

SVENSKA INSTITUTEN I ATHEN OCH ROM
INSTITUTUM ATHENIENSE ATQUE INSTITUTUM ROMANUM REGNI SUECIAE

Opuscula

Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome

14
2021

STOCKHOLM

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Published with the aid of a grant from The Swedish Research Council (2020-01217)

The English text was revised by Rebecca Montague, Hindon, Salisbury, UK

Opuscula is a peer reviewed journal. Contributions to *Opuscula* should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee before 1 November every year. Contributors are requested to include an abstract summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their article. For style of references to be adopted, see <http://ecsi.se>. Books for review should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee.

ISSN 2000-0898

ISBN 978-91-977799-3-7

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Printed by PrintBest (Viljandi, Estonia) via Italgraf Media AB (Stockholm, Sweden) 2021

Cover illustrations from Leander Touati *et al.* in this volume, p. 191

Book reviews

P.M. Fischer & T. Bürge, *Two Late Cypriot quarters at Hala Sultan Tekke: The Söderberg Expedition 2010–2017* (SIMA, 147), Uppsala: Astrom Editions 2018. xvi + 648 pp., 357 figs. and 148 tables. ISBN 978-91-981535-4-5.

<https://doi.org/10.30549/opathrom-14-20>

Peter Fischer inaugurated the third—and current—programme of excavations and research at the great Late Bronze Age port city at Hala Sultan Tekke (HST) in 2010. The first in the 1890s, by the British following Luigi di Cesnola and local stone or tomb robbers, was barely a programme. The second began in the late 1960s when “professional” excavating (to use Fischer’s term) arrived: after Vassos Karageorghis dug two tombs, the late Paul Åström started work in the city in 1971 that continued intermittently till 2005.

This volume is a monumental report on what Fischer and his team achieved between 2010 and 2017. I have enjoyed reading it—and apologize for being late with this review, when the book was published so speedily in 2018. The writing is personal, direct, and generally free from jargon and woolly terms like “ritual”. It was a pleasure to find too the apparent objectivity of Munsell charts eschewed in favour of subjective descriptions of pottery fabrics that could be checked against the many excellent colour illustrations. The introductory paragraphs for the different sections of the volume with their summaries of current research will help students, and be welcome also to scholars, for placing the team’s contribution in the historiography of Cypriot archaeology; and the many tables and lists are packed with well-marshalled details. The result is a formidable work of scholarship with new data derived solely from research in the field: sorely needed for progressing the archaeology of Cyprus.

The main aims of the third programme—to complete the occupation history of HST and to confirm the extent of the city—were, and are, spot on. Equally important was to unite

the relative and absolute chronology of HST and its destructions in a pan-Cypriot setting, even though that entailed coping with the well-established problems of dating and terminology for the centuries around 1200 BC (the Crisis Years, as Fischer reminds us). On the one hand are the uncertainties, if small still real, of the wiggles of the C-14 curve for that time, on the other the issue/potential issue of whether current subdivisions such as LC IIC2 or LC IIIA1 are handled with an excess of reverence that thereby produces a spurious certainty. Fischer and his team are aware of this. Perhaps we all need a sceptical self-restraint in finessing details of the chronology, even if this makes it harder to decide sequences, let alone agree on which of the widespread destructions and abandonments in Cyprus were calendrically contemporary. But such are the limits of archaeology in creating fine-grained old-fashioned history.

Following ground-penetrating radar and geomagnetic surveys, Fischer excavated two large areas (CQ1 and CQ2) in the north part of HST, setting them in three overarching Strata with a capital S, in a system that recalls Karageorghis’s Floors with a capital F at Kition. There was also enough residual pottery to confirm that occupation at HST goes back to at least the turn of Middle Cypriot to Late Cypriot, like other centres in south-eastern Cyprus.

The Strata (3: LC IIC1–2; 2: transitional LC IIC/IIIA; and 1: LC IIIA1–2) are key evidence of the Crisis Years and show an impressive continuity and wealth of culture, despite the crises of destructions and temporary abandonments, from the 13th century until the final crisis in the mid-12th century BC (after which, only Kition survived in the Larnaca area into the 11th century, when people may have moved there from HST). The buildings, finds, and contexts are presented comprehensively, whether pottery (by the authors) including some important late and probably locally made Pictorial Style kraters (christened the Bird Krater, the Creature Krater, and the Horned God Krater) as well as pot marks (all, or all

bar one, incised after firing), or the molar of an adult horse among a rich variety of faunal remains, and murex among the invertebrates (both groups presented by David S. Reese) or, among the fish presented by Omzi Lerna, Nile perch and at least two other freshwater species—that must have been transported at speed to Cyprus before they turned unfit for human consumption.

There is an impressive amount of detailed information in the different sections of the volume that scholars will be using for decades ahead: many congratulations to Fischer and Teresa Bürge for organizing a mass of evidence so helpfully and with such precision (and to the SIMA editors Jennifer M. Webb and David Frankel, and the publishers Åström Editions, for producing such a fine, albeit weighty book: it is just under 3 kg). The authors confirm the overarching importance of trade overseas in the life and economy of HST, and the city's role as one of the three mega-centres of eastern Cyprus where the island's farming produce and minerals met the great outside world of the Levant.

The life revealed in areas CQ1 and CQ2 on the north edge of the city reflects this domestic and exotic duality. The architecture is on the whole unremarkable, at least in this part of HST, with no big warehouses as seen at Maroni *Vournes*, Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios*, and Alassa *Paliotaverna*, and no ashlar masonry (apart from some blocks in Stratum 1 that are connected with an abandoned cistern of Stratum 2: pp. 42, 55 and fig. 2.27, p. 104 and fig. 2.61). The evidence is widespread for the daily tasks of preparing food in CQ1 and CQ2 and cooking, and consuming. And there is also plenty to show for workshops and specialized production, including textiles and purple dye from murex, as well as jewellery, and copper and bronze working, especially in the earlier Strata 3 and 2—when the prevailing winds from the south-west would have blown the fumes out and away from the city. If much of this life has a daily, domestic intra-island focus, the foreign and foreign-type goods reveal the other side of HST, and what a rich international city it must have been. From the Aegean to Egypt and the Levant and points further east and south, pottery, faience and glass, ivory, lapis lazuli and other semi-precious stones, ivory and gold were in the houses and workshops of HST, as well as the tombs. Perhaps the most surprising exotic object is a giant violin-bow fibula (12.1 cm long), found in Stratum 1, with parallels in Italy and Greece. Bürge and Fischer suggest (p. 472) that it was probably made abroad, and may even have arrived with an immigrant.

Finally, one is struck by how the inhabitants of HST picked themselves up from the blows of the Crisis Years to rebuild their city and strove to maintain the dual pattern of their life from LC IIC through into LC IIIA, even after nearby, and doubtless subordinate, Dromolaxia had ceased to exist—and, probably, was no longer (in charge of) supplying food to its larger neighbour. Here I wish that the authors had said more

on the likely source of HST's copper as seen in the quantities of slag and copper working at the site, and its role in the city's rich continuity of settlement life from the 13th into the 12th century BC: the closest deposits are at Mathiatis, which could point to the extent of HST's economic zone. Their views too would be valuable on comparisons with the other great and nearly-great sites of the 13th and 12th centuries, and where HST is similar and where different: important evidence for the ever-present strength of regionalism as a major factor in understanding prehistoric and early historic Cyprus through until the Ptolemies took the island.

These are among the intriguing questions which I hope will ensure that excavation and research continue for many years at HST. It is an important and exciting journey. We still have much to learn. Although, sadly, there are no lists of figures and tables at the front of the volume, nor an index at the back, this report is a big step on the way. It must have been taxing to assemble.

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M. Blomberg, G. Nordquist, P. Roos, E. Rystedt & L. Werkström, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Sweden fascicule 5. Gustavianum—Uppsala University Museum, The Historical Museum at Lund University, The Cultural Museum of Southern Sweden, Lund, Malmö Art Museum, Lund fascicule 2—Uppsala fascicule 2*, Stockholm: The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities 2020. 81 pp., 185 figs. and 24 pls. ISBN 978-91-88763-03-7.

<https://doi.org/10.30549/opathrom-14-21>

The fifth fascicule of Sweden in the *CVA* series presents 152 Corinthian, Etrusco-Corinthian, and East Greek vases from the collections of four museums: the Gustavianum—Uppsala University Museum (henceforth UU), the Historical Museum at Lund University (LU), the Cultural Museum of Southern Sweden at Lund (CM), and the Malmö Art Museum (MA). The vast majority of these vessels come from the two university collections and more than two thirds of their total number were previously unpublished. Other pottery groups from the LU were published in the first fascicule of Sweden in 1980, at which time the university's collection was housed at the Museum of Classical Antiquities, later supplanted by the Historical Museum (hence, the latest fascicule is labelled as the second fascicule of Lund). On the other hand, the UU collection makes its first appearance in the *CVA* (the volume's designation as the