John Lund, A Study of the Circulation of Ceramics in Cyprus from the 3rd Century BC to the 3rd Century AD

Gosta Enbom Monographs 5 Aarhus University Press, Aarhus 2015 390 pages, 282 tables, charts, and figures. ISBN: 9788771244502

Review by Brandon R. Olson

The present work represents the concluding volume of the National Museum of Denmark's research program >Pots, Potters, and Society in Ancient Greece<. The initiative, generously funded by the Foundation of Consul General Gösta Enbom, resulted in the publication of five volumes, four edited monographs (>Pottery in the Archaeological Record: Greece and Beyond, Ned-figure Pottery in its Ancient Setting, Ned-figure Pottery in its Ancient Setting and Trade of Cyprus,³ and >The Regional Production of Red-figure Pottery: Greece, Magna Graecia and Etruria⁴) and Lund's A Study of the Circulation of Ceramics in Cyprus from the 3rd Century BC to the 3rd Century AD<. The specialists called on to contribute to this research program have made a number of important contributions to the study of ancient pottery. Lund focuses on the Hellenistic and Roman pottery from Cyprus from the 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE to, among other things, determine to what degree ancient ceramics are capable of »contributing to our knowledge of the history of ancient Cyprus – economic or otherwise«.5 The work is the first monograph devoted entirely to the Hellenistic and Roman pottery from the island, but also contributes to a growing trend among scholars of ancient Cyprus to harness a specific class of material culture to shed light on an ancient Cypriot population that had experienced political ruptures and reorganizations following the arrival of the Ptolemies and later the Romans.6

In Chapters 1 (>Introduction<), 2 (>Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus: An Overview<), 3 (>Prolegomena<), 4 (>A Regional Approach<), 5 (>Evidence for Kilns and Potters in Cyprus<), and 6 (>Scientific Clay Analyses of Hellenistic and Roman Pottery from Cyprus<), Lund outlines his aims and potential pitfalls, provides current states of research on topics central to his study, and defines key concepts. The author delineates and interprets a series of regional exchange networks by studying certain classics of pottery produced in Cyprus during the

- M. L. Lawall J. Lund (eds.), Pottery in the Archaeological Record: Greece and Beyond. Gosta Enbom Monographs 1 (Aarhus 2011).
- 2 S. Schierup B. B. Rasmussen (eds.), Red-figure Pottery in its Ancient Setting. Gosta Enbom Monographs 2 (Aarhus 2012).
- 3 M. L. Lawall J. Lund (eds.), The Transport Amphorae and Trade of Cyprus. Gosta Enbom Monographs 3 (Aarhus 2013).
- S. Schierup V. Sabetai (eds.), The Regional Production of Red-figure Pottery: Greece, Magna Graecia and Etruria. Gosta Enbom Monographs 4 (Aarhus 2014).
- 5 P. 11
- See J. Gordon, Between Alexandria and Rome. A Postcolonial Archaeology of Cultural Identity in Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati 2012); P. Keen, Land of Experiment. The Ptolemies and the Development of Hellenistic Cyprus, 312–58 BC (PhD diss., The University of Chicago 2012); G. Papantoniou, Religion and Social Transformation in Cyprus: From the Cypriot Basileis to the Hellenistic Strategos. Mnemosyne Suppl.: History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity 347 (Leiden 2012).

Hellenistic and Roman periods. His ceramic datasets derive from three archaeological projects: Canadian Palaipaphos Survey Project directed by David W. Rupp and Lone Wriedt Sørensen, Akamas peninsula survey and excavations directed by Jane Fejfer and Hans Erik Mathiesen (excavation) and Peter Hayes (survey), and the excavations at Pangia Emathousa-Aradippou directed by Lone Wriedt Sørensen. The author focuses on specific fine ware, coarse ware, and plastic vessel classes from these sites, coupled with various museum holdings and other archaeological projects, to create a 1703-piece catalogue. In noting that there are no standard ceramic classification systems for Hellenistic and Roman pottery from Cyprus, a regional approach is employed to examine the implications of the »circulation of ceramic artefacts for our understanding of regionalism in Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus«.⁷ In essence, the author asks why ceramic artifacts are so distributed and then attempts to examine local level (up to 20 km from a given site) distribution and identify ceramic regions (an area with definable boundaries or characteristics). Following invaluable summations of the state of Hellenistic and Roman archaeology, evidence for kilns and potters, and scientific approaches to ceramic data specific to Cyprus, Lund begins his study.

In Chapter 7 (Case Studies), Lund outlines 15 ceramic classes that are local to Cyprus and its environs: Palm-Leaf Ware, Lagynoi, West Slope Pottery, Colour-Coated Ware, Pink Powdery Ware, Matt Red Ware, Cruches Locales, Jugs with Gouged Decoration, Clay Lanterns, Conical Unguentaria, Frying Pan with a Folded Handle, The Skouriotissa Type Transport Amphora, Head Vases of the Magenta Group, Rattles in the Shape of a Pig, Zoomorphic Plastic Vases. The presence and distribution of these classes and their associated forms are plotted in Chapter 8 (>Beyond Distribution Patterns<) to identify six ceramic regions with high proportions of certain pottery classes: western Cyprus, north-western Cyprus, north-eastern Cyprus, eastern Cyprus, southern Cyprus, and central Cyprus.⁸ The subsequent analysis indicates the differing nature of ceramic distribution on the island. For example, in the western Cyprus ceramic region, 82.9 % of the known vessels from the following ceramic categories are present: two forms of Lagynoi, Pink Powdery Ware, Cruches Locales, and the Frying Pan with Folded Handle. This specific pattern, as well as the rest of the identified ceramic regions, is further substantiated by the fact that "up to a third of the pottery that predominated in a given ceramic region was also distributed outside of it, and nearly always in one or more adjoining ceramic regions«. ⁹ The remaining 17.1 % of the vessels consisting of the aforementioned western Cyprus forms are found in only one other ceramic region, north-western Cyprus. Therefore, it appears that western Cyprus in general was more restrictive and insular with regard to its ceramic distributions.

The eastern Cyprus ceramic region differs and is defined by 64.6 % of all known vessels from the following ceramic classes: two forms of lagynoi, Plain White Ware Jugs with Gouged Decoration, Clay Lanterns, Rattles in the Shape of a Pig, and Zoomorphic Plastic Vases. The remaining 35.4 % of these vessels are scattered across six other regions (north-eastern Cyprus [9.3 %], western Cyprus [9.3 %], south-eastern Cyprus [5.6 %], southern Cyprus [3.7 %], central Cyprus [3.7 %], northern and north-western Cyprus [1.9 % each]. The more cosmopolitan nature of eastern Cyprus, in stark comparison to western Cyprus, suggests a greater degree of connectivity and ceramic circulation within different ceramic regions. In interpreting the nature of this circulation, Lund first outlines four underlying assumptions before explaining the impetus for ceramic circulation. First, items mapped in the same fabric can be said to be from restricted sources. Second, items mapped in the same general style demonstrate where

- 7 P. 44.
- 8 Pp. 154–158.
- 9 P. 159.
- 10 Pp. 159-160.
- 11 Pp. 158-159.

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types are in use, but is incapable of communicating the source of the type. Third, the number of find-sites and quantities of a specific type will decrease with distance from a production center. Finally, ceramic classes predominately found within their respective ceramic regions were their source areas. With these assumptions in place, the author argues that the circulation of the aforementioned ceramic classes in Cyprus was a result of trade.

In Chapter 9 (>Cyprus and Her Closest Neighbors: A Ceramic Perspective<), the author compares the geographic distribution patterns of certain ceramic wares and vessels (Eastern Sigillata A, Cypriot Sigillata, Lead-Glazed pottery from Tarsus, Pinched-Handle amphora, Agora M 54 amphora, and clay sarcophagi) to »illuminate the relations between Cyprus and her nearest neighbors: Rough and Smooth Cilicia, and north-western Syria«.¹² After identifying two ceramic zones in south central Turkey, western Rough Cilicia and Smooth Cilicia, the author argues that similarities among the percentages of occurrences for certain wares from the Rough Cilicia Survey and Anemurium (both in Rough Cilicia) with the Akamas Survey (western Cyprus) substantiate a link between the two areas in the Hellenistic and Roman times. Furthermore, the ceramic evidence also suggests a link between Smooth Cilicia and southern and south-eastern Cyprus. While in Chapter 10 (>Long-Distance Exchanges Involving Cyprus<), Lund examines different ceramic artifacts and other materials (ivories, jewelry, etc.) to show further connections to Cyprus. The chapter does not carry the robust analysis of the previous chapter, but the analysis does demonstrate that Nea Paphos was the primary corridor to Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus.¹³

Chapter 11 (>Writing Economic History with Potsherds?<) consists of a series of summations that explore the economic implications of Lund's Cypriot ceramic regions and their interconnectedness with themselves and areas farther afield. The author reiterates that pottery circulation within and between the aforementioned ceramic regions was a result of trade and produced for local and regional consumption. The author argues, ceramic diversity in Cyprus was greatest in the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, but imports, notably the introduction and eventual establishment of Eastern Sigillata A, eroded this diversity by the late 1st century BCE, as »pottery consumers in the Eastern Mediterranean turned increasingly towards imported ceramic fine wares with the consequence that local fine ware producers were apparently forced out of business«.¹⁴

The present work represents a welcomed departure from more traditional ceramic studies that rarely move beyond typological classifications and subjective analyses of source areas. Although examinations of geographic distributions of specific forms and wares are not unique to Cyprus, Lund's approach, outcome, and interpretation are novel. The author is quick to acknowledge the perils indicative of most ceramic analyses (i.e. pigeonholing ceramic types into established periodization schemes, lifecycle duration, visibility in the field and at the ceramicist's table, archaeological coverage, etc.), but does not let these handcuff his research aims. The work's greatest strength is Lund's clear mastery of the ceramic evidence and its utilization in addressing local and regional links and interconnectedness.

There are few pitfalls present in this work. At times transitions between chapters are a little disjointed, whereby certain chapters, namely Chapters 5, 6, and to a lesser extent 10, would be better suited for the introduction or concluding discussions. The only real drawback this reviewer identified was the comparisons made between survey projects from Cyprus and south central Turkey presented in Chapter 9. Differing surveying methods, sampling strategies, collection strategies, research goals, preparation of respective ceramicists, and publication outcomes all make survey data comparison a notoriously difficult endeavor. The author's geographic distributions of Eastern Sigillata A, Cypriot Sigillata, Lead-Glazed pottery from Tarsus, Pinched-Handle amphora, Agora M 54 amphora, and clay sarcophagi by raw

- 12 P. 164.
- 13 Pp. 206-210.
- 14 P. 220.



figures do little to support his larger claims of ceramic links between Cilicia and Cyprus. The comparison of various wares' »percentages of occurrences«, however does add credibility to and help reify these links.

Readers will find that Lund has produced a well-written work and an invaluable resource for scholars interested in Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus. Following nearly a century of continuous study, many of the dominant ceramic fine-ware industries of the eastern Mediterranean in the Hellenistic and Roman periods are now quite well understood with detailed shape typologies. Contemporary local Cypriot industries, however, make the ceramic record of Hellenistic and, to a slightly lesser extent, early Roman Cyprus difficult and at times outright ambiguous. A Study of the Circulation of Ceramics in Cyprus helps clarify this ambiguity and tasks ancient ceramics with contributing to a greater scholarly narrative, and for doing this, Lund has made a lasting scholarly contribution.

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