

# New Finds at Tel Dor and the Beginning of Cypro-Geometric Pottery Import to Palestine\*

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ONE of the main phenomena marking the end of the Late Bronze Age in Palestine is the cessation of the intensive import of Cypriot pottery vessels. Imported Cypriot vessels from the twelfth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries B.C.E. are extremely rare: the only known examples are the Mycenaean IIIC stirrup jugs from Tel Keisan and possibly Beth Shean, and the 'Black Slip Wheel-Made' jugs from the cemeteries at Tell el-Far'ah (south).<sup>1</sup> The next Cypriot imports found in the region

\* This study is dedicated to the memory of H. Neil Richardson, Professor of Old Testament at Boston University, senior participant in the Tel Dor excavations and friend.

Tel Dor has been continuously excavated since 1980 by an Israeli-American expedition, on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israel Exploration Society, in collaboration with American and Canadian universities. The project is directed by E. Stern, to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude for his permission to publish the material presented here, and for his continuous support. Area BI, in which the Cypriot vessels discussed here were uncovered, was excavated by the 'RichDor' group, under the direction of H.N. Richardson. In 1983-1985 the area was supervised by H.N. Richardson, S. Yankelevitch, M. Fleitman and Dinah Kaupman. The Cypriot fragments were drawn by Michal Ben-Gal and the local pottery by A. Boaz, who also arranged the pottery plates. The Tell Jerishe bowl was drawn by Ruhama Bonfil.

For recent general surveys of the results of the excavations, see E. Stern: *The Excavations at Tel Dor*, in E. Lipiński (ed.): *The Land of Israel: Crossroads of Civilization*, Leuven, 1985, pp. 169-192; idem: *Excavations at Tel Dor — A Canaanite-Phoenician Port City on the Carmel Coast*, *Qadmoniot* 20 (79-80) (1987), pp. 66-81 (Hebrew). For information concerning the Iron Age levels, see idem, *Tel Dor*, 1984 Notes and News, *IEJ* 35 (1985), pp. 60-64, and subsequent reports in the Notes and News section of *IEJ*; see also E. Stern and I. Sharon: *Tel Dor*, 1986 — Preliminary Report, *IEJ* 37 (1987), pp. 201-211; E. Stern *et al.*: *Tel Dor*, 1987: Preliminary Report, *IEJ* 39 (1989), pp. 32-42.

<sup>1</sup> At Tell el-Far'ah (south) Black Slip Wheel-Made (bucchero) jugs were uncovered in Tombs 102, 105, 237, 506, 525, 640, 642 and 647. As shown by Benson, the closest parallels to most of these jugs in Cyprus are found in LC IIIB contexts. Few of them have parallels in the Cypro-Geometric I (J.L. Benson: *The Necropolis of Kaloriziki* [Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, 36], Lund, 1973, pp. 59, 98) — in contrast to the conclusions reached by Du Plat-Taylor (Joan Du Plat-Taylor: *Late Cypriote III in the Light of Recent Excavations*, *PEQ* 88 (1956), pp. 34-35. The assemblages in some of these tombs slightly antedate the initial appearance of decorated Cypro-Geometric pottery in the rest of the country (including the Tell el-Far'ah cemeteries themselves, where the earliest White Painted vessel was found in Tomb 506). This phenomenon is unique — both in terms of the type of vessels represented and of their date — and does not change the overall picture. One other site in which similar vessels were found is Tyre, where Black Slip Wheel-Made vessels first appear in Stratum XIV. See Patricia M. Bikai: *The Pottery of Tyre* (Winchester, 1978, Table 13A).

are early decorated Cypro-Geometric vessels, in contexts dated mainly to the second half of the eleventh century B.C.E. It thus seems that a gap of about a century and a half exists before the renewal of Cypriot pottery import to Palestine in the Iron I Age.

The discovery of a relatively large assemblage of White Painted and Bichrome Cypro-Geometric fragments of Early Iron Age date at Tel Dor provides a good opportunity to review this phenomenon and its significance.

#### THE DOR FINDS

The earliest Cypro-Geometric pottery fragments at Dor were uncovered in Phase 9 in Area B1. Part of one assemblage, belonging to this phase, will be presented here. It was found in a building situated north of the eastern gate area, adjacent to the street running parallel to the city-wall. The nature of this building is not yet clear, but it is probable that it had some public function. Phase 9 in Area B1 is one of several Iron I Age phases, and was dated by typological means (using only the local pottery) to the second half of the eleventh and the first decades of the tenth centuries B.C.E. (Figs. 1-3). The best comparable pottery assemblages are those of Tyre XIII, Tell Keisan 9a-b, Tel Mevorakh VIII, Tell Qasile X, 'Izbet Šarṭah II-I and Hazor XI. Phase 9 does not end with a destruction but there is no clear continuity between it and the next, tenth century, phase (8).

The local pottery is extremely plain, and few decorated pieces of any sort occur. A few 'Philistine' sherds were uncovered in Area B1, but none of them can be ascribed with confidence to Phase 9. The Cypro-Geometric pieces uncovered to date in the assemblage under discussion belong to at least eight different vessels. As some of them are very fragmentary, only three fragments which have some typological significance will be presented here.

##### A. Bowl No. 32218/1 (Fig. 4:1, Pl. 26:A) — White Painted (advanced)

Wheel-made, light brown clay. Few white grits, some protruding from the surface. Black-brown monochrome decoration, slightly peeling. The bowl was painted with wide metopes, with 'fields' of cross-hatched lozenges alternating with narrow ones bearing floral designs.

The shape of the bowl and the overall decorative scheme are fairly typical of Cypro-Geometric Type I vessels. Likewise the motif of a 'field' of cross-hatched lozenges was popular mainly on Type I pottery, only rarely occurring on either earlier or later types (Proto-White Painted vessels display mainly cross-hatched chequerboard patterns), and may be found also on Proto-Geometric pottery in Crete.<sup>2</sup>

The schematic floral design on this bowl is unique. Pictographic designs, including floral ones, are very rare on early Cypro-Geometric vessels. Stylistically and chronologically speaking, the closest parallels to our design occur on a Proto-White

<sup>2</sup> E.g. M. Borda: *Arte Cretese Micenea nel Museo Pigorini di Roma*, Rome, 1964, Pl. 38.

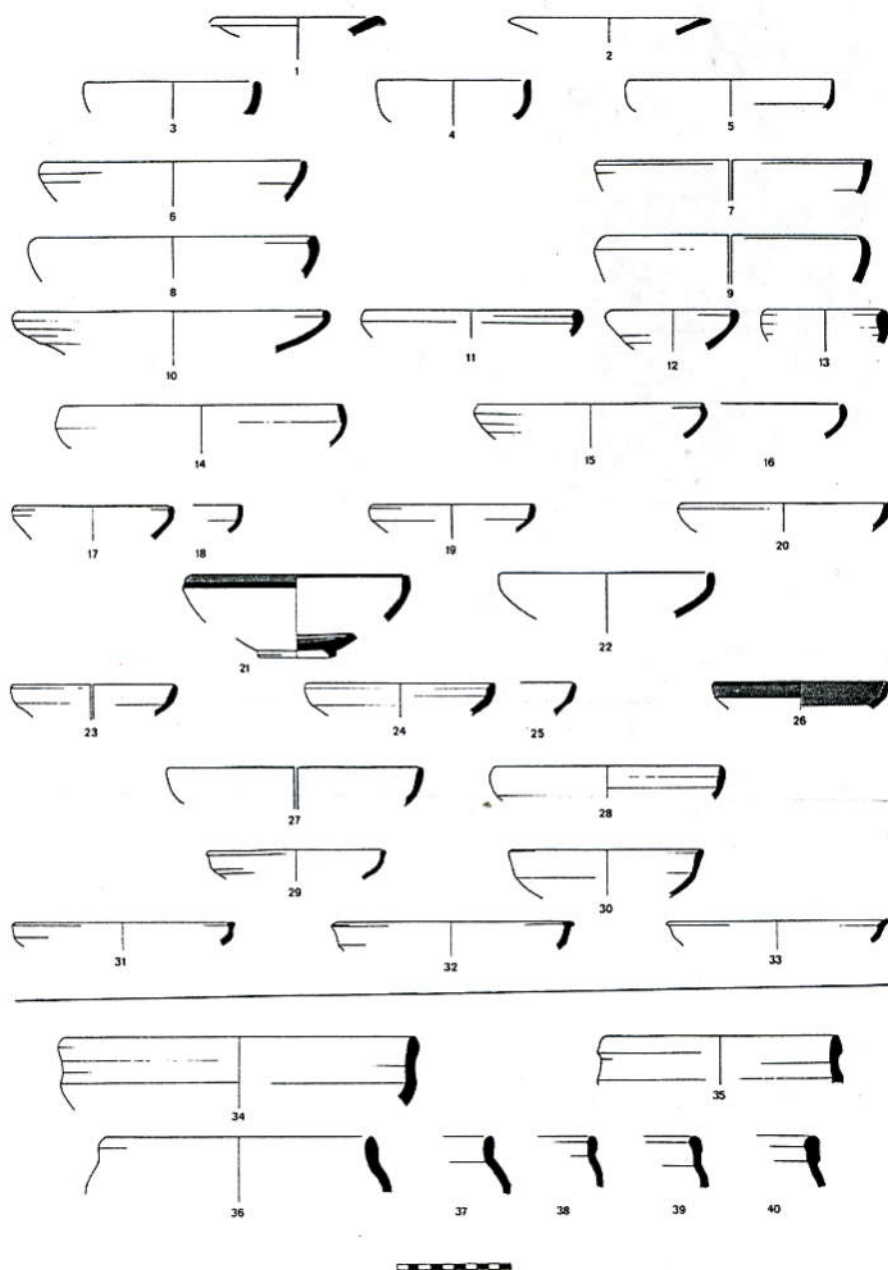


Fig. 1. Local pottery from Dor, Area B1 — Phase 9.



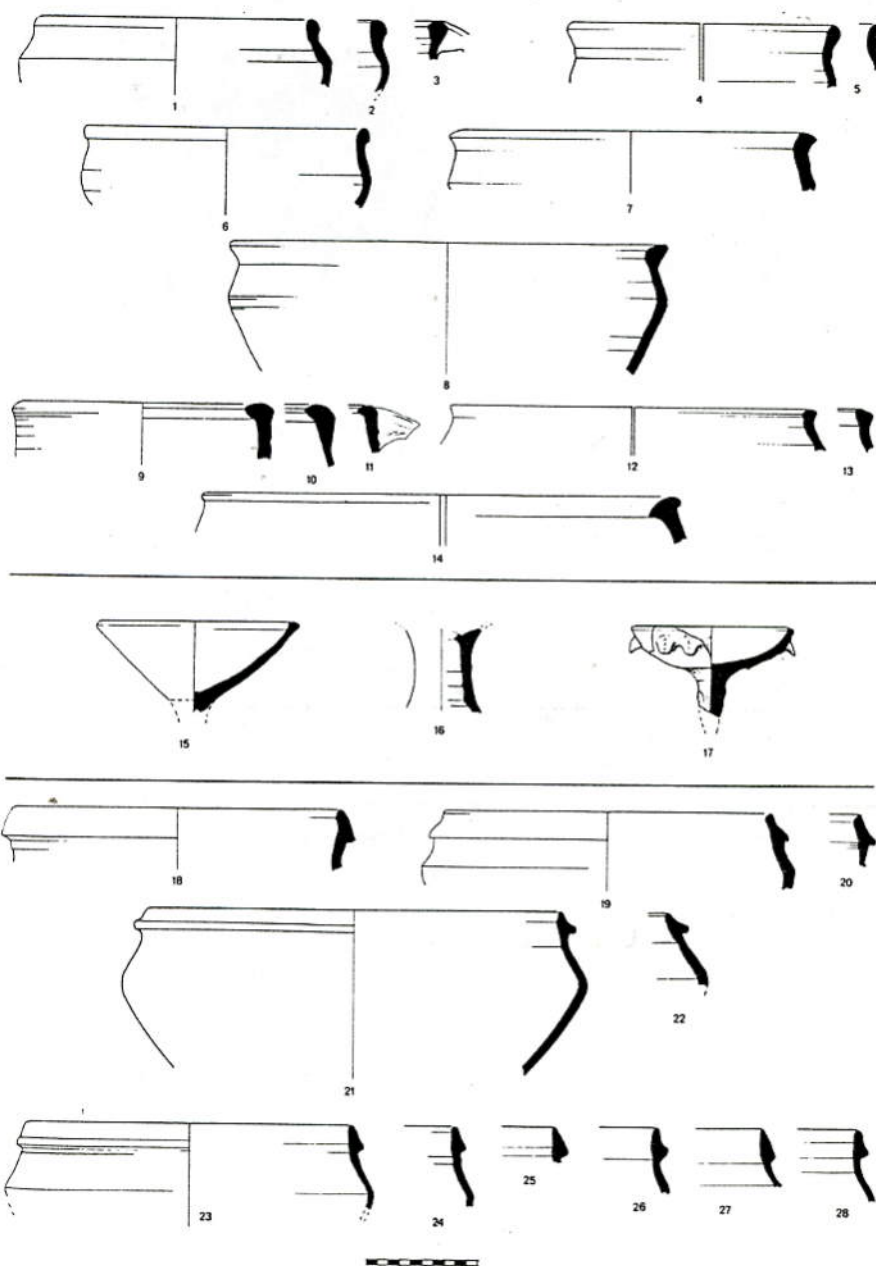


Fig. 2. Local pottery from Dor, Area B1 — Phase 9.

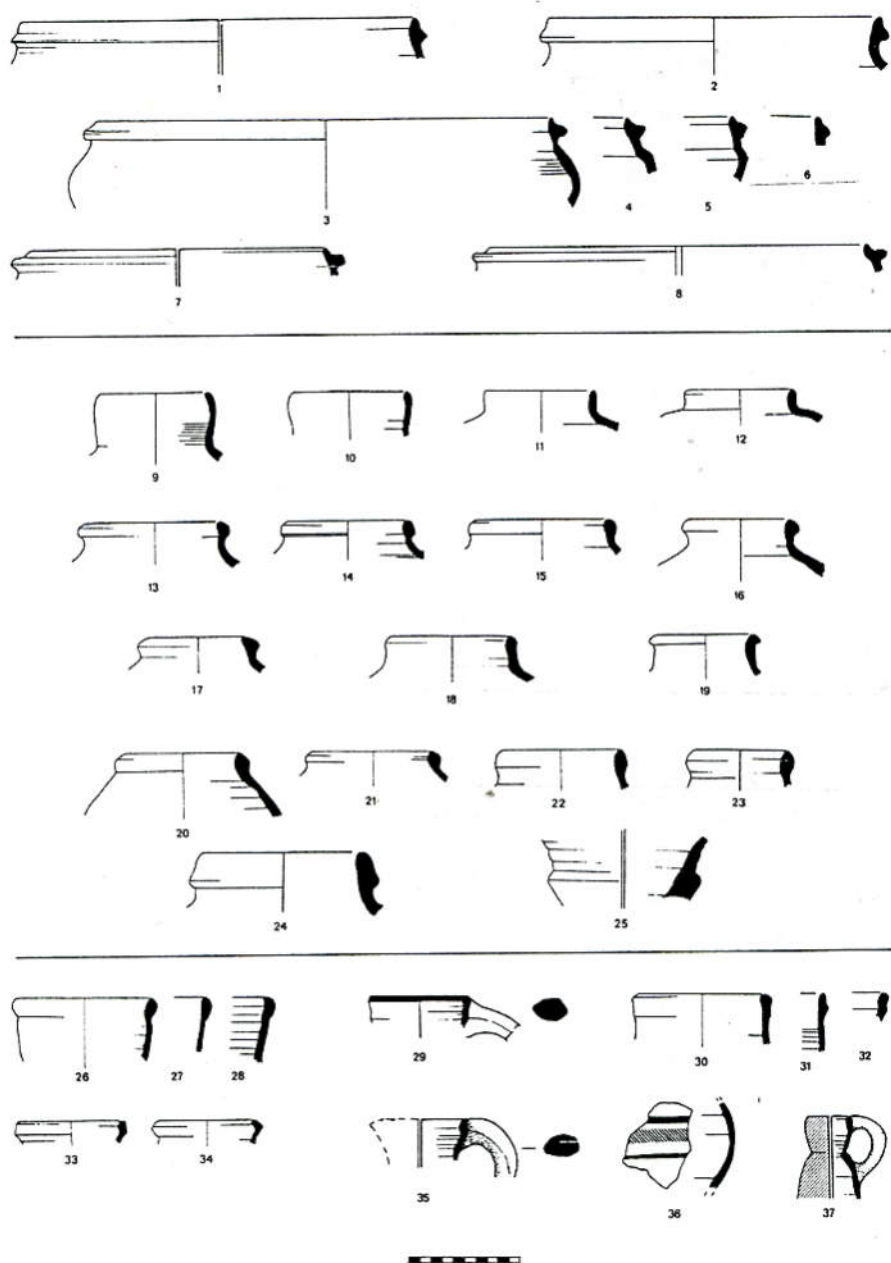


Fig. 3. Local pottery from Dor, Area B1 — Phase 9.

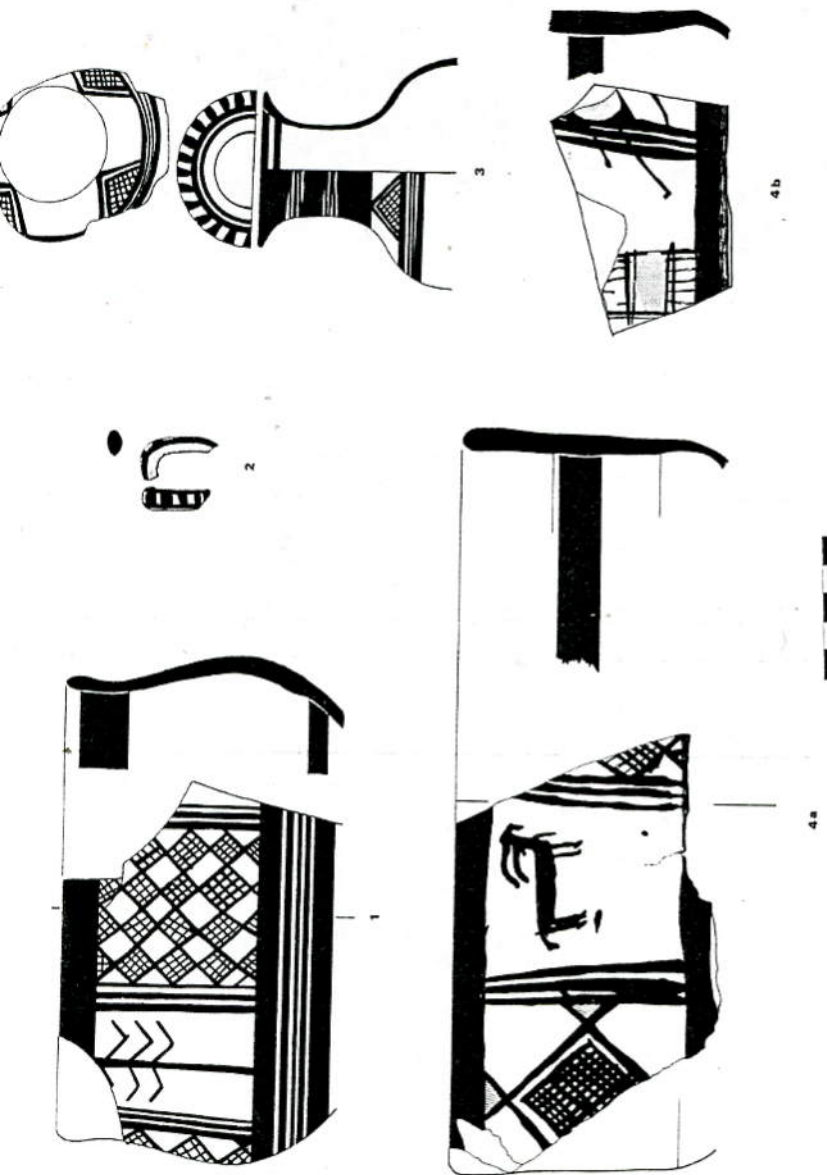


Fig. 4. Cypro-Geometric fragments from Dor, Area B1 — Phase 9.

Painted amphora from Kition,<sup>3</sup> a bowl from Karavas-Vathyrkakas (Tomb 2:25) and on an early Cypro-Geometric I bowl from Lapithos-Kastros (T. 206:99),<sup>4</sup> but the specific designs are different. Similar schematic floral designs become much more frequent on later types, down to the Cypro-Classical period. It seems that the design on the Dor bowl is one of the earliest examples of this style, which is definitely different from the more naturalistic style also in vogue at this period, seen for instance on a *kalathos* (Proto-White Painted) from Kouklia-Paleopaphos, Tomb 9,<sup>5</sup> and a bowl (White Painted I) from Lapithos.<sup>6</sup> Parallels to our design may be found on some of the funerary urns of Hama and Carchemish,<sup>7</sup> and on Late Minoan and Proto-Geometric vessels in Crete.<sup>8</sup> The significance of these similarities is beyond our scope here.

B. *Amphoriskos* No. 32216 (Fig. 4:3), Pl. 26:B) White Painted I (early)

Wheel-made, thin walls, light brown clay. Few small white grits. Black/brown monochrome decoration, slightly peeling. The ware and colour of decoration closely resemble those of Bowl 32218/1.

The closest parallels to the vessel's shape are globular amphoriskoi from Cypro-Geometric I contexts, with a high conical foot and horizontal handles. The decoration of this vessel is very common on Proto-White Painted and White Painted I closed vessels, and is particularly typical of the latter.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From Area II, Floor II — V. Karageorghis: *Excavations at Kition, V: The Pre-Phoenician Levels*, Nicosia, 1985, Pl. 212, No. 3209.

<sup>4</sup> Angeliki Pieridou: A Cypro-Geometric Cemetery at Vathyrkakas, Karavas, *Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus* (hereafter *RDAC*) (1964), Pl. VII:8; E. Gjerstad: *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, I, Stockholm, 1934, Pl. 125:5.

<sup>5</sup> V. Karageorghis: An Early XIth c. B.C. Tomb from Paleopaphos, *RDAC* (1967), Pl. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Angeliki Pieridou: A Tomb Group from Lapithos Ayia Anastasia, *RDAC* (1966), Pl. 3:8.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. L. Woolley: The Iron Age Graves of Carchemish, *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 26 (1939), Pls. IX:9, XI:4.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. on amphorae from Tombs V and VIII at Agios Ioannis — see J. Boardman: Protogeometric Graves at Agios Ioannis near Knossos, *Papers of the British School of Archaeology in Athens* 55 (1960), Fig. 7.

<sup>9</sup> The neck decoration, with two reserved bands rather than the single reserved band common on Proto-White Painted vessels, is another facet of the general tendency in the Cypro-Geometric I towards creating a more regular rhythm in the arrangement of the geometrical motifs. The cross-hatched triangles with one additional triangular frame appear initially in the Late Cypriot IIIB, but become much more popular on Type I vessels, later becoming rare again. On Proto-White Painted vessels one can encounter several variations that tend to disappear later, in the more rigid White Painted I style — e.g. triangles with more than one frame, or alternating triangles with and without frames. On Type I vessels, the scheme becomes standardized: the triangles almost always have one frame and are all identical. On a considerable number of Proto-White Painted vessels, the triangles are consecutively arranged, their bases touching each other. Thus the gaps between the triangles form a 'star' design, well-suited to the shoulders' curve. Already on some of the Proto-White Painted vessels one can detect a tendency to use isolated motifs. The gaps between the triangles gradually increase, each becoming a separate motif and thus the 'star' effect



## C. Bowl No. 27788 (Figs. 4:4a-b, Pl. 26:C) Bichrome I (advanced)

Wheel-made, light orange clay, grey core. Heavy, coarse walls. Possible traces of wheel burnish on exterior. Bichrome (dark brown and red) decoration. Typological considerations (the ware, the shape which deviates from the standard shapes of the period) pointed to a possible non-Cypriot origin for this piece. This was confirmed by neutron activation analysis.<sup>10</sup>

The two sherds of this bowl could not be fitted together. The length of the two preserved metopes is not even. The overall decorative arrangement — the metopes, their proportions, the individual geometric designs (such as red triangles at the corners of a cross-hatched lozenge) — is very typical of advanced Type I and early Type II vessels. Most conspicuous, of course, is the goat (?) design: animal figures on early Cypro-Geometric vessels are rare. The Dor bowl is part of a group of about 35 known examples that represent the pictorial *styles* emerging in Cyprus in the eleventh century B.C.E. This phenomenon has been thoroughly dealt with lately,<sup>11</sup> and I will not comment on this subject here. It should be noted, however, that the fact that the bowl is apparently of mainland manufacture adds important data concerning the problem of the origin of this style.

Several interpretations have been offered of the 'fence' motif, and others resembling it (e.g. a musical instrument, comb, table, altar, fence). The subject has been thoroughly studied by Morris,<sup>12</sup> and the Dor bowl adds no new clues to the interpretation of the motif.<sup>13</sup>

THE INITIAL APPEARANCE OF DECORATED CYPRO-GEOMETRIC  
POTTERY IN PALESTINE  
(excluding Black on Red vessels)<sup>14</sup>

The finds come from the following sites:

disappears. This tendency crystallizes on White Painted I vessels. There, the common arrangement (cf. the Dor amphoriskos) comprises only four triangles on the vessel's shoulder. There are only a few exceptions.

<sup>10</sup> See J. Yellin: *The Origin of Some Cypro-Geometric Pottery from Tel Dor*, this volume, pp. 219-227.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Iacovou: *The Pictorial Pottery of Eleventh Century B.C. Cyprus* (Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology, 79), Gothenburg, 1988, and detailed references there.

<sup>12</sup> Christine Morris: *Combs on Cypriote Iron Age Pottery*, *RDAC* (1983), pp. 219-224.

<sup>13</sup> It is possible that there is a narrative connection between this design and the goat, shown in a different metope; it could then be interpreted as a fence — possibly comparable to the design on the famous Kouklia *kalathos* (Karageorghis [above, n. 5]). This interpretation is problematic, however, because of the resemblance between our design and one occurring on a Bichrome III krater in the Cyprus Museum, where the object is being carried by a human figure (V. Karageorghis and J. Des Gagniers: *La céramique chypriote du style figuré*, plates vol., Rome, 1974, p. 103, No. IX.7).

<sup>14</sup> We have not included in this list the Cypriot Black on Red vessels: their occurrence outside Cyprus seems to represent a different phenomenon. Their initial appearance, moreover, both on Cyprus and the mainland, is later than that of the other decorated Cypro-Geometric groups. The non-Cypriot Black on Red vessels do not concern us here. Only vessels found in contexts of the eleventh and early tenth centuries B.C.E. are listed. I have marked sites where the contexts might be somewhat later with question marks.



*Achzib* — A White Painted I barrel juglet in one of the eleventh century cist graves.<sup>15</sup>

*Tell Abu Hawam* — A tall cylindrical bottle (Proto-White Painted?) in Locus 60,<sup>16</sup> a non-homogenous assemblage that included Late Bronze and Iron I Age sherds. No decoration was preserved. Hankey suggested that the bottle might be Cypriot,<sup>17</sup> but as the shape is also known from the local repertoire, this need not be the case. According to Balensi and Herrera, a White Painted I vessel was found in Unit 40,<sup>18</sup> inhabited during Stratum IVA 2-3 (according to Balensi, the second half of the eleventh and the beginning of the tenth centuries B.C.E.).<sup>19</sup>

*Shiqmona* (?) — At least two White Painted barrel juglets, in contexts that belong to the end of the Iron I Age.<sup>20</sup>

*Tel Zoror* — A White Painted I barrel juglet in Cist Grave V (second half of the eleventh century B.C.E.).<sup>21</sup>

*Tel Qasile* — Four fragments of White Painted I bowls were found. Three of these, uncovered south of Temple 131, probably belong to Stratum X (c. 1050-980 B.C.E.). The fourth fragment definitely comes from this stratum.<sup>22</sup>

*Tell Jerishe* (?) — A complete White Painted I bowl in an Iron I Age context. The exact chronological range is not clear (Fig. 5).<sup>23</sup>

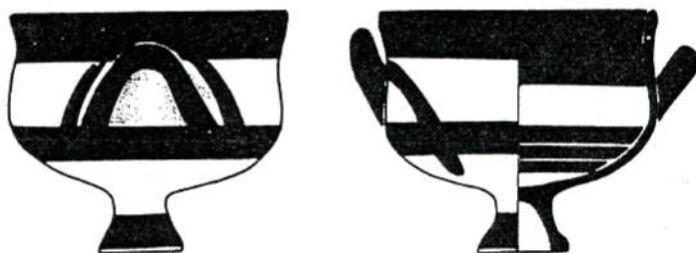


Fig. 5. The Tell Jerishe White Painted I bowl.

<sup>15</sup> A. Mazar: *The Temples of Tell Qasile*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977, p. 318, n. 1079 (Hebrew). According to the excavator, M.W. Prausnitz, the graves contained additional juglets, but their date is unknown to us.

<sup>16</sup> Jacqueline Balensi: *Les fouilles de R.W. Hamilton à Tell Abu Hawam*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université des Sciences Humaines, Strassburg, 1980, Pls. 18:5, 146:8, Catalogue p. 61 and see pp. 165 and 168.

<sup>17</sup> Vronwy Hankey: Mycenaean Pottery in the Middle East, *Annual of the British School of Archaeology in Athens* 62 (1967), p. 125.

<sup>18</sup> Jacqueline Balensi and Maria D. Herrera: *Tell Abu Hawam 1983-1984, Rapport préliminaire*, RB 92 (1985), p. 101, n. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Balensi (above, n. 16), p. 336.

<sup>20</sup> From the photographs shown to us it was hard to determine to which type they belong. Thanks are due to the excavator, J. Elgavish, and to A. Zemer of the Haifa Museum for this information.

<sup>21</sup> K. Ohata (ed.): *Tel Zoror II — Preliminary Report of the Excavations, Second Season 1965*, Tokyo, 1967, Pl. X:3.

<sup>22</sup> A. Mazar: *Excavations at Tell Qasile, Part II (Qedem 20)*, Jerusalem, 1985, Figs. 27:4-6, 45:18.

<sup>23</sup> No. T.134. The bowl is currently at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of

*Ashdod* — A White Painted I jug fragment from Area M, Stratum 10, dated by the excavator to the first quarter of the tenth century B.C.E. According to the neutron activation analysis results, it seems that the vessel was locally manufactured.<sup>24</sup>

*Tell Jemmeh (?)* — Two White Painted I barrel jugs in Stratum GH (Level 185).<sup>25</sup> The exact date of the destruction layer of Levels 184-185 within the tenth century has been a matter of debate: the stratigraphical data available are too scanty to pinpoint it.

*Tell ez-Zuweyid (?)* — A White Painted I jug fragment,<sup>26</sup> and at least ten other White Painted and Bichrome fragments,<sup>27</sup> in Stratum M. The date of this stratum is hard to determine. According to Trude Dothan, it contains two late Philistine fragments. It is possible to date the beginning of the stratum to the late eleventh century, but it definitely ends much later, perhaps as late as the ninth century B.C.E. It should be noted that the only complete Cypro-Geometric vessel at Tell ez-Zuweyid was uncovered above Stratum M.

*Tell el-Far'ah (south)* — A White Painted I bowl in Tomb 506,<sup>28</sup> dated around 1000 B.C.E. or slightly later. The tomb also contained a Black Slip (bucchero) jug.

*Tell Beit Mirsim* — A possible White Painted I barrel juglet fragment in Stratum B, Silo 6.<sup>29</sup> Albright maintained that the pottery from this silo is mainly contemporary with Stratum B<sub>2</sub> and should be dated to the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the tenth century. This material has recently been discussed by Greenberg, who assigned a 1150-1075 B.C.E. range to this assemblage.<sup>30</sup> There is no doubt that these dates are much more suitable than those offered by Albright, although it seems that the date could be slightly lowered for the latest material in the silo.

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Jerusalem. I thank Ora Negbi, Z. Herzog and Shulamit Geva for enabling me to present this hitherto unpublished bowl.

<sup>24</sup> M. Dothan and Y. Porath: *Ashdod IV — Excavations of Area M, 'Atiqot* (English series) 15 (1982), p. 74, Fig. 8:8.

<sup>25</sup> F. Petrie: *Gerar*, London, 1928, Pl. LX:86; J.G. Duncan: *Corpus of Dated Palestinian Pottery*, London, 1930, Type 86A.

<sup>26</sup> F. Petrie and J.C. Ellis: *Anthedon, Sinai*, London, 1937, Pl. XXXI:31.

<sup>27</sup> Petrie and Ellis (above, n. 26), Pl. XXXI: 25, 26, 29, 30, 34, 37, 38, 40, 41. It is hard to determine the types from these drawings. Gjerstad, who saw the fragments themselves, classified them generally as Types I-III. In addition to these, more fragments of possible Cypriot origin are reproduced in Pl. XXXI (all from Stratum M).

<sup>28</sup> F. Petrie: *Beth Pelet*, I, London, 1930, Pl. XXXI:325.

<sup>29</sup> W.F. Albright: *The Excavations of Tell Beit Mirsim in Palestine*, I, *AASOR* 12 (1932), Pl. 30:3. This fragment was defined as Cypriot by scholars following Gjerstad's remarks. In fact Gjerstad did not see the fragment itself, and his conclusions are based on the published illustrations alone — see E. Gjerstad: *The Swedish Cyprus Expedition*, IV/2, Stockholm, 1948, p. 256, n. 2. It is difficult to give a definite opinion on the basis of the photograph.

<sup>30</sup> R. Greenberg: *New Light on the Early Iron Age at Tell Beit Mirsim*, *BASOR* 256 (1987), p. 69. The author admits that on typological grounds it was very hard to reach definite conclusions as to the date of this assemblage.



*Beth Shemesh* — A White Painted I bowl in Stratum III,<sup>31</sup> which probably ends at the close of the eleventh century B.C.E.

*Tell el-Ful* — A White Painted (I?) barrel jug fragment, which probably belongs to Period II, dated by both Albright and Sinclair to the eleventh century B.C.E. The lower date is 990 B.C.E.<sup>32</sup>

*Megiddo* — A White Painted I bowl in Stratum VIA.<sup>33</sup> Another bowl (Bichrome II) belongs to Tomb 221b (end of the eleventh or beginning of the tenth century B.C.E.).<sup>34</sup>

*Beth Shean* — According to Gjerstad and Sinclair, two (then unpublished) White Painted vessels or fragments were uncovered in Stratum VI.<sup>35</sup> I will not deal here with the complex stratigraphical and chronological problems concerning this stratum at Beth Shean, especially as we do not know the exact findspots of these sherds. According to James, a fragment of a Cypriot Bichrome amphora was found in Locus 1283. The material in this locus, according to James, is either earlier than Stratum V or else belongs to its builders.<sup>36</sup> A neck fragment of a Cypriot Bichrome jug was uncovered in Locus 1211, attributed to Stratum V. It is not clear, however, to which phase of the stratum the sherd belongs.<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to know whether these fragments are the same as those mentioned by Gjerstad and Sinclair.

#### A. Chronology

According to the above evidence, it is possible to place the initial appearance of decorated Cypro-Geometric pottery in Israel in the last quarter of the eleventh century B.C.E. or slightly earlier. Two examples that are possibly earlier than the middle of the eleventh century are the Tell Abu Hawam bottle and the Tell Beit Mirsim fragment. However, both come from mixed contexts and cannot change the overall picture. The Tell Abu Hawam bottle is, moreover, not necessarily Cypriot, and the identification of the Tell Beit Mirsim sherd is also uncertain. The Beth Shean finds cannot be dated precisely enough. The chronology and typology of these finds are, of course, of utmost importance for establishing the early Cypro-Geometric chronology, but this remains outside the scope of this article.

#### B. Quantities

The number of Cypriot vessels from this period uncovered in Israel and published to date is very limited, even though it is obvious that there are more examples which were not identified by the excavators as Cypriot, and cannot be recognized as such

<sup>31</sup> E. Grant and G.E. Wright: *Ein Shems Excavations*, Part V, Haverford, 1939, Pl. 38:3.

<sup>32</sup> W.F. Albright: *Excavations and Results at Tell el-Ful*, *AASOR* 4 (1924), Pl. XXI:7.

<sup>33</sup> G. Loud: *Megiddo, II: (Seasons of 1935-39)*, Chicago, 1948, Pl. 78:20.

<sup>34</sup> P.L.O. Guy: *Megiddo Tombs*, Chicago, 1938, Pl. 72:8, p. 121.

<sup>35</sup> Gjerstad (above, n. 29), p. 250.

<sup>36</sup> Frances James: *The Iron Age of Beth-Shean*, Philadelphia, 1966, p. 52.

<sup>37</sup> James (above, n. 36), p. 52 and Fig. 8:1.



today. In most of the sites only a single vessel or sherd was found. In this respect the Dor assemblage, part of which is presented here, is very unusual — at least eight vessels in one context and additional pieces in other contexts of the same stratum.

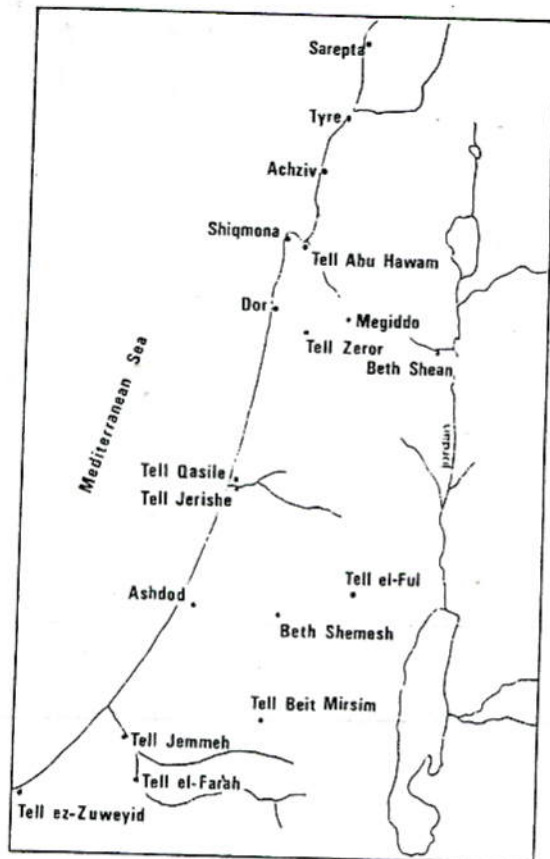


Fig. 6. Distribution of Cypro-Geometric pottery in Palestine in the eleventh and early tenth centuries B.C.E.

### C. Geographical distribution (Fig. 6)

Most of the vessels were uncovered in two main areas: the coastal plain (from southern Phoenicia to Philistia),<sup>38</sup> and the southern Shephelah and its margins. The few exceptions are the northern valleys (two vessels at Megiddo and a few possible sherds at Beth Shean) and the hill country (one sherd at Tell el-Ful).

To complete the picture it is worth noting that later in the tenth century B.C.E., the geographical distribution of Cypro-Geometric vessels remains much the same, though the specific sites vary a little.

<sup>38</sup> The finds from Phoenician sites outside Israel have not been dealt with here, but their existence should be borne in mind.

## DISCUSSION

What then are the phenomena revealed by the re-appearance (though on a very small scale) of Cypriot pottery vessels in Palestine in the last decades of the eleventh century B.C.E.? Gjerstad, acquainted with most of the vessels discussed here, considered them proof of ordinary commerce — small in scope but regular. The jugs and juglets were imported as containers for perfumes and oil, while the open vessels were bought because of their aesthetic value. According to him, the distribution of Cypriot vessels in Iron Age Palestine was similar to their distribution in the Late Bronze Age.<sup>39</sup>

Mazar considers these vessels proof of the revival of trade relations with Cyprus in the mid-eleventh century.<sup>40</sup> He would attribute this revival to the Phoenicians who, after the weakening of the Sea Peoples and the elimination of the Assyrian threat, were able to explore new horizons.

A few observations may be in place here:

a. In contrast to Gjerstad's opinion, there is a marked difference between Cypriot pottery distribution in Palestine in the Iron Age (especially in the initial stages with which we are concerned) and that of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>41</sup> There is of course also a drastic quantitative difference, LB Cypriot vessels have been found in large numbers in almost every excavated site. We are dealing here with two different phenomena, rather than with a single process which stopped and suddenly revived again.

b. It could be claimed that the geographical distribution is typical of any overseas product — i.e. the coast and the area along the main roads leading northwards and eastwards — but one should remember the relatively large number of vessels found in inland Philistia and its vicinity.

c. The types of vessels represented are of interest. These may be divided into three general groups: barrel juglets, other closed vessels and open vessels.

*The barrel juglets:* In the period in question these constitute about thirty percent of all the Cypro-Geometric vessels in the country. It seems that these percentages are not accidental and one cannot agree that the reason for this phenomenon is that the barrel juglets just 'appealed to mainland taste'.<sup>42</sup> It is logical to assume that these juglets were indeed brought to the country as containers for some specific liquid. They possibly shared the same function as the Black on Red juglets (most of which are indeed imported from Cyprus) that occur in Palestine from the first half of the tenth century B.C.E., replacing the earlier containers.

*Other closed vessels:* In this period these constitute about twenty-five percent of the limited Cypro-Geometric repertoire in Palestine. These figures prove that up to the

<sup>39</sup> Gjerstad (above, n. 29), p. 310.

<sup>40</sup> Mazar (above, n. 22), pp. 81, 125; idem (above, n. 15), p. 348.

<sup>41</sup> It should be emphasized again that Black on Red vessels are excluded here. These occur only later.

<sup>42</sup> Susannah Chapman: A Catalogue of the Iron Age Pottery from the Cemeteries of Khirbet Silm, Joya Qraye and Qasmieh of South Lebanon, *Berytus* 21 (1972), p. 172.



beginning of the tenth century, very few Cypro-Geometric vessels were brought to Palestine as containers.

*The open vessels:* These were almost certainly not used as containers. They comprise almost half of the entire Cypriot assemblage in Palestine in the period under discussion. We have already mentioned Gjerstad's opinion that the open vessels were imported because of their aesthetic value, and there is no doubt that they did indeed surpass all local contemporary pottery vessels. It would be logical to assume that they were indeed a popular commodity, but nevertheless, this does not seem to have been the case. The insignificant number of these vessels in Palestine throughout the Iron Age, even during periods when relations with Cyprus are known to have been very intensive, testify to the fact that somehow these vessels were not highly appreciated on the mainland, and were not part of a trade in *objets d'art*.

It thus seems that these vessels did not reach the mainland as a result of pure commerce. Here we are dealing with a more 'personal' kind of import — certain population groups, families or individuals who themselves maintained a direct, personal contact with Cyprus. As mentioned above, in addition to the coast and the northern valleys, there is a relatively large distribution of this pottery in the southern Shephelah and its margins, at sites that are known to have been inhabited by elements of the Sea Peoples. This distribution may lead to the conclusion that Cypriot vessels were brought here by families or individuals of the Sea Peoples, who maintained their contact with Cyprus, or maybe even by families who arrived from the island after the large immigration waves that ended in the twelfth century. Such a phenomenon, though possible, will require further proof. Moreover, this reconstruction does not explain the gap in the occurrence of Cypriot pottery during most of the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.E.

An alternative possibility would be, as suggested by Mazar (above), to attribute the renewed arrival of these Cypro-Geometric vessels in Palestine to the renewal of intensive traffic between Cyprus and the mainland. It is still uncertain whether this trade really merits the designation 'Phoenician', and we still do not understand the rôle of the (assimilated?) Sea People in these renewed contacts (which may explain the pottery distribution in inland Philistia).

It is important to emphasize that the Cypriot pottery vessels were not one of the objectives of this commerce, but only secondary items of exchange that probably found their way to the mainland as the merchants' or travellers' private belongings. This is especially true of the open vessels. The White Painted and Bichrome barrel juglets may indeed have served as containers for some precious liquid, but their insignificant numbers, especially in relation to the somewhat later Black on Red containers, prove that they did not regularly serve as commercial containers.

The finds at Iron Age Tyre, outstanding both in quantities and types of vessels represented,<sup>43</sup> are a good example of the sort of Cypriot assemblage to be expected in

<sup>43</sup> Bikai (above, n. 1).



a city whose inhabitants maintained a direct, 'personal' contact with Cyprus.

The Cypro-Geometric fragments uncovered at Dor, both in Phase B1-9 and Later Iron Age phases, greatly outnumber similar finds in other coastal or mainland sites in Israel. This suggests a similar phenomenon to that seen at Tyre. At least one vessel (Bowl No. 27788) was made at Dor or in its vicinity,<sup>44</sup> in imitation of Cypriot pottery. Though the piece differs from the standard Cypriot products of the period, both the general composition of the design and the specific geometric patterns testify that the artist had first-hand knowledge of the Cypriot fashions in vogue at the time.

The latter part of the tenth century and especially the following centuries witnessed a change in the number of Cypriot vessels found in Palestine, as well as in their types and geographical distribution. All of these indicate a change in trade patterns.

<sup>44</sup> Yellin (above, n. 10), p. 225.