

The Green Lectures 2024

The Hellenic Society is grateful to Professor J.R. Green for a generous donation to support a lecture series. We are delighted that Dr Lindy Crewe (Director, Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute) will deliver the 'Green Lectures' in 2024.

Programme

Monday 30 September, 6pm: Room G35, Senate House, London

Beef and beer: Working and feasting on Bronze Age Cyprus

(This lecture will also be filmed and available to watch on the Hellenic Society YouTube channel)

Tuesday 1 October, 1pm: Djanogly Theatre, Lakeside, University of Nottingham

Beef and beer: Working and feasting on Bronze Age Cyprus

This is a University of Nottingham Museum talk

Wednesday 2 October, 6.45pm: Queen's University Belfast (with the Classical Association in Northern Ireland)

Lecture title tbc

Friday 4 October, 3pm: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research seminar room, Cambridge

Easing gently into the Bronze Age: The case for a connected Chalcolithic Cyprus at the transition from the 4th –3rd millennia BCE

Monday 7 October, 6pm: Room G35, Senate House, London

Easing gently into the Bronze Age: The case for a connected Chalcolithic Cyprus at the transition from the 4th –3rd millennia BCE

(This lecture will also be filmed and available to watch on the Hellenic Society YouTube channel)

Abstracts

Beef and beer: Working and feasting on Bronze Age Cyprus

Ongoing excavations at Kissonerga-Skalia in western Cyprus are revealing a number of pyrotechnical installations and associated finds within a 'monumental' complex dating to the transition from the Middle–Late Bronze Age (c. 1650 BC), a period during which we see the first moves towards urbanism and the integration of Cyprus into eastern Mediterranean trading networks. This talk will discuss how this evidence may relate to the desire of the community at Kissonerga-Skalia to take part in these societal transformations.

Red Polished anthropomorphic protome from
Kissonerga-Skalia (© Ian J. Cohn)



Easing gently into the Bronze Age: The case for a connected Chalcolithic Cyprus at the transition from the 4th–3rd millennia BCE.

Archaeologists working on Cyprus tend towards caution in attributing major changes in lifeways or new appearances in material culture to external drivers. This can be explained partially as a reaction to earlier 20th century narratives which dismissed Cyprus as generally isolated from wider developments in the region interspersed with periods of strong ‘foreign’ influence, thus affording local populations little agency. However, the evidence for widespread movements around the Mediterranean and beyond makes it unlikely that Cyprus was ever ‘isolated’. The selective adoption or rejection of novel traits are now seen as complex cultural choices made as appropriate for maintaining, or modifying, local identities.

Bringing together an increasingly large dataset of ‘odd finds’ and ‘unusual practices’ from a number of sites dating to the transition from the 4th–3rd millennia BCE on Cyprus allows us to consider the thesis that international interaction with Cyprus at this time was extensive and that contacts with off-islanders may have resulted in the introduction of new practices and hence new types of material culture. Some long-held and valued traditions, such as the famous picrolite cruciform figurines, vanish by the first century of the 3rd millennium whilst others, such as living in single-celled roundhouses, endure. It is around 2500 BC, a period known as the Philia facies, that we see a package of new technologies introduced—centred around cooking, textiles, animal husbandry, metallurgy, burial practices, and including a switch to dwelling in multi-roomed rectilinear houses. These introductions are widely attributed to connections with southwestern Anatolia and considered to mark the start of the Bronze Age on Cyprus. Whether attributed to migrants or to trade, the extent and apparent rapid adoption of these changes across the island is difficult to fathom.

Excavation of the settlement and cemeteries at Souskiou have greatly expanded our understanding of the initial stages of this process, leading to a long 3rd millennium transformation from Late Chalcolithic to Bronze Age that is quite possibly marked by two different sets of interactions. This lecture will consider the likelihood that the introduction of some new traits occurred at a time of the widespread movements of ideas and people in the region—during the peak of the Early Transcaucasian Phenomenon. If this holds, the Philia package emerges as far less alien and radical and returns agency to indigenous Chalcolithic populations.



Late Chalcolithic pottery from Kissonerga-Mosphilia, Lemba-Lakkous and Chlorakas-Palloures on display in the Paphos Museum (courtesy of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus)