

SINDA AND THE ABSOLUTE CHRONOLOGY OF LATE CYPRIOTE IIIA

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The absolute chronology for the end of Mycenaean IIIB – 1230 B.C. – proposed by Furumark in 1941 was based on the circumstance that pottery of that date had not been found in a context later than the reign of Ramses II.¹ This date must now be lowered, since Mycenaean IIIB pottery was found at Deir Allah associated with a faience vase inscribed with the name of Queen Tausret /Tewosret who reigned 1188–1186.²

Another confirmation of a low date is the fact that Pharaoh Siptah (1194–1188) is mentioned among the documents from Ras Shamra.³ “There is evidence of destruction and fire throughout the city”.⁴ Furumark emphasized to me more than once that he considered the latest pottery found at Ugarit to be not later than Mycenaean IIIB; hence that style lasted down to the reign of that pharaoh.

A lowering of Furumark’s date for Mycenaean IIIB has also been made by others, e.g. Iakovides⁵ and Hankey and Warren. The latter suggest 1185/1180 using evidence from Kition.⁶ We are then very close to the eighth year of Ramses III who reigned 1184–1153 according to Kitchen.⁷

It follows that the absolute dates assigned by Furumark to the different periods at Sinda must be lowered. Period I, in which Mycenaean IIIB pottery was found, should thus end *c.* 1190/1180 B.C. It is impossible to know exactly how long Period II (=

Late Cypriote IIIA1), characterized by Furumark’s Mycenaean IIIC:1a and III C:1b (1), lasted. Furumark assumed 40 years (1230–1150). In the new scheme the duration of the period may have been from 1190/1180 to 1150/1140.

If we trust – and some do not⁸ – that the Sea Peoples after having destroyed Hattusha, Kode, Carchemish, Arzawa and Alasia were defeated by Ramses III in his eighth year we may have traces of these events in Alasia assuming that Cyprus is meant with that name. Should we attribute one of the destruction layers at Sinda to the Sea Peoples and in that case which one? Furumark assumed that the second catastrophe was due to an attack from the Sea Peoples. Should we hypothesize that the first destruction, which we now date to 1190/1180 B.C., was caused by the Sea Peoples? In that case who destroyed Sinda the second time?

I would like to emphasize that these suggestions are hypothetical and it also involves the equation of Alasia with Cyprus. Personally I believe that pirates and adventurers consisting of Mycenaeans and groups from other areas are responsible for the destructions. We may also have to reckon with wars between the Cypriotes themselves, as the Cyprominoan signs on the lead sling bullets from Hala Sultan Tekke suggest.

The duration of Sinda Period III (= Late Cypriote

¹ A. FURUMARK, *The chronology of Mycenaean pottery*, Stockholm 1941, 115 and 117.

² H.J. FRANKEN, The excavations at Deir ‘Alla in Jordan, *Vetus Testamentum* 11, 1961, 362–372; *idem*, *Excavations at Tell Deir ‘Alla. The Late Bronze Age sanctuary*, Louvain 1992, 31; V. HANKEY, Mycenaean pottery in the Middle East: notes on finds since 1951, *BSA* 62, 1967, 131–134 (Furumark accepted in a letter to me the Mycenaean IIIB date for *fig. 5* and classified the vases on *fig. 6* as “Mercenary” style); K.A. KITCHEN, The basics of Egyptian chronology in relation to the Bronze Age, in: P. ÅSTRÖM (ed.), *High, Middle or Low?*, SIMA PB 56, Gothenburg 1987, 52.

³ M. YON, The end of the Kingdom of Ugarit, in: *Crisis years*, 120; K.A. KITCHEN, The basics of Egyptian

chronology in relation to the Bronze Age, in: P. ÅSTRÖM (ed.), *High, Middle or Low?*, SIMA PB 56, Gothenburg 1987, 52. There are now very few transitional IIIB/IIIC1 sherds from Ras Shamra suggesting that Mycenaean IIIC1 started somewhat before the destruction of the city at about 1185 B.C. according to M. Yon in: YON *et al.*, *Céramiques mycéniennes* (Ras Shamra–Ougarit XIII), Paris 2000, 18.

⁴ YON, *op.cit.*, 117.

⁵ S. IAKOVIDES, The chronology of LH IIIC, *AJA* 83, 1979, 454–462 (1190/85–1170/65 for IIIC:1a).

⁶ P. WARREN and V. HANKEY, *Aegean Bronze Age chronology*, Bristol 1989, 159–162.

⁷ KITCHEN, *op.cit.*, 52.

⁸ E.g. L.H. LESKO, Egypt in the 12th century B.C., in: *Crisis years*, 151–154.

IIIA2) is difficult to assess. If we equate the Mycenaean IIIC:1b (2) ware, which is characteristic of Sinda Period III, with Mycenaean IIIC Middle, we may obtain some dates from Greece. Hankey and Warren suggest two generations or about 50 years for IIIC Middle: 1150/1140–1100/1090 B.C.⁹ Furumark suggested 40 years for Sinda Period III. This would now mean 1150/1140–1110/1100.

The dates are applicable on other sites in Cyprus which show developments similar to that of Sinda, e.g. Enkomi, Sinda and Maa, *Palaeokastro*.

The Proto White Painted Ware appears after Sinda Period III. This is in agreement with Maria Iacovou's opinion that the ware is derivative of LH IIIC Middle and postdates it "making it largely contemporary with LH IIIC Late".¹⁰

These new considerations of absolute dates for Late Cypriote III will give fuel for the discussion of the radical low chronology for Palestine proposed by Finkelstein¹¹ and Ussishkin.¹² There are links between the pottery from Sinda Period III and the Philistine pottery¹³ and the new, low dates proposed here for Sinda effect Palestinian dates. It may be assumed that some of the inhabitants fled to Palestine, where the Philistine pottery betrays influence from Sinda.¹⁴

If we adjust Furumark's absolute dates in the light of new discoveries which make a revision necessary, keeping his approximate, relative dates for the Sinda Periods, the following Table 1 emerges.

It should also be mentioned that Sinda was abandoned in the Late Cypriote IIIB period, when Proto White Painted ware appears.

Period	LC	Absolute dates	Pottery styles (Furumark)	Greece
Period I	LC IIC2	c. 1220–1190	Mycenaean IIIB	IIIB2
Period II	LC IIIA1	c. 1190–1150	Mycenaean IIIC:1a	IIIC Early
			Mycenaean IIIC:1b (1)	
Period III	LCIIIA2	c. 1150–1110	Mycenaean IIIC:1b (2)	IIIC Middle

Table 1

⁹ WARREN and HANKEY, *op.cit.* 168.

¹⁰ *Mediterranean peoples*, 337.

¹¹ E.g. I. FINKELSTEIN, Philistine chronology: High, Middle or Low?, in: *Mediterranean peoples*, 140–147.

¹² D. USSISHKIN, The destruction of Megiddo at the end of the Late Bronze Age and its historical significance, in: *Mediterranean peoples*, 197–219.

¹³ T. DOTHAN, *The Philistines and their material culture*, New Haven, London, Jerusalem 1982, e.g. 109, 115, 154, 217, 310.

¹⁴ See the preceding note. Charles Adelman remarks that the later Close Style pottery at Sinda is so different from the earlier and so similar in many ways (but for the Bichrome) to the Philistine that it is possible that influences for it came from the East as well. I have pointed out some imports and influences from the Phoenician area to Cyprus, even suggesting movement of people from that area to Cyprus, in: *Mediterranean peoples*, 82 and 84.

¹⁵ Down to (?) the beginning of Mycenaean IIIC Early or transitional IIIB/IIIC Early.

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