

EXPLORING ARCHAEOBOTANICAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN CYPRIOT PREHISTORY

Leilani LUCAS¹

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Recent archaeobotanical results from early Aceramic Neolithic sites on Cyprus have put the island in the forefront of debates on the spread of Near Eastern agriculture, with domestic cereal crops appearing at nearly the same time as on the mainland. Since Cyprus was thought to be the first region to be colonized after the emergence of agriculture in the Levant and demonstrates the earliest definite evidence of a targeted migration by farmers, it is an important region for better understanding aspects of the Neolithic revolution and its transmission, particularly with regard to timing. However, what happened after the introduction of agriculture to Cyprus has been relatively poorly researched. Further consideration is needed of the role of new introductions, local agricultural developments and intensification in subsequent cultural phases of Cyprus that correspond with evidence for trade and increasing social complexity. To address these issues, a review of the prehistoric Cypriot archaeobotanical record will be presented along with preliminary results from three recently excavated sites: Krittou Marattou 'Ais Yiorkis, Kissonerga Skalia, and Souskiou Laona. The preliminary results are compared with previous archaeobotanical data from Aceramic Neolithic, Ceramic Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Bronze Age occupations in Cyprus and it will be shown how these data contribute to our understanding of the island's prehistoric economic development.

¹ Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, UK, e-mail: l.m.lucas@ucl.ac.uk