

CYPRIOI CONTACTS WITH EAST AND WEST AS REFLECTED IN MEDIEVAL GLAZED POTTERY FROM THE PAPHOS REGION

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Der Artikel legt von drei Fundplätzen in der Paphosregion stammende glasierte Importkeramik vor. Das Material umfasst vier Hauptgruppen: 1. Mittelbyzantinische rottonige Gattungen. 2. Typen einer spezifischen "Coarse Ware", ausgeführt in unterschiedlichen Dekortechniken. 3. Islamische Keramik in "stone-paste" oder Irdenware. 4. Polychrome Sgraffito Keramik, im Stil der sog. Port Saint Symeon-Klasse. Anschliessend werden Probleme der Chronologie und der Herkunft im übergreifenden Zusammenhang der Ost- West-Beziehungen erörtert.

Cyprus "inter Grecos et Sarracenos": the poignant remark of the English pilgrim Willibald in AD 723 holds true not only for the years of the Greek-Arab condominium, but also for the long time of Byzantine and Frankish rule (965-1191/2-1571). The glazed pottery imported into Cyprus during these centuries reflects, in an impressive way, the situation of the island between East and West. But at the same time it raises a number of intriguing questions which I intended originally to discuss by analysing Italian imports from Kouklia. But the generosity of two friends intervened; Athanasios Papageorgiou gave me leave to publish an interesting ceramic group from Ayia Moni, Demetrios Michaelides the Medieval finds from Leptos Walls. My interest was redirected to an earlier period and I thus present here finds from three sites in the Paphos district: from Ayia Moni, Kouklia (Palaepaphos), and Paphos Leptos Walls (Fig. 1). "Leptos Walls" designate an area in Kato Paphos, near the church of Ayia Theoskepasti, where a small scale rescue excavation produced a large amount of Medieval pottery.

The monastery of Ayia Moni or "Moni ton Hieréon" is situated in the foothills of the Troodos, about 1000 m above sea level. According to local tradition, the monastic

establishment was founded in the 4th century, but there is no unequivocal evidence for its existence before the 10th century (Papageorgiou 1996: 23-24). A scriptorium attested in the 12th century testifies to a certain prosperity which seems to have continued well into the 14th century (Darrouzès 1951: 27). During restauration work at Ayia Moni an amount of pottery fragments were collected. This material does not come from a stratified context but is of great interest, as this fairly remote spot produced classes of imported pottery which are hardly known from other sites in Cyprus. We will therefore first present relevant pieces from Ayia Moni. In a second step, these will be compared with imports found at Kouklia and Paphos-Leptos. Finally, these three find groups will be analysed in the wider context of interactions with economic and cultural centres outside the island.

The material collected at Ayia Moni (AM) comprises the following groups of imported glazed pottery:

First, base and rim fragments of the most widely traded Byzantine tablewares, mainly Glazed Painted Ware with decoration in manganese brown and/or copper green (Fig. 4-5), plain Fine Sgraffito Ware with the common motif of a central tondo surrounded by patterned bands (Fig. 2: 1.4), and Painted Sgraffito Ware (Fig. 6; cf. Morgan 1942: pl. 46). Another small rim fragment belongs to the so-called Coarse Incised or Aegean Ware (Fig. 2: 1.7). Two vessels, of which the complete profile can be reconstructed, are of special interest – a plate with plain rim and a dish with vertical rim. Both display birds framed by foliage motifs in a style similar to representations associated with hunting iconography (Fig. 2: 1.1, 1.2; cf. Wartburg 2001b), as depicted on many bowls from shipwrecks (*The Art of Sgraffito* 1999: 41, 126-129; *Glory of Byzantium* 1997: 261, 262, 265, 266). Another bird, surrounded by simple leaf ornaments, is rendered on a third bowl (Fig. 2: 1.3). Slight but noticeable differences in form, decoration and especially fabric point to the existence of different production centres.

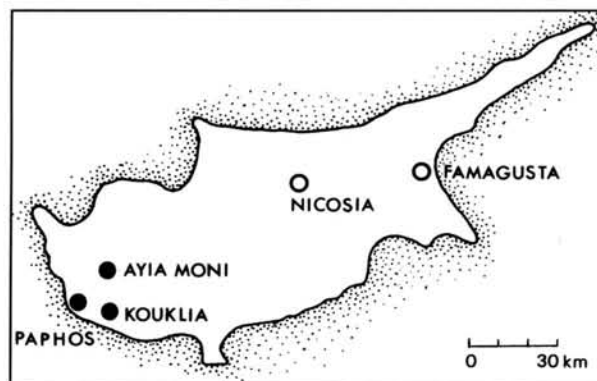


Fig. 1. Cyprus: Ayia Moni (AM), Paphos (LW), Kouklia (TA).

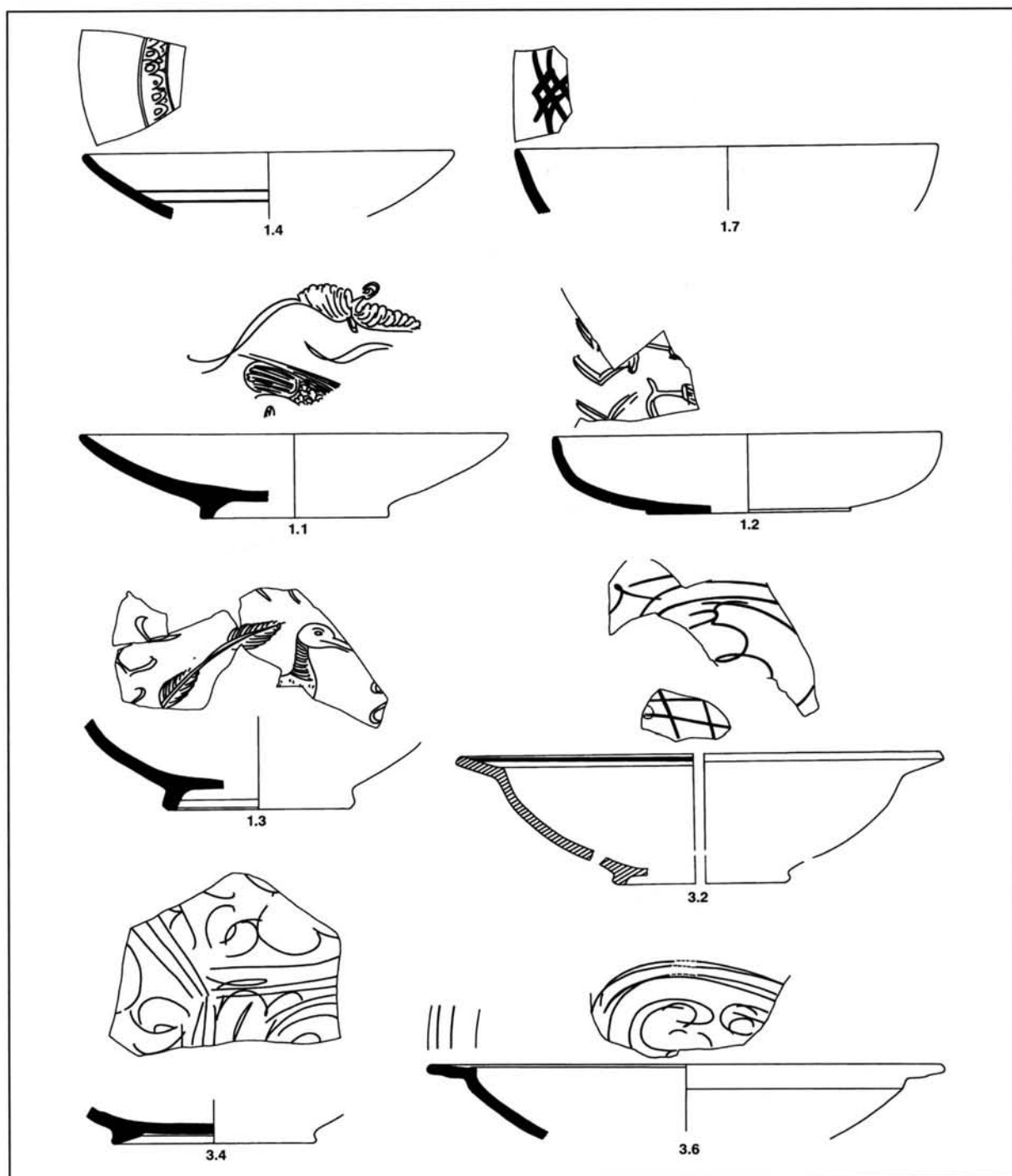


Fig. 2. Imported Glazed Ware found at Ayia Moni (AM).

Second, a series of fragments of the monochrome glazed Coarse Sgraffito Ware, widely distributed in Syria and Palestine (Hakimian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: 5 AI.1.1, 6 AI.2.1, 33; Pringle 1985: 183-186; Avissar 1996: 90). The fabric is red-brown, hard and gritty. The casually executed

design in thin lines is covered by a speckled green or yellow-brown glaze. Three fragments in ochre seem to belong to the same shallow bowl with broad ledge rim and low footed base (Fig. 2: 3.2). The fragments in green, on the other hand, come from at least two different bowls

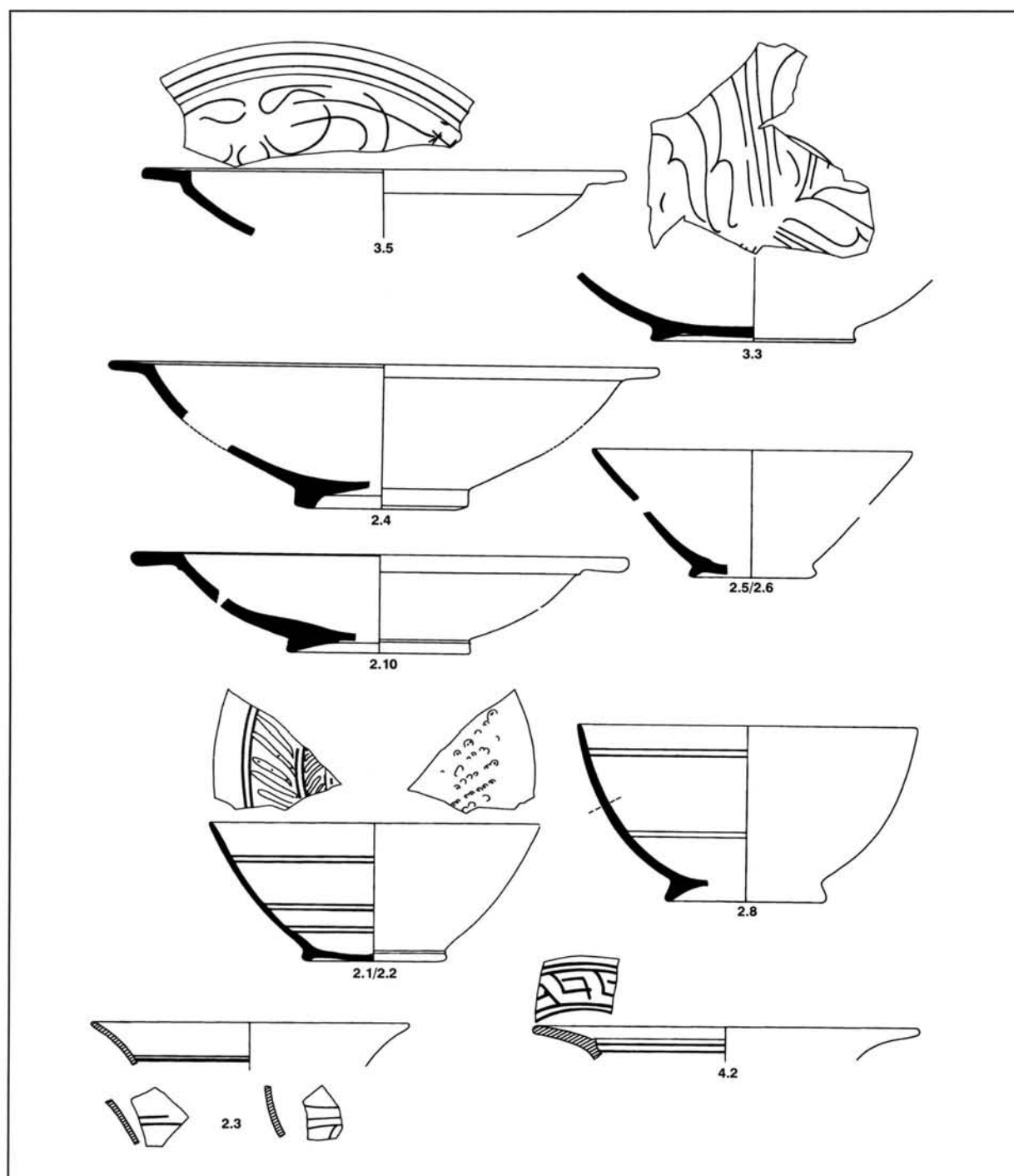


Fig. 3. Imported Glazed Ware found at Ayia Moni (AM).

with everted rims (Fig. 2: 3.4, 3.6; Fig. 3: 3.3, 3.5). The two bottom fragments show a similar kind of distinctive disc base.

The third group of imports found in Ayia Moni consists of Islamic Glazed Wares. Although most of the vessels are

represented by very fragmentary pieces, several types of fabric and style can be identified.

A. A shallow bowl of grey-buff earthenware with a flat everted rim. The manganese-purple glaze is applied only inside (Fig. 3: 2.10; cf. *Hama* 1957: 150, no. 472; Haki-

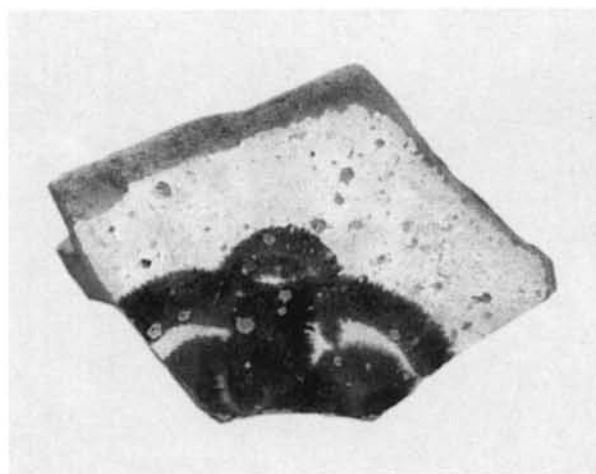


Fig. 4. Brown Painted, AM 1.12.



Fig. 5. Green and Brown Painted, AM 1.11.

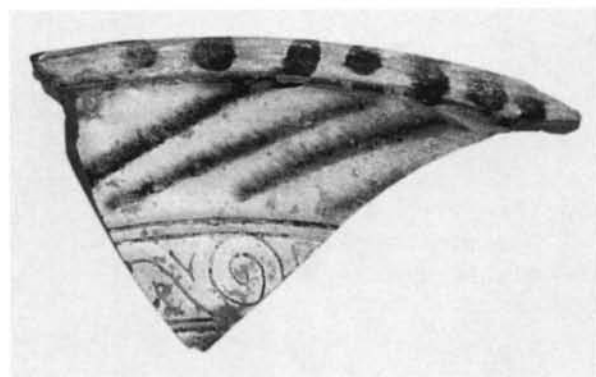


Fig. 6. Painted Sgraffito, AM 1.10.

mian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: 17). It is interesting to note that the base is treated in the same way as those of vessels of the Coarse Sgraffito type (cf. Porter, Watson 1987: 237, B7; Hakimian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: fig. 2.5, 9.2).

B. A bowl of similar shape – except for the base – shows a hard, pale yellowish-buff body of sophisticated stone-paste or fritware. The transparent colourless glaze covers also the outer wall to just about the angular footring (Fig. 3: 2.4; Fig. 9; cf. Porter, Watson 1987: 199, pl. 9; Hakimian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: 16). Of fine whitish thin fabric are fragments of a conical allover glazed bowl, with sides flaring directly from the footring (Fig. 3: 2.5/2.6; cf. Porter, Watson 1987: 213 B1; Pringle 1997: 140 nos. 22-23). A slight yellowish concentration of wide crackled glaze can be observed in the interior. Beside these simple monochrome glazed pieces, more sophisticated vessels of Monochrome Incised and Splashed Wares are represented. We may note fragments of a bowl in buff fritware with

swiftly executed incised decoration under a glaze of unusual mustard colour (Fig. 3: 2.3; Fig. 10). Two other bowls are made of white fritware of fine hard quality. Their shape is characterized by a distinct low footring and straight or slightly curved flaring sides. The decoration consists of incised, modelled and pierced elements, together with colour streaks splashed into an overall colourless transparent glaze (cf. Porter, Watson 1987: 185, 215 B21-23; Atıl 1990: 116). The better preserved example AM 2.1/2.2 (Fig. 3 and 7) is decorated with carved diagonal fluting combined with pierced design and random blue splashes, arranged antithetically in two friezes bordered by incised lines. The second bowl AM 2.8 (Fig. 3 and 8) shows a similar design. Features such as a frieze of incised and pierced motifs and random splashes applied in blue-turquoise and manganese are still discernable, although the surface is rather worn.

Finally, there is a small fragment of a completely different ceramic class. Shape and decorative scheme as well as the light red brown clay define this rim as “Port Saint Symeon” Ware (Fig. 3: 4.2), referred to by Pringle as “Crusader pottery par excellence” (Pringle 1986: 458). An exact parallel is to be found among the material of Al-Mina (Lane 1937: pl. 21), where this polychrome sgraffito ware was for the first time recognized as a class of its own.

The imports from Ayia Moni date, according to the presently accepted chronology, from the late 11th to the 13th century. It is obvious as well as remarkable that wares of Eastern origin predominate in this random collection. Of special interest are those Islamic types (AM 2.5/2.6, 2.3, 2.1/2.2, 2.8) which may belong – as far as I can see – to the Tell Minis group (most probably fritware 1 or intermediate fritware, according to Cristina Tonghini’s definition; 1998: 38-46; cf. also Porter, Watson 1987: 186-188;

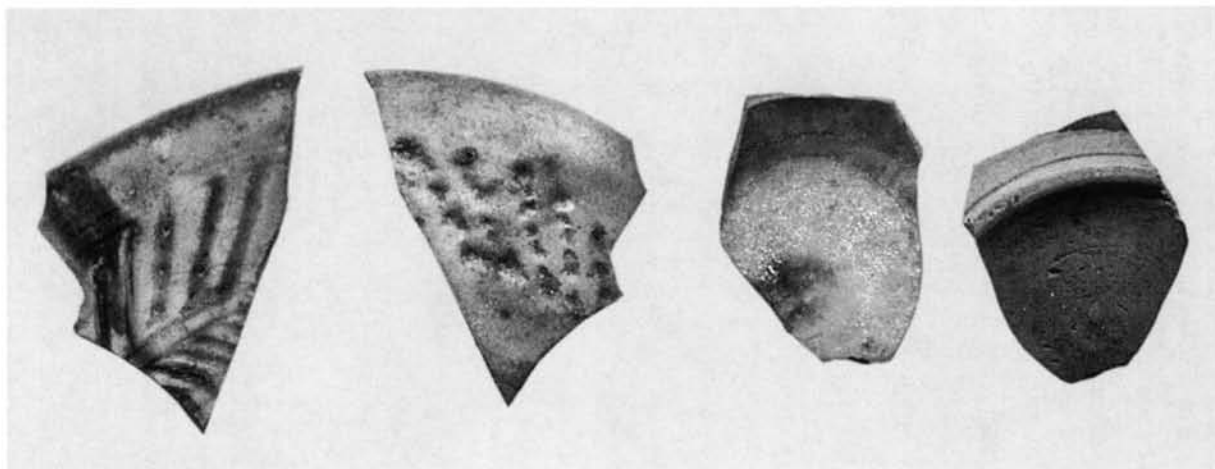


Fig. 7. Islamic Ware, AM 2.1/2.2.

Hama 1957: 150-156). This group is so far not recorded from any other site in Cyprus. On the other hand, widely traded classes like Zeuxippus Ware and Protomaiolica are conspicuously absent at Ayia Moni.

In order to compare the type spectrum of Ayia Moni with the imports found at Kouklia and Leptos Walls, these will have to be described briefly. In Kouklia Medieval glazed pottery is prominent among the ceramic material from the Sanctuary of Aphrodite (TA). Undisturbed deposits are rare, however, and the material from the few sealed groups is very fragmentary (see Wartburg 1998: 133-165). The same applies to the pottery finds from the seven trenches opened in the area (2 × 21.60 m) of the Leptos building complex (LW). Nonetheless, certain conclusions can be drawn.

The Byzantine wares from both sites include all the types observed at Ayia Moni: Green and Brown Painted

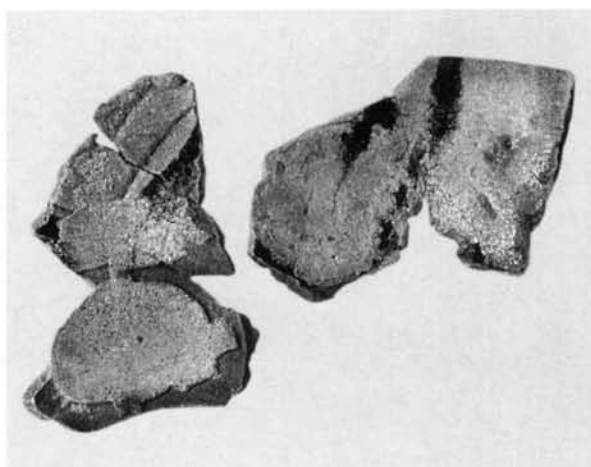


Fig. 8. Islamic Ware, AM 2.8.

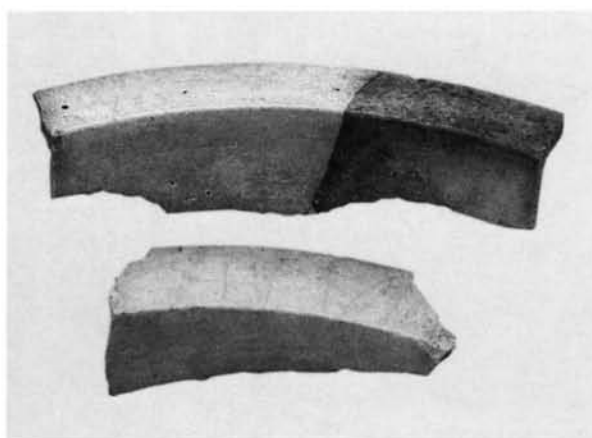


Fig. 9. Islamic Ware, AM 2.4.

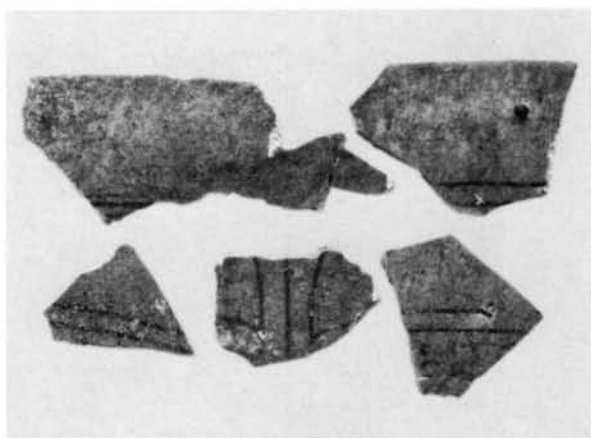


Fig. 10. Islamic Ware, AM 2.3.

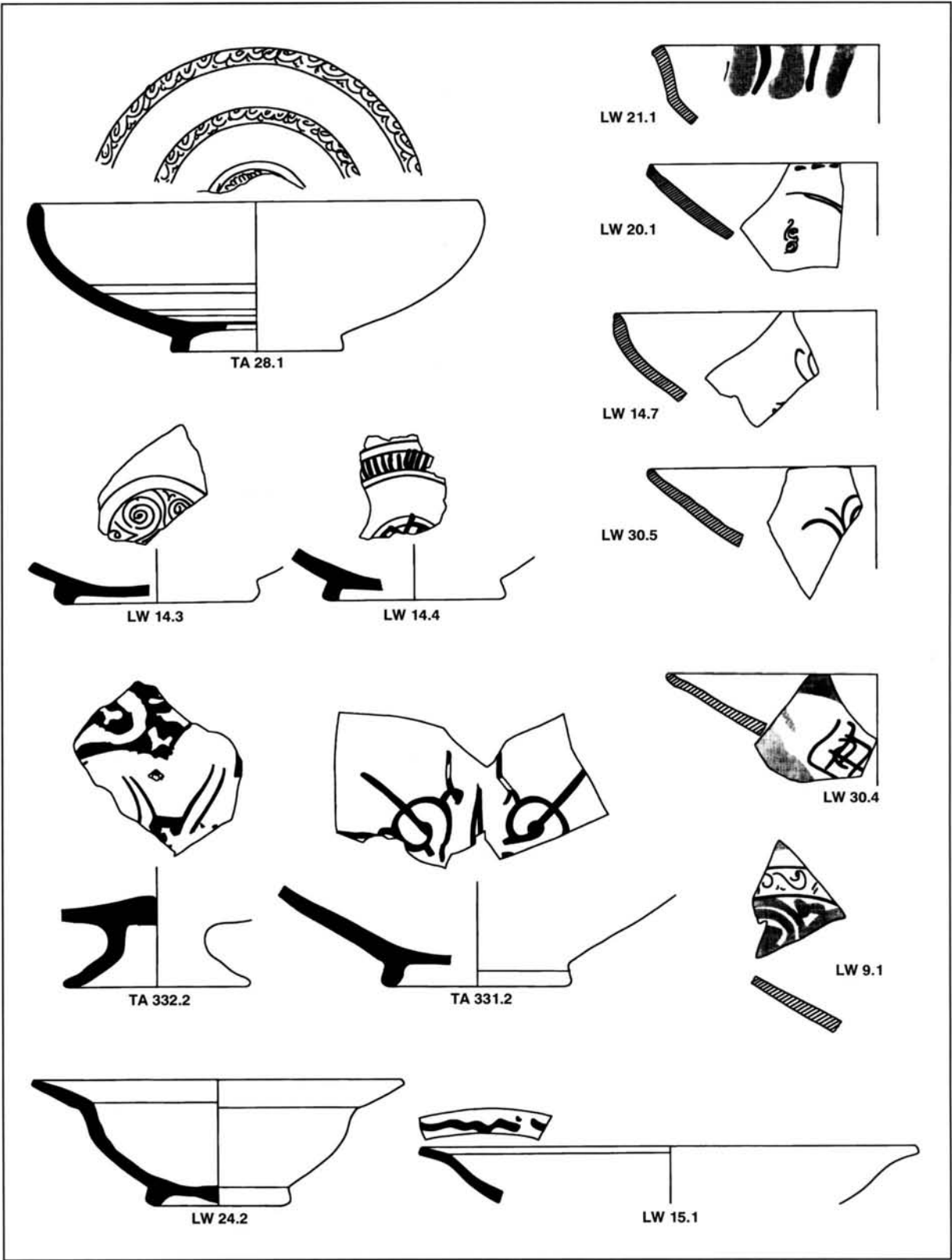


Fig. 11. Imported Glazed Ware found at Paphos (LW) and Kouklia (TA).

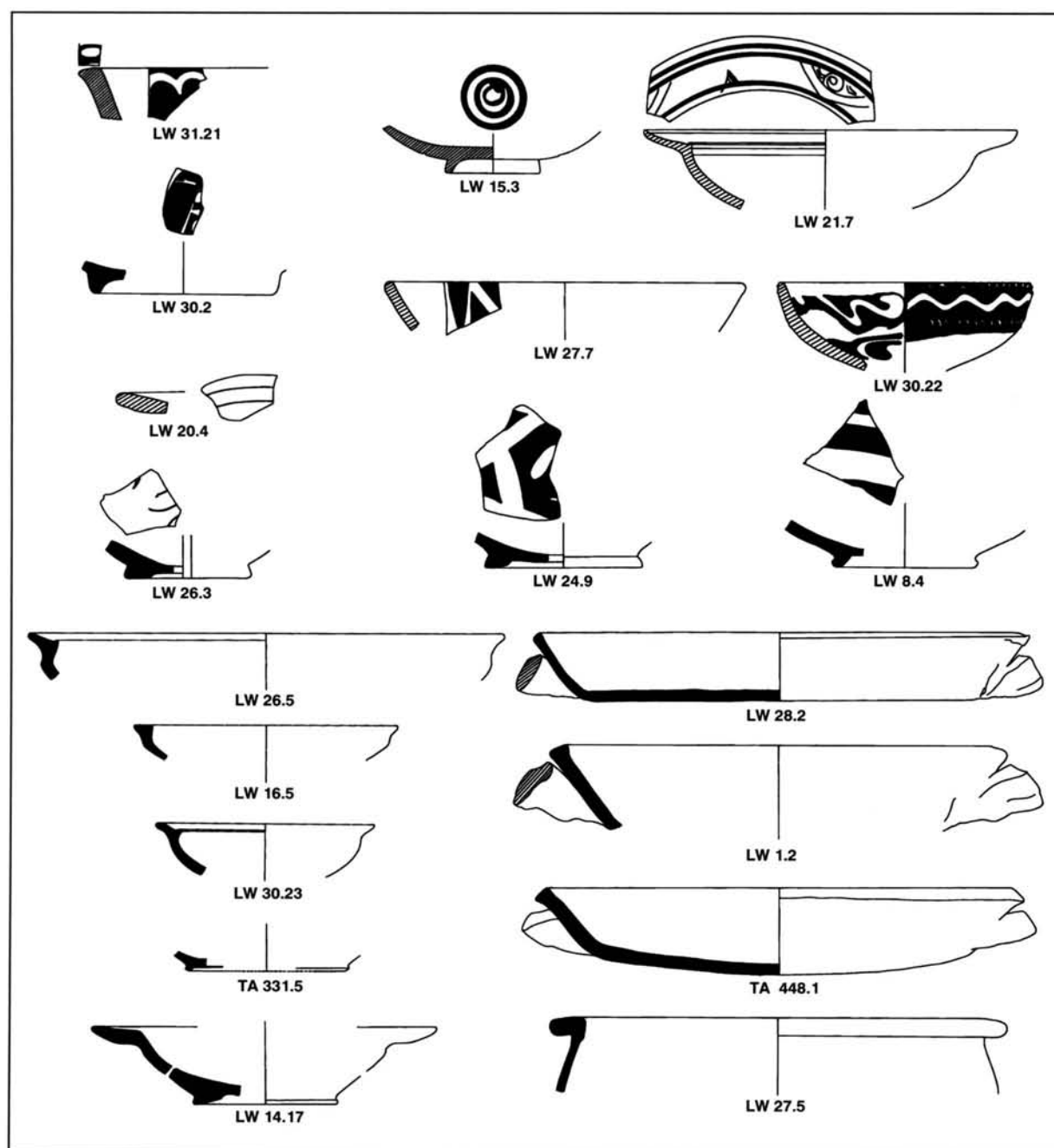


Fig. 12. Imported Glazed Ware found at Paphos (LW) and Kouklia (TA).

and Fine Sgraffito vessels (e.g. Fig. 11: LW 21.1, TA 28.1) such as bowls, plain rim fragments of shallow bowls decorated with geometric or floral design (e.g. Fig. 11: LW 20.1, 14.7, 30.5), and bases with central tondo surrounded by concentric bands (e.g. Fig. 11: LW 14.3, 14.4); Aegean Ware of two main qualities, decorated in champlévé or free-field manner (e.g. Fig. 11: TA 332.2, 331.2); Painted Sgraffito Ware, as well in finer and coarser fabric (e.g. Fig.

11: LW 9.1, 30.4, 15.1). Megaw's monochrome glazed Slip Ware, sometimes enlivened with green splashes (Megaw 1975: 37), belongs definitely to the coarser variation (e.g. Fig. 11: LW 24.2). Zeuxippus class II Ware (for the problem of definition see Wartburg 1997: 33), missing at Ayia Moni, is recorded at Kouklia and occurs in some quantity at Paphos-Leptos (e.g. Fig. 12: LW 15.3, 21.7; Fig. 13). On some of these fragments, the enhanced treatment with the

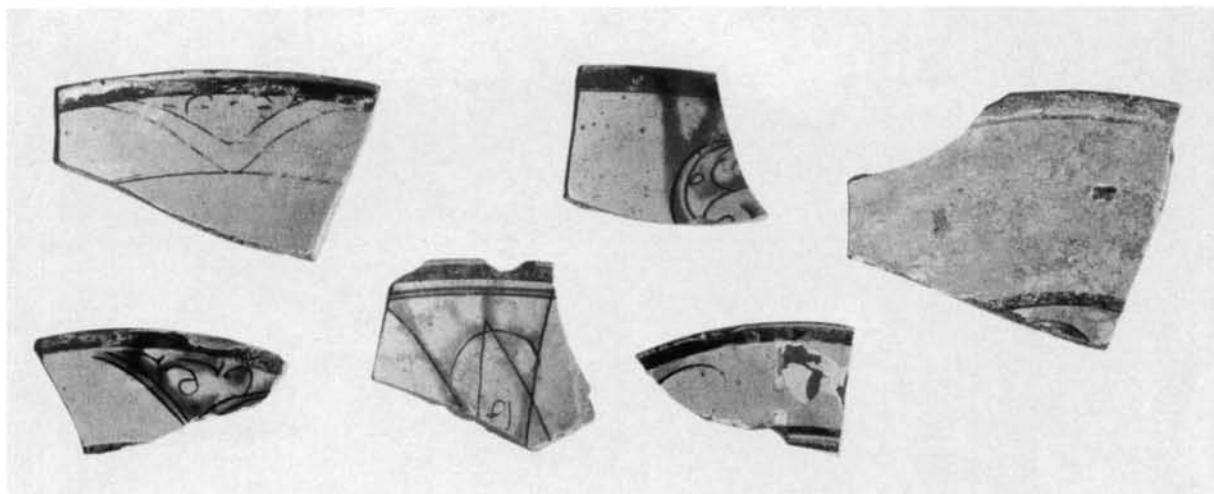


Fig. 13. Zeuxippus Ware, LW and TA.

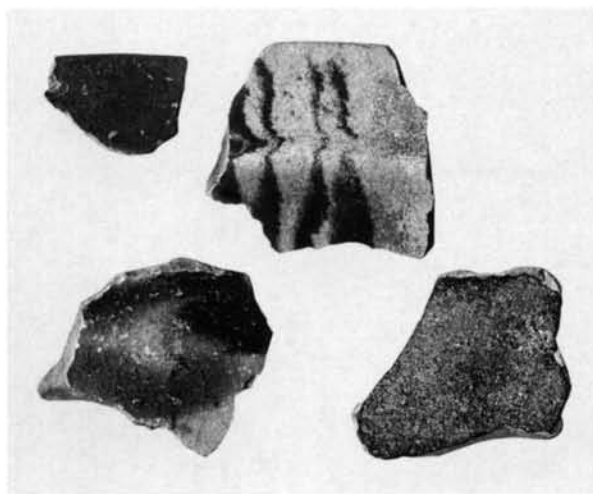


Fig. 14. Islamic Ware, LW 31.29, LW 14.17.

application of a second gold coloured slip on top of the already white slipped dark clay body can be well observed. The fragment LW 21.7 shows a close similarity with locally produced Paphos pottery. Finally, we may include in this general group of Byzantine wares the few imported fragments in Slip Painted manner (e.g. Fig. 12: LW 30.2, 31.21), which represent – in the context of the finds presented here – an alternative decorative technique rather than a different time horizon. In the same way, Slip Painted and Aegean Ware vessels were found associated in the Kastellorizo shipwreck (*The Art of Sgraffito* 1999: 143-157).

The monochrome Coarse Sgraffito Ware, our second main group, is represented outside Ayia Moni so far only

by three fragments from Paphos-Leptos. The shape of the ochre coloured base and rim fragments (Fig. 12: LW 20.4, 26.3) can be paralleled at Ayia Moni. Not found thus far in Cyprus were the forerunners of this group – a polychrome “splashed and mottled” sgraffito version, recovered from various sites in the Levant. This ware formed, *inter alia*, part of the cargo of the Serçe Limani shipwreck, dated unequivocally to the beginning of the 11th century (see Avisar 1996: 87-90; Jenkins 1992). Fragments which bear no traces of sgraffito design, but are similar in all other respects, should be included in this group. Specimens of this simpler green or dark yellow glazed category were recovered at Paphos-Leptos as well as at Kouklia (e.g. Fig. 12: LW 26.5, 16.5, 30.23; TA 331.5; cf. Thalmann 1978: 25; Pringle 1985: 177; 1997: fig. 10). Vessels of similar fabric but with slip painted decoration under transparent yellow or green glaze represent, seen in a wider perspective, but a further variation of this general group. Their decorative features include the broad-line type as well as finer applied motifs (Fig. 12: LW 8.4, 24.9, 27.7, 30.22; cf. Thalmann 1978: 24, fig. 33; Hakimian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: 7; Avisar 1996: 96-98; Stern 1997: 47-48). From a Cypriot point of view, it seems advisable to refer in the context of these “coarse” pottery types to the class of glazed cooking vessels. Both globular pots and frying pans were found in Paphos-Leptos and in Kouklia (Fig. 12: LW 28.2, 1.2, 27.5, TA 448.1; see also Wartburg 1998: no. 29-32; cf. Salamé-Sarkis 1980: 212-214; Thalmann 1978: 24-25; Hakimian, Salamé-Sarkis 1988: 24-25; Avisar 1996: 135-136, 142; Stern 1997: 40-43; 1999: 261).

Finds of Islamic Glazed Wares are – in contrast to Ayia Moni – very scarce at the two other sites. Kouklia yielded some plain fragments of fine thin-walled pinkish-buff fritware under turquoise glaze, such as a bottom piece with a



Fig. 15. Islamic Ware, TA 28.2.



Fig. 16. Islamic Ware, LW 31.35.



Fig. 17. Islamic Ware, LW 3.3.

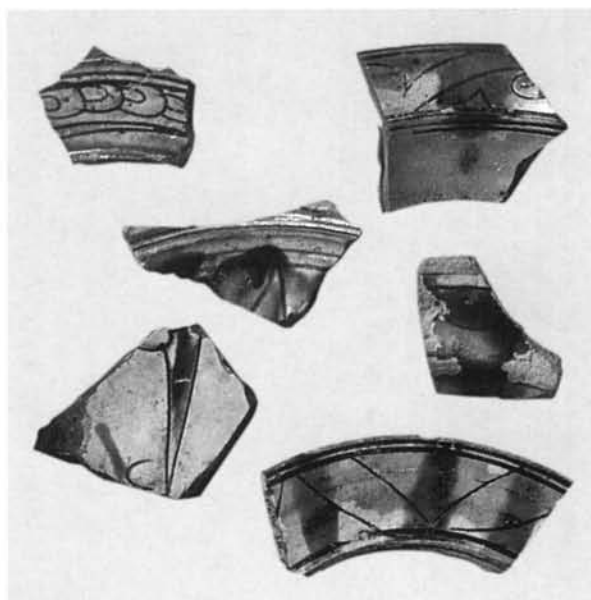


Fig. 18. "Port Saint Symeon" style, LW and TA.

straight footring of medium height (TA 332.1, Wartburg 1998: no. 9), and a single body sherd in lustre painting on a slightly green-tinged transparent glaze (TA 333.2, Wartburg 1998: no. 8). The best preserved piece is a turquoise glazed jar in greyish-buff fritware with a frieze of nimbly incised scrolls on its shoulder (Fig. 15: TA 28.2; Wartburg 1998: no. 48). At Leptos vessels of pinkish-buff earthenware with a flat everted rim and a typical low footring occur in two different decorative techniques. First, a simple monochrome version covered with a manganese-purple glaze (Fig. 14 left: LW 31.29), identical with the Ayia Moni bowl AM 2.10 (Fig. 3). Second, a variation decorated with radial manganese and turquoise stripes painted in a slightly opacified transparent glaze (Fig. 12 and 14 right:

LW 14.17) – in its appearance reminiscent of the so-called "Fayumi" Ware (cf. Avissar 1996: 82; François 1999: 22). Interestingly, the distinct shape of LW 31.29 and LW 14.17 shows close affinities with the Coarse Sgraffito ware. Identical regions of production or even identical workshops for this different wares are therefore not to be excluded. A number of thick, turquoise glazed fragments seem to belong to a large, rather crude vessel type (Fig. 16: LW 31.35). Finally, one tiny wall fragment survives of a bowl decorated in lustre painting on a white opaque glaze, which covers the inside body of pale buff earthenware with dark inclusions (Fig. 17: LW 3.3). On the exterior a green-tinged, transparent glaze is applied. One is tempted to attribute this piece to the Fatimid group (cf.

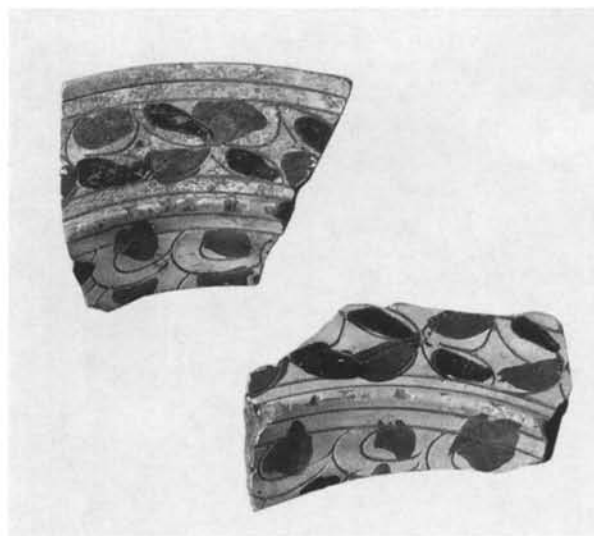


Fig. 19. Polychrome Sgraffito wasters from Misis.

Grube 1994: 138-142), but it is too small for definite attribution.

Fragments in the so-called "Port Saint Symeon" style are represented in small quantities, although it is not always an easy task to distinguish among the mass of local polychrome Sgraffito Ware the small pieces which can be attributed to it (Fig. 18). While four fragments can be defined as such with a high degree of certainty, I would prefer to assign the two rim fragments at the right (top and bottom) – despite their close stylistic affinities – to a local workshop.

CONCLUSIONS

The imports of pottery found at three different sites in the Paphos region form a fairly small, but in many ways interesting group. Their analysis adds on the one hand to our knowledge of the island's overseas trade exchanges. On the other hand, it is important for the question with which this paper is primarily concerned: a better understanding of the formation of the Cypriot ceramic production, in which the region of Paphos played a considerable role. Two problems especially present themselves in this context: the ambiguities of chronology and the question of origins.

As we all know, the chronological framework based on the destruction of the castle of Saranda Kolones in 1222 as a key date is open to discussion. As pointed out elsewhere, the written records do not bear out that the earthquake meant the definite end of the castle's life (Wartburg 2001a). Our chief and only contemporary source for this

event, Oliverus Scholasticus, can hardly be regarded as a reliable witness, as it can be proved that he had left Cyprus and the Levant months before the earthquake. The seemingly magical date of 1222 should therefore be used with utmost caution.

Unfortunately, the material from Ayia Moni and Kouklia does not furnish new evidence for absolute chronology. Stratigraphical data from the Sanctuary site (TA) at Kouklia are relevant, however, for the relative chronology of certain classes of imported and local wares. The pottery assemblages recovered from sealed contexts show that types which were thus far believed, for stylistic reasons, to represent a time sequence, occur practically in the same chronological range. Specifically important in this context is the observation that 12th- to 13th-century Byzantine pottery is associated with fine Islamic wares (Wartburg 1998: 138-142).

The find situation at Paphos-Leptos makes it also difficult to establish a definite chronological sequence. But coin evidence offers a *terminus ante quem* at the turn of the 13th century. At first, such a chronology seems to tie up in a satisfactory way with sites in the Crusader states. Yet behind this enticing harmony lurks a problem. The chronology of Crusader sites is often based more on correlations with political events or natural catastrophes than on stratigraphy. Thus the Leptos "correspondence" may, from the point of view of method, not stand up to close scrutiny. Only new independent and unequivocal archaeological evidence will provide a firm chronological base for future research in the field of Eastern Mediterranean pottery.

The question of origins also presents an option of difficulties. Of the four main classes of imports described, the western origin of the Byzantine wares seems well established. Theories denying that fact, put forward recently by Boas, are not fully convincing, but may be useful in encouraging us to reconsider the problem (Boas 1994: 102-107). As Byzantine imports found in the island have been amply discussed during the last years and presently form the subject of several archaeometric research programs, we shall refrain from further comments on this type of pottery.

The other three classes of imported pottery are supposed to be of eastern origin. This certainly holds true for the Coarse Sgraffito and related types (including the glazed cooking vessels), and for Islamic Glazed Wares. Although their number is still too small to draw any general conclusions, they present precious evidence for the island's trade contacts with the Near East. As Cyprus maintained close commercial relations with centres on the Syrian coast, such vessels were most likely imported from there (for an Islamic Medieval kiln site in Beyrouth see Aubert, Nicolaïdès 1997: 242). But for certain types of Islamic pottery an alternative route via Seljuk Anatolia, as proposed by John Hayes for similar finds in Constantinople, cannot be excluded (Hayes 1992: 43).

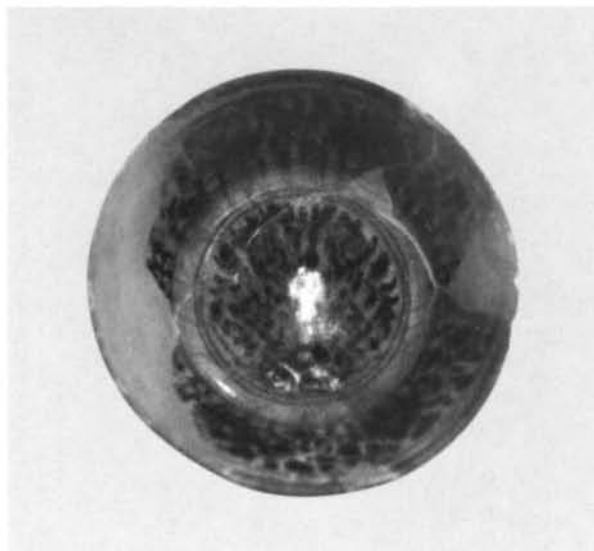


Fig. 20. Islamic bowl, Nicosia (CM 1937/X-II/A2).



Fig. 21. Islamic bowl, Nicosia (CM 1947/VII-12/2A).

Finds of more sophisticated Islamic pottery, besides the few examples from Paphos, are thus far recorded mainly from the northern and eastern part of the island – such as two 14th-century bowls from Nicosia (Fig. 20-21; cf. Megaw 1951: 148) which may come from workshops at Damascus. Whether such vessels represent pure luxury goods or gifts (as possibly at Ayia Moni) is impossible to decide without further evidence from the main cities, especially Nicosia and Famagusta.

The fourth class of imports, the polychrome Sgraffito pottery (usually called “Port Saint Symeon” or “Al-Mina” Ware), confronts us with a number of unsolved problems. As we all know, the origins of this ware are still disputed in the wider context of East-West connections. A hardly convincing theory, assuming a prominent influence of the Crusaders in the development of these wares, was put forward by Vannini (Vannini 1982, based partly on Soustiel). At the moment it would seem wise to agree with Cristina Tonghini’s statement: “However, a more complete picture of polychrome graffito ware is needed to support this theory or any other on the subject” (Tonghini 1998: 62).

The increasing popularity of polychrome Sgraffito pottery in Cypriot local production does not represent an isolated phenomenon, but reflects a general development in the Near Eastern and Western Asian region into which Frankish Cyprus was closely integrated. Yet if the impact of eastern traditions on the Cypriot manufacture is obvious, the way in which it operated still needs to be investigated.

Lane (Lane 1937: 52) emphasized the role of the “Port Saint Symeon” pottery as the definite forerunner of the Cypriot wares. He also took into consideration Hobson’s sug-

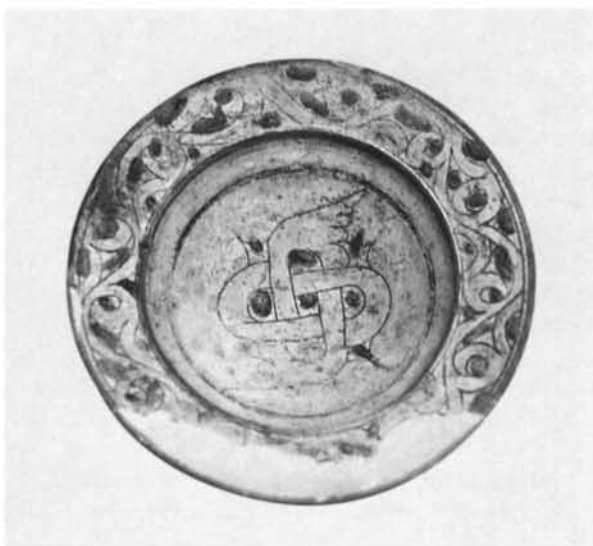


Fig. 22. “Port Saint Symeon” style bowl, Nicosia (CM 1953/II-3/1B).

gestion that Cilician products inspired the Lusignan Sgraffito Ware, stating: “The discovery of Cypriot fragments at Al-Mina and on sites in Cilicia shows that an interchange of pottery was taking place with the Asiatic coast”. Since then, polychrome Sgraffito pottery of “Port Saint Symeon” style, associated with wasters, has provided evidence for a production centre at Misis, the ancient Mopsuestia in Cilicia (Fig. 19; Hild, Hellenkemper 1990: 358, fig. 312-315). Lane had found the absence of “Port Saint Symeon” finds in the Cyprus Museum slightly disconcerting, but



Fig. 23. "Port Saint Symeon" style bowl, Limassol (LMRR 162 LM 1806).

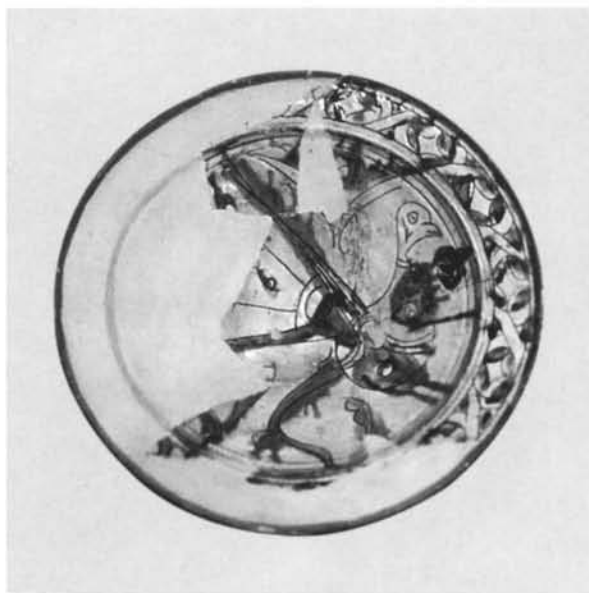


Fig. 24. "Port Saint Symeon" style plate, Limassol (CM1953/II-3/1A).

during the last decades pottery in the "Port Saint Symeon" style has been recorded at various sites in Cyprus.

The problem still awaits a convincing solution, although there is copious evidence for close relations between Cilician Armenia and Cyprus during these centuries. Future research in this field should distinguish – at least from the Cypriot point of view – between three pottery groups:

1. Vessels which are definitely imported. This group includes, *inter alia*, the fragment of a bowl, excavated in 1988 in Nicosia (Flourentzos 1994: 10); a vessel found in 1953 in Nicosia (Fig. 22), which represents a close parallel to a find from Al-Mina (Lane 1937: pl. 24, 1B); and a bowl from Limassol with the image of a sphinx, which is typical for this ware as well as the ornamental motifs on the outer rim (Fig. 23; cf. a bowl from Al-Mina in Patterson-Ševčenko 1974: fig. 13).

2. Local products with unambiguous affinities to the "Port Saint Symeon" style, represented by examples from Kouklia and Paphos decorated with cheetahs, sun emblemata, birds or fish; or two plates from Nicosia, which depict attractive figures of wine drinkers (cf. Wartburg 1998: 146; Papanikola-Bakirtzis 1996: pl. 12, 16; Flourentzos 1994: pl. 14-15).

3. Vessels which show close similarities to pottery from other production centres of polychrome Sgraffito pottery, such as Misis. This applies for example to a bowl from Morphou with a figure holding a wine cup (Taylor, Megaw 1951: pl. V. 9; Hild, Hellenkemper 1990: 315 or Budde 1969: pl. 5); to a vessel from Kyrenia depicting a bird surrounded by an ornamental design identical to that ap-



Fig. 25. "Port Saint Symeon" style bowl, Tarsus (Inv. 3054).

pearing on Misis wasters (Taylor, Megaw 1951: pl. VI 10 - fig. 17); or to a plate from Limassol (Fig. 24) which is very closely related to vessels from Cilicia, found at Misis and Gözlü Kule, Tarsus (Fig. 25; or Hild, Hellenkemper 1990: 314).

Admittedly, the groups proposed here are of a somewhat tentative character. Further research is necessary,

especially with regard to certain types of pottery made in late 13th- and 14th-century Cyprus whose provenance is not yet definitely established. At the same time we need more precise information about the production sites in the region of Antioch, and of other possible workshops in Seljuk Anatolia beside Misis.

At the end, I should like to emphasize the provisional character of my more general conclusions. This is in no small measure due to the fact that our knowledge of the Medieval pottery of Cyprus is based primarily on research conducted in the southern and western part of the island, above all in the Paphos region. Information about the main centres of economic and cultural activity – especially Famagusta and Nicosia –, but also about the castles and monasteries along the North coast, is still extremely restricted, but badly needed.

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