

Archaeological and Archaeometric Investigations into Cooking Wares in Frankish and Venetian Cyprus

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By the end of the 12th c., Cypriot cooking wares exhibited strong tradition of manufacture. They were handmade, manufactured by specialised potters, and highly standardised. Globular closed vessels predominated the assemblage, open shallow ones accounted for considerably smaller proportion, the two representing different cooking methods.

With the Frankish takeover, an assemblage of wheel-thrown, glazed cooking wares with a far higher proportion of open vessels—i.e. exhibiting stylistic, and possibly functional differences—arrived from the Levant, particularly from the area of Beirut. The new vessels were found on the coast and in the capital, but not in the Troodos mountains, and had no impact on local production.

The goals of the POMEDOR project for Cyprus were (1) to better define local production of cooking wares; (2) to investigate possible association between the Levantine cooking wares and new foodways.

The results suggest that production was centred in the Troodos mountains, and this may explain why it was not influenced by the imports. The question of foodways remains unresolved. Two functional markers gave contradictory results: increased proportion of shallow, open cooking vessels persisted, the glazed surface did not. Residue analysis provided no answer, but helped mapping directions for future research.