Vounous revisited: teaching history through a symposium and a ceramic workshop

Abstract

This paper aims to show an alternative method to teach the history of a past culture of a historic site, where archaeological evidences came out but the discovered objects were removed somewhere else. In this particular case, Vounous, an Early and Middle Bronze Age rock-cut cemetery site on the hill-top opposite to the famous medieval abbey called Belapais, somewhere between the villages Ozanköy (Casaphani) and Chatalköy (Ayios Epiktitos), in Kyrenia region in Cyprus, which was excavated between the years 1925-1962 is revisited for the purpose of a Symposium and Workshop entitled as “International Terracotta Symposium: Lost Heritage of the Legend Mountain, so as to recall and teach the past history of the site and prepare a museum in the site at least by the replicas of the objects which are not anymore in this area and mostly in several museums all around the world.

For the purpose of this revisit, several round huts built of palm tree leaves, wickers and mud-bricks so as to create working spaces for the ceramic production and displaying their products were constructed by the artists and other volunteers that lasted for several days. The author took part in this Symposium with a visual presentation that included a brief history of the excavation from the published literature as well as some views about the cultural aspects of the ancient people living in a nearby yet undiscovered area, through an analytical approach particularly to the ceramics from different aspects. Hundreds of ceramics produced during a workshop which encouraged several professional artists, amateur ceramic makers and children to learn the history on the original site and all these replicas and some original works that were inspired from the Vounous ancient ceramics are now displayed in a museum. This new approach that aimed to teach the lost heritage also brought awareness to the areas rich archaeological heritage.

Keywords: Vounous, Cyprus, bronze age, early cypriot culture, Middle Cypriot culture, ancient ceramic art, humour, scenic models, International Terracotta Symposium, lost heritage of the legend mountain

Abbreviations: SCE, Swedish Cyprus Expedition

Introduction

A study of the ancient Cypriot art, in particular the small idols and ceramics, make one realize about the cultural aspects of the social life of the human beings on this island. Although usually they are considered principally as offerings to the temples or tombs of the deceased as part of their religious beliefs, some them reveal details about the social life, dressing habits or dwellings, as well as the creative skills and aesthetic sense of their creators. Above all, the ceramics of the Early Cypriot [2250-1750 B.C.] and Middle Cypriot [1750-1450 BC.] (Early and Middle Bronze) Ages bears humoresque characteristics that make the viewers smile while watching them in the museums or their photographs in the museum catalogues or relevant publications. Thus, it can be assumed that they reflect the culture of a certain period, all the relevant innovative technology that people had discovered or the pride and happiness of possessing valuable things in their life. Above all these, perhaps the existence of some artists who managed to express such a humour as a reflection of communities with positive characters towards their families and neighbours.

Although the museums are expected to teach the past history to the citizens through the material culture inherited from the past, they are usually displaying these artefacts as part of national treasures, mostly in the manner of the ‘cabinets of curiosities’ and usually detailed information are lacking in the windows. People do not have deep memories after their visits since they just see so many things in a couple of hours at most, and also with no opportunity to feel the texture, mass and shape, since they are not allowed to touch them. The other problem for the people living in North Cyprus or the tourists visiting these sites, is the lack of well-designed museums with correct information for their provenance. It may be recalled here that Cyprus, that is subjected to many political events in its history, as an island that occupies a rather strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, has got two major communities, Greeks and Turks, who all call themselves Cypriots, but having different languages and religious beliefs which led them to a separation that resulted finally by the establishment of their individual ruling systems since 1974. The Cypriot Greek on the southern part of the island is still recognised internationally as Cyprus Republic that was initially founded in 1960 following the termination of the British Colonial Rule, while the Cypriot Turkish community, first as Cyprus Turkish Federal State founded in 1974 and then under the flag of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus since 1983. The archaeological objects discovered in illicit excavations or with special permission granted under the Law of Antiquities that was put into application in early 1870 and lasted in 1905\(^1\) with the New Law of

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\(^1\)Since the Law Issued in 1905 was not also enough to stop the exportation of the antiquities, amendments were made in 1935.

Department of Architecture Faculty of Architecture Eastern Mediterranean University Famagusta North Cyprus via Mersin 10 Turkey e-mail: netice.yildiz@emu.edu.tr

\(\quad\)University Famagusta North Cyprus via Mersin 10 Turkey e-mail: netice.yildiz@emu.edu.tr
Antiquities, resulted with the exportation of antiquities to Europe, America and Australia since the law allowed the diggers to get one third of the findings. However, even under the new Law of Antiquities that was put into practice in 1905, exportation of the antique objects even for the excavations performed scientifically still persisted due to the agreements with institutions and experts as well as other countries museums claiming some part of the findings in return of their expert support and funding. Consequently, these artefacts are now not only in the museums and private collections in the Cyprus Museum and some private collection in the south part of the island but also thousands of them are in several museums all around the world. The British Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Medelhavsmuseet Stockholm, Ashmolean Museum and Istanbul Archaeology Museum could be cited to hold the largest Cyprus antiquities collections in the world.

Art objects from the ancient eras in North Cyprus Museums are those that were left in some museum stores or houses located in the north part of the island just before the political divisions of the island occurred. So, although they are on display so as to teach the island’s past culture to the citizens and as touristic attractions, lack of enough documentation and research do not provide enough information to the observers. Also, approaching to these objects, even by the researchers, both in Cyprus as well as in other countries’ museums, is not an easy task. Therefore, mainly published literature, photographs and drawings are the main sources to understand the past culture of the island, the excavation reports and a book published by Desmond Morris being one of the best with their detailed studies of ancient potteries and terracotta figurines discovered in Cyprus antique cites, mainly from the cemeteries. However, the photographs of these cult objects which are circulating recently on the social media have increased the awareness of the lost heritage of Cyprus which are far away from the sites they had been discovered or in the collections of museums of other countries.

The ceramic artists of Cyprus who are practicing to create replicas of these objects so as to provide some touristic souvenir attractions by copying from the photographs available in publications alongside their professional original art works, recently realised the value of displaying at least such replicas in the sites where originally they were discovered as an alternative method to recall and teach the past history. Thus, a recent trend is to organise workshops in which some professional artists and amateurs could attempt to make some replicas as well as new creative modern designs through the inspirations they have gained from these lovely objects. A couple of recent attempts by some leading artists living in North Cyprus had aimed to bring awareness to the lost heritage of the island through individual or group workshops which will be mentioned in later part of this article. Similar practices are also made in the southern part of the island and artist from both parts of the island as well as from other countries are also participating to these events, particularly for the realization of a possible peace in a friendship environment. Thus, a recent occasion entitled as “International Terracotta Symposium: Lost Heritage of the Legend Mountain”, main part of the program to include a workshop was organised in the site of the antique cemetery of Vounous, that nearly lasted three months and two academic proceedings included to the program. One of these presentations, which was the shorter version of this paper, aimed to instruct the audiences with the cultural aspects of a settlement, yet not discovered, through the rich archaeological material objects unearthed from the rock-cut tombs of Vounous (Kyrenia-Cyprus) that revealed not only the art practices of the relevant period but also ritual burial traditions and cultural aspects of their social life.

Materials and Methods

In this paper, a brief history of the excavation of the Vounous cemetery will be presented and the art objects discovered in these rock-cut tombs will be discussed from a different perspective, to reveal the culture of the people who once occupied an unknown site in the hills of Kyrenia in northern part of Cyprus and believed to have a dominant culture over the other contemporary settlements in the island. After presenting this history through literature review, then the contribution of the contemporary artist living in North Cyprus and some other artists and scholars from different geographies to revisit a past forgotten history will be the final part of this article. Material objects that are mentioned in the study will be mainly from the published literature and museum web sites.

A short glimpse at the history of Vounous

The necropolis of Vounous is an Early and Middle Cypriot (Cyprus Bronze) Age cemetery site of an undiscovered settlement excavated on a hill in Kyrenia district which is on the northern coastal line of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean region. It is located 2.41km on the north-east of the village of Beylerbeyi (Bellapais), originally a Medieval Gothic style abbey site (Figure 1). It is also about an equal distance from south-east of another village Oranöky (Kazaphani or Casapharn), origin of which is dating back to the Byzantine era, and about 4.5km from Chatabik (Aysos Ekptitos) which is thought to be originally a Neolithic site. It extends over the north slopes of a hill which is bounded on the east and west by ravines, and on the north, is separated from the north slopes of the Kyrenia range by a deep valley. The slope of the hillock, on which the necropolis lies, extends northwards and to the sea uninterruptedly. The top of the hillock forms a plateau of a rather small extent, the south of which is abrupt, and drops down to the valley (Figure 2). The necropolis is therefore independent and bounded naturally on the three sides, the south, east and the west. Its extent towards the north, that is to say to the sea, thus has no boundary.


4The Cypruse Collection at Medelhavsmuseet (The Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities) is one of the world’s leading archaeological finds from Cyprus. The collections consist mainly of finds excavated by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition during 1927-1931 but also houses the of vases and other objects, which the Swedish Consul in Larnaca, Luke Z Pierides, bestowed on Crown Prince Gustav Adolf in 1925. In addition, the collections consist of finds made during Ennar Giustafson’s excavations in Cyprus from 1923 to 1924. Medelhavsmuseet opened at Fredsgatan, No: 2 in Stockholm, in 1982. http://www.varldskulturmuseerna.se/en/medelhavsmuseet/exhibitions/exhibitions/cyprus/ (20 September 2017).


complicated problem as they located the site of the event as Chatalköy (Ayios Epiktitos) in their invitation cards or posters. However, many published literature referred to; cite the name of the site as Kazazphani\textsuperscript{11} or Bellapais Vounous\textsuperscript{12} or Bellapais.\textsuperscript{13} The maps published in the books of Palma Luigi di Cesnola, who seemed to have obtained some ceramics from these tombs as well, indicated the name of Kazazphani next to Kyrenia.\textsuperscript{14}

**Excavations in Vounous necropolis**

\*Vounous* is considered as an important site by archaeologist which revealed at least 836 vessels from the tombs\textsuperscript{15} and some other objects. The first mention of *Vounous* as a Bronze Age site, as already mentioned above, was made by Einar Gjerstad (1897-1988), a PhD candidate then funded by The Sweden government, in his survey to collect data for his doctoral thesis entitled Studies on Prehistoric Cyprus (1926).\textsuperscript{16} Experts then started to consider excavations in the site and other places where they expected to bring to light Bronze Age culture of the island and its connections to the lands around it. Thus, the Swedish Cyprus Expedition team under the direction of Gjerstad continued their work on the island between 1927 and 1931 during which time they had excavated some 25 sites all over the island, which included the clearing of a large cemetery at *Vounous* near the village of Bellapais, to the east of Kyrenia (Figure 2) for the map of the area excavated. The discoveries made by Sweden Cyprus Expedition have been characterised as ‘monumental’ and credited with laying ‘the foundation for the study of all aspects of Cyproite archaeology’\textsuperscript{17}.

In the autumn of 1930, the finds were divided between the Cyprus Museum and Sweden. The Swedish share amounted to some 12,000 objects as well as 5000 boxes containing sherds. In March 1931, the finds were transported by the Swedish Orient Line’s M/S Gotland to Stockholm.\textsuperscript{18}

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\textsuperscript{16}Rosamond Hanworth also cited the location of Vounous cemetery as Bellapais. See (Rosamond Hanworth (not dated c. 1993). *The Heritage of Northern Cyprus, North Cyprus: Ministry of Communications, Public Works and Tourism, p. 16-17, 25. Hanworth remarked in her book that much of the Vounous cemetery has been excavated and studied carefully, but since the tomb robbing was still persisted in the area, she preferred not to locate the site on the maps in her book with her worries of further damage to the site. p. 16.

\textsuperscript{17}Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Major Alexander) (1881) Cyprus Antiquities Excavated by Major Alexander Palma di Cesnola 1876-79, Lawrence Cesnola Collection, W. Holmes and Son, UK.

As Porphyrios Dikaios wrote in his report that was published in 1940,19 early in 1931, the Kyrenia District Police had send a number of Red Polished vases collected on the site of Vounous, 2.4 km (1.5 miles) approximately east of Kazaphani village. Dikaios, then the curator of the Cyprus Museum, who was appointed to inspect the area, reported to the museum that an extensive area had been looted and an urgent excavation was required since he considered the area to be promising. Soon after, another excavation work was made in the vast necropolis of Vounous by Dikaios for Cyprus Museum in 1931-32 through the funds collected from the subscription fees of the museum memberships and the kind help of Rupert Gunnis (1899-1965).20 The first phase of the excavation continued for three months during which time they managed to open the tombs numbered 1-20. However, the looters from nearby villages continued doing harm to the site soon after within the three months that the excavation had been paused. Thus, Dikaios, spent another two weeks to open another eleven tombs in June and published his “Preliminary Report” in the Illustrated London News on 31 October 1931 (pp. 678 ff) which covered the tombs 1-20 and the second report for tombs 21-31 again in the same newspaper on 5th December 1931 (pp. 875 ff).21 Dikaios, continued the excavation in the area in 1932 through a funding support by a certain Mr. J. C. Gaffiero22 from Nicosia and opened another 17 tombs during the excavation season. The report of the third excavation by Dikaios was then published again in the Illustrated London News on 10th December 1932 (pp. 928) and also as proceedings in several symposiums.23 Thus, a total 48 tombs in the western part of the necropolis were opened by Cyprus Museum guided by Dikaios. (See Figure 2 for the map of the area excavated).

Porphyrios Dikaios, who was at that time the Curator of the Cyprus Museum, sampled Vounous in 1932 and the following year, Professor Claude Schaeffier of the Louvre had formed a few week’s work there. In 1936, Professor Claud Schaeffer had published a travel book Missions en Chypre, which included a few of his tombs, while it appeared that Dikaios’ report, which was published through the funding and editorial of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition24 in 1940, only dealt very briefly with his pots.25

Dikaios, during his work on the site, made extensive survey to discover the settlement site. He investigated the site extending from Bellapais to Ayios Epiphitos (Chatalköy) and Troulli, where later excavations revealed some Neolithic settlements.26 Dikaios mentions about a Bronze Age site, which he assumed to have been a settlement site, between Belapais and Vounous, on the slopes east of the Bellapais where the Greek cemetery is located.27 Dikaios also noted his discovery of a small stone axe head at the site called Tzaranies, which is located on the hillocks west of Vounous on the other side of the ravine. But his efforts ended with no result since this particular site called Tzaranies is covered with remains of a recent settlement, presumably from Byzantine era.28 Although it was easier to discover the cemetery site since they were all consisted of rock-cut dromos-tombs, his attempts to find the settlement site was not successful.

However, the result of the excavations elsewhere in the island that revealed Early Bronze Age Culture of Cyprus made it clear that the settlers favoured the slopes of the foothills for the tombs while the settlements were located on the plains.29

After the excavations conducted by Dikaios, the excavation at this site was continued by J.R. Stewart30 for the British School at Athens in 193731 who had done the most significant work at Vounous.32

J.B.R. Stewart, an ambitious, hard-working and venturesome archaeologist, had performed a long term excavation in Vounous with his first wife Eleanor and later his second wife Eve, until his death. James Rivers Barrington Stewart (born on 3rd July 1913, Sydney Australia-died on 6th February 1962, New South Wales Australia), worked extensively in Egypt, Anatolia, Australia and New Zealand, as an archaeologist and a university lecturer. However, he is best known are kept in the archive and museum of the Medelahvsmuseet, Stockholm. The Medelahvsmuseet was founded in 1954 as a direct result of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition and objects taken from Egypt in order to store the Swedish share of the finds from the excavations. The archival material from the Swedish Cyprus Expedition, including field diaries, drawings, photographs, manuscripts and correspondence, is kept in the archive of the museum. Stewart’s excavations at Vounous were published by the Swedish Institute in Rome in 1950 and Einar Gjerstad invited Stewart to write about the Early Bronze Age in Cyprus for Swedish Cyprus Expedition Volume IV, Part 1A (Stewart 1962). The good collaboration between Stewart and Gjerstad prompted Stewart to donate his field records to the Swedish Cyprus Expedition, which thus duly came to the museum. Göransson (2013) pp. 195-196.


33Dikaios (1940) p. 2; Dikaios (1936) Excavations at Ermi, Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, (pp. 1-81), (pp. 72-74), p. i.

34Dikaios (1940) p. 4

35Dikaios (1940) p. 4-5


37James RB Stewart (1962) known as Jim Stewart was an Australian descended from the Stewarts of Appin in Scotland. He was educated at the King’s School, Parrana, and then went to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He is usually associated with the Bronze Age of Cyprus; and his publication related to Vounous 1937-38 excavations, published in Lund in 1950 and in the series of Swedish Cyprus Expedition writing part IV: 1A, that was published in Lund in 1962. However, these are only a small part of his work and knowledge.38 Dikaios (1940) p. 3; See Stewart J & Stewart E (1950) Vounous 1937-1938. (Skrifter Utgivna au Svenska Institut I Rom 14, Lund, pp. 151-152.

39James Stewart’s reports for Vounous excavations and part of the collections

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for his pioneering work on the Early Bronze Age of Cyprus. It was on his trip back from Australia after his wedding to Eleanor that they paid a visit to Palestine where the couple met Lieutenant-Commander Noel Frederick Wheeler who had invited them to Cyprus. So, upon the acceptance of this unexpected invitation, they arrived to the island on 14th November 1935. Soon after, he was interested to conduct a survey and excavation in the island under the funding of British Institution of Archaeology in Athens.34

Stewart, although quite young when he visited Cyprus, had already done some practises in archaeology. Prior to his experiences in Cyprus, Stewart first joined Sir Flinders Petrie’s team for their final season at Tell el-‘Ajjul, Gaza, in southern Palestine, and then the Wilkin Scholarship enabled him to excavate and travel extensively in Turkey during 1935-37. He also stayed at the British School of Archaeology in Athens, where he met Dale Trendall (later Professor of Greek at the University of Sydney). While he was at the British School in Athens, he decided to concentrate on Cyprus as he learned that the Swedes had cleared a large cemetery at Vounous near the village of Bellapais, to the east of Kyrenia.35

Thus, Stewart, accompanied by his first wife, begun his first and perhaps most famous excavations in the cemetery of Bellapais Vounous on the island’s north coast in the years 1937-38.36 During his first excavation, as Crawford (1955) wrote, Stewarts were living in a picturesque quarter, in a room at the Bellapais Abbey, the Gothic splendour of Kyrenia, overlooking a precipice, with a gorgeous view over the coastal plain and across the sea, to the snowy peaks of Taurus in Asia Minor. The room was mainly occupied by pots in various states of repair, amongst which prowled the cats.37

Eve, Stewart’s second wife, remarked about his excavations to have always been able to produce something of interest or importance. Accordingly, at Vounous he had found an imported pot from Syria and magnificentchalics with model animals on the rim; at Ayia Paraskevi he got Philia and Vounous material in the same tomb, and also strings of small, coloured beads and little fishes, while Vasilia had a large imported alabaster bowl. But Karmi Palealona surpassed them all with his discovery on the wall of the dromos of Tomb 6 the earliest bas-relief human figure ever found in Cyprus and an imported, decorated Kamares were cup in another tombs numbered as 11B.38 So, these findings are important to prove material exchange between the communities living in different parts of Cyprus as well as international trade.

Probably Stewart’s earliest published material is the booklet on Vounous for an exhibition at the Institute of Archaeology, the University of London, March-April, 1939. The last thing he wrote, before his death in February 1962, was the report of this tomb, which he called ‘The Tomb of the Seafarer’, published in Opuscula Atheniensia Volume 4, Lund 1962.39

Discoveries in Vounous cemetery site by Stewart

The excavated area of Vounous cemetery was consisted of rock-cut chamber tombs which yielded a large variety of red polished potteries and terracotta figurines. The earliest discoveries were adaptation of Anatolian potteries while the ones that could be dated later than these, revealed a Cypriot character.40 As Karageorghis claimed, in spite of the fact that the island during the Early Bronze Age (Early Cypriot Age, c. 2300 BC) period was thickly populated and numerous settlements have been located, the knowledge comes exclusively from the cemeteries and knowledge relevant to the dwellings is scanty.41 However, as it is assumed that Early Cypriot period is subjected to new settlements by colonisers mainly from Anatolia, they seemed to be responsible for the introduction of new technology, like exploiting and processing copper mine, and new styles in material culture. Thus, a sub-rectangular and often multi-cellular architecture, the type of buildings that exists in Anatolia since the Neolithic period, seemed to have also been practiced in Cyprus.42 Consequently, the tholos houses of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, discovered in Khirokitia, Ayios Epiktitos (Chatalköy), Sotira, Lemba, Mesophilia and elsewhere, seemed to have been changed with their shapes to rectangular forms with flat roofs. Among the other novelties were the plough and equids, introduction of culture as the domesticated animal, several distinctive potteries, in particular the red polished ones, a variety of mold-cast copper tools, weapons, gaming stones and personal ornament objects, as well as spindle whorls and loom-weights which recall new style of textiles in which low whorl spinning technology was used in Cyprus since the beginning of the Early Bronze Age.43 In addition, there were new types of symbolic representations of human and animal forms and mortuary practices.44 Thus, the plank shaped idols, that represent mainly women wearing so many necklaces and earrings, were so common during the Early Bronze Age, some of which were also discovered in Vounous.

Vounous culture in view of the findings in the tombs

The findings in the rock-cut tombs of Vounous are rather informative for the culture of the people once lived in this region. The architecture style of the tombs as well as the objects discovered give hints for the socio-economic conditions as well as burial habits of these people. The Early Cypriot Period (Early Bronze Age) ground Area A excavated by Stewart’s team yielded 43 chambers, 23 of which contained 42 copper-base objects, which makes an average of 1.2 objects per tomb.45 The skeletons revealed some anthropological facts that human beings were mainly dolichocephalic (long headed) in Vounous and Lapithos. However, some brachycephalic skulls also

40Karageorghis (1968) p. 109
41Karageorghis (1968) p. 39.
occurred. There is one interesting fact in Vounous tombs that, they contained only 6% children skeletons as Keswani (2004) suggested and similar case is also to have been reported for Laphithos cemeteries while in other areas these were usually 50% of the findings. These findings attested to reveal the fact for the exclusion of the children from the mortuary rites accorded to the adults and also brings to mind that children were buried in their settlement areas, possibly in the courtyard of the houses.

Three of the early Vounous chamber tombs (No: 114, 116, 117) excavated by Stewarts had their stomion facades carved with representations of wooden doorways. Keswani (2004) suggested that these decorated doorways may mark the tombs as shrines while Chesson (1999; 2001) assumed them to be so called “charnel” (the houses for the dead) as is the case in the southern Levantine Early Bronze Age. The similar stomion representations could be seen on some potteries found in Vounous tombs and also the entrance door of the well-known Vounous Bowl which is in the collection of Cyprus Museum. Therefore, it could be assumed that these carvings and representations may be also recalling the memories of their houses.

As already mentioned above, despite protracted survey work, no major contemporary habitation site is known in the environs of Vounous, although saddle querns, hand-stones and a game have been noted in the vicinity of Cemetery B. It is already stated by the archaeologists that there has been yet no systematic exploration and stratification of the settlements of the period. Due to intense building activity in the area during the recent years, the possibility of discovery of such a settlement nowadays is becoming less hopeful. As J. B. Hennessy noted, this has meant that the succession of events in this important phase of the island’s history has been entirely created on an imagined technological and typological development of tomb types, burial customs, and, most of all, on the pottery and other small objects which form the offerings to the deceased in the tombs. However, excavated sites of Early Bronze Age in other areas brought to light a couple of houses with ground plan of the rooms in rectangular shapes and usually consisting of several rooms which also gave possibility to later annexes and expansions of the dimension of the house.

The tomb objects give some hints about farming activity and type of food consumed. The ploughing scene represented on terracotta discovered in a Vounous tomb is one of the best representation to reflect the developed farming technique in the Early Bronze Age, as described above. This single-handed plough represented as a clay model of ploughing scene and on a Red Polished jug with modelled decoration of the ploughman and cattle, discovered in Vounous and other excavated Early and Middle Cypriot sites indicate a notable increase in cereal grinding equipment which are the signs of an increase in the production and consumption of cereals.

Some potteries which have different characters than the majority of the discoveries give some ideas for the presence of commercial activity. The site is almost two and half kilometres from the coast which fails to offer a natural harbour or anchorage nearby, thus can hardly be the obvious reason for the relative wealth of this cemetery. However, some Syro-Palestinian vessels and Minoan bronzes discovered in Early Cypriot I and Middle Cypriot I tombs an imported Palestinian jar in Early Cypriot II burial at Vounous 164B, dated to early Early Cypriot IV are the signs of exchanges or migrations to the island from the mainland.

A range of metal items, such as daggers, knives, axes, razors, chisels, tweezers, dress pins, awls and four broken fragments of sheet gold that had been discovered in the Vounous tomb were again the proof of a sophisticated knowledge of metal technology. Discovery of sheath knives representation in clay art deposited in the tombs is another interesting aspect which brings to mind military organisation or inland social clashing problems during the Early and Middle Cypriot era in Vounous and elsewhere in the island. However, as Morris claims, these weapons could have been used for cutting and skinning animals, cutting meats or in other tasks.

Several tomb chambers at Vounous contained quantities of animal bones, majority being those of the cattle while bones of sheep and goat, were often placed at the skeleton’s feet. All these bones were present not only as cuts of meat, but also as cranial and facial bones, mandibles, and wrist and foot bones, suggesting that the animals were dispatched at Vounous cemetery, itself. As Waber & Frankel suggest, the purpose of the mortuary ceremonies at Vounous involved the slaughter and likely consumption of adult cattle and other animals. Furthermore, based on the statement of Keswani (2004) for the presence of ceremonial vessels in nearly 50% of the chamber tombs at Vounous Site A, Knapp (2013) also agrees with Webb and Frankel (2010: 195) that these may be indications of feasting in the dromos of the tomb as part of the mortuary rituals here. Since the presence of animal bones, decorated vessels and food presentation bowls are notably less in other pre-Bronze Age (Early Cypriot I-II)

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51For the image see: http://homepage.univie.ac.at/elisabeth.trinkl/forum/forum0300/14dosch.htm


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at cemetery sites on the northern coastal line, mainly in Karmi and Lapiθhοs, and complex (ritual) vessels are entirely absent from those sites.65 It may be assumed that Vounous was the dominant regional centre of an ‘ancient social territory’ extending from Lapiθhοs in the west, through Karmi, to Vounous in the East.66 During the last phase of Early Cypriot Period and first phase of Middle Cypriot period, some changes in the mortuary consumption practices took place. There is a notable increase in the number of small plain bowls and juglets, along with the decreased use of jugs, while the ceremonial type vessels disappeared in the inventory leaving their place to more complex or composite bowls and juglets. The increasingly elaborate decorations are then confined primarily to jugs and complex vessels, not widely distributed throughout the Vounous cemetery but indeed more broadly throughout Cyprus. Thus, this recalls a widely shared symbolic system in which larger numbers of people were involved in the commensal and drinking aspects of mortuary practices.67

Vounous ceramics that gives hints about the social life and religion of the citizens

As Swiny explained, Cypriot Bronze Age economy and lifestyle could be supplemented by the numerous scenic compositions, either free-standing or applied ceramic vessels that began to appear around the turn of the third millennium BC.68 It is evident that the deposition of figurative objects at Vounous was part of a complex system of social differentiation, although not a strict hierarchy of an urban life that aimed to manifest their personality or social status within the burial area. It demonstrates the desire to mark differences and social identities within the cemetery and stands in contrast to the lack of impetus of such tradition elsewhere on the island.69 So, as Knox (2013) remarked, the connection between figurative objects and the display of identities was evident only at Vounous in Early Cypriot 1st and 2nd periods, and had been clearly operating within a much smaller geographical focus in later periods.70

The detailed drawings provided by Dikaios (1940), Stewart JR (1937) and Desmond Morris (1985), an anthropologist who has written one of the most detailed books on the ancient art of Cyprus, mainly covering the periods until the end of the Iron Age, provided a rich material object to understand some aspects of the social life of the ancient eras. The Early and Middle Cypriot that could be analysed through these sources revealed the happy and relaxed character of their creators. Thus it is possible to trace the concept of humour in the ceramics of this period, while a sudden change can be perceived in the ceramics of the Iron Age with their very formal geometrical ornamentations, warriors with their arms and also borrowings from Egyptian, Mesopotamian and ancient Greek arts. So, it will be interesting to give some examples that reveal these characteristics.

One of the findings by Dikaios in Tomb 37 is again interesting and most entertaining since it is designed as an oval shaped box (pyxides) with a modelled lid where a couple, a man and a woman whose genitalia are well defined, lies in a bed covered with a blanket, represented in relief, and on either side of the mouth are two birds.71

A twin necked jug excavated by Dikaios (1940) that represents an embracing couple on one of the neck in relief is one of the most interesting scenic representations. It is clearly depicting the man who put his left arm round the woman’s neck while with his right hand, he touches the body of the woman just below her abdomen and the woman joins her hands also on her abdomen which is recalling a couple in love and perhaps expecting a baby. On the same neck behind the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief. On the other neck, on the side corresponding to the human group appears an animal with four horns while at the back appears again another animal with horns. There is a bird modelled in round between the two necks of the jug, and in front of which placed on the upper part of the handle, is a jug, which shows the bird eating or drinking.72 Thus, all it could assume that this jug bears fertility symbols that could bring charms to a family and it may work in the same manner for the deceased in the next life.

Most of the objects discovered in Vounous tombs, particularly the ones representing figures or attached figurines were not the objects used in daily life. The lack of sign of wear on the objects recalls the fact that they were made especially for the tombs of the deceased73 and they are assumed to be loaded with symbolic meanings, mainly related to the concept of fertility, particularly those cups with multi bodies joined to one neck or sometimes, attached multi cups all ending with their own neck.

Although, these are considered to recall fertility cults and as offerings to the dead, recalling their happiness in a humoresque manner, particularly showing a happy life spent together as husband and wife, presence of animals and ritual dancers, so as like the Egyptian pharaohs, who made sure to have everything they possessed in this life, would be ready for the next life after death, is designed by the artists, who were perhaps women potters.

However, there is one particular object, the well-known Vounous bowl, discovered by Dikaios who described it to be representing a religious ritual in a holy sanctuary. Many scholars considered the descriptions of Dikaios and considered the gathering of the people in a circular form enclosure as part of a religious performance and sacrificing animals and even a child sacrificial. Also, the experts considered a decorative part on the wall as a triple bucranial element with two snakes. The certain figure facing to this wall and resting on the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief. The certain figure facing to this wall and resting on the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief. The certain figure facing to this wall and resting on the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief. The certain figure facing to this wall and resting on the human group, a head of a horned animal is represented in relief.

71Dikaios (1940) p. 153 Pl. XXXV; Morris (1985) pp. 288, 289 Fig. 507.
72Dikaios (1940) P. 126.

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such a representation that recalls this bucranial wall.\textsuperscript{73} Also, this bucranial wall recalls the shrine temples in the Neolithic period village Chatalhöyük, in Anatolia. Although many experts like Dikaios\textsuperscript{74} and Louis Steel\textsuperscript{75} suggest these models as representing certain sanctuaries, temples or altars where sacrificing of animals or babies takes place with ritual ceremonies that include dancing, the anthropologist, Morris is claiming these to be part of the social life and normal scenes that anyone can witness in a village life like the men after field-work gathering in the village square for daily conversation.\textsuperscript{76} So, it could also be considered as social gatherings such as a family getting together in certain occasional events like a wedding, or a funeral or even celebrating the birth of a baby.

The author of this paper tells another similar story in the class that make the students to remember this bowl all the time. Thus, also, here is a representation of a life cycle, starting with birth, getting married, having children and getting older. Thus, the group of five people standing in a circle recalls a marriage ceremony and particularly, the external person climbed up to the wall and spying indoor could be another admirer of the girl who is to be married in this scene.

Presence of particular artists for the decoration of the potteries

Recent studies attempted to prove certain stylistic differences in ornamentation styles of the potteries which evoked the scholars to consider the presence of certain “artists” or merely “potters” in view of the ceramics discovered in the tombs of Vounous, Lapithos and Dhenia. As J. B. Hennessy (1973) recently tried to analyse the ceramics discovered in Vounous, particularly by Stewart\textsuperscript{77} who documented each item very carefully in published reports of his excavations, it is claimed that some of these potteries could be categorized in view of their shapes, sizes, ornamentations, particularly from free-field to zonal ornament, and thus some of them might be attributed to one or two specific artists.\textsuperscript{78} So, Hennessy after his comparative analysis, named two artists from Vounous. Since the names are not known during this time that writing still was not practiced, then Hennessy named them with the name of the archaeologist, who discovered them and recorded their details, as Stewart Artist No: 1, Stewart Artist No: 2 and also two more artists are mentioned, one from Lapithos, the other one from Dhenia. Stewart Artist No: 1 is thought to be the potter as well as decorator of at least 80 ceramics, all of which except two, were unearthed from Vounous cemeteries, while the other two\textsuperscript{79} were from Stewart’s excavation from Palealona.\textsuperscript{80} This artist is thought to be responsible for perhaps the finest of all the Early Bronze Age ceramics. He appears to have been both potter and decorator. The clays are uniform in the use of tiny grits and straw as temper. These vessels are well slipped, usually dark red and both polished and burnished to a high lustre. He uses a wide variety of shapes which include magnificent large cut-away spout and round-mouthed jugs.\textsuperscript{81} However, Morris mentions a woman as the decoration of a potter\textsuperscript{82} which sounds more reasonable when topics represented are considered carefully. Particularly, the plank figurines of woman holding babies sometime in their lap or in cradles, woman with her lover, domestic animals and utensils accompanying them like today’s modern woman shopping for expensive jewellery, clothes, porcelain dinner sets or kitchen equipment or usually talking about their concerns related to their children or husband.

Dressing habits and personal ornamentation in view of ceramics

The plank figurines of the Early Cypriot Age are depicted with so much details that show individualistic dress styles, ornamentation and face marks. These figurines are represented as specific people, each of which are wearing their own distinctive apparel (Knapp, 2013: pp. 339-340)\textsuperscript{83}, embroidered or woven cozy textiles with zigzag and circle patterns. The artists of the two dimensional plank shaped human figurines of the Early Cypriot Age clearly represents both male and female figures usually in long skirts made of woven cloth ornamented with zig-zag or circular motifs while usually women are wearing so many ornaments or jewellery.\textsuperscript{84} Again, upon a careful analysis of the incised decoration on these sculptures, it could be perceived that they used to wear a head wear in the shape of a band, richly adorned necklaces and large belts.\textsuperscript{85} Vounous bowl that is acknowledged by many experts to represent a temple structure is interesting to distinguish one of the figures wearing a headdress which is defined as a turban by Steel.\textsuperscript{86} Also, signs of piercing on the ears and other parts of the human faces as well as some rounded shaped potteries reveal the fashion of multi earrings worn on the ears and other parts of the face by the women. As Elizabeth Goring (1989) claims for the gold loop earrings found in Late Cypriot cemeteries to have been a kind of investment made by women,\textsuperscript{87} this may also be acceptable for the jewellery depicted on these plank figurines.

A group of terracotta sculptures or models discovered in the tombs in Vounous gives light to the casual apparel as well as daily life of that location during the Early Cypriot Age. One of these in the collection of Louvre Museum is interesting to show an interesting style of head wear as well as a neck ornament. Both of these ornaments consist of two or three circles which recall rather heavy jewellery or turban like head-wears. The Early Bronze Age rock-cut tombs excavated at both Vounous and Lapithos cemeteries revealed rich findings including ornaments of stone pendants, multi-coloured stone beads, picrolite spacers on necklaces, arsical copper and bronze spiral earrings, necklaces and large belts.

\textsuperscript{73}Morris (1985) p. 87, Figs. 8-11.
\textsuperscript{76}Morris (1985) pp. 281-284.
\textsuperscript{78}Hennessy (1973) p. 17.
\textsuperscript{79}These two potteries that were found in Palealona excavation are currently in the possession of Museum of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of New England, Armidale. Hennessy (1973) p. 17
\textsuperscript{80}Hennessy (1973) p. 18.
\textsuperscript{81}Morris (1985) p. 282.
\textsuperscript{83}Morris (1985) p. 140.
\textsuperscript{84}Taton-Brown (1987) p. 34.
gold and silver, spindle whorls and faience necklaces and beads.  

The excavation of Dikaios recorded pieces of woven cloth adhering to a copper-based sword or dagger from Tomb 26 at Vounous. Although two model spindle whorls made of clay were discovered in Bellapais Vounous excavations, however, the only known, actual spindle is a copper-based object, 29 cm in length and no loom has been unearthed from these cemeteries so far.

Excavated tombs revealed facts about eating and drinking habits 

As Knapp (2013) remarked, large and medium size bowls from the cemetery at Bellapais Vounous as well as the quantities of animal bones, mainly of adult cattle, found in the tomb chambers, suggest that food as well as drink, were consumed during mortuary celebrations.

The introduction of a new alcoholic beverage on Cyprus, or a greater importance attached to its consumption, may be indicated by the quantitative increase in the numbers of small liquid serving bowls deposited in tombs and the introduction of new elaborate, multicomponent pouring vessels at the north coast cemetery of Vounous.

Terracotta figurines representing the sacred animals

Incised decorations or modelled figurines of plank shaped animal representations designed as free standing terracottas or miniature models added as attachment to the rim or shoulder of a vessel, or animal modelled askos made of clay that represent different species of animals which they believed in as sacred was so common among the discoveries in the tombs. Among these animal form figurines were deer motifs, cattle as bucranial terminals attached to the red polished ware vessels, pigs, a particular one from Early Bronze Age tomb from Vounous with incised markings that may be intended to indicate a bristly back, sheep, birds, snakes, and animal horns which are usually put on the house walls since they have the superstitious belief that it will protect the occupants from the enemy or other natural disasters.

Terracotta figurines representing the social life

The Neolithic age does not have much material culture to give a full idea about the concept of religion during this age. But, looking at the women figurines carved on stone in a stump form (in other words, with arms and legs terminating below the body) it could be perceived that they were merely based on their religious ideas, with the belief of a magical power to help them for child birth and survival as well as bringing home more food. The same religious ideas exist in the Chalcolithic Age while Bronze Age could give a complete different concept that we may define as the reflection of their happiness, hard working yet naïve characters and humour for better social communication. Plank figurines of various types and subtypes, that appeared in the Bronze Age that replaced the cruciform figures usually cut from stone, became the most common way of representing people. A study of the figurative art of Cyprus show different aspects of their daily life.

Social identities, as individual or group representations designed as terracotta models that had been unearthed as material culture from Vounous cemeteries are significant to reflect their customs and traditions, mainly the daily practices like grain grinding, ploughing or washing as well as dressing and ornamentation habits, domestic utilities, as well ritual practices. Vounous bowls dated c. 2000 B.C. or in another saying, the late phase of Early Cypriots or the beginning of the Middle Cypriot era, is one of the most discussed material object that is assumed to represent a community within the enclosures of a shrine building and is considered as signs of new social conventions of power and exclusion. Within this circular walled enclosure, there is a spatial organisation with short walls separating the animal pens on two sides of the well-defined entrance door recalling a megaron style of entrance, sitting elements along the walls opposite to the entrance, an altar like (bucranial) wall with sculptured images in relief, a large sitting element standing freely in the middle of opposite to the altar wall. There are four penned cattle in their quarters on two sides of the entrance door, guarded by someone. Although the gender of the figurines represented are not much clear, many experts defined sixteen of them as men, two without the sign of gender and one as female since she is said to hold an infant. As Bolger (2003) defines, the female is represented in a confined, maternal role the men appear to be active participants in whatever is happening. At the same time, there is a representation to recall hierarchical status and social manner, from animals, infant and female, through individual males, to a seated male of some prominence on the throne like seat in the middle, opposite to the altar. The figure which is attached to the external wall recalls someone who is not allowed inside and spying indoor with curiosity which recalls a kind of mystified occurrence.

References


Morris (1985) p. 194 Figs. 316-324.
indoor. Such figures that appears also on potteries, mainly on handles of multi bodied jugs as if they are trying to climb up, or performing some domestic works on top of such potteries, are some humoresque representations on these Bronze Age artefacts that make the observer smile as if it is the sign of an energetic and hardworking person or a hyper-active person or a child.

This bowl as well as other material objects, mainly models, reveal the luxury objects, such as a sitting element with high back recalling a throne, baby cradles, stools, leather buckets used in their houses, specially designed corners for rituals and storage units.

**Humoresque representations in the scenic potteries and clay models discovered in Vounous**

Vounous cemeteries are one of the unique site that revealed some models with scenic compositions. Although usually the scenic compositions modelled in clay during the Cypriot ages show principally religious cult ideas, some they are obviously revealing the sense of humour of their creators which brings a smile on one’s face watching them. Obviously, these objects bring to mind some questions. What are the socio-economic changes that brought a complete change in the material objects created or deposited in the tombs during the Cypriot Ages that reflect such a humour which could not be seen in earlier objects or the ones made in the later works of the Iron age which mostly represents the military members and warriors that express terror and horror of the period since it was a time of political turmoil in Cyprus or merely unapproachable beauties like Aphrodite?

Such a comparison brings one to the conclusion that these material objects bare some facts relevant to the Bronze Age people living in Vounous and elsewhere in the island to have abided a happy life with little worries and took the burdens of the life easy which were reflected on these potteries in such aesthetic but humoresques attitude. It could be presumed that Early and Middle Bronze Age Vounous pottery craft was one of the domestic works done by women and most of these earthenware objects were designed by females, or children at home. So, similar to the rugs hand woven in Asian countries where each motif is bearing a meaning and they are abstraction of the nature,

It is regretful to say that Turkish Cypriots’ interest in archaeological heritage started recently. During the Ottoman era, Cypriots did not much cared to the antique sites. The antique sites were mostly used to obtain spolia for new buildings. But due to their beliefs, opening tombs was not much considered. Of course, burglars interested to find treasures, mainly gold and silver was an exception.

Several Western travellers discovered these sites and performed excavations through the help of the local people by making small amount of payments in return to dig the tombs for them. Opening museums or teaching the culture through these objects was not considered until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in eastern countries.

However, the local people’s interest in antiquities recently increased due to the growth of travel facilities to foreign countries and visits to important museums that house so many Cypriot antiquities. Also, the increase of academics that offer courses<sup>16</sup> and deliver occasional conferences on these topics is increasing awareness into the cultural heritage of the island. Recently, besides the archaeologist, art historians and historian, artists are also bringing new dimensions to modern art with inspiration taken from antique art but also recall the importance of their protection.

Turkish Cypriot artist, Emel Samioglu was one of the first artist who aimed to paint in Cyprus ancient history themes and had a couple of interviews with the author of this paper. After several conversations, then she was so inspired from the ceramics of the Bronze Age. She had inaugurated two exhibitions on Cyprus History theme in the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first of which was abstraction of the ceramics on canvases or paper while her second series were more abstracted forms which had traces of the human and animal forms or the ornaments represented on the ancient bronze age ceramics, particularly a theme representing fertility cults. The interest in the history was later on carried on by group artists, mainly lead by Ayhatun Ateshin in a series of events related to the Alaishia (the ancient Enkomi) culture starting from 2013. The series of thematic workshops between the years 2013-2017 resulted with some paintings and terracotta replicas of particularly human images dating back to the Cypro-Archaic period (Iron Age) and the products are now displayed in Akdeniz (Ayia Irini) village. However, the name of this workshop proved some problems since the aimed products were to create replicas discovered in a rock-cut temple in Akdeniz (Iyia Irini) dating back to the Cypro-Archaic eras which had nothing to do with the Bronze Age. The culture of the island, from the Alaishia city nowadays called as Enkomi on the eastern part of Cyprus, nearly 5 kilometers inland from antique Salamis city.

The latest event entitled as “International Terracotta Symposium: Lost Heritage of the Legend Mountain” that was organised by the curatorship of Rauf Ersanal, a ceramic artist, and some other leading art historians and historian, artists are also bringing new dimensions to modern art with inspiration taken from antique art but also recall the importance of their protection.

However, there is another fact which is suggested by some experts which is related to the status of the person buried. As Knox noted form Webb and Frankel, it is evident that the deposition of figurative objects at Vounous was part of a complex system of social differentiation made manifest within the burial area. It demonstrates the desire to mark differences and social identities within the cemetery and stands in contrast to the lack of impetus to do the same elsewhere on the island.<sup>16</sup>

**Results and Discussion**

**History themes by contemporary artists as a new means to teach civilisation history**


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<sup>17</sup>A Course on Cypriot Civilisations that cover the historical heritage of the island from Prehistory to modern eras is one of the first compact one offered at Eastern Mediterranean University since 1988 by the author of this paper.

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Vounous revisited: teaching history through a symposium and a ceramic workshop

tombs of Vounous (Figures 3-11,12). It was a great experience to the artists to work up on the hills of Kyrenia, under the sheds made of mud-bricks, palm tree leaves and wickers and even lived there for a couple of weeks. The inauguration ceremony was full of excited art lovers as well as public that had not at all been aware of this past history. Above all it was a great experience for the author of this paper to give a speech about the historical facts of Vounous, and the ceramics discovered in the tombs during past years’ excavation that could teach people the past history which is narrated above, in the breeze of a hot summer night under the fool-moon and stars, having the sea at the back and facing towards the Beshpamak (Pentadaktylos) mountains, which were also important themes that had been depicted on those ceramics, as zigzag or wavy linear incised ornaments.

Figure 3 Posters of the Ceramic Artist who Contributed to the International Terracotta Symposium: Lost Heritage of the Legend Mountain Workshop and Symposium ©Rauf Ersanal 2017.


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Conclusion

The products of this International Terracotta Symposium: Lost Heritage of the Legend Mountain Workshop and Symposium are now collected to be displayed in the nearby village Chatalköy (Epiktitos). A huge terracotta jug prepared by Semral Öztan, ceramic artists, has been planted at the entrance of the village (Figure 13) is one of the first such display of the history in its location. Above all, primary and secondary school children are frequently paying visit to the site at the weekends to see the tombs and the ceramics and also practice ceramic making in the guidance of the artists so as to understand the significance of the site and the past cultural heritage which is not in their country anymore (Figures 14-19).
So, it could be concluded that a past history of a site which has been excavated could recall and teach people the history of their past culture only if the findings could be displayed in local museums, particularly at the site of the excavation. North Cyprus has two major archaeological museums, one in Guzelyurt (Morphou) and the other one located in the Monastery of Saint Barnabas in Famagusta, where a couple of potteries discovered in Vounous are also displayed. A certain number of the artefacts discovered in this location are in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. However, some significant numbers have been taken abroad by the archaeologist and some other officers holding important positions during the British Colonial period which are in the possession of Medelhavsmuseet (Stockholm), and Nicholson Museum of Sydney University (Australia), Louvre Museum (Paris), British Museum (London), Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), Metropolitan Museum (Washington). Therefore, revisiting Vounous through a workshop and symposium was an excellent way to bring attention to a lost and forgotten heritage and teach the history on the site through practicing the relevant crafts under the guidance of experts in a more entertaining manner which could not be done in the same manner in the local museums in North Cyprus that are displayed behind the closed windows and not yet prepared for such educational activities.


**Acknowledgment**

None.

**Conflict of interest**

None.