Kristina Winther-Jacobsen

CRAFT SPECIALIZATION IN HELLENISTIC-ROMAN CYPRUS: IDENTITY OR HABITUS?

The two main ways we differentiate ourselves and others in material culture is either through quantity of artefacts or through the endless variability of artefacts over space and time leading to choices between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Artefacts are produced and used by people not only for physical tasks but to mediate social, economic and political relationships and to create, express, and maintain social, economic and political identities. Consequently, material culture seems the ideal source material for the study of identity. The past twenty years focus on agency in archaeology has sparked an enormous interest in identity. Yet, the correlation between artefact and identity is very complex Framing our research questions in social theory is a great challenge. This article aims to discuss further the difficulties of applying social theory to the study of material culture in the past.

In the foreword of *The Archaeology of Identities* from 2005 edited by Margarita Díaz-Andreu, identity is understood as individuals' identification with broader groups on the basis of differences socially sanctioned as significant. The later part of this definition is very important, because creating the means to differentiate by introducing an endless variability of artefacts over space and time is not the same as actual differentiation in the social realm, hence the significance of social sanctioning. As we use artefacts, we create, maintain and challenge the social norms surrounding them.

According to contemporary social theorists such as David Couzens Hoy (Couzens Hoy 2004), identities are flexible and dynamic social constructs emerging within the context of an individual's multiple overlapping social relationships and locations. This definition focuses on two central elements: social relationships and locations, in other words the dependence on audience and context which generates the highly flexible character of identity. Identity is not something you posses, but something you create only before a specific audience in a specific context which makes the identity meaningful. This flexibility poses a challenge to archaeologists and our ability to define identity archaeologically because archaeological assemblages rarely reflect specific events but rather multiple agglomerated events - agglomerated audiences and contexts (Ault/Nevett 1999, 52; see also deposit typology in Penã 2007, 337–339). We are able to show confidently that a given ceramic artefacts exists in a given archaeological context or deposit and based on that we may formulate a general interpretation of the activities associated with the context. We can demonstrate that ceramic artefacts travelled far and sometimes ended up in contexts very different from the area where they were produced. We may show that similar architectural structures are associated with different ceramic artefacts leading to interpretation of differentiated behaviour. But it is often difficult if not impossible to infer before which audience in which specific social context the artefact was used and the associated way in which it was used specifically.

In some cases the communication of identity is very intentional and deliberate; for instance when groups differentiate themselves from others in order to be exclusive as in the case of the continued use of Greek language for inscriptions in the Roman East suggests (Woolf 1994). The other way around, groups may also assert greater cohesion in order to legitimise privileges and facilitate control over others as in the case of the spread of the Imperial cult (Revell 2009, 80–110). These are the cases we most often hear about along with the right of Roman citizens, but also in some contexts directive to wear the toga (also Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 38–70). However, other aspects of identity tend to be subconscious and indirect, and I believe this is where most pottery studies apply. Certainly, pottery exhibits an endless variability over space and time allowing us to differentiate endlessly but not all differentiation is socially sanctioned as significant? Before we talk about identity, we need to establish before which audience and in which context a behaviour involving artefacts is socially sanctioned as significant.

The main behavioural categories of pottery studies are production, trade, consumption and discard and I want to focus on production (see also Penã 2007, 6–16). I study Hellenistic and early Roman pottery in Cyprus comparing patterns of differentiation produced in the 3rd century BC following Ptolemaic conquest and the second half of the 1st century BC and early 1st century AD following Roman annexation in order to understand the correlation between political, economic and cultural changes and changes in the pottery production.

One of the changes involve the introduction of very thin-walled cooking vessels made from densely and homogeneously tempered fabrics often dominated by quartz which is part of the Hellenistic and Roman ceramic koiné (**fig. 1**). In the Pre-Hellenistic period Cyprus was divided into more or less autonomous city-centres but by the end of the 4th century the entire island was subjugated the Ptolemaic kingdom. The cooking wares excavated at the city-centres and in their

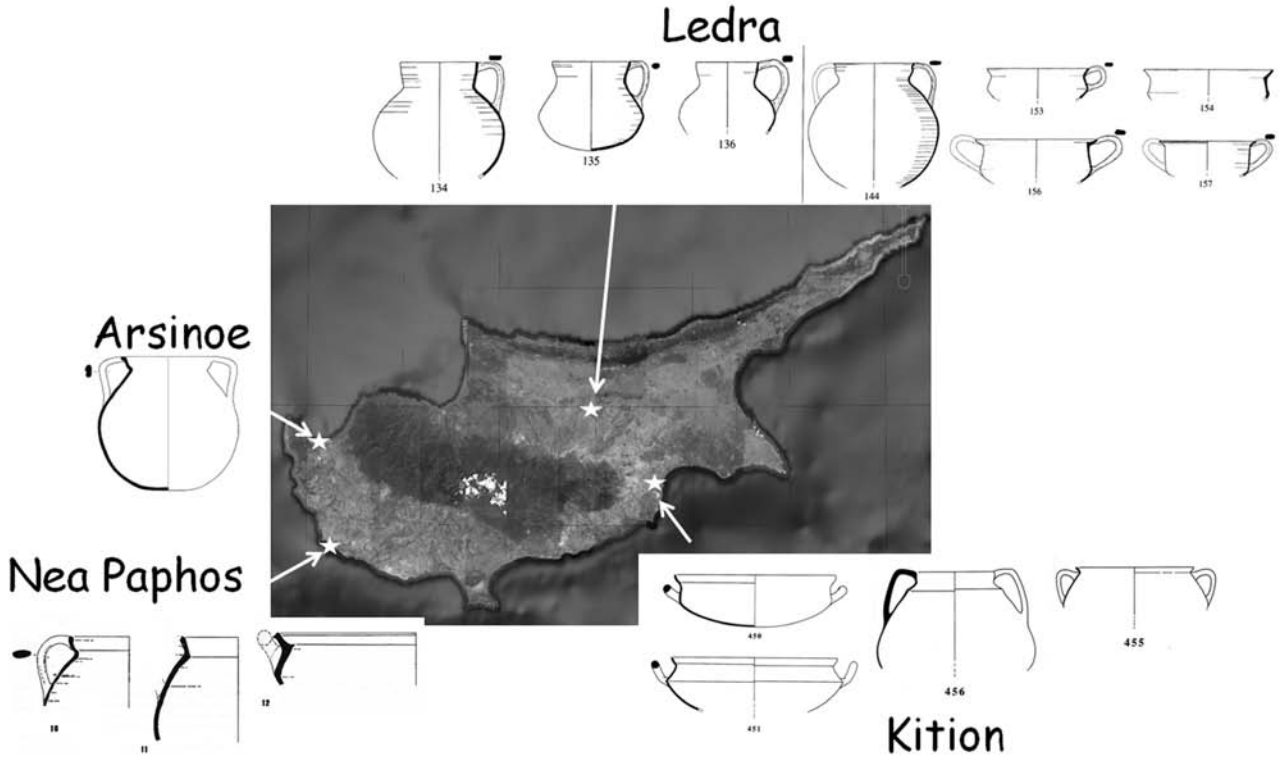

Fig. 1. 3rd century BC cooking wares from the city-centres. Drawing by E. Vassiliou and after HAYES 2003; BERLIN/PILACINSKI 2003; SALLES/REY 1993 [source images modified].

immediate hinterland suggest a relatively swift surrender to a thin-walled specialised cooking ware within two or three generations (WINTHER-JACOBSEN forthcoming). Sometime between the late 4th and late 3rd century BC, this style of vessel came to dominate the local cooking ware production.

The hinterland of the city-centre of Soli is home to Skouriotissa, the largest copper mine on the island and to the largest river valley in Cyprus and consequently a region of economic importance (**fig. 2**). Focussing on a specific case, I am trying to understand how potters in the hinterland of Soli responded to the technological challenge of the change suggested in the city-centres. The central part of Cyprus is occupied by the Troodos Mountains, a massif of eroded igneous rock. Their core is made up of deep-seated plutonic basic and ultra-basic rocks. Over and around these lie extrusive volcanic rocks, mainly pillow-lava. Although alluvial clay deposits are rich around the Troodos Mountains, quartz-rich formations are generally limited to the southern slope of the Troodos Mountains, south-eastern Cyprus, and areas in the Kyrenia Range. Consequently, the production of quartz-rich fabrics constituted a challenge outside these areas. Furthermore, the change in fabric composition appears to have been accompanied by a change in construction technique from coil building to throwing. How did potters working in the pillow lava area deal with this technological development?

It would have been ideal to analyse material from kiln sites, but desperately few Roman kilns have been identified in Cyprus (LUND 2006). The reason for this may be the use of very simple kiln technology as indicated at the Late Roman Dhiorios cooking ware factory in northern Cyprus (CATLING 1972, 30-31). Here all thirteen cooking ware kilns dated from the beginning of the 7th to the early 8th century AD consisted of simple chambers with the firing probably taking place inside the chamber. Furthermore, they were used probably only once and dismantled after use to make room for the next firing. This unobtrusive technology explains both the great number of kilns at Dhiorios and the general difficulty in finding kilns. Other kiln sites have been inferred based on chemical analysis (DASZKIEWICZ/SCHNEIDER 1997) or wasters (e. g. DEMESTICHA 2000; MANNING ET AL. 2000). Very few wasters were recorded by the Troodos Archaeological and Environmental Survey Project working in this area of Cyprus (WINTHER-JACOBSEN 2013, 147 no. TCP 424), although a 20th century updraft tile kiln was identified at Agios Theodoros 2 km west of Evrykhou (IRELAND ET AL. 2013, 214). The inference of pottery productions in the lower pillow lava area is based on petrographical analyses alone (see below).

Instead, as is often the case in Cyprus, we turn to the tombs. Since the Bronze Age funerary customs in Cyprus involved depositing multiple ceramic vessels with the deceased, and the common reuse of the chamber tombs provides long sequences of vessels for detailed material, morphological, stylistic, and technological analysis. Evrykhou Tomb 5, located deep in the area of the lower pillow lava, is a typical rock cut chamber tomb with multiple burials. The tomb includes about 150 ceramic vessels of a wide range of functions used from the Early Hellenistic period into the 2nd – early 3rd century AD (WINTHER-JACOBSEN 2007). The tomb was unlooted, but artefacts were moved around while it was still in use. The cooking pots are one of the types of vessels consistently deposited over the 500 years of use of the tomb.

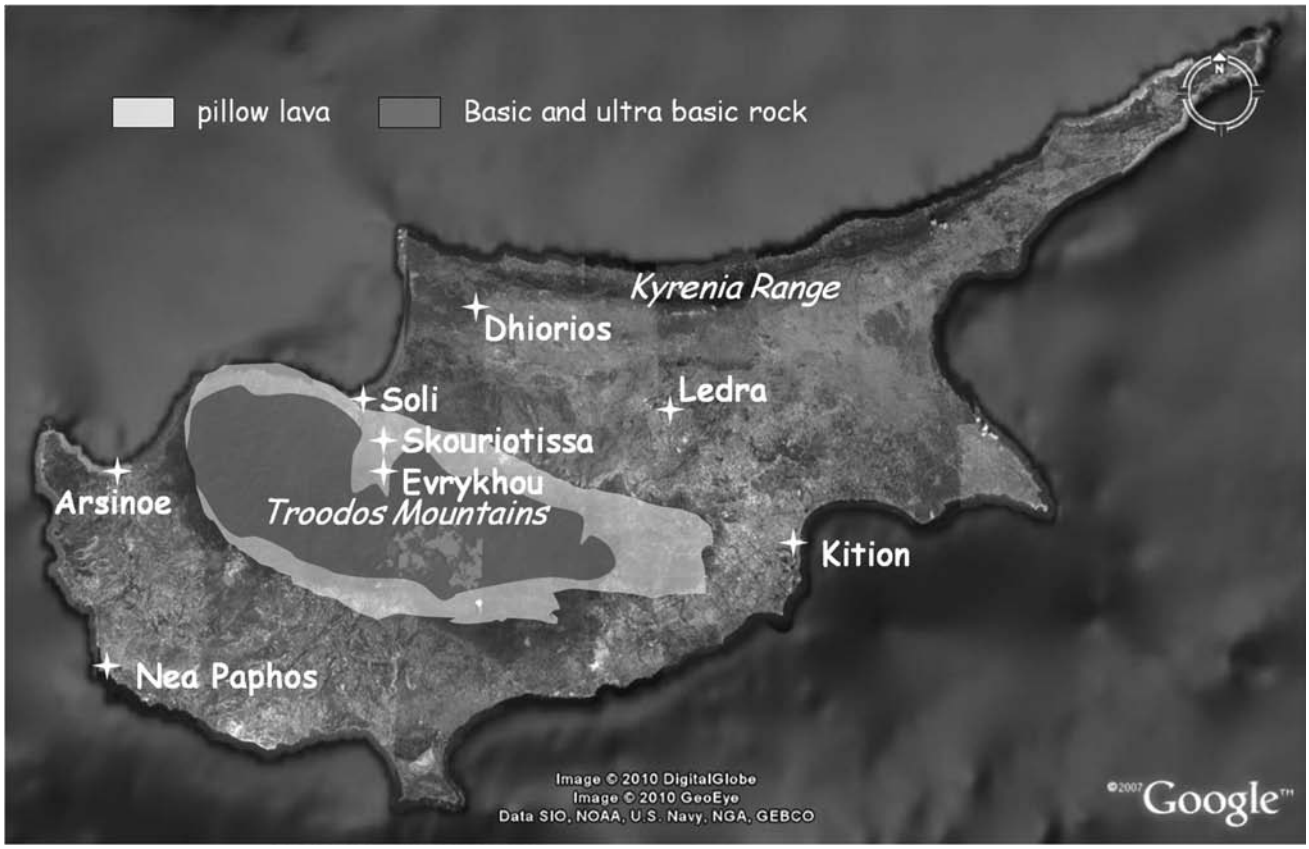

Fig. 2. Simplified geological map of Cyprus.

In Evrykhou Tomb 5 cooking wares of the Early Hellenistic period are represented by globular or biconical, thick-walled pots with a short neck and thick vertical handles (**fig. 3** top). The vessels were most likely coil built on a slow wheel as indicated by ethnoarchaeological analogy with 20th century cooking ware productions in the Troodos Mountains (Ionas 1998, 110–115). Sometime probably during the 3rd c. BC a thinner-walled vessel with a high rim appears (**fig. 3** bottom). Microscopic descriptions suggested that both of these vessels types as well as several bowls and dishes were made from the same fabric, and this was confirmed by X-Ray Diffraction analysis. The composition of the fabric was revealed by petrographic analyses to originate in the lower pillow lava. Based on a detailed analysis of this assemblage, I have hypothesized that cooking wares produced locally in the earlier part of the Hellenistic period were morphologically and technologically closely related to the Iron Age tradition, and that vessels of other use classes such as bowls, dishes and cups were produced locally in the same fabric following the same firing technology (Winther-Jacobsen forthcoming). The Hellenistic cooking wares and related pottery reveal a poor correlation between fabric and firing technology on the one hand and morphology and use on the other indicating a low degree of specialisation. By the early Roman period the change to thrown, thin-walled cooking vessels made from densely and homogeneously tempered fabric was complete, and the production of coil built vessels appears to have stopped (**fig. 4**). Furthermore, vessels are very similar in style to vessels made outside the island e.g. Ev5:37 similar to vessel from Paphos which according to Hayes (Hayes 2003, 481 no. 201) is a Cypriot copy of a common Aegean type, and Ev5:171 which has its closest parallel in Crete (Sackett 1992, 226 no T2,9 pl. 171,9). Furthermore, other vessel types no longer share the cooking vessel fabric and firing. In other words, the correlation between fabric and firing technology on the one hand and morphology and use on the other is strong indicating a high degree of specialisation.

At the time when thin-walled cooking vessels of densely, often quartz tempered fabrics dominated the city-centres, the potters working in the area of the lower pillow lava increased the percentage of temper especially quartz and switched to the fast wheel and apparently gave up the coil-built globular short-necked pot, but for a while, they still used the same fabric and firing process for a variety of vessel classes producing the thinner-walled vessels, dishes, bowls and cups. By the early Roman period this had stopped too and the cooking vessel production appears to have become specialised as we know from the Dhiorios cooking ware factory. If you consider the chaîne operatoire of the potters in the pillow lava area who made the cooking pots discussed here, their routines changed considerably during this period: the fabric composition, the way of constructing the vessel and the firing process all of which appears to have brought about a specialization of the cooking ware production in the Roman period.

These types of behavioural changes play right into the classical acculturation model explaining the change as part of the Hellenisation or Romanization process, but few would content with such an interpretation so we return to the issue of identity. Attempting to explain the technological change in

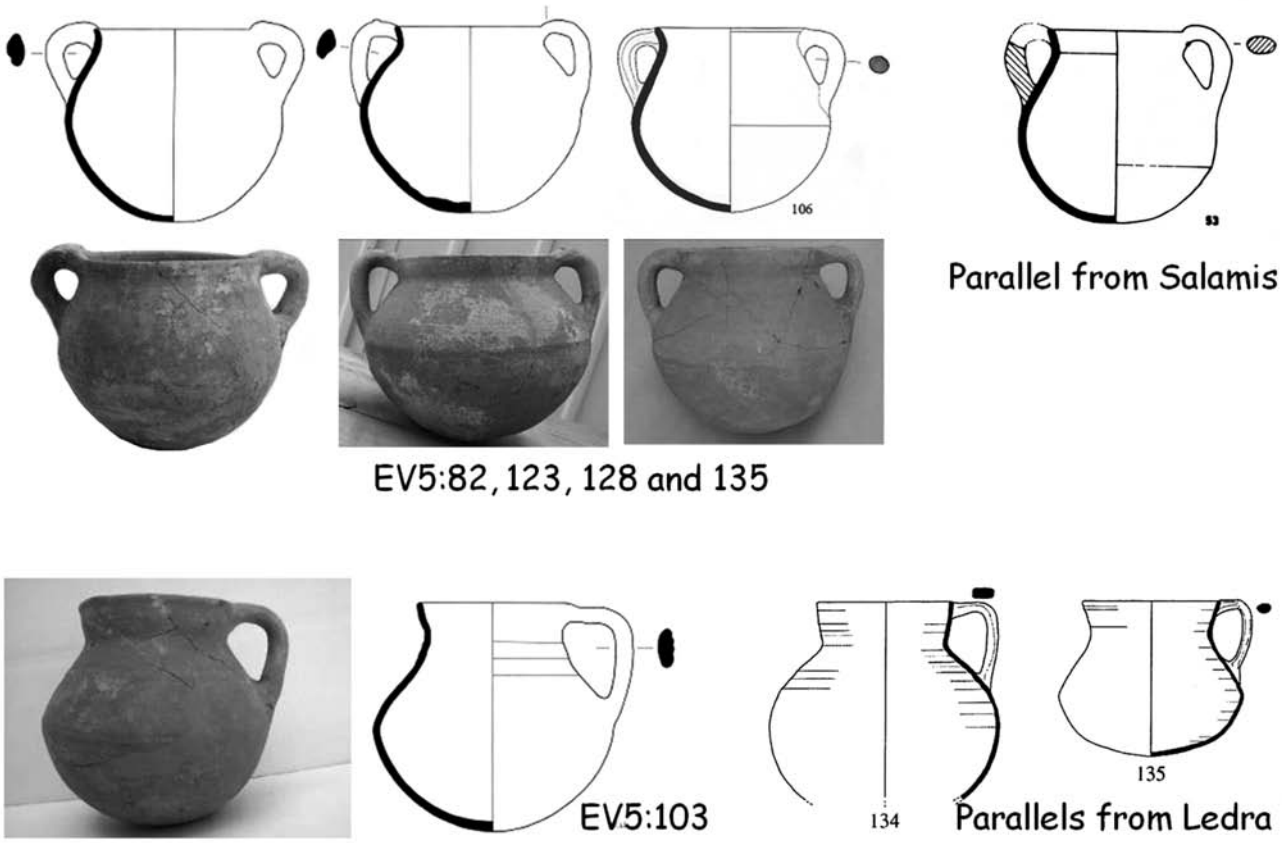

Fig. 3. Hellenistic cooking wares from Evrykhou T5. – Top: Coil built vessels; bottom: Photos by C. Parks and K. Winther-Jacobsen and drawings by J. Humbert. Also drawings after Berlin/Pilacinski 2003; Diederichs 1980 [source images modified]. For the purpose of comparison the images are not to scale.

cooking wares during the Hellenistic-Roman period in terms of identity, I would focus on the reconstruction of the inner being of the agent, the potter, on the ground of the routines of production and reproduction. Changing behaviour allows the potter to adapt to a style of production reflecting a more widely diffused production pattern creating the koiné. This establishes a means to differentiate consumers into those who participate in the construction of a heterogeneous yet comparatively unified way of life at an Eastern Mediterranean level during the Hellenistic and Roman periods and those who do not. Since the household of the potter also consumes pottery, the differentiation also involves its own members.

Ethnoarchaeological studies corroborate the positive relationship between the ratio of ceramic and metal vessels and the wealth of a given household (Trostel 1994, 222). Unfortunately, in places such as Pompeii, where contexts might be expected to reveal the ratio of vessels in different materials, the ceramic "common wares" were rarely recorded until the middle of the 20th century (Tassinari 1993, 234). In surface surveys in the Roman east villas show up as enormous quantities of ceramics distinguishable from multiple settlements by their architectural embellishments and baths and possibly the number of imports (Lukermann/Moody 1987, 99). Clearly wealthy Roman households included abundant pottery. The choice of social manifestation is temporally, spatially, culturally, and socially specific depending on context, audience and social sanctioning.

Although the ceramic koiné played a role in the creation of this heterogeneous yet comparatively unified way of life at Eastern Mediterranean level, I wonder if this is partly an archaeological phenomenon. It is a problem of the definition of "similar" and "same" in the sense that styles of vessels may be produced over wide areas partly obscuring a series of regional distribution patterns. The increasing focus on fabrics is gradually establishing much more detailed micro-regional distribution patterns (e. g. Van Kerckhove/Lepot/Borgers/Willems same volume; Martucci/De Simone/D'Italia same volume). The term koiné refers to a common dialect of ceramic styles and types which comes to be widely diffused over a large area such as the Roman Empire and beyond. Importantly, customs and practices do not necessarily contribute to the definition of the term. As formulated by Sam Lucy, identities are defined by the context in which the artefacts are used and the ways in which they are used by people. The introduction of thin-walled, wheel thrown cooking vessels certainly affected the local production; however, it is currently not possible to demonstrate an accompanying change in the consumption and use patterns since the repertoire of shapes is essentially the same and no residual analyses have been published. I would argue that the koiné itself is a response to trade over longer distances and to availability rather than a conscious strategy of differentiating appropriate from inappropriate behaviour. Only detailed analyses of individual artefacts and their contexts involving use-alteration patterns (e. g. Peña

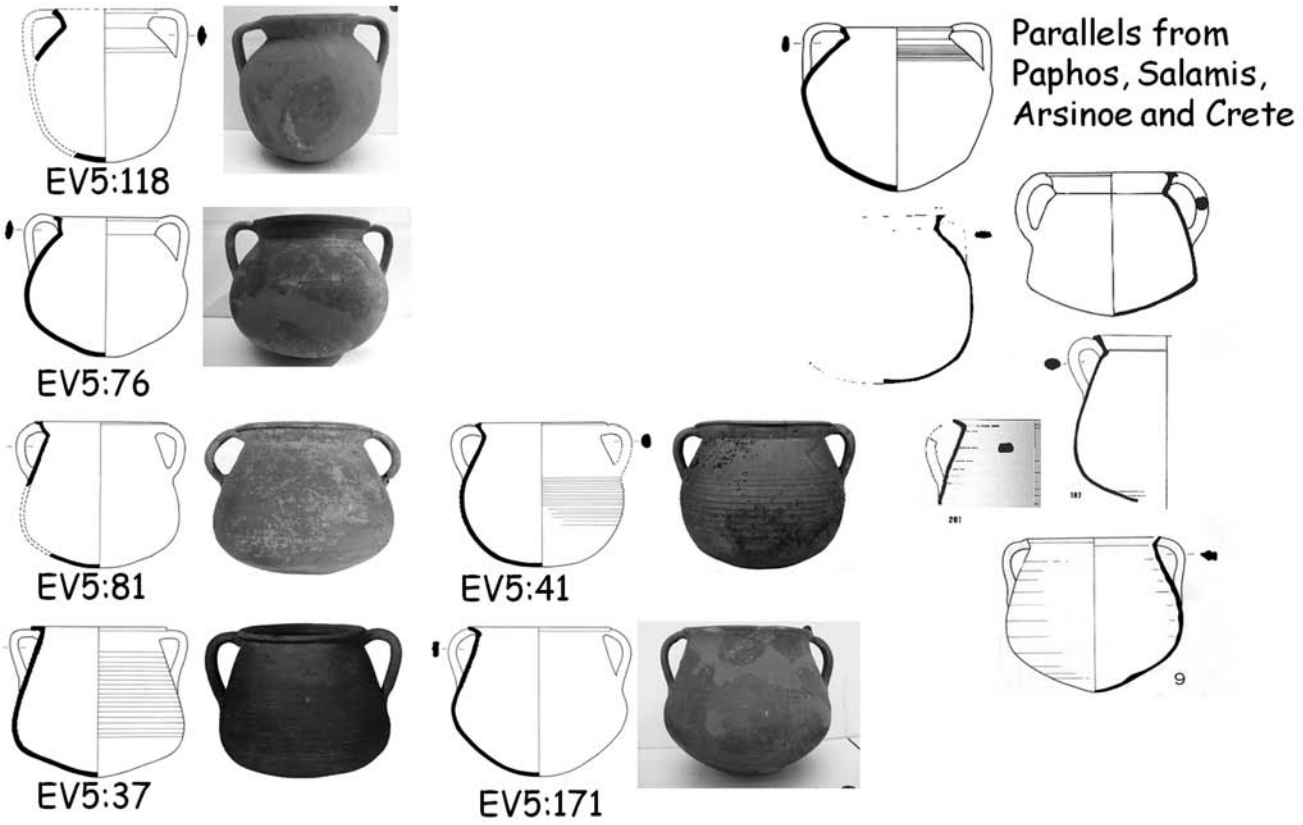

Fig. 4. Early Roman cooking wares from Evrykhou T5. Photos by C. Parks and K. Winther-Jacobsen and drawings by J. Humbert and E. Vassiliou. Also drawings after Diederichs 1980; Hayes 1991; 2003; Sackett 1992 [source images modified]. For the purpose of comparison the images are not to scale.

same volume; Banducci, same volume), residual analysis and assemblage differentiation can reveal a conscious strategy of differentiating appropriate from inappropriate behaviour.

Let us return to the Cypriot potters: their habitus was affected by the change in everyday conventions embodied in normative technical components changing their similarly routinised ways. This change is part of the discernible patterning of the material remains of archaeological cultures creating an increasing sense of a comparatively unified way of life at Eastern Mediterranean level during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. This changed the habitus of the people involved in the production, but did this challenge the identities of the potters and the consumers of their products? Each individual burial in Evrykhou Tomb 5 relates to a specific context and audience, and the continued deposition of cooking vessels in Cypriot burials at least into the 2nd century AD suggests no shift in perception (Winther Jacobsen 2007). There is nothing to indicate that the change was sanctioned as socially significant.

Changes occur all the time, styles, decorations, technologies, and uses change, and the changes are absorbed into the habitus of individuals. Changes create a means to differentiate but not the necessity. Depending on the context and audience the tension between difference and similarity may be used by some groups to differentiate themselves from others and by other groups to assert greater cohesion. It seems to me that for the concept of identity to provide new stimulus, we need to focus on context, audience and social sanctioning to a much greater extent.

kwjacobsen@hum.ku.dk

Bibliography

Ault/Nevett 1999	B. A. Ault/L. C. Nevett, Digging houses: Archaeologies of Classical and Hellenistic domestic assemblages. In: P. M. Allison (ed.), The Archaeology of Household Activities (London 1999) 43–56.
Banducci	L. M. Banducci, Ceramic Alteration Analysis on Roman Pottery: Determining Taphonomy and Use (see this volume).
Berliner/Pilacinski 2003	A. Berliner/J. Pilacinski, Appendix: The Pottery of the Early and Middle Hellenistic period. Rep. Dep. Ant. Cyprus 2003, 201–237.

Catling 1972	H. W. Catling, An Early Byzantine Pottery Factory at Dhiorios in Cyprus, Levant. Journal Brit. School Jerusalem 3, 1972, 1–83.
Couzens Hoy 2004	D. C. Couzens Hoy, Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-Critique (Cambridge/M. 2004).
Daszkiewicz/Schneider 1996	M. Daszkiewicz/G. Schneider, Chemical Composition of Cypriot Red Slip Ware from Kourion and Nea Paphos. Polish Arch. Mediterranean 8 (Reports 1996), 1997, 139–143.
Demesticha 2000	S. Demesticha, The Paphos Kiln: Manufacturing Techniques of LR1 Amphorae. RCRF Acta 36, 2000, 549–554.
Diaz-Andreu/Lucy 2005	M. Diaz-Andreu/S. Lucy, Introduction. In: M. Diaz-Andreu et al., The archaeology of Identity. Approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion (London 2005) 1–12.
Diederichs 1980	C. Diederichs, Salamine de Chypre IX. Céramiques hellénistiques, romaines et byzantines (Paris 1980).
Hayes 1991	J. W. Hayes, Paphos III: The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery (Nicosia 1991).
Hayes 2003	J. W. Hayes, Pottery Deposits from "Saranda Kolones" Castle Site, Paphos. Papers Brit. School Athens 98, 2003, 447–516
Ionas 1998	I. Ionas, Pottery in the Cyprus Tradition (Nicosia 1998).
Ireland, T. et al. 2013	T. Ireland et al., Architecture in the landscape. In: M. Givenet al. (eds.), Landscape and interaction: the Troodos Archaeological and Environmental Survey Project, Cyprus 1: methodology, analysis and interpretation. Levant Suppl. Ser. (London 2013).
Lucy 2005	S. Lucy, Ethnic and cultural identities, in: Diaz-Andreu, M. et al., The archaeology of Identity. Approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion (London 2005), 86–109.
Lukermann/Moody 1987	F. Lukermann/J. A. Moody,Nichoria and vicinity: settlement and circulation. In: G. R. Rapp Jr./S. Aschenbrenner (eds.), Excavations at Nichoria in south-west Greece I. Site, Environment, and Techniques (Minneapolis 1987) 78–112.
Lund 2006	J. Lund, On the circulation of goods in Hellenistic and Early Roman Cyprus: The ceramic evidence, in: L.Wriedt Sørensen/K.Winther Jacobsen (eds.), Panayia Ematousa II. Political, cultural, ethnic and social relations in Cyprus. Approaches to Regional Studies. Monogr. Danish Inst. Athens 6.2 (Athens 2006) 31–49.
Manning et al. 2000	S. W. Manning et al., Late Roman type 1a amphora production at the Late Roman Site of Zygi-Petrini, Cyprus. Rep. Dep. Ant. Cyprus 2000, 233–257.
Martucci/De Simone/D'Italia	C. S. Martucci/G. F. De Simone/S. D'Italia, Local productions around Vesuvius: trade patterns and identity (see this volume).
Peña	J. T. Peña, Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record (Cambridge 2007).
Peña	J. T. Peña, The Pompeii artifact life history project: conceptual background and first season's results (see this volume).
Revell 2009	L. Revell, Roman Imperialism and Local Identities (Cambridge 2009).
Sackett 1992	L. H. Sackett, The Roman pottery. In: Id. (ed.), Knossos from Greek City to Roman Colony. Excavations at the Unexplored Mansion II. Brit. School Athens Suppl. 21 (Athens 1992) 147–256.
Salles/Rey 1993	J.-F. Salles/C. Rey, Le bassin 417. In: J.-F. Salles (ed.), Kition-Bamboula IV. Les niveaux hellenistique (Paris 1993), 227–259.
Tassinari 1993	S. Tassinari, Il vasellame bronzeo di Pompei. Soprintendenza Arch. Pompeii Cat. 5 (Roma 1993).
Trostel 1994	B. Trostel, Household pots and possessions: an ethnoarchaeological study of material goods and wealt. In: W. A. Longacre/J. M. Skibo (eds.), Kalinga Ethnoarchaeology: Expanding Archaeological Method and Theory (Washington 1994) 209–224.
Van Kerckhove/Lepot/Borgers/ Willems	J. Van Kerckhove/A. Lepot/B. Borgers/S. Willems, Understanding consumption patterns in the *civitas Tungrorum* through the identification of the 'NOOR1' Ware (see this volume).
Wallace-Hadrill 2008	A. Wallace-Hadrill, Rome's Cultural revolution (Cambridge 2008).
Winther-Jacobsen 2007	K. Winther-Jacobsen, Pots for the Dead. Pottery and ritual in Cypriote tombs of the Hellenistic and Roman period. In: D. Malfitana/J. Poblome/J. Lund (eds.), Old Pottery in a New Century. Innovating Perspectives on Roman Pottery Studies. Proceedings of the International Workshop, Catania 22–24 April 2004. Monogr. Ist. Beni Arch. e Mon. – C.N.R. 1 (Catania 2007) 389–396.
Winther-Jacobsen 2013	K. Winther-Jacobsen, Hellenistic-Roman pottery. In: M. Given et al. (eds.), Landscape and interaction: the Troodos Archaeological and Environmental Survey Project, Cyprus 1: methodology, analysis and interpretation. Levant Suppl. Ser. (London 2013).
Winther-Jacobsen forthcoming	K. Winther-Jacobsen, Cooking wares between the Hellenistic and Roman world: artefact variability, technological choice and practice. In: M. Spataro/Villing (eds.), Ceramics, Cuisine and Culture: the Archaeology and Science of Kitchen Pottery in the Ancient Mediterranean World. 16th –17th December 2010 (London forthcoming).
Woolf 1994	G. Woolf, Becoming Roman, staying Greek: culture, identity and the civilizing process in the Roman East. Proc. Cambridge Philol. Soc. 40, 1994, 111–143.