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Miniature oxhide ingots from Late Bronze Age Cyprus

An update on the material



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“BRONZE AGE CYPRIOT MINIATURE OXHIDE INGOTS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY RE-APPRAISAL OF THEIR
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS AND FUNCTIONS”

Unlike other categories of Late Cypriot materials, miniature oxhide ingots do not constitute a large corpus of objects, numbering only fourteen at the state of the present research. Over the past 60 years, scholars have examined them in varying detail, interpreting them as votives, weights or copper samples. Despite some renewed interest, the small corpus seems to have discouraged new studies and held back scholarly debate. In particular, each interpretation does not assess the archaeological context and the peculiarities of each object, returning a false image of a uniform corpus of artefacts in terms of contexts and functions. Moreover, and perhaps surprisingly, given the presence of hundreds of full-size oxhide ingots in the Mediterranean basin, the small size of the counterpart is an aspect that remained unexplored in the debate concerning their possible function.

To clarify these issues, the thesis updated the archaeological data and re-appraised miniature oxhide ingots' possible function(s). In order to do so, it employed an interdisciplinary approach, which combined the review of the archaeological contexts and past interpretations with the anthropological aspects of the miniaturisation process.