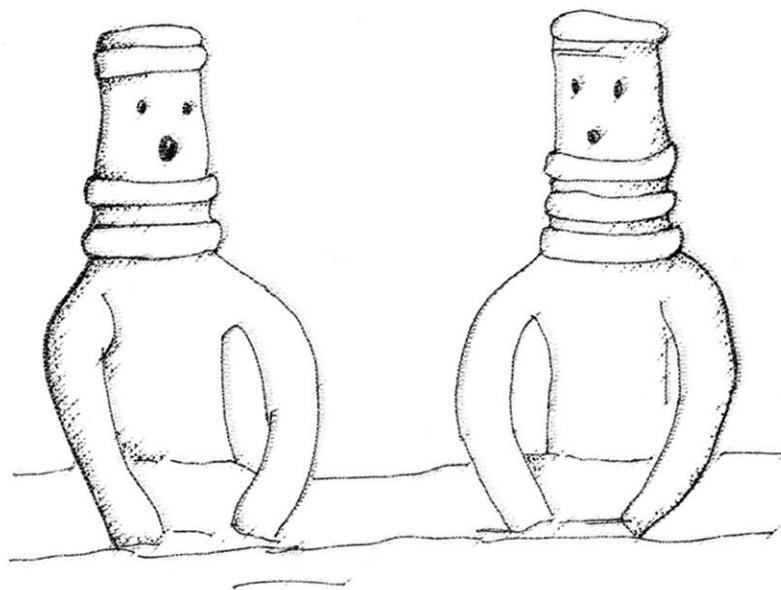




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Athens

# International Digital Conference on Cypriot Prehistory

## EVERYDAY LIFE IN PREHISTORIC CYPRUS (ca. 10000-1700 BC)



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**Luca Bombardieri, Marialucia Amadio**

(Università di Torino, Dpt. Studi Umanistici - Erimi Archaeological Project)

*“Live and let dye  
Ideology, economy and social practices at Middle Bronze Age Erimi”*

Recent scholarly debate on Cypriot Bronze Age have stressed the need of developing integrated multi-scalar data-sets to analyse the history and organisation of early urban centres from diachronic, spatial and ideological perspectives, and to pay particular attention to the analysis of elite vs. non-elite areas, since this aspect is recognised as fundamental in the examination of the development of social and cultural identities and roles. The co-existence of a textile workshop complex, a large residential quarter surrounded by a circuit wall and segregated from an extra-mural funerary area, makes Middle Bronze Age Erimi-*Laonin tou Porakou* a perfect case-study to investigate this topic, as it includes a range of key contexts to analyse social, cultural and economic developments of the recent Cypriot prehistory, and to enhance the analysis and definition of the formative period of urbanism and complexity in Cyprus.

To what extent a performing textile activity at a supra-household level influenced the identity and ideology of this community? What was the scale of trade and cultural interactions? Why the settlement was abandoned when it reached its acme in wealth? Was the abandonment planned or not? To address these questions targeted excavations and the application of interdisciplinary analytical framework are being applied along with a constant evaluation of the ancient community in its cultural *milieu*. After ten-years program of the Italian research project, some of these aspects have been addressed, many others still remain open.

**Joanne Clarke, Alexander Wasse**

(University of East Anglia)

***“How circular architecture and sheep pastoralism shed light on convergences between Cyprus, Upper Mesopotamia and the badia during the later Neolithic”***

Recent literature confirms that the late 7<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> millennia BC in the Levant and upper Mesopotamia was a period of expansive human interaction, during which networks of mobile herders, utilising small semi-permanent settlements and larger sedentary villages, exploited vast areas of the dry-farming steppic belt and the desert regions of the south and east where an extraordinary array of ecosystems were available to support a diverse range of seasonal activity. Throughout the period extensive mobile networks along the steppic side of the ‘desert line’ connected people and materiel from northern Syria and upper Mesopotamia to the Arabian Peninsular and Persian Gulf. It is anomalous therefore, that within this indisputably ‘expansive’ world, traditional narratives hold that Cyprus remained isolated from the mainland throughout the entire period, slipping into obscurity in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium when an occupational hiatus of up to 1000 years de-couples Cyprus from the mainland for over 2000 years. In this paper we draw on evidence from settlement patterns (building practices and uses of space) and livelihoods (herding practices), previously under explored within archaeological literature on the period, to challenge this prevailing view. We argue that Cyprus, far from being isolated from the wider expansive mobile networks of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> millennia BC, was the most westerly terminus of these networks and was ‘plugged into’ the ways of life and behaviours of the northern Levant via its long-standing economic and ideological connections with that region. Although these connections had been interrupted by the dominant PPNB culture of the late 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> millennia, we argue they were remembered and re-established following the disintegration of PPNB culture. Given the extraordinary breadth of connections that can be documented across such a wide region, to imagine Cyprus was not part of this interconnected world is fundamentally incompatible with the wider evidence.

**Lindy Crewe**

(Director, CAARI)

***“Vessels for eating and drinking from Chalcolithic to Bronze Age at Kissonerga”***

It is well known that during the Philia phase of the Cypriot Bronze Age (c. 2500–2200 BC), a new range of food and liquid consumption pottery vessels were manufactured, primarily in the northwest, and seemingly distributed to all Philia sites around the island. Incorporating evidence from earlier excavations at Chalcolithic–Philia Kissonerga *Mosphilia*, in tandem with recently excavated Philia–Bronze Age evidence from Kissonerga *Skalia*, this paper will consider how radical (or not) the changes in food and drink consumption may have been. Were new vessel types only associated with new forms of food and drink? Do these new forms demand new actions or do they slot into existing everyday practice? Can we see the continuation of the use of more traditional vessel forms in tandem with the new types and how does the gradual replacement or modification of long-standing tradition occur? These questions will be explored through the interplay of the imported northwestern pottery products with a range of vessels of local production, giving a glimpse into these changing systems.

**Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou<sup>1</sup>, Jennifer M. Webb<sup>2</sup>, Marcos Martínón-Torres<sup>3</sup> & Noémi S. Müller<sup>4</sup>**

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Institute & Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus

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& Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus

<sup>3</sup>Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge

<sup>4</sup>Fitch Laboratory, British School at Athens)

***“Approaching an everyday craft through the study of funerary pottery. Ceramic technology and the organisation and context of pottery production at prehistoric Lapithos\*.”***

*\*This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 747339.*

Lapithos was a thriving centre of pottery production from prehistory to the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD. This paper presents the results of an interdisciplinary project that focuses on the prehistoric phase of Lapithos' longstanding potting history (ca 2200–1700 BC), through a combined study of ceramic morphology, technology and composition. Specifically, a detailed morphological analysis of ceramic assemblages from the 1913 and 1917 excavations at Lapithos *Vrysi tou Barba* provided the ideal conditions for the assessment of a large, contextualised and well documented ceramic sample from the Early and Middle Bronze Age. Our analytical agenda included physicochemical and microstructural analysis, using portable X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, laboratory wavelength-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, neutron activation analysis, scanning electron microscopy and ceramic petrography.

The study of these analytical datasets allowed us: 1. to compare the composition of pottery that on stylistic criteria is thought to have been locally produced at Lapithos and vessels thought to be imports from other regions of the island, distinguishing local versus imported ceramics on both morphological and compositional grounds; and 2. to identify and record technological and compositional patterns that could indicate changes in raw material procurement, processing, firing and decoration over time and among different ceramic wares. This paper discusses the compositional and technological profile of pottery production at Lapithos and how an integrated analysis of funerary pottery can shed light on the practice of an everyday craft in this area. This is achieved by contributing to our understanding of potters' choices during clay paste preparation, forming, decorating and firing, and by tracing peoples' interaction with the landscape (reflected in raw material selection and pottery distribution). Finally, this paper integrates this new understanding of the technological profile of Lapithos with published data from contemporary sites, for a broader discussion of the organisation and context of pottery manufacture in Early and Middle Bronze Age Cyprus.

**Nikos Efstratiou, Dimitris Kyriakou**

(Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

***“Upland Cyprus in early prehistory: issues of marginality”***

New archaeological data from upland Troodos indicate that the interior of Cyprus and particularly high ground locations were indifferent by early human groups (foragers, farmers) in the past and they should be included in the study of early prehistoric Cypriot cultural developments. Indisputable evidence from the upland terrace of Ag. Ioannis/Vretsia-Roudias in the Paphos district, showing a habitation palimpsest from the Late Epipalaeolithic to the Aceramic Neolithic - including solid architectural remains - discuss the possibility that hinterland areas were not marginal ‘microcosms’ and they should not be underrepresented in Cypriot archaeology. The presentation will discuss issues of marginality in relation to the island’s coastal areas and the need to include the systematic research of inland Cyprus.

**Artemis Georgiou**

(Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus)

***“Importation, appropriation and the materiality of the ‘exotic’: Revisiting Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware and local production in Cyprus at the close of the Middle-beginning of the Late Bronze Age”***

The final stages of the Middle Bronze Age and the inception of the Late Bronze Age in Cyprus (ca. 1750-1550 BC) coincide with dramatic transformations in the island’s settlement pattern, which was substantially reformed to accommodate an emergent economic system that revolved around the procurement and extra-insular transshipment of copper. It was during this decisive period that the Cypriot communities established systematic commercial links with other regions of the Mediterranean, heralding the much more intensified connections during the course of the Late Bronze Age.

The aim of this contribution is to provide an updated overview of one of the earliest attestations for the participation of the Cypriot communities to the established commercial networks of the eastern Mediterranean, vis-à-vis juglets of Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware that were imported on the island from Egypt and/or Syria-Palestine as precious commodity containers. This ceramic class is distinguished by a characteristic fabric, with a polished surface, embellished by elaborate punctured decorations. The study will investigate the consumption practices of the imported Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglets and their contents within the newly founded coastal gateway centres, and the appropriation of the ‘exotic’ by the Cypriot communities for social and political preeminence. The contribution will also examine the impact of the imported Tell el-Yahudiyeh ware on the local production of finewares, elaborating on the transformations observed in the island’s ceramic industry during this critical era.

## **Athina Gerochristou**

(Ph.D. Candidate in Prehistoric Archaeology  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

### ***“The use of living space: Inhumations inside or outside circular buildings? A case study on the 6th millennium BC Mesopotamia and Cyprus.”***

The 6th millennium BC Mesopotamia (Halaf Culture/Chalcolithic Period) and Cyprus (Khirokitia Culture/Late Aceramic Neolithic Period) seem to share some cultural traits, despite their remarkable distance. Both regions during this period are characterised by the existence of circular buildings, although the Halaf Culture settlements featured rectangular buildings and structures as well. The living space of the circular buildings was managed in similar ways (e.g. areas reserved for preparing food, storing objects/goods, processing items, sleeping, etc.). Nevertheless, one evident differentiation concerning the use of space is their function as burial places. Notwithstanding the complexity of the Halafian mortuary practices, no inhumations have been observed underneath the floors of the circular buildings, when in use. On the contrary, this practice seems to be the norm in Cyprus, since at least the 7th millennium BC. In this study, I pull together indications for the existence of special funerary customs, associated with the regional beliefs related to death, and consider whether in the case of Cyprus, the practice of burying the dead under the floor of circular buildings was an act connected with practical reasons, or if we are dealing with a symbolic custom of particular importance.



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2. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, efstrati@hist.auth.gr)

***“Life in upland Neolithic Cyprus: preliminary faunal data from Ag. Ioannis/Vretsia-Upper Roudias”***

This paper presents a zooarchaeological study of Later Aceramic Neolithic (LAN) Ag. Ioannis/Vretsia-Upper *Roudias*. Until recently, Neolithic habitation in Cyprus was thought to have been restricted to the coastal plains. The discovery of Roudias and other upland sites renders this picture obsolete. The general picture of human-animal interactions is one of gradual increase in the importance of domesticates since their introduction in late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 8<sup>th</sup> millennia BCE at the expense of hunting. By the mid-8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> millennia (LAN) animal herding peaked but hunting remained of paramount importance. Our current knowledge, however, is based on a handful of assemblages from coastal sites. This bias enhances Roudias' potential for a fuller understanding of Neolithic lifeways in Cyprus. Based on preliminary results, this paper speculates on which animal-related activities were carried out at the site, as well as the nature of its occupation. The discussion of animal husbandry and hunting strategies provides new information on everyday life at an upland LAN site. Differences and similarities in human-animal interactions are examined through comparisons between Roudias and coeval coastal sites. Moreover, the preliminary results presented here are placed in the wider context of Neolithic Cyprus through comparisons with earlier, coeval and later assemblages.

**Carly Henkel and Evi Margaritis**

(The Cyprus Institute)

***“Subsistence practices and the everyday in Bronze Age Cyprus”***

The focus of archaeobotanical studies in Cyprus has been on the Neolithic period exploring issues such as the colonization of the island. This paper will present data from the subsequent Bronze Age in an attempt to initiate the discussion of the agricultural practices and economic models which developed during a period of substantial economic and social transformations. Focusing on data from Kalavassos, Erimi, Ambelia, Hala Sultan Teke and Pyla, the paper will investigate evidence of social storage, exchange systems, intensification of agricultural production and the level of specialization, if any, in the urban centers of the period.

**Aikaterini Karkani**

(Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports)

**“The metallurgical activity in Cyprus from the Early to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age”**

The aim of this paper is to present the early metallurgical activity in Cyprus, from the Philia Phase and the Early Bronze Age to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. The main areas of interest are the provenance of copper used and the primary stages of the metallurgical process, to the production of the appropriate metal composition and form for the manufacture of metal objects. The various types of metal objects are also discussed. Gold, silver and lead are imported in Cyprus during this period. Their presence is more evident on the island since the beginning of the Late Bronze Age and this can be connected with the intensification of copper production and trade. Of special importance is the early presence of iron objects, which more probably had been locally manufactured.

In Cyprus, where there are extensive copper ores, exploitable even in modern times, metallurgical activity is attested already before the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, as it can be witnessed from chalcolithic evidence. Ancient texts, combined with evidence from cypriot mines and early metallurgical workshops, where the whole pyrometallurgical activity took place, confirm the continuous development of cypriot metallurgy since its beginnings. Even so, until the early stages of the Late Bronze Age there are not dramatic changes in metallurgical techniques used in Cyprus and metallurgical tradition is homogeneous in terms of methods, means and expertise. Evidence for technological evolution appears in the mature phases of the Late Bronze Age and this fact is largely connected with the general socio-economic changes of this period.

**Dimitris Kloukinas, Anastasios Georgotas, Antonia Marda-Stypsianou, Eleni Mantzourani**

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, NCCP)

*“Approaching the everyday through the study of domestic architecture: the case of Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic Cypriot communities.”*

Rather than a mere reflection of social organisation, domestic architecture constitutes a major component of everyday experience. This involves, for instance, the channeling of daily movement, the arrangement of everyday activities and the (re)production of spatial and social perspectives. By examining the vertical and horizontal aspects of domestic space, the present paper seeks to put forth those elements or patterns that could be associated with the structuring of the everyday within Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic Cypriot communities. Stratigraphic evidence on replacement patterns, ground plans, feature and artifact distribution will all be used to provide insights into the production and reproduction of daily life. As part of the NCCP, the paper will primarily focus on the preliminary results from the three case study sites of the project.

## A. Bernard Knapp

(University of Glasgow, Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute)

### *“Maritime Narratives of Prehistoric Cyprus: Seafaring as Social Practice”*

This paper considers the role of seafaring as one of the most important aspects of ‘everyday life’ in the prehistoric communities of Cyprus. By the eleventh millennium Cal BC in the wider Mediterranean, the limited and tentative forays into the sea (*seagoing*) that typified the Late Pleistocene rapidly morphed into a more adept, practiced form of *seafaring*, and the sea became a ‘vector for travel’, not just a ‘provider of resources’. The maritime capabilities developed by these early seafarers enabled them to explore new lands and seas, tap new marine resources and make use of accessible coastal sites. Prehistoric seafaring extended peoples’ habitats and gave them access to resources that lay near and beyond the shore. In the beginning, seafaring increased the range and links of fisher-foragers and, in time, it facilitated the movement of migrants and certain resources in demand; ultimately, it paved the way for merchants and colonists to operate on a much greater scale, facilitating the bulk transport of goods and the expansion of trade, and enabling the establishment of sea-based states and kingdoms. The core activities of seafaring thus revolved around the exploitation of marine and coastal resources, the mobility of people and the transport and exchange of goods. On Cyprus, although we lack direct material evidence (e.g. shipwrecks or ship representations) before the Middle Bronze Age (post-2000 BC), there is no question that beginning at least by the Late Epipalaeolithic, prehistoric ‘voyagers’ sailed between the Levantine mainland and Cyprus, in all likelihood several times per year, in order to transport large ruminants like weaned calves or small wild boar on boats much more sophisticated than ever imagined. In the long stretch of time — some 7000 years — between the Early Aceramic Neolithic and the Bronze Age, it would seem — *prima facie* — that the inhabitants of Cyprus turned their backs to the sea. This study considers the likelihood that Cyprus was never truly isolated from the sea: all early seafaring communities had an ‘attitude’ to the sea, and the ‘business of seafaring’ involves travelling upon and making a living from the sea, enabling not just the transport of goods and resources but also the movement of people and ideas — communicating and sharing knowledge across the sea and between different lands.

**Alain Le brun**

***“Facing the problem of translating material date into behavioral patterns: 24 hours of the daily life in a neolithic village, Khirokitia (Cyprus)”***

The everyday life, the daily routines of living and working which course meets different temporalities, biological, climatic and social... refer to mental traditions, to ways of thinking that, for the neolithic world, ethnographic and ethnohistorical examples of the ‘traditional’ agricultural societies hardly enlighten. Obviously, one may outline the general framework, in which noises, shouts and smells will be missing. As for Khirokitia, a village founded at the turn of the 7th and 6th millenium, it is a concentration of circular buildings surrounded by an enclosure wall defining an inside and an outside. Therefore a closed world, with all that it entails of promiscuity, stress, conflicts and diseases, where regular patterns of the domestic space may be observed. Besides, this spatialisation of activities extends beyond the village, as for cereal processing operations, some taking place outside the village, some other inside. We may then establish the seasonal pattern of human activities, sketch out different taskscapes, question the private or public nature of such activity and in the latter case the decision-making process. The available documents barely offer a rare glimpse into the ‘social time’, the periodic recurrence of rites, feasts and public ceremonies, and the many forms that the dialogue with the invisible may take.

**Theodora Moutsiou**

(Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus)

***“The consumption of rare raw materials in the performance of daily social life in Early Holocene Cyprus”***

Objects made of rare raw materials can be found in several locales around Cyprus during the Aceramic Neolithic (8900 – 5200 Cal BC). The circulation of artefacts made of such materials can be used as a proxy to address social interactions in the daily life of early Cypriot communities. With a particular focus on obsidian, this paper uses a geospatial computational approach to infer the potential routes/optimal paths via which obsidian artefacts circulated across the island. In doing so, the aim is to use this information to improve our understanding of how these early communities used their landscape to build their social networks and exchange their goods and discuss whether the routes delineated in the archaeological record reflect functional or social criteria.

**Pantelitsa Mylona,<sup>1</sup> Jean-Denis Vigne,<sup>1</sup> François Briois<sup>2</sup>**

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2. Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, UMR 5608 : T.R.A.C.E.S : Travaux et Recherches Archéologiques sur les Cultures, les Espaces et les Sociétés)

***“Earthen architecture and social organisation: geoarchaeological approach applied at Klimonas in Cyprus”***

The recent excavations at the site of Klimonas (2011-2016) in the south of Cyprus revealed a Neolithic village constructed by earthen materials. A circular building (Structure 10) with a diameter of 10m, partially dug into the natural bedrock, was excavated. This building has a collective character in parallel with the PPNA communal buildings of Near East. Due to the importance of the site in the Neolithic context and the exclusive use of earthen materials a geoarchaeological study was applied using soil micromorphology. It aims to understand the construction technique used for this building and to test in which extent the earthen construction can record the cultural aspect of the human behavior through the construction techniques and the use of space of a Neolithic communal building.



**Katerina Papayianni,<sup>1</sup> Thomas Cucchi<sup>2</sup>**

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***“Of mice and men in prehistoric Cyprus: towards an anthropisation of the natural environment”***

The mammalian fauna of Cyprus has been extensively evaluated as an indicative example of how humans affected insular biodiversity to shift from endemic species to imported synanthropic and domestic ones. Such evaluations concern usually large mammals of economic importance for man, however rodents, and in particular mice, are excellent habitat markers and thus absolutely informative for insular biodiversity shifts. The proposed presentation will focus on the house mouse, a bioproxy used by zooarchaeologists to infer human mobility as well as habitat shift. We will present the onset and diachronic presence of house mice on Cyprus from the onset of human sedentary presence on the island and throughout the Neolithic period. We will compare the density of mouse presence in these settlements across time and also the type of contexts, where mice have been found. We will also discuss the overall subject of house mouse synanthropy on Cyprus that constitutes the earliest dispersal of this species outside the Middle East, which has been proven to be the cradle of its commensalism, and the simultaneous presence of cats, which were probably brought to the island due to mice. The data that will be presented are part of the results of an interdisciplinary project targeting the house mouse commensalism and dispersal from the Middle East to Europe. This project, named MOUSETRACK, combined innovative methodologies, namely geometric morphometrics and ancient DNA analysis to tackle its questions.

## **Charalambos Paraskeva**

- (a. External Research Associate, RURAL-CY Project, Archaeological Research Unit, University of Cyprus.
- b. Artefacts Digitization Specialist, RE-CULT Interreg GR-CY Project, Cultural Heritage Digitization Laboratory, Holy Archbishopric of Cyprus.)

### ***“Pottery Consumption and Discard Practices at the Middle and Late Chalcolithic Site of Chlorakas-Palloures, Cyprus”***

In a seminal paper for Mesoamerican ethnoarchaeology, Michael Deal asserts that it “is important to remember that some understanding of the regularities of pottery-related depositional behavior, regardless of geographical location, must be established before reliable statements concerning the socioeconomic nature of a given pottery assemblage can be made.” On the basis of the above proposition, the current study attempts to trace pottery consumption and discard practices, as indispensable constituents of everyday life, at the Middle and Late Chalcolithic site of Chlorakas-Palloures, Cyprus. The site has been known to archaeologists since the 1950s, it was extensively surveyed in the 1960s-1970s, intensively re-surveyed in the 1970s and 1990s, while since 2015 has been under investigation by the University of Leiden (2015-2017 rescue excavation, 2018 study season, 2019-2020 research excavation). Archaeological endeavours at Chlorakas-Palloures have yielded a substantial amount of pottery and uncovered a large number of archaeological deposits, including roundhouses, tombs, pits and other extra-mural features. Pottery analyses, disentanglement of site stratigraphy, and the careful study of natural and cultural transformations of the archaeological record allow some first glimpses into pottery consumption and discard practices at the site. Specific lines of inquiry include the delineation of individual household and extra-mural spaces biographies, the examination of pottery concentrations both horizontally across the site and vertically between households, and the exploration of prehistoric individual/areal and communal human behaviour, as compounded or aggregated in spatially contained social spaces.

**Solange Rigaud,<sup>1</sup> Jean-Denis Vigne,<sup>2</sup> François Briois<sup>3</sup>**

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***“Crafting, consuming and symboling during the PPNA: new insights on the life of the first villagers of Klimonas (Ayios Tychonas, Cyprus)”***

We present the recent archaeological excavation at Klimonas, which demonstrates that established villagers were living on Cyprus between 11,100 and 10,600 y ago. The village includes more than 26 buildings (including a remarkable 10-m diameter communal building) that were similar to those found on Late PPNA sites on the continent. Spatial data combined to soil micromorphology provides a view of the successive phases of building use and renovation. Pattern of occupation and radiocarbon dates indicate a complex history over a relatively short period of time (less than one century). Cereals were introduced from the Levant, and animal food was obtained by hunting the only ungulate living on the island, a small autochthonous Cypriot wild boar. A large array of stone tools productions is related to plant and game collect, processing and consumption on the site. The presence of various pigments and the identification of the full manufacture sequence of personal ornaments at the site also attest of non-utilitarian productions. Stone tool, faunal remain and shell and stone pendant deposits within trenches under various buildings highlight the symbolic value of some particular categories of the material culture of this community.

**Maria Roumpou<sup>1</sup>, Eleni Mantzourani<sup>1</sup>, Ioannis Voskos<sup>1</sup>**

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, NCCP)

***“Molecular evidence for the use of pottery vessels in Neolithic-Chalcolithic Cyprus: integrating archaeological information and organic residue analysis for the investigation of everyday life activities”***

Although the number of investigated and published prehistoric sites in Cyprus is increasing, several aspects of the material culture have not been studied substantially to date. The need for a holistic approach that takes into account evidence from different strands of inquiry is increasingly underlined from scholars studying the prehistory of Cyprus. This study seeks to produce molecular evidence for the use of pottery during the Neolithic-Chalcolithic periods in Cyprus. Lipid analysis of archaeological material has advanced greatly within the past 30 years. Organic residue analysis of food and non-food products surviving mainly in ceramic containers from a range of contexts have been studied to date providing useful insights into subsistence practices, cooking and storage processes, trade and ritual activities.

Hence, a number of ceramic containers covering the Ceramic Neolithic (c. 5200/5000-4000/3900 BC) and Middle Chalcolithic periods (c. 3500-3000/2800 BC) was sampled. All the selected sherds come from Limassol district sites (i.e. *Kantou Kouphovounos*, *Sotira Teppes* and *Erimi Pamboula*) as part of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Cyprus Project (NCCP). The primary aim is to achieve better understanding of everyday life activities on the island and to assess culinary practices and the procurement of food throughout this period. Samples were investigated using several extraction protocols so as to achieve better recovery of lipids and were analysed using gas chromatography mass spectrometry. The results obtained are expected to contribute in the discussions on the use of the ceramic containers and to provide further archaeological dialogue on social and economic practices, as well as cultural changes on the island.

**Maria Rousou<sup>1,2</sup>, Margareta Tengberg<sup>1</sup>, George Willcox<sup>3</sup>, Carolyne Douché<sup>1</sup> and  
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***“Of food and fuel – everyday use of plant resources in Pre-Pottery Neolithic  
Cyprus”***

Systematic sampling and analysis of botanical macroremains (wood, seeds, fruits) from pre-Pottery Neolithic sites in Cyprus allow us to get a glimpse into the daily use of resources from the plant world by the first inhabitants of the island. Indeed, plants, whether wild or cultivated, played a fundamental role in prehistoric subsistence economies, as food, fuel, fodder or used for craft and construction purposes. Our paper will present the recent results obtained by the archaeobotanical study conducted at Ayios Tychonas – Klimonas, situated in the southern part of Cyprus and dated to the late 9<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> millennia BC. The discovery and excavation by a French team (dir. J.-D. Vigne and F. Briois) of an early Holocene village showing cultural affinities with the continental Near East raise questions about the adaptation to insular environments and different aspects of the exploitation and use of plant and animal species. Special attention will be given to evidence of the early cultivation of cereals and the use of different resources from locally growing trees.

**Alan H. Simmons**

(University of Nevada, Las Vegas and Desert Research Institute, Reno Renee Kolvet,  
Independent Scholar)

*“A day in the life of an upland Cypriot Neolithic settlement”*

In Cyprus, as on the mainland, much Neolithic research attention has focused on permanent villages. These, along with domesticated resources, are the iconic images of this transformative period. Over the past several years, more and more attention has focused on day to day life in these villages, emphasizing both adults and children, males and females. This is a welcome addition to the research corpus on the Neolithic.

In this presentation, we examine a small Neolithic settlement in Cyprus, that of *Ais Giorkis*. In contrast to presumably permanent villages, which are most frequently located near the coast, *Ais Giorkis* is a rare upland site. Its small size, however, belies its significance. Several seasons of interdisciplinary research have shown it to be unique, both in abundance of material remains (the largest lithic and faunal assemblages on the island), but also its diversity of activities. Although we doubt it was occupied year round, it is a complex settlement whose occupants seem to have been involved in several tasks. Given its location in a rich ecotone, the site may well have served as a resource procurement and work camp. Here we discuss what might have been some of the daily activities of its residents, who hunted wild animals, had domestic animals and plants, and who had a knowledge of the medicinal values of wild plants. They also apparently had a focus on upland resources, including timbering. Other lines of evidence also suggest feasting activities. *Ais Giorkis* is an example of a colonization strategy of a “new space” (i.e., an island), and shows the complexity and sophistication of early Cypriots.

## **Anna Spyrou**

(E. Peltenburg Postdoctoral Research Fellow at CAARI,  
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### ***“Raising cattle on small islands: The case of prehistoric Cyprus”***

Accompanying human populations since the dawn of civilization, cattle are amongst our most productive livestock species and important components of our living cultural heritage. In pre-mechanized farming societies, domestic cattle played multiple roles; they were the agricultural engines and a form of social capital and they provided more milk, meat, manure and hides than any other domestic animal species. Apart from their purely economic significance, cattle, in many pre-state societies, played a crucial role in the social and spiritual arenas, forging social alliances between local communities and beyond. This is particularly the case of prehistoric Cyprus, where cattle have followed an interesting and mysterious pathway since their initial introduction, during the early Neolithic.

This paper aims to explore different aspects of the human-cattle relationship in prehistoric Cyprus, including the different subspecies of cattle that were present on the island, livestock management practices and animal movement across the prehistoric landscape. In order to explore these components, an integrated approach is devised, which combines archaeozoological, iconographic, isotopic and ethnographic approaches.

**Louise Steel**

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***“Exploring the aesthetic of Red Polished figurative art: the beautifully made...made beautiful”***

There is a rich body of three-dimensional art from Prehistoric Bronze Age Cyprus made in the Red Polished ware; this comprises plank figurines, pottery (bowls and jugs) adorned around the rim or shoulder with miniature animals, pots and people, and other modelled scenes placed on flat slabs of clay. The more elaborate of the decorated vessels comprise scenic compositions, characterised by groups of people apparently engaged in a variety of activities generally assumed to be meaningful for the Bronze Age Cypriot observer. These have typically been interpreted as dioramas of daily life, perhaps used to mark major life-cycle events or possibly integrated within an ancestor cult.

This paper draws upon previous discussions of the materiality of the Red Polished corpus, and how these objects were entangled within human-object relations, with the aim to shed light on how daily encounters between these objects created new social and material worlds in the Prehistoric Bronze Age. However, the primary focus is a consideration of the ancient aesthetic, questioning why modern scholarship has moved away from viewing ancient modelled worlds as “art”. In part this draws upon Gell’s notion of enchantment, which recognises that art objects are “beautifully made or made beautiful” (Gell 1992: 43). It invites us to consider that rather than attempting to infer *meaning* from such material we should bear in mind Bloch’s cautionary tale of Malagasy carvings; these did not “mean” anything, but simply “made the wood beautiful” (Bloch 2005). Similarly, the human figures formed from left over clay by the women potters of the Bosman, New Guinea “are made purely for pleasure and are kept in the house to look at” (Blackwood 1961, 360; Layton 1991, 13). Are we reading too much into the interpretations – might the Red Polished figurative corpus simply represent beautiful objects made for pleasure, commissioned and enjoyed by an individual and buried with them as a favourite or valued possession?



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***“Phytolith evidence on plant exploitation and the use of fire in a coastal campsite of the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. at Nissi beach, Cyprus.”***

Nissi beach is a site that preserves remains of the fifth millennium B.C. with evidence on a way of living that is far from the agricultural and pastoral activities of the well organized and settled inland villages. The site has been formed on lithified sand dunes and preserves characteristics of a short-term campsite with plant and animal remains consumed on primitive carved features. The lithic technology, the shell consumption and the absence of domesticates shows that the campsite hosted seasonal foraging and was far from farming. The remains of ash on a baked clay feature discovered at the site were analysed and phytolith assemblages proved the use of more than one fire; big fires for lighting, cooking and warming and smaller ones for drying seeds and food processing. They also show a variety of plant remains pointing to an extensive exploitation of local vegetation in which date palm has been included. People might have consumed the fruits or used palm by products such as leaves, fibers or trunk for fuelling, basketry or matting. It is not clear whether the palms were part of the local vegetation or the material was imported to Cyprus from other areas (Crete, North Africa or Near East) but it is clear that these foragers knew the importance of the plant and used it extensively.

## **Giorgos Vavouranakis**

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

### ***“Peeping Tom and the social dimension of representational art in PreBA Cyprus”***

In the PreBA, representational art in Cyprus flourished, as is evidenced in the many clay scenic compositions, either self-standing or on pottery vessels, with themes usually tapping on everyday life. Their burial finds contexts suggest that they were meant to communicate ideological messages concerning the organization and function of Cypriot societies as part of the funerary ritual. One of the best known such objects is the Vounous bowl, featuring an outsider looking over the wall and to the men, women with children, and to the oxen inside the bowl. This “peeping Tom” figure has rarely been touched upon by research, but prompts a reflection upon the type of messages that scenic compositions communicated and you extension upon the relationship between social reality and its funerary re-appropriation. The figure in question challenges any view of the Vounous bowl as a piece of propaganda that would simply aim to either sanction or challenge the social status quo in a direct manner. The idea of a genre-style faithful depiction of social reality runs counter to the symbolically charged role it had attained within its funerary context. In order to overcome this interpretative deadlock it is pertinent to turn to Slavoj Žižek’s ‘The Sublime Object of Ideology’ in order to argue that PreBA scenic compositions were communicatively effective exactly because they were raw reproductions of daily life. As such they afforded the symbolic expression of exceptional individuality, within the social fluidity and tension that characterized them the wider context of PreBA Cyprus.

**Efrossini Vika, Ioannis Voskos, Eleni Mantzourani**

(National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, NCCP)

***“Everyday life in Neolithic/Chalcolithic Cyprus: evidence from skeletons of Limassol district.”***

This paper presents the results of the recent re-examination of the osteological material from Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites in Limassol district, Cyprus. Stable isotope analyses and paleopathological observations were employed in order to directly reconstruct everyday activities and economic strategies on the island. Archaeological research on Neolithic and Chalcolithic Cyprus has revealed a habitation pattern where permanent agropastoral settlements coexist with semi-permanent camp sites associated with hunting. However, the effect of this economic model on human diets has not been explored, owing largely to the poor preservation of organic material recorded for the island. Our results demonstrate a difference in diet with other agropastoral communities, while the osteological observations show the potential to investigate daily activities through markers on the bones. Lastly, the problem of organic preservation due to the climatic circumstances of the island is addressed, with the aim to put forward a new agenda for future bioarchaeological research in Cyprus.

**Jennifer M. Webb**

(La Trobe University, University of Cyprus)

***“Everyday life in Middle Bronze Age Cyprus: challenging the current paradigm”***

In much of the current literature Middle Bronze Age (MBA) communities in Cyprus are viewed as small-scale, isolated and agrarian, with a low level of internal socioeconomic differentiation and few inter-site differences. Recent research is challenging this one-size-fits-all approach and beginning to reveal the complexity and diversity of ‘everyday lives’. It is now clear that there were significant differences in site size, with larger settlements located in agriculturally productive areas, at nodal points along communication routes and, in the case of Lapithos, on the coast; and smaller, more specialised communities of miners/smelters and producers of textiles and other commodities, founded to take advantage of particular environmental opportunities. This is likely to have promoted regional differentiation, with value and identity created ‘through asserting difference on which the quality of labour or the intrinsic nature of skill or ideas of magical properties of materials could be based as the exclusive possession of regional groups’ (Rowlands and Ling 2013: 497). This paper examines inter-site variation in relation to the different ways in which everyday life was structured and experienced, as observed through daily tasks, material culture, embedded traditions and the ideological perceptions which shaped individual and collective identities.

Rowlands, M. and J. Ling 2013: Boundaries, flows and connectivities: mobility and stasis in the Bronze Age. In S. Bergerbrant and S. Sabatini (eds), *Counterpoint: Essays in Archaeology and Heritage Studies in Honour of Professor Kristian Kristiansen* (BAR International Series 2508), 497–509, Oxford