

# **BICHROME WHEELMADE WARE: ORIGIN AND REPRODUCTION**

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Bichrome Wheelmade Ware is one of the most important mirrors for ancient Mediterranean trade routes and networks at the beginning of the Late Cypriot Bronze Age (LC I). The ware was widely distributed in the entire Eastern Levante, from Turkey (Alalakh) over the Syrian, Lebanese and Canaanite coast, down to Egypt. In Cyprus, Bichrome Wheelmade Ware has been found at nearly 40 sites. The wide distribution makes this requested ware an important tool for synchronizing the chronology of Cyprus with that of the eastern Mediterranean civilizations.

The origin of the Ware is of immense interest. Various vessel types and a large variety of decorative motifs inevitably requires that the LC Bichrome issue needs to be considered as an issue of originals and imitations in different places in the Levante region.

Comprehensive petrographic (optical microscopy), mineralogic (electron beam microprobe, XRD) and geochemical studies (ICP-MS, XRF) on Bichrome material from Tell el-Dab'a in the Eastern Nile Delta, indicates clearly that the found ware was partly imported from Cyprus, partly reproduced locally. The results make it possible to characterize and distinguish two chemically and mineralogically entirely separate groups, which correlate well with reference samples of both localities. The Bichrome Wheelmade Ware samples from Cyprus are at higher technological level and have a chemical signature referring to the ultramafic and mafic rocks of Cyprus. The manufacturing of the Egyptian Ware is not so well developed and the local reproductions are demonstrable made of Egyptian Nile-silt.