (see Webb & Frankel, 1999 for a gazetteer).

Thus, the extant data for the Philia consist mainly of assemblages, with relatively little contextual information and few reliable dates. The cemetery sites have provided evidence for collective and single burials that are accompanied by Philia jugs, bowls, spouted bowls and flasks, spurred annular pendants made from picrolite, and spiral copper earrings, as well as some copper tools and objects such as spearheads, pins, and rings.

The only site where we have good settlement data for the Philia at the moment is that of settlement phases A and B at Marki-Alonia (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b). Here we find rectangular buildings arranged around a courtyard, and rectangular ovens set against walls that are markedly different from those in the preceding Chalcolithic (Papaconstantinou, 2013). Accompanying these changes in domestic buildings are a suite of new assemblages and technologies that occur in the Philia. Apart from the Philia ceramics also known from graves, these include the introduction of cattle and the donkey (Croft, 2006), clay spindle whorls, loom weights, and metal casting moulds (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b).

In concert, the Philia assemblages from graves and settlements clearly differ from the assemblages of the preceding (and probably partially overlapping) Late Chalcolithic, and many of these new types of objects and technologies have good comparanda in Anatolia, which has led to the interpretations already mentioned (migration versus a local development inspired by Anatolian prototypes).

Across the Sea

That Cyprus has been an island since the flooding of the Mediterranean basin some five million years ago, and was first explored and later settled by human communities only from the end of the last Ice Age, from about 12,000 BC onwards, is well known (Vigne et al., 2012; Broodbank, 2013; Knapp, 2020). Prior to this date the island fits well into a bio-geographical perspective in which islands are localities in which unique variants of animal species can develop. On other Mediterranean larger islands, such as Malta and Mallorca, similar developments occurred (Broodbank, 2013), and on Cyprus the presence of miniature size elephants and hippopotami is well documented.

In archaeology, the idea that islands are unique laboratories in which unique developments occur (red), has also been extended to cultural phenomena. Parker Pearson has dubbed this view ‘the Easter island syndrome’ (2004, p. 129). The idea is that island cultures, like animal species, develop along unique and often quaint trajectories that have no parallels on the mainland. Celebrated cases are the statues

on Easter islands, c. 1400–1650 AD, and the temples on Malta, dating to the fourth and third millennia BC (Kolb, 2005). To explain prehistoric developments on Cyprus, its (constructed) insularity has been linked to its distinct cultural trajectories and assemblages, which were interpreted as (a chosen) lack of interaction with the mainland (Held, 1993, p. 28). Especially the later Neolithic (the Khirokitian and the Ceramic Neolithic) and the Chalcolithic are often portrayed as isolated cultural horizons completely disconnected from the mainland.

This is eloquently put by Broodbank (2013, p. 342):

a few dozen kilometres from a northern Levant well on its way to the rise of urban, literate palace-based states the archaic tradition of roundhouses, the heterodox portfolio of pig, sheep, goat and fallow deer, and a younger but equally idiosyncratic style of cruciform figurines in blue-green picrolite, reached its climax in the local Cypriot Copper Age.

And similarly by Clarke (2007a, p. 1):

By the beginning of the 7th millennium BC communities on Cyprus had diverged culturally from the mainland. The divergence was such that evidence for interaction diminishes to such an extent that communities on Cyprus appear to have been largely cut off from the wider influences of the mainland. The inhabitants of Cyprus developed their own local traditions and ways of doing things until the advent of the Bronze Age.

The application of this ‘islands as cultural laboratories’ view to Cyprus can be called into question, however (e.g. Rainbird, 2007; Voskos, 2018; Dawson et al., 2023).

A first question is where we draw the boundary of the island as a category. In truth, we are all islanders, but in our minds islands are below a certain threshold in size. For example, Cyprus is clearly considered an island today, whereas, for example, Australia is not. With modern transport one can travel from one end to the other in a few hours and fly over it in a blink of an eye and its island status may seem obvious. However, for prehistoric people living on Cyprus the perception might have been very different. After all, Cyprus is not that small, and we cannot assume a modern cartographic conceptualization of the island (Düring, 2017).

Travelling from one end of the island to the other would have taken days if not weeks (from Paphos to Nicosia would have been a 5-day walk, assuming 30 km a day (Bekker-Nielson, 2004, p. 67), and assuming the modern road trajectory, Google Maps estimates about 30 h of walking, so about 4 days of 8 h). Thus, from a logistical perspective, Cyprus is not a small and bounded place. Some of the people living in central Cyprus might not have travelled to the sea at any point in their lives. Also, in demographic terms Cyprus is not a small place. The prehistoric population of the island has been estimated recently by Manning (2019, pp. 107–108) to have been in the range of 100,000 to 200,000 people, and clearly this has an effect on scales and degrees of interaction within the island. We may therefore ask whether ‘island’ was a relevant category for people living on Cyprus, and whether, for example, interactions between those living in the Paphos area and those on the north coast were

more frequent than interactions between those on the north coast and those on the opposite coast of Anatolia.

Second, we can problematize the equation between a geographic unit (an island) and a cultural horizon. Although the ‘Cyprus as cultural laboratory’ idea may appear relevant to explain cultural developments on the island, such as the distinct assemblages of later Neolithic and Chalcolithic Cyprus, similarly long lasting ‘persistent cultural boundaries’ exist on the mainland, where they are well documented and exist despite prolonged interactions across these boundaries. A clear example is that of Neolithic societies in Central Anatolia, which for several millennia remained culturally distinct in almost every respect from those in Upper Mesopotamia/the Levant, despite the fact that domesticated crops and obsidian were transferred between these regions (Düring, 2011, 2013). A similar example consists of the Ertebølle societies of Denmark, which rejected farming for almost a millennium (Price, 2000; Shennan, 2018; Zvelebil, 2006). These are but two examples, selected out of many persistent cultural boundaries known in archaeology, simply to demonstrate that such boundaries are not at all exclusive to islands.

Moreover, within the island of Cyprus, there are multiple instances in prehistory in which there are regionally specific cultural differences, with distinct assemblages occurring in various parts of the island. For example, in the Ceramic Neolithic there are markedly different ceramic decorative motifs in the south-central part of Cyprus (combed decoration) and other parts of the island (red-on-white decoration) (Clarke, 2001, pp. 68–69), and in the Early Cypriot I/II (c. 2200–2000 BC) there is a similar regional distinction between red polished mottled wares in the south of Cyprus and the red polished incised wares of the north (Webb & Frankel, 2013; Peltenburg, 2018, pp. 461–464). However, in other periods, such as the Khirokitian (Later Aceramic Neolithic, c. 7000–5200 BC), Middle Chalcolithic (3500–2900 BC), and the Philia, there are interchangeable cultural assemblages across the island (Knapp, 2013; Peltenburg, 2018).

Thus, persistent cultural boundaries are not exclusive to islands, and nor is Cyprus by default a culturally homogeneous unit. Instead, we can ask how convergent assemblages on the one hand, and cultural distinctions on the other, are produced in social practices and interactions (Feuer, 2016; Lightfoot & Martinez, 1995). While geographical boundaries can be instrumentalized to create cultural boundaries, there is nothing self-evident about the two overlapping (Parker, 2006; Feuer, 2016, pp. 13–14). Islands are not natural determinants of cultural identities, and island identities, when they exist, are the product of cultural work by the relevant communities that construct them (Berg, 2007; Dawson et al., 2023; Rainbird, 1999).

In prehistoric Cyprus, it appears that island communities created and maintained their distinctive cultural assemblages in particular periods, such as the Chalcolithic, while simultaneously interacting with adjacent lands. This point has been made most pointedly by Bolger (2013) in a paper aptly called ‘a matter of choice’ in which she argues that a lack of correspondence in assemblages of Cyprus and adjacent mainland regions is not evidence for a lack of interaction. While the sharing and co-development of assemblages and cultural practices—as evidenced in the early Aceramic Neolithic on Cyprus (Peltenburg et al., 2001; Knapp, 2013)—do constitute positive evidence for interaction, the reverse is not necessarily true. To take

an example from the modern world: the assemblages used by Amish societies in northern America differ enormously from those of society surrounding them. Yet the Amish are clearly interacting with other communities, with which they are connected economically and politically. Their rejection of electricity, telephones, cars, and many other objects, is driven by cultural and religious considerations (Kraybill et al., 2013).

This position, that a lack of correspondence in assemblages does not indicate an absence of interactions, can be supported by the fact that imported materials and links with mainland assemblages do occur on Cyprus in the period between 7000 and 2500 BC. For the Khirokitian (c. 7000–5200 BC), we have postulated links in the chipped stone industries and engraved pebbles, and there are imported carnelian beads from the mainland (Eirikh-Rose, 2004; McCartney, 2007, p. 75; Moutsiou & Kassianidou, 2019). For the Ceramic Neolithic (c. 5200–4000 BC) we likewise have links in the chipped stone industries, and it has been argued that the earliest ceramics of Cyprus are comparable to those in the upper Levant (Clarke, 2007b, pp. 97–99; McCartney, 2007, p. 83). Finally, in the Chalcolithic (c. 4000–2500 BC) we have many elements pointing to interactions with adjacent regions, such as imported faience beads (Peltenburg, 1987; Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019), Chalcolithic Cypriot pottery that was found at Tarsus (Mellink, 1991), mainland features in Cypriot pottery (Bolger, 2013; Peltenburg, 2007), spurred annular beads imitating mainland prototypes (Peltenburg, 2018), and Cypriot objects made of mainland metals (Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019; Düring et al., 2021), and there is a tantalizing link in the form of picrolite figurines of Anatolian types (Vagnetti, 1979). While some of these links in material culture are more convincing than others, these data collectively do suggest that Cyprus was not completely isolated from the mainland between 7000 and 2500 BC. Instead, it appears likely that the contacts between Cyprus and adjacent areas existed in all periods, but that the archaeological visibility of these contacts varied. Indeed, various researchers (Knapp, 2020; Yamasaki, 2017) have recently argued for the persistence of seafaring throughout Cypriot prehistory, as manifested in both maritime resources and imports from the mainland.

Persistent Cultural Boundaries and Interactions

If we consider the distinctiveness of late prehistoric Cypriot assemblages as an actively constructed persistent cultural boundary which was built in part on geographical affordances, this opens up an interpretive space to study how that boundary was constituted, and how it ultimately broke down. If interaction can be attested throughout prehistory in Cyprus, the question of why Cyprus has distinct assemblages and trajectories, is really one that is concerned with the constitution, maintenance, and transformation of this cultural boundary.

Boundaries are always permeable, and they can act as selective filters for interaction and exchange (Feuer, 2016, pp. 12–13). Invariably there are things and people that do pass across constructed boundaries (Barth, 1969; Hodder, 1982; Hegmon, 1998; Mullin, 2011; Green & Costion, 2018; Langer & Fenández-Götz, 2020). A number of key questions arise in relation to such boundaries.

First, what types of things were taken across the boundary? It is postulated here that the types of objects, materials, and living beings that cross boundaries are often highly selective, and relate to very specific domains of social life. For example, conspicuous materials, such as obsidian, and bodily ornaments, such as glass beads, are among the sorts of things that would likely pass boundaries where other types of things might not (Düring, 2014; Lister et al., 2018). I will argue for the case of prehistoric Cyprus that such selective uptakes of alien things are related to how well they can be accommodated within pre-existing cultural practices.

Second, in what direction do things move across boundaries? It may be that particular goods travel in specific directions, and these directionalities may have been determined in part by natural resources and in part by cultural factors. In the case of prehistoric Cyprus such directionalities can be clearly documented.

Third, once goods cross boundaries how are they appropriated and consumed by the receiving communities and in which types of practices are they used? Are they used in ways that are compatible with pre-existing cultural practices or in new activities and formats?

Fourth, we can ask: how do boundaries transform through time? Do they become more or less selective in what is allowed to pass?

These are the questions that this paper seeks to address for interactions between Cyprus and the mainland in the third millennium BC. Focussing on such questions will allow us to discuss Cypriots as active participants in these developments.

Tracing Interregional Interactions in the Late Chalcolithic

If we apply a ‘persistent cultural boundary’ perspective to Cyprus in the (Late) Chalcolithic we can ask two questions: first, what evidence do we have for interactions between Cyprus and adjacent lands in the Chalcolithic? And second, what do we know about the ways in which imported things were used?

The (in)direct evidence for interaction between Chalcolithic Cyprus and the wider eastern Mediterranean is limited, and has been summarized in a series of publications (Mellink, 1991; Bolger, 2007; Peltenburg, 2007; Kouka, 2009; Bolger, 2013; Peltenburg, 2018; Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019; Knapp, 2020; Düring et al., 2021); here the overview will therefore be brief.

Direct evidence for interaction between Cyprus and the mainland comes in three categories. First, there is Cypriot *red-on-white* Middle Chalcolithic pottery found at the site of Tarsus-*Gözlükule* in Cilicia (Mellink, 1991, pp. 170–172; Bolger, 2013, p. 4). These Middle Chalcolithic sherds (two small sherds and one semi complete small jar) were found in deposits that date to the Early Bronze Age II, c. 2700–2400 BC (Fidan et al., 2015; Novak et al., 2017), thus postdating the Middle Chalcolithic by at least two centuries. However, the volume of the identified corpus of Cypriot Middle Chalcolithic sherds at Tarsus is small, and some are reported to derive from a fill deposit (Goldman, 1956, pp. 20, 130, figs. 263 & 347; Mellink, 1991, pp. 170–172). The most likely explanation, therefore, is that either this material was residual or that it was kept in circulation for some centuries. No similar finds from other sites in Anatolia or Syria have so far come to light.

The second direct link between Cyprus and adjacent regions in the Chalcolithic consists of faience beads. These have been found at the cemeteries of Souskiou-Vathyrkakas (Peltenburg et al., 2006) and Souskiou-Laona (Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019), both of which have been dated to the Middle Chalcolithic, and from chamber tombs at Kissonerga-Mosphilia, which have been dated to the Late Chalcolithic (Croft et al., 1998a, pp. 192–195). In total about 60 faience beads have been reported from these sites (compare to c. 5000 beads reported for Souskiou-Laona alone: Peltenburg, 2019, p. 224). A compositional analysis of 35 beads with a portable XRF shows that at least some of these faience beads contained tin and they (or the material they were made of) were probably imports to Cyprus, while others might have been produced from Cypriot materials (Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019, pp. 285–286). These beads were often interpreted as imports from the Levant or Egypt (Peltenburg, 1987; Croft et al., 1998a, p. 194; Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019, p. 286), but recent finds from Anatolia now constitute the best comparanda (Baysal & Sağlamtimur, 2021; Dardeniz et al., 2021). Further, one carnelian bead is reported from Kalavassos-Ayious (Todd et al., 2004, 219), but this might have been a piece picked from nearby Kalavassos-Tenta, as no other carnelian pieces have been found so far in Chalcolithic sites (Moutsiou & Kassianidou, 2019).

The third direct link between Cyprus and the adjacent lands in the Chalcolithic consists of metal artefacts. Relatively few metal objects are known from Chalcolithic Cyprus. In a review in 2011 Peltenburg identified only 11 metal objects dating to the Middle Chalcolithic, and 7 for the Late Chalcolithic which had been found at the Souskiou cemeteries of Laona and Vathyrkakas, and the sites of Erimi-Pamboula; Lemba-Lakkous; and Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Peltenburg, 2011, p. 4; Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019, p. 279). In recent years, 8 additional metal artefacts have been found at the site of Chlorakas-Palloures, of which three have been published (Düring et al., 2021; 2023).

The question of what types of metallurgy existed on Cyprus during the Chalcolithic has been the focus of substantial research. Gale (1991, pp. 50, 53) analyzed a series of metal artefacts from Erimi-Pamboula, Lemba-Lakkous, Kissonerga-Mylouthkia and Kissonerga-Mosphilia using Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis (INAA), and concluded on the basis of the trace elements measured that at least some of the objects were made from non-Cypriot copper. By contrast, Peltenburg (2011) argued on the basis of contextual evidence, such as copper lumps and a crucible, that working Cypriot ores did occur in Chalcolithic Cyprus. Subsequently, Kassianidou and Charalambous (2019, pp. 279–281) argued for a distinction between Middle Chalcolithic metal objects, which consist mostly of ornaments and were most likely made by cold working of copper wire and strip, for example by creating spirals, and Late Chalcolithic objects, some of which were made of melted copper cast in moulds. They also concurred with Gale, that at least some of the objects were made with non-Cypriot metal (Kassianidou & Charalambous, 2019, pp. 285–286; also Düring et al., 2018). The new finds at Chlorakas-Palloures facilitated additional research into this matter, and lead isotope analysis of three artefacts from that site (including objects that were made of bent copper wire and a cast copper axe) indicate that these objects were most likely made from copper deriving from the Taurus Mountains in Anatolia (Düring



Fig. 2 Two picrolite figurines of Anatolian type from Cyprus (no exact known findspot), 6.6 and 6.4 cm high (after Vagnetti, 1979, plate xii), and a marble figurine from Beycesultan, 5.6 cm high (after Şahoğlu & Sotirakopoulou, 2011, p. 297)

et al., 2021, pp. 677–680). As part of this re-assessment, older lead isotope data from objects from Pella (Jordan) and Agia Photia (Crete), which were previously considered to have been made from Cypriot copper (Philip et al., 2003; Bourke, 2014), were also re-assessed and found to be more consistent with Taurus copper ores (Düring et al., 2021, pp. 678–680). Given this re-assessment, it appears that while the production of ornamental objects made from copper wire and strip occurred already in the Middle Chalcolithic, cast objects only appear in the Late Chalcolithic. While some of the cold hammered objects were probably made of Cypriot copper, others appear to have been made of imported metal. The cast objects, as far as we know, were all made of imported metal.

Apart from this direct evidence for the imports of metal objects and faience beads to Cyprus, and the export of Cypriot pottery, there are also some indirect indications of possible contacts between Cyprus and the mainland, some of which are more convincing than others. Objects on Cyprus with ‘Anatolianizing’ traits include two enigmatic picrolite figurines, two types of ornaments, and pottery that has resemblances to assemblages from Anatolia.

The Anatolianizing figurines (Fig. 2) made of picrolite (two have been published by Vagnetti, 1979, a third example is mentioned in brief but not described or illustrated by Winkelmann, 2020, p. 281), do not have a secure find context or location. Given the near absence of figurines in the Philia assemblages (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, p. 155), and that picrolite was no longer used for figurines in these periods, these objects most plausibly date to the Chalcolithic, for which hundreds of figurines are known (Winkelmann, 2020, presents 639 figurines). The Anatolianizing figurines are clearly inspired by Anatolian prototypes, with good parallels at sites such as Beycesultan and more recently at Çiledir Höyük (Makowski, 2005; Sari, 2021; Tuncel & Şahoğlu, 2019; Türktüzün et al., 2014), but the picrolite examples from Cyprus differ in various details (shape of the body and the head). It would appear, therefore, that the people who created these figurines had seen figurines of

the ‘violin type’ from Anatolia, and were reproducing them with a Cypriot twist, rather than trying to create the exact shape they had encountered.

At Kissonerga-Mosphilia two further categories of Anatolianizing artefacts, more specifically bodily ornaments, were found in secure Late Chalcolithic contexts that are usually considered typical for the Philia: consisting of five ‘spurred annular pendants’ (Fig. 3) and one spiral earring (Peltenburg, 2018). Both types of objects have antecedents in Anatolia (and beyond), and will be further discussed with the Philia examples below. The fact that these objects typical of the Philia are known only from Mosphilia highlights the so far exceptional co-occurrence of Philia type objects in secure Late Chalcolithic contexts at that site, suggesting that some period of co-existence of these two assemblages (Paraskeva, 2019b; Peltenburg, 2018).

Finally, a number of features in Late Chalcolithic Cypriot pottery assemblages have been linked with contemporary assemblages in Anatolia, such as circular knobs and linear relief bands, and relief face motifs (Peltenburg, 2007) and burnishing and firing technologies (Bolger, 2013; Hadjigavriel, 2020). These comparanda are either limited to a small number of examples in Late Chalcolithic Cyprus (relief decoration is extremely rare in the Chalcolithic ceramic assemblages, constituting less than 1

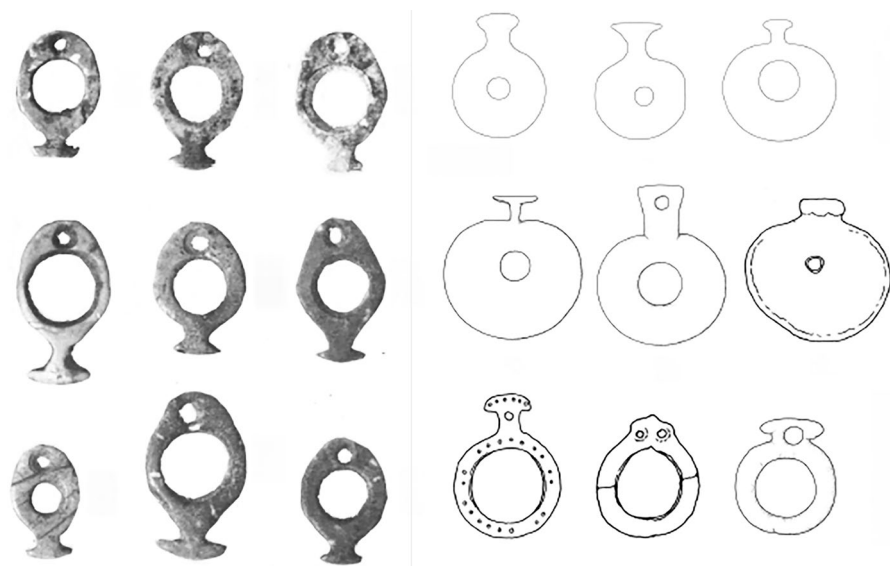


Fig. 3 (Left) Cypriot spurred annular pendants, 2–3 cm long (after Hennessy et al., 1988, fig. 25); (Right) ring idols from Anatolia (after Keskin, 2011, fig. 1)

‰) and occur on vessels that are otherwise very different from the supposed parallels in Anatolia, or focus only on some aspects of the vessels concerned, such as in the comparison with Early Transcaucasian Wares on the basis of the red and black surface treatment, while the shape repertoires are very different (this type of surface treatment is very common in the Late Chalcolithic (Hadjigavriel, 2020)). Thus, these ceramic parallels remain difficult to evaluate with the extant dataset.

Tracing Extra-Insular Interactions in the Philia

As has already been mentioned, in the Philia period many new elements occur in the archaeological assemblages, ranging from a novel pottery repertoire to new forms of houses and marked changes in agriculture and metallurgy. Many of these objects, structures, and technologies appear to have antecedents in Anatolia, and the combination of the marked changes occurring in the Philia and these Anatolian affinities has led to the already introduced discussion of whether the Philia is to be understood as a migration from Anatolia or a Cypriot appropriation of overseas practices and assemblages, which began with the first discovery of Philia assemblages in the 1940s and lasts until the present.

However, if we ask the same question for the Philia as we did for the Late Chalcolithic, namely *what is the direct and indirect evidence for interactions with the mainland?* the answers are not actually all that different, although the list for the Philia is undoubtedly longer.

Direct evidence for imports into Cyprus and exports from Cyprus in the Philia period consists of three categories: metals; pottery; and animals. The evidence for imported metals is unequivocal. Lead isotope analysis shows that Philia period metal artefacts—which include a range of new types, such as spearheads, daggers, and ring ingots—were made in part from Cypriot ores, in part from Taurus copper, and in part from Aegean metal, and so far at least 15 objects (out of 110 known Philia period metal objects: Webb, 2024, p. 104) were made from imported metals (Stos-Gale & Gale, 1994; Webb et al., 2006; pp. 271–273; Webb, 2018, pp. 10–11). This ‘mixing of metals’ continues in subsequent periods on Cyprus and suggests a lively exchange of objects and materials in which the origin of the metals was not a primary concern (Webb, 2018, 2022).

A second category of direct imports from the mainland consists of various types of animals that are introduced during the Philia. At the site of Marki-Alonia, these include new species of sheep and goats with twisted horns, possibly wool-bearing; cattle, which had been absent from Cyprus during the later Neolithic and the Chalcolithic; and donkey, which was introduced to the island for the first time (Croft, 2006). There is little doubt that the introduction of these animals was transformative, facilitating the use of animals for new purposes, such as the production of wool, traction, and transport, although we do not know to what degree these new possibilities were already utilized in the Philia (more on this below).

A third direct connection between Cyprus and the wider eastern Mediterranean in the Philia consists of ceramics. Despite substantial research on Anatolian connections in Cypriot ceramics not a single imported vessel has so far been identified

for the Philia. The earliest known non-Cypriot vessel on Cyprus is the Vounous jar, dated to the EC I/II (c. 2200–2000 BC), and this remains the singular example of a ceramic import into Cyprus in the third millennium BC (Bolger, 2013, pp. 5–6). By contrast, several Philia *Black Slip and Combed* sherds have been found at Tarsus-Gözlükule in Early Bronze Age II deposits (Goldman, 1956, pp. 112–113, 130; Webb & Frankel, 1999, p. 28), and recently a possible imported Philia *White Painted* jar has been reported from late Early Bronze Age II deposits at Hacımusular Höyük (Özgen et al., 2021, p. 622).

In terms of direct evidence for contact between Cyprus and the wider Mediterranean, the Philia, therefore, is not that different from the preceding Chalcolithic. In both periods a limited number of mainland imports are found on the island and a small amount of Cypriot pottery is conversely found on the mainland. However, the indirect evidence for contact in the Philia is much more extensive than for the Chalcolithic.

The most well-known indirect evidence for interregional interaction consists of the Philia ceramic assemblages, which show clear affinities with Anatolia, in for example the jugs with cut-away spouts, as was recognized immediately by the earliest excavator, Dikaios (1962, pp. 202–3). However, the Philia ceramics do not find direct parallels in any known assemblage in Anatolia. It was observed by Mellink (1991, p. 173) that: ‘None of the Philia pitchers are littoral copies of Anatolian prototypes, let alone imports,’ and she qualified the Philia assemblages as ‘selectively Anatolianizing, not Anatolian’. It should be noted, moreover, that Mellink was specifically comparing Tarsus Early Bronze Age II assemblages to those of Philia, and that the Tarsus-Gözlükule assemblages are seen by most researchers as the closest fit for the Philia, although some Philia shapes have the best comparanda in Pisidia (e.g. Warner, 1994, plates 162–182; Duru, 2008, pp. 165–169). Other recently excavated and published Early Bronze Age assemblages from nearby sites (Novak et al., 2017), such as those from Kilisi Tepe (Symington, 2007) and Kinet Höyük (Eslick, 2021, 2024) have few comparanda with the Philia. There are, moreover, many Anatolian Early Bronze Age II ceramic types that are missing from the Philia assemblages. Typical shapes such as the Depas, Tankards and Syrian bottles are lacking; these are thought to have appeared at Tarsus from around 2400 BC, in the Early Bronze Age III (Fidan et al., 2015; Massa, 2016; Novak et al., 2017; see also Eslick, 2024, pp. 188, 358, for Kinet Höyük, where these shapes seem to start around 2500 BC), but also typical Early Bronze Age II vessels from Tarsus, such as teapots, two handled jars, flat rimmed jars, and oval jars, to mention a few shapes.

Thus, the pottery parallels between the Philia and Anatolia are restricted to a subset of the ceramic assemblages that exist in Anatolia, and the Philia vessel types that do have comparanda, such as the spouted jugs, are only comparable in some of their attributes. Moreover, there are shapes in the Philia assemblages, such as the bowl with the downturned horned handle, the neck juglet, and the deep spouted bowls, that do not appear anywhere in Anatolia. Further, the Philia deep spouted bowl have antecedents in older Chalcolithic assemblages on Cyprus (Bolger & Webb, 2013), although this is probably the only vessel shape that does.

The partial appropriation and reworking of Anatolian pottery assemblages is also something we see in other elements of the Philia. For example, while the

shift to rectangular courtyard buildings, as evidenced at Marki-Alonia (Frankel & Webb, 2006b) is no doubt a clear break from the earlier tradition of Chalcolithic round houses, these courtyard structures of Marki do not have clear counterparts in mainland Anatolia, where villages typically take the form of houses with a megaron type plan arranged around a large central courtyard (Bachhuber, 2015b; Steadman, 2011). The ‘town houses’ of Tarsus (Goldman, 1956, pp. 12–32, plans 4–8) and Kinet Höyük (Eslick, 2021, pp. 74, 79; 2024, pp. 31–111) are more akin to those of Marki-Alonia, but only in some respects: although these buildings are rectangular in shape, and arranged neatly along streets, there is no evidence for the type of compound structures of irregular shape typical for Marki at the Cilician sites (Fig. 4).

A good example of selective appropriation that occurs in the Philia consists of the ‘spurred annular pendants’ already attested in the Late Chalcolithic at the site of Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Peltenburg, 2018). While a total of two bone and four shell pendants of this type were found at this site (Croft et al., 1998b, p. 234), these types of pendants are found in much larger quantities in Philia graves, where they are predominantly made of picrolite, with a few examples made of shell (Dikaïos, 1962, pp. 174–175; Stewart, 1962, pp. 259–262; Hennessy et al., 1988, pp. 15, 17, 62, 70; Swiny et al., 2003, pp. 236, 254, 276, 588), and some are also known from settlement contexts (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 75, 77, fig. 6.33). It has been convincingly argued (Kouka, 2009, p. 35; Peltenburg, 2018) that these spurred annular pendants are a Cypriot variant of what are known as ‘ring idols’ in Anatolia, Greece, and the Balkans (Keskin, 2011; Zimmermann, 2007). While in the latter regions the form is a perforated bar attached to a ring, and the objects are often made in metal, on Cyprus the bar is transformed into a spur and the perforation is placed on the opposite side, and pendants

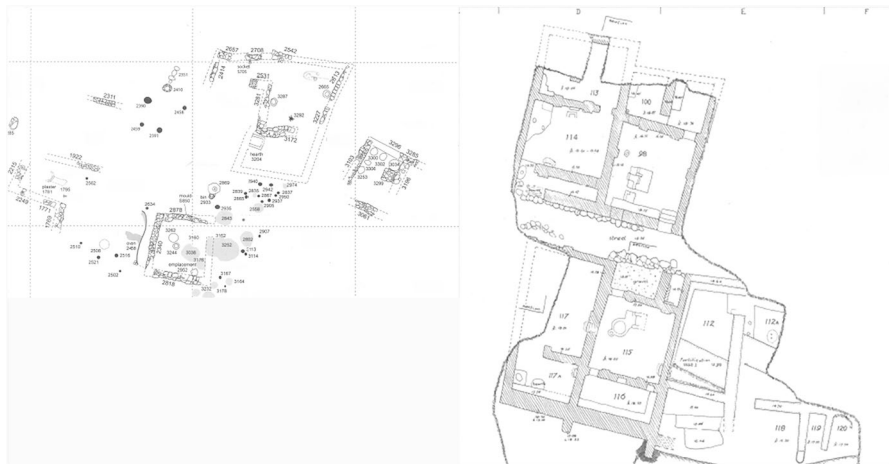


Fig. 4 Juxtaposition of domestic buildings: (Left) the Philia phase at Marki-Alonia (after Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, phase B plan); and (Right) EB II at Tarsus-Gözlükule (after Goldman, 1956, plan 4)

are made from shell, bone, or (mostly) picrolite (Peltenburg, 2018, p. 461). Webb, in a recent talk for the International Association for Archaeological Research in Western & Central Asia (Webb, 2021), has discussed this transformation of spurred annular pendants as something that was ‘lost in translation’, which is a very apt phrase to describe the selective reworking of this type of pendant.

The same applies to the ‘spiral earrings’ which have been attested in Late Chalcolithic Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Peltenburg, 2018, pp. 461–462), and more commonly in Philia grave contexts, such as at Ayia Paraskevi, Dhenia, Philia, and Vasilia (Dikaios, 1962, pp. 158–159; Hennessy et al., 1988, pp. 14–5, 17, 62, 70; Nicolaou & Nicolaou, 1988, p. 105, fig. 17; Swiny et al., 2003, pp. 376–799, 382; Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 186–187, fig. 5.26; Mina, 2014). While in Cyprus these objects were often made of copper plate (some were made of electrum), in Anatolia and the Aegean, examples are known from Baklatepe, Eskiyapar, Poliochni, Tarsus, and Troy, and these objects are often in gold and normally have a series of parallel lobes (Massimino, 2019, plate 24), although flat variants similar to those in Cyprus also exist, for example at Tarsus (Goldman, 1956, p. 300, fig. 434-2). Thus, as for the spurred annular pendants, many of these objects differ in their shape or materials from their mainland prototypes. Moreover, both the spurred annular pendants and spiral earrings are not very common in Anatolia and the Aegean, whereas in Cyprus these objects are ubiquitous.

There is a range of further objects that are new in the Philia period, and can be linked with Anatolia and the Levant. These include toggle pins (Dikaios, 1962, p. 173; Hennessy et al., 1988, pp. 29, 38, 98, 106; Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, p. 186, fig. 5.26; Mina, 2014, pp. 232–234), spindle whorls ($n=62$), and loom weights ($n=3$) (Crewe, 1998; Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 160–162; Muti, 2021, pp. 130–136), and casting moulds (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 215–217). Additional evidence for possible connections with the mainland occurs in the form of evidence for head shaping (Lorentz, 2006, pp. 298–303), and transformations in cooking, manifested in cooking pots and hobs (Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 17–21, 100–101).

There is thus a good corpus of objects and technologies that can be regarded as providing indirect evidence of interregional contact, in the sense that it is highly plausible that (some of) these practices and object types originated in Anatolia and/or the Levant, but the ways in which they were transferred to Cyprus and transformed in Cyprus is unknown. This transfer could have been facilitated by the transfer of ideas, objects, and people in various possible combinations, which we can no longer fully reconstruct.

Assessing Interactions Between Cyprus and the Mediterranean in the Third Millennium BC

If we summarize the evidence for interregional interactions between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland, we can draw out a number of points. First, both in the Chalcolithic and in the Philia the evidence for direct interaction is limited to a few

Table 1 Overview of direct and indirect evidence for interaction between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland in the Chalcolithic and Philia periods

Period	Direct evidence for interaction	Indirect evidence for interaction
Chalcolithic	- faience beads - metal objects - Cypriot pottery in Anatolia	- <i>Anatolianizing figurines</i> - <i>spurred annular pendants</i> - <i>spiral earrings</i> - <i>shared pottery characteristics</i>
Philia	- metal objects - animals (donkey, cattle, sheep/goat) - Cypriot pottery in Anatolia	- <i>Anatolianizing pottery</i> - <i>spurred annular pendants</i> - <i>spiral earrings</i> - <i>t oggle pins</i> - <i>spindle whorls & loom weights</i> - <i>casting moulds</i> - <i>cooking pots & hobs</i> - <i>skull shaping</i>

categories, with things like metal (objects) and faience and domestic animals being brought into Cyprus, and for both periods there is a relatively small amount of Cypriot pottery found across the sea, in places like Tarsus and (perhaps) Hacımusular. Thus, it appears that a highly selective set of objects and materials from across the sea were welcomed to the island (Table 1).

Second, there is a clear directionality in these exchanges. We can document ‘new’ object types, animals, technologies, and materials from the mainland that were adopted in Cyprus, and we see the Cypriot appropriation of things such as spurred annular beads and Anatolian figurines. Conversely, if we reverse the focus and ask what finds we have in Anatolia of things that look Cypriot or Cypriotizing there is an almost complete lack of data, apart from a small number of ceramic finds. Remarkably, no picrolite figurines, or beads have been reported anywhere in Anatolia, although this is a material that would have fitted well into Early Bronze Age assemblages in Anatolia and the Levant, where we find materials such as amber and lapis lazuli in good quantities (Baysal & Sağlamtimur, 2021; Massa & Palmisano, 2018). Surprisingly, even for the Philia period, for which we have good evidence for copper production and casting on Cyprus, there is no good evidence for Cypriot copper elsewhere in the Mediterranean (Webb et al., 2006, p. 277; Webb, 2024, p. 112).

On the basis of this pattern, it would seem that objects, ideas, animals, and materials—as far as we can see them—are almost exclusively moving in the direction of Cyprus and not the converse. It is, of course, possible that the Cypriot exports consisted of things that are archaeologically not (yet) visible: for example, these could have included furs, wooden products, basketry, or even people (see e.g. Zvelebil, 2006, for one reconstruction in which women might have crossed the boundary in the prehistoric Baltic), but we have no evidence for such possibilities at present.

Third, the Philia period is often portrayed as a relatively sudden arrival of a consolidated package of technologies and lifeways, that included the introduction of metallurgical know-how, rectangular houses, the (re)introduction of cattle, woolly sheep, and donkeys, the plough, spindle whorls and weaving looms, Anatolian style pottery, cooking pots and hobs, and cradle boards (Frankel, 2000; Webb & Frankel, 2007). However, there is increasing evidence that this transfer of things might not have occurred during a brief period or event, such as a colonization, but that many sequential interactions occurred over prolonged time periods. Thus, already in the (late) Middle Chalcolithic we find imported faience beads, and these continue into the Late Chalcolithic. In the Late Chalcolithic we also have indirect evidence, such as Anatolianizing figurines, the first spurred annular pendants and spiral earring-objects that are more typical for the Philia period—and the first imported metal (objects).

The only real addition to the direct imports during the Philia period consists of a suite of domestic animals that includes donkey, cattle and new types of sheep and goat. However, introducing new species of animals to the island would have been a logistical challenge. It is not likely that they were brought over at once with a substantial fleet capable of transporting a biologically viable population of cattle, sheep/goat, and donkeys, estimates for which are usually between one hundred and one thousand animals (Thomas, 1990; Trail et al., 2007). Indeed, for earlier Neolithic introduction of wild and domestic animals to Cyprus—for which we have better chronological control—Vigne and his colleagues (Vigne et al., 2014, p. 166) have argued that the introduction of new animals was a process that stretched over hundreds of years, and that various animal species were brought to the island sequentially. In such a reconstruction people must have regularly brought over animals when they crossed the Mediterranean and only stopped doing so centuries after the first animals had been shipped to Cyprus.

Further, the evidence for technologies such as the plough and cradle boards often presented as traceable back to the Philia—does not always exist for the Philia period; the best evidence for these things is from the subsequent Early Cypriot period (2200–2000 BC), or even the EC–MC transition in the early second millennium, meaning they can therefore date up to several hundreds of years after the Philia. This is true for the plough model from Vounous, the use of donkeys for transport, or the use of cradle boards for babies (a Campo, 1994; Knapp, 2013, p. 269; Knox, 2013; Mina, 2016; Webb, 2016, 2017). The evidence to date such practices back to the Philia in many cases is circumstantial, for example possible evidence for traction on cattle bones (Croft, 2006, p. 271) and possible evidence for head shaping on a child skull at Marki (Lorentz, 2006, p. 298). I argue therefore that a degree of ‘stretching’ is required to understand the temporalities of how the elements that have been attributed to the ‘Philia package’ were adopted on Cyprus. Another interesting illustration of more long-lasting interactions between Cyprus and adjacent lands consists of gaming boards carved in stone, which most likely came to Cyprus from the Mediterranean mainland and occur in substantial numbers from the Early Cypriot period onwards, but are so far not attested in the Philia (Crist, 2019).

I am not suggesting that the Philia is not a transformative period, in which a series of new assemblages, technologies, and practices appeared on Cyprus. However, if

we were to conceive of this transition as process in which various elements were introduced sequentially over a period of some centuries, a lot of the ‘problems’ that have surrounded the Philia would start to make more sense. These include questions such as why some supposed ‘Philia artefacts’ already occur in the Chalcolithic; how copper metallurgy started on Cyprus; how possible newcomers in the Philia would have been aware of Cypriot copper deposits; and why Philia assemblages, while clearly Anatolianizing in many elements, do not clearly link up with any specific Early Bronze Age assemblage in Anatolia. I think that for all these questions, ‘unpacking’ and ‘stretching’ the Philia would provide solutions.

Appropriating Things from Across the Sea

So far, I have argued that specific things, that is objects, materials, and animals, were brought to Cyprus in the third millennium BC, and that other mainland items were reproduced in distinctly Cypriot styles. In this section I would like to reflect on the selective permeability and directionality of things moving across the constructed cultural boundaries of Cyprus in later prehistory and ask why specific things were selected by Cypriot communities, how these ‘new’ things were used by these communities, and how this use compares to that known from Anatolia and the Levant.

Let us first consider which elements of foreign assemblages were adopted by Cypriot societies and why. Instead of comparing complete assemblages, it might be more productive to differentiate between various types of activities and the assemblages associated with them. For example, we could differentiate between domestic life, activities associated with storing and preparing food, funerary practices, farming, feasting, and the adornment of the body. It can be postulated that some activities are more open to foreign things than others, for example one might expect burial practices and the configuration of household activities to be relatively conservative, whereas the adoption and appropriation of foreign elements in feasts and bodily adornment might occur more easily. For example, glass beads were among the first objects widely adopted by societies in both America and Australia when they came into contact with Europeans, and they were used in ways that were similar to local beads and were often incorporated into composite necklaces and headdresses (Walthall, 2015; Lister et al., 2018, 312). Similarly, in Iron Age southern France, local societies selectively adopted Greek objects associated with alcohol consumption for their feasts (Dietler, 2010).

In the Chalcolithic of Cyprus imports from the mainland included things like faience beads, metal objects, spurred annular pendants, and spiral earrings. Most of these objects consist of small ornaments of types that were new to Cyprus, but could be easily integrated into existing cultural practices in Chalcolithic societies, given that bodily adornments such as pendants, necklaces, and bracelets are common in graves, and are depicted on figurines (Keswani, 2013; Mina, 2014; Winkelmann, 2020). Thus, imported bodily ornaments could have been used alongside Cypriot types of beads and pendants. Indeed, what is quite remarkable is that Cypriot versions of spurred annular pendants are quite distinct from their earliest attestation in Late Chalcolithic Mosphilia. In the subsequent Philia period, these

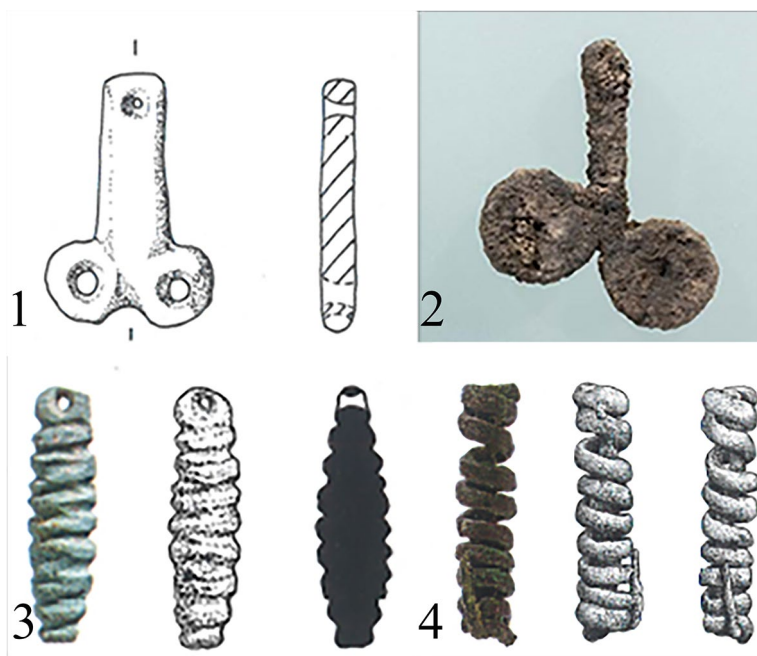


Fig. 5 Chalcolithic ornaments in picrolite and copper. 1) picrolite phallus symbol from Souskiou-Vathy-rkakas, 3 cm high (after Peltenburg et al., 2006, plate 13); 2) copper phallus from Chlorakas-Palloures, 3 cm high (BC21_U66_L3638.); 3) picrolite spiral bead from Souskiou-Laona, 2 cm high (after Peltenburg et al., 2019, plate 34); 4) copper spiral bead from Souskiou-Laona, 2.5 cm high (after Peltenburg et al., 2019, plate 49)

spurred annular pendants are almost exclusively made of picrolite, a development which makes sense only in a Cypriot cultural context, in which this had been a preferred material for bodily ornaments for millennia. Likewise, we see spiral earrings made of copper, whereas in Anatolia these objects were usually made of gold. In a Cypriot context, the use of copper for bodily ornaments fits into a longer tradition in which bodily ornaments were made of both copper and picrolite, often in similar shapes (Fig. 5). Thus, we have copper spiral beads—made of copper wire, and we have similar spiral beads in picrolite, and we have phallus shaped pendants both in picrolite and in copper (Peltenburg et al., 2006; Peltenburg & Webb, 2013; Peltenburg, 2019). Apart from the spiral earrings, these objects made out of both copper and picrolite, are distinctly Cypriot, notwithstanding the fact that some of them were made of imported metals (Düring et al., 2021, pp. 675–680).

The only class of imported objects that were truly distinct from local assemblages in Chalcolithic Cyprus were cast metal tools such as chisels and axes. Such objects had counterparts in older stone tools, which served similar purposes, but their material qualities were very different, and no doubt would have been appreciated as such. Interestingly, we have evidence for skeuomorphism—the imitation of one material

in another—in the form of stone flat axes that were hypothesized to imitate metal prototypes (Croft et al., 1998a, p. 188). At the site of Chlorakas-Palloures a stone flat axe and a copper axe were found adjacent to one another in a remarkable cache left inside a house (Düring et al., 2018, 2021), adding further credibility to this idea.

In the Philia period, the focus on personal ornaments that is typical for the preceding Chalcolithic, continues. Spurred annular pendants and spiral earrings are prominent in Philia grave assemblages, and so are toggle pins (Mina, 2014). The latter are especially interesting as they suggest new types of clothing, possibly made of fabrics that were not used in the Chalcolithic. These toggle pins are well attested in Anatolia and the Levant (CarMinati, 2014; Efe & Fidan, 2006) and suggest a substantial change in appearances in the Philia inspired by mainland prototypes. It has also been suggested that some of the spindle whorls found in graves might have been worn as beads or in conjunction with the toggle pins (Mellink, 1991, p. 173; Webb & Frankel, 1999, pp. 33–34; Frankel & Webb, 2006a, 2006b, pp. 160–161), and indeed it is striking that decorated whorls are more commonly found in Philia graves (Muti, 2021, p. 134).

These bodily adornments in Philia graves might have been inspired by Anatolian prototypes, but this does not mean that their use in Cypriot graves is similar to that in Asia Minor. For example, while spurred annular pendants occur in large quantities in Philia graves, these objects are rarely found in graves on the Mediterranean mainland, and when they are, they occur in small numbers (Keskin, 2011). Conversely, some objects that are common in Anatolian Early Bronze Age graves, such as studs, mace heads, and figurines are absent in Philia graves.

Philia grave assemblages differ in marked ways from what we know from Early Bronze Age II graves in Anatolia. One of the most pronounced elements in Philia grave assemblages consist of ceramic vessels that can be associated with drinking, most likely alcohol consumption, in the form of spouted jugs and cups. The ubiquity of such vessels in Philia graves has been interpreted as representing alcohol consumption as part of funerary practices (Webb & Frankel, 2008, p. 289; Kouka, 2009, pp. 36–37), and this has been linked to evidence for drinking on the Mediterranean mainland (Ünlü, 2016; Türkteki, 2020, pp. 142–423). However, in Anatolian burials, drinking sets are not common. While spouted jugs are often found, cups and drinking vessels are not.

Further, in Asia Minor, collective and rock cut graves such as those known from Cyprus are not typical, and I know of only one exception, at Çesme-Boyalık (Şahoğlu et al., 2009); further examples are known elsewhere in the Aegean in mainland Greece and Crete (Cosmopoulos, 1991, pp. 30–32). The typical cemetery in Anatolia consists of a large number of predominantly single or sequential family graves, arranged in neat rows, which take the form of pits, pithos graves, or stone lined cist graves (Wheeler, 1974; Massa, 2014; Bachhuber, 2015b, p. 85; Selover & Durgun, 2019). Larger, collective graves and rock cut chamber tombs do occur in Upper Mesopotamia, at sites such as Tell es-Sweyhat, Tawi, and Tell Halawa, (Orthmann, 1981; Kampschule, 1984; Zettler & Armstrong, 1997; Porter, 2002), but these contain grave assemblages that are completely different from those in Asia Minor (and the Philia assemblages inspired by them). In the southern Levant, in the second half of the third millennium BC, rock cut single and



Fig. 6 Two vessels in the form of a bunch of grapes from Souskiou-Laona. 1) 8.8 cm wide (after Peltenburg et al., 2019, plate 73); 2) 8 cm wide (after Peltenburg et al., 2019, plate 74)

collective tombs also occur (Meyerhof et al., 1989; GreenBerg, 2019, pp. 166–72; Lev et al., 2022), but once more, the grave assemblages and burial practices attested differ greatly from those in the Philia tombs.

Some of the elements we see in Philia rock cut tombs might have possible antecedents in Chalcolithic Cyprus, however. At Souskiou-Laona and *Vathyrkakas*, the earliest known cemeteries with rock cut tombs of the island date to the Middle Chalcolithic (Peltenburg ed., 2006; Peltenburg et al., 2019). These graves are predominantly shaft graves, sometimes with a bell-shaped burial chamber and a capstone, which suggests that they were periodically re-opened (Crewe, 2019, pp. 99–101). Indeed, many of the graves show evidence for sequential burial of multiple bodies, and in some cases the careful creation of bone stacks from earlier bodies (Lorentz, 2019, p. 158). At the *Vathyrkakas* cemetery, moreover, one of the tombs (no. 73) has a large square grave chamber of about 4.5 by 4.3 m cut more than 2 m into the bedrock, and, although looted, has yielded a series of Chalcolithic ceramic vessels (Peltenburg & Christou, 2006, pp. 24–26). More complex types of rock cut graves are thus attested in the Chalcolithic. In the subsequent Late Chalcolithic we do not have similar cemetery data, but there are chamber tombs with multiple graves at *Kissonerga-Mosphilia* (Lunt et al., 1998, pp. 70–72).

If we consider the types of grave inventories placed in Chalcolithic and Philia graves there are, moreover, remarkable similarities. First, in both periods personal ornaments are well represented in graves, whereas in Early Bronze Age cemeteries in Anatolia, these are much less prominent. Likewise, there is some evidence for the prominence of alcohol consumption in Chalcolithic tombs. At Souskiou-Laona and *Vathyrkakas* we find elegant goblets in graves, which are very uncommon in settlement contexts, as well as pointed flasks (Bolger et al., 1998; Peltenburg ed., 2006, plates 4, 23, 31 & 34; Peltenburg et al., 2019, plates 45 & 80) that would have been very suitable as containers of alcoholic beverages (Hadjisavvas & Chaniotis, 2012, p. 158), and there are three fascinating ceramic vessels from Souskiou graves that resemble a bunch of grapes (Fig. 6) (Peltenburg (Ed.) 2006, plate 31; Peltenburg et al., 2019, plates 73 & 74). In the Late Chalcolithic chamber tombs at *Mosphilia*, spouted jars are found that might also have been linked to alcohol consumption

(Lunt et al., 1998, pp. 90–92). Furthermore, evidence of tartaric acid, associated with wine, has been detected in Middle Chalcolithic vessels from Erimi (Hadjisavvas & Chaniotis, 2012; Lentini, 2005). It is therefore possible to argue that alcohol consumption was important in funerary assemblages in both the Chalcolithic and Philia periods, suggesting a possible continuity in this respect, while at the same time, objects related to alcohol consumption are not common in Early Bronze Age grave assemblages in Anatolia.

It appears, therefore, that both Anatolian derived objects, and objects inspired by Anatolian prototypes—transformed into distinctly Cypriot variants—were used in cultural practices with long histories on Cyprus and which diverge from the contemporary uses of these objects in Anatolia. Imported goods, materials and technologies were thus appropriated and transformed in Cypriot cultural formats.

Reassessing Cypriot Connections in the Third Millennium BC

As has already been mentioned, the nature of interactions between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland, and the Philia period in particular, has been interpreted in highly diverse ways. Here I will briefly revisit earlier positions on the basis of the discussion of third millennium BC interactions.

The first position is that whereas some minor imports of goods from the Mediterranean mainland are already attested in the Chalcolithic, the massive changes in assemblages, technologies, and economies occurring in the Philia period are best understood as evidence for migration of immigrants from Anatolia, bringing a series of things, technologies, and objects with them (Bachhuber, 2015a; Frankel, 2000, 2005; Webb & Frankel, 1999, 2007, 2011). According to Webb and Frankel (2007, 2011) the attestation of a series of embodied practices that first occur in the Philia, including new ways of producing pottery (such as push-through handles on jugs), new types of cooking (cooking pots on ceramic hobs), new textile technologies and clothing (manifested in spindle whorls and toggle pins), and new types of child care (as manifested in head shaping and new types of cradles), suggest Anatolian migrants bringing these practices to Cyprus. However, while there is no doubt that these practices are embodied, this does not imply that they were brought by migrating communities rather than appropriated by local groups. For example, if we assume that push-through handles represent embodied pottery production practices, why is it then, that a large part of the Anatolian corpus of ceramic shapes is lacking, and how do we explain the occurrence of ceramic shapes in the Philia assemblages that do not have counterparts in Anatolia? Clearly, the transfer of Anatolian repertoires is more complex than that of migrants reproducing their embodied practices in a new environment.

This does not mean that we can completely exclude migration as a factor in third millennium BC interactions between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland. Migration can take many forms, each with different characteristics (Anthony, 1990; van Dommelen, 2014). Historically, migration often takes the form of ‘stream migration’ in which first a few scouts explore the new region, which are then later followed by other members of the same group. The number of people moving might be

quite small and because of this the assemblages and practices of the region of origin might be reproduced in very selective ways and be transformed relatively quickly, in a sort of ‘founder’ effect, or even lose all recognizable earlier traits (Anthony, 1990, p. 903; Burmeister, 2000, p. 560). While the type of colonization migration involving complete communities posited earlier for the Philia does not appear likely, other types of migration that included smaller groups of people hailing from Anatolia over a more extended trajectory remain a possibility. Indeed possible DNA (haplotype) data that could point in this direction has been published (Voskarides et al., 2016).

Whether or not migrations from Anatolia occurred, any explanation of third millennium BC connectivity between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland needs to explain: first, why selective elements of mainland assemblages were taken up on Cyprus whereas others were not; second, why many of these elements were converted into Cypriot forms that, while derived from mainland prototypes, were clearly distinct in form and execution (for example the spurred annular pendants); and, third, why these ‘Anatolianizing’ objects were used in cultural practices that fit in earlier Cypriot practices that do not have clear counterparts in Asia Minor. Taken in concert, these three characteristics which have been highlighted in this paper, clearly suggest that Cypriot communities played an important role in determining what things from across the sea were taken up on Cyprus and how.

It is because of these idiosyncratic characteristics that the Philia was considered a Cypriot assemblage influenced by Anatolian prototypes by many scholars (Swiny, 1986; Knapp, 1993; Manning, 1993; Peltenburg, 1996; Bolger, 2007; Knapp, 2001; Bolger, 2013; Knapp, 2013, pp. 264–277). A variety of social interpretations have been put forward by these scholars to describe the relations between Cypriots and people from the mainland in the third millennium BC, ranging from status competition by emerging elites (Kouka, 2009; Manning, 1993) to hybridization models (Knapp, 2008, pp. 110–130; 2013, pp. 268–77), and reception theory (Bolger, 2013, pp. 11–12). All these models and ideas intend to highlight that Cypriots played an active role in the adoption of foreign assemblages, materials, animals, and practices, and did so to serve their own interests. Each of these theories can be critiqued, for example, we have little convincing evidence for emerging elites in the Chalcolithic and the Philia (Klinkenberg & Düring, 2023; Webb & Knapp, 2021), the use of reception theory equates assemblages to text, an equation that has been increasingly called into question (Buchli, 2013), and hybridization as a concept is linked to colonial encounters in which one society dominates the other (Silliman, 2015), a situation that clearly does not apply to Cyprus in the third millennium BC. However, the active role of Cypriot communities in third millennium interactions with the Mediterranean mainland that is central to these theories is, I think, beyond doubt.

Perhaps a less anachronistic interpretative framework for understanding connectivity between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland may be found in the work of Hahn (2004) and also Özbal (2023), who use the word ‘appropriation’ to discuss how foreign things are (re)embedded in local cultural practices, and the work of Dietler, who uses the concept of ‘entanglement’ to describe: ‘the complex webs of economic, political, social, and cultural linkages that can result, often inadvertently, from the consumption of an alien material culture’ (Dietler, 2010, p. 53). Such practices of selective appropriation of specific foreign things and goods and their

consumption in ways that fit within the cultural practices of the local society fit well with the data for Cyprus in the third millennium BC.

However, one can ask how ‘alien’ or ‘foreign’ the assemblages, materials, animals, and practices that appeared on Cyprus really were. No doubt, new things arrived on Cyprus and must have been appreciated as such. Yet, as has been discussed in this paper, the amount of (recognizable) imports on Cyprus from the Mediterranean mainland is quite limited, consisting of faience beads and (cast) metal objects in the Chalcolithic, and metal objects and domestic animals in the Philia period. While in the Chalcolithic period faience beads and cast metal objects were probably appreciated as foreign goods, even within the Chalcolithic the first Cypriot production of Anatolian inspired objects, such as spurred annular pendants and spiral earrings, began. These objects would most likely not have been perceived as foreign (inspired) objects after a generation or so, much like jeans in our times ceased to be particularly American some decades ago. In the Philia period there is good evidence for the production of cast copper objects on Cyprus, and the distinction between metal objects made of Cypriot versus imported copper would not have been visible, and probably did not matter. It is likely that by the Philia period cast copper artefacts were no longer considered as ‘foreign’ objects (even if people might have known that some of these things came in via overseas trade). For the most part, then, the Anatolian inspired assemblages, materials, animals, and practices in third millennium BC quickly became Cypriot, and were subsumed within Cypriot cultural practices. Most likely, if people came over to Cyprus from the mainland during this time, bringing their expertise on metallurgy and animal husbandry, they would also have been subsumed into local communities.

Conclusion

In this paper I have revisited the issue of how Cyprus (re)connected with the Mediterranean mainland in the third millennium BC, using a constructed boundary perspective, and asking: first, what things passed across the boundary; second, what the directionalities of interactions were; third, how ‘alien things’ were culturally appropriated; and fourth, how the properties of the boundary were transformed over time. I have compared the data we have for the Chalcolithic and Philia periods in order to highlight the similarities in the ways in which connectivities were structured in both periods.

First, in both periods direct interactions with Cyprus were limited to a few categories of objects, such as faience beads, metals and metal objects, and livestock, although there likely were other things that we cannot see in our archaeological datasets. Indirect evidence of things that were inspired and copied from Anatolian prototypes and practices, such as types of bodily ornaments, metallurgy, textile technologies, and cooking practices, is more ubiquitous. These Anatolianizing objects are derived from a small proportion of mainland assemblages and practices. Thus, a relatively selective set of things, materials, animals, and practices, rather than complete mainland assemblages, were taken up in Cyprus in the third millennium BC.

Second, in both periods there is a marked directionality in the archaeologically visible interaction between Cyprus and the Mediterranean mainland. Although a small amount of Chalcolithic and Philia pottery has been found at sites such as Tarsus and Hacimusular Höyük, overall there is a marked absence of Cypriot things in Anatolia and the Levant, and the flow of goods and livestock seems to be one-directional. This is all the more remarkable given that it is becoming increasingly plausible that interactions between Cyprus and adjacent regions took place over the course of centuries and must have consisted of hundreds of crossings, if we consider the temporal spread of materials found in archaeological sites and the numbers of livestock animals that must have been brought to Cyprus to create viable populations. It is likely that there were regular crossings between the Cypriot north coast and the adjacent Anatolian coasts of Cilicia, and that goods and livestock were regularly brought over as part of these crossings.

Third, in both the Chalcolithic and the Philia periods we can see that assemblages and practices from across the sea were transformed in Cypriot contexts. We see Cypriot variants of Anatolian-type bodily ornaments, both in their forms and in the materials used, as well as in the Anatolianizing ceramic assemblages, which consist of selected vessel types from the mainland that resemble mainland prototypes in some respects, rather than being precise copies, and are mixed with shapes that do not have counterparts in Asia Minor. Moreover, there is good evidence that these Anatolianizing objects were used in cultural practices, for example of bodily ornamentation and the celebration of wine consumption in graves, that were firmly rooted in Cyprus and that do not have clear counterparts in the Mediterranean mainland. Thus, things from Anatolia were appropriated and transformed on Cyprus rather than simply adopted.

Fourth, from the Chalcolithic to the Philia we can see an increased number of goods, practices, and livestock being brought into Cyprus, culminating in the marked cultural changes that we associate with the Philia. It is likely that the initially small number of interactions with Anatolia—in which a limited set of goods was brought to Cyprus that fitted in specific and constrained domains of cultural practices, such as bodily adornment paved the way for the broader adoption of a greater range of things, materials and livestock later on in time, which had much more profound effects on a range of cultural domains, including agriculture, foodways, and clothing. It is plausible that the developments that we see in the Philia included people from both Cyprus and Cilicia, who together created new cultural assemblages that merged elements from both regions.

In short, I argue that Cypriot communities in the third millennium BC actively constructed an island culture by creating cultural boundaries, through which selected types of objects, materials, and living beings were brought in, and these things and animals were initially used and appropriated and embedded in typically Cypriot practices. This appropriation of exotic things was directional, given that there is very little evidence for Cypriot objects or ideas in Anatolia, and this suggests that Cypriot communities took an active role in these processes. In the Philia period we see a marked transformation in society and economies on the island that is clearly inspired by Anatolian examples, but these Anatolian objects, technologies and animals, were embedded in Cypriot practices, in trajectories similar to those in

the preceding Chalcolithic. It appears, therefore, that the manner in which Cyprus connected with the Mediterranean mainland was more active than has often been suggested, a complex and fascinating transformation process in which Cypriot communities engaged with assemblages and practices from Anatolia on the basis of their own cultural traditions, a relation that over time increasingly opened up possibilities for new appropriations of mainland practices, people, and goods in Cypriot trajectories.

Acknowledgements The research for this paper was largely undertaken during a research stay as Scholar in Residence at CAARI (Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute). I am grateful to Lindy Crew, Katerina Mavromichalou, and Anthoulla Vassiliades for making my stay a productive and pleasant one, and for colleagues such as Diane Bolger, Lina Kassianidou, Bernard Knapp, Jenny Webb, and Evi Margaritis for many discussions, and to Victor Klinkenberg for numerous joint trips across Cyprus. This paper was commented on by Victor Klinkenberg and Maria Hadjigavriel, as well as two anonymous reviewers and Tim Taylor, and I am grateful for their input.

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