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FROM LITHOGRAPH TO WEB: THE BRITISH MUSEUM'S 1896 ENKOMI EXCAVATIONS

Introductions

Enkomi has a long and colourful history of 'excavation' and is usually regarded as the pre-eminent Late Cypriot Bronze Age (LC, c. 1650–1050 BCE) site due to the nature and diversity of the architectural remains, the finds from both mortuary and settlement contexts, its preserved size and length of continuous occupation. However, Enkomi is also the only extensively excavated LC coastal town and, whilst undoubtedly one of the most important settlements, this bias has led to Enkomi's designation as the 'prime' site (noted by Catling 1962:143) as it is impossible to establish the relative importance of the other settlements. As with the other sites, the majority of Enkomi evidence comes from the more extensive, and better preserved, LCIIIC–III period (c. 1340–1050 BCE).

Despite a considerable volume of publications (discussed further below), there is little in the way of contextual data for the tombs. The Cypriot Department of Antiquities excavations remain the only areas of the site to have been published with full stratigraphic information on the relationship of the intramural tombs to changes in organisation of the settlement (Dikaios 1969–71), and to include discussion of all disturbed as well as intact features. There are several problems with establishing the period of construction and use of the majority of Enkomi tombs, even when carefully excavated and recorded. Many were used for multiple interments over hundreds of years: flooding, collapse and looting all contribute to the difficulties of interpretation. In addition, there is evidence during the Cypriot Bronze Age for several cases of complex secondary treatment of the dead, including deliberate disinterment and relocation of both human remains and grave goods (Keswani 2004:191–2, 217–8, Table 4.1 and 5.1), making it difficult to be certain that tomb construction does not post-date the objects.

Comparison of the excavation with the publications of all the subsequent missions can facilitate further understanding of the British Museum (BM) tombs, placing the material within its context and alleviating some of the bias caused by 19th century techniques and retrieval strategies. The forthcoming web-based publication of the collection, particularly the searchable database format, will enable viewing and sorting of the material by tomb, raw material, date and a number of other criteria. Finally, researchers and others interested in the site will be able to study the entire dataset and fully appreciate not only the material wealth and range of goods in certain of the tombs, but also to appreciate how excavation strategies and archaeological agendas can skew understanding of a site.

History of excavation at Enkomi

Major Alexander di Cesnola (brother of Luigi Palma di Cesnola) seems to have been the first person to draw the site to the attention of archaeologists (Munro & Tubbs 1891:59) but by this time many of the tombs had already been looted. Following a bequest from a Miss Emma Towner

Turner to be used to fund excavation, The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities was allocated the money to conduct investigations on Cyprus. In addition to Enkomi, the sites of Kourion, Amathus, (Murray *et al.* 1900), Hala Sultan Tekke (Åström *et al.* 1976) and Maroni (Johnson 1980) were also excavated over a period from 1895–8. The impetus for an investigation of the area was the presence of two looted tumuli inland from Salamis, near the modern village of Enkomi. The BM expedition investigated these, and in the process, noted a number of nearby additional tombs ‘the construction of which leaves no doubt that they belong to the Mycenaean age’ (Murray *et al.* 1900:1). Explicitly stated in the report is the assumption that this is indeed a Mycenaean cemetery and these initial preconceptions clouded later interpretations of the site, and of the LC period in general (Steel 2001:163).

The expectation of the 1896 campaign was that the town associated with the necropolis should be situated on the plateau above the site but they were unable to locate the settlement (Murray *et al.* 1900:3). They excavated a total of 100 tombs, many of which had been previously looted, and encountered a series of wells, which they believed yielded no evidence for dating. The ruins of two small chapels, and a few shallow graves cut into the upper soil layer containing glazed mediaeval wares, led them to conclude that the wells and architectural remains all dated to the 13th or 14th century CE (Murray *et al.* 1900:5). This initial misinterpretation of the site as ‘Byzantine’ led to the unwitting destruction of substantial areas of the settlement.

The publication of the wealth and extent of the cemetery led to further excavations in the area. In 1913 the Cyprus Museum undertook a trial excavation and in 1927 another was begun by a Mr R. Gunnis. Both were unsuccessful in locating further tombs. The next large-scale excavation was undertaken over two months during 1930 by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (Gjerstad *et al.* 1934). Their strategy was to sink a series of trial trenches in the area immediately west of BM Tomb 69 with the purpose of locating further tombs. A total of 22 ‘productive’ tombs were excavated. The extensive pit digging that was the preferred tomb location technique of all the early missions was conducted within the LC settlement. The leader of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition, Einar Gjerstad, later acknowledged their blunder:

I made the worst kind of mistake a scholar can make: I was working on a pre-conceived idea. Since burial-grounds and settlements were topographically separated, as far as was known, during the whole Bronze Age in Cyprus, there was no reason to suppose that there were other habits in Enkomi (1980:70).

It was not until 1934 that the contemporaneity of the settlement and tombs was recognised by C.F.A. Schaeffer, who had recently made the same error of misinterpreting the settlement at the LB Syrian coastal site of Minet el-Beida (Pitard 1994:22–3). Schaeffer immediately commenced digging trial trenches but was unable to return to the site again until 1946, after the war. Due to commitments to his concurrent excavation at Ras Shamra in Syria, Schaeffer requested the assistance of the Cypriot Department of Antiquities and a joint project was instigated. The two teams dug separately, at different times of the year, in order to utilise the same foremen and local workforce. The Cypriot excavation, carried out under the directorship of the then curator of the Cyprus Museum, Porphyrios Dikaios, was undertaken over twelve seasons from 1948 to 1958 and

has been fully published (Dikaïos 1969–71). Schaeffer led the French Mission until 1970 when directorship passed to O. Pelon who continued until 1973, after which time the Turkish invasion brought an end to excavation. The French Mission's work has been (incompletely) published in a series of volumes and preliminary reports (including Schaeffer 1936, 1952, 1971; Courtois 1981, 1984; Courtois *et al.* 1986; Pelon and Lagarce 1973). It is generally held (cf. Ionas 1984; Iacovou 1988; Kling 1989) that Schaeffer misinterpreted the chronology of the site and that his stratigraphy is uncertain.

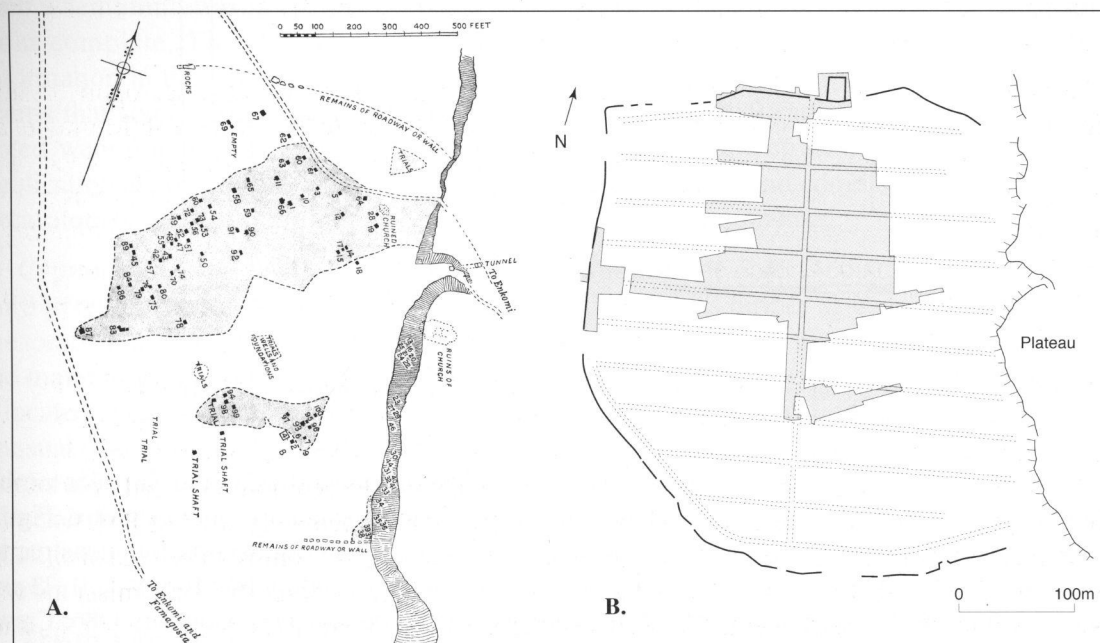


Figure 1: Enkomi excavation plans. A. shows *The British Museum's plan* (Murray *et al.* 1900:30) and B. the final extent of excavations at the site (highlighted in grey) showing the 13th century BCE fortification wall and gridded town layout (after Courtois *et al.* 1986:3, Figure 1). Scale and orientation approximately the same.

The location of the tombs shown on the BM plan juxtaposed with the town plan (Figure 1) shows the pits located within the settlement areas. Dikaïos observed:

the stratigraphical excavation of the deposit is now handicapped by innumerable pits which scar the remains and which constitute a break in the stratification. They, moreover, constitute a danger, since their filling which, in the older pits has become compact, contains ceramic finds of all kinds and of all the periods covered by the site. In order to eliminate the danger of pollution, each time we traced a pit of this kind, we dug it a foot or two deeper than the intact deposit or floor surrounding it and, thus, we were always aware of its presence. (1969–71:8)

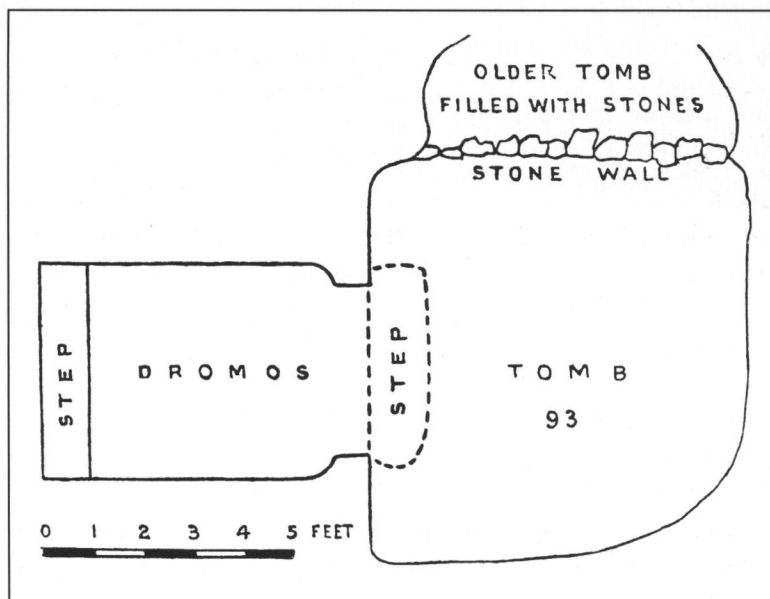


Figure 2: Plan of British Museum Tomb 93 (Murray *et al.* 1900:5, Figure 4).

The majority of the tombs excavated at the site by all missions (around 185) were chamber tombs, cut into the soft limestone bedrock, with one or more chambers leading from a sunken dromos. Figure 2 shows Tomb 93, one of only two tombs planned. In addition to the chamber tombs, four constructed tholos tombs (including BM Tomb 71) and five ashlar built tombs (including BM Tombs 1, 11, 12 and 66) have been excavated (Gjerstad *et al.* 1934; Johnstone 1971; Courtois 1981; Courtois 1986; Crewe forthcoming). Both built and tholos tombs were probably inspired by Near Eastern or Aegean types and the built tombs particularly by those found under houses at Ugarit (Keswani 2004:114–5 with references). Despite a number of objects dating to the very end of the LC, the BM apparently did not excavate any LCIII pit or shaft tombs. Presumably as this late tomb type is obviously cut into the settlement floor levels and may have been attributed to ‘Byzantine’ occupation.

Despite all the above-mentioned shortcomings of excavation and publication, a glimpse into the changing structure of the town and the relationship of the tombs to the buildings can be gained from Dikaïos’s excavation areas (1969–71, Volume IIIB, Plates 242–93). Built initially into courtyards and open spaces between buildings, tombs may have been sealed (or contents relocated) during expansion of settlement areas, or incorporated into building and street plans if still in use. By the later LCII town grid and monumental ashlar building phase at Enkomi the majority of earlier tombs had been sealed by the expansion. There are also tombs divorced from their stratigraphic relationship available for comparison from the other missions. The Swedes published thorough plans and separated the different burial layers where possible (Gjerstad *et al.* 1934) and the French published intact tombs and re-excavated two of the British built tombs (Courtois *et al.* 1986).

Interpreting the British Museum's Enkomi collection

The 1896 excavation was carried out under the direction of three different individuals. Mr A.S. Murray, the Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities, directed from the 28th March until early May. A Cypriot resident, Mr P. Christian, continued from early May until July. Mr A.H. Smith, an assistant in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, continued from July until September. The notebook (now published, Tatton-Brown 2003) is written in two different hands, Tombs 1–37 by Murray and Tombs 38–100 by Christian, who seems to have continued with the task of recording even when Smith was in charge. Christian's entries are far more comprehensive, although still far from complete. The 1897 museum register entries were written by Murray. Frequently, the information in the notebooks does not correspond to the register entries for a particular tomb. It seems that some objects retained were considered too ordinary to mention or that some objects noted were not considered worth keeping. Discrepancies between notebook, register and final publication are best explained by either additional recollections and communications between the excavators or a loss of information between excavation and registration.

Cypriot antiquities laws in 1896 stated that two thirds of the objects could be exported with one third to remain in Nicosia at the Cyprus Museum (CM). It was further agreed upon not to break up the tomb groups in order to facilitate future study and presentation in the museums. The majority of the material is consistent with this policy but a few items held in each museum are from tombs allocated to the other institution. It would seem that negotiations were undertaken to disperse some unusual objects or duplicates that either the BM or CM tombs may not have held examples of. The tombs allocated to the CM are mentioned in *A Catalogue of the Cyprus Museum* (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899) but have never been studied in detail, except for the Mycenaean pottery (Karageorghis 1965). Some of the Cypriot pottery and general dates for the tombs are noted by Åström (1972a, 1972b:828–9).

The majority of the objects in the BM collection were excavated in 1896, with some additional items acquired in 1898–1900. Around one third of the material was published in the volume *Excavations in Cyprus* (Murray *et al.* 1900) and certain classes of objects have been included in specialist studies or the catalogues of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities (see bibliography for details). However, some of the material awaiting conservation or study was not registered or catalogued and these objects will now be published for the first time.

All 1800 objects attributed to Enkomi now have detailed catalogue entries and colour images on Merlin, the British Museum's collections database. Merlin currently includes over 1 million entries for 2.5 million objects. Most of the departmental collections are now recorded on Merlin, the exceptions being departments with extremely large holdings, running into millions of items, which will take many more years to complete. Merlin uses several vocabularies (thesauri and authorities), developed in-house, and two of the thesauri (Object Names and Materials) were published in conjunction with MDA (Museum Documentation Association). Merlin data fields are compliant with SPECTRUM (the internationally recognised standard for documentation, developed by MDA in partnership with museum professionals including the British Museum). Following the relaunch

of the British Museum website in Spring 2007, Enkomi will be amongst the first set of curatorial projects published. The aim is to present the data in a format searchable by a variety of criteria, including find context, material, and location or chronology of production.¹

Contextual information on finds		LBA pottery (including figurines)	
Provenanced to 'Enkomi'	264	Cypriot	163
Provenanced to 'Enkomi tomb'	130	Aegean	239
Provenanced to a specific tomb	1306	Egyptian (Tell el-Yahudiyeh juglets)	7
Foundry Hoard bronzes	87	Syrian glazed pottery	3
Surface finds	11	Uncertain	3
In vicinity of Enkomi only	2		
Total objects*	1800		
Classes of material (LBA)**		LC pottery wares	
Gold	830	Base Ring (BR)	56
Bronze/copper	165	BR I	19
Silver	26	BR II	17
Iron	6	Female figurines	12
Faience etc.	94	Bull rhyta	8
Glass	13	Bichrome Wheelmade	3
Ceramic/terracotta	425	Red/Black Slip (R/BS)	3
Ivory/bone	102	R/BS IV rattle	1
Weights	29	R/BS V	2
Seals	63	Bucchero	12
Scarabs (incl. in jewellery)	16	Handmade	6
Stone beads/pendants	36	Wheelmade	6
Spindle whorls	33	Monochrome	3
Amber beads	6	Plain White ware (2 with potmarks)	6
Stone vessels/objects	37	Red Lustrous Wheelmade	14
Clay sling-shot pellets	2	White Lustrous Wheelmade	1
Cypro-Minoan inscribed balls	4	White Painted	10
Jewellery and tool moulds	2	WP V	1
		WP IV-VI Cross Line Style	1
		WP VI (3 rattles, 1 animal vessel)	8
		White Painted Wheelmade I-II	2
		White Painted Wheelmade III	16
		Pastoral Style kraters	12
		White Shaved	3
		White Slip (WS)	22
		WS I	4
		WS II	18
Classes of material (Post-LBA)			
Geometric/Archaic stone sculpture	5		
Geometric/Archaic terracottas	13		
Hellenistic lamp holder	1		
Neo-Assyrian seal	1		
Roman/Hellenistic textiles	2		

* Note that occasionally pieces of the same object have two or more registration numbers.

** There is some overlap with objects made from multiple materials.

Table 1: Overview of the Enkomi collection in The British Museum.

1. Some of the British Museum's objects (a selection of 5000 of those on display) can already be viewed on the web through the COMPASS project. In addition, a searchable web-based catalogue of the Stein Collection can be viewed at: <http://www.thebritishmuseum.net/thesilkroad>. For further information on Merlin, please contact Peter Main or Tanya Szrajber at the British Museum.

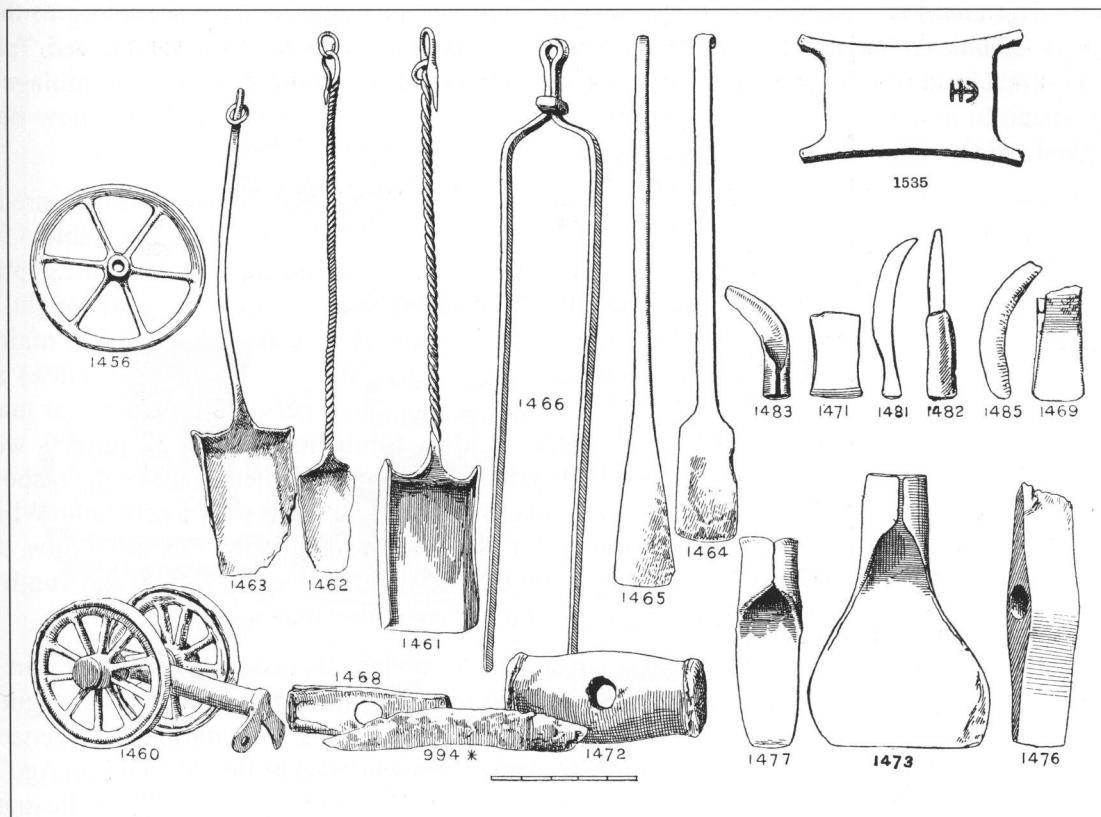


Figure 3: Selected tools and other objects published from the Foundry Hoard (Murray et al 1900:15, Figure 25).

Table 1 provides an overview of the collection. The majority of the material has some provenance but a total of 364 objects cannot be assigned to a specific tomb or other context. These are mainly objects manufactured from fragile or poorly preserved materials or are very small items, such as beads. It seems likely that the difficulty of marking certain objects led to separation from their tomb groups. It is also probable that some are additional surface finds, either from the settlement strata or objects discarded or overlooked by looters. The Foundry Hoard is also an extremely important assemblage, affording a rare glimpse into the importance of bronze artefacts and their use and recycling (Figure 3). The 87 bronzes now catalogued include additional material, primarily scrap and smelting debris, located in 1969. The two objects from the vicinity of Enkomi are scraps of Roman/Hellenistic textiles registered in 1982, certainly from a later tomb in the general area. The Cypro-Archaic and Cypro-Geometric terracottas and sculpture fragments found in and near a few of the tombs were probably all retained (all are published in Tatton-Brown 2000).

The 1896 expedition paid little attention to the deposition of the finds or to the human remains and the aim was to collect a 'representative sample' of objects from the tombs, and particularly

objects that could be displayed. Value judgements were placed upon objects according to their aesthetic qualities or monetary worth and a considerable amount of material was not retained. Table 1 shows that gold (primarily personal ornaments) accounts for almost half of the assemblage. It seems safe to assume that all gold objects would have been collected. These have now been weighed and the information included in the web catalogue.

The four wealthiest tombs excavated at Enkomi by any of the missions, if wealth is measured in gold weight, are BM Tombs 19, 66 and 93 and Swedish Tomb 18 (Keswani 2004:236, Table 5.9c). Tomb 93 is outstanding with around 1430g of gold, including the unique and spectacular Egyptian broad-collar (Murray et al. 1900: Plate 6). The other three all contained around 300g gold-weight. Of the 143 registered objects from Tomb 93 (not including an additional 71 gold items, mainly jewellery, registered in 1900 that are almost certainly from this tomb), only 26 (18%) are manufactured from other materials. Of these, only ten are not small personal ornaments or made from valuable raw materials. The one extremely wealthy tomb from which all objects were collected and published is Swedish Tomb 18. The table of finds (Gjerstad et al. 1934:558–9) shows 206 objects deposited with a minimum of 11 individuals. Of these, 51 items (25%) were gold. Whilst there is certainly variability in types and numbers of objects deposited in the Enkomi tombs, this may also be contrasted with the statistics of BM Tomb 19 (93 of 99 objects, 93% gold) and Tomb 66 (165 of 265 objects, 62% gold) and undoubtedly illustrates collection bias.

Locally-produced pottery was the least-retained class of object, dismissed as 'common ware of a dull colour with moulded, incised, or rudely painted patterns, which point back to an origin in primitive times' (Murray et al. 1900:7). Pottery styles which postdate the importation of Mycenaean wares to Cyprus, such as the LCIII Bucchero ware, were assumed to predate the 'Mycenaean Age' or based upon their 'less advanced' appearance. The overview of wares shown in Table 1 illustrates the predominance of decorated and fine wares. Of the 163 Cypriot ceramics collected, 25 are figurines or zoomorphic vessels and the majority of the remainder fine or decorated wares, with a bias towards juglets. Only nine vessels of coarse or plain pottery are included (three Monochrome and six Plain White ware). The most striking omission from the assemblage is the lack of large vessels, particularly the ubiquitous plain jugs and kraters. A study of the occurrences of Plain White ware in Enkomi tombs by Keswani (1991) has shown that typically Plain White accounts for around 24% of Enkomi tomb pottery (1991:99). Two contributory factors are certainly higher breakage rates of large vessels (many larger decorated vessels were considered worth mending) and the low desirability of either collecting the plain pottery or shipping it back to London.



Figure 4: Contents of British Museum Tomb 79 (Murray *et al.* 1900:40, Figure 69).

Pottery is by far the most frequently deposited item in LC tombs. Table 1 shows ceramics to be the second most common class of material after gold but when this figure is broken down to region of manufacture, imported Aegean pottery far outweighs the Cypriot. Very few of the items are Minoan (eight vessels ranging in date from Late Minoan I–III B) and the vast majority is Mycenaean pottery of Late Helladic IIIA2–B date, with a few II–III A1 examples. From a tomb in use through LCII at Enkomi, only around 10–25% of the pottery would typically be Mycenaean². Despite the higher numbers of Mycenaean pottery, it seems that not all was collected as the notebooks mention additional examples not retained. The presence of a considerable number of pictorial sherds in the assemblage does suggest that all of this style was collected. Figure 4 shows all the pottery retained from Tomb 79, all Late Helladic III. The only other objects retained from this tomb were two

2. Percentages calculated from Cypriot Tomb 10 (Dikaios 1969–71:389–90), Swedish Tombs 11 and 17 (Gjerstad *et al.* 1934:522–3, 546). However, Swedish Tomb 18 which dates solely to LCII C has 81% Mycenaean pottery (see Crewe forthcoming for further discussion).

scarabs and fifteen items of gold jewellery. Despite the fact that the excavation was undertaken before the development of ware names for Cypriot pottery, it is often possible to interpret the descriptions or the sketches in the notebook to obtain an idea of the original contents of the tombs. Where possible this has been noted and the additional information included in the web catalogue, for tombs held in both London and Nicosia. For Tomb 79, the notebook mentions what can be deduced to be White Slip, Base Ring, Red Lustrous Wheelmade wares and also bronze, ivory, stone and faience items. The fragmentary nature of some objects is noted but it is uncertain if this tomb was looted or if the material was poorly preserved due to taphonomic processes.

Collection strategies relating to the other classes of material or types of objects shown in Table 1 were certainly dependent upon factors such as preservation, aesthetic appeal or extent of duplication. Poorly preserved metals seem to have been collected if the object was at least partially restorable but some examples were not retained. Additional silver bowls are mentioned from Tomb 66 and it is likely that silver survival was poor in the damp tomb conditions. Even poorly preserved fragments of carved ivory objects were collected but the complete or near-complete status of the majority of faience and glass objects, along with the presence of two heads from zoomorphic vessels, suggests that some fragmentary examples were not kept. Finer stone vessels were probably all collected. However, the small dishes and tripod mortars and pestles, found in quantity in many of the Enkomi tombs are under-represented. The notebook entry for tomb 43, which was allocated to the CM, states that only four stone mortar and pestles were retained with 'many similar broken ones left' (Tatton-Brown 2003:24), probably due to both their plain, utilitarian appearance and weight. Only three mortars, two dishes and six pestles are now in the BM collection.

Conclusion

There is certainly no doubt that the tombs remain amongst the wealthiest known from the site and Late Bronze Age Cyprus in general. However, the selection of only the more valuable, exotic or aesthetically pleasing objects for collection, and even more so for final publication, by the British Museum expedition led to a perception of greater 'foreignness' of the contents of the 100 excavated tombs than is the case. The privileging of certain types of objects and materials occurred at the expense of the wider array of locally produced and utilitarian-type goods that one would normally expect in Late Cypriot tombs and which were obviously of continued importance in mortuary ritual even amongst particularly wealthy Enkomi residents. Contextualising the material, and the addition of conjecture on objects missing as well as those present, allows a greater appreciation of the variability within and between the tomb assemblages. Fuller publication of the tombs shows the tomb furniture to be a typical Enkomi combination of local/imported and luxury/utilitarian goods.

The web-based catalogue of all the Enkomi objects, along with additional information on the tombs that has been extracted from the notebooks will hopefully be a valuable addition to Cypriot studies. Eventually the material held in the Cyprus Museum may also be added to the database. Many of the objects found on Late Bronze Age Cyprus and in the surrounding region reflect the development of an international style as technologies were transferred, adopted and modified. Raw materials not found on Cyprus were imported and used to manufacture finished goods, which were

again exported. Therefore, there is often considerable ambiguity in the location or date of production for many of the objects and this is reflected in the database. Understanding of Late Cypriot society has progressed since 1896 but further refinements to our knowledge of the various materials and the technologies behind them will undoubtedly occur. It is envisaged that the Enkomi web catalogue will remain active, with scholars able to contribute information on their area of expertise and also to take advantage of the greater facility for study and understanding the material through the range of search and sort criteria along with the benefit of colour images.

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η πόλη της Έγκωμης της Κύπρου της Ύστερης Χαλκοκρατίας έχει ανασκαφεί από διάφορες αποστολές για μια περίοδο άνω των ογδόντα ετών, όμως είναι η πρώτη διερεύνηση που παρέμεινε ελάχιστα κατανοητή. Η δημοσίευση το 1900 μιας απίστευτης παράθεσης εξωτικών και πολύτιμων αντικειμένων από τάφους που ανασκάφηκαν από το Βρετανικό Μουσείο το 1896 δημιούργησε μεγαλύτερο ενδιαφέρον για το χώρο, ο οποίος συνέχισε μέχρι και τον τερματισμό των αρχαιολογικών δραστηριοτήτων στο βόρειο μέρος της Κύπρου το 1974. Η δημοσίευση από όλες τις αποστολές ήταν επιλεκτική και η κατανόηση της φύσης της κατοίκησης της Έγκωμης είναι αποσπασματική. Παρά την απουσία ερμηνευτικής πληροφόρησης, οι τάφοι που ανασκάφηκαν από το Βρετανικό Μουσείο είναι σημαντικοί για την κατανόηση του ρόλου της Έγκωμης εντός της Κύπρου αλλά και ευρύτερα εντός της λεκάνης της ανατολικής Μεσογείου την Ύστερη Εποχή του Χαλκού. Η παρούσα εργασία παρουσιάζει τα αποτελέσματα μελέτης ενός έτους για τη δημιουργία ενός καταλόγου αναζήτησης στο διαδίκτυο, με στόχο να φέρει μαζί και να δημοσιεύσει για πρώτη φορά πλήρως όλο το υλικό από τις ανασκαφές του Βρετανικού Μουσείου στην Έγκωμη και για να εξετάσει πώς μπορεί αυτό να συμβάλει σε μια ευρύτερη κατανόηση του χώρου. Ολόκληρη η μελέτη χρηματοδοτήθηκε από το Ίδρυμα Αναστάσιος Γ. Λεβέντης και είναι με τις ευχαριστίες μου για τη γενναιοδωρία του που παρουσιάζεται αυτή στη μνήμη του Κωνσταντίνου Λεβέντη.

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