

# A 'Maritime Aspect' in Late Bronze Age Cyprus?

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**Abstract:** Late Bronze Age Cyprus was involved in an increasing exchange of goods and ideas throughout the Mediterranean. As it is linked with far-reaching trade routes, the development of Cypriot culture is said to be in direct relation to the production and distribution of copper, even to be responsible for the emergence of local elites and also connected with ritual activities and procedures. As the actual exchange of copper is based on maritime trade, an attendant 'maritime aspect' has been proposed. By charging objects with an apparent maritime connotation, as it was done for seashells, images of marine animals on pottery, graffiti of ships and so-called 'stone anchors', scholars are shaping these objects into icons of a 'maritime aspect', which has a great impact on the interpretation of local ritual practice during the Late Bronze Age. In this paper, the interpretation of this 'maritime aspect' is revisited and previous assumptions are challenged. Especially addressing the so-called 'stone anchors' can lead to the assumption of a more situational structure in ritual assemblages.

## **About Meaning within Materiality**

In order to work on archaeological questions, the understanding of material culture is crucial. It is accurately defined by Hahn as “[...] the sum of all individual objects of a society [...] that are used or meaningful.”<sup>1</sup> Although this sounds quite straightforward, the ‘use’ and ‘meaning’ of an item are very much subject to continuous change, depending on the specific point in time during an item’s ‘life’, provided that “mind and matter” are to be seen in combination, and that symbols cannot be seen without a counterpart in materiality.<sup>2</sup> Forms as well as meaning are assigned to the ‘known’ and if no absolute correspondence is apparent, they

are compared to something that comes close to it or assigned to a new category, thus “[p]eople think through material culture”.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless it is not the nature of the archaeological material itself but rather the way in which it was treated that we should consider extensively in trying to fathom specific meaning(s).<sup>4</sup>

To get a grip on ancient customs, terms like ‘identity’ or ‘culture’ are used to compile comparable data of human behaviour and its expression. In consequence, the basic tool of choice to understand the material and to make it comparable with each other is categorisation, which is linked to our own understanding of differentiation. To stress our awareness of how we define these in the

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<sup>1</sup> „[...] die Summe aller Einzelgegenstände einer Gesellschaft [...], die benutzt oder bedeutungsvoll sind“ (Hahn 2005, 18).

<sup>2</sup> The unification of mind and matter, see Hodder 2012, 34.

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<sup>3</sup> Hodder 2012, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Wulf 2011, 83.

first place, we have to keep in mind that the problem incorporated in categorization itself is the projection of our expectations and (scholarly) categories on ancient cultures.<sup>5</sup>

A very prominent example for this general problem is the differentiation into a sphere of the 'profane' in contrast to a 'sacred' sphere of existence, meaning a dichotomy of a daily-life perception and the supernatural.<sup>6</sup> This way of simplified differentiation in order to categorize ancient cultures has even been criticised ironically as the result of "scholarly laziness",<sup>7</sup> but is still reflected in various attempts of categorization and the respective accompanying interpretations. The consequences of this approach are shown in an argument in favour of a 'maritime aspect' in ritual practices of Late Bronze Age Cyprus, an approach affecting various discussions which, in a scholarly view, are connected to this topic of the 'maritime'.

### Exchange in the Late Bronze Age in Cyprus

During the last part of the Middle and the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (MC III–LC I, c. 1700–1600 BC), the importance of Cyprus in the Mediterranean seems to grow. Coming from a more or less "agro-pastoral" background,<sup>8</sup> the emergence of "clear distinctions of social status" in burials, monumental architecture, fortifications, the appearance of settlements in former uninhabited areas,<sup>9</sup> their general increase in number and size and the Cypro-Minoan script are taken into account for a more prominent role of Cyprus.<sup>10</sup> Due to this, a higher degree of specialization is often assumed, supposedly

discernible through the existence of farms,<sup>11</sup> production sites<sup>12</sup> and buildings with a distinct ritual<sup>13</sup> or administrative<sup>14</sup> connotation.

Although clear evidence for a highly centralized organisation, like a palatial centre, is yet to be found, this change is interpreted as the result of the accumulation of agricultural products and various trade goods, accessible only by an elite and their administrative organisation, the local population, however, supported via small scale trade.<sup>15</sup> All these changes led to the assumption of a "dramatic transformation through contacts with and assimilation of external cultural influences".<sup>16</sup>

Subsequently, one of the major topics associated with Late Bronze Age Cyprus is its connectivity within and beyond the whole Mediterranean based on the impact of copper trade and intense contacts with New Kingdom Egypt, the Hittites in Anatolia and the Levantine City States, predominantly Ugarit.<sup>17</sup> The quality of exchange is apparent, as can be seen in the amount of material from Cyprus neighbours. This is exemplified in the Levantine pottery and rare Minoan imports from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and Mycenaean pottery during the 14<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>18</sup> Strong evidence concerning 'exports' from Cyprus is given by huge amounts of copper and wood which were ordered from 'Alashiya', as Middle/Late

<sup>5</sup> Sherratt 2015, 75.

<sup>6</sup> Collard 2013, 111; Eliade 1990, 11; Handler 2011, 45; Panagiotopoulos 2008, 115. 118.

<sup>7</sup> Insoll 2005, 8–9.

<sup>8</sup> Knapp 2013, 348.

<sup>9</sup> Steel 2004, 149.

<sup>10</sup> Knapp 2013, 348.

<sup>11</sup> Analiondas, Aredhiou-Vouppes, Ayia Irini, Steel 2004, 157–158.

<sup>12</sup> Metal: Apliki, Politiko-Phorades; Ceramics: Sanidha-Moutti tou Ayiou Serkou; Steel 2004, 157–158.

<sup>13</sup> Atheniou, Myrtou-Pigadhes, Ayios Iakovos; Steel 2004, 157–158.

<sup>14</sup> Enkomi, Kalavastos-Ayios, Dhimitros, Alassa, Palaepaphos; Steel 2004, 157–158.

<sup>15</sup> Steel 2004, 161.

<sup>16</sup> Steel 2004, 142.

<sup>17</sup> Steel 2010, 809.

<sup>18</sup> Steel 2004, 154; Steel 2010, 813.

Bronze Age Cyprus was referred to in written sources from Ugarit and Amarna.<sup>19</sup>

This far-reaching trade had a recognizable impact on society, as can be seen, for instance, in local burial customs. In general, Cypriot funeral rites during the Bronze Age are said to have been an important stage of increasing social and symbolic capital.<sup>20</sup> The arguments in favour of this analysis reside in the extraordinary labour involved in cutting the multi-chambered tombs into the bedrock and the amount of pottery and exotic goods involved in apparently highly ranked burials,<sup>21</sup> indicating intensive feasting.<sup>22</sup> These ideas seem to have been even more strongly stressed during the Late Bronze Age, which is shown by the relocation of the burial sites into intramural position,<sup>23</sup> the reduction of people being buried in a single chamber and a stronger differentiation of the individual,<sup>24</sup> presumably based on their social status indicated through the accessible ‘exotica’ and ‘foreign motives’.

This idea of the deliberate indication of social status via ‘exotica’ splits into various topics. The most prominent one may be the debate concerning the question if “copper production was under divine protection”<sup>25</sup>, a view based on the value attributed to copper from Cyprus.<sup>26</sup> Its local importance is shown in various examples, such as the extent of the distribution of so-called ‘Oxhide Ingots’ made of Cypriot copper throughout the

Mediterranean,<sup>27</sup> the evidence of residues of copper production near Cypriot ‘sanctuaries’, as well as the iconographic abundance of the ingot as a ‘symbolic’ item on Cyprus. Depictions of these ‘Oxhide Ingots’ are diverse, as on three imported kraters of Mycenaean origin, on seals and bronze stands as well as at the basis of at least two metal figurines.<sup>28</sup>

Without discussing the idea of a ‘metallurgical aspect’ any further, there seems to be a subordination of various categories such as ‘religious’ beliefs, social status, economy and trade under one superior topic. This topic reflects that the island was well-connected through trade, a characteristic which is often seen to be very much embedded in Cypriot culture, as the island is perceived as a melting point of cultural influence.<sup>29</sup> This assumption of having an idea of common identity embedded in an economic theme, namely the broad acceptance of a copper-based religious aspect, was widely accepted and expanded.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, it paved the way to arguing in favour of a similar interpretation in different aspects of Cypriot culture,<sup>31</sup> such as the connection to its surroundings via the medium of trade and economic values, seafaring and its accompanying element: water.

<sup>19</sup> Merrillees 2011, 258–259; Steel 2004, 144; Steel 2010, 804; 812; Raptou 1996; Ockinga 1996, 42, Text 67; Peltenburg 2012, 8–9.

<sup>20</sup> Keswani 2004, 88.

<sup>21</sup> Keswani 2004, 85.

<sup>22</sup> Steel 2010, 811; Keswani 2004, 82. 158–160; Collard 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Steel 2010, 811; Keswani 2004, 86–87.

<sup>24</sup> Lorentz 2005, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Knapp 1986; Kassianidou 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Kassianidou 2005, 127; Schaeffer 1965; Matthäus – Schumacher-Matthäus 1986, 169–170.

<sup>27</sup> Gale 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Webb 1999, 298–299. See, in particular, Buchholz 1959; Catling 1971, 15–32; Knapp 1986, 116; Kassianidou 2005, 127–141; Papasavvas 2009, 101–104.

<sup>29</sup> As can be seen in various monographs such as ‘Ancient Cyprus. Cultures in Dialogue’ (Pilides – Papadimitriou 2012) and ‘Cyprus. Crossroads of Civilizations’ (Hadjisavvas 2010).

<sup>30</sup> Papasavvas 2009, 101; Webb 1999, 298, with references to Knapp 1986.

<sup>31</sup> Frost 1985; Webb 1999, 302; Webb 2016, 630.

### A 'Maritime Aspect'?

To address the notion of a 'maritime aspect' embedded in Cypriot material culture during the Late Bronze Age, several issues have to be discussed, such as ideas of libation, the use of seashells, images of marine animals on pottery and graffiti of ships and finally the importance of so-called 'stone anchors' that have all been listed as items in direct connection with water and 'maritime trading'.

The apparent use of liquids, including water, is used to bind together certain elements of ritual activities at Late Bronze Age sanctuaries. Especially fixed features in these so-called sanctuaries are discussed in research with regard to their important role in Cypriot ritual activities connected to water in general; the 'stone anchors' (see below in detail), for example, that are incorporated into architecture and other distinct structural features as found in the Levantine and especially Byblos and Ugarit.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, different parts of infrastructure are in direct relationship with the water supply, or as some sort of sink, seen in various forms of conduits, wells or reservoirs. Several of these water conduits have been identified at Myrtou *Pigadhes* and Kition as devices to simply drain off rain water, even though one drain at Myrtou *Pigadhes* ends at a pit south of the altar at a central court. Its level of height proves its function as an inlet into the pit and rules out the possibility that it was used as a libation device.<sup>33</sup>

In various facilities as in Kouklia, in the hall of 'Temple 5' at Kition and Hala Sultan

Tekke, buried Pithoi may indicate some sort of water supply as well,<sup>34</sup> perhaps in direct relation to the use of water in practices connected to rituals, such as extinguishing a hearth's fire. This necessity may be proven through Kition and Enkomi and the numerous wells found at the sites, which lead to similar assumptions in connection with some basins and 'bath' tubs.

Some tubs are known from various sites, an exemplary one made of limestone with a bucranium relief from Athienou *Bamboularitis Koukounninas*,<sup>35</sup> for example, provides a connection between the importance of depicting bulls with tubs and accompanying actions concerning water. In general, these are interpreted as signs of ritual activities, although Webb awards libation aspects a higher value than Karageorghis and Åström, as she sees the leftovers of rituals of purification in them.<sup>36</sup>

The use of these items apparently changed significantly, as recently shown by Collard, who conjectures that these tubs were reused as deposits.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, the way in which they were generally interpreted did not change very much, as is shown by the fact that the bathtubs from monumental buildings at *Alassa-Paliotaverna*, *Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios* and Enkomi were interpreted as indicators for the utility of the ritual activities of elites as political statements.<sup>38</sup>

In this manner, problems can be ascertained in the alternative interpretations for a tub from *Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios* inside of Building X. The building in general is re-

<sup>32</sup> Wachsmann 1998, 262–292, with reference to the works of H. Frost.

<sup>33</sup> See Webb 1999, 174, with reference to du Plat Taylor et al. 1957, 16; 110; in contrast, see Ionnas 1985, 142.

<sup>34</sup> In Kouklia in Sanctuary I, close to Sanctuary II, in Hala Sultan Tekke and in the hall of 'Temple 5' in Kition.

<sup>35</sup> Dothan – Ben-Tor 1983, 129–131, fig. 60.2.

<sup>36</sup> Webb 1999, 175–176.

<sup>37</sup> Collard 2008, 117.

<sup>38</sup> Collard 2008, 117.

garded as some form of warehouse and the tubs as utensils for washing wool and such-like. Collard sees a ritual connection,<sup>39</sup> a theory which is based on an intentional deposition of the bathtub in over 100 fragments.<sup>40</sup> Nothing else was deposited together with the fragments, although the whole object was situated above several layers of a waste pit. In this case an intentional destruction might actually have happened, but only to enable transport of the debris instead of having to carry the whole object. Due to the lack of any evidence besides the destruction of the tub, I would not assume any sign of deliberate ritual activity in this action.<sup>41</sup>

The presence of these items is of great importance nonetheless, although the various ways in which they were used make it difficult to confine the to a single topic. But in combination with actions linked to libation and purification processes, they are of interest for discussing the meaning of water and the maritime, especially considering their deposition in funeral contexts, even miniature ones.<sup>42</sup>

Still there is no clear connection to water as an important icon when speaking about seafaring, apart from the knowledge of libation and purification processes. But keeping these in mind, the contexts in which seashells were found, motives on pottery, representations of ships, and the deposition of 'stone anchors' predominantly linked to the 'Temple Area' of Late Bronze Age Kition (fig. 3) have especially been attached to the topic of the 'maritime'. Even though there is not such an extensive debate about a 'mari-

time aspect' in research as there is about a metallurgical one, various references to this topic have been made and a 'maritime aspect' in Cypriot religious beliefs was effectively proposed based on these ideas.

### 'Temple 2' at Kition

The findings of 'stone anchors', some shells and pottery in phase Floor IV of the so-called 'Temple 2' at Kition are usually seen as an indicator for the 'sacredness' of these items or at least for the building's 'maritime' significance.<sup>43</sup>



**Fig. 1** Enkomi, Sanctuary of the Ingot God, west-adyton. Next to a rectangular plaster a baetyl (highlighted) is situated in situ, surrounded with protogeometric ceramics (original photography taken from Courtois 1971, 320, fig. 138).

<sup>39</sup> Webb did not further discuss a ritual connotation of this building, but Hitchcock made some comparisons to Minoan palaces. See Collard 2008, 60. 118.

<sup>40</sup> Collard 2008, 60–61.

<sup>41</sup> Contra Collard 2008, 61.

<sup>42</sup> Collard 2008, 99–111.

<sup>43</sup> Webb 1999, 37–44; Karageorghis – Demas 1985a–d.

Although the identification of the whole area as part of a predecessor of the later 'Temple Area' is still debated and cannot be addressed as a whole in this article,<sup>44</sup> it might still be appropriate to refer to this building as some sort of sanctuary.

The 'Temple' is aligned in an east/west axis and measures 17.3 m x 6.6 m, and consists of a small adyton to the west and a rectangular main hall divided by two rows of rectangular stone bases, which divide the room into a central aisle and two side porticoes; a u-shaped hearth was positioned in front of the west wall. An entrance hall was attached to the east, making the building accessible through a south entrance.

The actual size of the main room and its orientation to the hearth may indicate its presentation to an audience, since this way the building can contain a decent number of people supporting distinct actions like fumigation, libation or burning, although the actual hearths are far too small to be accessible for a large crowd. With the exception of a single rhyton, the findings do not support this assumption any further.

Several items<sup>45</sup> are positioned around a 'stone anchor' standing upright in the southwest corner of the building, reminding one of similar installations that were found at Enkomi in the west-adyton of the 'Sanctuary of the Ingot God', although no actual 'stone anchor' was used there (fig. 1).<sup>46</sup> Further associations with a 'maritime aspect' are triggered by the position of three other 'stone anchors'. One anchor is used in Room

24 as a column base, two former 'composite anchors' with double drilling on the downside are positioned opposite of each other in a pit in the antechamber,<sup>47</sup> thus creating some sorts of superstructure or deposition.

Altogether the pottery assemblage comprises 15 imported vessels inside the building,<sup>48</sup> including Mycenaean IIIB pottery with maritime motives like murex shells and depictions of an octopus, which have been found in all three rooms, even next to the upright 'anchor stone'. All of these items have been connected with trade and seafaring in general, but the finding of 11 seashells, seven from Floor IV, four, including two *Luria* with holes, from between Floor IV and IIIA,<sup>49</sup> supported this view even more. The excavation of the later 'Temple 2', which was built on top of Floor IV, unearthed 84 seashells between Floor IV and II/I in total. They consist of *Conus*, *Murex*, *Luria*, *Charonia sequenzae* and others, some of them grounded, one filled with lead. This way, the seashells have been used as a main indicator of a 'maritime aspect',<sup>50</sup> considering the additional arguments provided by the aforementioned 'stone anchors' and the motives of the pottery.<sup>51</sup>

### Ship Depictions

Unlike common themes such as copper production and cattle, depictions of actual ships are less frequent but known from Late Bronze Age seals, pottery and models made of clay that even reach back into the Middle Bronze Age but lack an archaeological context.<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, various graffiti of ships have been found at Enkomi and on several

<sup>44</sup> Webb 1999.

<sup>45</sup> Two faience beads, scrap metal, a spindle whorl, a bronze arrowhead, a White-Slip bowl, a Mycenaean IIIB kylix and stirrup jar. Taken from Webb 1999, 43.

<sup>46</sup> Courtois 1971, 312–325, figs. 131–138, see also Webb 1999, 182; Dikaios 1969a–b.

<sup>47</sup> Webb 1999, 43.

<sup>48</sup> Webb 1999, 44.

<sup>49</sup> Reese 1985, 342.

<sup>50</sup> Webb 1999, 71.

<sup>51</sup> Webb 1999, 44.

<sup>52</sup> Karageorghis 2006, 49. 68–69; Wachsmann 1998, 62–67.

walls in Kition, most of them on the outside of ‘Temple 1’, others reused in an ‘altar’ in ‘Temple 4’.

‘Temple 1’ itself is judged to be some sort of sanctuary. The building is of rectangular shape, approximately 27.85 m x 18.5 m and is placed in an east/ west orientation.

Due to continuous building activities, the inner area of the ‘Temple’ has been destroyed for the most part; suggestions for a reconstruction indicate a three-sectioned main hall with an aisle flanked by two side porticoes, separated by wooden columns presumably carrying a roof and a second floor.<sup>55</sup>

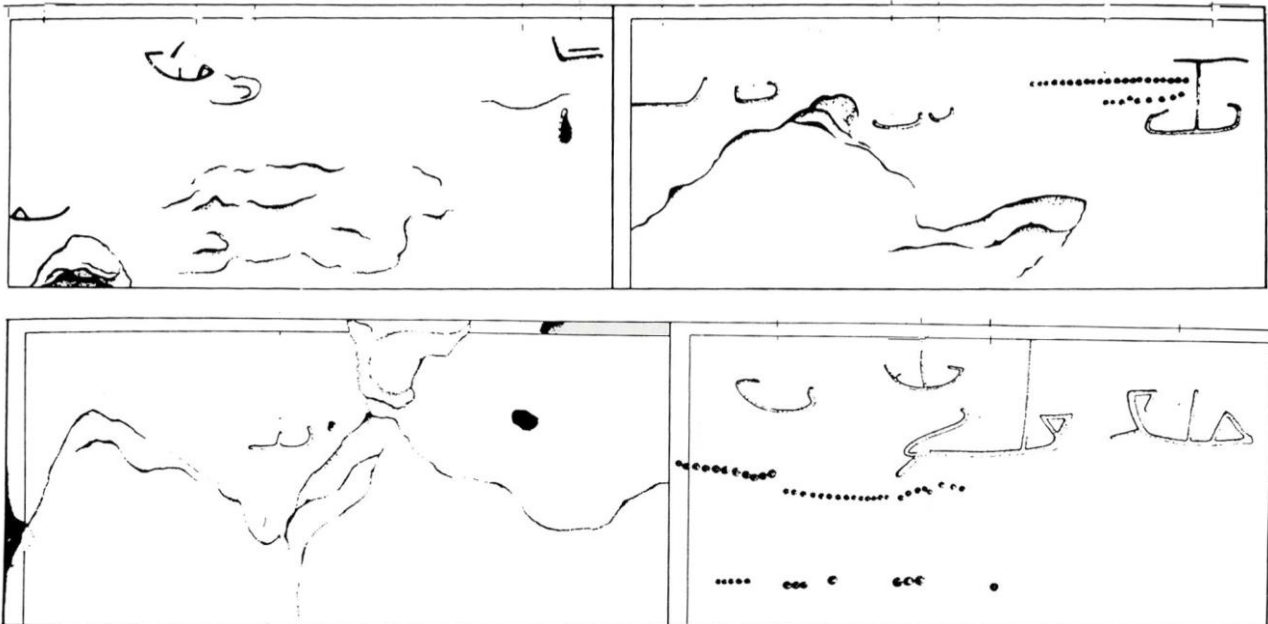


Fig. 2 Schematic rendering of some graffiti depicting ships located at the south wall of ‘Temple 1’ in Kition (Karageorghis – Demas 1985a, 330, fig. 3. Courtesy of Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).

Its main body consists of a huge hall (23.95 m x 18.5 m) and three small rooms in the west with an entrance nearby leading into the neighbouring building of the so-called ‘northern workshop’.

According to Karageorghis, this western part is reachable through a podium which itself was made accessible by stairs on its respective sides, forming an *adyton*.<sup>53</sup> It is claimed that in this part of the building, rituals and votive depositions took place,<sup>54</sup> although no single item could be recovered from inside the building.

The main entrance is referred to as monumental in size according to its width of 3.75 m, and has a threshold made of an *ashlar*-block. It leads into an open court area called ‘Temenos B’; an additional entry in the building’s southern part leads to the main entrance.

The outer walls in the south and east, as well as the inner facades of the northern wall and the southern parts of the west wall, incorporate high-quality *ashlar*-orthostats with a length of up to approximately 3.35 m and a height of 1.48 m. Some deliberately less elaborate areas indicate that these parts were

<sup>53</sup> Karageorghis – Demas 1985a–d.

<sup>54</sup> Webb 1999, 65.

<sup>55</sup> Callot 1985, 165.

planned with the intention that they would not be seen.<sup>56</sup>

The graffiti are located on the outer southern wall of the building. There are, in total, 19 possible depictions of various ships (fig. 2) executed in various levels of quality and elaboration, which encourage scholars to categorise the graffiti depicted into trade- and warships.<sup>57</sup> The graffiti might show a connection to the building's purpose, since they actually date to the building's time of use<sup>58</sup> and could consist of a plea for fair weather and safety.

These depictions are not singular to Cyprus. Similar examples have been recorded at Tell Akko in northern Israel, which have been addressed as votive offerings because of the apparent aspect of maritime icons.<sup>59</sup>

### 'Stone Anchors'

The most important argument to support the assumption of a 'maritime aspect' is the identification of the so called 'stone anchors'. These are pierced blocks of stone, around 1 m to 1.62 m in height, which have an estimated weight between 300 kg and 1,350 kg,<sup>60</sup> although smaller variants are known as well. Hundreds of these items have been found at Cyprus, but traces of their usage are rare.<sup>61</sup>

Especially in Kition, these objects have been unearthed in large numbers and in good condition (fig. 3), although others have been found at other Late Bronze Age coastal sites at Cyprus and in Hala Sultan Tekke, but generally damaged or in fragments.<sup>62</sup>

The 'anchors' were used in various ways in architecture; in Kition, for example, they were used as the bases of columns, thresholds, corner stones, in the fundaments of walls, in wells or in benches (fig. 4). Generally undamaged at Kition, some of the stones show scorch marks, some have a circular mould and others are incised with the Cypro-Minoan script. All of these have been interpreted as ritual actions done prior to or accompanying the erection of the buildings, supposedly to function as a votive to safeguard sailors in upcoming journeys.<sup>63</sup>

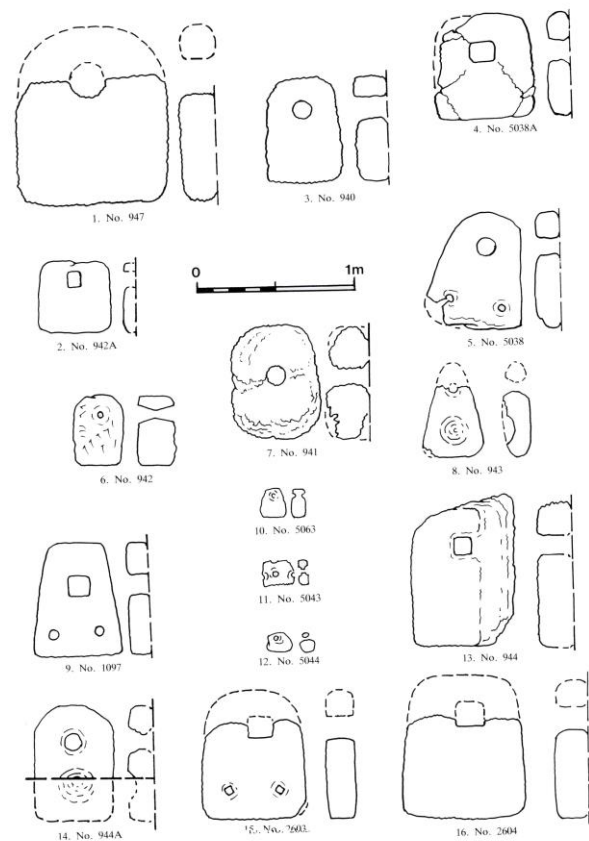


Fig. 3 Some 'stone anchors' from Kition 'Temple 1', Room 12 (1–8), Room 14 (9), Room 122 (10) Room 117 (11–12), Room 15 (13–16) (Frost 1985, 310, fig. 11. Courtesy of Department of Antiquities, Cyprus).

<sup>56</sup> Webb 1999, 65.

<sup>57</sup> Webb 1999, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Webb 1999, 69.

<sup>59</sup> Basch – Artzy 1985, 322–336.

<sup>60</sup> Frost 1985, 291.

<sup>61</sup> Frost 1985, 282.

<sup>62</sup> Webb 1999, 187.

<sup>63</sup> Frost 1985, 282, 290.



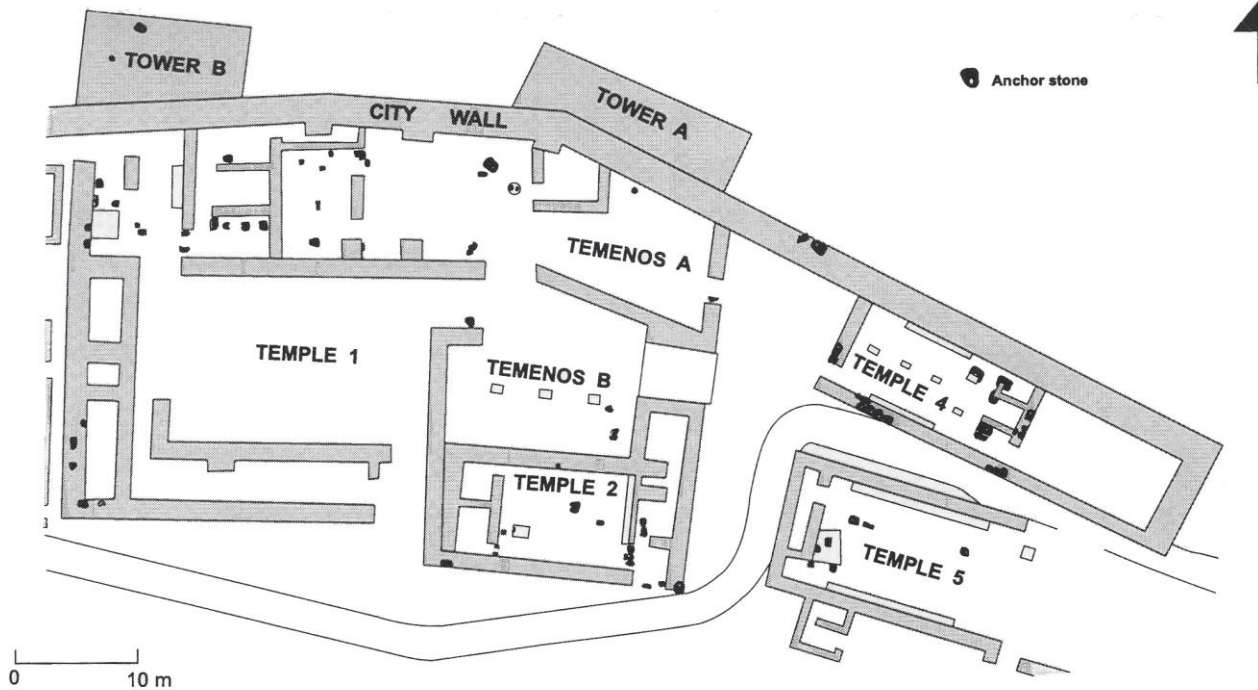


Fig. 4 Locations of the so called 'stone anchors' in the Sacred Area at Kition (Webb 1999, 186, fig. 71. Courtesy of J. Webb).

Webb refutes the explicit interpretation that the anchors are votive, since she considers the little number of 'anchors' actually deployed inside the buildings and the incorporation of the 'anchors' inside the buildings to stand in contradiction to this assumption.<sup>64</sup> She nonetheless accepts the idea of a 'maritime aspect' apparent at Kition, especially for 'Temple 2', stressing the integration of 17 of these stones in the building in connection with 48 shells and a surplus of maritime motives depicted on the pottery from this building. In connection with graffiti depicting ships on the neighbouring building of 'Temple 1', she accepts the 'stone anchors' as being part of a maritime founder's deposition.<sup>65</sup>

Although the general idea behind her arguments is convincing,<sup>66</sup> some of these

assumptions are based on the notion that these stones have to be interpreted as actual stone anchors in general. I would like to challenge this.

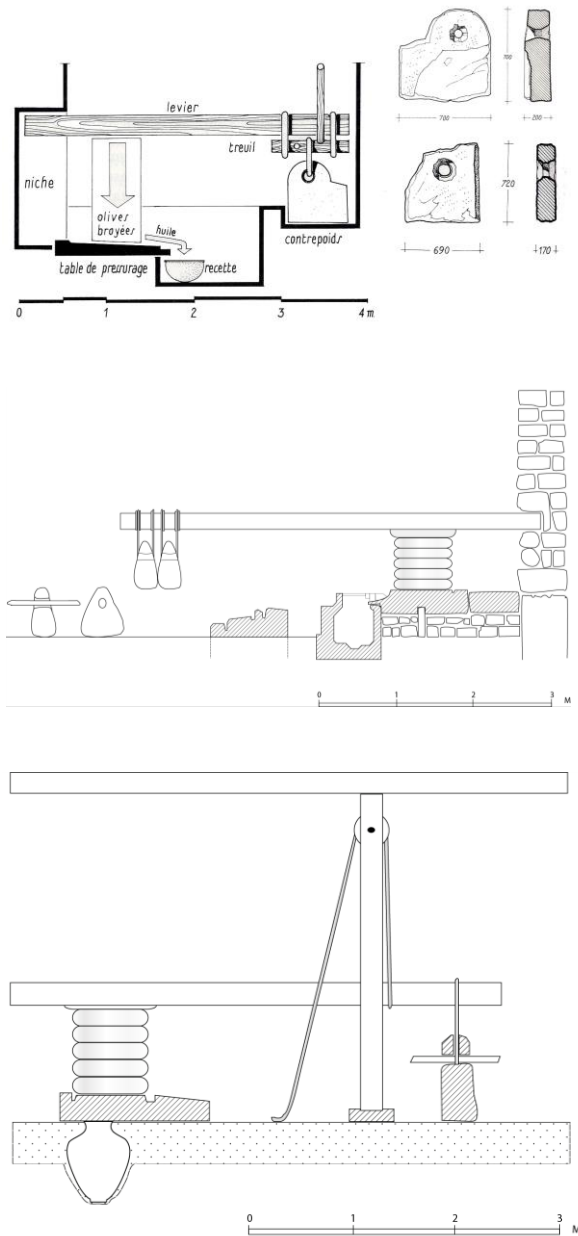
An alternative interpretation is provided by the reconstruction of contemporary oil presses, showing very similar stones used as a counterweight in this construction. Well-preserved examples which are properly documented (fig. 5, top) originate from Ugarit, their position proving their function as a counterweight.<sup>67</sup> Especially two of the counterweights have many similarities with the objects from Cyprus called 'stone anchors', due to the pierced top and the rounded edges. The biggest difference is the rectangular step joint at the underside of the bigger stone.

<sup>64</sup> Webb 1999, 187.

<sup>65</sup> Webb 1999, 187.

<sup>66</sup> Webb 2016, 630.

<sup>67</sup> Callot 1987, 201. 206.



**Fig. 5 Reconstructions of olive presses.** Top from Ugarit (Callot 1987, 201 fig. 6; Counterweights 206, fig. 10 and 11. Courtesy of O. Callot). Middle from Mari-Kopetra (based on Hadjisavvas 1992, 33, fig. 59). Bottom from Nicosia 'PASYDY building plot' (based on Hadjisavvas 1992, 39, fig. 65).

Oil presses from Cyprus itself are known, although contemporary ones are not very well preserved.<sup>68</sup> But examples from Cypro-Archaic times have quite similar counterweights in use, some are roughly worked, others indicate different ways of construction resulting in an additional piercing

through the topside of the weights (fig. 5, bottom).

To make at least some clear distinction between counterweight and anchor, additional holes at the underside of these objects are of interest (fig. 3). In 2002, Tóth published an article addressing these 'composite anchors': they are defined as anchors with "two or more holes drilled into them",<sup>69</sup> one as the actual rope-hole, the other(s) as tooth-holes for wooden bars that enable the anchor to be fixed to the seabed. In this manner, a difference between 'composite anchors' and 'weight anchors' without tooth-holes is obvious.<sup>70</sup> This is discussed as a technological advancement introduced around the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE, although there is no valid proof for this hypothesis.<sup>71</sup>

In Kition, there are only around 25 up to a maximum of 27 of the 147 Stones which are worked this way.<sup>72</sup> Even in the famous shipwreck of Uluburun, where around 24 of these stones were discovered, not a single one actually possesses these kinds of holes. Additionally, not a single one was found in a position that makes its interpretation as an anchor a valid option. Considering the amount of 'anchors', it is not very likely these were simply replacements, as others have argued.<sup>73</sup> It is even less likely that they were trading goods and so it is quite obvious that they were used as weights on the ship itself.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Tóth 2002, 85.

<sup>70</sup> Tóth 2002, 85; Wachsmann 1998, 255, with reference to H. Frost, although the assumption of a third kind of 'sand anchor' has been disproved; see Tóth 2002.

<sup>71</sup> Tóth 2002, 92.

<sup>72</sup> 'Temple 1': 3 or 5; 'Temple 2': 5; 'Temple 4': 5; 'Temple 5': 3; 'Northern Workshop': 3; 'Temenos A': 3; reuse during Phoenician times: 3. Frost 1985, 297–317; Wachsmann 1998, 273.

<sup>73</sup> Wachsmann 1998, 283.

<sup>74</sup> Yalçın – İpek – Medenbach 2005, 633.

<sup>68</sup> Hadjisavvas 1992.

The thought of the production of so many very specific stones, supposedly only to be used as anchors, arouses suspicion. This is supported by the fact that there seems to have been a significant overproduction of these anchors, leading to a secondary use as simple counterweights inside a ship. To assume that the use of such stones was intentionally diverse seems more likely, raising the necessity of their production immensely. This is supported by the various sizes and weights of the ‘anchors’ and widespread appearance in various contexts, even though alternative interpretations defining a specific role for each ‘anchor size’ cannot be disproven easily.<sup>75</sup>

So it may be assumed that the primary intention behind these items was to use them as counterweights in general. In making them widely accessible, their abundance at sites with a lot of heavy masonry might be the actual reason for their various uses in architecture, originating for instance from oil-presses or crane-constructions which may have been used at Kition.

Consequently, if no composite construction is apparent, a more general description as a weight-stone should be used and only within specific contexts should these objects be regarded as ‘anchor-stones’. But even as the double perforation of the ‘composite anchors’ may be a distinctive indicator to assume an intentional use as an anchor, a deposition or reuse might even indicate that a ‘maritime connotation’ decreased instead of gaining greater emphasis.

### Conclusion

As categorisation may be a valid tool for comparing cultures and ideas with one another and thus to fathom ideas concerning

the motivations of ancient cultures, we have to be aware of its possibility to backfire. Steel already noted that until recently, anthropological<sup>76</sup> or ‘modern’<sup>77</sup> methods rarely had any impact in scholarly research concerned with Cypriot archaeology,<sup>78</sup> which tends to use cultural-evolutionistic aspects to explain Bronze Age Cypriot culture and especially emphasises economic ambitions and organised actions to explain cultural exchange.<sup>79</sup>

As an ambivalent example, we have seen that the idea of an apparent ‘maritime aspect’ in Late Bronze Age Cyprus was based very much on the place’s trade connections and insularity.

Especially the so-called ‘stone anchors’ have shown how deeply these assumptions can make their way into the discourse of interpretation, especially in the attempt to identify gods, sanctuaries or ‘religious’ ideas. Among other things, the equal treatment of these stones as anchors in Kition led to the assumption that the dedication of build-

<sup>75</sup> Wachsmann 1998, 283.

<sup>76</sup> Steel 2004, 11, with reference to the works of P. Keswani and D. L. Bolger; for recent work see, e.g., D. Bolger, *Gender and Social Complexity in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Cyprus*, in: D. Bolger – L. Maguire (eds.), *The Development of Pre-State Communities in the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honour of Edgar Peltenburg*. BANEA Publication Series 2 (Oxford 2010) 156–165.

<sup>77</sup> Steel 2004, 11, with reference to the works of D. Frankel – J. M. Webb as well as E. J. Peltenburg. See, e.g., D. Frankel – J. M. Webb, *Three Faces of Identity. Ethnicity, Community and Status in the Cypriot Bronze Age*. *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998) 1–12.

<sup>78</sup> Steel 2004, 11; Collard 2013, 111.

<sup>79</sup> Steel 2004, 11 with special reference to the works of B. Knapp, E. J. Peltenburg and S. W. Manning. See, e.g., S. W. Manning, *Prestige, Distinction and competition: The Anatomy of Socio-Economic Complexity in 4<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium B.C.E. Cyprus*. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 292, 1993, 35–58.

ings had a 'maritime' connotation. Even though there is an apparent nautical symbolism in Kition shown in the graffiti of ships, these may only be identified as a general form of communication in a very basic form of ritual. In this way, these depictions give important indicators that messages were communicated by a wider audience instead of being reduced to some form of ritual specialist.

The assumption of the 'maritime' as an important aspect of Cypriot sanctuaries, at least of 'Temple 2' and 3 of Phase LC IIC,<sup>80</sup> is even echoed in later periods. This can be seen in the evaluation of the marine aspect of Aphrodite, which was based on the shells found at the sanctuary of Aphrodite Amathous and further reflected in the earlier female figurines associated with Aphrodite.<sup>81</sup> But in removing the 'anchor stones' as indicators of a 'maritime aspect' in religious life, the construction thereof is left to the value of imports,<sup>82</sup> some shells, motives on pottery and a few examples of graffiti on temple walls.

As a result, this approach emphasizes the possibility of continuing changes in the reception of ritual environments during their time of use. Instead of creating a strongly symbol-bound idea of ritual actions and defining an apparatus of paraphernalia used to emphasize that notion, a quite flexible and situational approach is suggested, for "sacredness does not adhere to any object or phenomena in particular".<sup>83</sup> In this manner, the Kition Temple 2 'anchors' in upright position most likely represent a baetyl variation, although a 'maritime aspect' should not be taken for granted by scholars. If the use

of stone weights or anchors in this ritual context was actually intended to stress its maritime connotation, a conscious process of communicating this specific element took place. Instead of just installing a general symbol, this would demonstrate a rather particular intention by the worshippers. But if this was the case, it is hard to ascertain and so we cannot completely exclude the possibility of worship towards a specific god incorporating this attribute or aspect at Kition.

To the extent that a comparison of all the stone anchors has yet to be conducted, the interpretation's focus must remain on each single context in order to evaluate its maritime connotation within ritual activity, as alternative uses, such as that of counterweights, have to be expected.

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<sup>80</sup> Webb 1999, 42.

<sup>81</sup> Papantoniou 2012, 196.

<sup>82</sup> Webb 2016, 630.

<sup>83</sup> Fogelin 2007, 61.

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