

CORRESPONDENCE

7 Amherst Road
Great Neck, New York 11021
September 7, 1970

Dear Dr. Bennett:

To The Editor: -

The following information maybe of interest to archaeologists working in the eastern Mediterranean and concerned with establishing some type of geological criteria for volcanic ballistic "fallout" or tsunami assault on a given site.

At a meeting in July 1970, arranged through the kind offices of Dr. V. Karageorghis and Dr. M. Loulloupis of the Cyprus Museum, a conference was held with the Director of the Geological Survey Department of Cyprus.

The information, while not establishing chronological levels, comes from a publication entitled "The Mineral Resources and Mining Industry of Cyprus, Bulletin No. 1" by L. M. Bear, p. 170. In the years 1933-1938 from the "upper part of a raised beach" about a half mile from the shore line at Aya Irini, ^{on the NW coast} (NW coast) about 4000 tons of pumice were commercially extracted, used at that time for roof insulation. The "raised beach" according to the Department is at least 30 meters above sea level. The pumice is not of Cypriote origin. The Department also reports other pumice deposits on the north coast of Cyprus but no records were kept because the pumice no longer has commercial value.

The Aya Irini area is now under Greek ^{military} Army control, no photographs maybe taken, and the "raised beach" is enclosed behind a barbed wire fence.

The height of the deposit, the tonnage involved and the distance from the shoreline might suggest a tsunami manifestation.

Not to be precluded, but ^{to be} treated with some caution would be the find of a few pumice pieces in a stratified layer. The possibility exists that small quantities of pumice might have been used for cleansing, polishing or grinding stone ware or culinary objects. The ^{availability} present day ^{size} availability and probably in the Bronze Age, of isolated pieces found on the Mediterranean beaches, would probably make this evidence inconclusive. Examples: the find by J. Tzedakis at Chania, Crete, of pieces of pumice in a layer of LM III B within a tripod (case kindly brought to my attention by Dr. P. Åström). Likewise a half pound of small pumice pieces found at Zakro in a Middle Minoan III layer (1970), may have had some utilitarian use. Distinguishable, however, are other pieces found at Zakro that undoubtedly were hurled ballistically from Santorini. The ball of scoriae found in a MM III context (1969) and the hand-size, fragile piece of scoriae laced with threads of sulphur found in the LM I B palace (1965) suggest a "fall out" rather than tsunami action.

Sincerely,

Yours, &c.

Leon Pomerance