

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

OPUSCULA

Annual of the Swedish Institutes
at Athens and Rome

1
2008

STOCKHOLM

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The English text was revised by Dr. Janet Fairweather, Ely, England.

*Published with the aid of a grant from
The Swedish Research Council*

Opuscula. Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome is the new combined volume of *Opuscula Atheniensia* and *Opuscula Romana*. Subscriptions can be placed with The Editorial Committee of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome, c/o Dr. Jenni Hjohlman, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm. E-mail: Jenni.Hjohlman@antiken.su.se. Fax +46-(0)8-16 13 62.

Price: SEK 800:– incl. VAT.

Contributions to *Opuscula. Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome* should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee (address above) before 15 September every year. Contributors are requested to include an abstract summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their article. Manuscripts, including photocopies of illustrations, should be submitted in duplicate. For style of references to be adopted see 'Guide for contributors' *Opuscula Atheniensia* 25–26, 2000–2001, 137–140 or *Opuscula Romana* 25–26, 2000–2001, 135–138. All articles are sent to referees for peer review.

Books for review should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee, address above. All books, whether reviewed or not, will be listed under the heading Books received.

ISSN 2000-0898

ISBN 978-91-977798-0-7

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Printed in Sweden 2008

Textgruppen i Uppsala AB

BOOK REVIEWS

Hala Sultan Tekke XII. Tomb 24, stone anchors, faunal remains and pottery provenance, edited by Paul Åström & Karin Nys (SIMA 45:12), Sävedalen: Paul Åströms Förlag 2007. 62 pp., ill., tables. ISBN 978-91-7081-228-6.

The twelfth fascicle in the series of definitive reports devoted to the Swedish excavations at the Late Bronze Age site of Hala Sultan Tekke *Vyzakia* in Cyprus conforms to the principles and standards which Åström has consistently set himself in making the results publicly available. Starting in 1976 with an account of previous explorations at the site, while his own fieldwork was still ongoing, Åström has published his finds in stages so as to avoid the overwhelming accumulation of data which has deterred other archaeologists from going to print fully and in a timely fashion, if ever. At the same time he has not hesitated to keep up with the latest developments in analytical techniques and publishing ventures, and the volume under review reflects all the qualities that have made his fieldwork an exemplary exercise in archaeological scholarship.

The first noteworthy feature of his latest report is its consistency. Instead of yielding to the politically correct pressures and fads to which Cypriote prehistory, and history, are increasingly subject, Åström has chosen to retain Hala Sultan Tekke in the title of his work, as this is the name by which the site and the whole series of publications about its remains are customarily and familiarly known to the archaeological community. Changing names for other than sound academic reasons would only have had the effect of further confusing the intended readership, which has already to cope with the multiple variations in the ways site and locality names have over the years been transliterated, never mind re-invented. If there is no academic justification for archaeologists to change the names conventionally given to sites in the north of the island, which exist to-day only on paper, there is even less reason to follow the new toponymy in the south, which was devised without regard to its historicity or the need for academic continuity.

Likewise, instead of recording the tombs which he dug with a new series of numbers, Åström has sagaciously taken

into account the funerary deposits previously registered at Hala Sultan Tekke and continued numbering the Swedish tombs in the same order. Hence the current report contains a detailed description of the finds from Tomb 24, the last deposit of this kind cleared by Åström's expedition, though not the last of the tombs uncovered and unpublished at the site. Though the contents of Tomb 24 had been looted, Åström and Nys have given a thorough account of the material recovered, consisting almost entirely of pot sherds dating to Late Cypriote IB and the whole of Late Cypriote II. This is accompanied by valuable colour photographs which give an excellent feel for the colours and textures of the Wares. Going back to black and white illustrations in future will seem positively retrograde and anti-climactical.

Furthermore Åström and Nys continue to adhere to the *Swedish Cyprus Expedition* terminology for their pottery classification and relative chronology, eschewing fanciful revisions whose purpose is less to improve the systems for categorising Wares and dates than to deride empirically based taxonomies that allegedly lack scientific underpinning. As they tellingly point out, "based on a petrographic and geochemical analysis of Base-ring fabrics, Vaughan ... proposed an alternative typology of this ware. Although her aim was to provide archaeologists in the field with a practicable fabric typology ..., her proposal did not find a ready reception with her target audience. This is possibly due to the fact that she never published her study *in extenso* ..." (p. 9). They have also sensibly ignored Knapp's ill-conceived and misguided attempt to convert the relative chronology of Bronze Age Cyprus into Prehistoric and Proto-Historic periods.

The second guiding principle of his work is comprehensiveness. No aspect of the excavations or finds has been too insignificant for Åström's attention, and he has taken great care not only to retrieve every scrap which might shed light on the history and culture of this affluent Late Cypriote emporium on the south-east coast of the island, but to have them, to the maximum extent possible, scientifically studied. Whereas in the past a somewhat cavalier attitude was often shown bone fragments from settlement and cemetery

deposits, Åström has collected everything of potential value and had most of them expertly identified. Reese's analysis of the faunal remains from the Hala Sultan Tekke tombs is included in the twelfth fascicle under review and tells us as much about external trade relationships at this time as the imported pottery. While ostrich eggshells from the Levant or North Africa come as no surprise, the occurrence of imported Nile River catfish is most unexpected.

Not content with the conventional designation of the nature of the stone objects encountered at the site, Åström has sought specialist advice to ensure the geological *bien-fondé* of his terms. Hence the material of the anchors found *in situ* in Areas 8 and 22, which are included in the report's catalogue by Åström and Svensson, was identified by Philippe Claeys and Virginie Renson, co-authors of the section in the same volume on the lead isotopic analysis of clays. A more detailed examination of the stones is promised to follow. The potential of this procedure for tracing the origins of the anchors found at Hala Sultan Tekke is clearly appreciated by Åström who notes that according to earlier lithological analyses three anchors from Kition were made respectively in Egypt and in the west of Cyprus (Akamas) (p. 46). It is not, however, stated on what basis the stone vessel base from Tomb 24 is called "gypsum alabaster", when it should be only one substance or the other (p. 24).

Finally Åström has shown himself to be a strong believer in innovative scientific research. While others might have been daunted by the cost, delays and logistical problems in having inorganic materials investigated in new ways, he has made determined efforts to ensure that the fullest insights are obtained from laboratory testing and been prepared to support different and novel approaches. This is in evidence in the fascicle under review which contains the preliminary results of an original project to determine the provenance of pottery finds from Hala Sultan Tekke using lead isotopic analysis, normally applied to copper sourcing. The conclusions are as interesting methodologically as they are industrially, and are enhanced by the useful table giving Cypriote Bronze Age provenance studies since 1994 (p. 55). Recent scientific work on the location of Alashiya could have benefited from this extensive bibliography.

With succeeding volumes in this series on Hala Sultan Tekke planned to contain, *inter alia*, final reports on the architecture of the site, the contexts of the finds and systematic studies of the pottery wares and objects of arts and crafts, we are in no position yet to formulate an overarching and reliable view of the history of the site as a whole. Enough, however, has already been presented to confirm the impression that Hala Sultan Tekke was, in comparative terms, a major coastal centre with established local industries and substantial overseas contacts maintained by direct maritime traffic which brought goods from the Aegean and the Levant, including Egypt. While Åström has given

us a foretaste of his impressions in P. Åström & E. Herscher (eds.), *Late Bronze Age settlement in Cyprus: function and relationship* (Jonsered 1996) (pp. 9–14), it is to be hoped that he will wrap up this exhaustive account of his fieldwork with a synthesis of his own archaeological observations while they are still fresh in his memory, and give us some idea of the lessons he has learnt from the experience.

In this regard I especially look forward to his review of Hala Sultan Tekke's place in the hierarchy of Late Bronze Age sites in the island. In a penetrating study in *BASOR* 348, 2007 (pp. 1–23), Iakovou has, not without reason, cast a critical eye over the estimates of settlement size in this period and challenged the notion that spatial extent, even if it could be realistically calculated, should be the key factor in determining geo-political status. Given that, in the light of the evidence currently available, there is no other way of objectively differentiating between settlements, it is illogical to single out any one site, like Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos*, as pre-eminent, and doing so is simply an earnest of Iakovou's desire to keep in Cyprus a Late Bronze Age polity with a leading centre or capital, for the sake of its identification with Alashiya. The fact that Alashiya also existed in the first half of the second millennium B.C. when Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos* did not is conveniently overlooked. Iakovou's sceptical commentary on the size of Hala Sultan Tekke merits Åström's considered response.

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WORKS DEALING WITH QUESTIONS CONCERNING ANCIENT GREEK VASES

The study of ancient Greek vases has lately been the subject of discussion. Voices have been raised declaring the subject to be limited and of interest only to a narrow circle of specialists. It is thus all the more pleasant to be able to present nine books on ancient pottery sent in to the *Opuscula Atheniensia* for review in the first years of the new millennium.

One is about the early study of Attic vases, focusing on the two very important personages, Beazley and Pottier: P. Rouet, *Approaches to the study of Attic vases*. Beazley and Pottier. Two are about painters, one about an important black-figure painter: O. Borgers, *The Theseus Painter. Style, shape and iconography*, and the other about a group of red-figure painters: T. Mannack, *The Late Mannerists in Athenian vase-painting*. A fourth book deals with non-Attic inscriptions on vases: R. Wachter, *Non-Attic Greek vase inscriptions*. Four books are volumes of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, one on vases from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek